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By Christopher Clark
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This year promises to be very big for Hiram Thompson and Scot Morgan, and their success will be based on something too tiny to be seen by the naked eye.

The co-owners of **MTS Environmental Products** in Exeter recently launched a product with the potential to revolutionize the way municipalities and businesses treat wastewater. In keeping with the times, it is an all-natural, environmentally friendly approach to the age-old challenge of dealing with human and animal waste.

The two friends began working together 20 years ago, when they teamed up with Morgan's brother, Gerry, and silent partner Neil Stephens to create MTS Farm Supply. A decade ago, they broadened their focus and launched the environmental division.

It was a prescient move. Each year, MTS Environmental constitutes a larger percentage of their overall business. Next month, the business will move to a larger facility primarily because of the interest in its newest product.

Bio-Desolve is a liquid formed by adding marine microbes to humic carbon. They also throw in some molasses, yeast and water, in a proprietary mixture they have been working on for quite a while. The result is a black liquid, rich with hungry microbes.

When Bio-Desolve is added to a lagoon-based water treatment system or a septic tank or an industrial grease pit, the microbes spread out and stop the fats and oils from coagulating.

As a result, there are no nasty chunks of debris to clog up the treatment system or the drain.

"Normally, you have to drain a tank and scrape out all the sludge," says Thompson, 54. "With Bio-Desolve, there is virtually no sludge. Everything drains, and there's nothing to gum up the pumps, drains and other parts of the system. There's no need to use alum to break up the solid particles, so there are fewer chemicals in the water and there is a significant cost saving."

The product has multiple uses, including grease pits in restaurants and residential septic sewer systems. Several municipalities, including Exeter, Parkhill and Niagara-on-the-Lake, are using the product, as are 90 McDonald's restaurants in Ontario.

With so many happy customers, the next challenge for MTS has been getting the product distributed more widely. There's good news on that front as well.

"We expect to be in Home Hardware stores across Ontario by the end of the year," Thompson says. "And we're also talking to TSC Stores to sell with them."

The product is available now at the company's Exeter office.

It costs about \$75/year to treat a septic system for an average family of four. For that minor expense, homeowners can wait many years before having to dredge their septic field.

Even after dredging, a typical set up can suffer from sludge in drains and pumps, but the microbes clean out those areas as well.

Although much of their attention is on Bio-Desolve, Thompson and Morgan have plans to use the technology in other applications as well.

"We are working on a product that will do the same thing for soils, reinvigorate soils by using microbes," Morgan, 53, says. "This has become our lead product, and we think there are lots of uses for the technology."

As they prepare to move and potentially add to their workforce of a dozen, the MTS partners can thank the tiny microbe for all their success.

MTS Environmental Products

215 Pickard Rd.

Exeter

519-235-2808

1-800-294-9725

www.mtsenvironmental.ca