# Chobani Yogurt Maker Plans Plant In Twin Falls

TWIN FALLS, Idaho (AP) — Executives from New York-based Agro Farma have picked Twin Falls as the home for a new western manufacturing plant for its Chobani yogurt.

Company officials joined state and local leaders Thursday to announce plans to build a $100 million production facility and add 400 jobs to the local economy, the Times-News reported (http://bit.ly/tGCL5f).

Agro Farma founder and CEO Hamdi Ulukaya said the decision to move to the Magic Valley was tied to the region's milk production capacity and trainable workforce. Idaho is the nation's third leading dairy producer, with the majority of those dairy farms centered outside cities like Twin Falls and Jerome.

"You will find you and your staff and your company made a very wise decision because Idaho is a place where there is unlimited potential for growth," Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter told Agro Farma officials during the official announcement.

The Twin Falls Urban Renewal Agency and city council members approved an agreement earlier Thursday helping pave the way for the new facility.

Under terms of the deal, about $4.3 million in urban renewal money will go toward acquiring land, and almost $13 million more will go toward infrastructure including water lines, wastewater improvements and utilities. The city will chip in $6.75 million in tax dollars for wastewater pretreatment and sewer line improvements.

The plan is to have the facility open sometime next year, with wages for workers starting at $14 per hour.

Company officials said Twin Falls was among sites in Nevada and California that were also considered as it sought a location for a production site in the western half of the country. Headquartered in Norwich, Agro Farma is New York's largest dairy manufacturer, and it launched the Chobani brand in 2007.

Chobani is currently the nation's top selling Greek yogurt, a thicker style yogurt that has twice the protein of traditional yogurts, all natural ingredients, and hormone-free milk.

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