



Waves of change

CAAR director embraces change, encourages retailers to do the same

By Heather Hudson

If there's one thing Priscila Vansetti knows, it's change.

Born and raised amid flourishing sugar cane fields and citrus orchards in her native Brazil, Vansetti entered the crop protection business with DuPont almost the minute she graduated from the University of São Paulo as an agricultural engineer.

For 15 years she worked in DuPont's crop protection division across Latin America before she and her family relocated to the US, in Wilmington, Delaware, where the headquarters of DuPont is located. For 12 years her focus was on Research, Development and commercialization projects to bring new technology and crop protection products to growers.

Today, you'll find her in Mississauga, Ont., where she's the business director for DuPont Canada's crop protection business, a CropLife Canada board member, as well as CropLife Canada liaison and board member for CAAR.

In Canada for less than two years, her diverse experience introduces an interesting perspective on the concept of change, arguably agriculture's only constant.

"What strikes me is that there's a lot in common among countries," she said.

"More and more, we're realizing we're a much smaller world, where global trade, the quest for innovation, sustainability and profitability are the realities and fundamentals in agriculture everywhere. Technology gaps are closing faster, standards are becoming much more similar in terms of quality and safety."

Vansetti speaks from experience when she suggests growers, retailers and manufacturers who enjoy the most success are also the most innovative and adaptable in the face of great change.

"We talk a lot about how things are changing, how much our value chain is changing in Canada, acquisitions in the marketplace, farms becoming bigger, new players in the segment, etc. People talk about adapting to change and embracing change, but success lies in how you make change your competitive advantage, how you keep changing the value curve, to be in the forefront," she added.

"That takes agility and letting go of old ways. That takes seeing things through different lenses" she said.

"We are in a time now in Canada when you look at our value chain – from distributors to retailers to growers – there's a lot of change going on. I'm seeing retailers adapting with new business models and responding to the changing needs of their growers."

When it comes to adapting to a new reality, Vansetti could teach a master class. Through all of her relocations, she says her enthusiasm for meeting new people, learning about new cultures and different aspects of the agriculture business has kept things exciting and interesting. She and her husband came to Canada alone; their son is attending university in Washington, D.C.

"There's always a steep learning curve. I never make the mistake of thinking that I know what I'm coming to. Being in so many places, our personal and professional way of approaching a new location or job is coming with an open mind and an open heart and learning from people as fast as we can. I'm amazed at every corner," said Vansetti.

As CropLife Canada liaison on the CAAR board, Vansetti hopes to offer and gain more insight into the industry's big issues.

"I think it's really important to dedicate part of our time, give back and be part of the bigger community and help shape some of the thinking. We're not able to do anything in isolation."

For now, she's enjoying her home's proximity to the music and arts scene in Toronto. She and her husband have already travelled as far east as Prince Edward Island, through the Prairies, the Rockies and the splendors of British Columbia.

Change has never been more welcome. ♦

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Priscila Vansetti, CropLife Canada liaison to CAAR board