

Facilities

Spending Some Green in

With consumer demand for healthier foods on the increase, facility growth is tailored to meet current and future customer requirements.

By Roger Morton

Founded in 1954, Hanson Logistics has a long history in supporting agriculture businesses. "We are Michigan based, with facilities in Indiana and Michigan," notes Andrew Janson, the company's president. "We have supported the agriculture industry for more than 50 years, working with grapes, apples, tart and sweet



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Upgrading for Blue

cherries and blueberries.”

With greater national emphasis on healthier eating and studies indicating natural antioxidant qualities of blueberries, there's small wonder demand for the fruit continues to grow. The company's Hartford, Mich., location has a current capacity of 7 million square feet, most for storage of the blueberry harvest and supporting materials. The facility is served by a seven-spot private rail siding served by CSX Rail.

To meet evolving grower needs, Hanson has embarked on a two-year, two-phase project to increase capacity. The first phase, a \$2 million facility improvement, is on schedule for completion in July. Timing is important. Janson explains the blueberry harvest runs from around July 4th through October.

The move from field to facility involves a number of steps. Once the fruit is picked, it is de-stemmed, washed, color sorted, graded, then boxed and sent to Hanson for storage.



*The Hanson Logistics
Hartford, Mich., campus*

“Arriving fruit temperature may be 60°F to 70°F as it comes out of the fields,” says Janson. “Next, it is room or box frozen, although we do have the capability for blast freezing. We freeze the fruit as quickly as possible to keep it fresh and maintain quality as much as possible.”

Although growers bring the harvest to the Hartford facility, Janson claims within the past few years, the company has become more involved with bringing the fruit from

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processing plants to the campus.

For the most part, the harvest is put into storage. Janson says that, while the company does not own the product, it is responsible for maintaining its integrity. Hanson offers vendor managed

inventory service. It also helps customers with outbound transportation, assisting them to determine if truckload, less than truckload or rail is the best way to ship.

With the first phase of work due to

Blueberry Facts

According to Michigan State University, the state is the top producer of highbush blueberries in the nation. Most of the acreage devoted to the fruit's production is located in the southwestern region of the state, along the shore of Lake Michigan. Blueberry production comes from 575 farms on a total of 17,000 acres.

The Hanson Logistics Hartford campus is located in Van Buren County. There are four additional counties—Verrien, Allegan, Ottawa and Muskegon—that make up the state's heaviest volume of blueberry farming.

be completed in July, the nature of the second phase is being examined now. Scheduled for 2010, Hanson is working with its grower community to determine the size of the expansion. The first phase has upgraded and added to freezing capabilities. The second will be to increase deep-frozen warehouse space. Janson explains that pallet positions are not yet determined. He does say there will be a refrigerated dock for both truck and rail. **MHM**

Creating for Consolidation

By Roger Morton

Saddle Creek Corp. has opened a new 150,000-square foot distribution center on its Lakeland, Fla. campus to serve the need Ebro Puleva, S.A. had to bring together two of its divisions under one roof. Ebro Puleva is a leading supplier of Spanish foods in the U.S. Its offerings include rice, sugar, dairy, biotechnology, delicacies as well as pasta, sauces and semolina.

Steven Cook, Saddle Creek's vice

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