

## Dakota Provisions – A Valued Partner



In this issue of the Feed Energy newsletter, we have the pleasure of featuring Dakota Provisions, a Turkey Processing Plant in South Dakota. Ken Rutledge, President and CEO of Dakota Provisions, was enthusiastic as he shared his insight into the turkey industry as well as the positive outlook for his company. Before we understand the full scope of Ken's excitement, let us first learn a little about Dakota Provisions.

Dakota Provisions is a state-of-the-art turkey processing facility in Huron, South Dakota. The company was founded in 2001 by a group of 44 Dakota Turkey Growers who wanted to ensure a thriving future for their family farms. Thus became the company's mission: "owned by growers, managed by professionals, driven by customers." The construction on the new 150,000 square foot facility began in 2004 with food safety as the major priority. Dakota Provisions officially began processing in the new plant January 2006. At the beginning, the company was processing 3.5 million heavy tom turkeys per year with 350 employees. This year, Dakota provisions is set to process 4.8 million heavy tom turkeys with 775 employees. With a four-year volume growth rate of nearly 50 million pounds, the Dakota Provisions' team is looking forward to a bright future.

As President and CEO of Dakota Provisions, Ken is a great leader for the company and the industry with over 37 years of experience in poultry production. He started with Dakota Provisions in March 2004 and oversaw the design and building of the new plant. To this day there is no question he enjoys working for the company. Ken commented, "I'm working with the best growers in the country and a great management team."

Dakota Provisions customizes products to better serve their customers nationally. Ken views this as a positive feature due to the increased demand in private label products versus branded products. The company offers a unique brand called "Prairie Grown". Customers can choose to either utilize the Prairie Grown label or have custom product packaged in their private label. Ken pointed out another growing industry trend of pre-sliced product for the food service industry because of past concerns with food safety issues. With the state-of-the-art processing facility, Dakota Provisions is able to market a pre-sliced product and ensure the highest standards in food quality. Dakota Provisions, also, proudly stands by sustainability in agriculture by serving their customers while preserving our earth.





From a producer perspective, Ken is noticing an increase in direct producer to customer relationships. “Producers need to be prepared for dealing with customers at the farm level. This includes having programs in place for animal handling practices, sustainability, and appearance and control,” Ken advised.

We want to thank Ken for taking the time to share some beneficial industry advice and excitement for his company’s involvement in agriculture. In light of all Dakota Provisions does for turkey growers, Feed Energy appreciates and values our relationship with the company.

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