

# Chris and Jaclyn Hancock

Dade City, Florida



Hancock Seed Company

## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Chris and Jaclyn Hancock:*

Hancock Seed Company was originally founded by Richard and Francine Hancock in 1978. However, the company's roots go back an additional generation when Francine's grandfather moved to Florida from Poland and started to farm different varieties of seed. Jaclyn Hancock, daughter-in-law to Richard and Francine and co-owner of the business, shared the story behind this multi-generational company and how she and her husband, Chris Hancock, are working hard to produce better quality seeds at reasonable prices while supporting family farmers across the United States.

"Chris and I are both from Florida," she said. "I grew up in Tampa and he grew up in Pasco County working the family farm at a very young age. Before I met Chris, and fell in love with the rural lifestyle, I assumed I'd be living somewhere like New York City utilizing my Fine Arts Degree in

Interior Design. However, after we got married, I really got into the business and started learning more about it. For fun, we'd go ride the fields and check on the crops. I started to work in the office and eventually got into sales, farmer relations, purchasing and exporting seeds."

Both Chris and Jaclyn are passionate about Farmer Direct and working with family farmers. When Chris was a child, his parents, at times, struggled as farmers. They sold much of their crop to brokers who paid them pennies on the dollar. The brokers, who then sold the crop, would end up making all the money. Chris and Jaclyn have built a business that puts more money in the pockets of family farmers.

"I reach out to and work with farmers from all over the world," Jaclyn said. "I buy direct from them, thus bypassing the need for them to have to use a middleman. We buy in large quantities and make our money through volume sales. We've made a lot of brokers unhappy, but we're focused on supporting the farmers."

According to Jaclyn, the company really turned the corner eleven years ago when Chris put the wheels in motion to bring the business online.

Since then, the focus has been on providing exceptional customer service and ensuring customers have a successful planting. With an amazing office staff that's treated and cared for like family, Hancock Seed's incredible reputation extends well beyond Pasco County.

In addition to Hancock Seed Company, the Hancock's also formed a sister company called Hancock Environmental Seeding. As Jaclyn shared, this Woman Owned Business Enterprise has made a substantial impact on the industry in a relatively short amount of time and works

with some high profile clients. "The services we provide include, Hydro Seeding, Conventional Seed & Mulching, Pasture Seeding, Drill Seeding, Wildlife Food Plots, Property Improvement, Preservation/Reclamation Projects and Storm Water/Erosion Control Management. We've done work with large companies and have a territory that includes the entire Southeast."

Looking ahead, Jaclyn remains very optimistic about the future of Hancock Seed, Hancock Environmental Seeding and the continued growth of their international export business. She's made contacts with farmers in India, Australia, Brazil and many other countries. Her goal is to further extend the company's international presence.

What advice does Jaclyn have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "It's not for the faint of heart," she laughed. "You have to be up for the challenge. Once you start something like that and have employees, you're in charge of families. If you don't do what you're supposed to do, those families don't get fed. Regardless of the pressure, there are lots of rewards if you do it. Above all, don't be afraid to try and don't be afraid to fail. We've failed with things. Don't get down on yourself when you fail. If you really want it, you have to keep going. It takes all kinds of successes and failures to see what works best."

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