



ZFS Ithaca to Receive Soybeans at Harvest; Operations Expected to Begin in Late 2019

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ZFS Ithaca, LLC, Michigan's largest soybean processing facility, is nearing completion of construction and will begin receiving soybeans at harvest 2019, with plans to begin operations later in the year.

The facility at 1266 E. Washington Rd., will be capable of processing more than 40 million bushels of soybeans annually. It features two dump pits, each capable of receiving up to 20,000 bushels of soybeans per hour, to help expedite the receiving process during the busy harvest season.

“Testing and commissioning of the truck scales and grain equipment will take place this summer, well in advance of the harvest rush,” said ZFS Ithaca General Manager Eric Meeuwsen. “Work on the processing plant is in full swing, and, as we move through the summer, we will focus on dialing in the systems to ensure the plant is ready for commissioning later this year in preparation for the start of our soybean crushing operations.”

Constructed on a 435-acre site just east of US-27, ZFS Ithaca includes grain receiving and storage, soybean processing and feed ingredients transloading.

More than four years in the planning and construction, the plant will increase the total soy processing capacity in Michigan to more than 50 million bushels annually, or roughly half the total amount of beans grown in the state each year. It is sized to meet the soy processing and soybean meal needs in Michigan for the next generation and beyond.

“(ZFS Ithaca) is the latest example of the leadership and vision ZFS has always offered Michigan agriculture. Their commitment to growth and providing services and opportunities to Michigan farmers and businesses is well known, and their investment in Ithaca reflects that commitment,” said Jim Byrum, president of the Michigan Agri-Business Association. “Just like the first soy processing plant in Zeeland that has been in operation for two decades, the new facility in Ithaca will boost local soybean prices for Michigan farmers, serve as a convenient, reliable source of soybean meal and hulls for livestock producers and allow Michigan's agriculture sector to tap into growing markets at home and abroad for soy products.”

The plant and the necessary infrastructure represent a significant investment in the community by ZFS Ithaca, an affiliate of Zeeland Farm Services, Inc. The plant is expected to create approximately 75 full-time jobs and has brought roadway and utility upgrades to aid in future development in Gratiot County.

Throughout the planning and development of the project, ZFS Ithaca, LLC has enjoyed its partnerships with Greater Gratiot Development, Inc., the City of Ithaca, Gratiot County, Gratiot Country Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Michigan Economic Development Corp. Their assistance has been instrumental in bringing the project to fruition.