

In Its New CIC, Glanbia, Customers Work Together To Formulate New Products

Twin Falls, ID—Some of the cheese industry's brightest researchers and technologists are working alongside some of the brightest food technologists to cooperatively formulate some of the future uses for cheese at Glanbia Foods' new Cheese Innovation Center (CIC).

Glanbia last week held a grand opening for the 14,000 square foot research and innovation center, a facility that houses an enviable culinary lab, cheese plant, cut and wrap area, laboratory and curing area. The new facility is adjacent to the new headquarters for Glanbia's US Cheese business.

"We now have every resource we need under one roof, from our on-site experts to cutting-edge technology and equipment," said Dave Perry, director of cheese innovation at Glanbia Foods.

Perry described the CIC as a place where the company can not only make cheese, but allows for the ability to take the cheese further and learn more about "how it functions, how it behaves, and how our customers can use it."

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—Dave Perry,
Glanbia Foods

Jeff Williams, president and CEO of Glanbia Foods said the CIC was a logical step in Glanbia's goal to be able to offer nutritious food to the world.

Looking with a historical perspective, Williams said, the CIC "is a natural evolution of our growth. We're more excited about the future. We are looking forward to working in a collaborating manner with our customers to develop dairy products to feed the world."

Glanbia Background

Glanbia Foods is the largest producer of American-type cheese in the world at 860 million pounds of cheese annually, according to Glanbia customer marketing manager Whitney Beem.

Glanbia sources its milk from 350,000 cows in the Magic Valley of Idaho and processes 12 million pounds of milk a day at the company's Gooding, Twin Falls and its newest plant in Blackfoot, ID.

A partnership with two cooperatives in New Mexico adds 11

million pounds a day through Glanbia's Southwest Cheese operation.

Glanbia produces a total 175 million pounds of lactose, whey protein concentrate 34 and 80, and whey protein isolates a year.

"In total, through our operations in Idaho and through the plant at Southwest, we'll run 23 million pounds of milk a day and we'll make about 860 million pounds of cheese this year," said Jeff Williams. "With the cheese sales and the value-added whey products we'll do just under, probably, 1.8 billion dollars in sales this year."

Glanbia's products are sold in the United States and are exported to more than 30 countries.

Wilf Costello, Glanbia's executive vice president, commercial-cheese, said Mexico is the company's largest export country.

"From a commercial standpoint we've decided to focus on a few regions," Costello said. "We look at strategic fit, we look at the size of the prize and then accessibility and sustainability."

Other regions the company concentrates its export attention on are the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and ASPAC (Asia Pacific) regions.

"MENA is primarily process cheese. That fits well for our business model for Gooding. Gooding is our barrel manufacturing facility, and it's the largest one in the world. We look at MENA to grow in process cheese," Costello said.

He also said the company focuses on five countries in the ASPAC region, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and China.

But Costello said the US is still the backbone of Glanbia's business. He said he hears the calls for newer products and said his company and everyone else should be prepared to answer those calls.

Beem agreed and said Glanbia is exploring more territories and is far more receptive to the requests from cheese buyers.

"We are moving to being a more flexible company, we want to make new cheeses, we've heard what they're saying that there needs to be more value."

"(The US) is going to continued to be a big part of our business. We have to recognize the changing needs in the marketplace, however, so whether its coming up with Greek yogurt or spicier cheese, we have to address those," Costello said.

CIC Addresses New Products; Feeding The World

Addressing Costello's concerns is what the new CIC is all about.

We are very aware that the flavor and functionality varies around



Glanbia's new Cheese Innovation Center (CIC) houses everything under one roof, from cheese plant (above) to packaging, laboratory to aging room to a culinary kitchen. The CIC gives Glanbia the opportunity to study functionality and flavor profiles of its cheeses to be used in a variety of applications.

the world, it's about adopting and adapting cheese in each market, Beem said.

"The Cheese Innovation Center represents our commitment to and investment in our customer relationships, the global cheese industry and our local community," Williams said.

What the CIC will allow Glanbia to do is make cheese to the specifications of not only the domestic buyer, but also the specifications of buyers in their export concentrations.

Perry said the company will be able to evaluate the cheese and see how it functions in all types of customer applications.

"We are going to not only make products but we are going to learn a lot more about them and most crucial we'll be able to do it with a customer by our side," Perry said. "That will dramatically move projects forward in a shorter period

and get to a positive end result for everybody."

In the CIC, the milk is standardized to get the milk to the composition that is needed to make a variety of different styles of cheese.

The plant can process 5,000 to 6,000 pounds of milk a day or about 12 to 15 40-pound blocks.

"We have a small scale (Tetra Pak CPS) HCV (horizontal cheese vat) which is a good representation of what you will find in several of our facilities. We also added two smaller (Relco) open vats that allow us to do side-by-side experimentation," Perry said.

The side-by-side experiments allow the company to be able to evaluate new ingredients, new cultures, a variety of different things, Perry said.

The CIC also houses an industrial high-speed slicer and a shredder.

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"In the natural cheese business, slicing, in particular, has grown and is a demanding application," Perry mentioned. "I've always thought that if you can get a cheese to slice well, it will do just about anything well. We're going to learn a lot from it. We are going to see how that cheese is going to perform."

Glanbia, in order to be able to prepare samples the way its customers prepare samples, included packaging and gas-flush packaging equipment which, as Perry described, would "complete the shelf lives and see how those products function in a package over a period of time."

The culinary lab gives the com-

pany the ability to take that final step to an actual end-use application.

"At least domestically, a lot of what cheese is about, is that it's in and on everything," Perry said. With the culinary lab "we're going to see how cheese functions in a variety of different food systems. The key is we are able to do it with a customer at our side."

Commercializing the Products

Innovation, research and development are all great investments, but one needs to take those ideas to market.

"We started getting some new ideas for making new products that could be developed in the Cheese Innovation Center," Williams said. "All of a sudden a light went off where we knew at some point

we would have to commercialize some of these products."

With the current Glanbia cheese plants running full, 24/7, 365 days a year, Glanbia purchased the Blackfoot cheese plant in March of this year.

Blackfoot has a long history in the cheese industry and most recently was under the ownership of Sartori Foods.

Williams said he had looked at the Blackfoot facility a number of times over the years but until recently didn't see how the plant would work for Glanbia.

"We just couldn't make sense out of the business because we were always thinking of our business as running full steam ahead, at maximum capacity," Williams said.

All that changed when Glanbia began to embark on the Cheese Innovation Center.

The Blackfoot facility gave Glanbia the opportunity to take 100 pounds of specialty cheese developed in the CIC and commercialize that to 5,000,000 pounds at the Blackfoot plant.

"The Blackfoot plant fits well, we call it the incubator plant," Williams said. "The plan is to take ideas we're working on with our customers out of the CIC and then commercializing those at Blackfoot where we have a little more flexibility. When we looked at that

plant with those lenses, it made sense to make that purchase."

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—Perry

In a video the company is sending out to its customers, Perry said that cheesemaking has a great history but it's got a brighter future. "What are we going to do moving forward? Where is cheese going to be used? How can we move it new systems? That's what innovation is."

Glanbia also constructed their new 35,000 square feet corporate headquarters next to the CIC. Williams said the corporate headquarters finally places the Glanbia team under one roof. Both the CIC and headquarters addresses the changing dynamics in the marketplace.

FDA Plans Sept. 19-20 Public Meeting On Two Proposed Imported Food Safety Rules

Washington—The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today announced that it will hold a two-day public meeting next month to discuss two proposed rules aimed at strengthening assurances that imported food meets the same safety standards as food produced domestically.

The meeting will be held Sept. 19-20 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington.

Late last month, FDA published two proposed rules regarding imported food safety. The Foreign Supplier Verification Programs (FSVP) proposal establishes requirements for importers to verify that their foreign suppliers are implementing the modern, prevention-oriented food safety practices called for by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and achieving the same level of food safety as domestic processors.

The second proposed rule, on the Accreditation of Third-Party Auditors/Certification Bodies, would strengthen the quality, objectivity, and transparency of foreign food safety audits on which many US food companies and importers currently rely to help manage the safety of their global food supply chains.

These two proposed rules were published in the *Federal Register* on July 29, 2013 (for more details, please see *FDA Proposes Foreign Supplier Verification Program, Accreditation Of Third-Party Auditors for Foreign Food Entities*, on the front page of our July 26th issue).

The purpose of next month's public meeting is to solicit oral stakeholder and public comments on the proposed rules and to inform the public about the rulemaking process, including how to submit comments, data, and other information to the rulemaking dockets, and to respond to questions about the proposed rules.

The Washington, DC, public meeting is the first of three that FDA plans to hold during the proposed rules' comment period, which ends November 26, 2013. Dates and locations will be announced in the near future.

FDA encourages all persons who wish to attend the meetings to register in advance. There is no fee to register, and registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The advance registration deadline is Sept. 10.

Those requesting an opportunity to make an oral presentation during the time allotted for public comment are asked to submit a request and to provide the specific topic or issue to be addressed.



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