

Time Catches Up

IOWA SWINE FEED PRODUCER BUILDS A NEW MILL, TWEAKS ELEVATOR OPERATION



Valley Feed & Seed

Rock Valley, IA • 712-476-2723

Founded: 1965

Feed milling capacity: 2,000-2,800 tpw at one location

Grain storage capacity: 650,000 bushels

Feed products: Swine feeds, wean to finish; beef cattle feeds

Number of employees: 9

Key personnel:

- Chad Kooima, general manager

Supplier List

Air compressor. Chicago Pneumatic

Bin level monitors .. BinMaster Level Controls

Bucket elevators..... Schlager Inc.

Concrete C&J Construction

Contractor/millwright D&W Industries

Control system..... Easy Automation Inc.

Conveyors Schlager Inc.

Distributors Schlager Inc.

Doors..... D&K Doors

Electrical contractor.. A&K Electric

Elevator buckets Tapco Inc.

Excavation Valley Excavation

Gates/diverters..... Schlager Inc.

Leg belting..... Continental/Applied Power Products

Magnets Eriez

Microingredient systems..... Easy Automation Inc.

Mixer Scott Equipment Co.

Motion sensors 4B Components Ltd.

Plumbing..... Rock Valley Plumbing

Scales Vande Berg Scales

Screw conveyors ... D&W Industries

Soil borings..... Gator Bros.

Speed reducers .. Dodge, Nord Gear Corp.

Square bins Scott Equipment Co.

Warehouse/control room Vande Hoef Construction



Valley Feed & Seed opened a new feed mill (right half of photo) in May 2021. As employees learn to operate it, capacity ranges from 50 to 75 tph. Photos by Ed Zdrojewski.

Privately-owned Valley Feed & Seed has been making feed, mainly for swine with some cattle feed (less than 10%), since the 1960s on a hillside overlooking the town of Rock Valley in far northwest Iowa. The business also operates a 650,000-bushel grain elevator there mostly to store grain for use in the feed mill.

Over the years, the company has made some upgrades to the elevator, mainly adding storage tanks. But little had been done to upgrade the 25-tph feed mill since the late 1990s, says General Manager Chad Kooima, who has spent his 30-year career at the business.

“The old mill never did more than 30 tph,” Kooima says, “and it took two people



Chad Kooima

to run it. Our new mill is fully automated, and so far, operates at 50 to 75 tph. We needed the upgrade to stay in operation.”

In addition to the mill, Valley Feed & Seed added a new single-story, 450-square-foot office building and added a new 7,500-bph elevator leg. “We could never receive corn and dry corn at the same time,” Kooima notes.

The company took bids and selected D & W Industries, Sioux Falls, SD (605-336-0435), as general contractor and millwright on the project.

“We tried to stay in the local Rock Valley area for most of our subcontractors, including our cement guy, excavation, and electrician,” Kooima says.

Work on the project began in June 2020,



Ingredients are deposited into a batching scale, then to a 4-ton Scott double-ribbon mixer.



New Easy Automation 16-bin microingredient system supplies smaller ingredient amounts to the mixer.

and the new mill ran its first batch of feed on May 29, 2021.

The Upgrade

The all-steel feed mill includes 13 Scott Equipment square bins atop the ground-floor mill and two truck loadout bays. The square bins include 11 ingredient bins holding an average

total of 30 tons and eight loadout bins holding a total of 14 tons of finished feed. All of the feed is shipped in bulk; no pelleting is done at Rock Valley.

All milling operations are under the control of batching and formulation software from Easy Automation.

Corn is ground on an existing CPM roller mill from the old milling operation.



New Schlager 7,500-bph receiving leg allows ingredient receiving and grain drying to be done simultaneously.

Ground corn, other major ingredients, liquids, and microingredients from a 16-bin Easy Automation system are measured on a batching scale above a Scott 4-ton mixer.

The double-ribbon mixer mixes a batch in an average of 3-1/2 minutes. From there, finished feed is sent to the loadout bins. Valley Feed & Seed operates a fleet of four trucks mostly within a 25-mile radius of Rock Valley.

At the elevator, D & W installed a 7,500-bph Schlager ingredient receiving leg outfitted with a single row of Tapco 14x7 buckets mounted on a 15-inch Continental belt supplied by Applied Power Products. The leg deposits grain into a new Schlager five-hole rotary distributor, which in turn sends grain and ingredients to storage via gravity spouts.

Ed Zdrojewski, editor