

**For Immediate Release**

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**U.K.-BASED RICE PROCESSOR WILL INVEST \$36 MILLION IN NEW JOCO  
PRODUCTION SITE**

*Veetee Foods Will Employ 200 at Selma's Eastfield Crossing*

*Johnston County, N.C. – September 16, 2024.* Veetee Foods, Inc., a global seller of heat-and-eat rice meals, plans to establish a 200-job production facility in Johnston County. The privately held company, headquartered in Kent, England, will invest \$36 million at Eastfield Crossing in Selma. Jobs at the new facility will average nearly \$60,000 in annual compensation.

"We welcome Veetee Foods to Johnston County and are excited by the addition of this growing consumer foods company to the ranks of our agribusiness industry and our community of international companies," said R.S. "Butch" Lawter, Jr., Chairman of the Johnston County Board of Commissioners. "The company's selection of Johnston County for this significant investment builds on the economic momentum we've been experiencing along the I-95 corridor, which is energizing job creation and business growth in communities like Selma and the eastern side of the county."

Commissioners, along with Selma Town Council, voted this afternoon on a competitive schedule of performance-based financial incentives to support Veetee's move to Eastfield Crossing. The company also will receive a \$996,750 Jobs Development & Investment Grant (JDIG) from the N.C. Department of Commerce. [Governor Roy Cooper announced](#) the company's decision shortly after a vote by the Economic Investment Committee, which oversees JDIG and other state incentive programs.

"It's great to see another international company like Veetee Foods decide that North Carolina is the perfect place to expand their presence in the United States," said Governor Cooper. "Our state's talented workforce and worker training systems, along with our infrastructure and transportation networks give companies the confidence they seek in a world-class business location like Johnston County."

Selma Mayor Byron McAllister said Veetee's choice of Eastfield Crossing is the result of the town's commitment to new business amenities and industrial infrastructure. "Given the extensive public and private investments that have been made in Selma in recent years, it's no surprise that high-quality companies like Veetee are finding their way here," Mayor McAllister said. "Great community partners and attractive business properties like Eastfield Crossing, along with the improvements we've made in water and wastewater services, are yielding an impressive return-on-investment in terms of job growth and

corporate recruitment – we expect to see more success with this disciplined and focused team strategy.”

In May of this year, Crystal Window & Door Systems Ltd, a New York-based building-products manufacturer, unveiled plans for a \$93 million production site in Selma, where it will employ 500 workers. The privately held company is building its new advanced manufacturing facility on 43 acres at Eastfield Crossing, which is situated at the intersection of I-95 and U.S. Highway 70.

Founded in 1987 by Moni Varma, [Veetee Foods](#) processes and packages Asian-style rice varieties such as Basmati and Pilau. By 2001, the company was Britain’s largest retail rice supplier. Its growth further surged in the mid-2000s after the company pioneered a line of microwaveable rice dishes that enable consumers to easily enjoy the same exotic rice dishes at home that they would find in specialty restaurants. In addition to its extensive European markets, Veetee’s products are available in the U.S. at supermarket chains such as Wegman’s, Harris Teeter and Publix.

“Veetee began in the 1980s as little more than a dream,” said Moni Varma, Chairman of Veetee Foods, Inc. “Our operations today now extend globally, and we are excited to work with Johnston County officials on our newest production facility in the Town of Selma. North Carolina offers numerous business advantages and the location at Eastfield Crossing provides the ideal site, putting our growing company in close proximity to U.S. consumers, a great workforce and supportive local leaders,” according to Varma.

Ed Aldridge, Chairman of the Johnston County Economic Development Advisory Committee, believes Veetee’s selection of Selma will bring additional diversification to the local economy and further highlight Johnston County’s global appeal. “Veetee’s new facility and the good jobs created there will be 21<sup>st</sup> century versions of our most important legacy industry: agribusiness and consumer foods,” Aldridge said. “It’s really encouraging to see foreign direct investment (FDI) moving into the sector, complementing the international dollars pouring into our bio manufacturing industry.”

In June, local and state leaders joined officials from Novo Nordisk, the Danish producer of insulin and other critical medications, in [announcing a \\$4.1 billion expansion](#) to the company’s production campus in Clayton. Not far away, Grifols Therapeutics, the Spanish maker of plasma-based pharmaceuticals, maintains a 250-acre manufacturing campus that has underwent a [\\$351.6 million expansion](#) in 2020.

Chris Johnson, Director of the Johnston County Economic Development Office, points to a recent economic impact analysis of the county’s agribusiness industry that indicates continued vibrance. “Across farming, value-added processing and distribution, our ag economy is formidable – employing nearly 13,000 and adding \$723 million to Johnston County’s annual gross domestic product (GDP),” explains Johnson, referring to a May 2024 study commissioned by the [Johnston County Cooperative Extension Office](#). The study, which determined the sector accounts for 14 percent of county employment, was



conducted by Dr. Michael Walden, William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Economics at North Carolina State University.

In addition to the broad support local agribusinesses receive from N.C. State and the Extension Service, other key partners include the University of Mount Olive, whose [School of Agriculture and Biological Sciences](#) provides reliable talent and workforce development resources to Johnston County's agribusiness industry, and Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP), which tracks and globally promotes the [agricultural technology cluster](#) found in Johnston and 13 neighboring counties in the region. "We're really blessed to have such an enviable array of assets in this industry, as well as some very supportive partners," Johnson says.

Dr. Michael Walden, in a separate analysis, projected the anticipated impact of Veetee Foods' new facility in Selma, determining the company's operations will add nearly \$233 million to Johnston County's annual GDP. Its fiscal impact will be equally significant, resulting in nearly \$1.7 million in tax revenues each year to municipal and county governments. "Those tax dollars will help fund critical public services like police, fire, first responders, roads, schools and libraries," Johnson said. "Companies like Veetee that are arriving and thriving in Johnston County make a positive impact on our communities that go well beyond immediate job creation."

The Johnston County Economic Development Office (JCEDO) facilitates value-added interaction between government, education, and the private sector in encouraging and promoting job creation and economic investment in Johnston County. A unit of county government, JCEDO collaborates with local, regional, and statewide partners and allies in providing confidential location assistance to businesses and technical support to the county's 11 municipalities. Its menu of services includes customized digital mapping, labor and wage analysis, site readiness assistance and incentive packaging. For additional information, visit [www.GrowWithJoCo.com](http://www.GrowWithJoCo.com).

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