HARVEST PARTNERS woos retailers, offers more to its members

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. (April 12, 2002) – The HARVEST PARTNERS® preferred customer program has launched a campaign to develop partnerships with retailers interested in increasing sales to rural consumers.

HARVEST PARTNERS, now in its 10th year, is the first and most comprehensive loyalty-based program to serve the agricultural/rural marketplace.

"We believe HARVEST PARTNERS provides an exciting and effective conduit for companies to reach an often overlooked and under-served market," said Jeff Klock, program manager for the HARVEST PARTNERS program at BASF. "This is really the only customer relationship building tool available that solely targets rural consumers."

This is a marketplace HARVEST PARTNERS knows well. The loyalty program has more than 1.2 million members who spend about $70 million in household income annually. By working with HARVEST PARTNERS Country Connection point purchasing program, retailers can offer goods and services to program members.

The campaign targets retailers seeking to build their businesses in rural areas by offering a partnership with HARVEST PARTNERS to benefit from the program's existing brand awareness. Members have an historical response rate of 4 percent to 5 percent to Country Connection offers.

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“This is an excellent program that benefits our members and our partners,” Klock said. “This provides services and products our members want, and by reaching just a small percentage of these customers, retail partners have the potential to greatly affect their bottom line.”

HARVEST PARTNERS was founded in 1992 as an incentive program for growers who purchased specific crop-protection products. BASF, which took over HARVEST PARTNERS in 2000 when it acquired American Cyanamid, is committed to expanding the program.

Traditionally, HARVEST POINTS award credits were earned by purchasing designated crop-protection products. However, during the past two years the program has expanded to offer grower-members point-earning opportunities that fully reflect their lifestyles, Klock added.

These opportunities include long-distance service offered through Univance Telecommunications; the HARVEST PARTNERS Mastercard offered through Capital One, which will become available in 2002; and legal and financial services through ARAG® Group.

“Loyalty programs such as HARVEST PARTNERS work because they offer services members need and desire,” Klock said.

According to independent interviews with consumers by Total Research Corporation:

- 60 percent of consumers say they spend 27 percent more with a company after joining their loyalty program;
- 29 percent sign up for additional services after joining such a program; and
- 63 percent encourage others to join their favorite programs.

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Since its inception in 2000, 13 businesses have become Country Connection partners, including Angling and Hunting Adventures, Conoco, EarthLink, General Mills and Sears.

HARVEST PARTNERS managers say their goal is to double the number of partners through the current campaign.

To learn more about the HARVEST PARTNERS preferred customer program, visit the Web site at www.harvestpartners.com. For information on Country Connection partnerships, contact Mark Anderson at (877) 987-9958, or by e-mail at maranderson@carlson.com.

The BASF Agricultural Products business in North America markets a range of innovative crop protection materials and systems that enable growers to increase their cost-efficiency as well as their crop yield potential. Its headquarters are in Research Triangle Park, N.C. It is a unit of the BASF Global Agricultural Products Division, located in Mount Olive, N.J.

BASF is a transnational chemical company that aims to increase and sustain its corporate value through growth and innovation. The company's product range includes high-value chemicals, plastics, colorants and pigments, dispersions, automotive and industrial coatings, agricultural products and fine chemicals as well as crude oil and natural gas. The BASF approach to integration, known in German as "Verbund," is one of its particular strengths, ensuring cost leadership and a unique competitive advantage. With sales in 2000 of about Euro 36 billion (circa USD 34 billion) and a workforce of 90,000 employees, BASF is one of the world's leading chemical companies. BASF acts in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Development. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchanges in Frankfurt (BAS), London (BFA) and New York (BF). The company's U.S. crop protection Internet address is http://www.agproducts.bASF.com.

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