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MARY ANN LEE ANIMAL NUTRITION KITCHEN **Saint Louis Zoo's Orthwein Animal Nutrition Center**

The Saint Louis Zoo prepares and delivers the food that our 17,900 Zoo animals eat each day.

Using precise “recipes” created in our nutrition lab, our staff weighs, thaws, slices, grinds, blends, packages and delivers the daily meals for each animal at the Zoo. Most of this work is done early in the morning, before the Zoo opens.

Special storage rooms maintain proper temperatures and humidity conditions to keep the food quality optimal. The dry storage area holds approximately 60 tons of bagged dry feeds, pellets, and canned products at full capacity. The cold storage area includes a freezer that holds more than 50 tons of fish, meat, and whole prey at one time – and that’s only about half the Zoo’s annual usage - as well as refrigeration for fruits, vegetables and proper thawing facilities.

Computerized systems maintain a record of recipes and individual animal diets formulated, reviewed and updated by the staff nutritionist. Food prep staff weighs all ingredients based on these records.

Handling protocols are developed for all foods to maximize food safety and optimal nutritional value. Meats, for example, are prepared in separate areas from fruits and vegetables.

Bulk preparation of certain diets/mixes for distribution throughout the Zoo provides consistency in quality and quantities.