

COMPANY BRIEFS

Simplot Plant Closings Handled with Employee Professionalism

When the Simplot Food Group embarked on an ambitious effort to design, build and commission a new state-of-the-art food plant in Caldwell, Idaho several years ago, a difficult decision was made to close three older plants in Aberdeen, Caldwell and Nampa.

The new Idaho Plant, built adjacent to the site of the original Caldwell plant, was the largest expansion in the company's history. The plant has proved to be a progressive, proactive response to market challenges, which has allowed Simplot to maintain a competitive edge in a very fluid market.

The Aberdeen, Nampa and original Caldwell processing facilities were an important part of Simplot's history, but at some point in time every competitive business is required to look at facilities and their infrastructure and balance the costs of maintaining older buildings and equipment, or investing in newer technologies.

John Coulter, Simplot's EHS Manager, credited all employees at the plants and the professional manner in which the plant closings were handled over the last year and half of operation.

"The plants are now closed and the employees have gone on to other endeavors within and outside of Simplot, but it's important they be recognized for the commitment they showed to the safety and well-being of their fellow employees," Coulter said.



Simplot's Nampa location was one of three locations closed as a result of the opening of the Idaho Plant in Caldwell.

All the plants averaged a Total Incident Rate (TIR) under the national industry rate, and Aberdeen finished Fiscal Year 2015 with zero OSHA recordable incidents.

Coulter said anyone who has been part of a plant closure, realizes it is a tough time in the life of that facility and its employees. Emotions are running high and it can be difficult to maintain concentration on the tasks that must be accomplished. But business must continue until the doors are closed and keeping everyone safe has to be a priority.

"During the closure process the plants continued making their production goals and keeping employees safe, which is a remarkable achievement," Coulter said "Meeting these goals is a testimony to the professionalism and integrity of each plant's staff and employees."

Simplot Enters into Agreement to Deliver High Resolution Satellite Imagery

Airbus Defense and Space and Simplot are launching a project to deliver Pléiades very high-resolution satellite imagery to Simplot customers. In the United States, Simplot will monitor customer and company fields distributed over several states during the growing season. This imagery will be acquired at key crop growth stages, and will be assessed for in-season adjustments.

Satellite imagery provided during the growing season will allow Simplot to collect data on crop conditions, and pinpoint variations that could be related to specific pest, nutrition or water issues.

Using the imagery, Simplot will be able to cover its entire geographic footprint to create a precise and detailed database.

This advanced mapping will enable Simplot to provide growers with crop change detection analysis and estimate the possible impacts this may have on yield.

Simplot hopes it will become possible in the future to diagnose crop issues through field comparisons allowing Simplot to guide crop production management and optimization decisions in real time. Factors such as seed density, fertilizer, water and other inputs could be adjusted on a sub-field level with pinpoint accuracy.

"The Pléiades images collected at key crop stages will fully support more sustainable farming practices while saving time and cutting costs," said Allan Feters, director of technology for Simplot Grower Solutions.