

NEWS / BUSINESS

ISG provides best-in-class, multidisciplinary problem solving for cheese and dairy sector

By Alyssa Mitchell

MANKATO, Minn. — Expansion is booming across the North American dairy landscape, and manufacturers continuously are seeking out new technologies, equipment and building efficiencies to keep pace with consumer demand. ISG, a 100% employee-owned multidisciplinary firm, has been partnering with companies in the dairy sector for more than 50 years to keep them competitive throughout the lifecycle of their facilities.

Founded in 1973, ISG set out to meet a clear market need for clients who wanted a responsive partner that combined practical design with multidisciplinary problem solving. While its team has grown since those early years — allowing ISG to attract top talent and staff each project with experts whose skills align directly with clients' goals — ISG continues to prioritize a client-first operating model.

Many of ISG's team members worked inside production facilities before joining ISG, allowing them to pair design knowledge with firsthand operational insight. The company's capabilities span structural and infrastructure engineering, permitting, and water and wastewater design and support. This range allows ISG to address the full lifecycle of a facility, from early planning to long-term performance.

"When it comes to the cheese and dairy industry, project success often comes down to how well the process partners, the infrastructure engineering teams, the construction partners and ownership team collaborate," says John Shamla, senior project manager at ISG. "ISG is uniquely positioned to provide all engineering solutions in-house when it comes to building and utility infrastructure design."

Through this approach, critical discussions about sanitary facility design, utility redundancy and diversity, wastewater management and building-to-process integration points can occur without missing any details, Shamla adds.

"We help clients navigate the AEC (architecture, engineering, construction) process from idea generation to final commissioning, for large and small greenfield projects, building additions, renovations and one-off repairs or improvements," he says. "We believe our success stems from our employee-owner culture, which fosters a team of experts who are great to work with."

Being 100% employee-owned allows ISG to enhance its culture as a unified group focused on making each team member — and the company — better, says Brian Gjerde, vice president of food and beverage at ISG.

"This directly impacts our clients and projects because our team is highly engaged in the work we are doing, which leads to higher productivity, higher efficiencies and a shared sense of responsibility for every client's success," Gjerde says. "If our clients are successful, we are successful."

Shamla notes that while many dairy plants share similarities, no two are completely identical.

"A core ISG belief is to remain adaptable, flexible and responsive in an ever-changing environment," he says. "This starts with better understanding our clients' needs and working to develop a full view of the problem and goals through a listen-first approach."

Cheese and dairy clients don't just need a consultant — they need a partner who understands the pressure, risks and opportunities that are unique to this industry, Gjerde adds.

"ISG stands out because we bring

together expertise, responsiveness and a business mindset that directly supports our clients' operational and growth needs," he says.

Once a need has been identified, ISG assembles a multitude of solutions with clear budgetary implications to establish the best path forward. This multiple custom option approach is backed by industry specific service offerings such as industrial refrigeration and industrial wastewater design, both growing areas of emphasis as facilities work toward greater sustainability and reduced operating costs.

As part of the decision-making process, ISG conducts a cost-benefit analysis

with a combination of internal historical costs and external partners to provide an understanding of the impact a decision may have on the overall project budget.

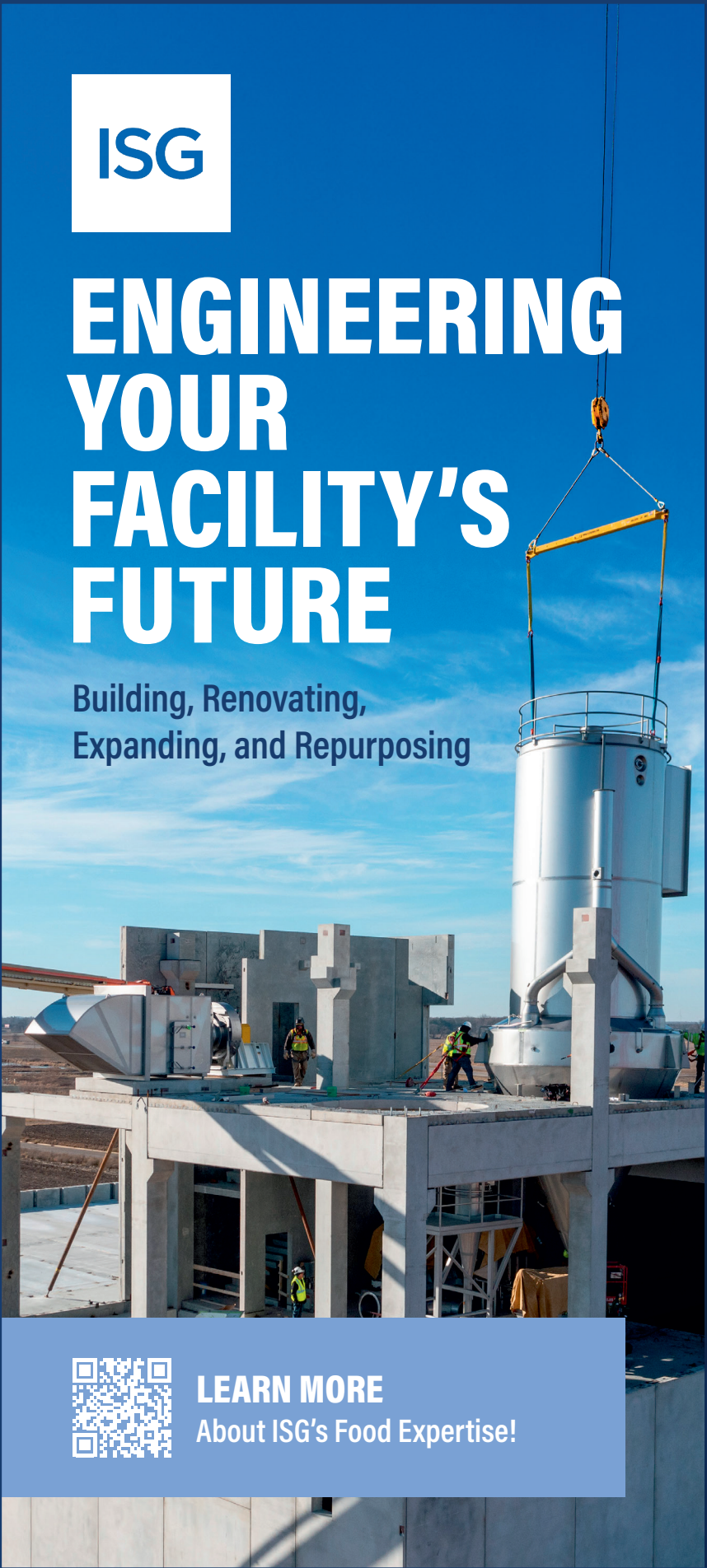
As the industry continues advancing food safety, employee safety and throughput, clear communication throughout and after a project has never been more important, Shamla notes.

"At the end of the day, ISG is here to help solve problems, whether that means using our vast knowledge of internal experience and services, or leaning into an excellent partner network," he says. "We focus on long-standing relationships and providing custom solutions." **CMN**



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