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Hill Firm, Two Others Plan Merger

Merger of two other packing companies with the Hill Packing Company of Topeka was planned Tuesday.

The companies are the Davis Packing Company of Estherville, Iowa, and Hill & Company, Inc., of Topeka.

Stockholders of the two Hill companies will vote on the merger proposal December 28. Offices of the new company will be in Topeka.

Hill & Company warehouse is owned by many of the same group which owns the Hill Packing Company.

The packing company, in business here since 1907, specializes in exportation of salt-cured and frozen horse meat to dealers in Holland, Sweden, Belgium and Belgian Congo.

For the past 30 years the company also has manufactured a prescription diet dog food, sold only thru veterinarians.

Topeka Firm Caters to Dogs But Makes Money Doing It

BY KEN DAVID

Of The Daily Capital Staff

A dog's life may not appeal to you or me, but that's what makes the wheels go round at one Topeka industry.

The Hill Packing Co. has been processing dog foods of various sorts for many years. The company is the multi-million-dollar brain child of a lively and energetic Kansan, Burton Hill.

Hill started his business a little more than 43 years ago in a red brick building hardly big enough to cuss a cat in, or a dog. How he managed to get the carcass of a horse in it is, from the appearance of the building now, something of a puzzle.

Had Some Lean Years

But apparently he did. Hill began his packing business on May 17, 1907. He coddled his business thru a lot of lean years and now as a compact, modern plant that produces 11 different horsemeat products sold in every state in the nation and several foreign countries.

Some of it is processed and packaged under government supervision and is, consequently, approved for human consumption, if you have the mind and stomach for it. A surprising number of people do, particularly the sturdy citizens of Norway, Finland, Belgium, Holland and sections of Africa.

But horsemeat in this country still is mainly a dog food, and Hill's products are staple items in the diet of thousands of man's best friends.

Not Dogs at First

Dogs, however, didn't exactly figure in the deal at Hill's in the beginning. Hill started out making hog and chicken feeds.

But not anymore. Now it's the dog that has his day with Hill's. Even sick dogs.

That's a new wrinkle, not generally known. Hill packages four different prescription rations for your ailing pet. But they're not on the open market. You have to get

them thru your veterinarian after proper diagnosis of what's the trouble with Bowser.

The prescription ration formulas were prepared by Dr. Mark L. Morris, a New Jersey veterinarian who has done extensive research in small-animal nutrition.

Diet Important

Dogs apparently are heir to ailments akin to those afflicting their masters and mistresses—some get too fat, some are too thin, others have kidney trouble and a few don't get along so well during pregnancy.

Research seems to have proved that diet is one of the controlling factors in a dog's recovery from an assortment of illnesses. And that's the pitch on prescription rations—controlled diet.

It's exclusive with Hill's. Furthermore, it's providing funds for continued research into all sorts of things about pets. Half a cent from every pound sold by veterinarians goes into a research fund.

From Pioneer Stock

Hill descended from pioneer stock and even had a crack at the land rush in Oklahoma when he was still in knee britches. He was born on a homestead along the

Skyline Drive in Wabaunsee County.

The compact, three-acre Hill Packing Co. plant sits on the edge of the Kansas River in Topeka and turns out millions of pounds of canned and fresh-frozen horse meat products annually for domestic consumption and export.

Hill's products are tested and approved by the American Veterinary Medical and Animal Hospital Association.

Hill figures that his annual gross business during the first few years in the life of the Hill Packing Co. was about \$50,000. From these small potatoes has grown an industrial giant knocking off annual sales of more than \$5,350,000 and employing 325 persons with a yearly payroll approaching \$1,000,000.

Last year, the company sold 15,800,000 pounds of frozen and 462,000 cases of canned horsemeat products. Export, which also includes shipments to Alaska, Hawaii and Guam, totaled 250 carloads, about 11,500,000 pounds.

And during World War II, the military served enormous quantities of Hill's dog food to the K-9 Corps.

Besides its horsemeat output, the company also does a tidy business on the side selling horsehides to leather goods manufactur-

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—Daily Capital Staff Photo

MUTUAL BENEFIT TRIO—Burton Hill, dogs and Hill's dog foods have been mutually beneficial for many years. Thousands of dogs have thrived on Hill's processed horsemeat and Hill has made it big business. Here he poses with one of those super-intellectuals of dogdom, a Weimeraner owned by Charles Holman, Yellow Cab Co. president. In the background are some of the numerous horsemeat products made by the Hill Packing Co., a 43-year-old Topeka firm.