

Laird Superfood names new CEO

By Bill Bartlett
Correspondent

Forty-nine-year-old Jason D. Vieth is the new chief executive officer (CEO) of Laird Superfood (NYSE:LSF), Sisters' largest full-time employer and rapidly growing, plant-based producer of human food products. He will also serve as a director. *The Nugget* reached Vieth shortly after the announcement.

Laird projects sales in the fourth quarter just ended at \$9.4 million, a 29 percent increase over the like quarter in 2020. For the full year 2021, the company is likely to report \$36.8 million in revenue, an increase of 43 percent. The company's stock, traded publicly on NYSE American, closed Friday at \$6.81, down 48 percent since January 1 and 87 percent in the last 12 months.

The appointment was announced by Paul Hodge, Jr. who will step down as founding CEO in a planned transition, which was posted last August when the search for his replacement began. Vieth's extensive experience in the food and beverage industry includes his most recent position as executive vice president of Sovos Brands, where he managed the Breakfast and Snacks

Group.

Other prior experience includes nearly a decade spent at WhiteWave Foods, most recently as senior vice president and general manager of the yogurt business that included Horizon Organic, Wallaby Organic, Silk, and So Delicious. In addition, he has led other food and beverage businesses such as Poppi and Life Time Fitness' LifeCafe.

Vieth is the father of three and a Boulder, Colorado, resident.

In a prepared statement from the company, Geoffrey Barker, chair of the board of directors said, "We are delighted to have Jason join the Laird Superfood team to lead the next chapter of our growth story. His breadth of experience and impressive track record of leading high-growth CPG brands, particularly in the wholesale channel, will be a powerful accelerant to our digitally native brand. Paul Hodge, our founding CEO, built a remarkable brand and platform, and Jason's strong operational background, experience with plant-based beverages, and strategic mindset make him the ideal candidate to lead Laird Superfood and make it a nationally recognized brand."

When we asked what was

the deciding factor to accept the offer, Vieth gave a lengthy list of the qualities he finds in Laird's products and people, a team he praises as passionate. He knows Sisters fairly well having vacationed at Black Butte Ranch and Sunriver. He's an ultra-marathoner and long-distance cyclist who finds natural compatibility with Sisters.

Vieth said: "Relocating to Sisters is TBD since I have three children (ages 18, 13, and 11) and we need to see how the whole COVID thing plays out."

His experience with Laird Superfood began years ago when he was introduced to the company's signature product, Superfood Creamer.

"My wife and I are both active outdoors and heard about this Laird Hamilton guy and his creamer. We fell in love with it instantly," Vieth said.

He went on to relate their humorous encounters in trying to get through airport security with large amounts of the white powder.

Both he and his wife are also consumers of Picky Bars, the Bend company acquired by Laird last year. The performance snack is a favorite of athletes, particularly runners like Vieth.

"So, knowing the product



PHOTO PROVIDED

Jason D. Vieth is the new CEO of Laird Superfood.

and then meeting the team, who are so totally focused on a holistic approach to foods, it was easy to say yes," Vieth said. "The right food is medicine."

Vieth has not been sedentary in his career, which started in 1995 as a senior manager with Accenture, the worldwide consulting firm. That was followed by a year as a senior program manager with GE Capital before quickly moving to Boston Consulting Group as a project leader.

From there he moved to Colorado, working his way to senior vice president and general manager of WhiteWave Foods, leading a \$150 million yogurt business. His nine-year tenure ended when he took on the role of senior vice president of Life Time – Healthy Way of Life with

more than 110 nationwide locations.

Next it was back to Colorado in the role of executive vice president and group manager for Sovos Brands, from where he was recruited by Laird.

Vieth holds a Bachelor of Science degree in finance from Miami University and an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.



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