

MIGHTY MICROBES

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This is a story about two Lawton Plant Maintenance department employees, Misty Concannon and Robert Jette, who searched for and found "a better way". Historically the Lawton Plant had paid about \$100,000 dollars per year to have a vendor pump out the plant grease traps and haul the grease away. Misty and Robert thought there must be a better way to deal with this problem. They first had a Dallas rendering company do an analysis on the grease. Too much brine content and other impurities ended the dream of selling it for rendering.

Undaunted, they turned to the ultimate research vehicle --the Internet. There they discovered an interesting new technology involving microbes, tiny microscopic creatures that abound almost everywhere. One particular species of microbe was being used to remove grease and oil from water in purification plants.

Misty and Robert reasoned that if microbes can remove grease from water, why can't they remove it from our grease traps. The next search was for an Oklahoma company that offered this technology. They found Advanced Microbial Services, Inc. in Tulsa and arranged for them to come to Lawton and study our problem.

After a thorough study, Advanced Microbial gave Misty and Robert the good news. They were confident they could cultivate a microbiological community that could withstand the conditions and clean the traps. Two weeks later an excited microbiologist called to say a colony of microbes had been cultivated that had a hearty appetite for Bar-S grease. However, conditions were so harsh in the grease traps that the microbes would have to be continuously replenished.

A twenty-one day test showed that the microbes were doing a fine job, and Advanced Microbial joined the Bar-S Team. They visit our Lawton Plant twice a month and completely handle the entire microbe operation. Misty and Robert were persistent in their search for a solution. The end result of their efforts is as follows:

- The city of Lawton is using Bar-S as a model plant to persuade other local industries to use these helpful microbes.
- Oils and fats in our water discharge have been reduced by over one-half.
- The maintenance department no longer has to spend time on this troublesome problem.
- Bar-S is saving over \$50,000 a year.
- All of this is being accomplished by millions of "Mighty Microbes" that we can't even see.