

The Governor's Visit



Scott Ramsdell, President of Dakota Layers, with Governor Daugaard.

On Feb. 4, 2011, Governor Dennis Daugaard toured the Dakota Layers shell egg farm 7 miles north of Flandreau, SD. Scott Ramsdell, President and CEO of Dakota Layers, said, "We are so pleased to host the Governor. The purpose of the tour was for the Governor to see firsthand what a state-of-the-art shell egg farm is like. We need our state leadership to be aware of the opportunities we provide everyday for South Dakota economically and for American consumers. We are very happy that the Governor made our business one of his first stops in his new administration." South Dakota State Senate Majority Leader Russell Olson was also traveling with the Governor.

Dakota Layers averages nearly 1 million laying hens and produces over twenty three million dozen eggs per year. They have gross sales of over 25 million dollars. "We are proud of the work our employees do each and every day. And we are proud to provide the kind of economic income to the area that we do," commented Ramsdell. The company currently is using about 1 million bushels of corn and nearly 11 thousand tons of soybean meal every year according to Patrick Stacklin, Dakota Layers' general manager.

National Pasteurized Eggs, Inc. (NPE) operates an in-shell egg pasteurization facility on premise. Dakota Layers property is the only in-line shell egg system in the nation where the laying barns, egg processing, and in-shell pasteurization are all done in one place. About half of the eggs produced by Dakota Layers are pasteurized by NPE who then sells the eggs to restaurants and retailers in all 50 states. Juan Astorga, the manufacturing manager at NPE commented, "Any time we can demonstrate our Safest Choice technology to Governor Daugaard and his staff, we are ready and willing to do so. We are committed to South Dakota and to further expansion opportunities as they arise."



Sowmya Arra, QA Supervisor, and Juan Astorga, Manufacturing Manager at NPE, with Governor Daugaard.

Governor Daugaard was very pleased the business was succeeding as a value-added business. He stated, "South Dakota looks to its people first to reinvigorate its economy. The state's farmers and ranchers are a cornerstone of that principle and when they can further process their raw commodities into

eggs and products like ethanol, we all win!" He further stated his support for the expansion and the jobs and additional economic development it will bring to the area.



SD State Senate Majority Leader Russell Olson and Patrick Stacklin, General Manager of Dakota Layers, and his family with Governor Daugaard.

One of the most recent threats to the industry is the misleading information that others put out relative to bird cage sizes. Dakota Layers is using a cage today that is 67 square inches. These are larger than many eggs farms and are standards established by the United Egg Producers which Dakota Layers supports.

The company is planning an expansion and is already permitted for another 1 million birds. With last year's problems in Iowa with an egg supplier, Dakota Layers has seen a greatly increased opportunity for sales and has raised their profile significantly. Today, they employ nearly 60 and with the expansion it will mean an additional 35 to 45 jobs. Ramsdell indicated that in considering the expansion, Dakota Layers is reviewing its options to utilize the chicken litter to make energy. While the science is relatively new in poultry, it has been done in several large animal facilities.

Additionally, he said the board of directors have been examining the efficiencies gained with a potential feed mill of their own. Today, the feed is prepared and delivered to the farm.

And maybe the most significant innovation will be the use of colony cages for the laying hens which offer them even more space to move around. "With regulation comes responsibility. We believe we are the most responsible laying hen and shell egg farm in the country, and we intend to meet consumer expectations as we look forward," concluded Ramsdell.



*Dakota Layers' Board Members and Governor Daugaard.
(from left to right) Brian Minish, John Hammer, Scott Ramsdell,
and Jason Ramsdell (not present, Ryan Zwart)*

For more information on National Pasteurized Eggs, Inc. visit www.safeeggs.com



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