

Roger Jacobi founded AgriLawn in 1991, with a “We Care” attitude. An Oklahoma State University-educated agronomist and International Society of Arborists-certified tree care professional, Jacobi began planning for his future early on by turning AgriLawn into an employee-owned company. Reflecting on two decades in the business, Jacobi talks about his company and how the industry has changed.

Why did you and your wife Ramona, choose to become an employee-owned company in 2007? We were looking at options to remove ourselves from the business over time, while maintaining our commitment to our employees and customers. When we learned more about the employee share ownership plan (ESOP) model, it was a great fit. We chose this route as opposed to entertaining buyout offers from national players.

What benefits do you find in being an employee-owned company? Even prior to establishing the ESOP, we strived to create an ownership culture within the company. Now that our company is valued on an annual basis, the employees see they have a stake in the outcome.

How has the industry changed in the 20 years you've been in business? Thanks to the Internet, it's easier to access resources such as product manufacturers, trade associations and universities, to enhance our field

knowledge. Also, the introduction of new products has broadened our pest management options. And many new technologies are available to help manage the business.

What challenges did you face growing your business to its present size? Making sure we were properly staffed at critical times to handle growth cycles. Also, adding employees who had more knowledge, experience and contacts than me in areas such as information technology/networking, marketing, compliance with Department of Labor regulations, and maintaining our fleet of trucks and equipment.

Your company has participated in a number of charitable activities, including GreenCare for Troops. Why are those programs important to the organization? We have a large military presence in our area (Tinker Air Force Base),

and we are proud to help these families in some small way. We look for opportunities to help out the larger community, and we enjoy the camaraderie these experiences provide.

What challenges do you see in the coming years for the industry? Regulatory pressures are always on the radar, as is being able to attract desirable job applicants to support growth. Also, maintaining margins that are sustainable — in light of increased competition and the volatile costs of fuel and fertilizers.

What are the biggest opportunities moving forward? Educating and supporting field and office staff to deliver exceptional customer service; valuing professionalism; committing to excellence; and maintaining positive relationships with coworkers, customers, vendors and regulatory agencies.



COMPANY: AgriLawn

FOUNDED: 1991

HEADQUARTERS: Oklahoma City, OK

TITLE: Founder/President

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY: 25

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT: PLANET, ISA, NPMA, Pesticide Rules Advisory Committee member (Oklahoma), Turfgrass Advisory Committee member (OSU at OKC)

SERVICE AREA: Oklahoma City and surrounding communities

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: 1

EMPLOYEES: 34

SERVICES: fertilization and weed management on lawns; targeted insect and disease management on lawns; plant health care for trees and shrubs; perimeter pest management; indoor pest management; soil testing; lime and sulfur applications; aerations; and seeding

HOBBIES: running marathons, gun range target practice, reading, watching sports

FAMILY: wife Ramona, and children Jessica, Juliana and Justin

WEBSITE: AgriLawn.com

“WHILE PERFECTION IS UNATTAINABLE, IT IS CERTAINLY A GOAL TO REACH FOR EVERY DAY.”

— THE START OF AGRILAWN'S MISSION STATEMENT