

Idaho Innovators

Making water work harder

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

BOISE — Mike Crist has spent some 30 years helping people understand innovative, technical products so they can put them to use.

Water has been his focus in

recent years.

“People are paying more attention to water, finally,” said Crist, owner and CEO of AgriMaxx. “They are getting more serious about their water consumption, and conservation.”

The nearly four-year-old

company sells a system that he says optimizes water at the molecular level.

“Every industry I’ve worked in, it’s trying to help people,” he said. “It’s not selling something they don’t need. It’s selling something everybody can benefit from.”

Crist learned of the approach while working in the wastewater treatment industry about seven years ago. The idea that treating water electronically could make it more efficient — “wetter,” in a sense — was both exciting and hard to believe.

“I heard all the things that can be done,” he said. “I knew why farmers would be skeptical. I was, too. I gave it a shot.”

The patent holder granted him the right to sell the technology. Crist started AgriMaxx in late 2017, early on helping a Portland-area farmer increase his corn yield.



Brad Carlson/Capital Press

AgriMaxx owner and CEO Mike Crist at a Boise golf course pond made clearer with help from one of the company’s systems.

“I had my ‘aha’ moment,” he said.

The unit, called Energy System Plus, is an electronic device that works to “loosen” the ionic bond in water molecules as they pass through a controlled electrostatic field.

Crist guarantees a 20% increase in yield and a 20% decrease in fertilizer and water usage.

“By making a ‘wetter’ water, the result is that the plant can uptake the water much easier and therefore doesn’t need as much fertilizer,” he said. “The plant isn’t working as hard.”

Crist has been book-

ing new customers in various industries, and working with established customers to install units in additional locations.

Farms, nurseries, golf courses and power and food processing plants are among the well-suited sites, he said.

The system also can be used on water that cattle consume, and even to optimize snowmaking and concrete curing.

Nurseries are the hottest market now, as operators seek to grow stronger, healthier plants and trees, Crist said.

Golf courses present a big opportunity as crews look to

MIKE CRIST

Age: 54
Title: Owner and CEO, AgriMaxx

Hometown: Portland. Lives in Meridian, Idaho

Family: Adult daughter

Education: Studied business at Arizona State University

Career focus: Marketing, installing technically innovative systems

grow healthier grass with less water and fertilizer, he said.

And in ponds and lakes, blue-green algae control “will be huge,” he said.

The system is priced in the low-\$20,000s. He said it can pay for itself in most applications in six months, depending on how much is saved on other equipment or inputs, or how much yield increases. He forecasts 2022 sales of \$2.5 million compared to \$1 million combined during the past 3.5 years.

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