



**MENTORING, TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF
FUTURE AND CURRENT EMPLOYEES OF THE
DAIRY INDUSTRY**

WHO ARE COOPERATIVE MEMBERS ARE



- 7TH largest milk cooperative in the United States
- The 99 cooperative members are located in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Texas , Oklahoma, and New Mexico.
- They currently produce approximately 7.8 billion pounds of milk per year or 156,000 truck loads of high quality milk being delivered to various customers throughout the country.
- Lead producers in quality and herd health and leaders in sustainability.



- Continental Dairy Facilities, LLC has been in operations for 6 ½ years in Coopersville, MI producing NFDM powder, cream, and condensed.
- Originally designed to balance milk for Select Milk Producers, but has taken on a role as a regional balancing plant for other cooperatives as well. In that timeframe has become a food ingredient supplier to several large domestic food companies and an exporter of ingredients to 14 different countries.
- Plant receives 4 million lbs. of milk daily (80 trucks)
- The facility produces on a daily basis: Nonfat dry milk 300,000 lbs., butter 250,000 lbs., cream 42,000 gallons, condensed 18,000 gallons, and buttermilk powder 12,000 lbs.
- Plant staff – 128 team members



Select Milk Producers has purchased property in Littlefield, Texas and has designed a twin plant to the Coopersville facility. Commissioning is set to begin March 2019

LABOR CHALLENGES

- The labor market is very competitive in Michigan as our economy has improved. Unemployment in the state was at 14% when we started operations, today it is at 3%.
- Any staffing needs now take longer to fill.
- Wage rates have been adjusted for skilled labor (maintenance and QA) to maintain competitiveness and retain team members.
- The labor market in Texas has changed due to the oil fields and we are facing the same challenges there and the oil fields are driving wage rates upwards as well.

OUR TEAM MEMBERS



- Diverse workforce
- 60% of our workforce is Millennials
- Remaining 40% is made up of Gen X, Baby Boomers and Gen Z starting to enter the workforce
- This requires Management to “Know their audience” communication skills have to be adaptable and flexible when working with each team member

CHANGES IN TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

- Training methods have had to change to become more effective. Group training has been discontinued.
- Online training programs have been adopted, the programs track and document individual training and notify trainers and employees when training is due.
- Incentive programs are tied to completion of online training programs

CHANGES IN TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

- Communication methods vary from screens in lunch room to social media and notification apps for team members.



MENTORING

- In 6 ½ years we have grown from 65 team members to 128.
- A portion of management has taken on a two plant role with the addition of the new Texas plant.
- Due to our rapid growth we have promoted from within our organization as much as possible to maintain our culture.
- Succession planning has been key to make this achievable.
- We have had to look at new talent due to our growth and for our future leadership.

CDF/CDFSW TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- This year we had the opportunity to host the Midwest Regional Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest and are now the new permanent home of this annual contest. This will give us yearly access to students with Food Science or Dairy Processing Technology majors as potential employees.
- The contest consisted of 8 universities and 50 students and professors, along with industry professionals as judges. The universities involved were Cornell, Wisconsin, Michigan State, Iowa, South Dakota State, Clemson, Mississippi and Tennessee.
- As a result we started an intern program with these universities.
- We had 4 interns that worked for us in our first year of this program and have hired 3 permanently.
- We have 3 applications already for next summers internships.

CDF/CDFSW TRAINING AND EDUCATION



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CDF/CDFSW TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- Our Director of Food Safety, Technical and Education is also teaching a class this fall at a local State University. This will allow us another University to partner with for potential team member recruitment.
- The past two years we have been part of an industry advisory board with Michigan State and local junior colleges to develop a 2-year program for working professionals and high school graduates to obtain an AS degree in Food Science.
- The program will launch this fall and will allow us the ability to grow our current team members knowledge of food processing and to have access to additional talent.
- Full Tuition reimbursement is offered for our existing team members and the university students from the schools we have partnered with. Upon graduation they enter a Management Trainee program and agree to a five year commitment with our company.

MAINTAINING A CULTURE

**I am not impressed by
your position, title and
money. I am impressed
by how you treat others.**

FINAL SUMMARY

- Our culture is unique its not for everyone.
- Does it work?
- We will continue to train and develop our existing team members and look for creative ways to recruit talent.



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