

DFA Plant to Help Spur Growth

Where today sits a small pile of freshly turned western Kansas soil soon will be Meadowlark Dairy Nutrition, a Dairy Farmers of America milk processing plant. According to Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey, the new plant could be an important catalyst to spur additional growth in the Kansas dairy sector. Secretary McClaskey attended a groundbreaking ceremony near Garden City on Thursday, Oct. 8.

“Kansas is one of the fastest growing regions for dairy production in the United States, growing 7.5 percent in 2014 alone, and more than doubling in the last 20 years,” said Secretary McClaskey. “We are proud to welcome DFA to Kansas and are confident this milk processing plant will make Kansas even more attractive to dairies looking to grow or relocate.”

Since 2010, total milk output in Kansas has increased 24 percent. In 2014, the approximately 143,000 dairy cows in Kansas produced 3.1 billion pounds of milk, valued at \$746.6 million. According to KDA economic data, in 2013, the dairy industry in Kansas supported more than 5,800 jobs and contributed \$1.02 billion to the state’s economy.

Dairy-farmer owned, DFA is the nation’s largest milk marketing cooperative and is the sixth-largest global dairy company, with exports going to nearly 50 countries. When completed, the plant in Garden City will process 4 million pounds of raw milk daily from local dairy farms to be used for milk powder for domestic and global customers.

“As we work to continue growing the dairy sector in Kansas, a limiting factor has been the proximity to a milk processing plant. That’s a significant factor dairies consider as Kansas dairy farmers look to successfully grow their operations,” said Secretary McClaskey. “Expanding the milk processing capacity in Kansas will enable us to add more value to milk and dairy products in Kansas and will make our state even more competitive in the future. We look forward to working together with DFA and all our partners in the dairy sector to grow and enhance Kansas agriculture.”