

Famo Feeds still investing for future

**Feed Facility of the Year:
Commercial Dry Category winner**

By SARAH MUIRHEAD

ONE hundred-plus years strong and investing for the future: That is Famo Feeds in Freeport, Minn. Businesses and services come and go, particularly in a sometimes challenging and often changing economy, but Famo Feeds, a family business, strives to be forward thinking and community focused in everything it does.

Famo Feeds is the Commercial Dry Feed winner of the 2018 American Feed Industry Assn./Feedstuffs Feed Facility of the Year award.

Its tradition of good service began in 1903, when the business was originally founded. In the 1970s, the Beste family purchased the company. "The company actually started out as a grain and flour business," according to vice president Tom Beste. "Over time, the feed aspect came into play and eventually became the sole focus."

Beste's brother John is president of Famo Feeds, and his father, Al, who still comes to the office every day, is the company's former owner and president. Beste's son Alex also is involved in the business.

Together, the Bestes work with their nutrition, sales and marketing, production, office and delivery staff to provide the best service and support to their customers. "Every day, we build upon Famo Feeds' commitment to creating quality nutritional solutions for livestock and poultry," Beste said.

Located on Interstate 94 northwest of Minneapolis, Minn., the Famo Feeds plant is easy to spot on the Freeport skyline. The company's mill is state of the art, but that is not what sets Famo Feeds apart. "Our people are what make our plant outstanding," Beste said.

The Famo Feeds production facility was built in 2004 and is currently managed by Kurt Mathaler. Making up the company are 13 production employees, one maintenance employee, five clerical employees, five supervisory employees, eight sales staff and three technical support staff. Famo Feeds also has six truck drivers who operate its company-owned fleet. The plant runs three production shifts per day.

In the last few years, a number of improvements and upgrades have been made to the plant, including the addition of a new automation system, a pellet mill rebuild, a mixer rebuild and a boiler upgrade. The new Repete FLX



automation system, installed in March 2018, has allowed Famo Feeds to increase its production efficiency while at the same time improving its working environment. "We are seeing almost a 10% improvement in capacity while making individual jobs easier," Beste said.

From a sourcing standpoint, the company maintains a number of critical control points in the plant that are constantly monitored to assure that quality standards are met. The Famo Feeds facility is certified for hazard analysis and critical control points, Facility Certified Institute-Restricted Use Protein Products and Safe Feed Safe Food.

Even with all the checks and balances in place, Beste noted that the company depends on the team to recognize po-

tential issues and see that they are addressed before they become problems. "We depend on our people to visualize improvements and articulate their ideas to their managers and departments. The staff at Famo Feeds understand that we contribute to the livestock feed distribution chain and the human food chain. We embrace that responsibility."

Finding and keeping reliable and qualified staff can, however, be a difficult task. Within the work family, more than 40% of the office and mill personnel have been with the company for over a decade. "When it comes down to it, you can build a new facility and have the top-of-the-line equipment, but none of it matters without committed people," Beste said.

Famo Feeds continues to adapt to ensure that it provides products and services that meet the demands of modern livestock and poultry producers.

"Our technical team regularly attends meetings to gather the most advanced information to apply to our programs," Beste said. "In recent years, we have been refining our products and programs for calf nutrition based on new university research. We have also adjusted our product line to better cater to the automated feeding systems that are increasing in popularity. Our vari-



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ous lines of feeds and programs are regularly evaluated to ensure that they do not become stagnant or outdated. We continue to evolve within this industry to be leaders in innovative feeding methods and strategies.”

As Famo Feeds relies on repeat business from its customers, a benefit for Famo Feeds employees is a quarterly tonnage bonus. For every ton of product manufactured, employees receive a bonus of 3 cents per ton. This incentive drives employees to be vigilant in the manufacturing and shipping process while also promoting the Famo Feeds brand, Beste said.

Famo Feeds serves a customer base in the Upper Midwest. The company is focused on the dairy and beef sectors but also offers feed products for horses, gamebirds, chicks, rabbits and more.

The Bestes look forward to continuing to build the Famo Feeds business for many more years. Their philosophy is that the constant flow of new challenges in the agriculture sector represents new opportunities — opportunities they are eager and ready to seize. ■



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