





Measurably Better than the Rest

Strategic success from a first-class producer in the plastics industry

Teel Plastics has evolved on an impressive scale since its early days in Baraboo, Wisconsin, where it started out as 'Insemikit' – a manufacturer of glass tubes used in the artificial insemination of dairy cattle and poultry. Founded in 1951, by W. F. "Pete" Teelin, and currently owned by the Jay L. Smith family, Teel Plastics is now a global specialist in plastic extrusion capabilities, producing everything from medical devices for small run start-ups, to exclusive products for Fortune 500 and Fortune 100 companies across a variety of industries. That's progress.

State-of-the-Art Strategy

Over six decades, the company has excelled by embracing and developing new technology. Christian Herild, Director of Sales and Marketing, explains, "The strategy for a long time was: we would basically take

on any project in any market that met the technical and manufacturing capabilities we already had. That was the driving vision, until the Jay Smith family took over in the late 1990s. Then the focus was put on establishing a market fit and technical fit through research and new development."

Today, the company has three Lean Enterprise facilities, all located in Baraboo, employing up to 250 workers on separate campuses, less than six miles apart. Built to the highest "green" standards, the main extrusion plant also serves as the company's corporate headquarters. A second building houses TeelDas, a division that produces an innovative termite protection product. Historic sites, including the Statue of Liberty and the White House, are grateful end-users of the product.



AT A GLANCE

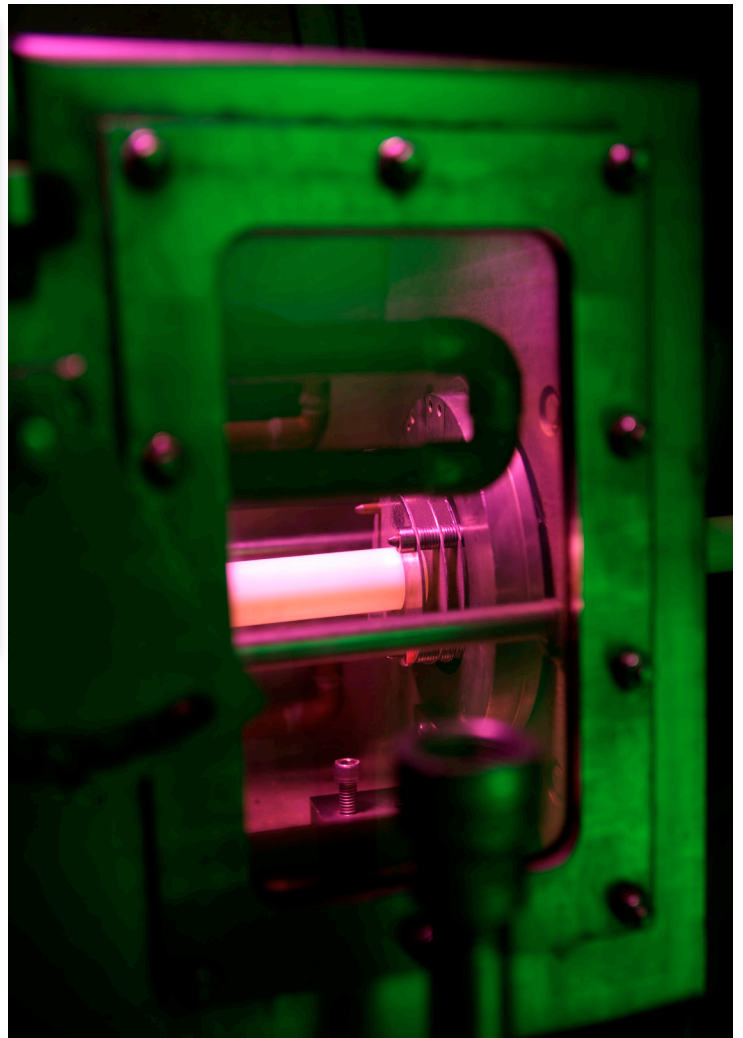
WHO: Teel Plastics Inc.

WHAT: Global specialist in custom extruded plastic tubing and plastic profiles

WHERE: 3 manufacturing plants and Company Head Office all located in Baraboo, Wisconsin

WEBSITE: www.teelplastics.com

The third facility manufactures Whirl-Pak® in a partnership with Nasco, and houses Teel's custom compounding capabilities. Teel also boasts a state-of-the-art testing and analytical laboratory specializing in polymer analysis to support both their internal compounding and customer needs. Whether a customer needs thermal analysis for process improvements to a production line, or testing for failure analysis of prod-





ucts, this lab is available to provide the information with accurate and reliable results, guaranteed.

Global Diversity

Extrusion is a high-volume process, wherein raw plastic materials are melted and formed into a continuous shape. Servicing a wide variety of markets has given Teel Plastics the expertise to create multi-layer, engineered components using these extruded resins. The healthcare tubing division, alone, produces billions of items, such as swab sticks, syringe components and IV tubing, and is constantly developing cutting-edge products that are custom-designed, fabricated, and sold to medical device manufacturers, worldwide.

The industrial division produces cores that meet clean room requirements. High-tech films on these cores are used in LCD televisions, computer displays, digi-

tal film, and safety glass, and are also a perfect fit for the auto industry. Cosmetic and packaging companies appreciate the pallet of colours available in extruded goods. Custom dispensing tubes are used for a variety of products in the food and beverage industries.

Herrild says, "As far as extrusion products go, health-care makes up 35 to 40 percent. The remainder is on the industrial side. Domestically, we ship coast to coast. We have products going to Europe; some to South America. Certain ones are more regional but many, especially medical and technical industrial products, go all over the world."

Competition is strong, but no single company covers all the different fields that Teel Plastics serves. Herrild admits, "We have some key competitors in medical, some in cores, some in pipe, but you know the people



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who make pipes aren't making medical stuff and the ones making cores aren't making pipes."

Teel differentiates itself from others by taking on things that are difficult to do. "If it's something you can get from a dozen other extrusion companies, or you're looking for us to be the fifth or sixth person to submit an RFQ, that's not necessarily the opportunity we want to be looking at. If you've got something where, either you've tried and failed, or you haven't found another company to do it successfully, that's the area we want to be in. We do a lot of co-development with our customers; listening to them to bring more intelligence to the product, then bringing our capabilities to bear on what they're trying to do."

Partnering for Prosperity

A wise philosophy of partnering with customers and suppliers drives continuous improvement throughout the company. Establishing closer relationships with large resin supply businesses is a key effort, right now. Rather than just getting quotes for materials, Teel wants to run new, experimental materials for them, help with development, and launch some new products. "Tell them we're not afraid of running the stuff that's difficult to run, or that they lack the qualifications to handle. These are the opportunities we want, and have had a lot of success with, recently."

Each year, Teel Plastics creates a strategic map setting out its main priorities for the next 12 months. This





year, the focus is on training – re-investing in people – and doing more detailed metrics on the operations for overall efficiency. The next two years will be geared to opportunities in pipe, whether conventional types for irrigation, geothermal, or conduit, or interesting and new higher-end plastics for specific applications.

“We’ve been very busy across every sector, particularly in the first part of 2015,” Herrild notes. “Pipe is an area where we continue to see growth, with more potential on the horizon, as we’ve taken up a number of new projects in that area. In general, it’s been a very good year for us.”

The five year vision would see Teel’s newly-cultivated markets - where sales are just starting to come in - become significant and fulfill the investment put into them. It is hoped that products now in development on the pipe and industrial side will have grown to the

point where either the present facility will warrant expansion, or another one is added to help support that growth. “Expanding would be a good problem to have in the next several years,” says Herrild. “It all depends on how rapidly things grow - and the product mix.”

Building on its business strengths and its commitment to customers, the community, and the environment, the future for Teel Plastics looks prosperous, indeed.

PREFERRED VENDORS

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