Jorge Aguilar: "The Phylgreen Chair is a training and information tool that helps us get closer to the farmer"

By Milagros Jurado

Tradecorp is a company of Spanish origin that in recent years has been steadily in the field of biostimulants and micronutrients, with a presence in more than 70 countries. The keys to its spectacular growth and international expansion in recent years are, among others, its strategic commitment to innovation, which aims to respond to the increasingly growing demand for sustainable and environmentally friendly products, and for the transfer of knowledge and the results of their studies to the farmer. This is how the Phylgreen Chair was born, an initiative with which it intends to disclose to the producer the results of its laboratory research, fostering this commitment and its proximity to the agricultural sector. From this and many other concerns, we spoke with the Marketing Director of Tradecorp Phytonutrients, Jorge Aguilar.

e-Comercio Agrario: what distinguishes Tradecorp phytonutrients with respect to other

companies in its market segment? What is your mission and business vision?

Jorge Aguilar: if there is something that distinguishes us, it is our commitment, which translates into greater proximity to our distributors and especially to farmers. A commitment of which, logically, we participate who are part of Tradecorp, a company that invoices, between phytosanitary and nutritional products, around 47 million euros. Taking into account that our turnover in the year 2000 was two million euros, this figure shows the great evolution that has been experiencing this company to this day. Growth and progress that would not have been possible without this firm conviction of the Tradecorp team in this business project.

Another aspect that is part of our vision as a company and that is very marked by the executive management of Tradecorp is the commitment to innovation. A strategic line that has its origin in the nonconformist nature of this company, which leads it to be continuously innovating to improve its product portfolio. We think that things can be done much better and that, aligned with our commitment to the sector, helps us to achieve new achievements in innovation and to differentiate ourselves in the market.

To all this must be added as a value the integration in our catalógo phytosanitary and nutritional products. *This makes us the most complete product offering in the sector, in terms of nutrition, biostimulation and crop protection. Based on all of this, our vision as a company is to consolidate ourselves as one of the main groups, in terms of sales, in our scope of action. And our mission, to become the reference company of distributors and customers, preferred by them when it comes to solving their needs and demands*.

ECA: within your future strategy, are biostimulants based on algae outlined as one of your main bets? If so, what are the main reasons?

J.A.: seaweed extracts are magnificent for use as biostimulants in agriculture, thanks to their active principles that help crops to withstand situations of environmental stress (drought, high temperatures, etc.). That is the reason why Tradecorp is committed to this product, especially considering that the current climate change situation is contributing to environmental stress becoming more common. Faced with this panorama, the algae is revealed as a fantastic tool to mitigate the damages derived from this stress and constitute one of our future bets. We must not lose sight of the fact that although the crops have their own mechanisms (enzymatic and non-enzymatic) to defend against this stress, there comes a time when, if this is too high, the plant can not fight it by its own means. It is from this point that the productive and qualitative potential of the crop will diminish, and that is where we enter, helping with our products to prevent and mitigate all the damages caused by stress.

> "It should be noted that our range of biostimulants formulated with algae extracts is controlled by us from the collection of raw material to the application of the final product in

crops, through our distributors"

ECA: your commitment to sustainable production methods and respectful of the environment has materialized in your ecological formulation of pure seaweed extract, Phylgreen, which combines tradition with cutting-edge technology and offers the farmer an effective solution to mitigate the effects of climate change on their crops ... what was the genesis of this initiative?

J.A.: There are several reasons. The first is that there is a target audience made up of field technicians, prescribers and farmers, who are increasingly aware of the current situation of climate change and who, therefore, demand solutions to alleviate the productive decline derived from the increasingly frequent environmental stress This, added to our vocation to innovate and to offer, in response to an increasing environmental concern, sustainable proposals that provide an effective solution, takes us a few years ago to look for business areas different from those we had and that from the point of of agronomic view were optimal to deal with the problem of environmental stress. And then in 2014, when the purchase of the Irish company Oilean Glas Teo (OGT) was made, Tradecorp became a manufacturer in the field of biostimulants.

ECA: in that line of new business niche What objectives do you propose with the commercialization of the new range of Phylgreen products?

J.A: Our biostimulant based on seaweed extract Phylgreen has a great presence and impact in the Mediterranean basin (Almeria, Murcia, Valle del Ebro) and in crops such as citrus, horticulture, olive ... our short-term business goal is to consolidate, in terms of sales, in these areas where we are already present and we have great brand recognition. On the other hand, in areas where we do not have the presence that we would like, such as the areas of wine and cereal crops, this task of penetrating those markets is still pending and that their farmers know the benefits of biostimulants and specifically of the algae.

ECA: Phylgreen has been tested in crops such as melon, strawberry, grape, orange, cucumber, tomato, and olive trees that have been subjected to water stress conditions to reproduce drought situations ... can these field tests be extended to others crops?

J.A.: Yes, you have to bear in mind that, although of Spanish origin, Tradecorp is a company present in more than 70 countries, each of them with its particular agro-climatic reality. In the different chairs that we have carried out in strategic areas of the Spanish geography, we have tried to expose the results of Phylgreen on the most characteristic crops of each zone, particularly in Mediterranean crops. Apart from these, we have obtained with our seaweed bioestimulant excellent results in crops such as cereals, tropical, lettuce, and all kinds of horticultural and fruit trees. *Due to its characteristics, this product will always adapt to a common problem of all crops: stress, which can be suffered by any crop, regardless of its geographical location.*

"The versatility and effectiveness of Phylgreen no longer differs from the agroclimatic zone"

ECA: What are your objectives in the short and medium term?

J.A .: Like any company, we share the common objective of obtaining economic results but, above all, our main objective, and that is why we develop initiatives such as the Phylgreen Chair, is to transfer knowledge. *That is, to give the farmer and producer what we know about algae extracts in general and about Phylgreen, in particular, so that they have all the tools and can decide what is best for them at all times*. We are a biostimulation company, not just algae. What does this mean ?, because we have positioned the algae for a very specific use, which is what we believe we will make the most of this raw material. We also handle other types of biostimulants and our objective is always to give the farmer a recommendation of what is their best application. *In this sense, our goal is to be leaders and reference in Spain, in terms of transfer of knowledge about biostimulation and micronutrition*.

ECA: apart from environmental factors such as those mentioned above, what other issues are conditioning the orientation of your research and innovation projects applied to the agricultural sector?

J.A.: What is marking our research and the development of new products are the people, what the consumer and the farmer are demanding. This translates into the search for products with low residues, that are environmentally and socially sustainable, that provide a nutritional value, with greater flavor, that help to improve the shelf life ... All those concerns that have, both the final consumer of the product agricultural, as the end user of our products, are those that are marking the lines of research and innovation in our company.

ECA: What does the Phylgreen Chair involve for the farmer?

J.A.: From the point of view of micronutrition and biostimulation, it is the most important event that Tradecorp has. It is a perfect link between technician, farmer and prescriber. *What we intend is to be your reference in terms of knowledge in these areas. We hope that, when they have a question, a problem, or seek a solution related to environmental stress and micronutrition, come to us. And for that there is no better way than to provide them with all our experience and knowledge*. We want to bring the research we are doing at the molecular level to the field, and transmit all the data that we obtain in the laboratory, translated into field data. At the same time, we intend that, through our training, you can interpret the data of the labels of the different products so that you can choose the best option. Our Chair is a training and information tool, which has to serve us to be much closer to the farmer.