

O&T Farms captures global markets with its innovative approach to animal feed and human health

Healthy food begins with healthy ingredients. Nobody understands this better than O&T Farms, which has never lost sight of its vision to make healthy feed for healthy animals.

Realizing that there was a need for locally supplied eggs, Ted Wiens and his brother, Oscar started an egg layer farm in 1967 on the outskirts of Regina. Over the course of several years, the family enterprise began to incorporate all-natural plant-based feed components made from local ingredients. By the early 2000's a proprietary feed ingredient featuring flax and other field crops was developed and patented. This made O&T Farms a pioneer in the production of Omega-3 enriched eggs, now a common sight on grocery shelves throughout the world.

Fifty years later, O&T Farms has taken its 'naturally better' approach global and has grown into a specialty feed company which, from its base in Regina, provides Omega-3 enriched animal feed to dairy, beef, poultry and pork producers around the world.

O&T uses a proprietary dry extrusion process, making its feed ingredients easily digestible by all types of livestock. Flax, which is high in Omega-3s, along with canola, soybeans, peas, chickpeas, beans, lentils, oats, and alfalfa are the key inputs used in their various feed product offerings. The flaxseed-based feed products, linPRO™ and linPRO™ Organic, contribute to improved overall animal health and specifically for dairy cattle improved immunity and production (milk response).

In addition to animal health benefits, Omega-3s are crucial to human health. The market for Omega-3 enriched foods is growing significantly. A report by Allied Market Research has suggested it could grow to \$7 billion by 2022; a huge market that O&T is uniquely poised to reach.

Besides serving the Canadian market, O&T currently exports its feed ingredients to the United States, Korea, China, Thailand, Bangladesh, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. The company holds patents for its products in 14 countries.

In recognition of its success as an international agri-business, O&T has been nominated as a finalist in the 2017 Exporter of the Year category of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's ABEX Awards.

The Saskatchewan government is seeking to increase agricultural exports by 50 per cent by 2020, and O&T is well on the way to doing its part. In the last four years, the company has nearly doubled sales of its value-added feed ingredients. That means it has also doubled its purchases of local raw ingredients from Saskatchewan farmers and other local businesses and doubled its workforce to 45 employees.

O&T is also committed to ongoing investment in research that helps improve and demonstrate the animal and human health benefits of its products.

Along the road to export success, O&T has been grateful for the assistance of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, government programs such as Growing Forward and for the invitation by the Federal Government to participate in international trade missions, all of which have helped the company to identify and access new global markets.

“Currently we’re getting interest from many new countries outside the U.S. and Canada, with new inquiries about our products coming regularly,” says Chief Executive Officer Elan Ange. “We are fortunate to be able to take advantage of the excellent logistics and infrastructure available in Saskatchewan to enable us to serve these growing markets.”

O&T has two manufacturing plants just outside Regina and despite a significant recent capital expansion, the company expects it will reach capacity again in the next 12 to 24 months, which will mean building another manufacturing plant. “This year is our 50-year anniversary, and our commitment to Saskatchewan is as strong as ever,” says Ange. “We source our ingredients, supplies, utilities and freight locally, and are proud to create employment in our province and bring our profits back to reinvest in Saskatchewan.”

O&T continues to be a family-owned company led by Ted Wien’s son, Tim, and is poised for the next chapter in its sustained growth story. The company sees huge growth potential especially in the area of Omega-3 enriched dairy products, which it estimates could increase international demand for its dairy-specific feed products by 50 to 100 per cent.

“We’re not growing accidentally, we’re growing strategically,” says Ange. “In terms of markets, we are just scratching the surface. The future is nothing but opportunity.”

With its recent addition of non-GMO and certified organic products to its existing lines, O&T Farms will continue to explore new market opportunities in the USA, Asia, Middle East and Europe, participate in trade shows worldwide and support its marketing initiatives with sound, scientific research data that demonstrates the health benefits of its products.