

QLF Clovis looks for constant improvement

**Feed Facility of the Year:
Liquid Feed Category winner**

By SARAH MUIRHEAD

THE Quality Liquid Feeds (QLF) facility in Clovis, N.M., is the Liquid Feed Category winner of the American Feed Industry Assn./Feedstuffs Feed Facility of the Year award program for 2018.

The plant, one of 17 in the QLF network of manufacturing facilities, is focused on continuous improvement and a dedication to providing excellent customer service. "QLF is always looking for ways to improve our feed and help the consumer," plant manager Jason Brawley said.

In addition to the liquid feed that is produced at the Clovis facility, an agronomy department helps local farmers improve soil quality. "We pride ourselves on making sure the end consumer sees the full benefits of our products. Every formula we produce has the animal and animal's owner in mind," Brawley said.

All of the company's plants nationwide produce a range of QLF products. The Clovis plant is one of the QLF operations specifically equipped to produce high-quality calcium suspension feeds.

QLF, headquartered in Dodgeville, Wis., is a family-owned, American company that has been serving customers for more than 41 years.

Built in 2012 after a move from Herford, Texas, and in order to get closer to dairy country, QLF's Clovis facility boasts an annual tonnage of more than 100,000 tons. Dairy and beef cattle are the primary receivers of the products.

According to Brawley, nearly 100% of the product produced is a custom mix.

The majority of QLF's liquid feeds are delivered directly to larger dairy and beef producers to be incorporated into total mixed rations. In addition to enhancing ration palatability, the liquid feeds are used to deliver a wide variety of nutrients and additives to dairy and beef animals, Brawley said.

The plant, which operates two shifts a day, has eight production employees, three maintenance employees, one clerical staff and two supervisory employees. A half-dozen truck drivers round out the team.

Over the 2015-17 period, QLF has made more than \$400,000 in investments to the Clovis facility.

Every angle of the plant is designed



to grow, Brawley noted. A new elevator leg on the company's dry system is the latest addition and has helped speed up operations and minimize bottlenecks. A further expansion of capacity is expected.

In addition, the facility has three mix lines that are kept totally separate in order to prevent any potential contamination. When building the plant, Brawley said "every dairy person we talked to wanted assurance related to contamination."

Brawley noted that the plant is set up so a homogenous suspension product can be guaranteed from start to finish. There is no settlement of calcium in the suspension feeds, he said.

The Clovis facility currently can load seven trucks at one time, with automation going in that will cut in half the typical loading time of 1.5 hours. QLF has its own trucks and drivers. It also uses a dedicated contract fleet as needed.

QLF Clovis recently added a fully automated batching and mixing system that includes the addition of a fully automated micro machine. This new equipment in the production facility allows for full automation of the batching, hand-added ingredients, bulk load, warehouse and shipping areas, including routing, Brawley said. The addition of this new equipment has increased efficiency and decreased the possibility of making mixing errors.

A formal supplier approval program is in place at the mill and consists of on-site audits, third-party certifications, supplier-provided test results on a regular basis and certification of analysis on loads. The company's molasses is sourced and processed in Louisiana.

Weekly meetings allow employees to voice questions and concerns while keeping them informed and involved.

Monthly safety training ensures an



The team at the Quality Liquid Feeds operation in Clovis, N.M., is focused on producing quality products and providing exceptional service, according to plant manager Jason Brawley. The Clovis plant operates two shifts a day and has eight production employees, three maintenance employees, one clerical staff, two supervisory employees and a half-dozen truck drivers.

ongoing effort to maintain a safe working environment. Safety team committee members meet regularly to discuss safety around the facility. "We provide a safe work environment for our employees to come to work, make a living and go home to their families safely," Brawley said.

Monthly quality assurance training allows for ongoing efforts aimed at maintaining high-quality products. QLF's Clovis facility is Safe Feed/Safe Food certified as well as operates under hazard analysis and critical control points and Food Safety Modernization Act plans.

QLF, as a company, has grown over the years from a primarily Midwestern marketer of liquid feed supplements to a full-line liquid feed and cooked low-moisture block organization that serves the animal feeding industry nationwide.

In addition, QLF manufactures and markets a premium line of products to enhance the appearance, palatability and performance of specialized texturized feeds primarily for horses, calves and show animals. QLF also markets and distributes quality cane molasses directly to feed manufacturers. ■



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