

APPENDIX: FARMERS HARMED BY AGRIBIOTECH

At The Time Of The Bankruptcy Many Farmers Spoke Out About The Harm AgriBioTech's Actions Had On Their Farms And Their Livelihoods

Don Wirth

2000: Don Wirth, An Oregon Farmer, Was Concerned He Was Not Going To Be Paid For The Seeds He Grew For Agribiotech After Agribiotech Filed For Bankruptcy. The Albany Democrat-Herald reported, "Farmers typically bill the company after shipment and are paid 30 to 60 days later. But considering AgriBioTech's announcement, it's unclear if farmers will be willing to ship seed to the company. 'If it looks like we won't be paid, we aren't doing business,' said Don Wirth, a Tangent farmer who depends upon AgriBioTech for 16 to 17 percent of his annual revenue. 'They'll have to come get us. I'm not going to ship something I know I'm not going to get paid for.'" [Albany Democrat-Herald, [1/25/00](#)]

- **Wirth Was Hesitant About Sending Agribiotech Seeds Saying, "If It Looks Like We Won't Be Paid, We Aren't Doing Business."** The Albany Democrat-Herald reported, "Farmers typically bill the company after shipment and are paid 30 to 60 days later. But considering AgriBioTech's announcement, it's unclear if farmers will be willing to ship seed to the company. 'If it looks like we won't be paid, we aren't doing business,' said Don Wirth, a Tangent farmer who depends upon AgriBioTech for 16 to 17 percent of his annual revenue. 'They'll have to come get us. I'm not going to ship something I know I'm not going to get paid for.'" [Albany Democrat-Herald, [1/25/00](#)]
- **Wirth: "I'm Not Going To Ship Something I Know I'm Not Going To Get Paid For."** The Albany Democrat-Herald reported, "Farmers typically bill the company after shipment and are paid 30 to 60 days later. But considering AgriBioTech's announcement, it's unclear if farmers will be willing to ship seed to the company. 'If it looks like we won't be paid, we aren't doing business,' said Don Wirth, a Tangent farmer who depends upon AgriBioTech for 16 to 17 percent of his annual revenue. 'They'll have to come get us. I'm not going to ship something I know I'm not going to get paid for.'" [Albany Democrat-Herald, [1/25/00](#)]

Agribiotech Accounted For 16 To 17 Percent Of Wirth's Annual Revenue. The Albany Democrat-Herald reported, "Farmers typically bill the company after shipment and are paid 30 to 60 days later. But considering AgriBioTech's announcement, it's unclear if farmers will be willing to ship seed to the company. 'If it looks like we won't be paid, we aren't doing business,' said Don Wirth, a Tangent farmer who depends upon AgriBioTech for 16 to 17 percent of his annual revenue. 'They'll have to come get us. I'm not going to ship something I know I'm not going to get paid for.'" [Albany Democrat-Herald, [1/25/00](#)]

Ed Sessions

2000: Ed Sessions, A Farm Equipment Dealer From Wyoming, Said He Was Set To Lose \$1.6 Million If Affected Farmers Were Not Given Aid. Casper Star-Tribune reported, "Ed Sessions, a farm equipment dealer in Powell, said his business alone stands to lose \$1.6 million if the farmers do not receive the help they need. 'The need is already here,' he said. Sessions said his company has had to cancel orders from suppliers and already has a surplus of equipment on its lot because of canceled orders." [Associated Press, [2/22/00](#)]

- **Sessions Said He Was Dealing With Cancelled Orders And Surplus Equipment Because Of The Bankruptcy.** Casper Star-Tribune reported, "Ed Sessions, a farm equipment dealer in Powell, said his business alone stands to lose \$1.6 million if the farmers do not receive the help they need. 'The need is already here,' he said. Sessions said his company has had to cancel orders from suppliers and already has a surplus of equipment on its lot because of canceled orders." [Associated Press, [2/22/00](#)]

Fred Hopkin

2000: Fred Hopkin, One Time President Of The Wyoming Alfalfa Seed Growers Association, Said That He Knew Of Farmers That Were Owed "As Much As A Quarter Of A Million Dollars All The Way Down To A Few Thousand Dollars." The Billings Gazette reported, "Fred Hopkin of Powell, past president of the Wyoming Alfalfa Seed Growers Association, called the AgriBioTech situation 'very serious for the whole economy' because growers who contracted with the company are still owed money. 'I know there are growers who are still owed as much as a quarter of a million dollars all the way down to a few thousand dollars,' Hopkin said." [Associated Press, [1/28/00](#)]

Becky Coble

2000: Becky Coble, A Montana Farmer, Said, “The Situation With ABT Has The Potential Of Turning What Could Have Been A Good Year Into Another Year Of Surviving.” The Billings Gazette reported, “The situation with ABT has the potential of turning what could have been a good year into another year of surviving,’ said Becky Coble, who is part of a family farm partnership in the Burlington area. ‘I don’t know what all the results will be. I do know I’m glad we didn’t have more acres committed to them (ABT). Some of the growers around here had hundreds of acres. I don’t know what it will do to them,’ she said.” [Associated Press, [1/28/00](#)]

- **Coble: “I Don’t Know What All The Results Will Be. I Do Know I’m Glad We Didn’t Have More Acres Committed To Them (ABT). Some Of The Growers Around Here Had Hundreds Of Acres. I Don’t Know What It Will Do To Them.”** The Billings Gazette reported, “The situation with ABT has the potential of turning what could have been a good year into another year of surviving,’ said Becky Coble, who is part of a family farm partnership in the Burlington area. ‘I don’t know what all the results will be. I do know I’m glad we didn’t have more acres committed to them (ABT). Some of the growers around here had hundreds of acres. I don’t know what it will do to them,’ she said.” [Associate Press, [1/28/00](#)]

Kevin Lewis

2000: Kevin Lewis, President Of The Wyoming Alfalfa Seed Growers Association, Estimated That Agribiotech Owed Wyoming Growers Roughly \$6 Million And Said, “It’s Going To Be A Devastating Blow To Some Of Us.” The Billings Gazette reported, “All told, AgriBioTech Inc. of Henderson, Nev., owes Wyoming growers roughly \$6 million, said Kevin Lewis of Basin, president of the Wyoming Alfalfa Seed Growers Association. The company also owes money to a smaller but still undetermined number of Montana growers. Although the company’s bankruptcy does not doom alfalfa as a crop in Wyoming, it could ruin farmers who had expected ABT to buy their alfalfa seed crops for \$1.40 a pound and may be left with virtually no income for a year’s worth of work, Lewis said. Such a loss of income will have repercussions throughout the local economy. ‘This industry is not going to go away,’ Lewis said. ‘It’s going to be a devastating blow to some of us, but the demand is there and someone will come in here to buy seed again.’” [Associated Press, [2/5/00](#)]

Rod Christensen

2000: Rod Christensen, Administrator For The Northwest Alfalfa Seed Growers Association, Called Agribiotech’s Bankruptcy “A Major Disaster For Many Growers.” The Bellingham Herald reported, “The bankruptcy of a seed company is sowing fear among many Pacific Northwest growers Some Columbia Basin growers have as much as half of their land under contract with AgriBioTech of Henderson, Nev. [...] ‘This is a major disaster for many growers’ said Rod Christensen administrator for the Northwest Alfalfa Seed Growers Association in Pasco ‘They are left hanging a mile out there.’” [Associated Press, [2/12/00](#)]

- **Christensen: “They Are Left Hanging A Mile Out There.”** The Bellingham Herald reported, “The bankruptcy of a seed company is sowing fear among many Pacific Northwest growers Some Columbia Basin growers have as much as half of their land under contract with AgriBioTech of Henderson, Nev. [...] ‘This is a major disaster for many growers’ said Rod Christensen administrator for the Northwest Alfalfa Seed Growers Association in Pasco ‘They are left hanging a mile out there.’” [Associated Press, [2/12/00](#)]
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George Pugh

2000: George Pugh, An Oregon Seed Farmer, Was Left “Stuck” With Seed That Could Not The Put On The Market After Agribiotech’s Bankruptcy. Statesman Journal reported, “Seed supplier ABT’s bankruptcy continues to cause big problems for growers. George Pugh, a grass seed farmer and chairman of the State Board of Agriculture, is among those putting ABT’s proprietary seed in storage bins and hoping the bankrupt company’s operations are quickly sold. Until a successor takes over for ABT, Pugh and numerous other ABT growers are stuck with seed that can’t be put on the

market. 'It seems like every storage shed is near capacity,' said Pugh, who farms 2,400 acres near Shedd." [Statesman Journal, [6/29/00](#)]

Dave Nelson

2001: Dave Nelson Of The Oregon Seed Council Said Seed Market Conditions Were "Very Grim" After Agribiotech's Bankruptcy. The Statesman Journal reported, "But grass seed prices have been depressed lately as well, with the industry still adjusting to the turmoil created by last year's bankruptcy of major seed supplier AgriBioTech Inc. 'It's a very grim market situation for most agricultural commodities,' said Dave Nelson of the Oregon Seed Council. For four consecutive years, perennial rye grass seed sold in the profitable 58-cents a pound range. Today the seed is going for about 42 cents a pound. That's below the cost of production, Nelson said." [Statesman Journal, [1/25/01](#)]

- **Rye Grass Seed Was Selling Below The Cost Of Production.** The Statesman Journal reported, "But grass seed prices have been depressed lately as well, with the industry still adjusting to the turmoil created by last year's bankruptcy of major seed supplier AgriBioTech Inc. 'It's a very grim market situation for most agricultural commodities,' said Dave Nelson of the Oregon Seed Council. For four consecutive years, perennial rye grass seed sold in the profitable 58-cents a pound range. Today the seed is going for about 42 cents a pound. That's below the cost of production, Nelson said." [Statesman Journal, [1/25/01](#)]

Dan Silveria

2000: Dan Silveria, An Idaho Farmer, Predicted That Farmers Affected By Agribiotech's Bankruptcy "Could Be Affected To The Tune Of About \$60,000 Each." The South Idaho Press reported, "Alfalfa seed farmers in Idaho and others had contracts with AgriBioTech to grow seed for the company. Some of those contracts were for three years, and some farmers are in the first year of those, agreements. Dan Silveria, who has been farming west of Caldwell for 20 years, said losses to growers could amount to tens of thousands of dollars each. 'Growers could be affected to the tune of about \$60,000 each,' Silveria said. 'That's an average.'" [Associated Press, [2/2/00](#)]

Shelley Wold

2000: Shelley Wold, President Of The Montana Alfalfa Seed Growers Association, Was Relieved After The Bankruptcy Judge Allowed Agribiotech To Sell Their Contracts Saying, "It Puts A Little Value On The Crop Which We Were Not Sure Had Any Value For A While There." The Billings Gazette reported, "Under an agreement approved by a majority of growers and approved by U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Linda Riegle last week, ABT will attempt to sell its contracts with the growers to another company as part of the liquidation and sale of its assets. If ABT cannot sell the contracts by July 1, then the growers themselves can sell their harvested seed. 'It puts a little value on the crop which we were not sure had any value for a while there,' said Laurel-area farmer Shelley Wold, president of the Montana Alfalfa Seed Growers Association Growers. 'It at least gives us something to go forward with.'" [Billings Gazette, [3/6/00](#)]

Scott Scheuerman

Wyoming Farmer Scott Scheuerman: "We Got Screwed And There Was Not A Freaking Thing We Could Do About It. There Was No Way To Fight Multimillionaires... We Were The Little Guy. We Were Just A Number, And They Could Care Less About Us." According to the Washington Post, "In the end, a settlement negated the need for a trial and specified that there was no admission of wrongdoing. The 'Budd entities' agreed to pay less than half of the amount initially earmarked for the farmers and other creditors — some of whom remain angry they only received a portion of their lost earnings. 'We got screwed and there was not a freaking thing we could do about it. There was no way to fight multimillionaires,' said Scott Scheuerman, a Wyoming farmer who had urged fellow growers to send their crop to the company, which had bought up dozens of processing plants. 'We were the little guy. We were just a number, and they could care less about us.' Ted Budd's untold role in the case illustrates the risk that Trump, still the most powerful figure in the GOP, has taken in impulsively backing a low-profile candidate who is loyal to him and has spoken dismissively about the Jan. 6 insurrection. By elevating Budd into a top primary contender in a key midterm race, Trump has created extraordinarily high stakes for his party." [Washington Post, [8/30/21](#)]

Wyoming Farmer Scott Scheuerman: "I Pushed Hard To Get Everybody Going On This, And Then They Pulled Out And Made Me Look Like An Idiot." According to the Washington Post, "Scheuerman, meanwhile, recalled how he urged fellow growers to sell seed to AgriBioTech. 'I pushed hard to get everybody going on this, and then they pulled out

and made me look like an idiot,' he said. He said that while a Wyoming program offset some of his losses, a series of hailstorms compounded the problems on his farm, and he filed for bankruptcy." [Washington Post, [8/30/21](#)]

Tod Stutzman

Wyoming Farmer Tod Stutzman: "We Had To Pull Resources Out Of Our Families And Companies To Pay Back" A Loan To Cover The Losses. According to the Washington Post, "Richard Budd arrived on June 10, 1999, in Powell, Wyo., to reassure alfalfa growers that the company was on solid financial ground. Speaking to farmers at the small town's Fraternal Order of Eagles lodge, Budd told them to send their seed to the company's facilities and said they would be paid, according to Tod Stutzman, a farmer who attended the meeting. Richard Budd said in a statement to The Post that he didn't remember specifics of the meeting, but said at the time the company had received a line of credit that made him feel 'optimistic about our chances.' Stutzman said he sent his seed to AgriBioTech and awaited his payment of \$135,000. [...] Stutzman said that he learned he would not receive the \$135,000 that he was owed by the company. That was a major shortfall for the fourth-generation farmer with a 2,000-acre spread near Yellowstone National Park, whose business grossed about \$1.5 million annually at the time. 'We had to pull resources out of our families and companies to pay back' a loan to cover the losses, said Stutzman, who worked with members of the Wyoming Alfalfa Seed Growers Association who were affected by the bankruptcy." [Washington Post, [8/30/21](#)]