Paulo Escobar

Bio Insumos Nativa

“ I saw an opportunity to be an international leader in the production and sale of premium organic and agricultural inputs. ”

COUNTRY	Chile
INDUSTRY	Industrials
YEAR SELECTED	2012
PARTNER	Eduardo Donoso
WEBSITE	www.bionativa.cl

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Biological solutions for improving crop productivity are taking root. Founded in 2002, Bio Insumos Nativa (Bionativa) develops, produces and sells phytosanitary (relating to plant health) products such as fungicides, bactericides, biological stimulants and insecticides to Chile's medium- and large-scale farms. The company's ecological approach to research and development is disrupting the biochemical paradigm that dominates the agriculture industry: Bionativa's biologically based products are just as effective as chemical substitutes but developed at a fraction of the cost and time. With 98% of sales going to conventional non- organic farmers, entrepreneurs Paulo Escobar and Eduardo Donoso are winning contracts based on superior products.

Paulo and Eduardo come from backgrounds of dissimilar interests, but their skills today could not be more complementary. As a child, Paulo dreamed of running his own business. Eduardo on the other hand wanted to join the ranks of Greenpeace. Friends since their time as students at Universidad de Talca, Paulo and Eduardo studied agriculture from perspectives befitting their childhood interests. While Paulo earned an MBA and built expertise in the agricultural supplies industry, Eduardo earned a PhD in ecology and evolutionary biology. After school, the two continued their parallel and yet divergent paths. Paulo worked for 14 years at COPEVAL, a supplier of agricultural inputs, eventually working his way up to management positions in sales and business development. Eduardo built up his research portfolio and taught classes in plant pathology. While doing research in plant pathology, Eduardo saw an opportunity to commercialize biopesticides and approached Paulo and fellow plant pathologist Gustavo Lobos.

In 2002, funded with personal savings and family loans, Bionativa officially launched. The entrepreneurs rented laboratory space from the university and set up an office in Gustavo's home, where they worked until April 2011, when they made a big effort to professionalize and restructure the company. Today, Paulo is the CEO, in charge of business development and strategic partnerships. Eduardo is the Director of Research & Development, setting research priorities and managing product development. Gustavo serves as a board director and lends the credibility of his name and reputation within the community. Since inception, Bionativa has focused on solving mainstream phytosanitary problems rather than those that affect only organic farmers. Demonstrating its legitimacy and competitiveness with agrochemical substitutes, in 2006 the company became the first producer of organic agricultural inputs to register a product with Servicio Agrícola Ganadero de Chile (SAG).

Biologically based products were initially seen as artisanal, but Paulo and Eduardo managed to break into the market of conventional farmers nevertheless. True innovators, they are pioneering and executing on the development of biological solutions to phytosanitary problems. T With rapid growth in the global demand for organic agricultural inputs, Bionativa is set to transform an industry and capitalize on an exciting market opportunity.