Processing in Person: A Cut Above the Rest (Part I)

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***Chem.Info*'s recurring Processing in Person feature highlights a processing company that stands about above the rest for the implementation of strategic processing techniques and the production of high quality goods. This week, we're focusing on Daniele, Inc., a deli meat processing company in Pascoag, R.I.**

Perhaps an unlikely find in quiet, small-town Rhode Island, Daniele, Inc. has been making sausages in the region for nearly 40 years. But its roots stretch much farther.

The company, now a third-generation family-owned company, can trace its roots to World War II-era Italy, where Croatian refugee Stefano Dukcevich, along with his wife Carolina, began making and selling sausages. The pair grew their little business, eventually opening several sausage-making factories and training their son, Vlado, in the business.

In the mid-1970s, Vlado came to the U.S. to introduce real prosciutto to the American consumer. Though prosciutto had long existed in the U.S., the taste was inauthentic — it “tastes like a baked ham,” according to Michael DeCesare, Daniele Foods’ Food Safety Director. Vlado aimed to change all that.

And Vlado’s gamble paid off. While at the helm of Daniele, Inc., he successfully grew the business and eventually opened a second processing facility to keep up with growing demand for his authentic sausage products.

Growth and expansion

Vlado eventually passed along operation of the company to his sons, Stefano and Davide Dukcevich. The brothers have continued the business’ upward trajectory, opening a third processing facility in 2004. That facility is now operating at capacity, and the company is building an expansion, expected to be completed next year.

Operating three facilities means keeping an eye on logistics. Each of the company’s facilities has a focused area of products it manufactures. The oldest facility cures and packages traditional cured meats like prosciutto, American-style prosciutto (for consumers looking for a less traditional flavor), mortadella, dry-cured capocollo, pancetta and bresaola.

The smallest facility, the expansion built by Vlado, is located directly across the street and handles the company’s specialty items like mozzarella-wrapped prosciutto and salami, and provolone- and prosciutto-stuffed cherry peppers.

And the company's newest facility, located just down the road from the two existing buildings, traffics almost exclusively in salami, the company's largest and fastest growing market. The facility produces around 200,000 pounds of salami each week.

From these facilities, product is shipped across the U.S. and exported throughout the world. With a mix of private label and Daniele-branded products, Daniele, Inc. sells to all major club stores and Wal-Mart in addition to local and national grocery chains around the country.

Tomorrow… Daniele's commitment to food safety

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