

Member news & Notes

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Aqua Science BY COLIN HEFFINGER

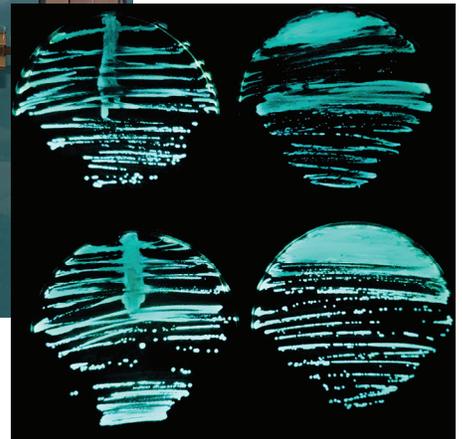
» Water is the essence of life. Its quality is essential throughout all ecosystems and levels of society, from drinking water to industrial water, to wastewater and beyond. Effectively testing water quality is at the forefront of sustaining our world – through the power of science. Using the marine bacterium *allivibrio fischeri*, a strand of bacteria that has been utilized for over 30 years to measure toxicity in water, foods, sediments, and soil, an emerging business known as Aqua Science is leading the path to future innovations in water testing for Delaware and beyond.

“Measuring toxicity levels is essential because you want to make certain that drinking water is safe,” states Iwona Evans, owner and CFO of Aqua Science. “Testing wastewater is really important because that water is released into waterways, which impacts local wildlife. We started providing water toxicity screening tests to Delaware and the neighboring states. We want to make sure the water is healthy in Delaware and the surrounding area.”

Aqua Science, founded by Iwona Evans and Alan McQuillin, began in Newark as a group of highly trained experts for *allivibrio fischeri* production and reagent manufacturing in February 2020. Together they provided the spark to create and grow the business with



Left, Iwona Evans, founder, owner and CFO, poses in front of AquaScience's building. Below, the BioLight is a bioluminescent bacteria. The light levels are measured before and after exposure. Changes in light determine levels of toxicity in samples.



their interest and passion to develop a better water testing product for customers. Since then, Aqua Science has expanded into creating their own instruments and reagents as well as offering their staff to fulfill custom reagent work outsourced from local biotech companies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a business that started just on the eve of the global pandemic, Evans explains its impact on Aqua Science and its growth. “Not knowing what was ahead made a big challenge for us,” Evans explains. “But we quickly realized the good and bad of the current events. The whole world seemed to stop and slow down – which gave us time to set up our building, equipment, and R&D.

Within 6 months we had our first product out the door and available to customers. Aqua Science's product, the BioLight, is currently the highest quality bacteria reagent in the ecotoxicity market.”

Evans reflects on the impact of her employees. “We will always be grateful for this amazing team. It is special when you go to work in the morning and see your employees happy and motivated each day. As Aqua Science continues to grow, we'll be focused on hiring new employees within Delaware. The degree is important but lack or level of it is not a limiting factor – knowledge, work ethics, and motivation is what matters.”