

# Selling Field X Field®

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## OCTOBER 2020

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR SEED SALES TIPS AND INFORMATION

## GENE EDITING LEADS TO FASTER, CHEAPER PRODUCTS

If you've heard me speak in recent months, you know I'm excited about the promise of gene editing for Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, as well as for the seed industry in general. We've been living in a biotech world where a few large companies control the industry by tying up all the genetics in their technologies. They then control what happens to those genetics, which has led to fewer companies doing plant breeding.

After all, why invest in a technology when you don't have full control of your investment? The investment to bring a new biotech event to market is in the billions of dollars. It also requires a seed company to have employees all around the world to gain approvals for the grain to be marketed worldwide.

These products have brought some great results and have lowered the amount of chemicals sprayed on biotech crops, which is great for the environment. Unfortunately, we have allowed countries like China to have great power over our seed products by requiring them all to approve a new biotechnology event before it comes to market. This licensing process has slowed down new approvals, leaving farmers vulnerable because pests and herbicide-resistant weeds don't care about worldwide approvals. Resistant weeds will grow regardless of an approval process.

Gene editing, which isn't a technology event, has the potential to fundamentally change the seed industry – and agriculture. Gene editing



## Latham®

HI-TECH SEEDS

by **JOHN LATHAM**  
PRESIDENT

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has the ability to speed up the plant breeding process and eventually solve problems that could previously only be solved by biotech. CRISPR-Cas9 is one method of gene editing that has much promise by making precise cuts at specific locations in the plant genome. This process can facilitate precision crop breeding by working with the native characteristics available within a crop.

CRISPR also may be used to create transgenic crops. This is one specific method of gene editing that is relatively inexpensive and is bringing new entrants into the seed industry. In my role as chair of the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), I've lobbied for regulations that allow for fair treatment of gene-edited crops. We have made significant progress domestically with the USDA and the EPA. In addition, partners around the world now see gene editing as a safe and effective method to increase productivity.

I'm proud to announce that Latham Seeds is working with multiple companies that are developing products through gene editing. We won't see a return on this investment over the next year, but that's okay because we are in the business for the long haul. We hope to see great new product results in the next few years. We will be adding gene-edited products to our corn and soybean research programs. I'm hoping we will look back at this time as the start of something new for Latham Seeds and for our industry. It should be an exciting ride!

# TIME TO PUT YOUR NOTES INTO ACTION!



by **AMY ROHE**  
SALES MANAGER

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How much is drone footage worth? The answer may surprise you!

Throughout the growing season, we have encouraged you to walk fields with your customers. Some Latham® dealers have taken great notes and have found creative ways to share their findings with customers! I have seen pictures inserted into Data Forward™ maps. Other dealers have sent drone videos to customers after they discovered how important weed management was to those customers.

Valuable time spent with customers and the insights learned allows you to provide an extra level of value. Now it's time to put those notes into action! The great conversations you had all growing season long lead into an impactful crop plan for next year.

To recap what we covered at Latham Dealer Kickoff, the top four reasons to do a crop plan are:

- 1 Better time management
- 2 Fewer seed returns
- 3 Increased customer retention
- 4 **Enhanced product performance = Increased yields = Increased ROI**

Latham's Product Team spends a significant time in the field, taking notes to help place our products. They share their field notes with Latham Dealers, so you can make the best product recommendations based on both soil types and management practices.

We are committed to making sure you have the tools you need to be confident in the product recommendations you are making! Our Product Team members are recording more videos than ever to guide you through this process, so check them out in our Dealer Center on LathamSeeds.com. Watch videos from Latham's Virtual Field Day in September, and make plans to participate in our Post-Harvest Huddles next month.

Our entire team is here to support you:

- **Product Team** – hand-picks products to best fit farmers' needs and wants based on your feedback, market trends, and what is in the pipeline for new technologies.
- **Data Forward Team** – learns even more the environments in which our products thrive. They assist dealers and customers on the best management practices to maximize yield, field by field and acre by acre.
- **Sales Team** – spends time in the field with both customers and our product team, learning more about products and how to maximize the performance.
- **Marketing Team** – shares real-time harvest results on social media plus implements a fall advertising campaign that includes radio and direct mail.
- **Production and Operations Teams** – have processes to ensure we only ship the highest quality seed. These team members are involved with everything from growing and conditioning seed to packaging and shipping our products.

While fall harvest may feel like a finish line, it really is the heart of our seed selling season. You have done the leg work (literally) of getting out and seeing customers throughout the growing season. Now lean on your team to put those notes into a crop plan! Crop plans set up your customers, our products and you up for success next year.

**HAPPY SELLING!**

# SEEDSMANSHIP 365= SELLING FIELD BY FIELD



by **RYAN SCHON**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
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I'm tired of ag businesses wanting to wheel and deal for the 15 minute sale and not the 15 year sale. I want partners in the industry, not distributors and providers.

This tweet really got my attention this summer. Granted, it's just one farmer. Maybe he came from one of those terrible self-serving sales pitches that we've all suffered through. I'm sure you've also sat quietly while someone rolled through a sales script, trying to sell any product to anyone at any price, trying to make a commission and then vanish.

At first, I convinced myself this farmer must be talking about some other company. It probably wasn't even a seed company, right? But what if it was? What if this was their Latham experience? What could we learn by putting ourselves in this farmer's shoes? The lesson that stuck with me is that we owe it to farmers and to our legacy to be better than this. How do we become that partner, that trusted advisor, that this farmer really wants to do business with?

## Seedsmanship

Many industries have similar models for successful selling and becoming a trusted advisor. In the seed business, it has its own name – seedsmanship. At Latham Seeds, we call it Selling FieldxField.

Big companies have done extensive research listening to farmers to understand what they want from their seed dealer. Here is a good summary of farmers' top needs:

- 1 In-season follow up** – walking their fields at emergence, late vegetative and pre-harvest
- 2 Fair prices** – good value for price; deliver more value to increase what's considered fair
- 3 Locally located** – invest in the local community and deliver hometown service
- 4 Financing** – manage cash flow with payment timing through early cash, financing options

- 5 Seed knowledge** – make recommendations for product, placement, and management

## 365

Good seedsmanship is a year-round endeavor. Farmers want to know that you're going to be there for them when they need you. You aren't just there to make a sale and move on to the next farm and the next season. Harken back to the days of traveling elixir salesmen, and it's easy to understand why farmers have a heightened sense of caveat emptor. Fortunately, there are opportunities for strong dealers to become trusted advisors who are there for farmers, in every season. Again, we can learn from customer research, and this time it is true across all industries.

- It takes 6 to 12 contacts to make a sale
- Most salespeople give up after 2 contacts



## Field-by-Field Crop Plans

We're coming up on that critical November 15 early order date. If you're already delivering that high level of service year-round, then your next step is easy. Take everything you learned all summer from walking customer fields and test plots, and your experience with Latham products over the last few years. Make a field-by-field product recommendation for each farmer. Again, our most successful Latham dealers tell us this is what they already do. Send in that field-by-field crop plan with your customers' early orders and we'll even reward the activity.

Delivering for your customers will double your early order discount with an additional \$3.00/unit on corn and \$0.50/unit on soybeans. The total early order opportunity are increases over last season.

Go get 'em!

# 4 WAYS TO MAKE COLD CALLS MORE MEANINGFUL



by **LAURA CUNNINGHAM**  
MARKETING MANAGER

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One sunny, mid-August day this year, I was sitting on the porch and working on some fall campaigns when an infamous white pickup truck pulled in my drive. I knew I was about to be the recipient of a cold call.

One thing I've noticed is that many salespeople don't know how to carefully ask who the decision-makers are on the farm. It probably stems from an incorrect assumption that it wouldn't be me. I would be happy to tell them about my role working for a seed company and managing livestock on the farm... if they ask. However, typically the cold calls I receive follow this order:

- **The greeting.** This portion of the call is usually all about them and their company and/or products.
- **The discussion.** What do you look for in a hybrid? What characteristics are important? What traits do you plant?
- **The ask.** Usually, there is some impending deadline to provide a sense of urgency for me to place an order on the spot.

How do you approach a farmer in a cold-call scenario?

This year during Latham Dealer Kickoff, our sales team rolled out a program to place emphasis on our trademark FieldXField™ planning process, which provides a framework to guide your initial conversations with purpose.

During that mid-August visit from Brand X, the younger gentleman intrigued me when he asked this simple question, “Besides weather and the markets, what is a challenge you face on your farm?” He created the opportunity for me to express a pain point and to explain his process for doing research into my issue and returning with some potential ideas for how to overcome it. Some of the most professional salespeople want to use an actual piece of my farm – whether that is a field map, a soil sample, a feed sample, etc. – and bring back custom

recommendations to fit that issue. Enter Latham's FieldXField method.

This cold call from Brand X reminded me that Latham Dealers can deliver a similar in-depth cold call conversation by using these tools:

- 1 FieldXField planning forms, plus notes to guide discussion.** At Kickoff, we rolled out a planning form with talking points to help you uncover a pain point and set up a return visit to share some ideas to solve it.
- 2 SeedWare's Catalog Widget or Latham's Seed Catalog.** This online resource can help you develop a great leave-behind about the company OR some product information to supplement the FieldXField form you can return with on your second visit to this prospective customer.
- 3 “The Field Position” agronomy library on LathamSeeds.com.** Sometimes a prospect is learning a new farming practice, so they would appreciate insight on timing for nitrogen or benefits of seed treatments. “The Field Position” blog has 12 years of content, which is newly organized into library format to make printing or sharing resources easier than ever.
- 4 Data Forward™.** During his discussion, the competitor rep asked if I would be willing to give him field coordinates. If I did, he said he would research the field and get back to me. Those of you who use Data Forward have an incredible tool at your fingertips! You can learn about similar things like soil type that would help with placement.

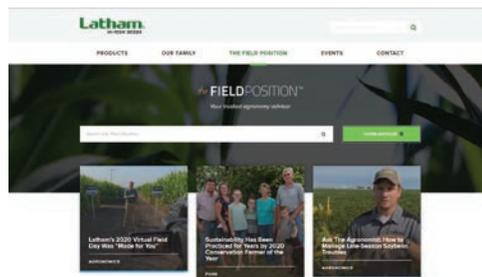
Whether this is a cold call visit or an opportunity to ask for more business from a return customer, the experience matters. How could you add more value to your dealer-customer relationship – and create an outstanding customer experience – with FieldXField planning?



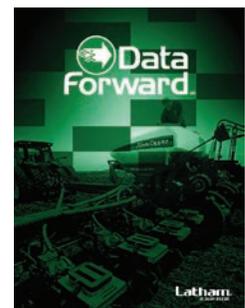
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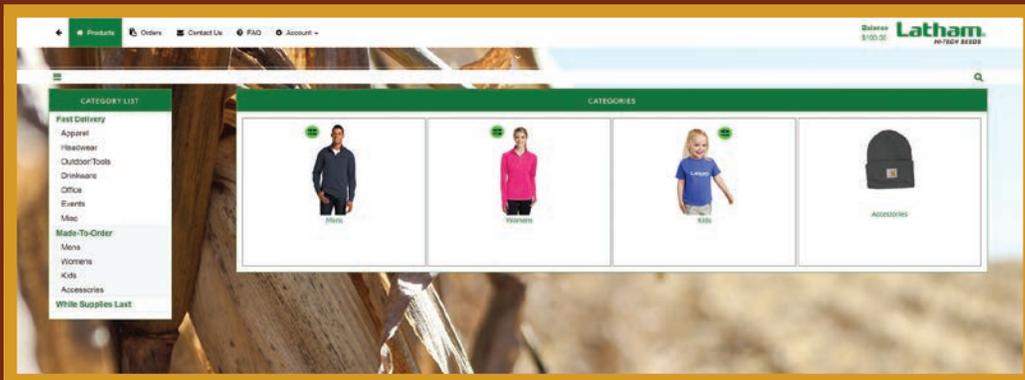


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# ORDER CHRISTMAS GIFTS NOW!



The holidays present Latham® dealers with the opportunity to show existing and prospective customers how much you appreciate their support. Visit [www.lathamgear.com](http://www.lathamgear.com) to choose gifts.

Contact Kilah Watson with any questions.

**NOTE:** Order gifts as soon as possible to mitigate any supply shortages or shipping delays due to COVID-19.

## SEEDWARE WEBINAR



**SANDIE JOHNSON**  
WEBINAR INSTRUCTOR  
641-692-0333 / [sandiej@lathamseeds.com](mailto:sandiej@lathamseeds.com)

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 7:00 AM  
Thursday, October 22, 2020 8:30 AM

## 2020-21 SEEDWARE OVERVIEW CUSTOMER & ORDER ENTRY

### TO PARTICIPATE:

1. Call or email Sandie to get registered.
2. You will receive a notice via email. Please confirm your registration by clicking "register now."
3. Reminder emails will be sent prior to the webinar.
4. When the time has come for your session to start, join by clicking the link received via a confirmation email.
5. Watch, listen and learn!

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70  
YEARS**  
OF THE INDUSTRY'S  
BEST GENETICS, HIGHEST  
QUALITY PRODUCTS, AND  
HOMETOWN SERVICE.

HELPING FARMERS FEED AND FUEL THE WORLD



**Selling FieldXField®**

Published monthly for Dealers of Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, focusing on seed sales tips, trends and information from around the seed industry.

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## HALLOWEEN TRIVIA QUIZ

- The first Jack-o-Lanterns were made out of what?  
**a.** turnips **b.** melons **c.** coconuts **d.** pumpkins
- In what century did the practice of trick-or-treating begin?  
**a.** 17th century **b.** 14th century **c.** 16th century **d.** 20th century
- If you want to keep spirits out of your home on Halloween, what should you sprinkle on your doorstep?  
**a.** garlic **b.** holywater **c.** thyme **d.** salt
- Which horror film among these is based on a true story?  
**a.** The Amityville Horror **b.** Halloween **c.** The conjuring **d.** Get Out
- According to superstition, if you stare into a mirror at midnight on Halloween, what will you see?  
**a.** A Phantom **b.** Your future Spouse **c.** Your dead Ancestors **d.** Your death
- What movie convinced people to get rid of their Ouija boards?  
**a.** Ouija **b.** The Exorcist **c.** The Amityville Horror **d.** Halloween
- How many "witches" were burned at the stake in the Salem Witch Trials?  
**a.** 20 **b.** 0 **c.** 12 **d.** 6
- What does the word "Halloween" mean?  
**a.** Night of the Dead **b.** Holy Night **c.** Day of the Dead **d.** Blessings

