

Selling fish food earns more than 'chicken feed'

BY GINGER SECRIST MYERS
Staff Correspondent
GARDNERS — "Hello, this is the San Diego Zoo. We'd like to order the usual tonnage of flamingo feed."

"Is this the feed store manager? Put me down for another batch of catfish ration."

These are not the usual conversations most people expect to overhear while eavesdropping on most feed stores in Pennsylvania. But they are the types of discussions that buzz through telephone lines to an Adams County firm, known as Zeigler Brothers, Inc., on a daily basis.

Located here in the heart of the orchard region of Pennsylvania, Zeigler Brothers started out like most feed companies — carrying poultry and cattle feeds. That was in 1935, when Ty and Leroy Zeigler opened their original mill at nearby Arendtsville. The business was moved to its present location 14 years later.

Then in 1954, the two founding brothers had a parting of the ways, and brother Leroy was left to carry on the feed business. Good fortune kept the small company thriving for a number of years, but eventually economic hardships took their toll. When the business was on the brink of financial ruin, Leroy passed the company's keys to son Tom. That was in 1965.

From that time on, the mill began feeding a 'horse of a different color', focusing its attentions on the meals of laboratory animals, zoo residents, and fish. Tom, who had earned his doctorate degree in nutrition from Cornell University, had unlocked the door for a successful, even though

unusual, feed business when he secured a franchise agreement with Rangen, Inc. of Buhl, Idaho to manufacture and distribute Rangen Trout Rations.

Since that desperate switch to the specialty feeds market, Zeigler has become one of the foremost fish ration experts in the world and has co-authored 19 scientific publications on the subject. Zeigler Brothers, Inc. now is an expression of Tom Zeigler's theory of 'total systems' approach in formulating and producing animal food.

Supplying the specialty market has left little time for Zeigler's to deal in poultry and livestock feeds. A workforce of 54 people, which includes four Ph.D. professionals, help churn out the fish, flamingo, and other feeds, at the rate of about 240 tons a week. These feeds, formulated to meet individual needs for each animal, bird, or fish, contain an average 10-12 ingredients.

For all their painstaking care in developing, manufacturing, and marketing these specialty feeds, Zeigler Brothers expects to be reimbursed by their unique clientele just as generously. This year the company will gross more than \$6 million, with the bulk of the income generated by fish food sales, according to David B. Knapp, director of Marketing and Sales.

Knapp explained that in addition to fish rations, another large part of Zeigler's business is formulating feeds for laboratory animals. However, he said, these sales have declined since federal research program budgets were cut. Knapp expressed his hope that the slack in federal funds will be picked up by



Tim Markey, seated, supervisor of Quality Control, and David B. Knapp, director of Marketing and Sales for Zeigler Bros. Feeds, examine some of the sample packets of feed to be shipped from the mill. Quality control is

monitored daily and all formulation sheets are double-checked for accuracy. The Adams County feed company formulates hundreds of different rations for guinea pigs, dogs, fish, monkeys, and chinchillas, to name a few.

private resources, especially in the chemical and pharmaceutical research areas.

Another factor that could influence the sales of laboratory animal feed, said Knapp, is any effect of animal welfare legislation on controlled research. Knapp expressed concern that the specialty feed business would feel the ripple effects of this movement if it succeeds in curtailing laboratory testing.

Along with being famous for its fish and laboratory feeds, Zeigler's has earned a reputation over the years for formulating new feeds. According to Tim Markey who serves as supervisor of Quality Control and Assistant to the President, the company's director of Technical Services John Chah developed a medicated parrot diet. The exotic bird feed — the only one of its kind approved by USDA — is used at quarantine stations and has been shown to be effective in

eliminating contagious diseases in imported birds.

Along with USDA, Zeigler's ships feed on a daily basis to such famous clients as King's Dominion recreational park in Virginia, the San Diego Zoo in California, the National Zoo in Washington D.C., the National Institute of Health, along with large pharmaceutical companies like Squibb and Smith-Kline, plus corporations like Exxon Bio-Medical. The Adams (Turn to Page D21)

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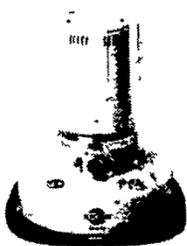


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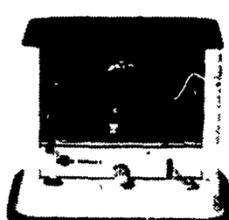


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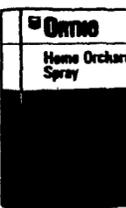
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