

Purina Celebrates 100th Year, Holds Open House

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — The red and white checkerboard-painted water tower and signs at the Camp Hill Purina Mills Inc. facility have been a landmark for years, visible from Rt. 11, south of Camp Hill proper.

It's also been a landmark business since opening in the early 1950s.

This week, Thursday through today, was an open house celebration with hundreds of people attending, touring the mill and visiting with company representatives, dressed in casual shirts that were designed especially to mark the 100th anniversary of Purina Mills Inc., in St. Louis, Mo.

Though ownership of the company changed this year with a takeover buyout by the Sterling Group.

With input from Sterling, management and employees now own 35 percent of the company.

But the celebration this week at Camp Hill was a display of the versatility and aggressiveness of the company to be the dependable feed company for everyone.

In the rear of the Purina headquarters building for the northeast United States, in the parking lot in front of the mill, tents were erected, with bags of various types of Purina feeds used to weight the tent poles and to provide an attractive display. Straw bales set in rows and food was offered to those in attendance.

Tours of the facility went from start to finish, explaining the role of the company's 1,200 acre research farm in Gray Summit, Mo., that was started in 1926.

Research there has been ongoing and has helped the company develop complete nutritional feeds for almost every animal need.

In the past several years and within the past year and a half, a number of new feeds have been introduced, especially Prepare, a pellet feed for up close dry cows; another for heifers called Cornerstone; a horse feed made for the palatability and nutritional needs of geriatric horses; another for rac-

ing horses; another for pleasure horses; etc.

There are elephant feeds, monkey feeds, wild bird feeds, commercial poultry, turkey, layers, poulets, swine, cats, etc.

At the Camp Hill mill, about 900 tons of product, bagged and can be manufactured daily with three shifts working. At that plant, they make about 200 different types of feeds.

And quality control is carefully monitored. Each worker on line actually does a quality control inspection and signs off before the product is moved to the next phase.

In 1985, with an expansion of the 10-acre Camp Hill facility, the current quality control program had been put into place.

And it keeps modernizing and gaining in accuracy and efficiency.

Computers linked directly to the home office in St. Louis give nutritional formulas that change slightly with each tested variance in ingredients.

And ingredients, all of them, every shipment, are tested and approved before the shipment can be unloaded.

Testing of fat quality is important to ensuring the palatability of the product and handling. Fats can go rancid quickly, they can melt.

About 60 percent or so of the ingredients come by railcar; the rest by truck.

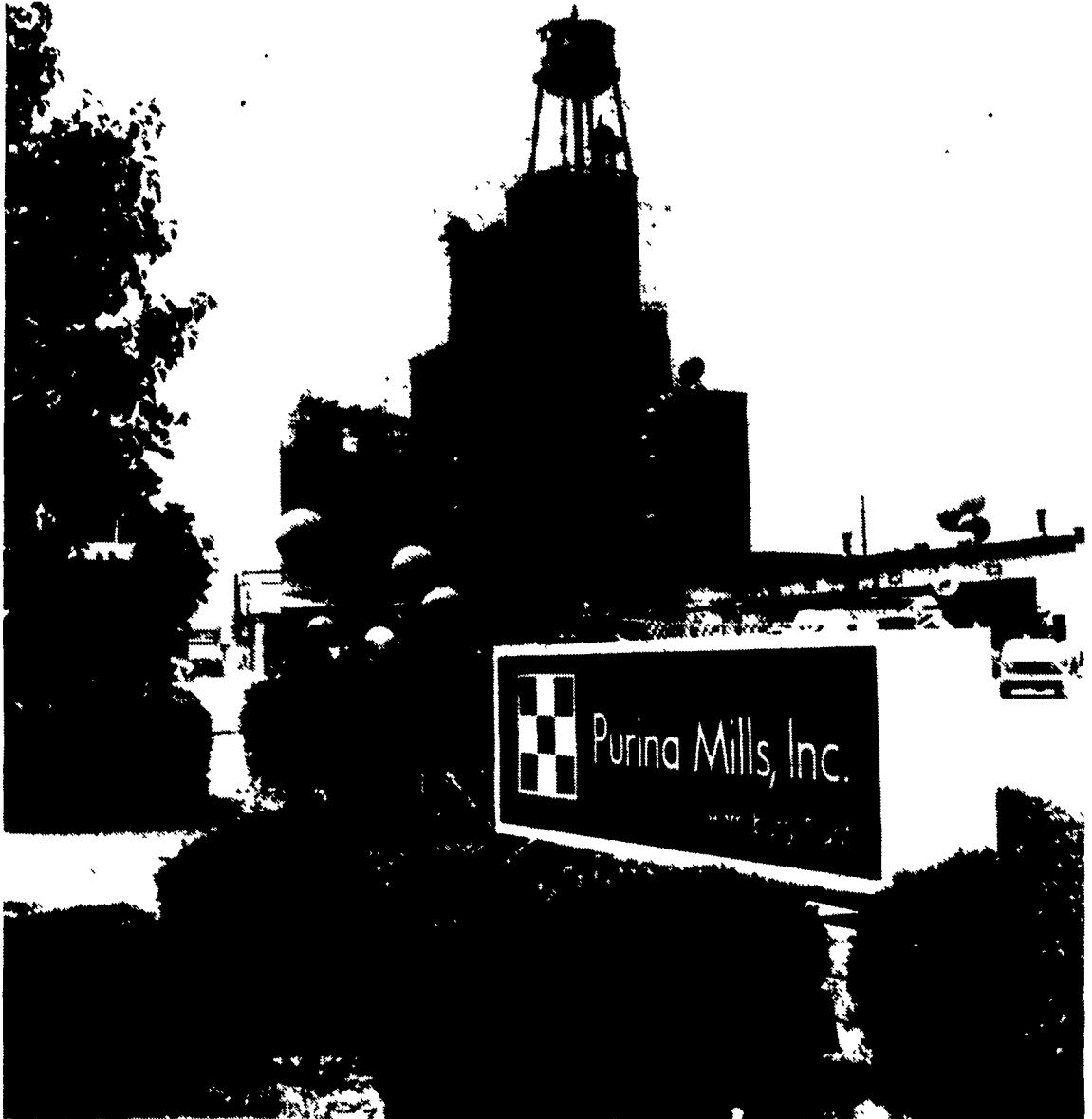
The product goes out of the facility by pickup truck and by tractor-trailer and serves and area from Virginia to Maine.

Of the 30 people who work the mill, 21 are in production, five in maintenance and four drive truck.

There are five people in customer service and five in administration.

The regional headquarters employs 40 people.

Being located in the heart of animal raising country, with access to Rt. 11 and major interstates, and the railhead, it can be expected that the plant at Camp Hill should continue to be a landmark for some time to come.



Balloons adorn the entrance to the Purina Mills, Inc. Harrisburg plant in Camp Hill. The company held an open house for three days this week offering tours of the plant and talks with company employees to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Purina. Similar celebrations are to be held across the nation.



A Purina employee discusses the laboratory testing techniques utilized by Purina Mills Inc. at the Harrisburg plant.



This machine, one of several in the automated Purina Mills Inc. facility at Camp Hill, is bagging a feed while a machine operator performs his job which includes inspecting the product and monitoring equipment measuring devices.

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Paul Hann, right, gives a tour of the Purina Mills, Inc. Harrisburg plant. Here, standing in front of pallets of turkey feed, he discusses the variety of feeds, the manufacturing process and considerations taken in making the best product they can.