PORTAGE PEA PROTEIN FACILITY ON TRACK TO START OPERATION THIS YEAR

Construction of Roquette's Portage Pea Protein facility is shown here in August 2020.

Roquette's Portage Pea Protein facility in Manitoba remains on target to start operation by the end of 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Located on 67 acres in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, the facility is expected to be the world's largest pea processing plant and employ approximately 120 people, said Michelle Finley, Communications and Public Affairs Manager for Roquette Canada Ltd.

"The health and safety of our employees, contractors, customers and the communities we operate in, is our top priority," she said. "We are confident that our COVID prevention protocols are some of the very best in Canada for a large construction project and, as a result, we have been able to safely keep the site open throughout the pandemic."

The North American demand for new and innovative plant proteins continues to grow at an incredible pace. To meet this demand, Roquette has invested over $780 million (CAD) in pea protein over five years, including more than $600 million for the Portage Pea Protein facility.

"An important factor in selecting a location for the new pea protein plant was the region's capacity to supply enough yellow peas to keep the facility running 365 days a year," Finley added. "The positive response from growers across the prairies in 2020 confirms that the new facility is perfectly located and that Western Canada's farming community is eager to access the sustainable domestic market that Roquette offers."

Finley encouraged growers from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to connect with Glen Last, Roquette's Country Category Specialist, to learn more about the company's price premiums and flexible delivery options. He can be reached at RCL_fieldteam@Roquette.com or 431-304-0200.

With its flagship plant located in France, Roquette is a global leader in innovative, plant-based ingredients for food, animal nutrition, pharmaceutical and industrial products. Roquette currently operates in more than 100 countries, has a turnover of around $5.5 billion and employs 8,670 people worldwide.

Meanwhile, processing in Alberta got a boost with the federal government's announcement of more than $2.6 million in funding through Western Economic Diversification Canada for the Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc, AB.

This investment will support the installation of equipment specifically focused on supporting companies to develop new plant-based foods and products. The news release stated that plant-based foods represent a significant economic opportunity for Western Canadian firms seeking to meet growing global and consumer demands for protein-rich foods that are healthy and environmentally sustainable. With Western Canada already producing high-protein pulse crops such as peas, lentils, and chickpeas, the goal of this initiative is to enable agri-food producers to turn these crops into higher value ingredients or finished products before exporting them to markets around the globe.

Operated by the Government of Alberta, the Food Processing Development Centre is a fully equipped pilot plant and product development facility. It is staffed with experienced food scientists, engineers, and technologists who work with businesses to develop and fine-tune their products. Over the next four years, Government of Canada support will enable the Centre to assist approximately 100 small- and medium-sized companies, and potentially bring up to 30 new products to market.