

National Proteins Inc., Ryan and Ron Dueck,
Blumenort Manitoba

Business Profile

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Food safety is tops at new soybean refinery

By earning FSSC 22000 certification, NPI is preparing to:

- Move into more profitable product lines
- Sell to the biggest grocery retailers
- Create local jobs by building on the increase in Manitoba soybean acres
- Offer consumers a new soy cooking oil produced right here in Manitoba.

Ryan Dueck can picture the day when totally made-in-Manitoba soybean oil will fill the shelves of major retail grocers. When that day comes, the bottles are likely to bear the label of Natural Proteins Inc. (NPI), the soybean refinery owned by Ryan and his father Ron Dueck.

While their refinery at Blumenort also produces crude oil, Ryan knows there's more profit potential in oil for human consumption – and that's why the new refinery has jumped into food safety programming in such a big way.

Just months after its first shipment, NPI earned the stringent Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000, a standard recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative and accreditation bodies around the world.

Natural Proteins Inc. is proving that even small, new firms can adopt the highest standards of food safety management.

NPI was among the first processors in Manitoba to achieve this certification. It's an enormous achievement for a company fresh out of the starting gate.

Ryan considers food safety programs a valuable long-term investment, but the initial cost was significant – particularly for a new company facing many other expenses.

That's where Growing Forward was able to help. The program funded development of NPI's food safety program, as well as some costs related to the intensive third-party audit and

two-day pre-assessment that were part of the FSSC 22000 certification process. In total, NPI received \$25,000 from Growing Forward.

FSSC 22000 takes all elements for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), and incorporates them into a management system that follows the ISO 22000 standard approach.

It's an ambitious food safety standard for a new company with only a few employees – and that's precisely why Ryan chose FSSC 22000. The company has big plans and Ryan wants to ensure the operations start off on the right foot.

In addition to the "buy local" crowd, Ryan wants to eventually sell soybean oil to huge grocery chains that demand the highest assurance of food safety.

"Now we're in the position to start knocking on those doors," he says.

Also appealing to Ryan was FSSC 22000's holistic approach to food safety, which considers the whole management and record-keeping system, "not just the dust in the corner."

For example, the system requires employees to fill out a form every time there's an error, no matter how insignificant it might seem at the time. The company must then look at how the cost of those errors is adding up.

"That helps you see any ongoing problems or patterns so that you can zero-in on long-term solutions," Ryan explains. "It's the whole ball of wax. We're managing not just food safety, but also risk." ■

Food Safety from Farm to Fork

FSSC 22000 is a stringent food safety certification scheme. It shows that a company's food safety management system meets a high standard that is fully recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and accreditation bodies around the world.

Besides helping to ensure a safe food supply, FSSC 22000 opens doors to profitable markets that are demanding that assurance of food safety. A growing number of large retail chains are requiring their suppliers to implement a preventative food safety program based on HACCP principles. Some are going one step further by requiring suppliers to implement a GFSI-benchmarked scheme. ■



About The Food Safety Program, for Processors and Distributors

The Growing Forward **Food Safety Program, for Processors and Distributors** funds initiatives that help prevent, eliminate and control potential hazards that may occur in the processing and handling of food. Eligible applicants can receive \$5,000 to \$25,000 through this program.

Even if your company is just starting to develop a food safety program, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives can steer you toward the right funding and expertise. You can start small, with sanitation and personnel practices, and work toward a complete food safety program. Growing Forward also offers funding to develop traceability programs.

Food Safety is Good Business

In addition to protecting the safety of our food supply, these programs can help businesses:

- respond to new consumers demands and gain access to new markets
- increase customer confidence and satisfaction
- improve product quality and consistency
- cut processing costs and waste
- reduce the risk of a product recall
- reduce business risk and liability by demonstrating due diligence
- improve the health and well-being of Canadians ■

For more information on how Growing Forward and other provincial programs can help improve agribusiness profitability, contact your local Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Growing Opportunities (GO) Office or visit our website at manitoba.ca/agriculture.