



## Chamber Business Profile

### Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition North America Inc.

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On a hillside near Eddyville, two manufacturing facilities convert Iowa corn into ingredients that reach food producers worldwide. What began in 1986 as an animal nutrition operation has grown into a major manufacturing campus for Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition North America Inc., blending global food science with local agriculture in southeast Iowa.

The company, commonly known as Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition, is part of the larger Ajinomoto Group, a Japan-based organization with a history dating back more than a century. According to company materials, the Group traces its origins to Dr. Kikunae Ikeda's discovery of umami, the fifth basic taste, which eventually led to the creation of monosodium glutamate, or MSG, in 1909. The group opened its first North American office in 1917 and later expanded to Iowa, where the Eddyville site opened in 1986.

This heartland location was chosen for a practical reason... corn. Iowa-grown corn is central to the facility's fermentation process. The campus relies on local farming partnerships, and about 10 percent of team members have ties to agriculture, according to company data.

Today, the Eddyville complex includes two manufacturing facilities as part of the Solutions & Ingredients Division. Animal nutrition production began first, followed by MSG production in 1993, when a second plant was added. The site specializes in amino acid fermentation, a term they have coined "AminoScience." As the only domestic producer of MSG in the United States, the team pride themselves on supplying large-scale food manufacturers and seasoning companies in a business-to-business model.

The facility employs about 250 full-time workers, with an average annual salary of about \$76,000 and an average tenure exceeding 10 years, reflecting a strong local workforce. Company leaders say that stability is tied to employee engagement and community involvement. Steve Salevsky, Vice President of Operations, states, "You can find our products in items in your pantry or when you're out to eat. While our company is the global leader in culinary umami seasoning, we strive to support local initiatives that improve the quality of life for our employees and the regions we serve." Team members regularly participate in service projects across Monroe, Mahaska, and Wapello counties.

For many in the public, MSG remains a misunderstood ingredient, which inspires the company's ongoing goal of science-backed education. Through campaigns such as "Know MSG," the company shares research highlighting MSG as a safe flavor enhancer that can help reduce sodium while maintaining taste.

Beyond production, sustainability has become a defining focus of the Eddyville site. The company recently opened the Ajinomoto County Line Wetland Bank, dedicating roughly 130 acres for environmental restoration and credits. The wetlands project represents a broader commitment to environmental stewardship, including

efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2030 and to cut energy and water use. “We’re proud of the functional impacts that this wetland site is going to provide for us, improvements like supporting watersheds, improving water quality, sequestering carbon through close to 2000 trees that we’re planting here, in addition to providing a wildlife habitat to restore that functionality,” Salevsky said.

That balance between global scale and local responsibility defines much of the company’s identity. The Ajinomoto Group now operates more than 120 production sites worldwide, yet the Eddyville campus remains closely tied to Iowa agriculture and rural communities. Products made in Iowa include MSG, AjiPro-L, and omega-3 ingredients, all rooted in local production but destined for broader markets.

When asked what customers value most, AHN leadership points to consistency, quality, and customer-centricity. The emphasis on reliability positions the Eddyville facility as both a local employer and a key contributor to a global supply chain.

As Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition North America looks ahead, its focus remains on innovation and sustainability while maintaining strong ties to the communities surrounding its Iowa operations. From corn grown by nearby farmers to ingredients shipped around the world, the Eddyville facility continues to demonstrate how global food production can be rooted in local relationships and pioneering the science of wellbeing.

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