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Gold'N Plump

Independence, Wisconsin USA



The most advanced single stage broiler hatchery in the US.



Raised to be the best.



Mike Helgeson,
C.E.O. Gold'n Plump

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Round to be the best.

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The Gold'n Plump Hatchery at Independence, Wisconsin

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Driving through the beautiful rolling hills of Wisconsin, past the herds of cattle and over the imposing Mississippi River, you could, perhaps, be forgiven for not expecting to come across the most state-of-the-art broiler hatchery in the whole of the USA. But there it is.

Once inside, you cannot fail to be amazed. In fact, whomever you talk with instantly responds with enthusiasm and pride about their new hatchery, the quality of the chicks, and the efficiency and controllability of the Chick Master Avida systems that have been installed here.

The 60,000-square-foot hatchery was officially opened on March 1, 2007 as part of a \$38 million expansion of Gold'n Plump's Wisconsin operations. The new \$10 million hatchery is the focal point of the company's plan to increase volume and meet rising consumer demand for quality and safer food. According to Steve Jurek, Gold'n Plump's executive vice president of operations and administration, the company could not be more pleased with the new hatchery and the decision to use Chick Master equipment. "The whole

installation went very well. Chick Master has been an excellent partner a testament to how two companies can work together to achieve something great" Jurek said. Tom Solberg, the breeder hatchery manager agreed. "Chick Master was

Cloud, Minnesota in 1926 by E.M. Helgeson. Today, the company is run by his grandson, Mike Helgeson, who leads a team of over 1,500 people and more than 250 family farmers. Jurek and his team conducted a 6-month expansion study to determine the best location for future growth. After determining its Wisconsin operations had the most potential for improving efficiency and aiding the long-term success of the company, Gold'n Plump began researching hatchery technology with Chick Master representatives. Together, they visited 10 hatcheries, including Jamesway

extremely helpful from the start. The project manager took time to answer my questions and was very thoughtful in his responses. He needed to be because I ask tough questions," Solberg said. "I was satisfied, and I don't say that very often!"

Gold'n Plump is a family-owned, fully integrated provider of premium chicken products to retail, delicatessen and foodservice customers throughout the Midwest and in many other parts of the U.S. Their first hatchery was built in St.

and Hatch Tech facilities before deciding to buy Chick Master single-stage equipment for the new hatchery in Independence, Wisconsin. According to Bill Petz, Gold'n Plump's director of Arcadia operations, the team had rigorous expectations for the potential hatchery equipment. "We were looking for a total solution," Petz said. "We needed equipment with round-the-clock technical support, quick-to-respond on-

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Steve Jurek
Executive Vice President of
Operations and Administration

site support, and expedited parts delivery. On top of it all, we needed the equipment delivered within 5 months of our decision to pursue the project." Chick Master was able to meet all of these objectives to the full satisfaction of Gold'n Plump's team, which include a rigorous trial of the equipment.

"We tested the Avida system in Arcadia and St. Cloud and saw better chick quality, growth rate, egg viability (as the flock ages) and improved feed conversion. On all levels what we tested looked very positive to us," Petz said. "The machines are cost-effective and helped add to our investment incentive for a better return.

Currently, the hatchery has capacity to produce 1.2 million chicks per week from the 36 Chick Master Avida, A18, single-stage setters and 12 Avida A12 machines installed. At full capacity, the group will have more than 4 million eggs in the incubation process at all times. These eggs are supplied by approximately 300,000 breeder hens, cared for by farmers affiliated with Gold'n Plump.

The ability to accurately control the atmosphere inside the setter cabinet was the key to the improvements seen in chick quality and performance. "Control of the entire facility with Galaxy is a great help. It works really well especially the ability to tweak the control for a particular egg age," Solberg said. "Different age flocks also require different incubation environments. Anyone who has Multi-Stage systems, new or old, knows that you basically shoot for the middle (the average) and hope for the best. That is the way it is. Now our expectations have risen way beyond that. With Avida

systems you have constant control of the environment within the box. I used to be committed to multi-stage. Now I see the benefits of the precise environmental control that can be applied to all of the eggs in the machine. In the end, we get much better chick quality and more viable eggs. Also, it is difficult to clean multi-stage systems unless you program in some down time. With Avidas' when the set is complete, the setter itself is empty. You can clean it and start again." Solberg continued, "We are constantly developing

could tailor our parameters around egg age and flock age." According to Jurek, Gold'n Plump is already seeing benefits from their Avida systems: more birds within the desired weight range, improved chick quality, improved feed conversion, better hatchability, livability, and reduced cost per chick.

"After we moved into the new hatchery, the results have even been better than expected," Jurek said. Solberg added, "What we see is much better conditioned chicks that all come off together with no sign of dehydration. From a hatchery persons' perspective, you take the real early chicks and the real late chicks and bring them to the middle a tighter mass has a better opportunity to go straight to feed and to compete and gain. Currently we are seeing, on average, an improved hatch of around 1.5%. We simply get more viable chicks."

Gold'n Plump is also seeing improvements in the grow-out performance on the farms as a result of improved chick quality and tighter hatch window. "It is early in the process, but first results indicate that daily weight gain is increasing," Petz said. "The reports show that our birds are growing faster and we have to react to this because of size constraints at our processing plant. It is a good problem to have, but as of yet, we haven't put any numbers to it. We need more experience to know exactly how to handle this good problem."

Jurek added, "Sometimes it is difficult to pinpoint why the growth we see has really taken off. However, we know that the new facility is a key contributor to the improved performance.

It is a magnificent achievement and to-date, the most advanced in the U.S. I know of no hatchery that is more automated. We have a great facility with great performance," beamed Steve Jurek.



Setter room with eighteen Avida 18 singlestage setters



Fully automated system from transport to setter trolley



Left to right: Tom Solberg, Bill Petz, Steve Jurek and Robert Holzer, President of Chick Master