



Curwood Plant Manager Steve McDowell says 2007 was a good year for the Centerville facility. The product demand saw the plant hiring more than a dozen new employees. It also

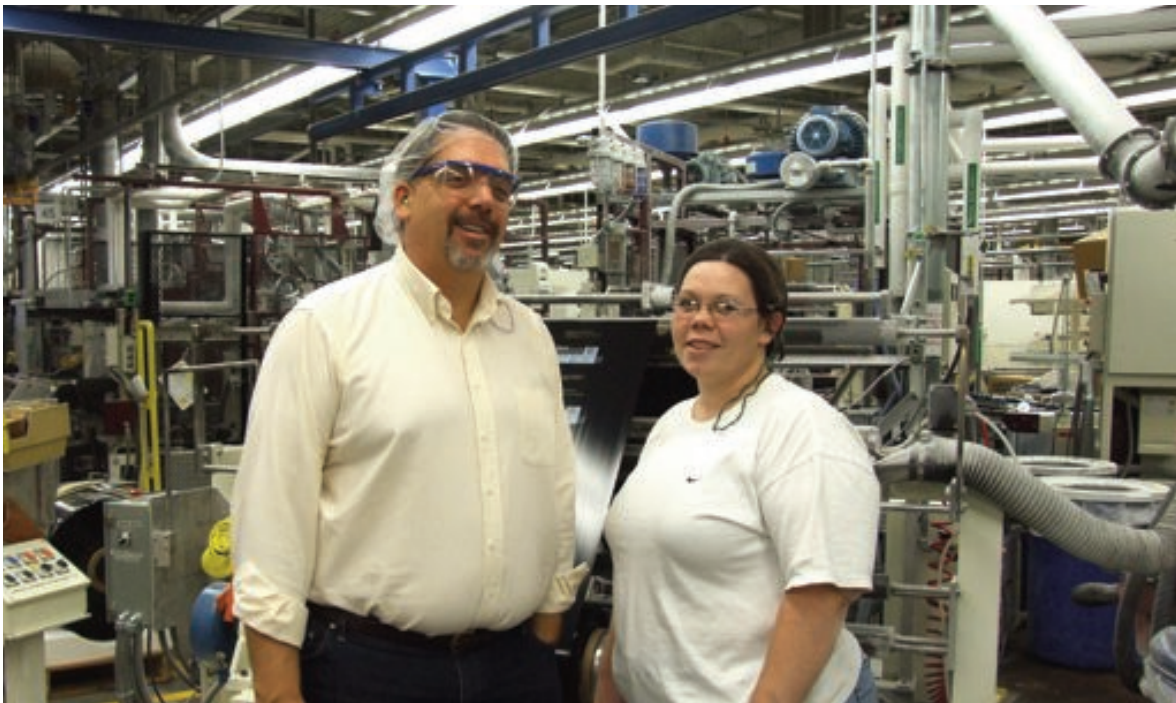
majority of the wrappings are for such meats as poultry, beef and pork.

The plant can produce 1 million bags a day, but it is not just one continual run of a generic packaging. Coming out of a packing plant, it

the Centerville facility. He pointed to the willingness of employees to volunteer for teams that look at everything from safety to quality improvement.

The plant forges ahead with new products and more efficient production—often prompted by

Curwood enjoying continued success



catering to its larger customers. When these lines are worked out, says McDowell, they can then utilize them for products with other customers.

Food packaging is a very competitive business and through the years the field has dwindled to just several major players. So far, says McDowell, the domestic market is still served by suppliers within the U.S. That is because food suppliers want the product quickly on demand, which so far can't be fulfilled by overseas producers who ship by boat.

Curwood founded in 1958 by Howard Curler and Bob Woods in New London, Wisc., to pioneer flexible packaging markets, specializing in protective food packaging. In 1959, full-scale manufacturing of polyethylene film product began, including polyethylene-coated cellophane & polyester film.

J. M. Bemis & Co. was founded in 1858. Judson Moss Bemis, the 25-year-old son of an Illinois farmer, opened a bag factory in St. Louis, Mo., with \$2,000 in savings, six sewing machines, two small printing presses and wooden type contributed by a cousin. He produced the first commercially machine-sewn, color-printed textile bags in the United States. The first customers were milling companies that shipped goods on the Mississippi River.

Now a global supplier of flexible packaging and pressure sensitive label materials headquartered in Neenah, Wisc., Bemis serves customers worldwide and produces packaging for products found in virtually every aisle of the grocery store.

Twelve companies operate 58-plus locations in 10 countries under the Bemis banner, with combined net sales over \$3.5 billion. Nearly two-thirds of Bemis packaging is used in the food industry, with the balance used in markets including medical, pharmaceutical, chemical and agribusiness.

**By Dan Ehl
Managing Editor**

installed a new slitter that can be used to cut larger rolls of film, as well as a new bag machine.

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takes approximately 45 different sizes and shapes of bags for cattle and 36 for swine.

The bags are also customized for each customer through labeling printed on the film itself. McDowell says the technology for printing has greatly advanced since he first became plant manager in 2000, the same year parent company, Bemis Company, Inc., bought the plant from Viskase.

To maintain efficiency and product offerings, said McDowell, the company continues to invest in the plant, which also has one of the lowest waste rates in the company. This and the plant employees' positive attitudes are what the company likes about

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