



## MMPA Hosts Open House at Ovid Plant

Exactly two years after first breaking ground on a \$62 million expansion, MMPA hosted an open house on June 30 to showcase the newly renovated and expanded Ovid processing facility.

Nearly 500 people attending the event got to see the inner-workings of the plant as Ovid employees gave tours to MMPA members, industry representatives and public officials. Many attendees were visibly impressed with the efficiency and cleanliness of the Ovid plant, which can process approximately 5 million pounds of milk in a single day.

“I felt that we had access to something very few people get to see,” MMPA member Ramona Okkema, of Blanchard, Mich, said of the open house. “There’s a lot of control for cleanliness and I was impressed at how they could join the old with the new and do it so efficiently. You can tell an amazing amount of thought and planning went into the back-up systems, too.”

The Ovid manufacturing plant operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, taking in approximately 3.5 to 5 million pounds of milk each day. Sales from the Ovid plant were nearly \$140 million in 2009.

“I am pleased to tell you today that without a doubt, we believe our investment here in Ovid is money well-spent,” said Ken Nobis, a dairy farmer from St. Johns and MMPA president, during the open house program. “We continue to believe that the dairy industry — the number one segment of the state’s agriculture industry — is one of the shining stars in our state’s economy. We are proud to be leaders in the Michigan dairy industry — an industry that provides nearly \$6 billion to our state’s economy. Investments like this plant expansion will keep Michigan Dairy farmers at the top of the nation’s dairy industry.”

The 14,000 square foot expansion and plant renovation projects have increased the Ovid plant’s capacity from 3 million pounds per day to more than 5 million pounds per day, improving throughput and efficiency and allowing MMPA to remain competitive and viable in the marketplace. MMPA management

worked closely with many local and state government agencies to ensure the expanded operation would meet strict environmental, employee health and food safety regulations.

Michigan Department of Agriculture Director Don Koivisto commended MMPA for being easy to work with to resolve issues that may arise, because MMPA uses a solution-oriented approach.

According to a study completed by the MSU Product Center, the Ovid expansion project could have an economic impact of over \$183 million to the state of Michigan. They also estimate that there would be approximately 176 direct, indirect and induced employment opportunities created through the expansion project.

MMPA General Manager Clay Galarneau thanked the employees for their efforts in keeping the expansion project on time and within budget.

“Many employees worked long and sometimes unusual hours to complete parts of this project,” Clay said. “Many of these projects were completed in the middle of the night to avoid interference with milk receiving or processing normally done during daytime hours. Milk production in Michigan continues to grow at an impressive rate. Our members are proud of the investment that has been made here and they look forward to MMPA’s efforts to provide a market for their milk and a safe, wholesome and nutritious product for their customers.”

Products made at the Ovid facility include butter, nonfat dry milk, cream, condensed skim milk and specialty blends. These products are used by MMPA customers in various end products such as ice cream, yogurt, infant formula, pudding, cheese, baked goods, frozen dinners, candy bars and other confections.

“We really enjoyed the tour of the plant,” MMPA member Kevin Litwiller, of Perrinton, Mich. said. “We now have a greater appreciation for all the work that went into the tour and the work being done at the plant itself.”

**Photo left:** MMPA Ovid employees conducted tours of the renovated facility.

**Photos below, clockwise from top left:** Public officials were invited to attend a special VIP tour at the beginning of the day; attendees were welcome to take a self-guided tour of the new dryer area; the renovated Ovid plant, taken from the top of the new dryer building; (inset) MMPA President Ken Nobis discussed the economic impact Michigan's dairy industry has on the state's economy; MDA Director Don Koivistio commended MMPA for being easy to work with throughout the construction project.

