

Freshpet Expansion Feeds Lehigh Valley's Pet Food Manufacturing Momentum

Published Tuesday, August 25, 2026

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Lehigh Valley's leading role in feeding America's pets is expanding with construction of a first-of-its-kind operation.

Freshpet's first dedicated cold storage facility is nearing completion and is scheduled to open by the end of the year, allowing for efficient distribution of its temperature-sensitive, refrigerated pet food products.

The 216,000-square-foot building is located in Lehigh Valley Industrial Park VII in Bethlehem, with convenient access to Interstate 78.

Freshpet came to the Lehigh Valley in 2013, opening its Freshpet Kitchen production facility in Hanover Township, Northampton County. It since has expanded operations there several times.

The company makes fresh, minimally processed meals and treats for dogs and cats using simple ingredients like real meat, fruits, and vegetables with no fillers or preservatives. Recipes are steam-cooked at lower temperatures to offer a fresh alternative to traditional processed pet food.



"This new distribution center is an important step forward as we continue to grow alongside the families who count on us," said Nicki Baty, Freshpet's Chief Operating Officer. "Located just minutes from our Bethlehem Kitchen, it gives us greater control over our operations and the scalability we need to keep pace with our growth, while positioning us to support Freshpet for years to come."

Lehigh Valley is a hub of manufacturing, and pet food manufacturing stands out.

The region is among the Top 15% of manufacturing markets in the U.S., with more than 700 manufacturers producing a collective output of \$9 billion. That represents 16% of the Lehigh Valley's Gross Domestic Product. Nationally, manufacturing is 11% of GDP. Employment in manufacturing in the Lehigh Valley has grown three times as fast as the U.S. since 2010.

Food and beverage manufacturing is one of the high-value sectors targeted for growth in Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC)'s Strategic Plan.



"Freshpet's impressive growth continues right along with the renaissance of the Lehigh Valley," said Don Cunningham, President & CEO of LVEDC.

About 35% of pet food manufacturing jobs in Pennsylvania are located in the Lehigh Valley, and the region has 13 times the number of jobs as the national average. In addition to Freshpet, companies that operate in the Lehigh Valley include Spot & Tango and Nestle Purina.

Spot & Tango recently announced a \$20 million expansion to its production center in Upper Macungie Township that will double production capacity within a year or two.

Freshpet's new center is being developed through a joint venture between J.G. Petrucci Company, Inc. and BGO Cold Chain, with construction by Petrucci's in-house construction management firm, Iron Hill Construction Management.

"We are grateful for the commitment of Freshpet to continue expanding here and for the great partnership between Petrucci and Freshpet to continue to provide new and expanded facilities for growth like this new building in South Bethlehem," Cunningham said.

"Petrucci has been an exceptional partner, bringing specialist expertise and a shared commitment to quality and strong execution," said Kevin Rivest, Managing Partner, BGO. "Freshpet's lease of the entire facility underscores the growing demand for modern cold chain infrastructure in this market."

Freshpet's Commercial Office is in Bedminster, N.J. It has an additional Kitchen production location in Ennis, Texas.