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BREAKING FEATURED

Italian ag manufacturer breaks ground in Orangeburg County; biostimulant maker to create 47 new jobs

By GENE ZALESKI T&D Staff Writer 13 hrs ago

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Valagro officials break ground Tuesday on the Italian company's first manufacturing facility in the United States at the Orangeburg County/City Industrial Park. Pictured, from left, are Valagro Head of North and Central America Matteo S Valagro Corporate Affairs Director Marco Rosso; Valagro Country Manager Dr. Mario Mastrangelo; Valagro Chief Op

Officer Prem Warrior; Valagro Chief Executive Officer Giuseppe Natale; Orangeburg County Council Chairman John Valagro Senior Vice President, Americas Milen Marinov; and Orangeburg County Development Commission Chairman Middleton.

GENE ZALESKI, T&D

An Italian manufacturer of biostimulants and specialty nutrients for plants was welcomed to Orangeburg County on Tuesday.



Swedish auto supplier opens Orangeburg plant; Gnotec Group to employ 78

By GENE ZALESKI T&D Staff Writer

"We are very, very excited to welcome you, Valagro, here in Orangeburg County. So let's grow together and reach our maximum potential right here in Orangeburg," Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce Chairman Daryl Cate said.



Orangeburg County Council: 2 solar farms planned

BRADLEY HARRIS T&D Staff Writer

The company broke ground on its first manufacturing facility in the United States at the Orangeburg County/City Industrial Park near the intersection of U.S. Highway 301 and Interstate 26.

Valagro is planning to invest at least \$15 million and create 47 new jobs over the next five years.

"If you are an entrepreneur, the U.S. is the holy land," Valagro CEO Giuseppe Natale told those gathered at the company's groundbreaking.

"It is a great country and I think you have a lot of to be proud of," he said.

Valagro initially announced in May 2018 its intention to locate in the county, saying Orangeburg's location enables it to better serve the U.S., Canada and Mexico and its existing customer base.

Its 65,000-square-foot facility will be located on about 11 acres across the street from Allied Air. Construction is expected to begin on the facility by the first quarter of 2020 with operations beginning by the end of 2020.

Natale promised the county Valagro will be "quality employer."



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"Profit is the consequence of a good service you are able to deliver to your customers," Natale said.

Natale related how he was born in a small village and spent most of his time on his grandfather's farm. His father helped build an agrichemical distribution company.

At the age of 20, Natale helped build the company.

When the company started, there was no money, no experience and no knowledge of how to run an agribusiness industry, but he said there was a dream "to provide products to farmers and growers to enable them to produce more quality foods in a more sustainable way."

He said the company was able to take advantage of trends in agriculture.

"People now care not only what they eat but also how what we eat is produced," Natale said. "We were working on how we can deliver this kind of help to win the challenge."

Valagro, headquartered in the Abruzzo region of Italy, is a global leader in biostimulants. The company specializes in the production and marketing of specialty nutrients for use in agricultural production and other industrial applications.

The Orangeburg plant will produce biostimulants, which are active ingredients of purely natural origin that stimulate the main physiological processes of the plant.

Micronutrients will provide plants with all the elements they need to grow healthy and strong.

During Tuesday's event, Orangeburg Mayor Michael C. Butler offered prayer for the success of Valagro.

"Lord, I ask this plant become a blessing, to provide an opportunity to those who are unemployed and for those who want to further their education and further themselves," Butler said.

Orangeburg County Development Commission Executive Director Gregg Robinson said, "Welcome to the family. We want you to become a part of the fabric of our community and we look forward to hearing exciting things in the future."

Company officials were presented with a South Carolina state flag to fly at their facility.

Orangeburg County Council Chairman Johnnie Wright thanked Valagro for choosing Orangeburg County.

"We have a lot going on in Orangeburg County," Wright said.

S.C. Department of Agriculture Director of Agribusiness Development Jack Shuler, an Orangeburg County native, said "We know you are going to make a great product here." Shuler said he was on a delegation to Italy about three years ago and said it is nice to see one's labors come to fruition.

"This will be a great industry for South Carolina and for Orangeburg County," he said.

Orangeburg County Councilman and farmer Harry Wimberly said, "Micronutrients now are a big part of farming because of the cost of fertilizers. It is very important."

The announcement received statewide praise.

"Today, we celebrate yet another international firm choosing to do business in South Carolina, a further testament to our business-friendly climate and well-trained workforce," S.C. Gov. Henry McMaster said in a press release. "I congratulate Valagro and Orangeburg County on this terrific new partnership and look forward to watching it thrive for years to come."

Valagro is the 22nd international company to fly its flag in the county.

"When a new business comes to South Carolina, it speaks volumes not only about our business climate, but also about our workforce," S.C. Department of Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt said. "I am excited to see what the future has in store for Valagro and their new home in Orangeburg County."

The Coordinating Council for Economic Development approved job development credits, as well as a \$100,000 Rural Infrastructure Fund grant to Orangeburg County to assist with the cost of construction.

The county also provided the company with a fee-in-lieu of taxes agreement for a 30-year term and special revenue credits. It also approved the company's placement in a joint county industrial park with Dorchester County. A joint industrial park is another mechanism that allows the county to provide incentives to industries.

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