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By Michael Barker

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William Burgess takes the chair at BASIS

Burgess Farms chairman picks up the reins from Chris Clarke at the training and certification body



William Burgess

William Burgess has been named chairman of training and certification body BASIS.

Burgess, the chairman of Produce World and Burgess Farms, takes over from Chris Clarke, whose seven-year tenure came to an end in April.

BASIS chief executive Stephen Jacob described Burgess as an experienced businessman who "holds a raft of knowledge and contacts throughout the food and farming industry, making him the ideal candidate for the non-executive role."

Burgess trained and practiced as a chartered accountant before joining the family business, becoming chief executive of Produce World and Burgess Farms in 2000 and chairman in 2015.

"His current role sees him in an outward-facing position, with a large focus on networking with key stakeholders – an important skill that will be invaluable to BASIS," Jacob said.

Burgess himself added: "I hope to support and coach both Stephen and the BASIS board, give a strategic overview and offer insight into retail and consumer perspectives, which I feel will be increasingly important to the organisation going forwards.

"A big part of my role will be to chair board meetings and play a role in challenging the norm to help the organisation and its members to prosper. This is in context of an increasingly political environment where the food and farming industry is under increasing scrutiny over controls and training provision for the sector.

Burgess said that while Brexit and the incoming Agriculture Bill would pose a big challenge to BASIS members and its associated industries, there is also the opportunity to help shape policy.

"The UK has never had its own bespoke agricultural policy, so now is the time to ensure BASIS is known to key policymakers, while the government is more open to change," he said.

"I hope that during my tenure, we can raise awareness of BASIS' work and ensure that ministers are aware of the level of training on offer for farmers and advisers, as well as how this can play an important part in environmental protection and sustainability for our sectors."

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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