

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN - 100-YEAR-OLD CEREAL COMPANY PREPARES TO REACH A NEW GENERATION OF CONSUMERS

ABOUT CREAM OF THE WEST LLC. Founded in 1914, Cream of the West has been roasting Montana grains and producing natural cereal products for more than a hundred years. While best known for its iconic line of Cowboy hot cereals - first created in a Montana ranch kitchen - the company has expanded its products over the years to include cold cereals, snacks, pancake mixes, and more.

Since 2002, Cream of the West has made its home in Harlowton, a town of less than a thousand people in south-central Montana. The company and its 7 employees are committed to developing sustainable agriculture and bolstering the economies of rural communities within the state.

THE CHALLENGE. With growing consumer interest in healthy, whole-grain foods, Cream of the West was looking to expand the availability of its products out of state and online. In preparation for potential manufacturing growth, the company wished to strengthen its procedures and staff training related to food safety. Specifically, Cream of the West management wanted to increase the number of employees qualified in Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles and prepare for its first third party Good Manufacturing Practices audit.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Cream of the West contacted the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC), part of the MEP National Network™, for assistance. An MMEC Food and Process Specialist worked closely with Cream of the West to assess its staff training, operations, and audit readiness. During an on-site visit, he taught an in-house HACCP class to personnel and conducted a GMP pre-audit. Based on the pre-audit, Cream of the West received a list of CGMP (Current Good Manufacturing Practices) deficiencies - and perhaps more importantly - specific strategies to resolve them. Thanks to the training, key personnel gained a full understanding of HACCP principles, which allowed the company to fully implement them into their daily operations.

"MMEC's assistance is helping us lay the groundwork for increased production and market expansion," said Cream of the West Owner Alicia Moe. "Our successful third-party audits have helped us to initiate partnerships with three co-packers - one in state, one out-of-state, and one who is exporting to China, as well as maintain our wholesale grocery customers."

"MMEC provides valuable information and support that allow manufacturers to grow and prosper – all of the staff do great work, and we've benefited enormously from our relationship with them over the years."

-Alicia Moe, Owner

RESULTS



3 created or retained jobs



\$25,000 in new or retained sales



\$10,000 in new investment

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