

The Love Story Continues: "Feed Love. For Life" is the motto for Marty's Meals, the pet food manufacturer that has taken Santa Fe by storm. Owner Sandy Bosben's vision for her company continues to evolve since first conception. The pet food industry has followed the lead of independent manufacturers like her and turned its attention to the market segment of pet owners desiring to feed their animals as well if not better than themselves. Manufacturing of fresh, and gently cooked foods has become a norm and advances in freeze drying are making it possible to ship the food worldwide. Recognizing the market similarity to Santa Fe, in 2016 Sandy opened a retail store in Boulder, Colorado. This location is now turning a profit, accounting for about a third of the organization's sales.

Although Sandy has no intention of competing with the corporate giants, she has become something of a regional leader in the industry. Sandy's approach to species-appropriate recipes is a result of her work with consultant Dr. Richard Patton, an internationally-known animal nutritionist. Marty's Meals has the distinct honor of being the first line of pet food to obtain Non GMO certification for its chicken and turkey recipes.

Since the business' launch in 2010 with financing from The Loan Fund, Sandy has been intent on making Marty's Meals a case study in how sustainability and equitable business practices can fuel each other's success. Her philosophy of 'triple bottom line plus' drives the decisions she makes about sourcing, preparing and packaging her products. "We devote a great deal of attention to how we source every ingredient for our dog and cat food products. We get to know our small-scale farmers and ranchers. We work with suppliers who share our values for the ethical treatment and raising of healthy animals; we only use 100% certified organic vegetables and grains and we source as many ingredients regionally as are available. Locally-sourced ingredients ensure the shortest farm to kitchen delivery time." said Sandy.

Now Marty's sales exceed \$1 million annually, and to remain competitive, Sandy has chosen to expand into a bigger facility that can accommodate freeze drying equipment and shipping. Costs to ship her products had been prohibitive, limiting her ability to sell online.

Freeze drying will solve this problem, and Marty's Meals will develop an online store to capture more of this audience. With the help of the Santa Fe SBDC, and support from the City of Santa Fe Economic Development Department and the State Economic Development Department, Sandy obtained a LEDA grant as well as JTIP funding to cover some of the expense. She plans to add 11 more manufacturing jobs.

Sandy said, "if it had not been for the technical assistance and support from my business advisor, Debbie Collins, at the Santa Fe SBDC, Marty's Meals would not be where it is today. I started working with Debbie when Marty's Meals was just an idea. Her expertise, guidance and resourcefulness have been invaluable. She has helped me avoid more pitfalls than I can count. I look forward to working together into the future as Marty's Meals continues to grow. I consider Debbie a friend as well as my go-to business advisor."

What does the future hold? Marty's Meals will be featured in a documentary coming out in 2019. Sandy also wants to enhance the quality of her employees' lives by offering a retirement plan and assistance with health care coverage. She also plans to work with NMSU's Extension Program to source a dependable supply of organic vegetables from New Mexico farmers. Healthy pet food is here to stay.

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