

## General Manager for Prairie Farms

Opportunity to lead a manufacturing facility for this highly regarded dairy cooperative

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**Prairie Farms** has retained Kincannon & Reed to recruit a **General Manager** to lead one of its dairy plants through its next growth phase. The successful candidate will have the accomplished operational background to provide best-in-class leadership and management for all areas of the operations including manufacturing, product quality, procurement, sales, logistics, fulfillment, and demand/production/inventory planning.

### *About the Company*

Since 1938, [Prairie Farms](#), which is comprised of more than 750 farm families, have been producing and selling high quality products throughout the Midwestern and Southern US. According to *Dairy Foods Magazine*, the company is ranked in the top fifteen of all Dairy producers in the U.S. The firm has revenue of approximately \$3.5 billion, utilizes nearly fifty manufacturing plants, and employs more than 7,500 associates. Prairie Farms produces a wide range of products including fresh, and UHT milk, cottage cheese, sour cream, ice cream, coffee beverages, iced teas and juices, and an assortment of cheeses.

As a cooperative supported by family farms, the company is dedicated to sustainability, the communities in which it serves, and embodies a “family values” work culture.

### *Position Overview*

Reporting to the *Vice President of Operations*, we seek a progressive and engaging leader who will encourage employees in continuous improvement activities with high-touch involvement in manufacturing principles at the Battle Creek, MI plant. This facility is unique in that it produces UHT and fresh milk and is one of the largest plants within the network of nearly fifty plants operated by Prairie Farms. Specific responsibilities include:

- Lead and provide oversight of manufacturing, sales, supply chain, transportation, procurement, and demand planning.
- Champion a strong safety culture.
- Develop and budget the management of Battle Creek’s operations activities.
- Drive capital planning with budgeted dollars and meeting deadlines.
- Ensure operational KPI’s including safety, quality, cost, and productivity are in place, properly monitored, and being met at the facility.
- Interface with local and regional authorities and agencies to maintain and/or establish strategies in support of compliance with required standards (safety, regulatory, environmental, etc.)
- Develop the Operations organization within Battle Creek; including organizational design, hiring, recruitment, retention of employees and succession planning. Ensure that the adequate level of training is available to all associates.
- Support the implementation of a multi-year network strategy aimed at improving produced quality and reducing production costs.

Other important parameters for this position include:

- The position is based in Battle Creek, MI.
- The plant employs 250 associates, with 10-15 direct reports, running 24/7.
- Expect travel to be no more than 10%.

### *Candidate Profile*

#### *Experience and Education*

- A minimum of five (5) years of experience in dairy/dairy ingredient or food processing industry; knowledge of UHT process technology highly preferable.
- Fluent in Continuous Improvement Processes and methodologies.
- A proven track record of high level of engaging floor level and supervisory employees at the production level.
- History of hands-on accountability for productivity, labor costs, and operating margins. Implemented systems and processes which drove improvements in operating margins, worker safety, productivity, product quality and other key metrics.
- Experience in managing budgets with the ability to interpret business financials including cause/effect relationships.
- A Bachelor's Degree or equivalent combination of relevant education and work experience.

#### *Skills*

- Excellent communication—verbally and written—along with the ability to make formal presentations to a wide array of audiences.
- Excellent organizational, supervisory, and leadership skills to manage a team of technical staff.
- Data-driven, with solid financial skills to manage and oversee all financial matters of the plant.
- A strategic orientation with the ability to apply a solid grasp of business management principles and act opportunistically in the context of Prairie Farms' structure and business.

#### *Personal Characteristics*

- Hands-on, “roll up the sleeves” and “get it done” attitude who leads and works with others.
- Comfortable with both autonomy and ambiguity; can build from scratch and use resources available.
- A strong presence and likeability that encourages others to engage.
- Holds self and others accountable.
- An entrepreneurial business builder's spirit and perspective with a keen drive to succeed.
- High energy, tenacity, and willingness to go the extra mile.
- A team leader and team player.
- Unquestioned integrity.

*For confidential consideration as a candidate, or to suggest a prospective candidate, please contact:*

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