FUTURE FORWARD

Building upon a legacy of excellence, CPM|Crown enters a new era of innovation in sustainable processing



For more than 148 years, CPM|Crown has been committed to sustainably feeding, fueling, and building a better world. Since 1878, the industry pioneer has revolutionized the way products are made, developing equipment and process technologies that help manufacturers improve efficiency, increase output, and achieve higher-quality results. From launching the first commercially successful pellet mill in 1931 to expanding its capabilities through strategic acquisitions and global partnerships, innovation has always been at the heart of CPM|Crown.

Today, that legacy extends across feed and food, green energy, advanced materials, and sustainable packaging. Backed by world-class innovation centers, test labs, R&D expertise, and a global network of resources, CPM|Crown works alongside customers to solve today's challenges while preparing for tomorrow's opportunities.

At the helm of this operation is CPM|Crown's President, Kris Knudson. With 50 years in agriculture, food, technology and engineering, and a chemical engineering degree from Montana State University, Kris spent 19 years at Cargill before coming to CPM|Crown eight years ago. Now, he's leading the company's next phase of growth, including the scaling of its innovative Monarc™ Clean Oilseed Processing and the development of a new pretreatment technology.

"Our biggest priorities right now are strengthening the things that matter most to our customers: reliable equipment, responsive support and long-term value," Kris says. "We're also focused on growth and innovation, but always with a practical connection to what our customers need. The momentum around the first Monarc™ facility in Barcelona, along with emerging commercial opportunities, is a good example. We expect continued investment in refining processes and renewable fuels, driven by market conditions and the push toward sustainability."

Sustainability shift

CPM|Crown officially launched Monarc Clean Oilseed Processing in October 2025, and the technology is already proving pivotal within the market. Playing integral roles in this operation are Alex Danelich, Chief Commercial Officer, and Marc Ulery, Global Product Director, Monarc.

With 20+ years of diversified leadership experience within the oilseeds industry, spanning engineering, project management, product line management, and commercial roles in a global setting, Alex is currently responsible for Crown's Crush, Liquids, and Specialty Segments. Similarly, Marc has more than 25 years of grain processing experience across the food and feed industries. He spent most of his career with Cargill and more recently served with CPM|Crown as Optimizing Services Director, before transitioning into his current role as Global Product Director for Monarc. The two join the conversation to share some of the technology's strategic advantages.

"Monarc pairs a patented ethanol-based extraction process with the kind of plant scale, cost-effectiveness, and familiar configuration that processors expect from CPM|Crown crush and protein facilities," Alex explains. "In practical terms, it gives customers a way to replace hexane-based solvent extraction without having to sacrifice throughput or the economics behind their operation."

"From a sustainability standpoint, the shift is meaningful," Marc adds. "Ethanol can be produced from renewable, plant-derived sources, which can help reduce reliance on fossil-fuel inputs and support broader sustainability and decarbonization goals. "The shift also strengthens the customer's market-facing story and the economic case for moving away from hydrocarbons. With Monarc, hydrocarbons are removed from the process, including mineral oil systems traditionally used to strip or clean residual hexane from oil. That helps address concerns around trace MOSH and MOAH contamination and supports cleaner, more responsible manufacturing."

Alongside the scaling of Monarc, CPM|Crown has continued to expand its Lifecycle360™ offering. A comprehensive suite of support services designed to



▲ Alex Danelich



▲ Bill Morphew



▲ Harry Certain



▲ Kris Knudson



▲ Marc Ulery

optimize every stage of a facility's lifecycle, Lifecycle360 supports innovation by helping teams develop, test, scale, and commercialize new ideas while strengthening employee knowledge and confidence.

"One of the biggest things we've heard is that customers want experts who can look holistically at their entire facility to identify bottlenecks, strengthen procedures and identify opportunities for improvement. From that feedback, we added Plant Operations as a dedicated part of Lifecycle360," Kris says.

"Plant Operations includes preventive maintenance planning, shutdown steam purge planning and support, debottlenecking, process safety management, and hazard analysis, operating procedures such as SOPs, start-ups, shutdowns, and clean-outs, virtual plant monitoring, smart operating controls improvements, KPI and ROI evaluation, reliability assessments, day-to-day project and maintenance planning, and risk assessments. Together, these services give customers a structured way to validate assumptions, uncover unseen gaps, quantify improvement opportunities, and move from assessment to execution with CPM|Crown as a coordinated partner."

Global Innovation Center

At the same time, CPM|Crown continues to grow its Global Innovation Center in Minnesota.

"The center is located at our headquarters in Blaine, Minnesota, and includes a 15,000-square-foot pilot plant, analytical lab, and training facility," Alex says. "Because we can replicate production environments while providing expert support, customers can move from early feasibility work to continuous pilot-plant testing with data that's representative of commercial operations. We have systems for preparation, extraction and liquids refining, along with the technical expertise to help interpret the results and determine what they mean at full scale.

"Another important role the center plays is that it gives customers a place to bring their own innovations, test and scale them in a controlled environment, and use our technology to develop commercially viable solutions. That customer-back approach helps shorten the path from an idea to a process that can be implemented at scale."

Collaborative partner

This Innovation Center provides the perfect opportunity for CPM|Crown to launch its latest development – an advanced new pretreatment technology – in 2027. Leading this development is Bill Morphew, Vice President of Sales for CPM|Crown's Liquids Segment. Bill began his career as an engineer and operations leader in oilseed processing plants in North and South America. At CPM|Crown, his roles have included project engineer, sales manager, and commercial director.

"The new technology addresses several of the most pressing challenges renewable fuel producers are dealing with right now," Bill says. "Those challenges include limited feedstock availability, rising processing costs, and the complexity of traditional multi-step pretreatment systems. The new technology simplifies conventional pretreatment into a streamlined process designed to reduce complexity and operating costs, while increasing yields and allowing producers to process a broader range of feedstocks with greater consistency."

Looking ahead, CPM|Crown remains focused on turning innovation into practical solutions that deliver greater efficiency, sustainability, and value for customers. From Monarc™ and Lifecycle360 to its new pretreatment technology, the company continues to invest in solutions that address today's challenges while preparing for tomorrow's opportunities. With more than 148 years of expertise behind it, CPM|Crown is well-positioned to lead the next generation of sustainable processing.

"The biggest thing we want the market to understand is that our direction is about much more than selling equipment. We've built a strong reputation as a supplier of efficient, reliable unit operations, and that remains an important part of who we are," Kris affirms, concluding our conversation.

"If there's one message we want to leave with the market, it's that CPM|Crown is becoming an even more focused, collaborative partner. We are commercially informed, technically capable, financially disciplined, locally responsive, and committed to helping our customers drive more value from their products and operations." ■

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