

MPTL helps guarantee safe food in Minnesota



NEW WORKSTATIONS:

Renovations to the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory in Willmar made work areas more efficient for lab technicians.

By PAULA MOHR

INCREASING concerns about avian influenza have doubled the number of poultry samples tested at the Minnesota Poultry Testing Laboratory over the past decade.

That's the main reason why the MPTL in Willmar was recently renovated, using funds appropriated by the 2006 Minnesota Legislature.

"This facility does more than test a turkey and check a chicken," says Gene Hugoson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture commissioner. The MPTL is a crucial link in guaranteeing safe, high-quality food products for consumers.



DALE LAUER

Lab renovations included state-of-the-art testing technology and online reporting.

Poultry is a three-quarter billion-dollar industry in the state. Nationally, Minnesota is No. 1 in turkey production and the top state for the production of broiler chickens, eggs and upland game birds such as pheasant, partridge and quail.

Much of the disease testing at MPTL is conducted under the guidelines of the National Poultry Improvement Plan, a state-federal-industry partner-

ship program designed to prevent and control disease across all segments of the poultry industry, according to Dale Lauer, MPTL director and veterinarian. The MPTL is one of only two labs in the state authorized to test samples under NPIP guidelines. The program certifies states, flocks, hatcheries and dealers that meet specific disease-control standards so that poultry buyers are certain that they are purchasing monitored and tested disease-free poultry.

The MPTL currently has 11 employees including administrative staff, full- and part-time lab technicians, information technology staff, field staff, and Lauer.

Community wind farm planned for southeast Minnesota

NATIONAL Wind LLC recently announced its partnership with communities in southeast Minnesota to form and capitalize High Country Energy LLC.

When completed, High Country Energy will be the largest community-owned wind-energy project in Minnesota and in the country, according to the company.

National Wind will manage the development and construction of High Country Energy's 300-megawatt wind farm located in eastern Dodge and western Olmsted counties. High Country Energy LLC was formed by National Wind in partnership with seven members of the community that invested in the project: Barry Rogne, Bryant Hokeness, Dan Hoffman, Eric Lee, Ken Binkley, Kevin Green and Larry Larson.

"We are grateful to the community for its strong support of this project and to the local landowners who have decided to partner with us," says Patrick Pelstring, co-founder and chairman of National Wind. "This is a groundbreaking community-owned project because it compares in size to some of the nation's largest utility projects. This allows the project to take advantage of economies of scale not normally available to community-owned projects. It is owned by the local community with significant financial returns for the local community."

Minnesota has created incentives to promote community-based energy de-



velopments through the New Generation Energy Act of 2007. National Wind supports this effort with a unique landowner-based development model designed for larger-scale projects. The High Country Energy project is expected to qualify for C-BED status, meaning it is owned by Minnesota residents and that 51% of the profits are returned to the Minnesota community members over the life of the project. The New Generation Energy Act of 2007 has required utilities to commit to allocating space on the grid for 1,200 MW of C-BED projects by 2025.

The wind farm will also be utilized to help meet Minnesota's mandate for 25% of its electricity from renewable resources by 2025.

Other High Country facts:

■ The proposed site stretches across 49 miles of agricultural land in southeastern Dodge County and western Olmsted County.

■ The land is characterized by hills and includes the highest elevation in Dodge County. State Highway 30 bisects the project area providing east-west access.

■ The project has the wind potential for up to 300 MW and will be developed in several phases.

■ The project will provide enough energy to generate electricity for 87,400 homes and will displace almost 750 tons of greenhouse-gas emissions.

■ The 300 MW High Country Wind Energy Park will consist of up to 200 turbines, depending on their size and configuration.

■ Based on development, transmission and construction schedules, the first project may come on line during 2009. Overall, the project is expected to develop into three or four phases over the next five years.

National Wind, with headquarters in Minneapolis, develops and manages community wind energy projects of utility scale (50 MW or more).

National Wind and its development subsidiary, Wind Energy Developers LLC, have participated in developing 12 wind energy projects and currently have more than 1,000 MW in development throughout Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota.

For more information on this project, go online to www.highcountryenergy.com.

NewsWatch Briefs

Agventure: new name for CHS Agronomy Services

Agventure is what CHS will call its current agronomy locations operated by CHS-owned Northwest Grain, based in St. Hilaire; Agri-Valley, based in Grand Forks, N.D.; Mid-Valley Grain, based in Crookston; and Salol Elevators, based in Badger. CHS Agventure will also operate the new hub plant currently under construction in Warren. Construction on the 24,000-ton agronomy facility began earlier this summer and is on schedule for completion by February 2008. The plant will be shuttle-train ready and located on the Burlington Northern/Canadian Pacific rail line.

WindLogics expands St. Paul headquarters, staff

WindLogics has tripled its headquarters by moving to expanded facilities in St. Paul's historic Bandana Square, and it continues to add staff and services. WindLogics offers advanced wind-resource analysis, and long-term wind-variability and weather-forecasting services. Using weather data and advanced computer-modeling techniques, WindLogics works with landowners, project developers, owner/operators, financiers and utilities to maximize returns by understanding wind history and potential at their locations of interest.

Volume 125 ■ Number 10

CONTENTS

MINNESOTA NEWSWATCH	3
VIEWPOINT	12
CROPS	18
DAIRY/LIVESTOCK	24
MIDWEST EXTRA	MX1
FARM MANAGEMENT	31
NATURAL RESOURCES	36
MINNESOTA COUNTRYSIDE	40
EQUIPMENT	45
MARKETPLACE/CLASSIFIED	47
MARKETING	55

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