

MEAT&POULTRY

Cargill adds ground beef wing to plant

August 1, 2006

UNITED STATES: Upgrades at Cargill's Dodge City, Kan., plant lead to improved performance.

Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation (CMS) has added a ground-beef wing to its Dodge City, Kan., fed-cattle plant. This addition has improved performance and is increasing customer confidence in the Excel Fresh Meats brand, according to a news release.

The addition provides more flexibility in production, allowing CMS to better meet the needs of its customers, the release adds. Because of advanced technology and more sophisticated electronic monitoring systems, the lean- point accuracy of the end product is more precise. This accuracy gives customers more lean-point options than before. And the addition has a higher capacity for large-volume orders, producing 500,000 pounds per day.

“We were doing well with production and customer confidence before, but part of having a Genuinely Better mindset is believing that there is always room for improvement,” said Dan Schnitker, vice president and general manager of the Dodge City plant. “At Cargill, we’ve invested more than \$1 billion in the last 10 years. Part of that investment was for advanced technology to make processing ground beef at this plant more of a science. We’ve worked hard so that our customers can sell Excel brand products with more confidence because of our continuously improving quality, food-safety, and customer-service practices.”

The new ground beef addition of the Dodge City plant is in a 24,000-square- foot space. All operations are monitored and controlled by computer in an elevated viewing room. This improves productivity by eliminating the need to make manual adjustments in the lean-to-fat ratio of batches. A computer- generated formula monitors lean-to-fat ratios within each ground beef batch. Should a batch stray from its specific ratio, the formula automatically corrects the ratio to bring it back to its correct lean-fat percentages.

Even with advanced technology, people still play an important role in production. CMS employees oversee the entire process. Each ground beef machine is connected to a computer. Monitors display the real-time status of each piece of equipment for employees to observe. Workers can pinpoint with exactness where attention is needed should something out of the ordinary occur. This results in a reduction in downtime, increasing productivity.

“This is a perfect example of how we continue to look at new ways of using technology for processing ground beef and creating a Genuinely Better experience for our customers,” explained Misty High, group brand manager, CMS. “The Excel brand represents 85 percent of Cargill’s beef and pork business. It’s imperative that this portion of our business continues to build consumer confidence.”

Ground beef production at Dodge City includes 20-pound chubs that go to Cargill Meat Solutions' case-ready plants for further processing; 10-pound chubs aimed at retailers that regrind and package for consumers; a variety of ready-for-retail one-, two-, three- and five-pound chubs sold under Cargill Meat Solutions' brands or as private-label product; and the newest line-- REDiFresh case-ready patties.

Excel Fresh Meats is a brand of beef and pork products that Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation markets to its worldwide customer base of retail and foodservice customers. The Excel brand represents 85 percent of Cargill Meat Solutions' beef and pork offerings. For more information, visit www.excelfreshmeats.com

Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation is one of the largest fresh, frozen and value-added beef, pork and turkey suppliers in the country. The business is a subsidiary of Cargill, Incorporated, an international provider of food, agricultural and risk management products and services.

Category: Processor News

In Europe: Chris Harris, Editor or

In North America: Bryan Salvage, Editorial Director

Meat Processing, Meatnews.com