



# DONMARIO



A REGIONAL  
REALITY





# DONMARIO

A R E G I O N A L R E A L I T Y





DONMARIO

A REGIONAL REALITY

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The second volume of DONMARIO SEMILLAS, entitled *DonMario. A Regional Reality*, presents our history between 2003 and 2012, and coincides with our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The past seven years have lapsed with an idea as horizon that has become the focus of our regional present: that the growth of soybean in South America constitutes a large region in which the interaction between genotypes and the environment does not distinguish political borders, with similarities and differences within and across each of the five soybean producing countries –which together produce more than 50% of the soybean grown worldwide.

Today, our Company –which is at the same time Argentine and South American– is the largest supplier of soybean genetic traits in the region. This means both a source of pride and a commitment to continue this tradition in the future, providing South American growers with the seeds and the knowledge that will enable them to continue to increase their yields, and producing more food for a world that is increasingly needing it.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound thanks to the DonMario community that continues to collaborate with their efforts and dedication day after day, and to South American growers who trust in our varieties year after year. On a personal note, I would like to thank my wife Marcela, for her unconditional support over almost three decades in the fascinating role of leading our Company.

Agr. Sc. Eng. Gerardo Bartolomé  
President  
DONMARIO Semillas



CHAPTER ONE  
A SOUTH AMERICAN  
MULTINATIONAL COMPANY





*“When the people of DonMario look at a map today, they look at the South American map: although there are different cultures, soybean is still the same.”*

## From Chacabuco to the Region and the World

In the last decades, DonMario has gone a long and fascinating journey. By 1980, the city of Chacabuco testified the creation and growth of the venture of five young partners, full of energy and projects. Just a few years later, those who remained linked to the company dared to make a change that proved critical to their future: the switch from grain to seed production, for which DonMario is widely known throughout the Americas. Some time later, technology and hard work, added to this strategic decision, would make them leaders in Group 4 RR Soybean. Thus, during the 1990s, the Company experienced a new change –a process of professionalization that extended throughout its structure and prepared it for the big challenges that could already be anticipated in the horizon. The new millennium found the DONMARIO Group more than ready to welcome it.

Indeed, the journey is long, but the journey ahead would be even longer. Or, better said, the journeys ahead, since soon the farming landscape of Argentina would cease to be the only one ploughed by the people of DonMario, as DonMario seeds started to cross the borders of our country towards Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and beyond the Atlantic Ocean.

The Brazilian market was undoubtedly the largest challenge, but also the one to provide one of the most resounding successes to the Group. Vast in its geography and huge in the opportunities it affords, this South American giant started growing RR soybean thanks to the contribution of the previous works developed in Argentina, to which DonMario collaborated with its capital and expertise. The quality of germplasm would since then make the share of the Group in the Southern Brazilian market to grow up to more than 50% of the surface area planted with soybean in recent years. As we will see, this germplasm is the product of the joint effort of technicians and specialists in both countries, since the development stations and the field tests multiplied quickly at both sides of the border.

Like in the case of Brazilian farming, the first DonMario seeds to land in Paraguayan lands preceded the establishment of the Group in that country. However, these seeds had been originally designed for different climates. Consequently, since 2005 –the year in which DonMario decided to definitely enter this market– the search of the variety ideal for the region would obsess both development and testing teams. The focus on improved yields with a high-quality seed enabled DonMario to overcome the terrible consequences of what many in *Guaraní* lands have called the worst drought in history, while strengthening its current position as one of the main soybean growers in Paraguay.

Even before these experiences, the people of DonMario had already disembarked at the other side of the Río de la Plata. The close relationships between growers at both margins of the river meant that the investment of DonMario in *Charrúa* lands was an almost natural step in the growth of the Company. After the establishment of the Company in 2000, the partnership with Erro –a traditional company located in Dolores– allowed DonMario to start to work in the development of research and marketing strategies tailored to Uruguay, which today translate into a market share exceeding 40%.





*The people of DonMario have developed varieties for each environment and bioclimate, tailored to the demands of soybean growers.*



Some time later—but always in a bold movement—DonMario started to work in Bolivian lands. Marked by an ancient farming tradition in the imposing Andes, in the last decades, Bolivia has experienced a resurgence of its agriculture in other regions. Today, the hub of modern Bolivian agriculture is located at Santa Cruz de la Sierra, an eastern Bolivian department far away from the *Altiplano*. Many of the leaders of this change were Argentine, among others, the growers and technicians who advised local growers that wished to modernize their farms. Today, they were joined by the experts of DonMario who took the knowledge and expertise gained in the Argentine northwestern and northeastern regions to our neighboring country, and accepted the challenge of increasing their yields.

The most exotic destination for the people of DonMario may perhaps be South Africa, but the truth is that the passion for rugby is not the only link with the country. The country on the other side of the Atlantic is undergoing a deep transformation of agricultural practices, and of course, DonMario could not remain foreign to it. After being contacted by South African growers to try seeds in the land of the renowned Springboks, the people of DonMario who traveled to Africa found a scenario that is quite different from the one prevailing in our Humid Pampa or at Rio Grande do Sul; in South Africa a great part of lands are devoted to self-subsistence agriculture. Since 2005, however, DonMario seeds have outperformed the best local crops by 15%, and the African market suggests a significant potential, although in need of patient development activities, which the DM Group has already initiated.

“Today, when we look at a map in DONMARIO, we look at the South American map”, explains President Gerardo Bartolomé, while adding, “although there are many different cultures, there is one and only soybean, and therefore, we think of South America as a single and large market.” Despite the difficulties that this change entails to logistics and the sales team at the Company, the people of DonMario have rapidly adjusted to this sudden increase in the scale and magnitude of their operations, and the Group already has a 30% share in the total volume of soybean grown in the region. There is still a more demanding challenge, which Roberto Brinnand qualifies as the “big dream of Gerardo Bartolomé”: going beyond the traditional political map of the region and designing a great map of all South American growing and agroecological areas. A dream that –little by little, seed by seed– is increasingly closer to becoming true.

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### Growing in All Areas

“Gerardo has an impressive vision,” explains Ignacio Rosasco, former Product Manager for Corn, and further states, “I don’t know where he gets that.” Most remarkably, he is not the only one to highlight the word *vision* when characterizing Gerardo Bartolomé, responsible for promoting the restructuring of the Company to form work teams that manage the new ventures of DonMario. In any case, this is not the only agreement among the people of DonMario. The work climate at DonMario and the values prioritized therein are recognized both within and outside the Company. “It is like a big family,” clarifies Gerardo Bartolomé, “even though no papers are signed, there are intrinsic values that the ones with longer history in the Company demand from newer employees: cordiality, good mood, respect and willingness to work. We provide the training.”



and renowned academic, Fogante promoted direct seeding since the late 1980s, in very precarious conditions as to raw materials and specialized machinery. His goal to resolve the issue of soil erosion with sustainable exploitation criteria and crop rotation has turned him into a necessary reference of the progress of soybean growing in our country. That is why, today, in Chacabuco, DonMario's library is named after him.

The growth of the Company also made it necessary to open offices in the city of Buenos Aires –an important business center and stop in the way to the new destinations of DonMario within the region and beyond the Atlantic Ocean. Although this decision was initially resisted by long-time employees, who were more closely linked to the history of the Company with the city of Chacabuco, soon all doubts were dispelled. Today, both sites of the Company work jointly, and many of the Group members –such as Gerardo Bartolomé himself– spend their time alternatively at one and the other.

Thus, 250 square meters were acquired to house DonMario's offices in a building located at Thames Street, followed by another 200 square meters one year later, and in 2010, by a new office block located in the ground floor. Outside Argentina, testing stations and offices also multiplied. For example, in Brazil, the Company is already working at a 44-hectare plot to build research, development and marketing facilities. In our region, DonMario already has over 500 employees.

ROGELIO FOGANTE  
LIBRARY, CHACABUCO











DONMARIO - CHACABUCO



to normal. These characteristics that oftentimes are not mentioned on paper are especially appreciated by those who have worked with other companies in the past.

In 2006, the Human Resources Department started to be developed, first within the Administrative Department and then as separate unit. In this evolution, the figure of Marcelo Loustaunau was important. He first served as consultant to DonMario but – after successfully carrying out the *Corporate Mission, Vision and Value* project– he was invited to join our team in a permanent way, to later become part of the Executive Committee of the Group. The daily work that he highlighted is not only appreciated in-house. Quite on the contrary, DonMario enjoys an undeniable leadership among local and regional growers thanks to his achievements, and also –very especially– thanks to the human quality of the people who wear the T-shirt with the DM logo. As one example, every year *Chacra* magazine publishes a ranking of the companies of the sector with the best image amongst growers and farmers, with both local businesses and large multinational companies operating in our country. In 2006, DonMario already occupied the 7<sup>th</sup> position of the ranking; one year later, it was in the 6<sup>th</sup> place; and in 2009-2010, it rose to the 4<sup>th</sup> place –a position that the Company maintained in 2010 and 2011.



### ***DONMARIO Award to Excellence in Soybean Crop Management***

*Over several decades of work, the people of DonMario came to appreciate those who have strived to improve the conditions prevailing in Argentine agriculture, day after day. Some years ago, DonMario decided to formally recognize the figures that are noteworthy for their work in the development of soybean. This was the origin of the DONMARIO Award to Excellence in Soybean Crop Management. The main idea was to honor the colleagues who have worked towards the development of soybean growing, which is of fundamental relevance to Argentine agriculture. "By rewarding the hard work and the professionalism of those who receive the prize," explains Federico Rizzo, "we also set an example of how to promote these qualities among the main actors in the sector." Thus, the profile of nominees to the Award comprises people with a deep professional honesty, who are generous with knowledge (especially in its transfer to future generations), who seek excellence in their works, and who produce developments in soybean management that may translate into improved productivities. Based on the present relevance of the award, and on the commitment of DonMario towards the development of soybean, DonMario expects that the Award to Excellence in Soybean Crop Management will enjoy prime importance and high prestige in technical terms, and*

*will be equally valued by public and private agents, academics and growers. After receiving the nominations from sector representatives, the selection of the award winner falls with a panel of renowned agronomists who decide by consensus. In 2010, the winner was Rogelio Fogante, an important innovator in the use of Group 4 varieties, and pioneer of direct seeding in Argentina. In its second edition, the prize was awarded to Engineer Antonio Pascale, Professor Emeritus of the School of Agricultural Sciences, University of Buenos Aires, who has been researching into the potential of soybean since 1957. Upon receiving the small silver plant from Gerardo Bartolomé, the humility of Engineer Pascale led him to clarify that the merits of his work should be shared with all the members of the Chair that he presided for many years. It was in the experimental field of the School of Agricultural Sciences where the first five cultivars "of varieties whose names would be unknown to present growers, due to the deep changes that the crop has experienced since then," were produced, as Pascale explained. To a large extent, these changes were the result of his research. Ultimately, with his thorough studies, he refuted the idea –still very strong in 1969– that our country was not apt for a crop that is currently grown throughout the country.*



### *The Biotechnology Laboratory*

*The growing market demand for increasingly more productive materials, free of diseases, leads to a continuous search of new resistance sources, which –through genetic improvement– must be incorporated into the varieties introduced in the market year after year.*

*Among many others, this involves the work of many people and large amounts of plots for field research. Since the 1980s, when molecular testing methodologies were introduced (more specifically, the so-called Molecular Markers), many issues that were quite difficult to resolve in the field started to be facilitated with the aid of DNA testing. To be clear, today it is possible to “mark” the genes that convey resistance to a given disease and trace them at the laboratory with molecular markers.*

*The main advantage of this is, undoubtedly, the large amounts of samples that can be tested each day, at a significantly lower cost than maintaining a large number of plots for field tests, or of complex plant disease tests.*

*The laboratory is just another tool in support of DonMario’s seed improvement programs, and the information provided by molecular markers is used by breeders –together with other multiple phenotype information of the different varieties, such as yield, type of cycle, agricultural traits, and the quality of seed– to assist them in the selection of the best varieties.*

*The main role of our Laboratory and its staff is to*

*provide biotechnology solutions to the specific issues raised by DonMario’s breeders. In this way, DonMario is extending the range of features tested for each variety, which necessarily translates into increased efficiency of improvement programs and of the Company as a whole, in order to be better suited to provide better seeds to its customers year after year.*

*The main activity of our Laboratory is Molecular Marker-Assisted Seed Selection (MMASS) targeted at several of the most damaging diseases affecting soybean and wheat. To perform MMASS, it is necessary to have one or more molecular markers associated with the resistance genes, to be able to “mark” the presence or absence of a given gene at a certain variety.*

*Inside the Laboratory, each sample is tested to determine the presence or absence of the molecular markers that, based on their associations, enable our technicians to determine the presence of the resistance gene. Lastly, the data collected through these molecular tests are converted into discrete data (R: resistant or S: susceptible) and are reported to breeders, so that they may select the varieties that would advance to the following selection cycle or not.*

*Agr. Sc. Eng. Ezequiel Pozzo  
Research Manager, Latamsur*

*Dr. Gaspar Malone  
Head of the Laboratory of Molecular Markers*



MARCOS QUIROGA

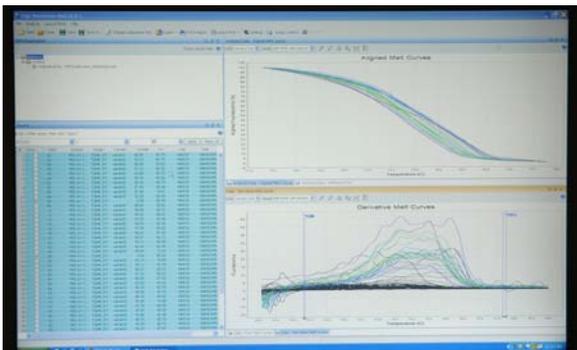
Despite the qualitative leap that the adoption of these technologies meant in the development of DonMario seeds, Marcos Quiroga highlights that “these are extremely useful tools, but they do not explain the significant changes experienced by the Group’s seed improvement program *per se*.” The key to the rapid growth of this program was, rather, its regionalization. Indeed, field development provided a considerable volume of information that was very useful to identify the issues in each of the areas. The presence of DonMario in all countries and bioclimates of the region has exposed the Company to varying situations and has forced it to develop better and more rapid responses to crop diseases. It is this diversity what has made DonMario’s development program so versatile, to such an extent that, as Quiroga explains: “the diseases that we fight today are those generally associated with soybean, in any area of the world, and no longer those proper of a certain region or a specific set of conditions.” As an example, we may mention the case of the “frogeye leaf spot”, which in Argentina was rapidly fought and eradicated thanks to the work that had been previously done in Brazil to combat this disease.

After a campaign in which the “frogeye leaf spot” disease had caused yield losses of up to 40% in different regions of our country, DonMario successfully launched a portfolio that is 70% composed of soybean varieties resistant to this disease. The star product in this portfolio was the new DM 3810 variety, which –further to the above mentioned resistance– outperformed DM 3700 (which had set an extremely high benchmark for competitors and was very popular in the country, with over 4 million hectares planted) by 10%. Among mid groups, an outstanding variety is DM 5.9i, which is also resistant to this disease and has a high yield potential. Gerardo Bartolomé summarizes the above in a single sentence: “This proves that –by combining conventional genetic improvement, plant disease science, molecular marker-assisted seed selection and the regionalization of research activities– it is possible to exceed the historical genetic gain rate and, at the same time, to react promptly to major plant diseases.”



The regionalization of DonMario’s research and development activities is today a reality. With 82 research centers in South America and 17 in the United States, plus those that are being opened in Africa and those used in Puerto Rico off-season, the improvement program introduced more than three decades ago in Chacabuco is able to cope with all soil, weed, disease or pest issues that may jeopardize its seeds. In any

case, Chacabuco continues to occupy a relevant position within the Group, since it has become a “mega-station” centralizing many of the activities that are carried out in the region. Also, as the program grew, it was necessary to assign some of the tasks to each of the local research teams in the countries where



APPLICATION OF IT TO GENETIC RESEARCH



*“It is possible to exceed the historical genetic gain rate and, at the same time, to react promptly to major plant diseases,” claims Gerardo Bartolomé*

DonMario operates, even where it only operates off-season, which was key to shorten variety testing times (from 12-14 years until market introduction in the past, to 5-7 years in our days). Overall, more than 80 people work in the breeding program, i.e., the breeding and testing of varieties –as many as possible: “We have to generate a lot of germplasm, a lot of varieties, a lot of genetic material –says an enthusiastic Marcos Quiroga– we must make sure that germplasm flows, to obtain the results from different areas.” After this testing, and despite the technology that has been incorporated into the process over the years, “we have to go to the field and see the plant.” This remains unchanged.

The Company seeks to continue to work in the extension of its improvement program –currently the largest in Argentina and one of the most important in South America. More than 5,000 crossings are created there every year, from which 250,000 experimental lines are derived, which are later selected to be incorporated into market varieties. Top-notch software and statistical packages are crucial to handle the volume of information and to obtain the data that will allow DonMario experts to provide, season after season, seeds increasingly tailored to growers’ needs and that offer yields enough to meet the growing world demand for food of our days.

BOXES CONTAINING  
VARIETIES IN  
ENVELOPES READY  
FOR DISPATCH







C H A P T E R   T W O  
A R G E N T I N A





*The growth of DonMario in the Argentine agricultural market is evidenced by the figures of the Company, but is quite especially experienced every day in the trust that growers place in each new variety produced by DonMario*

## A Story Told in Figures

“In the last five years, we have grown at an annual rate of 200%”, states Obdulio San Martín, one of the main actors of this growth that –since 2003 to our days– the seed-breeding company of Chacabuco has experienced. These giant steps forward are evidenced not only in the overall outcomes recorded in the financial statements of the Company, but also –and most importantly– in the everyday experiences of each of the members of DonMario, who face new challenges and have new reasons to feel proud.

The general structure of the Company has been largely retained: if we divided it in three large areas, we could say that the *Research* department is engaged in the creation and testing of seed varieties, the *Production* department is in charge of multiplying these varieties and, lastly, *Marketing* is devoted to fostering the relations with growers and to make these seeds available to them. The first of these stages has been covered elsewhere; an overview of the other two areas will clarify the scope of the changes undergone at DonMario, and how they were experienced in the Company.

### Production

Two concepts act as focus and guide for the entire department: Variety Purity and Germinating Power. As Fernán Díaz Saubidet, who followed the path started by Juan Pablo Arabetti, explains, this means planting high-quality seeds in order to obtain the largest amount of kilograms per hectare. However, as simple as this may seem, putting it in practice is not that simple. A first challenge faced by the people of DonMario is that of an ever-increasing production. Thus, the increase in the surface area covered by the Production Department (15,000 hectares in 2003 vs. more than 33,000 hectares in 2011) is a consequence both of the expansion of the research program and of the increase in the number of bags sold to growers. DonMario’s development and expansion meant not only producing a larger number of seeds per year, but also a larger number of varieties.



ABDULIO SAN MARTÍN

The relationship between *Research* and *Production* can also be measured in figures. Faced with the thousand hectares used by DM Production, Research & Development presently employs the record number of 600 hectares entirely devoted to their activities. Thus, the *Research* Department works with pre-market varieties and tests them on the field, in micro-parcels, so that the surface initially used for each variety is small, and is increased as the different quality assessments are passed. Later, the selected varieties advance to the production stage, and are planted in larger surfaces. The final decision with respect to these varieties falls necessarily with the breeder. Each year, approximately 400,000 are assessed, out of which approximately 5 are ultimately introduced into the marketplace. The entire process takes around 7 years for each variety, and requires a work infrastructure as the one that DonMario has fostered throughout its history.

In any case, in recent years, changes have also been noticeable in this process: while in the past, at any given time we worked with 20 pre-market and 7 market tests, today that figure is closer to 60 pre-market and 20 market varieties. In the opinion of the people of DonMario, this change is directly linked to the increased work complexity, which demands a kind of work that, to a certain extent, could be defined as “handicraft”, which –to the traditional concepts and techniques of agricultural management– now adds issues related to product registry, traceability and preserved identity. These issues are increasingly more important to DonMario, and have resulted in a profound change in the work methods, especially within the *Production* Department. The area worked to adapt to new requirements associated with the increased scale, while preserving their initial values; to certain extent, these values moved the Department forward as they worked incessantly with the energy, dedication and passion that characterizes the people of DonMario.



## Marketing

In order to strengthen the seed production cycle, DonMario has focused on the training of all staff involved, as well as on the promotion of loyalty among the contractors, carriers and growers that work with DonMario, which results in a greater commitment of all

of them, and a more solid team work. The recognition of the high quality of DonMario seeds is not only enhanced by complex research and development programs, but also rests with small details, such as the cleanliness guarantee of all seed-transporting trucks that ensures variety purity, and prevents the accidental mix of different varieties from adversely affecting the production of growers, even if minimally. Things like this –which characterize the attention to detail of the people of DonMario– are features that identify the Company among growers thanks to its strictest adherence to their work methods.

Production efficiency and sustainability are also maintained through the adoption of knowledge management services that incorporate new software into the daily work of the technicians of the *Production* Department. These new technologies were applied to the improvement of production and the effective control of the process as a whole, such as crop monitors, planting mappers, and spraying mappers. In order to deal with these changes, the Department has 13 employees for field works, plus the staff devoted to administrative tasks. The area is also growing as a consequence of the regionalization policy promoted by Gerardo Bartolomé, aimed at obtaining specific developments for each territory and climate in our country. In this respect, basic seed production modules have already been opened in the provinces of Salta, Tucumán and Córdoba.

Like for the rest of the members of the Board, for Obdulio San Martín, 2009 was a year with quite a great emotional value. In that year, the partners in DonMario decided to allocate a large number of their shares of stock to compensate those people who had trusted and who continued to trust in the Company. Thus, Obdulio switched from Marketing Manager to Marketing Director, and holder of a small share in the company in which he had trusted and to which he had contributed. Such a generous decision strengthened the commitment of all the newly-appointed Directors towards DonMario, and with renewed energies they led the prospects of the Group.

The Marketing Department headed by Obdulio San Martín is currently formed by 60 people. To work more orderly, the area is divided into the following sectors: Sales is headed by Joaquín Bosco; Development, by Federico Rizzo; Marketing reports to Ricardo Pettinaroli; and Strategic Accounts is headed by Diego Marull. Sales Agents also form part of this structure, and work throughout our country. Ultimately, this department –which is key, since it is the main link between DonMario and the growers and their needs– has done anything but growing in recent years.

The above mentioned work teams are at the same time the consequence and the best example of the scope of the growth experienced in the Department. As Obdulio San Martín puts it: “The exponential growth of the Company forced us to break with the work logics according to which each of us made a

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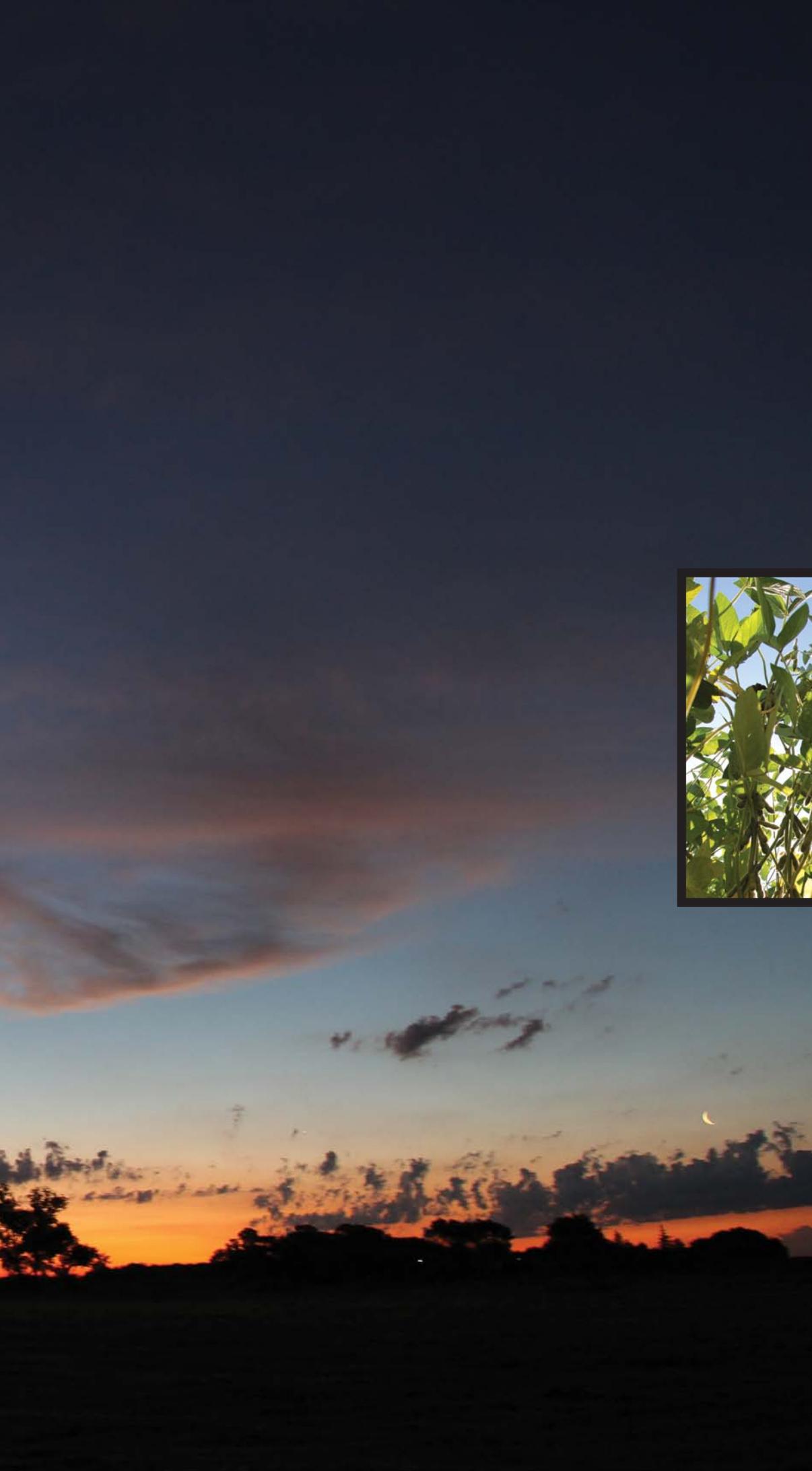
*The growth in Argentina was very valuable because Argentina is a highly competitive market that requires ongoing innovation*

Manuel Mihura

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*In recent years, the direct and open relationship between DonMario and growers has enabled the Company to give a prompt response to the concerns and demands of a first-class market as the Argentine market*

## The Relationship with Growers

One of the most important bases of DonMario's success is the closeness to and support that the Company earned from the growers using its seeds. Of course, this is earned through the daily work characterized by the professionalism and attention to the need of growers, but also thanks to the moments that the Group specifically devotes to listening and talking to the growers. Thus, the fairs, meetings and conferences attended or organized by DonMario are an important tool to foster a close relationship with its clients and partners. Also, in the last years, the significant role of mass media has been incorporated in the mix.

Often times the recommendations, observations and even the criticism received during Field Days have become best practices in the products offered by the Group. That is the reason why DonMario is always aiming at multiplying the dialogue opportunities that also enable the Company to inform growers of the latest news in terms of research and development.

The largest event started by DonMario is, perhaps, the meeting that the Company organizes every year in Pergamino, which in 2011 moved to the historical city of Chacabuco. More than 2,000 people are invited to these sessions, where the latest knowledge and information on soybean growing are shared. This meeting is also useful to put a face to the relationship existing between the Company and its clients by offering them the advice and the recommendations of DonMario's experts, plus a space to share their own experiences and concerns. The last session held in Chacabuco deserves a special comment.

*Tranqueras Adentro* is another type of meeting organized every year. This name designates the exhibit carried out by DonMario for its largest clients. It consists of a tour through the seed plot, the facilities and the fields, with an explanation and a first-hand exhibit of the work at DonMario. These tours are held throughout February and have become a classic within the Argentine agricultural sector.

The mega-exhibit *Expoagro* and *DONMARIOMÁS* Field Tours are other examples of the permanent search of dialogue with growers.



### **14<sup>th</sup> Soybean Production Refresher Technical Sessions**

*The previous sessions had been held in Pergamino, but –with more than 2,000 participants confirmed for the 2011 session– the city was too small for the guests of DonMario. The solution, however, could not have been simpler: moving the sessions back to the place where the Company had been born. And Chacabuco did not disappoint us. A week before, the 38<sup>th</sup> Argentine Corn Fair had been held, with the visit of the Argentine President and the Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, who headed the celebrations of the 146<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city. The inhabitants of Chacabuco, however, had to wait at least a few more days until their city returned to normal.*

*Due to the fog in the roads, growers arrived little by little with their trucks, from all cities of our country.*

*Even the city of Buenos Aires sent vans full of journalists, cameras and recorders to cover this annual event that is already recognized by specialized media as especially relevant to the Argentine agriculture. Many visitors from abroad were also present. The Municipality offered different sites throughout the city (parks and entire roads) so that the participants could park their vehicles. The venue of the sessions was the Municipal Sports Center of the City of Chacabuco, where physicians of the local hospital were preventatively assigned, together with members of the city Fire Brigade. The stadium lent by the city government is large, but soon even the uppermost places were full, and the audience followed the presentations through 4 large displays with graphics, charts and brief summaries of technical presentations.*

## Expoagro

In 2011, and during the last 4 years, DonMario was the official seed provider of *Expoagro* –the largest open-field farming fair in Argentina and one of the largest in the world. This fair used to be separated into two different events: *Feriagro* and *Expochacra*, respectively organized by the newspapers Clarín (since 2003) and La Nación (since 1992). The combination of the two fairs led to this mega-event with over 200,000 participants already in 2007. The special space reserved for DonMario since then translated in 2011 into a large stand with several plots planted with the most diverse seed varieties offered by DonMario in the marketplace or under development. Thus, the different wheat varieties acted as hedge for the space occupied by the people of DonMario, while soybean was planted in small green beds placed in the halls of the booth, ready to be examined by the hundreds of visitors who were interested in becoming aware of the latest developments of the Company, or who just wanted to say hello to their old friends.

Among the 60 hectares devoted to pedestrian streets and the plots occupied by each exhibitor, the 40 hectares for visitor parking and the 500 hectares for dynamic demonstrations of the planting and harvesting of summer crops, DonMario's booth looked like a garden. In just a few hectares, the company from Chacabuco was able to present the most important developments in its germplasms. Amazingly, many years of work, the selection among thousands of different varieties, genetic improvement and treatment at origin were able to fit in just a small seed.

The differences among each soybean variety were evident, and the growers who visited the fair from every corner in our country and from neighboring countries were able to appreciate the differences



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*The constant search of innovation, together with the work that characterizes each of the members of DonMario, create trust in the Company that has extended beyond initial borders and towards new destinations.*

## Rising to New Challenges

The success of DonMario in recent years may be traced back to the ability of the Company to adapt itself to new scenarios and projects. However, the degree of this success also implied changes within the Company. The rapid growth that in the last years took DonMario from Chacabuco and Argentina to the region and farther beyond the Atlantic Ocean demanded the transformation of the work methodology and structure of DonMario.

Following the ideas and the values that had inspired the founders of the Company, the Group once again trusted in the people that had supported DonMario since the early days. Alejandro Bartolomé, who had participated in the establishment of the Company, returned in the mid 2010s to join our work team with full-time dedication and to contribute his expertise to the team led by his brother Gerardo. His activities support a series of new spaces that are critical to the Group, but parallel to the usual activities of the Company. As he explains, "I collaborate with the matters that would otherwise distract DonMario from its main activities and goals."

The new organizational structure of DonMario continues to work with the same bases that supported the development of the Company. As seen in the first chapter, the core of the business activity of



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the Company is formed by the initiatives associated with the production of soybean seeds, which undoubtedly are the star product of the Group. At the same time, DonMario continues to work in the development of wheat seeds and new corn hybrid varieties. This does not mean that the Company has missed a series of new opportunities found along the way, such as Kumagro and the maximization of DonMario SGR.

## Kumagro



If there is one word to characterize the philosophy underlying this new business, that word is “trust”. As long as the world’s demand for high-quality natural products and certification continues to grow, DonMario—through Kumagro—will be ready to offer a line of grains with the highest quality as guaranteed through a wholly-certified process. Within the DonMario Group, Kumagro has specialized in the so-called Special Crops that are currently in high demand due to the characteristics that are so dearly appreciated in the market. Kumagro works to meet the specific demands of each of its clients through the development of premium grains that are largely destined to human use. What is the business goal? To obtain grains with higher protein contents, a larger size and a greater consistency, and a lower content of linoleic acid, among others. Kumagro can also produce grains according to the demand.

Kumagro poses a new challenge to DonMario but is supported by the same passion, professionalism and honesty that have characterized the Company since its very establishment. The special grains produced and exported by the Company today are sold for high-quality human food and animal fodder, and their quality is ensured through a strict and comprehensive quality assurance system that ensures the full satisfaction of clients’ needs. These products have already met the requirements of several protocols and have been approved by the International Agricultural Organization and similar authorities in Argentina, the United States, the European Union, Japan, France and others. Furthermore, they have been approved and supported by several international organizations specialized in organic food and non-GMO crops.

The trust that Kumagro has received from consumers from around the world enables the Company to target the worldwide market, literally. To date, Kumagro is exporting its products to Canada, the United States, Mexico, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Germany, France, and Japan, but the opportunities to gain new markets are certainly broad and this list will surely include other destinations.

The challenge to produce this type of grains was signaled by a change in the mindset and the work methodology at DonMario, on the ground that the work with Kumagro seeds is quite different from those traditionally employed with the Company, and subject to more stringent protocols to monitor the compliance with the requirements of the relevant certifications. Based in Carmen de Areco, Province of Buenos Aires, at the heart of the most productive area of the Humid Pampa, Kumagro works in fields prepared for this purpose, with strict limitations and detached from other fields where other practices are followed so as to avoid farm pollution. These fields are subject to highly intensive and thorough works that privilege quality over quantity, with more stringent controls aimed at achieving an optimal product to meet market demands.

Today, Kumagro’s research program focus on soybean varieties for the manufacturing of tofu, soybean milk and soybean sprouts. The potential for growth of the Company is very high, largely thanks to the





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