

July 23, 2012

Plant associates get LEAN during weight loss challenges

When it comes to practicing the concept of LEAN at our plants, two facilities in particular—Bardstown and Greeneville—excel at it in more ways than one!

Not only is LEAN a process the plants use to make production more efficient—thereby improving the workplace—but it's what people can personally achieve when they make their eating and exercise habits more efficient—thereby improving their health and lives. Here's the "skinny" on what happened at each location:

Greeneville

At the Tennessee-based facility, 44 individuals signed up for Biggest Loser—a 5-month challenge that began in January and ran through May. The participants collectively lost 444 pounds. All participants who weighed in for the first three months of the program received a Biggest Loser t-shirt. Prizes were awarded for first, second and third place.

Winner **Eugene Cutshall**, Machine Specialist, lost nearly 60 pounds—over 25% of his body weight. "I feel so much better," he said. "I learned a lot over the last five months about health and nutrition, and I've discovered firsthand that it takes a lot of determination and will power to make a lifestyle change."

Second place finisher **Pip Wilkerson**, Gift Wrap Supervisor, said, "As a result of losing 55 pounds, I had my blood pressure medication reduced to a lower dosage, and I improved my cholesterol levels so substantially that my doctor commented she had never seen a turnaround in such a short period of time." (Pip was one of several American Greetings associates who shared their weight loss journeys in this [inspiring video](#).)

Phil Ball, Maintenance, came in third place. "I lowered my calorie intake to 1800-2000 calories per day and ate 5-6 smaller meals per day. I also drank a lot of water," he said. "I started walking two miles on our indoor walking track every day and participated in the Couch to 4 Mile. Now I need a new wardrobe!"

To help encourage associates to participate as well as educate them about weight loss, Greeneville's Wellness Committee held monthly wellness presentations. "We covered various topics, including eating on the go, healthy snacks, understanding food labels, and exercising without a gym," said **Paige Peters**, Assistant Human Resources Manager and co-leader of the Wellness Committee.

Bardstown

The Kentucky-based plant had 46 associates participate in a weight loss and healthy living regimen dubbed the AG Meltdown. The 12-week program culminated in a total weight loss of 192.4 lbs. All associates who participated in the weekly weigh-ins received an American Greetings t-shirt.

Bardstown teamed up with the local health department to do the weigh-ins and provide educational sessions every other week. "The goal of the sessions was to share information to help associates learn ways to change their eating and exercise habits for the long term," said **Debbie Stone**, Accounting Supervisor and leader of the AG Meltdown effort. "We had topics about calories; why we eat what we eat; design your own exercise plan; keys for successful results; building your strength; and how to calculate how many calories you need to burn."

The program also included some Saturday walks at a local 1.5 mile track.

Individual winners were:

- 1st place - **Luzette Moran**, J60 Machine Specialist, 2nd shift



Greeneville's Biggest Loser winners (l. to r.): Phil Ball; Eugene Cutshall; Pip Wilkerson

- 2nd place - **Debbie McIntyre**, J60 Machine Specialist, 1st shift

Team winners were:

- 1st place - THE BIG B WINNERS
 - **Janice Taylor**, J60 Machine Specialist, 3rd shift
 - **Wendy Lawson**, J50 Machine Specialist, 3rd shift
 - **Debbie Wright**, J50 Machine Specialist, 3rd shift
 - **Charlie Geoghegan**, J50 Production Specialist, 3rd shift
- 2nd place - AG CARD SHARKS
 - **Mary Evans**, J50 Supervisor 1st shift
 - **Donnie Avis**, J50 Machine Specialist, 1st shift
 - **Buttons Bryan**, J50 Production Specialist, 1st shift
 - **Chris Pardieu**, J50 Site Coordinator 3rd shift
 - **Rick Arnold**, J50 Production Specialist, 1st shift

Bardstown associates found the program valuable not only from a health improvement standpoint, but for the way it fostered an environment of associate teamwork and support.

“I became much more conscious of what I was eating,” said **Lorna Zeugner**, a J50 Machine Specialist, 2nd shift.

“I did lose a few pounds, but more importantly, the program reminded me to choose and eat better food,” said **Chris Pardieu**, member of the second place-winning team, the AG Card Sharks.

“Participating in the AG Meltdown has been all about support and encouragement,” added **Donnie Avis**, also with the AG Card Sharks.

“American Greetings and the health department helped educate me about and promote a healthy lifestyle.”

Greeneville and Bardstown associates are looking forward to participating in the company-wide Biggest Loser and sharing more success stories.