

EuropaBio sat down with new Member Lallemand, to find out what fires them up for the future of industrial biotechnology

Interview with Bill Nankervis, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Lallemand Group of Companies



About Bill Nankervis

Bill holds a BSc in Mechanical Engineering and started his career in the chemical industry in South Africa and the UK (for ICI) before joining Anchor Yeast in South Africa. He relocated to the USA in 2007 to lead Lallemand's Biofuels & Distilled Spirits business and, in 2011, he resettled in France (Toulouse) to assume leadership of the Specialties Division of the Group. He moved back to North America in 2014 in preparation for taking on the role of Executive VP & COO responsible for all business units and operations worldwide.

1) Lallemand is poised at an exciting time for industrial biotechnology – where do you see your greatest opportunities?

At Lallemand we are passionate about Yeast and Bacteria and about Biotechnology in general. We are fortunate that there are so many opportunities for further development in applications for yeast, bacteria and their derivatives. We have organised ourselves to be able to bring focus to different market areas and have more than 10 business units, each dedicated to researching, developing, producing and marketing products and solutions for customers and partners operating within those markets. We have big dreams about the future potential and I honestly believe each of these units is still in the development phase of what we can imagine delivering in future. Addressing the environment and climate crisis, improving plant health and productivity, food security and safety (with bio-preservation for example), animal and human health are all areas of great opportunity in addition to the more traditional food ingredient and beverage industries.

2) How has the company changed over the years as technologies advance?

We strive to be one of the leading players in all the areas that we chose to put effort and focus into. We are fortunate that this approach and the opportunities in the Biotechnology space have allowed us a long track record of growth as a Group.



Naturally this brings a lot of change over the years! Key to supporting this is ongoing reinvestment in our capabilities. Human resources are the most important in that respect and I am proud to be one of the leaders of a tremendously talented, committed and diverse team around the World. In addition, funding ongoing research and development, both internally and with key partners, as well as investment in production capacity and the supply chain that goes with that make us a significantly different organisation than just 10 years ago. Our core values, passion and vision however remain unchanged.

3) How is Lallemand planning to grow in Europe?

Our growth is driven by listening to our customers and partners and a willingness "to try". Even if we do not have a ready solution, perhaps it is possible if we just try! That ethos and not fearing failure, using customer complaints as one vector for innovation (for example) is applied not only in Europe but across all our businesses around the World. I am convinced there remain many opportunities in Europe and we will continue to look for those that are right for us and invest accordingly.

We are encouraged by the European Commission's Green Deal ambitions turning challenges into opportunities and ensuring a sustainable future economy. It is essential that there is an appropriate framework in Europe to encourage ongoing investment and innovation in Biotechnology if we hope to realise all the potential benefits Industrial Biotechnology has to offer our World.

4) How is your skills profile changing as the company grows?

Encouraging an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit and the ability to work both autonomously and in teams continues to be essential for Lallemand. Similarly developing young people who will ensure our future success. Skills profiles have changed as we have grown and will continue to evolve with the digital age and the need for specific new kinds of skills as technology develops.

