

IntelliGenics - January 15/00 p.13

Ten full-time employees work year-round in both the feed mill/store operation and garden centre.

While the store sells everything from pet food and animal health care products to such consumer favourites as water softener salt and shovels, it's the feed mill that has been the driving force behind the business all these years.

All the feed produced for dairy and beef cattle, horses, swine, poultry and birds start out as raw ingredients, including corn, wheat or soybean meal.

"We get the raw products from farmers in

this area and beyond. And we'll even use our two bulk trucks to pick the products from the farmers," Hinchey said.

Once the raw products arrive at Thrasher's, the crew swings into action producing the desired feed.

"We can formulate any feed a customer wants," she said.

Producing feed is like following a recipe for a meal. Using such equipment as bins, mixers, grinders and rollers, employees add the right mix of salt, minerals, vitamins and proteins to produce the desired type.

"Most farmers have their own custom formula that they feed to their animals and so our job is to do that feed," she noted.

Four tons of feed is a typical farming order "and we provide next day service. Sometimes, it's same day service if the farmer is all out of feed."

The feed mill produces an average of 20 tons of feed every day, or some 5,000 tons over the course of the year.

Dairy farmers represent its largest customer base.

"We serve about 150 dairy farmers in the area and they're our biggest bulk feed customer," Hinchey said.

Why?

"Dairy cattle have to work hard to produce milk and they have to eat high quality feed in order to produce high quality milk," she replied.

Thrasher's also produces its own private label of feed for horses, pigs, poultry, beef cattle and domestic and wild birds. These bagged products are available at the feed mill for customer pick-up.

"Because we're producing food for animals, it must pass strict government regulations...we have strict testing in our facility," Hinchey said.

In addition to producing its own feed, Thrasher's is a distributor for Master Feeds, a prominent national feed company.

Thrasher Feeds Limited