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Midwest Bio Systems – Revolutionizing Farming with Their Aeromaster Composting Systems that Enables Farmers to Harvest the Sun

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“We are allowing thousands of farmers, thousands of growers of all kinds, it does not matter if it is in the horticulture industry, or the golf course industry, to harvest more sun.” Edwin Blosser

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CEOCFO: *Mr. Blosser, you started Midwest Bio Systems (MBS) in 1993, but were did your interest in renewable farming systems start and what led you to start MBS?*

Mr. Blosser: We started Midwest Bio Systems in 1993 as a result of many things prior to that. We like to tell the story because it never grows old to people who are listening to us. The reason they like to hear the story is because it lays out “the why”. God has a plan for us in our lives, although some of us may not know it, and in many ways, I did not. However, when we started farming, when I was 4 and 5 years old, back in the 1960s, I remember very well that my folks were very eager to get started. At the time, my Dad was working at a welding shop and my Mom wanted him to be at home with his sons. Her parents had farmed, so she wanted us to become farmers, and we finally got that opportunity. I recall it vividly how glad they were to get into farming, and I’m glad that they did because growing up in the farming world has helped me ever since.

Twelver years later in 1981, we entered a timeframe in our lives where interest rates were exceeding 21% and we were caught with a little too much debt, as we had been expanding pretty fast in the 1970s, which just about took us under financially. I was the oldest of 4 boys in our family, but all the way down to the youngest, we really worked hard from early morning to late evening, just trying to make things work, and we managed to squeak through. I remember that severe struggle we went through, but many times, those trying times ended up refining us. I often think of the biblical application of the gold that gets refined by the fire. However, those trying times led me to a deep passion to find a way for me to help family farms thrive and not just survive. I had a conscious

and subconscious prayer in my heart that if there was a way for me to do that, God please let me get into it.

Then in December of 1983, I married a wonderful woman to whom I am now married for almost 40 years. At that time, I started working with my father-in-law, and my father-in-law in January of 1984 said, "Edwin, there is a new way to farm called the Renewable Farming System," and I asked, "What is that?" He told me that renewable farming simply means that for every year you farm, your inputs can be allowed to go lower and your outputs become higher. In other words, your margins increase. It is the opposite of conventional farming where it is a continuing escalation of costs and a plateauing of yields, or not as much of an increase of yields as the costs are increasing. Therefore, over the years the margins have gotten thinner and thinner, and very challenging simply because the farmer has a lot of risk. He places a lot of risk into whether will it rain if he is not into irrigation, or will there be any kind of wind storms. It comes down to what are the things that farmers can control. As I got into Renewable Farming, my father-in-law sent me off to a 3-day seminar, with 5 different speakers who had been very successful in teaching people how to farm renewably. My Dad and my brother-in-law went with me, and I came back and said, "Yeah, this sounds very intriguing, I would like to get into it, what are my next steps?" By then I was working mostly for my father-in-law, as my father's farming operation was not as large and my brothers also needed work. Both my father and my father-in-law suggested I look to see if I could train under the farmers who put on the Renewable Farming seminar. I called the first one who said, "No Edwin, I wish that I could, but I really am too tied up." The second one said to let him think about it, and a week later he came back and said, "Edwin I have a plan for you. I'll give you some things to study, but they are very short and will only take you a week or two. Then I will need you to implement it out in the field and if you can do that, I will take you to the next step." I went through some experiential training and ended up going through 4 different trainers in Renewable Farming Systems. These were very difficult times as in 1987, I had to redo 1986 simply because I did not succeed. However, I came out of that a stronger person, and even more committed because I knew the answers would be there if I applied myself.

I then focused on getting into a soil fertility business that would service a 10-mile radius around me locally. I was bringing in all of the technology that I could, and I quickly added acres. Even before I started Midwest Bio Systems, I was already consulting with farmers of up to 22,000 acres by 1992, just locally, but then it started expanding out into other states. By 1993, I was in 22 states already, and that is when we started Midwest Bio Systems, although I actually started Midwest Bio Systems because of the need to manufacture composting equipment. I graduated in 1991, and one of my trainers said, "Edwin, remember plants do not read college textbooks." When I look at some of the training that comes out of conventional farming, and where it comes from, not all of it is best for the farmer. Some of it is orchestrated by some of the vendors of some of the agricultural inputs. While I am not saying this is unethical, we have found that renewable framing is where it is at and where the future will expand.

CEOCFO: *Before we discuss your products and services, why efficient composting of high-quality compost is important: sun energy and kilocalories?*

Mr. Blosser: I was learning during my training process, particularly in the last two or three years, as we got into better photosynthesis process of plants, how we could make a lot of things happen. Then we could have a lot better return because we were managing how well the sun energy was taken in by the plants and how well the photosynthesis started. For example, when we looked at our trainings, we discovered somebody down in Florida took a CO₂ bottle out of a welding shop, and they set it underneath an orange tree. They cracked the bottle open slowly, as and it took two weeks for that bottle to actually get empty. It kept leaking out a little bit of CO₂ all critically at the right stages of setting fruit and so forth. In the end of that year, they had doubled the yield of any tree around them. That got me started into the idea that plants need CO₂ to interact with the sun rays, for it to produce a glucose, a sugar-like substance which is the beginning component of a brand-new cell in the growth process of plants. My point here is I learned that as we interact with soils, the soil is not just a media to stick plants in and then to stick seeds in and that is what helps the plants, it is a media that interacts and has a relationship with the plants the best. Not sure what was meant here One of those things is to produce CO₂. 70% of all microbial organisms, the unseen world in the soil is producing CO₂, which needs to defuse gas up into the air and come up against the bottom of the leaves. This is all part of that whole process and if you look at that process of "gasation" you can actually see how you can turn on the ability to harvest more sun.

Why is efficient composting of a high-quality compost so important? The reason is we compost plant material. We compost something that used to grow. Even if we are composting manure, and some of our customers compost only manure. If we compost manure, it is still plant material that goes through the stomach of an animal. That plant material had grown by using photosynthesis and the sun's energy in the form of kilocalories is what it grew by. When you look at this sun energy that went in there, that sun energy in the form of photosynthesis is very light. For example, a study was done a few hundred years ago by a scientist in Europe. He planted a 5 lb. tree in exactly 200 lbs. of soil. He only used water and at the end of five years, he took that tree out of that pot. It had been precisely 5 lbs. in the beginning and now it weighed 164 lbs. The net gain from start to finish was 159 lbs. That 159 lbs. equates to 2544 ounces if you take the 159 times 16. You have 2544 ounces of gain. The soil only weighed 199 lbs. and 14 ounces, meaning that only 2 ounces out of the 2544 came from the soil; 2542 ounces came from the sun. When you take it further and analyze that material, there is a lot more to plant material than just organic matter and the mineral content.

It is the sun's photosynthate material that first evaporates when you start decomposing plant material or manure. The basic definition of compost starts with compose, the word 'compose' means putting together, bringing together into one. We do not want to lose all of that sun energy, and that is why high-quality compost is so important because we capture that photosynthesis energy. Did we capture all of it?

Not even close. In the future, we will get better and we are getting better. We are getting ten to one hundred times more of it captured than our competition. We have our own compost site and do what we talk about in our own operation. We sell it from our own operations. We sell high-quality compost for \$260 a ton. The farmer receives more value than that and sometimes two and three times more because we capture the sun. We did not get into composting because we had something to get rid of, we got into it because it takes sun energy and transforms it into next year's crops.

CEOCFO: *Tell us about some of the products you offer farmers. Your 170X – why it is the most efficient and cost-effective composting equipment available on the market. Is it your new drum design, wider, all around an elite machine designed to enhance the microbial activity in the windrow?*

Mr. Blosser: Yes, yes, and yes. Our mission is to improve the life of the farmer. Our mission is to have people thrive and not just survive. So we come from the soil and go backwards which gives us the edge on the composting side of it. We manufacture composting equipment that is called Aeromaster Composting Systems. We promote our Aeromaster Composting Systems ACS which is the acronym for Aeromaster Composting Systems. The accessories that need to go along with that which aid our customers in introducing very high quality, highly active sun energy type compost. In the whole aspect of our 7.5 years of training, I was primarily focused on helping soil fertility and getting the maximum bang for our buck for the farmer. That is the forte and the strength of our organization today. The composting equipment is a tool. We have found that we can have the greatest impact of last year's sun energy for this year's crops. It becomes cumulative, meaning that in every set of five years, we have demonstrated that you have to benefits from your inputs five, four, three two, and one year ago, not just the inputs you put on this year. It helps you reduce your cost majorly. Some of our customers buy compost from our composting equipment customers. Some buy compost from our existing equipment customers and turn it into an extract where they make high-quality compost that has a lot of photosynthesis stored in it, into a liquid and then they run it through their planters, their irrigation, and they are even taking that to the upper echelons and many higher levels where it has made a lot of difference in softening soils and getting things turned around for the farmers.

I look at this from a high-level comprehensive systems approach to helping people. We have our compost turner, the 170X, which is one of our five models we have. The 170X is quickly becoming a flagship product, namely because our drum design is a larger than normal diameter but also because it is designed the best to handle every particle separately. When you do that, you can then dictate how much moisture is on every particle, what kinds of things you applied to every particle so that it does not evaporate and lose energy, and how you can keep the windrow truly aerobic and actually expand the microbial community to actually bind some of that sun energy into a protein which is why it becomes so valuable.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us some success stories such as in commercial composter, dairy, or with individual farmers?*

Mr. Blosser: For a commercial composting example, we had a guy who had eight front-end loaders that he used to turn all of his compost and dig rows, he felt like he had to because he was going through so much volume. He had a lot of rows 15 ft. high and he is running through there with those eight loaders. He ended up buying two 170X and now he wants to sell one of them because he only needs one 170X to replace the eight front-end loaders. When we do some comparisons, which he has, the cost of his machine going significantly more than 1400 or 1500 hours a year.

We have done a study where if you just locked it in at 1400 hours compared to some of the other equipment he could have bought, this saved him about \$47 thousand a year in operations cost. Well, you know that \$47 thousand in five years amounts to easily making it the savings get up to \$200 thousand which is more than that cost to start with. Most people when they buy a piece of equipment do not ask what it is going to cost them to buy and operate it for five years from buying and the final cost. If they ask that question, we are typically 40% to 50% lower cost than anyone else out there. If they ask how much it costs upfront, then they are going to have a completely different answer. Our equipment is a little higher. It is still the lowest cost turner out there in five-year ownership by far, and sometimes two or three times lower. That is by accident.

When we started manufacturing compost, we were completely oblivious. We went to Europe two different times in 1992 to learn how to turn sun energy into a protein through the process of composting. We came back and imported equipment. The manufacturer in Europe wanted us to find somebody here and we went to five different manufacturers and ultimately ended up starting our own. Nobody else focuses on this individual particle management. It requires the lowest amount of horsepower, diesel, and breakdowns. It is a chain of events that makes this.

CEOCFO: *It is evident from your website that Midwest Bio-Systems cares about the success of your farmer customers, as you don't just sell equipment and say good luck. You put a great deal of effort in educating your customers through workshops and Tele-classes. Why is that and is there a cost for workshops?*

Mr. Blosser: Our sincere desire is, to improve the lives of the people we touch. We have service beyond the sale because we are not just about making money and selling equipment. We know our core product is the improvement of the life of others. If you look at doing that, you have to look at education. I often kid people that our composting equipment prints money. We do not have a turner that costs you money because of the way you can value-add your final product. You go from a normal of \$5-\$20 of value to over \$200 and that is the improvement and harvesting of the sun instead of blowing off the sun when composting. Why do we not just sell equipment? Because you can take our equipment and produce a bad product or take our equipment and harvest the sun.

There are seventeen tele-classes on our website and another workshop coming up. It is a transformational type of event. The early-bird cost of our workshops is \$775. On top of that people who are buying equipment get 3% off their whole goods and 5% off their accessories that they buy, which oftentimes is more than five times more than the cost of their workshop. There are people there who do not buy equipment, just for the workshop. We had one guy be there for the ninth time in a year. Most of our people are there two or three times simply because it is so extensive that you just don't quite get everything the first time. We have customers that come up with tears in their eyes saying this is the best workshop they ever came to because it pertains to their needs.

CEO CFO: *What is the market like for you today? What is your geographic reach in the US and internationally?*

Mr. Blosser: We have sold composting equipment to 31 different countries. On top of that, we have been in three US territories. It has been and is a tremendous experience over the last 30 years. We reached our 30-year mark in February of this year and it has been an amazing story. If I could print out my life story, you would think it would be a fable because it is unreal all that we have been able to do.

CEO CFO: *How do you reach potential customers? Is it through dealers or direct sales?*

Mr. Blosser: It is a word-of-mouth and referrals business more than anything. We do have some dealers but the best way is to just call our office. We have the dealer contact and we will work with you directly. We tailor the needs to the customer's desires. We have a support center simply because we are worldwide and we have to be here.

CEO CFO: *Where will future growth come from; more products, expanding your reach and potential customers?*

Mr. Blosser: Future growth will come through larger commercial composters, who are excited and sharing, large dairy farms sharing. There is just a lot of new partnerships that are forming in all kinds of ways through referral type partnerships, contingencies and actual dealers. We love them all and try to do a fair system so everybody has a proper process. The education experience is one requirement. We are planning a process where we are getting a new facility built to expand our production. We are actively promoting to various communities on how to increase their business.

CEO CFO: *In closing, why is Midwest Bio-Systems and your Aeromaster Compost Equipment important to the future of farming?*

Mr. Blosser: Our very simple statement that we make consistently is "Most people struggle to have a profitable composting operation; Aeromaster composting equipment produces quality compost at less cost in a fraction of the time." This allows our customers to experience higher profits and a more successful future." Our part of this is we are allowing thousands of farmers, thousands of growers of all kinds, it does not matter if it is in the horticulture industry, or the golf course industry, to harvest more sun. We recognize that what we are doing is looking at the phenomenon of our normal conventional way of growing things has been outdated and has not taken into factor of how to harvest more sun, but

it is much about how to sell more products to the farmer, in our opinion. We will be able to have our part in changing our world by improving for better soils, better food, healthier animals and healthier human bodies.

I am involved in human nutrition and have been for many years since I got intimately involved in the nutrition of crops. It is to be a light to our world and turning waste into assets. It is the gift of God that I was called to. I felt this calling in 1984, and I am marveling that I will be forty years into this next year. I have no idea where God will take this but the journey has been a wonderful one. What I was able to share was something I learned from others, and through the grace of God and wisdom coming from God. All the honor and glory belongs to Him; it is not from me. This is to have the light of God shine in everybody's lives. What is amazing is that God chose us to be in this industry. I love what I do, I am passionate with what I do, but not for me, but for the people we help and the God I serve.

