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Governor cuts ribbon for new Stamey Farm Road yogurt facility

By Bethany Fuller



With the snip of a ribbon by Gov. Beverly Perdue, Origin Food Group became the first and largest value-added dairy facility in the state to produce yogurt.

“This is where the potion is put together,” Perdue said, peeking into the laboratory on Wednesday afternoon before the ceremony began at the new yogurt production facility on Stamey Farm Road.

Perdue described Stamey Farms, also known as a leading exporter of live dairy cattle, as a traditional dairy. She also applied the term traditional to their partnership with the Alarcon family of Ecuador, which stemmed from the two families long standing friendship and business connections. Many farmers, like the Stameys, have become innovative in recent years, she said.

“Here is the plant, there are the cows,” said Origin Co-owner Bob Stamey, pointing to the nearby dairy farm his family has operated for more than 60 years. The milk for Origin’s new yogurt shake line, frush, will come from those dairy cattle across the street.

Origin co-owner Francisco Alarcón said the new product is a healthful alternative snack for people on the go.

“Frush is just the beginning,” he said. “We see our North Carolina products selling beyond the state’s borders.”

The company, with the help of BB&T and the United States Department of Agriculture, made a \$7 million investment transforming the Homer’s Truck Plaza off of Exit 146 on Interstate 40 into a state-of-the-art facility.

In 2009, the partners were granted an \$89,000 economic incentive tax grant from Iredell County.

Dairy Advantage North Carolina Dairy Development Coordinator Matthew Lange said the facility made Stamey Farms one of the first fully developed value-added dairies in the county and the first-value added yogurt production site in the state. Origin’s plans to eventually employ 40-50 people would make it the largest value-added dairy production facility in the state.

Origin Food Group partners Stamey and Alarcon told community leaders and local, state and federal officials gathered Wednesday about how their business and personal relationship grew and developed into two dairy-related business ventures.

Stamey spent some time reviewing his family’s history in Iredell County, which is ranked number one in the state for dairy. Stamey Farms, an exporter of live dairy cattle, started supplying Alarcon 15 years ago. The Alarcóns have 33 years of experience in yogurt and beverages in Ecuador, and were looking to expand their business in that country.

Stamey would later work with Alarcón’s daughter, Barbara, when she started her own dairy in the Andes Mountains. Origin is the Stameys’ and Alarcóns’ second business venture together. The two families purchased Mooresville Ice Cream in September 2009. Barbara “Babi” Alarcon has worked closely with the Stameys on both ventures.

“We’ve been welcomed with open arms,” Alarcón said.

Along with a peek inside the facility, Origin Food Group also treated guests to frush, the yogurt-fruit shake, which will be on the shelves of Lowes Foods, BiLo and Ingles grocery stores by the end of February.

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