



Food Processing

Opportunities in Northwest Iowa



Background

The Northwest Iowa Region includes six counties - Cherokee, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Plymouth, and Sioux - with a total population of nearly 100,000. The two primary industry sectors in the region are Manufacturing and Agriculture, and these sectors account for 27.4% of the total employment in the Region compared to 16.2% for these sectors in the State of Iowa and 9.1% for the U.S.

Food Processing Industry

Over 4,400 workers in Northwest Iowa are employed in the Food Processing Industry. As a percentage of total employment, the Food Processing Industry represents a significantly greater percentage of the employment in our Region (6.6%) than is represented in the State of Iowa (2.6%) and the nation (0.8%).

The leading Food Processing companies in Northwest Iowa are:

- Wells Dairy - 3rd largest ice cream manufacturer in the US
- Tyson Foods - process and package ham, hot dogs, and deli meats
- Dean Foods - fluid milk manufacturing
- Sioux-Preme Packing - specialty pork processor
- Iowa Lamb - lamb slaughtering and processing
- Premium Iowa Pork - custom harvesting and processing of pork
- Siouxpreme Egg Products - egg processing
- BoDeans Baking - manufacturing of ice cream cones and sandwich wafers
- Associated Milk Producers - a dairy marketing cooperative with members in Iowa and 5 other states
- SIG International Iowa - producer of premium pork products, primarily for the Japanese market
- Agropur - milk and cheese processor

Transportation and Logistics

Excellent highway systems are important for Food Processing, and Northwest Iowa offers easy 4-lane

Benefits of Northwest Iowa for Food Processing Companies

- Excellent highway systems
- Access to a large supply of farm commodities
- Strong Transportation and Warehousing Sector
- Affordable skilled workforce
- Quality training programs and educational systems

access to two east-west Interstates (I-90 and I-80) and two north-south Interstates (I-29 and I-35).

The Transportation and Warehousing Sector accounts for 5.2% of the Region's employment (nearly 3,500 workers) compared to 3.9% for the State of Iowa and 3.6% for the U.S. There are over 200 truck transportation companies and 28 warehousing and storage operations located in our six counties.



Agriculture

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there are nearly 6,700 farms in the six counties in Northwest Iowa,



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and these farms have a combined total of 2.2 million acres. Our Region accounts for just over 7% of the farms and farmland in the State of Iowa, and it is a leading producer of agricultural commodities.

Northwest Iowa Region - Agriculture		
Northwest Iowa Agriculture	Northwest Iowa	% of State
Land in Farms - acres	2,230,830	7.3%
Milk Cows	45,670	21.2%
Cattle & Calves Sold	880,842	24.2%
Hogs & Pigs Sold	9,599,408	20.3%
Chickens Sold	4,859,656	47.4%
Corn for Grain - bushels	166,575,286	7.3%
Wheat for Grain - bushels	62,526	4.5%
Oats for Grain - bushels	309,351	6.9%
Soybeans - bushels	40,992,580	9.5%

Skilled Workforce

Studies have shown Iowa to have a highly skilled workforce, and nearly 10,000 workers in our Region are employed in the Manufacturing Sector with over 4,400 workers employed in Food Processing Industry. The earnings of our Food Processing workers (\$46,613) are 8% below the earnings for food processing workers in Iowa and 4% below the average for all U.S. Food Processing workers.

The low cost-of-living in Northwest Iowa allows our workers to enjoy a high quality-of-life, while enabling employers to hire skilled, productive workers at an affordable wage.

Available Buildings and Sites

There are several buildings and building sites available in the region suitable for food processing operations. Among the available buildings are:

- A 17,290 sq. ft. food processing facility in LeMars, IA with 6,800 sq. ft. of production area, cooler, freezer, dry storage, lab, and office space.

- A 15,150 sq. ft. facility in Cherokee, IA with 6,960 of manufacturing space and 8,190 sq. ft. of frozen storage space on 8.2 acres of land.

Education and Training

Education is one of the key strengths of the Region and the State of Iowa. Annually, Iowa is one of the nation's leaders in scores on ACT and SAT college entrance examinations. Two of the school systems in Northwest Iowa (George-Little Rock and Sheldon Community Schools) have been named to the Top 100 Schools list compiled by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Two community colleges in the Region offer programs to prepare students for careers in manufacturing and other fields - Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon and Western Iowa Tech in Cherokee. In addition, Northwestern College in Orange City and Dordt College in Sioux Center are four-year private institutions in the Region that educate students for careers with employers in Northwest Iowa. Both these colleges have been named among America's Best Colleges by *U.S. News and World Report*.

The Iowa New Jobs Training Program provides employers, which are expanding their existing operation in Iowa or are locating a new operation to the State, with employee training. This training is customized to meet the employer's needs and is available through Iowa's community colleges. This program is financed through bonds issued by the community colleges.

Northwest Iowa Development

Economic developers from the six counties in the northwest corner of Iowa have joined together to form Northwest Iowa Development. Through this regional economic development organization, we are able to provide a unified, regionally-targeted approach to developing and marketing the Region to attract quality new corporate locations as well as assist the employers in Northwest Iowa in their expansions. In addition, we are dedicated to developing and attracting the skilled workers needed by our employers.

We are available to assist you with your site location project.

