

Equipment update improves business and environment for local company



When Dunn-Rite Food Products embarked upon a plant expansion project, it also reviewed waste management systems and how these

systems could reduce its environmental footprint. The review demonstrated that an investment in waste management equipment would minimize the Winnipeg plant's environmental footprint and could be done cost effectively.

Dunn-Rite has been a local leader in developing quality chicken products for more than three decades and, after their recent acquisition by Sunrise Farms, continues to grow their business and the Canadian chicken industry.

The new waste management equipment, which was funded under *Growing Forward 2's* Growing Value program, allows for a more automated and environmentally conscious way of transporting and disposing waste.

Upgraded waste management system paying off

"One of the machines is called the Taifun and it's one of the first installations of this equipment in Western Canada. It uses air instead of water to transfer feathers and offal," says Grant Carlson, program manager at Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The equipment was brought in as part of Dunn-Rite's \$26 million renovation and plant expansion last spring, \$1.5 million of which was funded through *Growing Forward 2*.

"We had two objectives when we decided to upgrade the equipment," says Rene Cahill, chief operating officer at Dunn-Rite. "One, we wanted to reduce the amount of water used in processing, and two, we wanted to improve the quality of wastewater being sent to the city of Winnipeg's waste water treatment facility."

Projects like this not only have a positive effect on the environment, but also add to the long-term success of the business by reducing operating costs and maximizing efficiency. The new waste management system is almost completely automated. Workers who used to spend time on waste management can now focus on producing quality whole chickens and chicken pieces to be sold in Manitoba's grocery stores. These improvements help industry meet new wastewater regulations around suspended solids, pH levels and other targeted levels. They also reduce operating costs related to sewer and water charges.

Prior to the expansion, the plant, which processes an average of 300,000 Manitoba-grown chickens every week, was transporting its byproducts with a flume of water: a man-made stream that carries waste to a central disposal site. With the new waste management system for transportation, absolutely no water is used, and the company has reduced its total water usage by more than 10 per cent. ■



Shape Foods in Brandon

Manitoba businesses practicing food safety at a global standard

Food safety is more than just washing your hands before you handle a product, and with help from *Growing Forward 2's* Growing Assurance program, Manitoba businesses have the chance to implement programs to ensure all staff are aware of what it means to be food safe.

"There are many benefits to implementing a food safety program. The obvious benefit is the improvement of food safety practices but the program may also lead to increased market access and improved efficiencies in the facility. It is used to demonstrate a company's commitment to food safety to customers," says Jill Zacharias, food safety program manager at Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Shape Foods in Brandon received *Growing Forward* funding to develop and implement a documented food safety program which has received recognition from MAFRD. Now with help from *Growing Forward 2*, they are in the process of upgrading their program to a global food safety standard.

"This is what's expected in a food facility. There are higher expectations when you're working with food, you need to be careful of not only how you're handling food, but also the details of what you're wearing, how your hair is tied, how your nails are cut—it's all involved with safety and cleanliness," says Kim Mackenzie, quality and food safety manager at Shape Foods.

Prior to implementing a formal food safety program, Mackenzie says there were specific people given roles to ensure food safety requirements were being met. Now every person employed is trained to be aware of food safety.

"It could be the company president or the guy we hired yesterday, every person who works here is responsible for food safety," she says.

The business has been operating for five years and mainly produces flax oil and flax byproducts. The products are sold in bulk as well as retail across North America, and more recently in Asia.

"Without the help from MAFRD we wouldn't have been able to break into the foreign market—this is why it's so important to be at the top of our game when it comes to food safety certification," MacKenzie says.

Mackenzie says the company's next step is to become Safe Quality Food certified. ■

Gourmet Baker upgrading to keep up

With more than 30 years of Nanaimo bars, Bavarian turnovers, cakes and pastries, Gourmet Baker has built up a strong reputation for quality service and products across North America.

Recent equipment upgrades, completed with funding from *Growing Forward 2's* Growing Value program, at their Manitoba facility has allowed Gourmet Baker to keep up with the demands of its clients.

Thousands of product units are produced in its facilities every week, and with a recent expansion, the company's business grew as well.

The biggest equipment upgrade is a calibrated batching system, which automatically scales ingredients into a mixer for each batch of baking. Prior to the new system, each batch was prepared by hand.

"At the time we were increasing our capacity and product demand—there was no way we would have been able to keep up if we still used hand-loaded bagged product," says Marty Raiwet, maintenance and engineering manager at Gourmet Baker.

The equipment can also hold more which allows the company to buy local product in bulk, instead of shipping in bagged product from elsewhere. This has helped to reduce Gourmet Baker's transportation costs, while benefiting the local grain market.



For more information on Gourmet Baker, visit their website at gourmetbaker.com. ■