



## The Power of Engagement

Geoff Finch, President and CEO, The Wenger Group

Much has been written, especially recently, about team member (employee) engagement. Sadly, estimates put team member engagement levels at somewhere under 33%—that means that at least 2 out of 3 co-workers are not engaged in their work. While there are many reasons for this, it can often be traced to ineffective, or inattentive, leadership. CEO's, executives and managers all have a responsibility to lead by example. They



Take Your Dog to Work Day at The Wenger Group

must genuinely care for their team, and they must be consistent in their decisions.

The company that can move the needle on team member engagement stands to build a truly sustainable competitive advantage—as higher engagement scores translate to better customer retention rates, better service levels and higher profits.

So how do you tackle this critical issue? It starts with proactive dialogue. A great model is the Gallup Q12 Index, which is based on research done on more than 17 million people. It's a list of twelve questions that are thought-provoking dialogue starters such as "Do you know what is expected from you at work?" and "Does someone at work seem to care about you as a person?"

### Our Mission: Providing Quality Feed for Quality Food

Developing a caring, positive culture is also very important. Here at The Wenger Group, we've recently redoubled our efforts in providing the kind of workplace that recognizes and rewards team members with the goal of driving a level of engagement that allows us to serve our customers in a truly special way. While we are far from perfect, and have a long way to go on our journey, we have taken a few positive steps such as...

- Created a PEEP program to financially reward those who either Promoted Quality, Encouraged Safety, Enhanced Customer Relations, or Protected our Environment

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- Developed a Lunch-and-Learn seminar series to share information with team members on issues such as health care, nutrition, technology, or current company operations

- Instituted special events such as Take Your Dog to Work Day, a Wenger photo contest, a picnic with team members playing musical instruments, and a paper airplane flying contest, among many others

Driving truly special levels of team member engagement is undoubtedly a tough task, but is well worth the effort. Good luck on your own journey!!

### In This Issue:

- All PA Mills Now Process Verified
- Scholarship Award Winners
- REAP Funds Available
- Probiotics & Prebiotics for Animal Health

# Fewer Audits, More Options for Wenger Customers

## ALL PA MILLS NOW PROCESS VERIFIED

Wenger Feeds is pleased to announce that all its Pennsylvania based mills are now Process Verified through the USDA's Process Verified Program. The company is the first independent feed mill in the country to achieve certification. This verification offers Wenger's customers a unique way to market their food products using clearly defined, implemented, and transparent process points.

The certification was achieved on June 30, 2016 for all PA-based locations.

The company will be audited again in six months with locations sampled thereafter to ensure adherence.

The program is audited regularly by the USDA and includes how Wenger Feeds conforms to customer defined requirements. As such, process points must be verifiable, repeatable, feasible, and factual and cannot be requirements of regulations or management system criteria.

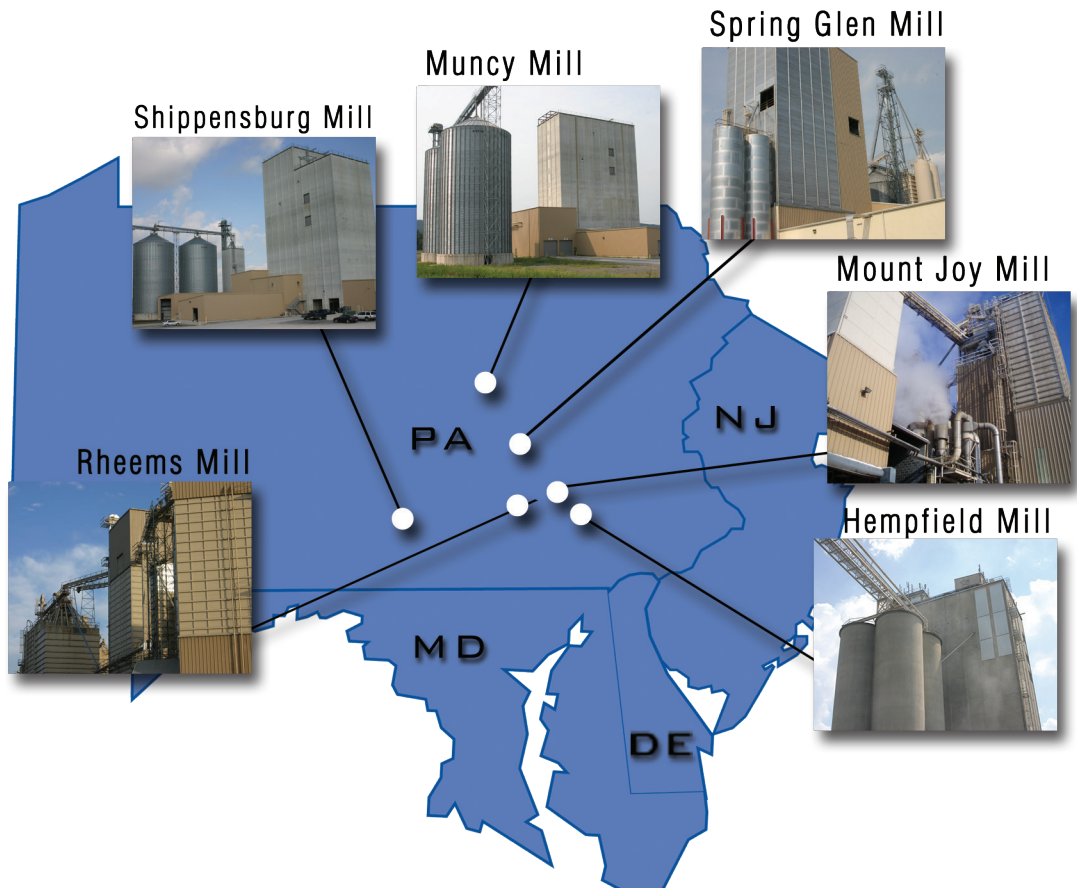
**The company is the first independent feed mill in the country to achieve certification.**

Wenger's triple ISO certification in ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and OHSAS 18001 was an asset in achieving Process Verified Certification. "Our ISO certification was key in achieving Process Verified Status as the system is based on the ISO 9001 standard. We were able to build procedures that address each

set of customer requirements and group them into one certification. This saves our customers time and money," noted Clay Henry, Quality and Food Safety Manager.

Previously, Wenger Feeds had certified two locations and later certified three more in response to a customer request. By certifying all Commonwealth-based locations, the company offers its customers and its manufacturing team greater flexibility in where to manufacture orders. In addition, individual customers will no longer have to bear the time and cost associated with single audits as each location will be certified for all Process Verified programs.

All Wenger Feeds Pennsylvania-based feed mills are now Process Verified. With this effort, the company offers its customers and its manufacturing team greater flexibility and cost savings. In addition, individual customers will no longer have to bear the time and cost associated with single audits as each location will be certified for all Process Verified programs.



## Eleven Win Scholarships from Wenger's Feed Mill Scholarship Foundation

The Wenger Group, the parent company of Wenger Feeds, is pleased to announce the winners of the Wenger's Feed Mill Scholarship Foundation. The Foundation was launched in April 2015 to award academic scholarships exclusively to eligible full-time team members of The Wenger Group companies. "We value the commitment our team members have to The Wenger Group, and it gives us great pleasure to support their families as they prepare for the future," noted Barry Shaw, Executive Chairman of the Board.

Individual awards were determined by the Board of Directors of the Wenger's Feed Mill Scholarship Foundation, a separate entity from the company. Awards were available for use at accredited colleges or universities, community colleges, as well as trade and technical schools.

**"We value the commitment our team members have to The Wenger Group, and it gives us great pleasure to support their families as they prepare for the future."**

The 2016 recipients and their Pennsylvania home towns are as follows: Samuel David Aungst of Elizabethtown, Niall Bailey of New Holland, Justin Drescher of Mount Joy, Ainsley Feyock of Lancaster, Karen Flowers of Elizabethtown, Leah Hammaker of Elizabethtown, Nathan Henry of Manheim, Dylan Hoffer of Manheim, Kirill V. Khomenko of Mount Joy, Charity Marvin of Shickshinny, and Beau Walmer of Elizabethtown.

"The scholarships were awarded exclusively to eligible team members of our companies. This year, we made three additional awards over last year and received applications from nearly every division," noted Jamie Rowley, Chief Administrative Officer. In total, the Foundation awarded \$55,000 in scholarships.

## REAP Program Available for BMP Implementation

Pennsylvania farmers who want to implement best management practices (BMPs) or purchase on-farm conservation equipment are encouraged to apply for 2016-17 Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program tax credits.

REAP is a tax credit program for agricultural producers who install BMPs or make equipment purchases that reduce erosion and sedimentation that impacts Pennsylvania's streams and watersheds. The program, administered by the State Conservation Commission, gives agriculture producers an incentive to purchase conservation equipment and materials to better protect the environment.

Farmers may receive tax credits of up to \$150,000 per agri-

cultural operation for 50 to 75 percent of the project's cost. The most common projects approved are for no-till planting and precision ag equipment, waste storage facilities, Conservation Plans, Nutrient Management Plans, and protecting heavy animal use areas like barnyards. REAP can be used in conjunction with other funding sources such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) or the Chesapeake Bay Program for purchases.

2016 REAP Applications will be accepted beginning August 1, 2016. You can find an application and more information here: <http://goo.gl/9TiYyy>



## PREBIOTICS & PROBIOTICS ENHANCE GUT HEALTH & ANIMAL PERFORMANCE

Fausto Solís de los Santos, Ph. D., Nutrition Services Manager

The use of antibiotic growth promoters (AGPs) in animal feed improves daily body weight gain and feed efficiency by 6% and 4%, respectively. However, it has been theorized that antibiotic residues in meat and poultry may lead to the development of antibiotic bacterial resistance in humans and animals. Therefore, the use of AGPs was first banned in the European Union in 2006 and will be restricted to non-medically important antibiotics in the USA after January 2017. Medically important antibiotics will still be allowed therapeutically under the direction of a certified veterinarian, which is called a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). (Find more information about VFDs at our web site: <https://goo.gl/nepUul>).

### ANTIBIOTIC ALTERNATIVES

With fewer AGPs available, animal productivity and feed efficiency may be jeopardized unless effective and affordable antibiotic alternatives are available. Several antibiotic alternatives such as exogenous enzymes, organic acids, bacteriophages, natural extracts, essential oils, prebiotics, and probiotics are being tested and have shown to maintain or increase performance, and enhance the immune system in animals. Those antibiotic alternatives enhance the stability of the intestinal microflora and the development of the gastrointestinal tract (GIT).

The intestinal microflora has more than 400 species of bacteria—about half of which are beneficial. Increasing the beneficial population of bacteria with feed additives—mainly the lactic-acid bacteria such as *Lactobacillus* prevents the growth of pathogens such as *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *Clostridium*, and *Campylobacter*.

### Probiotics are beneficial bacteria collected from the gastrointestinal tract of healthy animals.

A disease related to gut integrity is Coccidiosis, which is a parasitic disease caused by protozoa of the genus *Eimeria*. Several species of *Eimeria* develop in different regions in the gut, where they can cause mild to severe lesions. Coccidiosis reduces body weight gain, increases feed conversion and mortality. Untreated or improperly treated coccidiosis causes severe damage to the gut, opening the doors for *Clostridium perfringens*, which is responsible for the development of Necrotic enteritis.

With the objective of preventing the development of Coccidiosis and Necrotic enteritis and improving animal performance, academia and industry have isolated and refined specific beneficial bacteria to produce competitive exclusion cultures, also known as probiotics and Direct Fed Microbials (DFM). Probiotics are beneficial bacteria collected from the gastrointestinal tract of healthy animals.

### HOW PROBIOTICS WORK

There are four hypothesized mechanisms of action of the beneficial bacteria to prevent and control pathogenic enterobacteria and to improve animal performance:

- 1) Attaching to gastrointestinal mucosal site, not leaving enough room to pathogens (competitive exclusion)
- 2) Reducing intestinal pH (an acid pH is an unfriendly environment for pathogens)
- 3) Some beneficial bacteria produce antibacterial toxins
- 4) Beneficial bacteria compete for nutrients with pathogens in the GIT.

Lactic-acid bacteria such as *Lactobacilli* grow very well in the GIT, but, with few exceptions, they do not tolerate high temperature; therefore, they are not feasible for pelleting feed or for high temperature climate. Probiotics based on *Bacillus subtilis* are strong spore forming bacteria that stand up to 194°F, and are therefore the probiotics of choice for pelleted feed. *Bacillus subtilis* probiotics can grow poorly in the gut and therefore must be constantly applied in the feed. However, they increase the population of *Lactobacillus* in the gut and reduce the load of pathogens such as *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *Clostridium perfringens*, and *Campylobacter*.

### PREBIOTICS

In addition, probiotics or the beneficial bacteria ferment the undigested feed or fibers in the large intestine. Those fibers that reach the large intestine to be fermented by beneficial bacteria are called prebiotics.

The fermentation of those fibers or oligosaccharides is believed to increase the amount of Volatile Fatty Acids (VFAs), especially the short chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as acetic, propionic and butyric acid, which are absorbed as energy sources.

A good prebiotic has both mannans and Beta Glucans.



## WENGER FEEDS WELCOMES DR. FAUSTO SOLÍS AS NUTRITION SERVICES MANAGER

Wenger Feeds is pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Fausto Solís as Nutrition Services Manager.

Dr. Solís will be managing the Nutrition Services Department and overseeing all aspects of feed

formulation, poultry and swine nutrition, and research trials for Wenger Feeds.

“Dr. Solís’ extensive experience in poultry and swine nutrition will be an asset to Wenger Feeds’ customers as he manages the department and contributes to our new product development efforts at our four research facilities. His experience in dairy nutrition will give us a new area of expertise as our sister company, Nutrify, LLC, expands its offerings to the dairy market,” noted Geoff Finch, President and CEO.

Dr. Solís earned a Ph.D. in Poultry Science from the University of Arkansas and was most recently the Technical Manager, Nutritionist, and Director of the Nutrition Division for Instituciones Pecuarias Dominicanas S.A., an integrated agricultural company located in the Dominican Republic. He previously served as Manager of the Agricultural Services Department for the Caribbean Region for Nestle, S.A.

Mannans provide favorable conditions for beneficial intestinal *Lactobacillus*. They also provide competitive binding sites for pathogens causing them to pass through the intestine thus decreasing attachment and colonization. Betaglucans were recently shown to decrease *Salmonella enterica serovar Enteritidis* organ invasion in laying hens and provided protection from the effects of *Escherichia coli* challenge in broiler chicks.

### PREBIOTICS & PROBIOTICS WORK TOGETHER

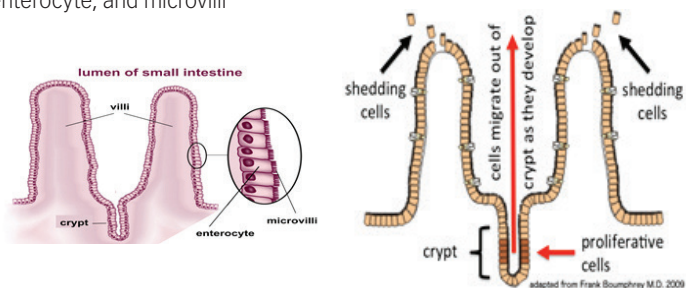
It has been shown that both prebiotics and probiotics and other feed additives increase animal performance by enhancing the capacity of the gastrointestinal tract to digest and absorb nutrients through stimulating the length and surface area of intestinal microvilli, enhancing the lamina propria thickness, and increasing the crypt depth (Figure 1). The intestinal villi are finger-like structures in the epithelium of the gastrointestinal tract that contain specialized cells for absorption of nutrients

(Figure 1). Increasing the length of the villus allows more surface area for the absorption of nutrients and cell turnover to renovate the organism.

Immediately after hatching, the intestinal villi undergo a dramatic increase in size and numbers to prepare the gut to digest and absorb nutrients. In studies carried out by the author, the supplementation of prebiotics with both mannans and Beta glucans increased the height and surface area of the intestinal villus (Figure 1), and the average body weights (Solís de los Santos et al., 2005, 2007).

Wenger Feeds has specific feeding programs that include prebiotics, probiotics, essential oils, natural extracts, and organic acids to stimulate the immune system, improve animal performance and to control pathogenic diseases such as coccidiosis, necrotic enteritis, and focal duodenal necropsy. For more information, contact your account leader.

Figure 1: Intestinal villi showing the crypt, enterocyte, and microvilli



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## MilloGram

Vol. 29, No. 4  
October - December 2016

The MilloGram is published four times a year for our customers, employees, neighbors, and friends by Wenger Feeds, 1-800-692-6008

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