



We create chemistry

To Whom It May Concern:

At BASF, we create chemistry for a sustainable future. To provide balance to farmers, society and the environment as the agricultural industry works to feed and clothe the world, we must effectively manage the present and anticipate the future. One way we accomplish this is to invest in community outreach and STEM education through our partnership with iCEV to offer the Plant Science Certification.

BASF is a leader in the crop protection industry of agriculture, and the competencies of our employees in fields like plant science contribute to our success and innovations. In our seeds and traits solutions business, we use both traditional breeding and plant biotechnology to provide farmers with solutions to maximize yields and quality. We also have a broad portfolio of fungicides, insecticides, herbicides, seed treatments and pest control products. In addition, we provide biological crop protection products and solutions for improving plant health as well as nutrient management in the soil. The depth of knowledge our scientists possess make BASF abundantly qualified to serve as the certifying body for the Plant Science Certification.

We believe that individuals with a passion and knowledge in plant growth and development, gene inheritance and variation, crop production, pest management, the water cycle, and plant nutrition can enter the agricultural job market, bringing value to their employer and playing a role in securing the global food supply for our ever-growing population. An individual who has earned the Plant Science Certification demonstrates an interest and readiness to enter the agricultural industry with its many opportunities.

A career in the plant science field is rewarding both personally and professionally, and students achieving the Plant Science Certification are equipped to begin a career dedicated to sustainable and innovative solutions for farmers, agriculture and society!

Sincerely,

Linda Trolinder, Ph.D

Senior Vice President

Research and Development for Field Crops Seeds & Traits

Hashtag

#PlantScienceCertificate

Instagram

@basf_agproducts

Twitter

@BASFagro

Facebook & LinkedIn

BASF Agricultural Solutions



JIMMY PARNELL
PRESIDENT

December 15, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

My name is Blake Thaxton, and I serve as the Bee and Honey and Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Division Director for the Alabama Farmers Federation (AFF). AFF is Alabama's largest farm organization comprised of and representing agricultural and associate members in all 67 Alabama counties. We strive to protect and improve the ability of farmers engaged in production agriculture to provide a reliable supply of food through responsible stewardship of Alabama's resources.

Agriculture is a significant part of Alabama's economy and livelihood; crop production being one of the main drivers of the state's agricultural operations. Alabama's largest row crop in production is cotton, which ranks 9th in the nation's production overall. Whether farmers are growing crops for food, fiber, or fuel, understanding plant science is essential for many reasons. In addition to crop production, greenhouse and nursery production is a fast-growing agricultural sector within the state. A key part of AFF's Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Division is to help farmers address everyday challenges like pest management, for example.

The diversity within Alabama's plant science industry makes it difficult to find training programs that comprise or even touch on the range of subjects that fall under this agricultural sector. However, after reviewing the BASF Plant Science Certification, I can say I am impressed with how well the industry standards assess every need within the plant science industry. Individuals who earn this certification are skilled and prepared to begin entry-level occupations, narrowing the skills gap and strengthening the state's economy.

I encourage the state of Alabama to recognize the importance of preparing and educating students with the BASF Plant Science Certification and look forward to our future workforce earning this certification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blake Thaxton".

Blake Thaxton
Bee and Honey and Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Division Director
Alabama Farmers Federation



To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

The Arizona Farm Bureau is Arizona's largest farm and ranch organization with membership that represents production agriculture throughout the state of Arizona. We are "The Voice of Agriculture" in Arizona. Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental grassroots organization that analyzes problems and formulates action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement and thereby to promote the national well-being. As our industry continues to face new and ongoing challenges, Farm Bureau will be there to help face those challenges. One of those challenges: the availability of skilled labor.

Individuals who earn the BASF Plant Science Certification have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of plant, natural and environmental science fields. Our industry requires employees that have an understanding and knowledge in each of these categories.

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. Arizona's agricultural community represents \$23.3 billion of Arizona's economy. It is vital that we keep the pipeline of skilled workers open so that agriculture can continue to thrive in Arizona.

An individual who has earned the BASF Plant Science Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company, has proven they are more qualified for employment in the plant science industry than an applicant without the certification. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to employers as it shows a basis of knowledge and skills that the individual will bring onto the job from day 1.

We look forward to seeing this Certification making the approved list so that teachers and students can take advantage of the knowledge and skills that it provides.

Sincerely,

Katie Aikins
Director of Education
Arizona Farm Bureau

June 4th, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. Currently, I am an Associate Professor in the School of Plant Sciences at the University of Arizona. My lab specializes in identification of potential crop pathogens using genomic sequencing technologies as well as understanding how phytopathogens adapt and exploit different crop species.

Individuals who earn this certification have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of plant, natural and environmental science fields. It is particularly important that students have a well-rounded training across disciplines that span plant physiology to soil science. This program provides students with an opportunity to explore a variety of fields within the umbrella of plant sciences.

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. Arizona is a leader in controlled environment agriculture and in arid land agriculture, and there are currently numerous employment opportunities available for well trained students across multiple relevant areas.

This certification is what the plant science industry needs to fuel the 21st century agricultural workforce.

An individual who has earned the BASF Plant Science Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company, has proven they highly qualified for employment in the plant science industry. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to researchers and educators like me because it provides students a broad platform of foundational knowledge that can prepare students for a variety of future learning opportunities.

Sincerely,



David A. Baltrus
Associate Professor
Plant Sciences



December 9, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

As Indiana's largest general farm organization, we represent the agriculture industry throughout the state of Indiana. Our mission is to promote agriculture through public education, member engagement and by advocating for agricultural and rural needs. Indiana Farm Bureau is an independent voluntary organization representing members and uniting them for the purpose of analyzing problems and formulating action.

Students who earn this certification have demonstrated mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in the agricultural industry. These concepts include the ability to understand the processes of plant growth, identifications of plant diseases, pests and weeds, in addition to appreciation of water resources and exposure to plant genetics.

Agriculture is a vital component of Indiana's economic health. It is imperative for the agriculture industry to have a pipeline of knowledgeable, confident and skilled workers for current and future positions. Every 10 jobs directly related to agriculture supports an additional eight jobs in the state. Agriculture supports more than 107,000 Hoosier jobs.

Students who have earned the BASF Plant Science Certification have exhibited dedication and prove they are more qualified for employment in the plant science industry than an applicant without the certification. In addition, this certification is valuable to students as it provides an opportunity for future learning opportunities.

Sincerely,



Lindi Kocher
Agriculture Education Coordinator
Indiana Farm Bureau



GREENCASTLE/PUTNAM COUNTY
**DEVELOPMENT
CENTER**

Building our community!

December 12, 2019

RE: BASF Plant Science Certification

As the LEDO (Local Economic Development Official) for Greencastle and Putnam County, Indiana, my top priorities are new business attraction and existing business retention and expansion. To the latter, we focus mainly on major employers in the manufacturing and distribution sectors (including Agriculture), and workforce is their greatest need.

We work at the local level, regionally and within the state to find creative solutions on how to solve this workforce need of employers; especially engaging our local educators and employers and regional partners at our Workforce Investment Board to aid in these challenges and opportunities.

One known solution is to provide training to our k-16 students who are interested in entering the animal science field and provide them with an opportunity to earn a certification showing their proficiency in this employment sector. We are, therefore, highly supportive of local efforts to provide opportunities to our students interested in crop and plant science through the BASF Plant Science Certification. Because Agriculture is such an integral part of our county's economic health and there is such an ag emphasis in this certification, we feel that this offering to local students would be valuable and highly successful.

Thank you for your consideration of this certification program request, and for your willingness to partner with Putnam County to be a success.

Sincerely,

Kristin Clary, Executive Director



Nevada Farm Bureau Federation

2165 Green Vista Dr., Suite 205, Sparks, NV 89431

Phone: (775) 674-4000 or Toll-Free (800) 992-1106

August 16, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

Nevada Farm Bureau is the largest agricultural organization in Nevada, representing farm and ranch families throughout the state. We are pleased to offer our endorsement for the BASF Plant Science Certification

As a statewide organization that's mission is to be the voice of Nevada's agriculture, we see the importance of this certification. At Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, we work to promote, preserve, protect, and resolve challenges in agriculture through advocacy, education, and leadership. This certification directly lines with our values seeing as it provides proper education in the plant science industry. With industry standards developed by BASF, I can be sure that the BASF Plant Science Certification is relevant to the plant science industry.

I believe this certification will provide individuals with the skills needed to enter the plant science industry with confidence and succeed. Earners of this certification will be much more qualified than those who do not hold this certification. I would absolutely consider an individual who holds the BASF Plant Science Certification for an interview or job with Nevada Farm Bureau Federation. I know that earners are dedicated to their work, willing to step outside of their comfort zone, and overall well-rounded individuals. I look for this in all employees and feel confident that earners will have all of these skills.

Agriculture is an extremely technical and wide-ranging industry. Those who have earned BASF Plant Science Certification have demonstrated that they come to you with qualified expertise.

Sincerely,

Doug Busselman

Executive Vice President

February 22, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to support BASF Plant Science certification for the NM Ag Education program at Hagerman High School under the direction of Codi Montes-Dennis.

As a member of New Mexico's largest general farm organization, we represent the agricultural industry in Chaves County as the 2nd leading commodities producers of New Mexico. Our mission is to promote agriculture through public education, member engagement, and by advocating for agricultural and rural needs. Chaves County Farm and Livestock Bureau is an independent, voluntary organization representing members and uniting them for the purpose of analyzing problems and formulating actions. Our focus is provision of safe, affordable food and fiber; protection of private property rights; community involvement; prevention of regulatory overreach; and leadership development.

Students who earn this certification have demonstrated mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in the agriculture industry. This foundation includes processes of plant growth, identifications of plants, some diseases, pests and remediations. An exposure to our complicated water resources and the intricacies of plant genetics also set up a background for range management, sustainable farm practices, and environmental awareness for our Pecos Valley farms and ranches.

Agriculture is a vital component of Chaves County's economic health. It is imperative for our industry to have knowledgeable, confident and skilled workers for current and future positions. Chaves County contributes \$42.5 million in cash receipts for cattle and \$45 million in crops including pecans (78.8 million pounds), alfalfa (107,000 tons) and 14,700 tons of other hay per 2020 NM Agricultural Statistics (www.nass.usda.gov/nm). Our Leprino Foods cheese factory hires over 600 workers to produce and distribute mozzarella and string cheese.

Those who have earned the BASF Plant Science Certification have exhibited dedication and prove they have a baseline for employment in the plant science industry. This certification is also valuable to students for future learning opportunities in post-secondary education/training.

Sincerely,



John Jackson
President
Chaves County Farm and Livestock Bureau



CHAVES COUNTY FARM & LIVESTOCK BUREAU

701 South Atkinson - Roswell, New Mexico - 88203 - Phone: (575) 622-6860 - Fax: (575) 623-2681

February 22, 2022

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Sincerely,

John Jackson
President
Chaves County Farm and Livestock Bureau



Rio Rancho Public Schools Career Technical Education Team
500 Laser Road
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
(505) 962-4624

February 28, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the CTE Program Manager with the Rio Rancho Public Schools' Career Technical Education team. The Rio Rancho Public schools are located in Rio Rancho, NM. Our CTE team supports all of our CTE programs in the district with funding and guidance for curriculum, supplies, equipment, and professional development. The Rio Rancho Public Schools is a school district of roughly 17,300 students with approximately 6000 high school students. Of those 6000 high school students, we have approximately 3500 students who are currently enrolled in a CTE course. We have a strong and successful Agricultural Sciences – FFA Program with over 300 students.

The certifications that would be of most value to our students and are in alignment with the curricular content of our Agricultural Sciences and FFA program would be:

- Plant science
- Ecology conservation and management
- Fundamentals of animal science
- Principles of livestock selection

We are requesting state approval for certification in these areas, as it would give our CTE Ag students something tangible and of value that they could take with them outside of the educational walls that illustrates proof of their knowledge and what they can do. We trust ICEV as the certifying body of this certification as they have established themselves as a trusted leader in CTE curriculum and historically proven that they are knowledgeable of the industry and its needs.

In closing, I feel that having the ability to offer students a certification in the aforementioned areas adds legitimacy to the curricular programs and the students' learning. In addition, it provides the students something that can potentially help them get a foot in the door for employment where they can continue to learn and grow in an area where they have a passion.

Sincerely,

Benton Spradlin
CTE Program Manager, Rio Rancho Public Schools



Rio Rancho Public Schools Career Technical Education Team
500 Laser Road
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
(505) 962-4624

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Sincerely,

Benton Spradlin
CTE Program Manager, Rio Rancho Public Schools

Stohauer Farms is a 4th generation, family-owned and operated farm. While the original farm was founded and is based in La Salle, Colorado, operations have expanded into northern New Mexico. The New Mexico farm is operated outside of Clayton, and we grow potatoes, including russet, yukon, red, and fingerling varieties.

As the manager of the Clayton farm, I oversee the daily farm operations and make hiring decisions. While we employ multiple year-round employees, we hire many contract employees during the potato harvest season. Whether we hire full-time or contract employees, I prefer to hire someone with a background in crop production and plant science.

Throughout my time in the industry, at Strohauer Farms and other operations, I have seen firsthand how important it is for someone to have a basic understanding of farming practices and plant science principles. Farming is a highly technical field, and it is challenging to train someone who doesn't have any previous knowledge of farming practices. During harvesting and planting seasons, time is of the essence, and taking extra time to train someone on the basics of plant science is a waste of the farm's resources, both human and financial. As the saying goes, "time is money."

When we look to bring a new employee on the farm, seeing a certification guaranteeing their background in crop production and plant science would be a huge benefit. Not only would it strengthen their resume and employability, but it would also make the hiring process so much easier. That is why I wholeheartedly endorse the BASF Plant Science Certification.

As someone who has always had a passion for farming, I wish I could have had the opportunity to earn a certification like the BASF Plant Science Certification in high school because I know it would have been beneficial to me as I was starting my career. I ask the New Mexico Public Education Department to add the BASF Plant Science Certification to the list of approved credentials. The certification is valuable to both high school students and their future employers, and operations like Strohauer Farms want to see the certification become more readily available to high school students across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brady Marshall".

Brady Marshall
Farm Manager-Clayton, NM
Strohauer Farms



P.O. Box 516 • Hagerman, New Mexico 88232 • (575) 622-4416

February 23rd, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

Waide Irrigation Service and Supply is located in Dexter, New Mexico and supports the local dairies and farmers by providing parts for water supply and waste disposal systems in the Pecos Valley. I manage the business that includes thirty employees supporting the needs of the customers. The business also provides additional services with new installation as well as existing equipment which includes pivots, water lines, irrigation solutions along with water supply and waste systems to support the needs of the local agricultural industry.

It is crucial that our future leaders get the tools needed to develop the skills, both technical as well as leadership development, in the plant and agricultural sciences.

This education is what the State needs to help support the growth and sustainability of the future generation for farms and the Dairy Industry in Southeastern New Mexico. The certification will allow employers to recognize skills and identify commitment to growing our future in both crops and people as well as overcome the labor challenges and lack of experience that the State faces today. It is recognized in this Region that the upcoming generation assumes that Career opportunities are limited in the Area and Within the State and this perception needs to be addressed by supporting educational opportunities like this one to initiate change and offer opportunities for our students.

The certification provides training in the field of plant science and supporting water resources for agriculturally based business and is vital to the future of the region and valuable to employers as it helps develop skills needed to build sustainability for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cliff Waide".

Cliff Waide
Manager

**Cannon Bros. Farms, Inc.
1892 NC Hwy 111
Oak City, NC 27857-9614**

August 22, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

I write this letter endorsing the BASF Plant Science Certification. Cannon Bros. Farms and many others can greatly benefit from the approval of this certification. There is a dire need for knowledgeable and qualified individuals to enter the plant science industry. This is especially true at our family-run farm. It has become increasingly difficult to find individuals who have the knowledge necessary to help us grow and improve our operations. I believe the BASF Plant Science Certification can help to fill these gaps and bring qualified individuals into the industry.

This certification provides knowledge in many fields in the plant science industry. Standards including crop production and water resources can benefit those in the crop growing industry. The plant pests section gives knowledge to those interested in entomology. Plant pathologists may be interested in the areas of pesticides, herbicides, and diseases. As you can see, this certification has something for anyone interested in the plant science industry. This education and the exam ensures that individuals are well prepared to enter the plant science industry with less training needed than candidates without the demonstrated knowledge.

Having the BASF Plant Science Certification available for North Carolina students would be a significant factor I consider when looking for employees. I know earners of this certification will be ready to step foot in my fields with the knowledge they need to help grow crops and our farming operation, and any applicant that holds this certification would be automatically considered for an interview with Cannon Bros. when we are looking for new employees.

For the reasons above, I fully support the approval of the BASF Plant Science Certification. I know it can help bring skilled individuals into all sectors of the plant science industry and close gaps in the labor market. Thank you for considering this certification to be added to the approved list in North Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ricky Cannon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ricky Cannon
President, Cannon Bros. Farms

CONOHO FARMS, INC.

210 West Highway 11
Oak City, NC 27857

25 August 2022

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction:


I am writing to express my full support for the BASF Plant Science Certification for North Carolina classrooms. I hope to see this certification used moving forward for many reasons, primarily, access to qualified employees, improved career satisfaction, and an overall more knowledgeable plant science industry.

Throughout many years of experience in the farming industry, it is hard to ignore the need for career-focused training, especially in the crop production and processing realm. I would do business with and fully trust feed suppliers, plant geneticists, and other individuals who have gotten certified with the BASF Plant Science Certification because they have proven skills in the various topics, including:

- Plant Anatomy
- Crop Production
- Classification & Nomenclature
- Plant Pests
- Plant Processes
- Fertilizers, Pesticides & Herbicides
- Plant Genetics
- Water Resources

Enhancing the plant science industry in North Carolina by proving this certification is a smart move for our state education system. Thank you for your consideration in approving this meaningful certification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Turner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rob Turner
Owner
Conoho Farms, Inc.



August 18, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Scott Holloman, and I am writing on behalf of Heaven & Earth Landscaping to offer support for educating and preparing our workforce through the BASF Plant Science Certification.

There is a growing need for qualified and educated individuals who want to enter the plant science industry. I believe this certification can help fill those needs and the growing gaps in today's workforce. BASF created this certification on standards they think need to be met in the plant science industry, and they were spot-on. This allows us to indicate that earners are proficient in the skills necessary to succeed in the jobs for this industry.

Additionally, we appreciate that the certification can introduce individuals of all ages to future career options. It allows them to identify positions within the field and figure out if they are interested in a plant science career for the long-term. Without the chance to earn this certification, some individuals may not realize their own interest the plant science industry. Even if a student completes the certification and decides the plant science industry is not for them, they still have basic knowledge and skills they can apply to decisions they make about the food they eat and other agrarian pursuits, which is an added benefit for our citizens.

Employers like me can greatly benefit from this certification. Finding employees with such skills in this industry is becoming increasingly difficult. As such, this certification allows us to identify skilled individuals and push them into the workforce. In turn, employers can more readily find those individuals and offer them interviews or jobs within our businesses. An individual with the BASF Plant Science Certification would almost certainly be guaranteed an interview with Heaven & Earth Landscaping, and would be well positioned to receive a job offer. It's especially impressive to me that high school students can earn this certification, and we see great potential in the BASF Plant Science Certification benefiting North Carolina's workforce and all North Carolina individuals by providing proper education in the plant science industry.

Thank you for reviewing this certification for approval on North Carolina's state certification list.

Sincerely,

Scott Holloman

Scott Holloman
Heaven & Earth Landscaping

JGC Farms, LLC
1122 NC-111
Oak City, North Carolina 27857

23 August, 2022

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction:

I am writing this letter to recommend the approval of the BASF Plant Science Certification on behalf of JGC Farms located in North Carolina.

I am passionately supporting this certification because I believe students who earn this certification have demonstrated a drive and desire to enter various positions and lead fruitful careers. Exposing young people to educational opportunities like this one while still in high school can benefit those already in the industry as well.

The certification prepares students for the following:

- Plant anatomy
- Classification and Nomenclature
- Plant Processes
- Plant Genetics
- Crop Production
- Plant Pests
- Fertilizers, Pesticides, and Herbicides
- Water Resources

The BASF Plant Science Certification will bridge the gap between education and industry to better supply the state of North Carolina with a new and knowledgeable generation of workforce leaders. Plant science is an industry that powers a lot more than most realize and because of this, using the BASF Plant Science Certification in North Carolina classrooms will have a great impact on our economy, industry, and environment.

Thank you for your consideration in approving this much needed certification.

Sincerely,



Joshua Cannon
President
JGC Farms, LLC



August 1, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. As a Landscape Designer for ProGreen Turf and Landscaping, I fully recognize this certification's potential to create a pipeline of prepared workers for our industry and ProGreen Turf and Landscaping. Our vision is to be known as the Coastal Carolina industry leader in customer service, professionalism, and the highest quality landscape installation and management. As a result of our dedication, homeowners and business owners everywhere can spend more time enjoying their space and less time maintaining it.

The world of plant science is incredibly diverse. The BASF Plant Science Certification gives individuals base-level knowledge of the plant science industry. Earners of this certification will be more than prepared for entry-level jobs at companies like ProGreen Turf and Landscaping since earners will become skilled in plant cell biology, plant classification, diseases and pests, plant nutrition, plant breeding, and water & watershed conservation.

As an employer, I can assure you that a resume with the BASF Plant Science Certification will stand out to me as I consider applicants for interviews and jobs. Since the information individuals must learn to earn this meticulous certification is based on industry values and standards, we know that any individual with this certification will be well versed in all topics related to plant science. I also know the BASF Plant Science Certification earners are trainable, willing to go the extra mile, and need less upfront training and preparation to start their job. This helps both the new employee and the employer!

For the last 13 years, we at ProGreen have prided ourselves on high-quality products and skilled employees. The approval of the BASF Plant Science Certification would allow us to easily find highly qualified employees looking to enter the workforce, especially those exiting career and technical education programs. I support the approval of this certification, seeing it will be beneficial to employees, employers, and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordan Lopez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jordan Lopez
Landscape Designer
ProGreen Turf and Landscaping



October 26, 2022

Review Committee,

The BASF Plant Science Certification is a great educational opportunity. I see the benefits of this certification as follows:

- Boosts the economy in North Carolina
- Validates an individual's understanding of the plant science industry
- Gives individuals a competitive advantage in the job search
- Generates a pipeline of skilled workers into the workforce
- Connects employers to earners of the certification
- Relays the individual has credible knowledge needed to enter the industry

This certification will have a positive impact on Sedgefield Country Club. We are consistently looking for employees who are knowledgeable in plant science and take pride in our golf course and landscaping. We are a 96-year-old club that prides itself on being ranked one of the *Best Golf Courses in North Carolina* and hosting the PGA's Wyndham Championship. None of this is possible without pristine greens, lush fairways, and a well manicured course, which is why we value credentials in plant science.

At Sedgefield County Club, we adamantly welcome applications from BASF Certification earners and would strongly consider an individual who has this certification over one who does not in the hiring process. For the reasons above, I firmly support this certification and know that it would be an exceptional educational opportunity for North Carolina learners of all ages.

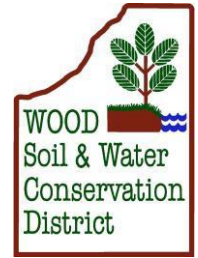
Sincerely,

Beverly Marler
General Manager
Sedgefield Country Club

Wood SWCD

1616 East Wooster Street Suite 32
Bowling Green, OH 43402

419-354-5517 #4
wcdswcd@woodswcd.com



September 28, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Wood Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board of Supervisors and staff, this letter is written in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

The Wood SWCD is a county political sub-division of the State of Ohio and is comprised of all lands within Wood County. As small local natural resource conservation agency, the district determines the conservation needs and assists with development and implementation of programs to restore and protect these resources. Soil and water conservation districts are a division of the Ohio Department of Agriculture and partner with local, state, and national government and as well as non-governmental organizations to service both the agricultural and urban communities.

Since agricultural production and agri-business are primary industries in the region, it is essential for us as an organization to encourage the obtainment of specific agri-science and environmental science courses and certifications. Avenues to educate today's youth in the broad spectrum of agriculture have opened up with the change from traditional, generational family farms to corporate farming and ag industries. Young adults earning certifications from relevant and reputable sources such as BASF provides a pool of candidates to fit the much needed skilled-entry level positions within the industry and related organizations.

Within our local, county resource agency, interest in the stewardship of natural resources and good communication skills are key elements in hiring staff. Education and certifications specific to natural sciences are benefits in choosing employees to service residents in both the agricultural and urban communities. A plant science certification from BASF certainly is a value-added resume builder.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie M. Lause". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

Julie Lause
Administrative Assistant & Outreach Coordinator
Wood Soil & Water Conservation District

August 14, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

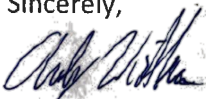
I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Crop Science Certification.

I am Andy Witker, Ag. Loan Specialist with Ag Credit. We specialize in loaning to farmers, commercial ag business, and residential loans. As a loan company we need to know our customers and the skills that they possess that will make them be successful. When we consider the many skills that an individual need we look at their education level and interest. Most of our entry-level positions do not require a college degree but someone with a strong plant science background and a desire to work. After reviewing the BASF Plant Science Certification an individual that has pass it would have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of plant, natural and environmental science fields. It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. In the past 10 years, young people have limited backgrounds in agriculture, so it is difficult to encourage them to work in our industry without prior experience. With this certification, new hires would be more career-ready than and individual without the certification. It would provide an edge over someone who does not have this certification. I feel that the BASF Plant Science Certification is a good start for any person that is seeking to work in this industry.

This certification is what the plant science industry needs so that entry-level individuals will have the science background to be successful.

It is awesome to learn that there is another tool to help identify students who are career ready and want to make a mark in this rewarding industry. Personally, I would have been excited to have earned the BASF Plant Science Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company. As an organization that works with individuals, offering skills for them to increase their value and be more ready for employment, now is the time to adopt this certification to help fill the jobs in our industry.

Sincerely,



Andy Witker

Ag Credit Loan



111 E Gypsy Lane Rd. | Bowling Green, OH 43402
o: 419.352.5178 | 877.635.3426 (Toll-Free)
f: 419.354.2199

August 14, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. I am Shane Vetter senior account officer for Ag Credit. I am responsible for making good loans for FFA/4-H projects and farm loans to all ages of people. I urge you to adopt this BASF Plant Science Certification as soon as possible to help young people get a good start in the agronomic field of work.

With this certification I can have confidence in making Ag Credit a provider of money that will give us a positive return. It will also help young people who are interested in the agronomic field get a good start.

This certification is what the agronomic industry needs so that entry-level individuals will have the science background to be successful.

It is awesome to learn that there is another tool to help identify individuals who are career ready and want to make a mark in this rewarding industry. Personally, I would have been excited to have earned a BASF Plant Science Certificate by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company. As the senior account officer at Ag Credit I feel that this certification will help fill jobs in the agronomic field, offering skills for them to increase their value and be ready for employment. Now is the time to adopt this certification to help fill the jobs in the agronomic industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shane Vetter".

Shane Vetter

Ag Credit Senior Account Officer

Agricultural Incubator Foundation

Where Agriculture, Education, Research and Innovation Meet

AIF & CIFT

13737 Middleton Pike

Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

August 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Crop Science Plant Science Certification.

I am Bernie Scott, member of the Board of Directors of the Agriculture Incubator Foundation, an educational and research-focused organization promoting the development, advancement and appreciation of agricultural systems that are economically, ecologically and socially sustainable. As a member of the Board of Director of the AIF, we are reaching out to individuals, entry-level specifically, providing them with hands-on skills that will help them pursue positions in the crop science field. Individuals who earn this certification will have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of plant, natural and environmental science fields. It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. In the past 10 years, young people have limited backgrounds in agriculture, so it is difficult to encourage them to work in our industry without prior experience. With this certification, new hires would be more career-ready than an individual without the certification. It would provide an edge over someone who does not have this certification. I feel that the BASF Crop Science Plant Science Certification is a good start for any person that is seeking to work in this industry.

This certification is what the plant science industry needs so that entry-level individuals will have the science background to be successful.

It is awesome to learn that there is another tool to help identify students who are career ready and want to make a mark in this rewarding industry. Personally, I would have been excited to have earned the BASF Plant Science Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company. As an organization that works with individuals, offering skills for them to increase their value and be more ready for employment, now is the time to adopt this certification to help fill the jobs in our industry.

Sincerely,



Bernard Scott

AIF Board of Directors

Agricultural Incubator Foundation

Where Agriculture, Education, Research and Innovation Meet

AIF & CIFT
13737 Middleton Pike
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

August 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

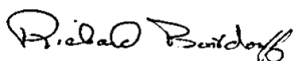
I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

I am Richard Bostdorff of the Agriculture Incubator Foundation, an educational and research-focused organization promoting the development, advancement and appreciation of agricultural systems that are economically, ecologically and socially sustainable. As the chairman of the AIF, we are reaching out to individuals, entry-level specifically, providing them with hands-on skills that will help them pursue positions in the crop science field. Individuals who earn this certification have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of plant, natural and environmental science fields. It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. In the past 10 years, young people have limited backgrounds in agriculture, so it is difficult to encourage them to work in our industry without prior experience. With this certification, new hires are more career-ready than an individual without the certification. It provides an edge over someone who does not have this certification. I feel that the BASF Plant Science Certification is a good start for any person that is seeking to work in this industry.

This certification is what the plant science industry needs so that entry-level individuals will have the science background to be successful.

It is awesome that there is another tool to help identify students who are career ready and want to make a mark in this rewarding industry. Personally, I would have been excited to have earned the BASF Plant Science Certification in high school, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company, and am glad it is available to current employees to upskill, as well.. As an organization that works with individuals, offering skills for them to increase their value and be more ready for employment, now is the time for the state to join in these efforts and adopt this certification to help fill the jobs in our industry.

Sincerely



Richard Bostdorff
AIF President

November 6, 2020

To whom it may concern:

As the program development specialist for AmericanHort, I am writing this letter to voice our support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. AmericanHort truly represents the entire horticulture industry, including breeders, greenhouse and nursery growers, retailers, distributors, interior and exterior landscapers, florists, students, educators, researchers, manufacturers, and all of those who are part of the industry market chain. We are the leading national association for the green industry, and AmericanHort works tirelessly to connect the industry across states and segments to provide opportunities that expand individuals' network and resources.

2130 Stella Court
Columbus, OH 43215
USA

614 487 1117 **Main**

525 9th Street NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20004
USA

202 789 2900 **Main**

The horticulture industry needs more individuals who have a background in plant science principles. Our field is highly technical, and employers need a way to identify qualified applicants. Due to the nature of the horticulture industry, employees without background knowledge are behind the curve and employers must spend more time and resources on training, which cuts into their bottom line. Along with validating knowledge and skills, the BASF Plant Science Certification proves an individual is interested in the horticulture industry and is dedicated to pursuing opportunities to further their career.

AmericanHort wants to see the BASF Plant Science Certification receive state approval in Ohio, not only because we represent the interests of the American horticulture industry, but because we are also an employer. When we see the BASF Plant Science Certification on an applicant's resume, we know they have an in-depth understanding of the industry and will be an asset to our team.

We need more young people who are interested in careers in the horticulture industry, and we need a way to easily identify those individuals. On behalf of the entire horticulture industry and AmericanHort, we ask the Ohio Department of Education grant state-approval to the BASF Plant Science Certification.

Sincerely,



Meagan Nace

Program Development Specialist
meagann@americanhort.org
614-884-1140



Andre Farms LLC

Andre Farms LLC
14687 COUNTY ROAD M,
WAUSEON, OH, 43567,
419-337-8908

11/24/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Andre Farms is an EPA licensed, time tested, family owned business that seeks to promote sustainable stewardship systems for custom soil, water, and nutrient solutions and management. We do business as Andre Farms, Andre Land Forming, and Organic Nutrient Recovery offering organic waste management, composting, nutrient management support, custom farming, and land forming.

In 1959 Norris Andre purchased his first Eversman Land Leveler to improve farm productivity and make better use of the family farm's tractor. Today our operation is still looking for ways to steward their resources and help others do the same.

Our mission is to operate an honest, profitable business for us as owners, our employees, landlords, customers, and suppliers. We plan to uphold our community values with integrity and morals. We are the second generation of earthmoving contractors in the land forming business.

We serve customers in Northwest Ohio by providing agricultural, commercial and conservation land forming to help clients consistently increase productivity and asset value. Producing quality crops for the consumer, with efficiency and stewardship of the land. Providing superior manure management solutions to livestock and equine facilities and maintaining a topnotch EPA approved Class 2 compost facility.

Our business operates in a multitude of areas, all centered around providing high quality service to our customers as well as being good stewards to the earth. As an agricultural employer, our business is constantly looking for qualified talent to help our operation. I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. Our business is requesting the state to approve the BASF Plant Science Certification. If the state approves this certification, our business will directly benefit from a more qualified workforce being available.

In conclusion, this certification being approved would show our plant science industry within the state of Ohio is prepared to continue investing in the agricultural industry. A pipeline of qualified employees is essential for our industry to continue providing high quality agricultural production in our state. The BASF Plant Science Certification would be a terrific tool in evaluating talent for our business.

Sincerely,



Ross Andre
Production Manager
Andre Farm LLC

August 24, 2020



Public Utilities

Environmental Services

348 S. Erie St.

Toledo, Ohio 43604

phone 419-936-3015

fax 419-936-3959

→ toledo.oh.gov

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Toledo Division of Environmental Services serves the citizens of Toledo by fighting for a higher quality of life through balanced, responsible environmental protection, ensuring safe air and water for the Greater Toledo Metropolitan Area. Our primary objective is to increase citizen safety with regards to environmental threats but also to provide leadership and act as an environmental resource for other local, regional, state and federal departments and divisions. There are approximately 50 people in our division, which is located in the Toledo downtown area.

This letter is in support of the state approval request for the BASF Plant Science Certification by the Aerospace and Natural Science Academy of Toledo (ANSAT). Through the various plant and animal programs at ANSAT, students learn the various aspects of plant management, including the importance of native plants as an important part of urban stormwater management. Their graduates are able to apply for higher level positions with the City of Toledo because of the knowledge, skills, and certifications like this one that they acquired while at ANSAT. The City of Toledo has a large inventory of urban stormwater control measures that require regular maintenance and management of the vegetated portions of the structures. Most high school graduates do not have this specialized knowledge and skill base; many college graduates with this knowledge choose other employment opportunities rather than becoming a local government employee. Applicants with these skills and knowledge base are preferred because the training phase regarding plant science will be shorter than the average applicant.

We look forward to having a well-qualified and diverse applicant field from which to choose future employees as part of our maintenance team for our increasing inventory of stormwater control measures. Stormwater management is critical to protecting the water quality of runoff and thus protecting our local waterways and Lake Erie. Proper maintenance and management of our many stormwater control measures will ensure that the significant investment by the City over the years will continue to be supported and expanded.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (419) 936-3950.

Sincerely,

Karen Granata

Karen Granata, Administrator
Environmental Services



Deerfield Ag Services, Inc.
9041 St. Rt. 224
PO Box 155
Deerfield, Ohio 44411-8715
330-584-4715

Type text here

11/24/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Deerfield Ag Services is a family-owned, full-service agricultural service provider with one agronomy and four grain locations throughout Ohio. Our staff's expertise, passion for farming, and personal understanding of the intricacies of their customers' operations grows a trusted partnership that increases profitability. From agronomy services to grain marketing, Deerfield Ag Services partners with Ohio farmers to help farm operations expand.

Our mission is to educate ourselves and our customers in the adaptation of new technologies and techniques of farm and business management. We use the highest principles of integrity and business management to help create profit for our customers. Today, our company has locations operating in Deerfield, Louisville, Kinsman and Massillon, all providing high quality service to our customers.

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. Individuals who earn this certification have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in the agronomy industry. Understanding the key principles of Plant Science is a vital part of what makes our business so successful. The most impactful element about this certification is that it demonstrates a holistic education surrounding plant science. We know how much of an impact this certification can have on our rural communities in Ohio. We also know that our customers would benefit from this certification being available to the members of their community.

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in a wide variety of roles in one of the largest industries in the world. It is difficult to find a large population of potential employees possessing this level of understanding. It would be an important advantage to us in the hiring process to be able to identify candidates who have demonstrated a passion & understanding for Plant Science through obtaining this certification.

An individual who has earned the BASF Plant Science Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company, has proven they are more qualified for employment in the plant science industry than an applicant without the certification. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to employers like us, because it helps connect us to qualified candidates.

Sincerely,

Abram Zehentbauer
Seed Operations Specialist
Deerfield Ag Services, Inc.



Grobe Fruit Farm
43875 Telegraph Road
Elyria, Ohio 44035
440-322-8312

11/24/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Grobe Fruit Farm is a family owned retail and wholesale business for over one hundred years, Grobe Fruit Farm strives to be the leading produce supplier in Northeast Ohio. Food safety has topped our list and everyone at the farm strives to make this one of our top priorities. Safety (employee and customer), quality, and friendly service are top priorities in all that we do within our business.

The main emphasis is still on the sweet traditions established by the older generations, so come taste over a century of agricultural experience and visit a beloved family tradition of Lorain County. Our family strives to keep pace with the modern agriculture, while honoring and attempting to match the hard work and determination of previous generations.

Today we operate a diverse business, producing not only hundreds of acres of high-quality apples, we have expanded into many different kinds of fruits and vegetables. We also operate one of the most productive cider mills in the entire state of Ohio. Apple cider pasteurized in our operation can be found on grocery store shelves throughout the entire state.

As an agricultural employer, our business is constantly looking for qualified talent to help our operation. I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. This certification would allow us to intentionally pursue candidates who can help us improve our family operation. If the state approves this certification, our industry will be able to benefit from a specifically qualified workforce. As an orchard, it is extremely difficult to find employees who possess a working knowledge of plant science, this certification would be incredibly valuable in seeking worthy candidates.

Our orchard would directly benefit from the BASF Plant Science Certification being approved by the state of Ohio. A potential Grobe Farms employee showing that they possess a real background knowledge in plant science would immediately stand out in the hiring process.

Sincerely,



Brett Grobe
Operation Manager
Grobe Fruit Farm



GROWMARK FS, LLC

2936 Telephone Road • Caledonia, NY 14423 • 585-538-6836

Tim Little
Location Manager
Growmark FS, LLC
2940 Caledonia, NY 14423

September 14, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. I am Tim Little with Growmark FS, LLC for the past 11 years and have been in the Crop Science Industry for 11 years. Growmark FS, LLC is a national Crop Fertilizer Service company throughout the country with over 2000 employees with many job openings in Ohio. We are committed to finding local employees in our many rural areas across the states we serve. Working with farmers who depend on us to provide agronomic soil testing, fertilizer recommendations and applications, weed control, and plant health are just a few of the services we provide.

After reviewing the certification, I can safely say we are very interested in employing individuals with this certification. It would also provide industry with a pool of individuals that can help us fill our agronomic jobs. In the last 10 years many of our new employees do not have any agriculture background so it is difficult to encourage them to work in our industry. It would provide an edge over someone who does not have this certification. I feel that the BASF Plant Science Certification would be a good start for any of our new hires AND current employees to brush up on industry practices.

This certification is what the plant science industry needs so that individuals will have the science background to be successful.

With the growing job opportunities in the agronomic industry this would be a winning situation for the employee and employer. I encourage the Ohio Department of Education adopted this certification to help individuals work to meet the increasing world demand for food.

Sincerely,

Location Manager
Growmark FS, LLC

GROWMARK FS, LLC • GROWING YOUR EXPECTATIONS



People...Products...Knowledge...

August 25, 2020

Helena Agri Enterprises
200 North Main Street
Continental, OH 45831

To Whom This May Concern,

Thank you for the information on BASF's Plant Science Student Certification. After reviewing the exam, I feel that this is a good base of knowledge for anyone entering the agri business industry from high school, college or for interns. I whole heartily agree that BASF Crop Science Plant Science Certification is a good place to start since there are fewer candidates coming off of the farm. There is great interest in agriculture among young people from all backgrounds. I encourage your efforts on this program.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chip Carder".

Chip Carder
Operations Manager
Helena Agri Enterprises, LLC.
Continental, OH 45831

carderc@helenaagri.com



August 25, 2020

Helena Agri Enterprises
200 North Main Street
Continental, OH 45831

To Whom This May Concern,

This letter is written to request the BASF Plant Science Certification be added to the Ohio Industry Recognized Credential List.

I was glad to learn about the BASF Plant Science Certification the first time I saw it. I've reviewed the certification exam, and I feel that this certification proves a good base of knowledge for anyone entering the agri-business industry from high school, college or for interns. I whole-heartily agree that the BASF Plant Science Certification is a good place to start if someone is trying to enter the industry since there are fewer candidates coming off the farm. There is great interest in agriculture among young people from all backgrounds - they simply need a comprehensive way to prove their skills that revered in the industry, and that is this certification.

I look forward to seeing more applications with this certification once it is approved by the state. Our industry needs it to train employees.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Noffsinger".

Wayne Noffsinger
Branch Manager
Helena Agri Enterprises, LLC.
Continental, OH 45831

noffsingerw@helenaagri.com



METROPARKS TOLEDO

August 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

My Name is Shannon Hughes and I am the Director of Programming at Metroparks Toledo. I am writing this letter in support of Ohio high schools, specifically Toledo Public Schools, gaining industrial credential credit towards graduation for the BASF Plant Science Certification. As a partner of Toledo Public Schools and the Aerospace and Natural Science Academy of Toledo Metroparks, we look forward to having students who complete this certification apply for employment with us. Metroparks and Toledo Public Schools have been trusted partners for over 15 years and have worked closely in the last 5 years to provide more employment opportunities to students at entry level positions in ways like offering this industry certification. Many of the lessons taught in this certification (plant anatomy, classification and nomenclature, and plant pests) are directly connected to what our Natural Resources Division does on a daily basis. Each year we hire over 50 individuals to work in our park district in conservation. When individuals come to us already certified in things like BASF Plant Science or Pesticide Application it saves us time in training, money in expenditures and helps us get individuals into the field quicker. By providing students the opportunity to learn these lessons in the high school classroom they are better able to compete with other individuals in the workforce. As the workforce continues to change nonprofit conservation organizations have an increasingly hard time hiring entry level positions. Metroparks believes in growing talent from within and we are much more capable of creating life-long employees when we can help them advance from an early stage of their career. The BASF Plant Science Certification shows Metroparks that the individual is truly vested in a career path such as natural resource management and is willing to make the commitment to our career field moving forward. We fully support Toledo Public Schools as they seek to attain this certification's state approval, because they deserve to receive credit in the classroom for what we value in the workplace.

Sincerely,

Shannon Hughes, MPA, CIP, EdD
Strategic Manager Park Programming and Interpretation
Metroparks Toledo

November 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Ohio AgriBusiness Association (OABA), I write in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification developed by BASF.

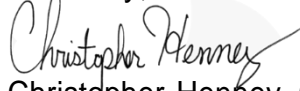
As background, OABA is a membership-based agribusiness trade association whose members includes manufacturers, wholesale and retail suppliers of plant nutrient and protection materials, the grain warehousing and marketing industry, the feed and seed industry, as well as companies providing equipment, financing, insurance, consulting, and other products and services for the agribusiness industry. OABA also administers both the Ohio Certified Crop Adviser Program and the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program in Ohio.

The Ohio AgriBusiness Association, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education, offers the OABA – Agribusiness and Production Systems Certification. This agribusiness credential verifies that high school student expertise in the areas of agriculture, agribusiness, and production systems. I believe the BASF Plant Science Certification is complimentary and a great asset for our industry. This certification is detailed and specific, and stacks well with ours. As creators of a certification ourselves, we can recognize a valuable certification and the need for more valuable credentials in our industry.

The food and agribusiness industry is in dire need of skilled workers at all levels. Creating interest and documenting education and experience through a certification program helps. A certification provides a student with greater confidence as she or he enters the job market. A certificate or credential also give confidence to an employer that this prospect has a base level of knowledge related to plant science.

In closing, I reiterate my support for the BASF Plant Science Certification. I look forward to seeing its state-approval in Ohio come to fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Henney".

Christopher Henney, CAE
President and Chief Executive Officer





59 Greif Parkway, Suite 101 Delaware, OH 43015
740.201.8088 www.ohiocornandwheat.org

To: Ohio Department of Education Career Tech
Fr: Brad Moffitt, Director of Market Development
Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association
Re: BASF Plant Science Certification

September 30, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

Having spent a part of my career with the Ohio Department of Education and being a part of the work unit that was initially responsible for industry credentials, it is my pleasure to validate the BASF certification.

I currently serve as the Director of Market Development with The Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association. In that role, I work with our export partners and international customers all over the world. I also am responsible for our biofuels portfolio. In addition, as a lifelong practitioner in agriculture AND in education, I still work with education interests at secondary and post-secondary levels.

The Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association works in favor of the interests of Ohio's grain farmers. We guard policy efforts at both the state and our nation's capitals. We also work to drive demand for grain. We represent over 30,000 grain farmers in the state, and work with our sister organizations to represent the interests and drive demand for 300,000 producers of corn nationwide. Our Ohio office is located just south of Delaware Ohio.

I have studied with interest the Plant Science Certification put forth by BASF. I find it VERY comprehensive and it will be an even greater asset to Ohio's 300+ career tech agriculture programs once approved by the state. I offer the following bullet points for my assessment of this tool:

--CEV and BASF are highly reputable organizations. BASF is one of the world leaders in crop protection.

--Our state and our nation's agriculture industry needs skilled, entry level employees. With the ever-changing landscape of today's agriculture, giving students a boost in their skill sets and ability to easily acclimate to careers is essential. This Plant Science Certification serves that purpose.

--Today's talent pool sees our industry draw fine young leaders. The problem: knowledge of technical agriculture. This certification fills that gap.

--Seeing this certification on a resume lets us know that we are going to spend less time on training and more time on actual job assignments. I know I speak for other related agriculture industries with that statement.

As Director of Market Development, I work with a variety of types of businesses. State approval of this certification will be an asset to the businesses seeking employees and to the job seekers. Technical skill

development and the subsequent skills are woefully absent from applicant skill sets. BASF, as a world leader in plant protection, nutrition, and research is a natural partnership.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Moffitt', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brad Moffitt, Director
Market Development
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association





November 20, 2020

Ohio Department of Education
Career Tech
Columbus, Ohio

To Whom It May Concern:

The Ohio Soybean Council is a Qualified State Soybean Board, located in Worthington, Ohio, and represents the interests of Ohio's 24,000 soybean farmers. Ohio soybean farmers are interested in the ability to farm profitably and sustain the agriculture industry for future generations. They believe that an important vehicle for achieving this is through education and validation of that education.

As the Research and Education Director of the Ohio Soybean Council, I provide oversight and management of our education program. Our volunteer soybean farmer board has always held education as a primary focus of the organization. For over twenty years the board has invested significant resources to make the connection of agriculture to science and technology in Ohio classrooms. The vehicle for this connection is our education platform GrowNextGen (grownextgen.org). An important focus of GrowNextGen is workforce development, providing resources to teachers and students about agriculture careers. Our industry faces challenges in finding qualified candidates for the wide variety of career opportunities all across the agriculture value chain with over 30% of high-tech, high-talent jobs going unfilled nationwide (USDA data). We are glad to know our efforts are expanded by BASF.

This BASF Plant Science Certification provides valuable support for the agriculture industry in Ohio because:

- BASF is a well-respected leader in our industry and able to identify workforce skills
- The skills identified by this credential are essential to our industry
- Teachers will understand specifically which skills are valuable to industry, thus preparing students
- Students receiving this certification will show evidence of having these skills
- Well-prepared students will not need additional training, saving industry time/money
- The Ohio Department of Education supports the need for additional credentials for students
- The agriculture industry needs new talent that is well-trained and skilled in technical fields

As the Director of Research and Education for the Ohio Soybean Council, I support the state approval of this certification that I believe would assist in providing the next generation of prepared, talented workers that the agriculture industry needs.

Sincerely,

Tom Fontana
Director, Research and Education



August 14, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Crop Science Certification.

I am Andrew Lang local sales representative for Pioneer Seed Company a major producer of seed around the world. As an international company we are reaching out to individuals, at all levels. Many of our employees have started at the entry level positions, working themselves into opportunities that in most cases to a lifelong career. Most of our entry-level positions do not require a college degree but someone with a strong plant science background and a desire to work. After reviewing the BASF Plant Science Certification an individual that has passed it would have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of plant, natural and environmental science fields. It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. In the past 10 years, young people have limited backgrounds in agriculture, so it is difficult to encourage them to work in our industry without prior experience. With this certification, new hires would be more career-ready than an individual without the certification. It would provide an edge over someone who does not have this certification. I feel that the BASF Plant Science Certification is a good start for any person that is seeking to work in this industry.

This certification is what the plant science industry needs so that entry-level individuals will have the science background to be successful.

It is awesome to learn that there is another tool to help identify students who are career ready and want to make a mark in this rewarding industry. Personally, I would have been excited to have earned the BASF Plant Science Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company. As an organization that works with individuals, offering skills for them to increase their value and be more ready for employment, now is the time to adopt this certification to help fill the jobs in our industry.

Sincerely,

Andrew Lang

Pioneer Territory manager

419-341-1424





Ben Murphy
Pioneer Seed Company
Field Agronomist
15180 Henry Wood County Rd Organization Name]
Grand Rapids, Ohio 43522

August 14, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Crop Science Certification.

I am Ben Murphy, Field Agronomist for Pioneer Seed Company a major producer of seed around the world. As an international company we are reaching out to individuals, at all levels. Many of our employees have started at the entry level positions, working themselves into opportunities that in most cases lead to a lifelong career. Most of our entry-level positions do not require a college degree but someone with a strong plant science background and a desire to work. After reviewing the BASF Plant Science Certification an individual that has pass it would have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of plant, natural and environmental science fields. With this certification, new hires would be more career-ready than and individual without the certification. It would provide an edge over someone who does not have this certification. I feel that the BASF Plant Science Certification is a good start for any person that is seeking to work in this industry.

This certification is what the plant science industry needs so that entry-level individuals will have the science background to be successful.

Personally, I would have been excited to have earned the BASF Plant Science Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading company. As an organization that works with individuals, offering skills for them to increase their value and be more ready for employment, now is the time to adopt this certification to help fill the jobs in our industry.

Sincerely,

Ben Murphy
Field Agronomist Pioneer Seed Company



October 8, 2020

RE: Support for BASF Plant Science Certification

I am the owner of Warnke Enterprises, LLC, a small landscaping, mowing, and snow removal business in Northwest Ohio offering commercial and residential services, with a specialization in healthcare facilities. We currently employ 15 individuals year-round and a handful of seasonal employees.

I am writing in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification being used in high school classrooms. This certification builds the skillset, knowledge, and techne that make a valuable employee in our industry. Students build proficiency in plant anatomy, life, and care; pest identification and remediation; environmental conservation and protection, as well as applicable regulations; and overall project management. Our work is fast paced and changes rapidly with the seasons; rarely is there time to adequately develop these competencies in our new hires.

It's difficult to find qualified new hires altogether, let alone ones with the breadth and depth of skills the BASF Plant Science Certification develops. Having a pool of new hires with these competencies would elevate the professionalism of our industry as a whole and the services we can offer our client base, as well as employees' own understanding of their contributions and value to the field.

In summary, I am in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification being used in high school classrooms because of the value to the students themselves and our industry in developing high-caliber potential hires and in elevating the profession and our services.

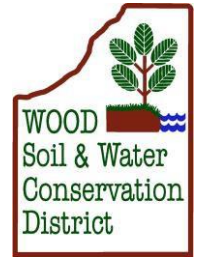
Sincerely,

Ben Warnke
Owner

Wood SWCD

1616 East Wooster Street Suite 32
Bowling Green, OH 43402

419-354-5517 #4
wcdswcd@woodswcd.com



September 28, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Wood Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board of Supervisors and staff, this letter is written in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

The Wood SWCD is a county political sub-division of the State of Ohio and is comprised of all lands within Wood County. As small local natural resource conservation agency, the district determines the conservation needs and assists with development and implementation of programs to restore and protect these resources. Soil and water conservation districts are a division of the Ohio Department of Agriculture and partner with local, state, and national government and as well as non-governmental organizations to service both the agricultural and urban communities.

Since agricultural production and agri-business are primary industries in the region, it is essential for us as an organization to encourage the obtainment of specific agri-science and environmental science courses and certifications. Avenues to educate today's youth in the broad spectrum of agriculture have opened up with the change from traditional, generational family farms to corporate farming and ag industries. Young adults earning certifications from relevant and reputable sources such as BASF provides a pool of candidates to fit the much needed skilled-entry level positions within the industry and related organizations.

Within our local, county resource agency, interest in the stewardship of natural resources and good communication skills are key elements in hiring staff. Education and certifications specific to natural sciences are benefits in choosing employees to service residents in both the agricultural and urban communities. A plant science certification from BASF certainly is a value-added resume builder.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie M. Lause". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

Julie Lause
Administrative Assistant & Outreach Coordinator
Wood Soil & Water Conservation District

Andrew Streff
25133 440th Ave
Salem, SD 57058

August 10, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Streff Farm to express support for the BASF Plant Science Certification approval in South Dakota.

Streff Farm is a family farm located in Salem, South Dakota. We focus on corn and soybean production and heavily rely on some of the practices that individuals learn through the BASF Plant Science Certification. Through the industry standards set by BASF, we know earners of this certification are prepared to play a vital role in ensuring agricultural productivity and efficiency. The plant science industry needs skilled individuals who are ready to enter the workforce. This is especially true at Streff Farm.

Recently, Streff Farm suffered the effects of a derecho. Our farm was virtually destroyed and had to be rebuilt. Cleaning up took extra hands to get us back to the point to where we can start producing again. It would benefit our farm incredibly to have someone with the skillset the BASF Plant Science Certification provides. I would absolutely hire someone who holds this certification. I'm confident they will be determined, passionate, hardworking, knowledgeable, and meticulous about their work, no matter the job. Additionally, this could save time and money when training the new employee since they will already be extremely knowledgeable in the plant science industry.

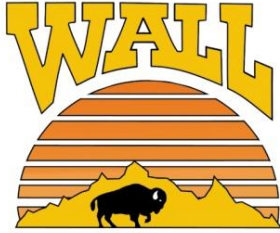
I believe the BASF Plant Science Certification is one that makes a positive difference for all employers and businesses in the plant science industry. Local farms like Streff Farm benefit from the crop production knowledge earners gain. Plant geneticists and engineers benefit from the reproduction and hormone regulator portions. Plant pathologists benefit from the sections about pesticides, herbicides, and diseases. These are just a few examples that prove the BASF Plant Science Certification equips earners with a vast range of knowledge and prepares them to enter any field within the plant science industry.

On behalf of Streff Farm, I wholeheartedly support the BASF Plant Science Certification because of the benefits not only for individuals but also for businesses and communities. This certification will help create a pipeline of skilled workers into every part of the plant science industry. I am hopeful for a state endorsement of this certification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Streff', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Streff



CITY OF WALL

501 MAIN STREET • PO Box 314
WALL, SOUTH DAKOTA 57790-0314
(605) 279-2663 • FAX (605) 279-2067

WALLCITY@GWTC.NET

WWW.WALLSD.US

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

Wall, South Dakota is home to the famous Wall Drug Store and a gateway to Badlands National Park. While we may be best known for the approximately million visitors passing through annually, we also have a robust agriculture industry that is the second pillar to our local economy.

Traditionally, the Wall area and Western South Dakota in general, was predominately wheat country when it came to crop production. That has changed significantly over the last 10-15 years. With the advent of no-till operations we have seen an explosion of other crops being produced in the area. Corn, soybeans, safflower and especially sunflowers have all seen a dramatic increase in production during this time.

With the increased production in other crops, it is imperative that we continue to educate our local producers on the importance of plant and soil health to sustain that change and to provide the best opportunities at increasing production and operators bottom line.

One final aspect to this certification program that excites me as a Mayor is that we have recently opened an industrial park just on the edge of our community. The primary focus of that industrial park is to attract value-added ag opportunities. By providing programs such as the Plant Science Certification program, it hopefully generates a path to increased production of those crops that sustain these value-added ag endeavors. In many instances, this shortens the loop for producers who can haul product to a local facility thereby saving on fuel costs and serves to increase their bottom line.

Sincerely,

Marty Huether

Marty Huether
Mayor, City of Wall, SD 57790
605-685-3021

Eisenbraun, Inc. Creighton, SD



Eisenbraun, Inc.
21362 Creighton Rd.
Creighton, SD, 57790
605.391.3388

09/25/2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Kaden Eisenbraun and I am representing the general stance of my family's farm and ranch in this letter. Eisenbraun, Inc. is a multi-generational farm and ranch located in North Creighton, South Dakota. We specialize in registered Angus and commercial Angus/Simmental crosses as a cow-calf operation, as well as produce dryland crops including wheat, hay, millet, safflower, and alfalfa. I am a fourth-generation stakeholder and partner on the operation, who oversees cattle and hay production operations. We operate on 20,000 acres and are considered a 'large-farm' by both economic and physical standards. We currently employ 7 individuals on our team, and with upcoming expansions, we are looking to increase this number to 8 full-time employees.

At Eisenbraun, Inc., we believe in the power behind comprehensive certifications. Our operations specifically see tremendous value behind the BASF Plant Science certification. We believe that creating a strong future of qualified agriculturalists begins with primary and secondary schooling. Our operation works closely with the local FFA and 4H chapters, and we would love to see this certification enacted. BASF has strong value and tremendous insight in their development and articulation with schools. With this certification, it will require less time for us to spend training our employees on many of the basic concepts that are expected to be known, and the work that our employees put in will benefit the farm and ranch. Comparing an individual with this to an individual without, all other aspects being the same, the certified candidate would win every single time. This would be a great asset to our operations when hiring new employees, and existing employees may even be able to gain some knowledge and understanding from them as well.

Eisenbraun, Inc., requests approval from the state for the BASF Plant Science certification because we acknowledge the depth that this can develop students and for the agriculture industry. Our operation and the industry within South Dakota as a whole will be able to benefit from higher skilled and knowledgeable employees, as well as increase productivity. Please heavily consider adopting this certification for use.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kaden Eisenbraun
Operations Manager



September 27, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tom Johnson and I am the CEO and President at Elevate located in Rapid City, South Dakota. Elevate is a new and innovative approach to economic development for Rapid City and the Black Hills region. Our main focus is to recruit new businesses, help current businesses expand, and bring in jobs to fill the local community's needs. Our mission is to Elevate the work within our region and support the present and future workforce. Because we know today's students are tomorrow's workforce, we invest in educational opportunities for South Dakotans, which is why we fully support the approval and urge utilization of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

Our team and I believe that individuals who earn this certification have demonstrated a mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in the plant science industry. In addition to the exposure that happens in courses and in the field, it is important to utilize resources of this caliber to further our future employees' education and therefore maintain the integrity of professionals within the state.

As an employer, I applaud BASF for offering a certification based on current workforce needs. When interviewing job applicants, knowing an applicant has this certification ensures employers they have substantial knowledge and skills and are prepared to implement the practices. Individuals who take the time to earn this certification prove they possess determination and grit; most employers would agree this is a dying skill. The BASF Plant Science certification is extremely valuable to economic development because helps companies connect to qualified candidates and gives them the confidence, they are hiring the right workers.

It is vital that there be a way to prepare and expose young people to this industry certification. This certification will bridge the gap between education and industry in order to supply South Dakota with a new and knowledgeable generation of industry leaders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Johnson

CEO and President



South Dakota FFA Foundation, Inc.

39393 133rd St. Bath, SD 57427

Your Investment in the Future of Agriculture

SD FFA Foundation
Gerri Ann Eide, Executive Director
39393 133rd St.
Bath, Sd 57427

August 16, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the South Dakota FFA Foundation, as the Executive Director, where I have served for eleven years. The role of our organization is to support Agriculture Education/FFA programs across the state of South Dakota with funding, educational resources, and promotion. There are 4900 SD FFA members in 99 FFA chapters across the state. The Foundation has two contracted employees, including myself, and a volunteer governing board of instructors and industry leaders from all aspects of agriculture. The SD FFA Association is located on the South Dakota State University campus in Brookings, SD, while the SD FFA Foundation is located in Bath, SD.

I am requesting state approval of the BASF Plant Science curriculum for SD programs. This will provide ag teachers great resources for youth to gain hands on, high tech curriculum to educate our youth, relevant to what is happening in the agricultural industry. iCEV is a trusted provider for Career & Technical Education curriculum, and specifically agriculture education curriculum, and with the changing world, there is need for online access to curriculum for students and teachers. This curriculum would be very valuable. The agriculture sector, specifically agronomy is in constant demand for qualified employees. This curriculum would introduce high school students to the opportunities, create interest for them to pursue life long careers in plant science, and teach current industry relevant information and technologies. Students having this certification would also provide employers an added assurance that the student had knowledge and skills needed in the field.

In closing, the SD FFA Foundation is in support of the iCEV – BASF Plant Science curriculum and certification being approved for high school teachers and students to access. Access to rigorous and relevant curriculum is always needed by our teachers to continue to educate youth to fill the pipeline of employees needed to feed our world. Certification will provide employees confidence in youth they hire, needed skills in the industry, and assist young people in finding satisfying and fulfilling jobs that feed the world. That is what the SD FFA Foundation is all about.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerri Ann Eide".

Gerri Ann Eide
SD FFA Foundation Executive Director



April Smith Patterson
Joint Operations Officer
Honest Abe Log Homes & Sister Companies
9980 Clay County Hwy.
Moss, TN 38575

August 20, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. I am the joint operations officer of Honest Abe Log Homes and its sister companies, a family business of 120 people headquartered in Moss, Tennessee. Our customer base revolves around log homes and timber manufacturing. We are also the county's largest privately-owned employer. Our business was founded by my father over fifty years ago. We employ about multiple positions that range across the disciplines of manufacturing, electrical, mechanical, agricultural, and industrial.

With such a large percentage of our business focused on natural wood products, the material covered in the BASF Plant Science Certification lays a helpful foundation for us to build upon. Already possessing this certification helps speed up our training process for new people without having to cover the basics when hiring new people.

Conservation and being environmentally friendly are key aspects of our business, and everything we produce that would have waste is recycled into a usable product. Our family would greatly appreciate a resource like the BASF Plant Science Certification being made more readily available to individuals in the state of Tennessee because of what it means for our community and in hiring new personnel. We feel strongly that it makes hiring new personnel even more valuable.

Sincerely,

April Smith Patterson
Joint Operations Officer
Honest Abe Log Homes & Sister Companies

David I. Yates PhD
President, ex officio
Northeast Tennessee Nursery Association
110 Yates Drive, Elizabethton, TN

August 16, 2020

Dear Sir or Madam:

Hello, I am David Yates, representing the Northeast Tennessee Nursery Association. I am Past President of the Association, and our association consists of various commercial nursery growers in the region as well as supporters of growers. The association has monthly meetings that address growers' needs and gives up to date information along with training for our members.

We are requesting that the State of Tennessee approves industry certification for the BASF Plant Science Certification. Offering a BASF Plant Science certification would be enormous for students interested in the Plant Science fields. We don't get this opportunity often to see young adults enter the field, and having this offer would be tremendous in maintaining their interest in the plant sciences.

BASF is highly reputable - it's scientific approach to plant sciences is uncanny. We as an association would welcome its certification with open arms. Also, as an association, knowing that young people with the knowledge and training in the industry is overwhelmingly exciting. We don't have enough young people entering our field to fill the current empty positions, and with an expected growth in the next 10 years, we need even more qualified young people.

As an association, we hope the State of Tennessee will approve the BASF Plant Science Industry Certification. The future of our profession depends upon it!

Sincerely,
David I Yates PhD
President, ex officio
Northeast Tennessee Nursery Association
DrDIYates@gmail.com

Peach Creek Nursery

Susan Harbison
Greenhouse Manager
Peach Creek Nursery
600 Peach Creek Road
McEwen, TN 37101

August 20, 2020

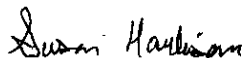
To Whom it May Concern:

Hello, my name is Susan Harbison. I work for Peach Creek Nursery in McEwen, TN as the greenhouse manager. Peach Creek Nursery is a retail garden center. We specialize in vegetable plants, herbs, perennials and annuals. We also grow earthworms for fishing and composting and sell their castings. It is my job to coordinate greenhouse operations to optimize plant health and growth. I'm also available to talk with customers and offer advice so they can get the most out of their plants and gardens. We are small and family owned but we do brisk business and are working to expand into the tree and shrub market.

As our world changes and people move away from producing their own food, that knowledge is being passed down to fewer and fewer youth. The world of plant science is extremely large and diverse. The BASF Plant Science Certification covers a wealth of information including plant anatomy, plant classification, productions, pests and diseases, nutrition, water resources, etc. The knowledge from this certification is helpful for even a seasoned nursery worker and certainly allows greenhouse and nursery applicants to set themselves apart in the hiring process. It undoubtedly benefits employers to have applicants with such a solid base of knowledge on the subject.

Please consider approving the BASF Plant Science Certification for Tennessee students. It would be a great boon to our state agriculture and plant producers to have the option to hire employees who have completed this certification. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Susan Harbison
Greenhouse Manager
Peach Creek Nursery



Smoky Mountain Farmers Co-Op
321 West Main St.
Sevierville, TN 37862
Phone: (865) 453-7101

August 12, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is David Majors, and I write this letter on behalf of a locally owned farm supply, lawn, garden, automotive, and outdoor power equipment store. We strive to provide excellent customer service and provide products that meet the needs of our ever changing area. We have locations in Sevierville, Morristown and Newport, Tennessee and Waynesville, North Carolina and a crops center in White Pine, Tennessee. We serve more than 2,250 farmer members.

I write this in hopes that you will consider making the BASF Plant Science Certification one of the Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Certifications. Though Tennessee is largely still rural, it is difficult for us to know which potential employees truly have the necessary background in plant science needed for our work without having proof. This certification provides proof. There is only so much we can learn about an employee in an interview, but when we see this certification on someone's resume, we know it means they've proven mastery of the concepts BASF established on behalf of the plant science industry. This is a tremendous help to employers like us. And, while the public might not know BASF, it is a multinational industry leader in our eyes.

In eras like the one we're living in now, it'd be especially nice to know that students coming out of high school are ready for the workforce, and we can't always know that without a certification like the BASF Plant Science Certification. It's a great risk for me to invest in an employee who doesn't return that investment. Unfortunately, though, when schools aren't incentivized to use this certification in school, the pool of individuals who are earning it in TN will stay smaller than the industry needs. It is hard to find skilled entry-level employees who want to work in agriculture. Adding this certification to the Tennessee Promoted List would make that easier.

I wish all of our entry level employees had the BASF Plant Science Certification. It is the equivalent of years of experience with plants. So, employees with this certification save me time and money in training. I hope the state considers doing Smoky Mountain Farmers Co-Op and the agriculture industry a favor by adding this certification to the Tennessee Promoted List.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Majors".

David Majors
Manager

August 11, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. As county director for the UT Extension Office in Lewis County, I see the need for more educational programming in the field of agriculture. As perilous times approach us at a more rapid rate than ever, it is imperative that individuals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for programs that have become increasingly demanding. The importance of teaching others self-reliance and helping them identify areas that affect the outcome of the source is becoming necessary for survival. The knowledge and Plant Science certification will enable individuals to better identify and understand growth for plants and plant genetics. Their depth of training would also help to recognize and alter methods of managing plant diseases, pests, and weeds.

Please consider adding the Plant Science Certification to the list of certificates approved to help improve the quality of skilled agriculturists and prepare potential employees, and establish well-trained students for the workforce.

Sincerely,



Shelly Ray
UT Extension Lewis County Director



**AGRICULTURE
TEACHERS**
ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

April 14, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

I have been involved in agricultural education, first as a student and then for the last 32 years as an adult. I was a high school agriculture teacher for thirty years, and for the past year I have served as the executive director of the Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas. It has been my privilege to work with the more than two thousand agriculture teachers as they impart knowledge and skills to their students.

Those who earn this Plant Science Certification must exhibit their mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in this critical agricultural industry. These concepts include the ability to understand the processes of plant growth, the ability to identify the characteristics and treatments of plant diseases and parasites, as well as using higher level thinking skills to solve real-world problems in plant science. With the happenings and advances in current plant technology, we need well trained and qualified students to be prepared for roles in the industry. These are just a few of many examples which could be cited.

Producing the next generation of skilled agriculturists is the ultimate goal of any such certification. A certification offered by a worldwide company like BASF has value and makes holders of this certificate more employable than similar applicants who do not hold such a credential.

Please consider adding the Plant Science Certification to any list of certificates approved in the future.

Sincerely,

Ray Pieniazek

Executive Director

Ag Teachers Association of Texas

Dewey Hukill
PO Box 74
Olton, TX 79064

May 15, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

I am Dewey Hukill, past owner and president of Agri-Gold Inc dba Pride of the Plains Bulb Farm. I was also on the American Farm Bureau Nursery and Greenhouse Committee and the AFBF Labor committee representing Texas Farm Bureau.

There was always a discussion on these committees of how to have a labor force especially with young people who have an understanding of agriculture production.

I think someone earning this certification would be an attractive hire for most any agriculture related job.

I would encourage you to consider this certification opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dewey Hukill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Dewey Hukill



SAMUEL JACKSON, INCORPORATED

3900 Upland Avenue Lubbock, Texas 79407 USA

Tel: 806.795.5218 Fax: 806.795.8240

E-mail: engineering@samjackson.com

May 17, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. I am president of Samuel Jackson, Incorporated, a small family business of 50 people headquartered in Lubbock, Texas. Our customer base revolves around fiber processing, and the largest portion of our business is cotton fiber processing at the gin level. Our business was founded by my grandfather in the early 20th century and 2018 is my thirtieth year with the company, 27 of those years as its president. We employ about 15 engineers that range across the disciplines of electrical, mechanical, agricultural, and industrial.

With such a large percentage of our business focused on natural plant fibers, like cotton, the material covered in the Plant Science Certification lays a helpful foundation for us to build upon. Our fifteen engineers can begin the training process for new people without having to cover these basics. That accelerates the pace to making new people productive and an asset to our organization.

Water and energy conservation are key aspects of our business, which is conducted across every cotton producing region on earth. Depending on the year, between 25% and 50% of our gross revenues are derived from sales to customers outside the US. I appreciate the value that a resource like the BASF Plant Science Certification brings to a candidate that we are considering. I feel that it makes that candidate more valuable and I would consider it, along with the multitude of other factors that give us each such an individual signature on this planet.

Sincerely,

SAMUEL JACKSON, INCORPORATED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Chris Jackson". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first name "S." being a simple initial and "Chris Jackson" written in a cursive-like script.

S. Chris Jackson
President

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES
Dr. Charles R. Hall
Professor & Chair
Ellison Chair in International Floriculture

MEMORANDUM

May 21, 2018

Re: Support letter for Plant Science certification

I am writing this letter to provide strong support for the BASF Certification for Plant Science. Such an endorsement requires some perspective to be credible. I have been employed as a teaching, research and extension educator for almost 30 years (13.5 at Texas A&M University, 5.5 at the University of Tennessee, and another 11 years back at Texas A&M) and have served in faculty appointments in both Horticultural Sciences and Agricultural Economics. During this time, I have performed a variety of roles including applied research and extension educational programming in horticultural marketing and management; teaching in the areas of agricultural and food marketing, strategic agribusiness management, and contemporary issues in horticulture and agribusiness; and development and coordination of the TAMU Master of Agribusiness (MAB) program. Currently, I hold the Ellison Chair in International Floriculture at Texas A&M University. It is from these perspectives that I offer my evaluation of the Plant Science certification program.

This certification is desperately needed from an industry perspective. There are a number of jobs that could be filled that are left empty because we do not have enough qualified individuals seeking employment across the plant sciences industry. Part of it is a lack of knowledge from individuals regarding the career opportunities in plant sciences, but also due to the fact that the prestige of such programs has been lacking. Certification not only provides exposure to the opportunities for individuals but also emphasizes the fact that plant sciences can be a career rather than a mere job. Certification also enables industry firms to hire candidates knowing they have a base set of knowledge that will be required of them once they get on the job. In short, individuals need this certification and the plant sciences industry needs it as well!

Should you need any further elaboration of these points, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Dr. Charlie Hall
Professor & Ellison Endowed Chair in International Floriculture
Texas A&M University

Kevin Hukill
2130 FM 1072
Littlefield, TX 79339

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to show my support of the BASF Plant Science Certification. I have worked as an inspector for the Texas Department of Agriculture for the past nine years. In this capacity I work with Seed Companies, Grain Elevators, Chemical and Fertilizer Distributors, and Producers.

This certification will be instrumental for individuals to have an advantage in the job market. I understand the difficulties these agriculture companies have in hiring people who have the knowledge and skills to complete tasks that are assigned. This Plant Science Certification will give the companies hiring these individuals the confidence that their new employee will have the knowledge and understanding to be successful. I look forward to seeing the success of the certification and its recipients in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Hukill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a stylized "H".

Kevin Hukill

TRIPLE F FARMS

956-279-9805
Daniel_fike@sbcglobal.net

7917 E. Mile17 Rd
Edinburg, Tx
78542

May 1, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the BASF Plant Science Certification.

I am a farmer from Edinburg, Tx. My family and I have been farming in the area for over 60 years. We grow Corn, Sorghum, and citrus in the area. We have recently been competing in a national sorghum yield contest and have won three national awards.

I understand that when an individual earns this certification they will be in high demand to work in the industry or further their education in college. They will have demonstrated that they understand the vital concepts to be successful in the industry, including:

- describe anatomical structures and functions of plants
 - explain the process of reproduction in plants
 - determine various identifying characteristics and techniques used in plant classification
 - understand the plant life cycle and evaluate the factors which affect plant growth and development
 - understand plant cell processes and functions
 - explain plant growth requirements and identify methods to correct nutrient deficiencies in plants
 - determine environmental impacts, physiological disorders and diseases impacting plant growth and development
 - identify major crops and analyze trends in crop production for regions of the United States
 - demonstrate proper fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide application
 - understand the importance of water conservation and management on crop production and the environment as a whole.
-

It is important that individuals have the opportunity to pursue this certification from a nationally recognized company such as BASF, so that they can fill current and future positions in the industry. This is very important because agriculture is constantly changing. We are having to produce more with less to stay ahead in the field. New diseases and pest, such as the Sugarcane Aphid in sorghum make it harder and harder to produce. Urban sprawl is taking our good land and pushing farmers into less fertile land. Population is growing exponentially and it's going to be hard to produce enough food for everyone on these less fertile lands. Those with this certification could help a lot with these problems.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fike




Warren's Southern Gardens
1675 Northpark Dr
Kingwood, TX 77339

July 31, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter as a Houston-area business owner asking you to consider incentivizing the BASF Plant Science industry certification in Texas schools so it will be more popular among those seeking employment in the landscaping, gardening, and outdoor living fields. As an employer, it would help me tremendously.

My husband and I are the owners of Warren's Southern Gardens. We are committed to providing area residents with not only a one-of-a-kind Greater Houston area garden center, but we also offer a complete landscape and design division, Warren's Outdoor Living, to create custom outdoor living spaces. Our goal is to provide customers with the best variety and highest quality flowers, plants, trees and shrubs. To go along with our outstanding gardening products, we are committed to providing Houston with experienced and knowledgeable staff to diagnose and offer solutions to its lawn and garden questions, but finding staff with that skillset is easier said than done.

I am confident that if the BASF Plant Science Certification were on the Texas-approved Industry-Based Credential list, more schools in the Houston area could justify using the certification in class, thus increasing the quality of talent I have to choose from, which ultimately keeps product quality high and product cost low for my customer. The BASF Plant Science Certification is impressive, and the BASF name is reputable. I am excited about the potential for the certification to be used more in Texas classrooms, where agriculture programs are strong and are looking for a certification that provides meaningful placement directly into the workplace. I can trust that if an individual has a BASF Plant Science certification, they already possess foundational knowledge and skills of our work, which saves me time and money on training, as an employer. Plus, it shows me they're interested in and committed to our industry, and it gives me confidence that employee will represent Warren's well in front of our customers.

I need more applicants with the BASF Plant Science Certification, and I hope you help make this happen by making this certification incentivized in Texas classrooms.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bernice Warren".

Bernice Warren
Owner
(281) 354-6111



West Texas A&M University™

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support for the BASF Plant Science Certification.

As a professor of plant science at WTAMU, a university recognized for its agricultural science program, I see great value in this certification. The skills verified by the BASF Plant Science Certification will benefit individuals by preparing them for the workforce and will also benefit employers by helping them identify quality candidates. Additionally, the certification will also benefit both Texas and American agricultural industries by developing a pipeline of knowledgeable individuals who are capable and ready to work. It is of vital importance that there are educated young people in the plant science industry to ensure a sustainable and viable future for the agricultural industry.

It is my hope that more people will earn the BASF Plant Science Certification and pursue careers within the agricultural industry.

Sincerely,

Brock Blaser, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Plant Science
Department of Agricultural Sciences
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