



PRESS RELEASE

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empirical Opens Next-Generation Ground Beef Facility in Garden City, Kansas to Support America's Growing Affordable Beef Demands

State of the art operation will deliver significant dividends to customers and consumers seeking less expensive ground beef at a time of record high beef prices

Garden City, KS, April 8, 2026 — *empirical*, America's premier producer of USDA inspected lean ground beef and beef products, today announced the opening of a new state of the art production facility in Garden City, Kansas. The long-term investment will strengthen domestic ground beef supply by increasing efficiency, enhancing food safety, and reducing food loss at time of record high beef prices.

The operation comes online as the beef industry continues to face persistent structural challenges, including constrained domestic supply, rising ground beef costs, ongoing food loss, and commitments to meet sustainability goals at scale. Rather than expanding cattle numbers or increasing resource use, *empirical's* model centers on innovation that creates new value through increasing the availability of lean beef from existing U.S. produced cattle.

In response to growing demand of *empirical's* lean ground beef by leading restaurant, retail, and food service companies the organization expanded its operations through a major investment in a new 280,000 square foot facility. The plant represents one of the most sophisticated food production operations in the world designed in a manner that easily allows for future expansion to meet ongoing demands.

Initially the plant will increase the company's production of lean ground beef by 50%, with the ability to expand significantly in the future. In addition, *empirical* will increase the production of high-quality tallow used in cooking oils, cosmetics, renewable fuels, and consumer products -- making it one of America's largest producers of tallow. These expanded capabilities build on *empirical's* portfolio, which includes Noble Valley ground beef, Two Rivers boxed beef and pork, Dos Rios taco meat and Jen's Beef Bolognese and Sloppy Joe at its operations in South Sioux City, Nebraska.

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The new facility will create over 250 new skilled and semi-skilled jobs supported by **empirical's** technical team with support from its partnership with the Garden City Community College. The Garden City expansion will supplement **empirical's** production operations in Nebraska and its headquarters in South Dakota.

For over 45 years, **empirical** has helped the industry capture an average of twenty-one additional pounds of available beef per head of cattle — supporting greater supply while reducing inefficiency across the value chain.

“This facility reflects a belief that efficiency is one of the most effective tools the industry has to strengthen domestic supply,” said Craig Letch, President, Empirical Foods. “Increasing the availability of beef without increasing cattle numbers supports resilience across the system — from producers through consumers.”

The Garden City facility was designed using decades of operational learning, with a focus on long-term performance rather than short-term optimization. Food safety is engineered directly into the system through equipment design, layouts, and workflows. Automation is applied to improve control, consistency, and reliability — not simply speed.

“This is more than a ceremonial opening of a new facility,” said Nick Roth, President, Empirical Technology & Empirical Innovations. “This facility is the culmination of five decades of innovation, and sets a new bar for food safety, efficiency and work environment for the next 50 years.”

By increasing the supply of high-quality, extra-lean ground beef, the facility helps reduce pressure on imports while supporting more consistent and cost-effective ground beef formulations for customers. Greater availability of lean beef also contributes to affordability for consumers without compromising safety or quality – an ongoing challenge faced by restaurants, retailers, and food service company in today's economy.

In an era where one third of all food produced in the world goes to waste, **empirical's** process addresses food loss by redesigning how lean beef is separated from fat, keeping more protein in higher-value food channels. In doing so, the company produces value through innovation that was heretofore not possible.

***empirical** is a family-owned company that has devoted over 45 years to innovation in the meat industry, proving that exceptional beef at a significant value doesn't require compromise. From lean ground beef to steaks and roasts, **empirical** serves leading retail and foodservice partners nationwide. The company is guided by a simple belief: every person, at every economic level, deserves access to quality, affordable, great-tasting beef.*

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