

GROW MORE, CONSERVE MORE AND MAKE AGRICULTURE BETTER

THAT'S THE PROMISE OF BUTTONWILLOW WAREHOUSE COMPANY.



Buttonwillow Warehouse Company

Buttonwillow Warehouse Company is a family-owned business that has proudly served California growers for over 50 years. Founded by Donald Houchin in 1963, BWC began as a grain elevator and warehouse, expanding into fertilizer and crop protection product distribution in 1970. Today, BWC operates 11 service locations across 14 counties in the heart of California's Central Valley, along with BWC Agro de Mexico in Central Mexico. Through each generation, BWC's dedication to our people, communities and agricultural innovation has never wavered.

Buttonwillow attributes sustained success to the simple premise of putting people first. By fostering such an environment, BWC successfully retains a world-class workforce, supports the communities we serve and consistently meets the evolving needs of our customers, season after season.

We offer growers a comprehensive portfolio of products and services to maximize crop output and quality. Our full-service offerings include agronomic guidance, crop protection and nutrition products, field scouting, custom application and irrigation management services. Our team services crops including almonds, pistachios, silage corn for dairy cattle, alfalfa, wheat and cotton.



OUR MISSION & VISION

Mission

To deliver best-in-class products, recommendations, and services that consistently add value and enhance the profitability of our customers' operations.

Vision

To achieve excellence every single day, ensuring customers' success and continued prominence in the industry.

At BWC, we attribute our success to our core values: **integrity**, **community** and **innovation**. We always operate with the highest **integrity**, ensuring honesty and transparency in all our dealings. We support and protect our people and **communities**, fostering a robust and people-first culture that prioritizes the well-being of our workforce and the communities we serve. Additionally, we continuously strive to improve through **innovation**, seeking out new ideas and technologies to meet the evolving needs of our customers and enhance the quality of our products and services.



While our goal is straightforward, achieving it is a complex endeavor that demands the right people, innovative solutions, a commitment to environmental sustainability and strong community leadership. Our dedicated team embodies these essential elements that prioritize the human side of agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley. Led by Clay Houchin and the entire Buttonwillow team, our focus on these core values drives our success and fosters a positive impact within our communities.

The owners of Buttonwillow are still engaged with the daily operations, working out of the main offices in Bakersfield, California. If someone has a question or concern, he or she can easily pick up the phone and speak directly with them, which is a level of personal relationship you don't find in many companies. Unlike other retailers where the main office and owners are remote, at Buttonwillow, customers have direct access to our leadership team, enhancing the employee experience regardless of tenure.

Founder and current president Donald Houchin, and Clay Houchin, who serves as chief executive officer, prioritize fostering a healthy and safe work environment while cultivating a diverse company culture. We challenge our team to continually seek improvement while upholding the foundational values that have guided Buttonwillow Warehouse Company since our inception. Central to our company's mission is a commitment to delivering consistent value to every grower customer through dedicated training, ample resources, and unwavering support for our teams.

As an independent, family-owned business deeply rooted in California agriculture, Buttonwillow Warehouse Company remains dedicated to our people-first approach, a legacy established by Donald Houchin that continues to shape our growth strategy and business practices today.



Clay Houchin, CEO of Buttonwillow Warehouse Company

PEOPLE-FIRST: THE “BUTTONWILLOW WAY”

At Buttonwillow Warehouse Company (BWC), we prioritize integrity, community, and innovation in all our operations. These core values are instilled in our new employees to ensure they always operate with the highest integrity. Our commitment to community emphasizes safety for our employees and the communities we serve, ensuring everyone returns home safely daily. Innovation is another cornerstone of our philosophy, driving us toward continuous learning and improvement. Our crop advisors and service technicians regularly attend educational classes and engage in internal and external communications to stay updated on the latest agronomic advancements.

Dave German, Central Region Sales Manager at Buttonwillow, embodies the “Buttonwillow Way” by highlighting the company's investment in our people. Over his 30-year tenure, German has grown within the company, facing new challenges daily due to fluctuating insect and disease pressures and changing conditions, making his role exciting and dynamic. He describes the “Buttonwillow Way” as business-oriented yet family-friendly, attributing his success and growth to the loyalty and support our company provides to our team.

To maintain a skilled workforce, BWC invests significantly in professional development. We hire college students and potential candidates, integrating them through a structured learning process. This includes working with senior salespeople, gaining hands-on experience and pursuing necessary certifications like the PCA license and Certified Crop Advisor program. Our Level One program allows new hires to learn the ropes over one to two years without the pressure of immediate sales, focusing instead on understanding crops, products and customer interactions. We hold regular agronomy meetings and innovation contests to encourage knowledge sharing and the practical application of new technologies, ensuring our team is well-prepared to deliver value and drive sustainable growth for our customers.

As operators of our own produce and crop production, every new product or service — whether crop protection like fungicides and pesticides, fertilizers or new mechanical inputs — is first validated on our own farmers' acres. We then collaborate closely with select customers to gauge performance and potential benefits, ensuring that innovations bring tangible improvements for all stakeholders.

Leveraging his extensive experience, Dave German emphasizes Buttonwillow's commitment to workforce safety and advancement when hiring new pest control advisors (PCAs) or certified crop advisors (CCAs).

The Buttonwillow approach to people is grounded in practical programs that drive success in attracting and retaining top talent. About eight years ago, the leadership team introduced the Buttonwillow training program, which sets specific requirements and milestones for new employees. Before working with customers, every new hire must meet these predetermined standards to understand the job fundamentals and industry basics while building rapport with new and long-standing customers.

For instance, Buttonwillow PCAs and CCAs complete internal training that surpasses certification requirements. This process takes up to four years, with each new PCA or CCA conducting and presenting original agronomic research to the entire Buttonwillow team before working directly with customers. This approach ensures a well-prepared and trained workforce and results in strong in-field performance and fewer crop issues. It also fosters long-term team members who excel at collaborating with growers, product manufacturers, and other Buttonwillow team members.

This innovative, formalized process results in a qualified workforce inclined to remain with Buttonwillow. Our PCAs and CCAs are well-equipped to make product recommendations and understand why the products and services they recommend are the most effective choices for the crops in their region. This investment in developing a skilled workforce translates to employee loyalty and long-term service to the company.

CUSTOMERS

In the agricultural industry, reputation is paramount. At BWC, we understand the importance of trust and credibility in our relationships with growers and the broader community.

Our partnership-driven recommendations are always made with the best interests of the growers in mind, fostering long-term, sustainable relationships. Buttonwillow's PCAs strive to be trusted partners with their farmers, earning our place at the table through consistent, reliable support. Our family-oriented approach extends beyond business, as BWC continues to invest in our communities, making a positive impact both in the short and long term. Our dedication to our growers and communities sets BWC apart and underscores our commitment to excellence.

We also prioritize fostering dynamic and strategic relationships with our customers, whether they are long-term or short-term. Our approach is rooted in innovation and proactive engagement, ensuring we deliver the latest technological advancements and knowledge directly to our growers. Our PCAs and CCAs work year-round alongside growers, maintaining monthly crop inspections to ensure customer satisfaction. We're committed to promptly addressing any concerns or issues growers bring to us, offering tailored solutions with contingency plans (Plan A, Plan B and Plan C) based on their preferences and needs.

With over 30 years in the industry, German has firsthand experience showing how short-term gains can lead to long-term losses. That's why at BWC, we prioritize transparency and delivering genuine value. We aim to be recognized for selling products and providing innovative solutions that truly benefit our growers. Building trust is integral to our business philosophy — it defines how we operate and ensures our customers can rely on us for years to come.

SAFETY

Safety is a top priority across all operations at BWC. We maintain an in-house safety department that conducts regular inspections at our branches to guarantee a safe working environment for our employees.

We have implemented a comprehensive safety program that includes quarterly audits, which are conducted at each branch location four times per year. These audits cover a range of areas, including DOT compliance for all vehicles, adherence to established BWC safety rules, and ensuring that all office permits, warehouse inventory, and shipping documentation records are accurate and up to date. We hold ourselves to a high standard, with a minimum score of 95% expected on these audits.

In addition to quarterly audits, we conduct monthly safety meetings at each branch, where we record and review any near misses. This proactive approach allows us to continuously improve our safety practices and prevent future incidents. Plus, all new employees, except sales personnel, are required to complete Asmark training on their first day of hire. This national program for retailers ensures compliance with DOT, EPA, and OSHA regulations and includes the Responsible Ag program, which certifies that each branch is committed to environmental, health, safety, and security standards for both the branch and the surrounding community. Every BWC branch is Responsible Ag compliant.

We have also equipped all BWC vehicles, including those used by sales personnel, with cameras. These cameras track speed, record accidents, and capture near-miss incidents, helping to protect our drivers and the community at large. This initiative underscores our commitment to safety on the road.

To further enhance our environmental safety measures, BWC has undertaken an aggressive program to upgrade all yards with concrete surfaces. This initiative aims to eliminate groundwater contamination, improve containment to prevent water from leaving our yards, and construct lined retention ponds at all locations to ensure no water escapes into city drainage systems. These efforts demonstrate our dedication to protecting both our employees and the environment.

Recently, during the construction of a new dry liquid blending facility, our safety manager identified potential hazards in the design of specific steps. With a proactive approach, we engaged our contractors promptly to redesign the steps and eliminate any risk of accidents. At another facility, challenges with the design of a liquid blender posed safety concerns during material handling tasks. Following the safety manager's recommendations, we implemented new standards and safety measures to enhance employee safety while maintaining operational excellence.

These proactive safety measures exemplify our commitment to the well-being of our team members and in the field at BWC.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Buttonwillow Warehouse Company is committed to continuous innovation in agricultural practices to enhance crop yield and quality through tailored solutions. We actively research and introduce new products, like alternative fertility combinations, to optimize agricultural outcomes. BWC also emphasizes open dialogue and collaboration with customers to refine their offerings and drive mutual success.

Innovation is integral to BWC's operations, extending beyond conventional agricultural practices by leveraging cutting-edge technologies for optimal plant health and fertility management. For instance, our recent investment in a new dry liquid blending facility enhances operational safety and efficiency. By redesigning facility layouts based on safety feedback, BWC demonstrates continuous improvement and innovation.

Buttonwillow distinguishes itself in agricultural innovation by prioritizing comprehensive plant health and fertility management. We adopt new technologies for sustainable crop yield maximization, integrating biotic products and biological materials to enhance soil health and promote sustainable agriculture. Continuously investing in technologies that boost production efficiency and effectiveness, paired with our proactive approach, ensures competitiveness while providing growers with cutting-edge solutions for long-term productivity and environmental sustainability.

For example, over the past 24 months, BWC has showcased leading-edge agronomic solutions like Aprovia® Top and Miravis® Prime. Specifically, a key example of BWC's innovative spirit is our adoption and promotion of Miravis Prime for powdery mildew control in 2024, showcasing our proactive approach to addressing the needs of grape growers. Buttonwillow's ability to deliver ROI-focused messaging and agronomic solutions to our customers has served us well with our growers and underscores our strategic vision. Our approach involves trialing these products to understand their agronomic fit and the value they bring to growers. This thorough process ensures that the solutions they adopt address the specific agronomic challenges our customers face while delivering a positive return on investment.

Buttonwillow challenges our partners to provide solutions that make sense not only for our business but, more importantly, for our customers. By focusing on raising the bar with respect to technology, we help growers increase the quality and marketable yield of their crops. This approach is especially crucial in addressing issues like poor commodity prices, ensuring that growers achieve high-quality fruit and a positive ROI.

For example, to help customers make informed investments in their crops, BWC developed AgriKnowmics, an in-house software application. This versatile tool is available both as a cloud-based platform and in stand-alone versions for iPhone, iPad, and laptops. AgriKnowmics allows partnered laboratories to upload soil, tissue, and water analysis results, presenting the data in an easily understandable format aligned with Justus von Liebig's philosophy.

The software enables the Buttonwillow team to group large sets of samples for program evaluations while also allowing for detailed analysis of individual samples. AgriKnowmics tracks and compares individual fields over a single season or multiple years, leveraging thousands of data points on almonds to create grower-specific standards, BWC seasonal standards or UC guidelines.

This powerful tool helps our customers focus their fertilizer investments on areas of greatest need, providing flexibility to adapt to crop load and weather fluctuations. We offer AgriKnowmics free of charge to our full-service customers, empowering them to make sound agronomic decisions with confidence.

Our approach to innovation is meticulous and results-driven, beginning with a thorough assessment of new technologies across agronomic sectors. Collaborating closely with customers for trials provides valuable insights that drive tangible business improvements. Plus, with a diverse range of crops, we ensure swift problem-solving and adaptation to challenges, future-proofing their offerings and engaging with crop protection manufacturers to deliver high-ROI agronomic tools. This ongoing dialogue enables optimal product and service delivery, reinforcing our reputation as an innovative leader in agricultural solutions.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Buttonwillow Warehouse Company exemplifies a solid commitment to environmental stewardship by integrating sustainable practices into our core operations, aligning with our mission and values. We prioritize sustainable solutions to enhance agricultural sustainability and minimize our ecological footprint. Our commitment is evident in BWC's proactive adoption of softer chemistries in insecticides, which safeguards beneficial insects and reduces chemical drift into neighboring communities. Additionally, BWC emphasizes soil health management strategies to optimize soil carbon ratios and fertility, ensuring long-term productivity while upholding environmental responsibility.

In California's highly regulated agricultural industry, BWC surpasses regulatory standards, ensuring compliance and exceeding environmental requirements. CEO Houchin sets a proactive environmental philosophy for BWC, advocating for staying ahead of regulations to maintain environmental integrity and prevent future issues. Significant water capture, drainage, and recycling investments across all 12 locations mitigate environmental risks and potential regulatory impacts. These enhancements benefit Buttonwillow and contribute to industry-wide sustainability by preventing incidents such as chemical spills.

Furthermore, BWC focuses on preserving the effectiveness of crop nutrients and protection products through advanced soil and production system knowledge. Our agronomy team integrates organic products, selective chemistries,

insect growth regulators and precise nutrient applications to optimize field, grove or orchard management. This holistic approach maximizes efficacy while minimizing environmental impact, embodying BWC's commitment to practical and innovative environmental sustainability strategies.

All 12 Buttonwillow locations hold ResponsibleAg certification, ensuring safe storage and handling of crop protection products in compliance with environmental, health, safety and security regulations. This commitment safeguards the well-being of our employees, customers and communities, supported by state-of-the-art facilities equipped with advanced safety and product-handling technologies.

By embedding environmental sustainability throughout our operations, BWC enhances agricultural productivity and sets a benchmark for responsible stewardship in the industry, ensuring long-term viability and community well-being.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & AG RETAIL

Community is integral to the fabric of BWC. It embodies the towns our company and team members proudly call home and signifies our leadership within the broader agricultural retail community nationwide. Beyond mere participation in local events such as food drives and school activities, our engagement is pivotal. These efforts form a vital support system, nurturing our workforce, their families, and the entire community we serve.

At the local community level, Buttonwillow goes above and beyond. In addition to backing local community initiatives such as food pantries and service projects, Buttonwillow annually awards eight scholarships to the dependents of our team members. This program supports young community members, strengthens ties with esteemed agricultural universities like Cal Poly and Fresno State, and nurtures future PCAs, agronomists and other pivotal contributors to the agricultural retail industry.

Clay Houchin and other influential members of the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) recently met with U.S. Congressman John Duarte and his team to address pressing issues facing California agriculture, including labor shortages, water management concerns and transportation challenges.

Houchin's leadership extends beyond the San Joaquin Valley. He serves on the ARA's board of directors, leading environmental sustainability-focused initiatives. Additionally,

BWC is represented on the board of directors for Western Plant Health, an organization dedicated to advancing environmentally responsible agricultural products. Houchin also holds the position of chairman of the board for Aligned Ag Distributors, a consortium of independent agricultural retailers collaborating to ensure comprehensive product and service offerings for our customers.

Furthermore, BWC collaborates closely with the California Association of Pest Control Advisers (CAPCA), the state's main professional association representing most PCAs. This collaboration ensures that our PCA training and development programs are designed to meet rigorous standards, provide top-tier service to customers, and promote responsible stewardship of advanced agronomic solutions.

Our commitment to our community underscores deep-seated values of support and collaboration. By actively engaging in initiatives that benefit our surroundings, BWC contributes positively to the welfare and growth of our home areas. This dedication reflects our integral role as a responsible corporate citizen, driven not by obligation but by a genuine passion within the BWC team.



WHY BUTTONWILLOW WAREHOUSE COMPANY IS THE AG RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Buttonwillow Warehouse Company embodies the essence of the ARA Retailer of the Year award, excelling in people, technology innovation, safety and community. For over five decades, BWC has been a cornerstone of excellence in California's San Joaquin Valley, driven by a steadfast commitment to these pillars.

People are at the heart of BWC's success. Under the visionary leadership of Clay Houchin, the third-generation leader of his family business, our company's dedicated team cultivates a culture focused on continuous growth and development. This dedication is reflected in comprehensive employee training programs that empower our team to deliver unparalleled service and expertise to growers.

Technology Innovation is seamlessly integrated into BWC's operations, ensuring that our customers benefit from the latest advancements in agronomy. By embracing cutting-edge technologies and providing forward-thinking solutions, BWC helps our growers maximize crop yields and enhance profitability. Our commitment to innovation has driven double-digit growth since 2014, demonstrating our ability to adapt and thrive in a dynamic industry.

Safety is paramount at BWC. We uphold the highest safety standards across all operations, from fieldwork to product handling. Our rigorous focus on safety ensures the well-being of our employees, customers and our broader community, reinforcing trust and reliability.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of our ethos. As one of the last remaining family-owned independent ag retailers in the region, BWC is deeply invested in the local communities we serve. Buttonwillow's initiatives support local economies, enhance sustainability and foster strong community relationships.

Buttonwillow's holistic approach – combining a laser focus on our people, cutting-edge innovation, stringent safety practices, and robust community involvement – sets us apart as the premier candidate for the ARA Retailer of the Year award. Our unwavering dedication to our core values and doing what is best for our growers and their business, as well as our community, drives our success. This commitment elevates our presence within the agricultural industry.

In a world dominated by corporations, we take pride in maintaining a people-first, family-owned business culture and values. This commitment to integrity and excellence, rather than merely focusing on quarterly numbers, is what makes BWC truly deserving of this recognition. Buttonwillow Warehouse Company is not just an ag retailer but a beacon of excellence and a model for others to follow.



BWC is a proud sponsor of local education systems including Cal Poly and their baseball team.



BWC Grower's Appreciation BBQ at Woodlake Branch.



Annual BWC Thanksgiving food drive giving back to local communities.



CEO Clay Houchin with U.S. Congressman Jimmy Panetta, ARA President Daren Coppock and others discussing all things agriculture in California while also honoring Jimmy Panetta with a 2023 Legislator of the Year award.



BWC is 28th on the CropLife Top 100 list of high-performing ag retailers.

Annual Dispatcher Meeting

BWC holds an annual dispatcher meeting to enhance learning and training for our customer service team.



BWC Annual
Crop Adviser
Training

Annual crop adviser training to provide the best support for our customers.



Employees at HQ enjoying BWC's annual costume contest.



BWC Field Day at Elk Grove Ranch was used as a learning experience for crop advisers. Attendees heard from key speakers and were given visual demonstrations on key functions at the ranch.

SCHOLARSHIP Award Winner



Ondina Alfaro

"I am honored to receive this scholarship and continue my journey towards receiving an MPH from the University of California, Berkeley. I plan to integrate my education to continue serving vulnerable populations at higher risk of disease by combating root causes of health disparities and promoting health equity."

BWC provides 7 scholarships for college students in the area to pursue their education in agriculture-related fields.



BWC crop advisers continually do research and ask questions to provide the most sustainable practices for their customers. The final test is always the field, greenhouse, or orchard.



BWC crop advisors assist other local companies in providing learning opportunities for growers in the area.



Innovation Trial presentation competition held for entry-level crop advisors.



BWC opened a new location in Kerman, CA, and held an event open to city officials, local farmers, and suppliers to celebrate.



BWC team members attending the ARA Winter Board meeting. Hearing from the USDA and EPA.



Clay Houchin and other ARA members meet with U.S. Congressman John Duarte and staff to discuss issues facing California agriculture including labor, water and transportation.



Volunteer Day, an annual gathering, allows BWC team members to give back to their community in a variety of ways.