



Hilmar Ingredients named Dairy Exporter of the Year

Hilmar CA October 7, 2009 — By demonstrating leadership in driving global demand for U. S. dairy exports Hilmar Ingredients was recently named 2009 Exporter of the Year by *Dairy Foods* magazine in an award sponsored by the U.S. Dairy Export Council.

The evaluation criteria for Exporter of the Year are both significant and extensive. Hilmar Ingredients demonstrated on-going export sales success; a leadership role in driving global dairy demand; providing high-quality U.S.-produced products that fulfill worldwide trends; and a commitment to customer service and long-term investment in international markets. For Hilmar Ingredients the journey to becoming a leading exporter began in 1994 when the company shipped their first container of product from the nearby Port of Oakland to customers in Asia. Today Hilmar Ingredients' whey protein and lactose products are exported to more than 40 countries across all continents.

A key to Hilmar Ingredients export success can be attributed to the company focus on customer service and customization. "That is something we do everyday," says Kevin Vogt, vice president and general manager of Hilmar Ingredients. "We have a strong interest in global business opportunities. By actively listening to customer needs and responding we learn and gain important knowledge. Often, just from the interaction, we pick up valuable insight – whether it is a new product or a new appreciation of culture and attitudes." Although the domestic market remains the core business, exports are a significant contributor to the success of the organization as a whole and an integral component to Hilmar Ingredients overall growth. "We have logistical advantages to export markets because of our manufacturing locations in California and Texas. And we've gained a lot of experience over the years," according to Tony Pallios, director of sales.

Hilmar Ingredients is a division of Hilmar Cheese Company, who is also growing its export cheese business. "The Japanese, in particular, have been impressed with our cheese, and foodservice and hospitality buyers are eager for applications for the American Original cheeses we produce," according to Phil Robnett, vice president of Hilmar Cheese.

Hilmar Ingredients is the whey protein and lactose division of Hilmar Cheese Company. Founded in 1984 by twelve Central California dairy families who owned Jersey cows, Hilmar Cheese Company has grown to include a second manufacturing site in Dalhart, Texas. Still privately held, the Company employs almost 1,000. Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, Hilmar Cheese Company is committed to continuous improvement and innovation. The Company's mission is to produce high quality products within a framework of environmental sustainability. ###