

WBR ARTICLE

FMC: Granger facility to stay in mothballs

By Staff

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GREEN RIVER — FMC Wyoming Corporation today reversed its plans to reopen the Granger soda ash facility later this year. The Granger plant temporarily suspended operations this April to align production with the decreased demand due to the global economic slowdown, and had plans to restart the facility later in 2009 if needed to meet increased export demand.

According to a company release, FMC expects demand to recover, but at a level that does not immediately require the incremental Granger production.

Output from Granger is dedicated to supply export demand through the American Natural Soda Ash Corporation (ANSAC), which is the export marketing and logistics organization that serves export geographies, primarily Latin America and Asia.

"There is no fundamental change in our operating philosophy," said Ed Flynn, president of FMC Wyoming. "Due to its low start-up cost, our Granger facility has always been utilized as swing capacity to meet rising export demand. While ANSAC has successfully regained share, revised export demand projections for the second half of 2009 do not warrant a restart of the Granger operation at this time."

As a result of this decision, FMC expects to operate without any excess capacity during the balance of 2009 and into 2010. FMC's solution mining technology utilized at Granger requires less cost to restart than other technologies employed in soda ash mining. This provides FMC with considerable flexibility to bring the production at Granger back on line quickly when it is required. Currently, FMC's Granger facility has an operating capacity of 600,000 short tons per year; this capacity represents approximately 5 percent of the U.S. effective production capacity.

FMC Wyoming Corporation is a subsidiary of FMC Corporation, a diversified chemical company serving agricultural, industrial and consumer markets. According to the State Inspector of Mines annual report, FMC's Wyoming operations employed 810 people in 2008.