MIDDLEBY CORP
Form 10-K
March 15, 2012

UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

x Annual Report Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

For the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2011

or

¨ Transition Report Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Commission File No. 1-9973

THE MIDDLEBY CORPORATION

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware	36-3352497
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)	(IRS Employer Identification Number)

1400 Toastmaster Drive, Elgin, Illinois	60120
(Address of principal executive offices)	(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: **847-741-3300**

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common stock, par value $0.01 per share	**The NASDAQ Stock Market LLC**

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: **None**

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes x No ¨

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act. Yes ¨ No x

Note – Checking the box above will not relieve any registrant required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act from their obligations under those Sections.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes x No ¨

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Website, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes x No ¨

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of Registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K. ¨

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer or a smaller reporting company. See definition of “accelerated filer, large accelerated filer and smaller reporting company” in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer x Accelerated filer ¨ Non-accelerated filer ¨ Smaller reporting company ¨

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes ¨ No x

The aggregate market value of the voting stock held by nonaffiliates of the Registrant as of June 30, 2011 was approximately $1,695,367,810.

The number of shares outstanding of the Registrant’s class of common stock, as of February 24, 2012, was 18,655,910 shares.

Documents Incorporated by Reference

Part III of Form 10-K incorporates by reference the Registrant’s definitive proxy statement to be filed pursuant to Regulation 14A in connection with the 2011 annual meeting of stockholders.

THE MIDDLEBY CORPORATION AND SUBSIDIARIES

DECEMBER 31, 2011

FORM 10-K ANNUAL REPORT

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PART I

Item 1. Business

General

The Middleby Corporation (“Middleby” or the “company”), through its operating subsidiary Middleby Marshall Inc. (“Middleby Marshall”) and its subsidiaries, is a leader in the design, manufacture, marketing, distribution, and service of a broad line of (i) cooking and warming equipment used in all types of commercial restaurants and institutional kitchens and (ii) food preparation, cooking and packaging equipment for food processing operations.

Founded in 1888 as a manufacturer of baking ovens, Middleby Marshall Oven Company was acquired in 1983 by TMC Industries Ltd., a publicly traded company that changed its name in 1985 to The Middleby Corporation. The company has established itself as a leading provider of (i) commercial restaurant equipment and (ii) food processing equipment as a result of its acquisition of industry leading brands and through the introduction of innovative products within both of these segments.

The company's annual reports on Form 10-K, including this Form 10-K, as well as the company's quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K and amendments to such reports are available, free of charge, on the company's internet website, www.middleby.com. These reports are available as soon as reasonably practicable after they are electronically filed with or furnished to the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”).

Business Segments and Products

The company conducts its business through two principal business segments: the Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group and the Food Processing Equipment Group. See Note 9 to the Consolidated Financial Statements for further information on the company's business segments.

Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group

The Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group has a broad portfolio of cooking and warming equipment, which enable it to serve virtually any cooking or warming application within a commercial kitchen or foodservice operation. This cooking and warming equipment is used across all types of foodservice operations, including quick-service restaurants, full-service restaurants, convenience stores, retail outlets, hotels and other institutions.

This commercial foodservice equipment is marketed under a portfolio of thirty brands, including Anets®, Beech®, Blodgett®, Blodgett Combi®, Blodgett Range®, Bloomfield®, Britannia®, CTX®, Carter-Hoffmann®, CookTek®, Doyon®, Frifri®, Giga®, Holman®, Houno®, IMC®, Jade®, Lang®, Lincat®, MagiKitch'n®, Middleby Marshall®, MPC®, Nu-Vu®, PerfectFry®, Pitco Frialator®, Southbend®, Star®, Toastmaster®, TurboChef® and Wells®.

The products offered by this group include conveyor ovens, combi-ovens, convection ovens, baking ovens, proofing ovens, deck ovens, speed cooking ovens, hydrovection ovens, ranges, fryers, rethermalizers, steam cooking equipment, warming equipment, heated cabinets, charbroliers, ventless cooking systems, kitchen ventilation, induction cooking equipment, countertop cooking equipment, toasters, and beverage equipment.

Food Processing Equipment Group

The Food Processing Equipment Group offers a broad portfolio processing solutions for customers producing pre-cooked meat products, such as hot dogs, dinner sausages, poultry and lunchmeats and baked goods such as muffins, cookies and bread. Through its broad line of products, the company is able to deliver a wide array of cooking solutions to service a variety of food processing requirements demanded by its customers. The company can offer highly integrated solutions that provide a food processing operation a uniquely integrated solution providing for the highest level of food quality, product consistency, and reduced operating costs resulting from increased product yields, increased capacity and throughput and reduced labor costs though automation.

This food processing equipment is marketed under a portfolio of eight brands, including, Alkar®, Armor Inox®, Auto-Bake®, Cozzini®, Danfotech®, Drake®, MP Equipment®, and RapidPak®.

The products offered by this group include a wide array of cooking and baking solutions including, batch ovens, baking ovens, proofing ovens, conveyor ovens, continuous processing ovens, and automated thermal processing systems. The company also provides a comprehensive portfolio of complementary food preparation equipment such as grinders, slicers, emulsifiers, mixers, blenders, battering equipment, breading equipment, food presses, and forming equipment, as well as a variety of food safety, freezing and packaging equipment. This portfolio of equipment can be integrated to provide customers a highly efficient and customized solution.

Acquisition Strategy

The company has pursued a strategy to acquire and assemble a leading portfolio of brands and technologies for each of its two business segments. Over the past three years the company has completed thirteen acquisitions to add to its portfolio of brands and technologies of the Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group and its Food Processing Equipment Group. These acquisitions have added fifteen brands to the Middleby portfolio and positioned the company as a leading provider of equipment in both industries.

In January 2009, the company acquired TurboChef Technologies, Inc. ("TurboChef") for cash and shares of Middleby common stock. The total aggregate purchase price of the transaction amounted to $160.3 million including $116.3 million in cash and 1,539,668 shares of Middleby common stock valued at $44.0 million. TurboChef is a leader in speed-cook technology, one of the fastest growing segments of the commercial foodservice equipment market. TurboChef's user-friendly speed cook ovens employ proprietary combinations of heating technologies to cook a variety of food products at speeds up to 12 times faster than that of conventional heating methods.

In April 2009, the company acquired the assets of CookTek LLC ("CookTek") for $8.0 million in cash and $1.0 million in a deferred payment due the seller. CookTek is a leader in the manufacture of induction cooking and warming systems for the commercial foodservice industry. CookTek's line of induction cooking equipment utilizes magnetic waves to heat product in a highly energy efficient manner at speeds fast than conventional cooking equipment.

In April 2009, the company acquired substantially all of the assets of Anetsberger Brothers, Inc. ("Anets"), a leading manufacturer of griddles, fryers, and dough rollers for the commercial foodservice industry for $3.4 million in cash and $0.5 million in deferred payments. The acquisition of Anets allows Middleby to continue to expand its portfolio of leading brands in cooking and warming and increase its leading position in the griddle and fryer segment.

In December 2009, the company acquired all of the shares of Doyon Equipment Inc. ("Doyon"), a leading manufacturer of baking ovens for the commercial foodservice industry for approximately $6.4 million. The acquisition of Doyon enhances Middleby's position as a leader in the baking segment and better positions the company to address the growing needs of the retail and supermarket foodservice segment

In July 2010, the company acquired substantially all of the assets and operations of PerfectFry Company ("PerfectFry"), a leading manufacturer of ventless countertop frying units for a purchase price of approximately $4.9 million. This acquisition further strengthens Middleby's leadership position in ventless cooking solutions for the commercial foodservice industry.

In September 2010, the company acquired the food processing equipment business of Cozzini Inc. (“Cozzini”), a leading manufacturer of equipment solutions for the food processing industry for an aggregate purchase price of approximately $19.2 million in cash, 34,263 shares of Middleby common stock valued at $1.8 million and $2.0 million in deferred payments. The acquisition of Cozzini complements Middleby’s existing food processing equipment brands Alkar, RapidPak and MP Equipment.

In April 2011, the company acquired all of the capital stock of J.W. Beech Pty. Ltd., together with its subsidiary, Beech Ovens Pty. Ltd. (“Beech”), a leading manufacturer of stone hearth ovens for the commercial foodservice industry for a purchase price of approximately $13.0 million. The acquisition of Beech continues to expand Middleby’s portfolio of leading brands in the cooking and warming segments and reinforce its position as a leading manufacturer of commercial ovens.

In May 2011, the company acquired all of the capital stock of Lincat Group PLC (“Lincat”), a leading manufacturer of ranges, ovens, and counterline equipment for the commercial foodservice industry for a purchase price of approximately $82.1 million. The acquisition of Lincat not only expands its portfolio of leading brands but also increases its presence in European markets.

In July 2011, the company acquired all of the capital stock of Danfotech Inc. (“Danfotech”), a leading manufacturer of meat presses and defrosting equipment for the food processing industry for a purchase price of approximately $6.1 million and $1.5 million in contingent payments. The acquisition of Danfotech further complements Middleby’s existing food processing brands.

In July 2011, the company acquired the assets of Maurer-Atmos GmbH (“Maurer”), a leading manufacturer of thermal processing systems for the food processing industry based in Germany for a purchase price of approximately $3.3 million. The addition of this brand complements and further strengthens Middleby’s food processing equipment platform.

In August 2011, the company acquired all of the capital stock of Auto-Bake Pty. Ltd., (“Auto-Bake”) a leading manufacturer of automated baking systems for the food processing industry for a purchase price of approximately $22.5 million. The acquisition of Auto-Bake allows further expansion of product offerings in food processing equipment.

In December 2011, the company acquired all of the capital stock of F.R. Drake Company (“Drake”), a leading manufacturer of automated loading systems for the food processing industry for approximately $21.7 million. The acquisition of Drake further complements the Middleby’s existing food processing brands.

In December 2011, the company acquired all of the capital stock of Armor Inox, S.A. together with its subsidiaries Armor Inox Production S.a.r.l. and Armor Inox UK Ltd. (collectively “Armor Inox”), a leading manufacturer of thermal processing systems for the food processing industry for approximately $28.7 million.

The Customers and Market

Commercial Foodservice Equipment Industry

The company's end-user customers include: (i) fast food or quick-service restaurants, (ii) full-service restaurants, including casual-theme restaurants, (iii) retail outlets, such as convenience stores, supermarkets and department stores and (iv) public and private institutions, such as hotels, resorts, schools, hospitals, long-term care facilities, correctional facilities, stadiums, airports, corporate cafeterias, military facilities and government agencies. The company's domestic sales are primarily through independent dealers and distributors and are marketed by the company's sales personnel and network of independent manufacturers' representatives. Many of the dealers in the U.S. belong to buying groups that negotiate sales terms with the company. Certain large multi-national restaurant and hotel chain customers have purchasing organizations that manage product procurement for their systems. Included in these customers are several large multi-national restaurant chains, which account for a meaningful portion of the company's business, although no single customer accounts for more than 10% of net sales.

Over the past several decades, the foodservice equipment industry has enjoyed steady growth in the United States due to the development of new quick-service and casual-theme restaurant chain concepts, the expansion into nontraditional locations by quick-service restaurants and store equipment modernization. In the international markets, foodservice equipment manufacturers have been experiencing stronger growth than the U.S. market due to rapidly expanding international economies and increased opportunity for expansion by U.S. chains into developing regions.

The company believes that the worldwide commercial foodservice equipment market has sales in excess of $20 billion. The cooking and warming equipment segment of this market is estimated by management to exceed $1.5 billion in North America and $3.0 billion worldwide. The company believes that continuing growth in demand for foodservice equipment will result from the development of new restaurant concepts in the U.S. and the expansion of U.S. and foreign chains into international markets, the replacement and upgrade of existing equipment and new equipment requirements resulting from menu changes.

<u>Food Processing Equipment Industry</u>

The company's customers include a diversified base of leading food processors. Customers include several large international food processing companies, which account for a significant portion of the revenues of this business segment, although none of which is greater than 10% of net sales. A large portion of the company's revenues have been generated from producers of pre-cooked meat products such as hot dogs, dinner sausages, poultry, and lunchmeats and producers of baked goods such as muffins, cookies and bread; however, the company believes that it can leverage its expertise and product development capabilities in thermal processing to organically grow into new end markets.

Food processing has quickly become a highly competitive landscape dominated by a few large conglomerates that possess a variety of food brands. The consolidation of food processing plants associated with industry consolidation drives a need for more flexible and efficient equipment that is capable of processing large volumes in quicker cycle times. In recent years, food processors have had to conform to the demands of “big-box” retailers, including, most importantly, greater product consistency and exact package weights. Food processors are beginning to realize that their old equipment is no longer capable of efficiently producing adequate uniformity in the large product volumes required, and they are turning to equipment manufacturers that offer product consistency, innovative packaging designs and other solutions. To protect their own brands and reputations, big-box retailers are also dictating food safety standards that are often more strict than government regulations.

A number of factors, including rising raw material prices, labor and health care costs, are driving food processors to focus on ways to improve their generally thin profitability margins. In order to increase the profitability and efficiency in processing plants, food processors pay increasingly more attention to the performance of their machinery and the flexibility in the functionality of the equipment. Meat processors are continuously looking for ways to make their plants safer and reduce labor-intensive activities. Food processors have begun to recognize the value of new technology as an important vehicle to drive productivity and profitability in their plants. Due to pressure from big-box retailers, food processors are expected to continue to demand new and innovative equipment that addresses food safety, food quality, automation and flexibility.

Improving living standards in developing countries is spurring increased worldwide demand for pre-cooked and convenience food products. As industrializing countries create more jobs, consumers in these countries will have the means to buy pre-cooked food products. In industrialized regions, such as Western Europe and the U.S., consumers are demanding more pre-cooked and convenience food products, such as deli tray variety packs, frozen food products and ready-to-eat varieties of ethnic foods.

The global food processing equipment industry is highly fragmented, large and growing. The company estimates demand for food processing equipment is approximately $3.0 billion in the U.S and $20.0 billion worldwide. The company’s product offerings compete in a subsegment of the total industry, and the relevant market size for its products is estimated by management to exceed $0.5 billion in the U.S. and $1.5 billion worldwide.

Backlog

Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group

The backlog of orders for the Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group was $30.3 million at December 31, 2011, all of which is expected to be filled during 2012. The acquired Beech and Lincat businesses accounted for $1.6 million of the backlog. The Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group's backlog was $32.8 million at January 1, 2011. The backlog is not necessarily indicative of the level of business expected for the year, as there is generally a short time between order receipt and shipment for the majority of the company’s products.

Food Processing Equipment Group

The backlog of orders for the Food Processing Equipment Group was $108.7 million at December 31, 2011, of which $88.8 million is expected to be filled during 2012. The acquired Danfotech, Maurer, Auto-bake, Drake and Armor Inox businesses accounted for $68.9 million of the backlog. The company's backlog was $30.7 million at January 1, 2011.

Marketing and Distribution

Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group

Middleby's products and services are marketed in the U.S. and in over 100 countries through a combination of the company's sales and marketing personnel, together with an extensive network of independent dealers, distributors, consultants, sales representatives and agents. The company's relationships with major restaurant chains are primarily handled through an integrated effort of top-level executive and sales management at the corporate and business division levels to best serve each customer's needs.

In the United States, the company distributes its products to independent end-users primarily through a network of non-exclusive dealers nationwide, who are supported by manufacturers' marketing representatives. Sales are made direct to certain large restaurant chains that have established their own procurement and distribution organization for their franchise system. International sales are primarily made through a network of independent local country stocking and servicing distributors and dealers and, at times, directly to major chains, hotels and other large end-users.

Food Processing Equipment Group

The company maintains a direct sales force to market the Alkar, Auto-Bake, Cozzini, Danfotech, Drake, Maurer, MP Equipment and Rapidpak brands and maintains direct relationships with each of its customers. The company also involves division management in the relationships with large global accounts. In North America, the company employs regional sales managers, each with responsibility for a group of customers and a particular region. Internationally, the company maintains sales and distribution offices in Australia, Brazil, Italy, Germany and Mexico along with global sales managers supported by a network of independent sales representatives.

The company’s sale process is highly consultative due to the highly technical nature of the equipment. During a typical sales process, a salesperson makes several visits to the customer’s facility to conceptually discuss the production requirements, footprint and configuration of the proposed equipment. The company employs a technically proficient sales force, many of whom have previous technical experience with the company as well as education backgrounds in food science.

Services and Product Warranty

The company is an industry leader in equipment installation programs and after-sales support and service. The company provides a warranty on its products typically for a one year period and in certain instances greater periods. The emphasis on global service increases the likelihood of repeat business and enhances Middleby's image as a partner and provider of quality products and services.

Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group

The company's domestic service network consists of over 100 authorized service parts distributors and 3,000 independent certified technicians who have been formally trained and certified by the company through its factory training school and on-site installation training programs. Technicians work through service parts distributors, which are required to provide around-the-clock service via a toll-free paging number. The company provides substantial technical support to the technicians in the field through factory-based technical service engineers. The company has stringent parts stocking requirements for these agencies, leading to a high first-call completion rate for service and warranty repairs.

It is critical to major foodservice chains that equipment providers be capable of supporting equipment on a worldwide basis. The company's international service network covers over 100 countries with more than 1,000 service technicians trained in the installation and service of the company's products and supported by internationally-based service managers along with the factory-based technical service engineers. As with its domestic service network, the company maintains stringent parts stocking requirements for its international distributors.

Food Processing Equipment Group

The company maintains a technical service group of employees that oversees and performs installation and startup of equipment and completes warranty and repair work. This technical service group provides services for customers both domestically and internationally. Service technicians are trained regularly on new equipment to ensure the customer receives a high level of customer service. From time to time the company utilizes trained third party technicians supervised by company employees to supplement company employees on large projects.

Competition

The commercial foodservice and food processing equipment industries are highly competitive and fragmented. Within a given product line the company may compete with a variety of companies, including companies that manufacture a broad line of products and those that specialize in a particular product category. Competition is based upon many factors, including brand recognition, product features, reliability, quality, price, delivery lead times, serviceability and after-sale service. The company believes that its ability to compete depends on strong brand equity, exceptional product performance, short lead-times and timely delivery, competitive pricing and superior customer service support. In the international markets, the company competes with U.S. manufacturers and numerous global and local competitors.

The company believes that it is one of the largest multiple-line manufacturers of food production equipment in the U.S. and worldwide although some of its competitors are units of operations that are larger than the company and possess greater financial and personnel resources. Among the company's major competitors to the Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group are: Manitowoc Company, Inc.; Vulcan-Hart and Hobart Corporation, subsidiaries of Illinois Tool Works Inc.; Electrolux AB; Groen, a subsidiary of Dover Corporation; Rational AG; and the Ali Group. Major competitors to the Food Processing Equipment Group include Convenience Food Systems, FMC Technologies, Multivac, Marel, Formax, and Heat and Control.

Manufacturing and Quality Control

The company’s manufacturing operations provide for an expertise in the design and production of specific products for each of the two business segments. The company has from time to time either consolidated manufacturing facilities producing similar product or transferred production of certain products to another existing operation with a higher level of expertise or efficiency.

The Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group manufactures its products in ten domestic and eight international production facilities. These production facilities are located in Brea, California; Chicago, Illinois; Elgin, Illinois; Mundelein, Illinois; Menominee, Michigan; Bow, New Hampshire; Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina; Smithville, Tennessee; Dallas, Texas; Burlington, Vermont; Brisbane, Australia; Randers, Denmark; Scandicci, Italy; Shanghai, China; Laguna, the Philippines; Lincoln, the United Kingdom; Wrexham, the United Kingdom; and Warwickshire, the United Kingdom.

The Food Processing Equipment Group manufactures its products in four domestic and four international production facilities. These production facilities are located in Algona, Iowa; Chicago, Illinois; Waynesboro, Virginia; Lodi, Wisconsin; New South Wales, Australia; Mauron, France; Guadalupe, Mexico; and Reichenau, Germany.

Metal fabrication, finishing, sub-assembly and assembly operations are conducted at each manufacturing facility. Equipment installed at individual manufacturing facilities includes numerically controlled turret presses and machine centers, shears, press brakes, welding equipment, polishing equipment, CAD/CAM systems and product testing and quality assurance measurement devices. The company's CAD/CAM systems enable virtual electronic prototypes to be created, reviewed and refined before the first physical prototype is built.

Detailed manufacturing drawings are quickly and accurately derived from the model and passed electronically to manufacturing for programming and optimal parts nesting on various numerically controlled punching cells. The company believes that this integrated product development and manufacturing process is critical to assuring product performance, customer service and competitive pricing.

The company has established comprehensive programs to ensure the quality of products, to analyze potential product failures and to certify vendors for continuous improvement. Products manufactured by the company are tested prior to shipment to ensure compliance with company standards.

Sources of Supply

The company purchases its raw materials and component parts from a number of suppliers. The majority of the company's material purchases are standard commodity-type materials, such as stainless steel, electrical components and hardware. These materials and parts generally are available in adequate quantities from numerous suppliers. Some component parts are obtained from sole sources of supply. In such instances, management believes it can substitute other suppliers as required. The majority of fabrication is done internally through the use of automated equipment. Certain equipment and accessories are manufactured by other suppliers for sale by the company. The company believes it enjoys good relationships with its suppliers and considers the present sources of supply to be adequate for its present and anticipated future requirements.

Research and Development

The company believes its future success will depend in part on its ability to develop new products and to improve existing products. Much of the company's research and development efforts at both the Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group and the Foodprocessing Equipment Group are directed to the development and improvement of products designed to reduce cooking and processing time, increase capacity or throughput, reduce energy consumption, minimize labor costs, improve product yield and improve safety while maintaining consistency and quality of cooking production and food preparation. The company has identified these issues as key concerns for most of its customers. The company often identifies product improvement opportunities by working closely with customers on specific applications. Most research and development activities are performed by the company's technical service and engineering staff located at each manufacturing location. On occasion, the company will contract outside engineering firms to assist with the development of certain technical concepts and applications. See Note 3(o) to the Consolidated Financial Statements for further information on the company's research and development activities.

Trademarks, Patents and Licenses

The company has developed, acquired and assembled a leading portfolio of trademarks and trade names. The company believes that these tradenames and trademarks provide for a significant competitive advantage due to a long-standing recognition in the marketplace with customers, restaurant operators, distribution partners, sales and service agents, and foodservice consultants that specify foodservice equipment. The company has historically maintained a high level of marketshare of products sold with these tradenames and trademarks.

The company's leading portfolio of tradenames of its Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group include Anets®, Blodgett®, Blodgett Combi®, Blodgett Range®, Beech®, Bloomfield®, Britannia®, Carter-Hoffmann®, CookTek®, CTX®, Doyon®, FriFri®, Giga®, Holman®, Houno®, IMC®, Jade®, Lang®, Lincat®, MagiKitch'n®, Middleby Marshall®, MPC®, Nu-Vu®, PerfectFry®, Pitco Frialator®, Southbend®, Star®, Toastmaster®, Turbochef® and Wells®.

The company’s leading portfolio of tradenames of its Food Processing Equipment Group include Alkar®, Armor Inox®, Auto-Bake®, Cozzini®, Danfotech®, Drake®, MP Equipment®, and RapidPak®.

The company holds a broad portfolio of patents and licenses covering technology and applications related to various products, equipment and systems. Management believes the expiration of any one of these patents would not have a material adverse effect on the overall operations or profitability of the company.

Employees

Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group

As of December 31, 2011, 2,150 persons were employed within the Commercial Foodservice Equipment Group. Of this amount, 905 were management, administrative, sales, engineering and supervisory personnel; 1,109 were hourly production non-union workers; and 136 were hourly production union members. Included in these totals were 778 individuals employed outside of the United States, of which 432 were management, sales, administrative and engineering personnel, 272 were hourly production non-union workers and 74 were hourly production union workers, who participate in an employee cooperative. At its Elgin, Illinois facility, the company has a union contract with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters that expires on April 30, 2012. The company also has a union workforce at its manufacturing facility in the Philippines, under a contract that extends through June 2015. Management believes that the relationships between employees, unions and management are good.

Food Processing Equipment Group

As of December 31, 2011, 616 persons were employed within the Food Processing Equipment Group. Of this amount, 319 were management, administrative, sales, engineering and supervisory personnel; 185 were hourly production non-union workers; and 112 were hourly production union members. Included in these totals were 263 individuals employed outside of the United States, of which 140 were management, sales, administrative and engineering personnel, 123 were hourly production non-union workers. At its Lodi, Wisconsin facility, the company has a contract with the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Ironworkers that expires on December 31, 2014. At its Algona, Iowa facility, the company has a union contract within the United Food and Commercial Workers that expires on December 31, 2014. Management believes that the relationships between employees, unions and management are good.

Corporate

As of December 31, 2011, 18 persons were employed at the corporate office.

Seasonality

The company’s revenues historically have been stronger in the second and third quarters due to increased purchases from customers involved with the catering business and institutional customers, particularly schools, during the summer months.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

The company's business, results of operations, cash flows and financial condition are subject to various risks, including, but not limited to those set forth below. If any of the following risks actually occurs, the company's business, results of operations, cash flows and financial condition could be materially adversely affected These risk factors should be carefully considered together with the other information in this Annual Report on Form 10-K, including the risks and uncertainties described under the heading "Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements."

Economic conditions may cause a decline in business and consumer spending which could adversely affect the company's business and financial performance.

The company's operating results are impacted by the health of the North American, European, Asian and Latin American economies. The company's business and financial performance, including collection of its accounts receivable, may be adversely affected by the current and future economic conditions that caused, and may cause in the future, a decline in business and consumer spending, a reduction in the availability of credit and decreased growth by our existing customers, resulting in customers electing to delay the replacement of aging equipment. Higher energy costs, rising interest rates, financial market volatility, recession and acts of terrorism may also adversely affect the company's business and financial performance. Additionally, the company may experience difficulties in scaling its operations due to economic pressures in the U.S. and International markets.

The company's level of indebtedness could adversely affect its business, results of operations and growth strategy.

The company now has and may continue to have a significant amount of indebtedness. At December 31, 2011, the company had $317.3 million of borrowings and $10.0 million in letters of credit outstanding. As of December 31, 2011, the company could incur an additional $272.7 million of indebtedness under its credit agreement. To the extent the company requires additional capital resources; there can be no assurance that such funds will be available on favorable terms, or at all. The unavailability of funds could have a material adverse effect on the company's financial condition, results of operations and ability to expand the company's operations.

The company's level of indebtedness could adversely affect it in a number of ways, including the following:

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the company may be unable to obtain additional financing for working capital, capital expenditures, acquisitions and other general corporate purposes;

- a significant portion of the company's cash flow from operations must be dedicated to debt service, which reduces the amount of cash the company has available for other purposes;

- the company may be more vulnerable in the event of a downturn in the company's business or general economic and industry conditions;

- the company may be disadvantaged competitively by its potential inability to adjust to changing market conditions, as a result of its significant level of indebtedness; and

- the company may be restricted in its ability to make strategic acquisitions and to pursue new business opportunities.

The company's current credit agreement limits its ability to conduct business, which could negatively affect the company's ability to finance future capital needs and engage in other business activities.

The covenants in the company's existing credit agreement contain a number of significant limitations on its ability to, among other things:

- pay dividends;
- incur additional indebtedness;
- create liens on the company's assets;
- engage in new lines of business;
- make investments;
- make capital expenditures and enter into leases; and
- acquire or dispose of assets.

These restrictive covenants, among others, could negatively affect the company’s ability to finance its future capital needs, engage in other business activities or withstand a future downturn in the company’s business or the economy.

Under the company’s current credit agreement, the company is required to maintain certain specified financial ratios and meet financial tests, including certain ratios of leverage and fixed charge coverage. The company’s ability to comply with these requirements may be affected by matters beyond its control, and, as a result, there can be no assurance that the company will be able to meet these ratios and tests. A breach of any of these covenants would prevent the company from being able to draw under the company revolver and would result in a default under the company’s credit agreement. In the event of a default under the company’s current credit agreement, the lenders could terminate their commitments and declare all amounts borrowed, together with accrued interest and other fees, to be immediately due and payable. Borrowings under other debt instruments that contain cross-acceleration or cross-default provisions may also be accelerated and become due and payable at such time. The company may be unable to pay these debts in these circumstances.

The company has a significant amount of goodwill and could suffer losses due to asset impairment charges.

The company’s balance sheet includes a significant amount of goodwill, which represents approximately 42% of its total assets as of December 31, 2011. The excess of the purchase price over the fair value of assets acquired, including identifiable intangible assets, and liabilities assumed in conjunction with acquisitions is recorded as goodwill. In accordance with Accounting Standards Codification (“ASC”) 350 “Intangibles-Goodwill and Other”, the company’s long-lived assets (including goodwill and other intangibles) are reviewed for impairment annually and whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of an asset may not be recoverable. In assessing the recoverability of long-lived assets, the company considers changes in economic conditions and makes assumptions regarding estimated future cash flows and other factors. Various uncertainties, including continued adverse conditions in the capital markets or changes in general economic conditions, could impact the future operating performance at one or more of the company’s businesses, which could significantly affect the company’s valuations and could result in additional future impairments. Also, estimates of future cash flows are judgments based on the company’s experience and knowledge of operations. These estimates can be significantly impacted by many factors, including changes in global and local business and economic conditions, operating costs, inflation, competition, and consumer and demographic trends. If the company’s estimates or the underlying assumptions change in the future, the company may be required to record impairment charges. Any such charge could have a material adverse effect on the company’s reported net earnings.

Competition in the foodservice equipment industry is intense and could impact the company’s results of operations and cash flows.

The company operates in a highly competitive industry. In the company’s business, competition is based on product features and design, brand recognition, reliability, durability, technology, energy efficiency, breadth of product offerings, price, customer relationships, delivery lead times, serviceability and after-sale service. The company has a number of competitors in each product line that it offers. Many of the company’s competitors are substantially larger and enjoy substantially greater financial, marketing, technological and personnel resources. These factors may enable them to develop similar or superior products, to provide lower cost products and to carry out their business strategies more quickly and efficiently than the company can. In addition, some competitors focus on particular product lines or geographic regions or emphasize their local manufacturing presence or local market knowledge. Some competitors have different pricing structures and may be able to deliver their products at lower prices. Although the company believes that the performance and price characteristics of its products will provide competitive solutions for its customers’ needs, there can be no assurance that the company’s customers will continue to choose the company’s products over products offered by its competitors.

Further, the market for the company’s products is characterized by changing technology and evolving industry standards. The company’s ability to compete in the past has depended in part on the company’s ability to develop innovative new products and bring them to market more quickly than the company’s competitors. The company’s ability to compete successfully will depend, in large part, on its ability to enhance and improve its existing products, to continue to bring innovative products to market in a timely fashion, to adapt the company’s products to the needs and standards of its current and potential customers and to continue to improve operating efficiencies and lower manufacturing costs. Moreover, competitors may develop technologies or products that render the company’s products obsolete or less marketable. If the company’s products, markets and services are not competitive, the company’s business, financial condition and operating results will be materially harmed.

In addition, the success of the company’s business depends, in part, on its ability to maintain and expand the company’s product offerings and the company’s customer base. The company’s success also depends on its ability to offer competitive prices and services in a price sensitive business. Many of the company’s larger restaurant chain customers have multiple sources of supply for their equipment purchases and periodically approve new competitive equipment as an alternative to the company’s products for use within their restaurants. There can be no assurance that the company will be able to continue to expand its product lines or that it will be able to retain its current customers or attract new customers. The company also cannot assure you that it will not lose customers to low-cost competitors with comparable or superior products and services. If the company fails to expand its product offerings, or loses a substantial number of the company’s current customers or substantial business from current customers, or is unable to attract new customers, the company’s business, financial condition and results of operations will be adversely affected.

The company is subject to risks associated with developing products and technologies, which could delay product introductions and result in significant expenditures.

The product, program and service needs of the company’s customers change and evolve regularly, and the company invests substantial amounts in research and development efforts to pursue advancements in a wide range of technologies, products and services. Also, the company continually seeks to refine and improve upon the performance, utility and physical attributes of its existing products and to develop new products. As a result, the company’s business is subject to risks associated with new product and technological development, including unanticipated technical or other problems, meeting development, production, certification and regulatory approval schedules, execution of internal and external performance plans, availability of supplier- and internally-produced parts and materials, performance of suppliers and subcontractors, hiring and training of qualified personnel, achieving cost and production efficiencies, identification of emerging technological trends in the company’s target end-markets, validation of innovative technologies, the level of customer interest in new technologies and products, and customer acceptance of the company’s products and products that incorporate technologies that the company develops. These factors involve significant risks and uncertainties. Also, any development efforts divert resources from other potential investments in the company’s businesses, and these efforts may not lead to the development of new technologies or products on a timely basis or meet the needs of the company’s customers as fully as competitive offerings. In addition, the markets for the company’s products or products that incorporate the company’s technologies may not develop or grow as the company anticipates. The company or its suppliers and subcontractors may encounter difficulties in developing and producing these new products and services, and may not realize the degree or timing of benefits initially anticipated. Due to the design complexity of the company's products, the company may in the future experience delays in completing the development and introduction of new products. Any delays could result in increased development costs or deflect resources from other projects. The occurrence of any of these risks could cause a substantial change in the design, delay in the development, or abandonment of new technologies and products. Consequently, there can be no assurance that the company will develop new technologies superior to the company’s current technologies or successfully bring new products to market.

Additionally, there can be no assurance that new technologies or products, if developed, will meet the company’s current price or performance objectives, be developed on a timely basis, or prove to be as effective as products based on other technologies. The inability to successfully complete the development of a product, or a determination by the company, for financial, technical or other reasons, not to complete development of a product, particularly in instances in which the company has made significant expenditures, could have a material adverse effect on the company’s financial condition and operating results.

The company has depended, and will continue to depend, on key customers for a material portion of its revenues. As a result, changes in the purchasing patterns of such key customers could adversely impact the company’s operating results.

Many of the company’s key customers are large restaurant chains and major food processing companies. The demand for the company’s equipment can vary from quarter to quarter depending on the company’s customers’ internal growth plans, construction, seasonality and other factors. In addition, during an economic downturn, key customers could both open fewer facilities and defer purchases of new equipment for existing operations. Either of these conditions could have a material adverse effect on the company’s financial condition and results of operations.

Price changes in some materials and sources of supply could affect the company’s profitability.

The company uses large amounts of stainless steel, aluminized steel and other commodities in the manufacture of its products. A significant increase in the price of steel or any other commodity that the company is not able to pass on to its customers would adversely affect the company’s operating results. In addition, an unanticipated delay in delivery of raw materials and component inventories by suppliers—including a delay due to capacity constraints, labor disputes, the financial condition of suppliers, weather emergencies, or other natural disasters—may impair the ability of the company to satisfy customer demand. An interruption in or the cessation of an important supply by any third party and the company’s inability to make alternative arrangements in a timely manner, or at all, could have a material adverse effect on the company’s business, financial condition and operating results.

The company's acquisition, investment and alliance strategy involves risks. If the company is unable to effectively manage these risks, its business will be materially harmed.

To achieve the company's strategic objectives, the company has pursued and may continue to pursue strategic acquisitions and investments or invest in other companies, businesses or technologies. Acquisitions entail numerous risks, including the following:

- difficulties in the assimilation of acquired businesses or technologies;
- inability to operate acquired businesses or utilize acquired technologies profitably;
- diversion of management's attention from other business concerns;
- potential assumption of unknown material liabilities;
- failure to achieve financial or operating objectives;
- unanticipated costs relating to acquisitions or to the integration of the acquired businesses; and
- loss of customers, suppliers, or key employees

The company may not be able to successfully integrate any operations, personnel, services or products that it has acquired or may acquire in the future.

The company may seek to expand or enhance some of its operations by forming joint ventures or alliances with various strategic partners throughout the world. Entering into joint ventures and alliances also entails risks, including difficulties in developing and expanding the businesses of newly formed joint ventures, exercising influence over the activities of joint ventures in which the company does not have a controlling interest and potential conflicts with the company's joint venture or alliance partners.

An inability to identify or complete future acquisitions could adversely affect future growth.

The company has historically followed a strategy of identifying and acquiring businesses with complementary products and services. As part of its growth strategy, the company intends to pursue acquisitions that provide opportunities for profitable growth and which enable it to leverage its competitive strengths. While the company continues to evaluate potential acquisitions, it may not be able to identify and successfully negotiate suitable acquisitions, obtain financing for future acquisitions on satisfactory terms, obtain regulatory approval for certain acquisitions, or otherwise complete acquisitions in the future. An inability to identify or complete future acquisitions could limit the company's growth.

Expansion of the company's operations internationally involves special challenges that it may not be able to meet. The company's failure to meet these challenges could adversely affect its business, financial condition and operating results.

The company plans to continue to expand its operations internationally. The company faces certain risks inherent in doing business in international markets. These risks include:

- extensive regulations and oversight, tariffs and other trade barriers;
- reduced protection for intellectual property rights;
- difficulties in staffing and managing foreign operations;
- potentially adverse tax consequences;
- limitations on ownership and on repatriation of earnings;
- transportation delays and interruptions;

- political, social, and economic instability and disruptions;
- labor unrests;
- potential for nationalization of enterprises; and
- limitations on the company’s ability to enforce legal rights and remedies.

In addition, the company is and will be required to comply with the laws and regulations of foreign governmental and regulatory authorities of each country in which the company conducts business.

There can be no assurance that the company will be able to succeed in marketing its products and services in international markets. The company may also experience difficulty in managing its international operations because of, among other things, competitive conditions overseas, management of foreign exchange risk, established domestic markets, language and cultural differences and economic or political instability. Any of these factors could have a material adverse effect on the success of the company's international operations and, consequently, on the company's business, financial condition and operating results.

The company is subject to currency fluctuations and other risks from its operations outside the United States.

The company has manufacturing and distribution operations located in Asia, Europe and Latin America. The company's operations are subject to the impact of economic downturns, political instability and foreign trade restrictions, which may adversely affect the company's business, financial condition and operating results. The company anticipates that international sales will continue to account for a significant portion of consolidated net sales in the foreseeable future. Some sales and operating costs of the company's foreign operations are realized in local currencies, and an increase in the relative value of the U.S. dollar against such currencies would lead to a reduction in consolidated sales and earnings. Additionally, foreign currency exposures are not fully hedged, and there can be no assurances that the company's future results of operations will not be adversely affected by currency fluctuations. Furthermore, currency fluctuations may affect the prices paid to the company's suppliers for materials the company uses in production. As a result, operating margins may also be negatively impacted by worldwide currency fluctuations that result in higher costs for certain cross-border transactions.

The company may not be able to adequately protect its intellectual property rights, and this inability may materially harm its business.

The company relies primarily on trade secret, copyright, service mark, trademark and patent law and contractual protections to protect the company's proprietary technology and other proprietary rights. The company has filed numerous patent applications covering the company's technology. Notwithstanding the precautions the company takes to protect its intellectual property rights, it is possible that third parties may copy or otherwise obtain and use the company's proprietary technology without authorization or may otherwise infringe on the company's rights. In some cases, including a number of the company's most important products, there may be no effective legal recourse against duplication by competitors. In the future, the company may have to rely on litigation to enforce its intellectual property rights, protect its trade secrets, determine the validity and scope of the proprietary rights of others