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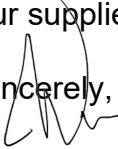
To whom it may concern:

Volkman Pet Products is a pet food manufacturer located in Ceres, CA. Our primary manufacturing emphasis is in small animal and bird, (including wild bird, pigeon, poultry, and companion bird foods). VPP blends, packages and sells various species-specific diets to pet and feed stores in the Western US and distribution partners across the country. These diets include seeds and grains sourced from various areas of the US and Canada.

Our business is heavily dependent on the railroad, with single car shipments of these seeds and grains going weekly into Modesto & Empire Traction on both the UP and BN. While service has always been undependable and inconsistent, it has become increasingly unreliable over the last year or so. On the loading end, our suppliers are seeing delays of weeks or even months in receiving empty cars. Once loaded, cars will frequently become delayed or lost; it's not uncommon for cars ordered weeks apart to show up together.

Not only does this feast or famine situation make inventory management a nightmare, but it also costs money. When our product doesn't arrive, we're forced to buy bulk truck shipments on the spot market to fill in, often costing a lot more. Furthermore, when we cannot get the product out of grain elevators during the contracted time period, we pay additional storage fees.

The lack of timeliness and service in the rail industry is directly affecting Volkman, our suppliers and our customers. I look forward to improved service in the future.

Sincerely,


Jason Tooze
General Manager
Volkman Pet Products