Founded at the end of the 19th century, Canada-based Lallemand Inc. practically grew from yeast. Specialising in the development, production, and marketing of yeasts and bacteria for human and animal health, it has grown into a global network of plants, distribution centres and representative offices spread over 36 countries -- a far cry from the modest turn-of-the-century Montreal-based plant where the company began it all.

Like single-cell yeast, it has multiplied many times over, going into several fields including beer-brewing, wine-making, pharmaceuticals, biofuels and plant care. For the animal feed industry, it set up the Lallemand Animal Nutrition division in 1998.

As a major supplier of probiotics, silage inoculants and yeast derivatives for animal production, Lallemand Animal Nutrition launched its first probiotic yeasts, Levucell SC ruminant specific yeast and Levucell SB monogastric specific yeast, in 1993. Following the approval of Levucell SC in Europe, Lallemand’s BACTO-CELL® became the first probiotic for aquaculture to be authorised in the region.

Despite its many successes, Lallemand feels the livestock production industry needs to approach current challenges differently, by putting emphasis on biosafety and environmental impact, its general manager, Dr. Yannig Le Treut, tells FEED Business Worldwide (FBW).

“We need to take a more global and holistic approach where prevention is important. Vaccination, for example, and strengthening of immunity will be key,” he adds, saying more should be done beyond merely replacing antibiotics growth promoters (AGPs). “Specific microbial-based products can help enhance immunity, boost valorisation of fibres, and enhance welfare and food safety.”

As Lallemand Animal Nutrition gears itself up for a 20% leap in revenue within the next five years, Dr. Le Treut shares with FBW the company’s business strategies to address current and future animal feed industry challenges around the globe.

FBW: Tell us more about Lallemand Animal Nutrition’s probiotics range under the Levucell®, Bactocell® and Micro-Cell® brands.

Levucell® SC is a specific probiotic yeast for ruminants and equine. Levucell SB yeast and Bactocell, a lactic acid bacteria, are suitable for monogastric species such as swine, poultry and aquaculture. Micro-Cell® is a range of Direct Fed Microbial destined to the North American market.

All our probiotics are strain-specific, beneficial live yeast or bacteria that positively influence animal digestive function and health. Our objective is to select the right strain for the right application. Including these probiotics in the diet can help optimise rumen or gut function, enhance digestibility, protect against harmful microorganisms and support stronger natural defences. Each probiotic is vigorously scrutinised to ensure product efficacy and consistency.

With many probiotic products in the market, how does Lallemand make its products distinct from those of its competitors?

We differentiate ourselves by the originality of our approach and a strong understanding of not just our products, but the
production chain as well.

Things are changing and we will need to redefine production chains with solutions that should fit within these chains. Thanks to our experts, we will help partners to adopt practices that could achieve the most favourable effects from their feed.

Our business model is based on three strengths: firstly, our expertise in microbial fermentation since we are the primary producer of yeast and bacteria; secondly, our commitment to research and continuous documentation of our products; thirdly, our strong and long-lasting customer relationships; as we say at Lallemand, business is made by people and this is an important driver for our company.

We support not only our customers but also the end-user of our products with strong technical expertise, education and practical solutions.

One example is the organisation of technical exchanges — by species such as beef and dairy cattle, and swine — where we invite international experts. These events are of high acclaim among our customers.

Concerning our products, our strategy is to have one specific strain for a specific application with a specific process.

We have seen that the same strain, depending on the process of production, can exert different properties. The challenges for the process include the efficacy and stability of products as a high-yield potential does not necessarily mean optimal characteristics. This is where our fermentation expertise makes the difference.

How does Lallemand help feed-mill customers switch to your products and improve profit margins?

As part of our specific customer support, we help partners formulate their feed using our feed additives, which are known for their most cost-effective formulations. Our products are known not only for their efficacy, but also for producing higher return on investment.

For example, with our probiotic yeast for ruminants, we are working on building a database from trials examining the effect of Levucell SC, with a range of raw materials. Such specific information is valuable in formulations where our products are used.

Customer support is an essential part of our strategy, and I would say specific customer support, with upstream and downstream services. Until now, we rely on local initiatives but as we expand, the formalisation of our specific services under the Lallemand Forward umbrella will help in globalising our service offerings while maintaining certain specificities.

We offer support in all countries where we operate and have technical experts available in all regions.

In addition, new challenges, such as biosafety, immunity, fibre valorisation, valorisation of local production specificity, sustainability and animal welfare, are redefining the way we are going to produce livestock in the future.

We are adapting to these changes through our know-how in fermentation and microbial screening, and expertise in microbial ecosystems.

Innovation is part of the company’s DNA and we constantly invest in R&D. I can assure everyone that future products, which address relevant issues, are already in the works in our labs.

How has Lallemand fared in the animal nutrition business following its recent acquisitions?

The company has grown externally and internally with the acquisitions of MDL and Aquapharm as well as the recent establishment of Lallemand Biotech in Japan, and Lallemand China and India.

Our growth strategy will continue to be based on internal growth and external acquisitions whenever it is relevant for our business.

Tell us more about Lallemand Animal Nutrition’s current activities in China.

Lallemand China has started operations and, today, we have a team of seven people, supported by global experts.

The country is a difficult market to operate in but we managed to find some partners to support our business.

There is already a major focus on swine and aquaculture and we have made the first advances in these areas.

In dairy, we have an integrated offer from silage optimisation down to cow nutrition with local and international experts in our local team.

With these advantages, we will then be able to add value for our customers by sharing our expertise locally.