

Global fruit genetics, R&D and licensing company Sun World has announced an agreement to be acquired by Bridgepoint, an international private equity group.

Bridgepoint will become a controlling shareholder alongside management and succeeds a transformative and successful period of ownership from Renewable Resources Group LLC and Vision Ridge Partners, [Sun World](#) said.

The Bridgepoint investment will support Sun World's plans to accelerate its growth strategy by building a broad-based genetics and technology platform for specialty fruit growers.

CEO David Marguleas, who will serve on the company's new board and hold an equity position in the company, said: "Our connection with the Bridgepoint team was undeniable from the first conversation".

"They understand and appreciate the extraordinary head start we enjoy in the sector after 30 years of breeding superior produce. And they share our vision of the many ways we can grow. To say we're 'excited' undersells what this new partnership means for Sun World."

Andrew Sweet, a Partner at Bridgepoint who leads the firm's investment activities across North America, said: "In partnering with Sun World, our ambition is for it to become a broader-based platform investment in fruit genetics with a considerable runway for long term growth."

"Sun World was part of the first wave of genetic innovation for produce, establishing a recurring royalty business model that has enabled it to prioritize its R&D innovation."

"Today it enjoys a market-leading reputation with the largest growers, distribution partners and retailers globally, thanks to its cutting-edge molecular techniques and breeding processes. We expect to continue to invest in new technologies that benefit growers and consumers alike."

In addition to enhancing its intellectual property portfolio and core grape and stone fruit breeding operation, Sun World says it has begun work in a number of under-served crops and technology solutions that have strong global appeal.

The anticipated growth will be both organic and through investment and acquisition of new genetics and emerging technologies, all of which have the potential to add meaningful value for Sun World growers worldwide.

To facilitate the company's expansion, last year Sun World opened its new Center for

Innovation in California's San Joaquin Valley. The complex features a sophisticated fruit breeding and variety development operation, including specialized facilities for tissue culture and molecular breeding, and a 160-acre experimental research farm.

Sun World currently holds 300+ plant patents and the company views the Center for Innovation as an important advantage in advancing their pipeline of fruit genetics.

Sun World divested of its substantial farming, packing and marketing operation in 2019 to concentrate more fully on its breeding and licensing business.

J.P. Morgan Securities LLC served as the exclusive financial advisor on this transaction, whose terms were not disclosed. The transaction is expected to close in the second quarter of 2021, subject to customary conditions.