

# Vermeer Celebrates 60th Anniversary, History Of Innovation



In 1948, young inventor and entrepreneur Gary Vermeer founded a new company in a one-room cement block building to produce a hoist device for lifting grain wagon boxes to make them easier to empty.

Today the Vermeer Corp. employs more than 2,000 people in the United States and overseas. The Pella, IA, headquarters and manufacturing facilities cover 110 of the 336 acres owned by the company. In addition, there are manufacturing facilities in Goes, The Netherlands, and Beijing, China.

Each month on average, 500 truckloads of equipment leave Vermeer plants for distribution throughout the world.

Vermeer still produces agricultural equipment, but over the years has expanded its line of equipment to include utility construction, energy pipeline, landscape and environmental markets.

In a time of acquisitions and consolidations, often resulting in corporate conglomerates whose management may know little of the customers they serve, Vermeer remains a family-owned company. Gary Vermeer retired in 1989 and remains chairman emeritus of the company's board of directors.

## Current leadership

The company is led today by Gary Vermeer's son and daughter: Bob Vermeer, chairman of the board and co-chief executive officer (CEO); and Mary Vermeer-Andringa, president and co-CEO. Jason Andringa, son of Mary and Dale Andringa, is manager of the Vermeer Goes manufacturing and distribution facility in The Netherlands. Allison Van Wyngarden, daughter of Bob and Lois Vermeer, is an industrial distribution manager for Vermeer in Pella.

Throughout 2008, company employees and the dealer personnel who sell and service Vermeer products are quietly celebrating the organization's 60th anniversary.

"It has been a great journey," reflects Mary Vermeer-Andringa. "Our dad was truly a visionary when he founded the company 60 years ago. He had a tremendous entrepreneurial spirit and keen business sense. His principle was simple – find a need and fill that need with a product built to last, and simply build the best. That idea has been the guiding force of our company since then. Our people take pride in what we build, and that pride is reflective in every piece of equipment that rolls off the line. We believe that the products we build, along with the strength of our dealership network, set us apart from the competition."

In utility markets, Vermeer is best known for its trenchers, vibratory plows and horizontal directional drilling equipment.

The first Vermeer trencher was introduced in 1950. Today's trencher lineup includes a walk-behind model, rider trenchers for utility work from 37 to 120 horsepower, and large, heavy-duty track machines from 125 to 600 horsepower for cutting through rock, paving and difficult soils. There are three compact walk-behind vibratory plow models. Vehicles that power utility trenchers are designed to accept interchangeable work modules, including vibratory plows and utility backhoes.

## HDD market

Vermeer entered the directional drilling market in 1991 and today is a leading producer of HDD equipment offering 14 models with pullback capabilities from 5,500 to 500,000 pounds. Their HDD equipment

*Left: Gary Vermeer pictured with one of his first trenchers. Middle: Vermeer founder Gary Vermeer (center) is flanked by his children who now oversee the company, Bob Vermeer, chairman-of-the-board and co-CEO with sister Mary Andringa, who also serves as company president. Right Top: The first Vermeer building. Right Bottom: Today's operations consists of several large buildings and facilities.*

includes a complete selection of support equipment such as fluid-mixing systems, locators, drill pipe and downhole tools. In addition, Vermeer has added vacuum excavators, compact excavators and skid-steer loaders. HammerHead pneumatic piercing tools has been offered through Vermeer dealers for many years.

In the agricultural market, Vermeer's best-known product likely is its round hay baler, the first model being introduced in 1971. In wide use on landscape and land clearance projects are Vermeer chippers, stump cutters and tub grinders.

Today there are 150 Vermeer industrial equipment dealerships selling and supporting utility equipment products and 430 agricultural equipment dealers.

Earlier this year, Vermeer changed the company name from Vermeer Manufacturing Co. to the Vermeer Corp. and acquired Horizontal Rig & Equipment Inc., Conroe, TX, expanding the company's line of large HDD equipment.

"While Bob and I are proud of our past, we are equally excited about our future," says Vermeer-Andringa. "Today we are no longer limited by geography or culture. We are truly a global organization with an entrepreneurial spirit that stretches to all corners of the globe."

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Vermeer Corp., (888) 837-6337, [vermeer.com](http://vermeer.com)