

A Future Investment for Iowa State Students and Livestock Operations

By Dawson Schmitt

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University will create tons of feed and learning opportunities for students as construction continues on a feed mill and grain research complex.

The Kent Corporation Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex, under construction on Highway 30, south of Ames and off the corner of State Street, first broke ground in the fall of 2019. The initial site work began in November 2020 with creating the access road and pouring the foundations for the storage bins, which continued into the early spring, according to Dr. Mark Honeyman, associate dean of operations.

According to university officials involved in the project, visions for the feed mill included providing a hands-on experience for students interested in feed technology and access to livestock feed.

“The ISU Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex, a state-of-the-art facility, will focus on furthering the university’s mission of teaching, research, service and extension while producing feeds for ISU livestock and poultry teaching and research farms,” wrote Honeyman and Jay Harmon, associate dean of agricultural extension, in an over-

view of the feed mill.

Officials project the complex to cost around \$24.2 million, accounting for a revision due to higher material costs following the original projection of \$21.2 million. To fund the construction of the complex, ISU faculty raised millions of dollars through partnerships with companies in the industry.

Ray Klein, the director of the CALS Office of Partnerships, headed the coordination of finding partners for the feed mill. He said fundraising for capital for the facilities, such as boilers, a hammer mill, sensors and probes, became a large portion of the funds - more than 20 companies donated for materials and equipment alone.

Klein said that not only was raising money important, but building partnerships within the industry became vital for the feed mill’s success. He said companies, such as Kent Corp. and Iowa Corn Growers Association, donated to the project to benefit the industry in its entirety. Not only do students benefit, but Iowa’s farmers do as well.

Klein said that the goal of the feed mill is to produce as much feed as possible for students to get as much hands-on experience necessary to understand the feed process. He said companies that donated would realize their investment upon buying products from the mill.

“By purchasing feed from us, they know we are educating students,” he said. Aside from partnering with external businesses, the feed mill will supply the livestock farms run by the university. Officials project the mill will produce 20,000 tons of feed per year and supply around 6,500 tons to the research and teaching farms.



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One way for students to participate is by taking courses within the feed technology minor, where they can learn at the mill. Klein said that students can enhance their employability through the minor and working at the feed mill upon its completion.

Katelyn Belding, a senior in animal science with a minor in feed technology, said the current structure of the minor is beneficial to students, but having the mill in the future will enhance students' understanding of the process.

"There is a lot of hands-on stuff incorporated into the feed tech minor, but they are just on a small scale," she said. "With the large feed mill, you actually get to put it into practice to develop a feed diet."

Belding said skills learned at the feed mill teach students more than the operational aspects.

"If you're a feed salesman, you know where your feed is coming from and how it is processed," she said.

Klein said the project is a commitment to students and Iowa producers to help drive the state's economy.

"Iowa producers depend on Iowa State to provide expertise, research and training," he said. "The feed mill is designed to meet the needs of the motor driving the economy."

Jacob Stukerjurgan, a junior majoring in animal science and minoring in feed technology and agribusiness, received a scholarship for the feed technology program. Since starting at Iowa State, he helped develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for how to run equipment at the feed mill. He said he plans to work at the mill once construction concludes.



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Stukerjurgan said he has always had a passion for the industry, as he worked at his parents' feed mill in eighth grade, sweeping floors before moving up to mixing feed. He said he wanted to come to Iowa State when he heard the feed mill was being constructed. Stukerjurgan also praised the donors who contributed to the project.

"I appreciate them donating and putting this up," he said. "It's a huge impact on the feed industry (in Iowa)."

Honeyman said the construction of the feed mill is on schedule, where the education center and warehouse will be built in early 2022. He said the facilities will become fully operational by the fall 2022 semester.