

Geography Is Part of the Routine

Fertilizer Machinery and Know-How Go World-Wide from Green Bay

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EVERY continent but Australia is on the sales records of a young Green Bay area firm building equipment and supplying know-how for fertilizer manufacturers.

Eugene LeBoeuf, vice president-sales of the Fertilizer Engineering and Equipment Co., explained about Australia.

"Their import duties are too high," he said. "They flew some people here to buy just our engineering, but we were unable to make a deal."

Something may work out. Meanwhile, the steadily growing concern is learning a lot of geography at home and abroad under its enterprising president, James E. Madigan.

Widely-Scattered

One recent sale was in Bombay, India. Another was in Spain. A customer in Costa Rica has been advised that his shipment is on the way.

The business started small. Madigan operated as a modest family venture for several years, and incorporated in 1955.

The plant on Sturgeon Bay Road in the Town of Scott now has taken over better than an acre of land. Employment in the shop averages 70, reaching 100 at peak times when neighboring farmers are hired to help out. The office staff numbers some 14 or 15, and the girl at the switchboard answers "FEECO," the international code address.

Field for Specialists

Equipment for fertilizer manufacture is a specialty item. There are about 15 fertilizer plants in

Wisconsin, with perhaps nearly 1,000 in the entire country, according to Madigan.

Fertilizer is a highly competitive product, however, and the manufacturers want to be certain their machinery will do the job efficiently and effectively. FEECO has four or five rivals in the United States producing the same type of equipment.

The machinery is massive and sophisticated, featuring huge drums built of half-inch or thicker steel. Electric motors to supply power range to 100 horsepower and over.

Every job is custom built, designed at the plant by FEECO's engineers. Prospective purchasers are encouraged to come to Green Bay to have the advantage of the firm's full panel of experts.

"That's only part of the deal, though," LeBoeuf emphasized. "We sell knowledge along with the machinery."

Over 300 Installations

The company has installed equipment in over 300 plants. Some were entirely new operations, while others were total or partial replacements. Fertilizer is corrosive, and equipment has a reasonable life expectancy of about 10 years. One of the two fertilizer plants in Green Bay has bought replacement components from the local firm.

Besides Madigan and LeBoeuf, officers of the corporation are Robert Hessel, vice president; Glen H. Wesenberg, vice president-process engineering, and Madigan's wife, Doris, secretary and treasurer.

Most of the sales, logically, have been in the United States. But as world food needs become even more acute, and as underfed nations accept agricultural technology, FEECO and its contemporaries should find excellent opportunity for expansion.

The Green Bay firm shipped a complete package to Bombay, and the purchaser was granted a license to build two more like it. Considering freight costs, the saving will be a good 30 per cent.

Prospects for Future

One of the biggest orders so far was filled in a small town in Quebec, Canada. The drum was nine feet in diameter and 80 feet long, and required delicate maneuvering on the highway to the railroad yard.

Prices vary, depending on size and features. LeBoeuf said a granulation plant delivered to El Salvador, smallest of the six Central American republics, will cost the buyer at least \$300,000 by the time it is installed.

"We are trying to follow a steady pattern of growth," Madigan's head salesman declared.

So the next time you're in Australia, watch for the Green Bay label.