

Newswatch

Blair adds a plant

By ANN TONER

ADANISH company sees a green future for the United States. At a time when some grain ethanol plants are struggling to survive, Novozymes broke ground this spring for a \$160 million to \$200 million plant at Blair that will make enzymes for the biorefining business.

At a glance

- Novozymes is investing \$160 million to \$200 million in ethanol's future.
- The plant's enzymes are for first- and second-generation ethanol production.
- The plant will be ideally located to serve Midwest ethanol plants.



ROYAL HANDSHAKE: Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman (left) shakes hands with Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik. Also shown are Crown Princess Mary Elizabeth and Lars Hansen, president of Novozymes North America.

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The company decided to double the size of the previously announced plant because it expects that the Obama administration will be friendly to renewable fuels efforts, and there will be demand for the products they make.

"We expect strong growth for first- and second-generation fuel ethanol, and we have to be ready to deliver the required quantities of enzymes to support such growth," said Lars Hansen, president of Novozymes North America, at the groundbreaking.

Novozymes wants the plant completed by 2010, if possible. The plant will hire about 100 people to work in the facility. The city of Blair is offering \$800,000 in local sales-tax revenue for Novozymes' equipment and utility costs, and the State of Nebraska is kicking in an \$800,000 Community Block Grant for infrastructure work.

Enzymes are proteins that speed up chemical reactions and are made by bacteria and fungi.

Novozymes will make enzymes for both first-generation ethanol production (where sugar or starchy materials such as grain are turned into fuel ethanol) and second-generation ethanol production (produced from cellulosic biomass such as crop residue, wood chips and switchgrass).

Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary Elizabeth, along with Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman, joined many local officials for the ribbon-cutting and tree-planting.

The prince noted that a 30-year focus on renewable energy sources and energy conservation has been good for the Danish economy.

Denmark's national energy consumption has only risen 4% since 1980, yet the national economy has grown 64%.

Denmark embarked on its green energy campaign after the oil crisis of the 1970s.

The Danish economy suffered because it was 99% dependent on imported energy sources. Now, about 30% of national energy use comes from renewable sources.

The future Novozymes plant will be located on the edge of the Cargill corn refining campus at Blair.

In addition to Cargill's large wet-milling plant, there are several manufacturing plants, operated by different companies, that are making use of corn-milling byproducts to make other high-value products.