

## Mark Remmert – Green Dot

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

Let's go to New York, where an excited consumer has just made a purchase. It is a cell phone case for an I-phone – and not just any cell phone case, but one that is made of bioplastics. Where do you suppose those bioplastics came from? Would you believe, rural Kansas? Today we'll meet a company which is specializing in the type of renewable, compostable, bio-based technology which is helping more businesses go green. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Mark Remmert is Chief Executive Officer of Green Dot, a Kansas company which created these bioplastics. Mark is well-suited to lead this company after a career in the plastics industry. After receiving a degree in geology and geophysics from the University of Wyoming, Mark's career with Dow Chemical Company took him around the world. He then retired and moved back to a ranch which his family owned near Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Mark was approached by some investors who were working on an idea for a bioplastics company. They wanted Mark to lead this new business. "I'll do it – as long as I can stay in Kansas," Mark said.

With that, the company known as Green Dot was born. It takes its name from the fact that compostable products in Europe are marked with a green dot. In 2011, the company opened its headquarters in Cottonwood Falls, not far from Mark Remmert's ranch.

Green Dot did product testing at the Kansas Polymer Research Center at Pittsburg State. The company acquired a production facility, product development laboratory, and bioplastics product line from another Kansas company. Green Dot also received support from the Kansas Bioscience Authority.

Today Green Dot produces biopellets that are used to make three types of items: Elastomers (which are essentially elastic polymers), biodegradables, and starch and wood-plastic composite products. Kevin Ireland works in corporate communications for Green Dot.

"We want to show the plastics industry that they can use this kind of biopolymers in their products, and they are often less expensive and perform better," Kevin said. The raw materials for some of these substances might be corncob materials, wood fibers, or other non-food products. "We're using products that wouldn't have been used otherwise," Kevin said.

These renewable biobased resins produce a lighter carbon footprint and reduced carbon emissions. The ultimate goal is to improve the environment and build a more sustainable world.

What are examples of finished products using the Green Dot technology? These include durable goods such as toys or pet supplies, electronics accessories such as cell phone cases, or wood-related products in furniture. "We work with manufacturers to make new products or to make their existing products more sustainable," Kevin said. Obviously, the sustainable and non-toxic nature of Green Dot's products makes them especially attractive.

One toy company named Begin Again uses Green Dot's products in their toy line, including a product called Scented Scoops which looks like ice cream cones complete with the aroma of strawberry, for example. The cornstarch base enables the products to carry the scent.

Today, Green Dot products are going all over the nation, but the company is based in Kansas. Company headquarters is in Cottonwood Falls, the lab is in Atchison, and the production plant is in the rural community of Onaga, population 697 people. Now, that's rural.

Kevin Ireland points out that Kansas is a leader in the growing biosciences industry. "Kansas is the fifth leading funder of biosciences among the states," Kevin said. "I was at a meeting in Berlin last year where we were a finalist for the international bioplastics award. Europe has a reputation for being green, but I think we do the commercialization of green products best in the U.S. We have an advantage in cost, turnaround time, and quality," Kevin said.

For more information, see [www.greendotpure.com](http://www.greendotpure.com).

It's time to leave New York, where an excited consumer has just bought a compostable, biodegradable biocase for her cell phone. We salute Mark Remmert, Kevin Ireland, and all those involved with Green Dot for making a difference by developing these sustainable materials. As the company says, their broad range of biobased and compostable plastics aren't just greener, they're better.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.