WISCONSIN MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME

2001

Anton J. (Tony) Weiler
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Anton J. (Tony) Weiler, a self-made and self-educated Wisconsinite, turned his lifelong interest in fixing and building better machinery, and his respect for people, into a business that today ranks among the world’s leading manufacturers of meat-processing equipment.

Born on a farm in Marathon County near Athens, Wis. in 1906, Weiler became interested in fixing and improving farm equipment as a child, and studied engineering informally for the rest of his life.

Weiler’s drive to build better machines led him to establish Weiler and Company, a small general machinery repair shop in Palmyra, Wis. in 1939.

“In the beginning, he repaired farm equipment, but because of his initiative, insights and aggressiveness, he took advantage of opportunities to make processing equipment for fur ranches and for the meat industry,” says Bob Kauffman, an emeritus professor and meat quality researcher in the Department of Animal Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Wisconsin’s growing fur-ranching industry spurred a demand for grinders and other equipment needed to process animal byproducts into mink feed. Weiler opened a branch plant in Whitewater, Wis. in 1957 to help satisfy the ranchers' needs.

Within a short time, Weiler and Company began making processing equipment for the U.S. meat industry, installing its first bone grinder in an Armour & Co. rendering plant in 1961. Not long after, the USDA approved Weiler grinders for processing edible meats and other food products.

Weiler moved his entire company to Whitewater and oversaw its expansion until his death in December 1994.

Today, more than 60 years after its founding, Weiler and Co. serves the needs of meat processors in Wisconsin, the United States, and several other countries, including Australia, Argentina, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom. The company earns nearly half of its $12 million sales through international markets. Oscar Mayer, McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, Jones Dairy Farm, Doskocil, and Hardee's are just some of the company’s regular customers.

Weiler remained active in all the company activities until his death in 1994. He had very little formal education, but a brilliant mind for mechanical design. His company continues to provide scholarships to students seeking vocational/technical education.

“As a direct result of Tony Weiler’s ability and interest in manufacturing strong, effective and durable products, many meat companies and meat distributors in Wisconsin have grown to rely on obtaining products from the Weiler Company,” says Kauffman. “Furthermore, it is clear from the beginning that he respected people and their needs.”

Weiler was married to Amelia Przybysz in 1941, and they had four children, Janet, Robert, Mary and Rita.