





Back on the farm...

Harvey B. Hunter started Hunter Dairy back in 1917 in Charlotte, NC. Mr. Hunter needed a way to get the milk his farm produced to market, so Hunter Farms was born. When he first started out, the milk produced by the cows on the Hunter Farm was often only a few hours old when it was delivered right to a customer's doorstep.

The operation has grown from delivering the raw milk produced from a small dairy herd, to one which procures milk from 200 dairy farmers across a five-state area. It operates 24 hours a day, 5 days a week, and with over 180 employees it is now approaching \$85 million dollars in annual sales.

Hunter Farms has worked hard to continue to grow and keep pace with new ideas and technology. From the very beginning, Hunter Farms has been synonymous with quality. Hunter Farms supplies ice cream, milk, and other dairy products to Harris Teeter stores under the names of Hunter Farms, Hunter All-Natural, Hunter Homemade, Highland Crest and Harris Teeter. Hunter Farms also supplies dairy products to major corporations such as Wendy's and McDonald's.



In 1980, Harris Teeter purchased Hunter Dairy in Charlotte. In 1990, Harris Teeter acquired Borden Dairy Plant, which greatly increased dairy product production. In 2002, both were consolidated into the High Point Plant that exists today.

All in a day's work...

Hunter Farms gets milk from Producer Associations or Milk Cooperatives. 13,000 cows are milked to provide the plant with 645,000 lbs. or 75,000 gallons of milk - each day. That is approximately 50 lbs. or about 6 gallons of milk from each cow, every day, to keep consumers in milk and cookies.

Hunter Farms works 24 hours-a-day, 5 days a week to turn out 7,200 gallons of milk per hour, 100,000 gallons per day, and that means about 22 million gallons per year. That includes; skim, half percent, 1%, 2%, whole milk, buttermilk, and chocolate milk.



When it comes to ice cream, Hunter Farms produces 2.3 million gallons per year for Harris Teeter and other grocery stores. Hunter Farms produces Buttermilk for McDonalds and Frosty Mix for Wendy's that is distributed in NC, SC, GA, and FL.

And they even make orange juice - a lot of it - 1 million gallons annually. And another 1 million gallons of Freshens Smoothie and Yogurt Mix that is distributed throughout the United States via shopping centers, airports, and universities.





From the farm to your table...

On the farm a dairy cow is milked with the kneading like motions of a milking machine. When finished, a sensor automatically disengages the machine and the cow makes her way back outside into the pasture. As they wait for their next milking the cows dine on a nutrient-filled diet of natural grains and vitamins.

The cow's milk is then sent through a chiller that cools the milk to below 40 F and tests it to make sure it is free of bacteria. Big tankers, holding 6,000 gallons of milk take the milk to a processing plant like Hunter Farms.

When the milk arrives at Hunter Farms, the receiver checks the temperature and the wash ticket that verifies the last time the tanker has been cleaned. When the tanker pulls up the lab takes 2 raw milk samples for testing. One sample is tasted and then another is tested for bacteria and antibiotics. If it tests positive for either one the milk is sent back. If everything passes the tanker hooks up to a raw milk silo and pumps milk at a speed of over 170 gallons a minute. It takes about 30 minutes to unload the entire tanker and then the tanker is washed, sanitized and issued a new wash ticket.

The milk then goes from the raw milk silo to the High Temperature Short Time (HTST) unit where it is pasteurized, homogenized, and butter fat adjusted. The HTST unit heats the milk to 172 F for 16 seconds and then cools the milk to 34 F for bottling.



The next scene is a labyrinth of cartons being filled with the pure, white liquid. The first three gallons off the line are taken to the lab for final verification before they are bound for a store.

The lab then takes the first sample and verifies the proper weight, tastes the product, and double checks the packaging and expiration date. At the end of the day, the second sample of milk is tested for bacteria and then incubated for 24 hours at room temperature to be tested again the next day. The third sample is kept at 45 F and tasted for shelf life at the end of 20 days.





By any other name...

Milk today can take so many forms. Yogurt, butter, cheese, sour cream, cottage cheese, cream, crème fraiche, the list goes on and on. Condensed or evaporated milk comes from milk that has had 60% of the water removed. If unopened, it can last for up to one year at room temperature. If sugar is added, the result is sweetened condensed milk and it lasts for two years. If milk is dry or powdered, removing 95% of the moisture, it can also last for a year at room temperature.



Hunter Farms and Harris Teeter are proud to offer wholesome milk and ice cream that's made right here in North Carolina.

Plant tours can be scheduled between 9:00am and 2:00pm Monday through Friday and last about an hour. The tours are limited to classes of 25 students.

Classes will receive a brochure about Hunter Farms that includes a lesson on the history of the company. Students will watch a video that shows the cows being milked, how the milk is transported to the plant, and finally how the milk is processed and bottled. The group will be able to walk through the plant and see milk and ice cream being packaged. They can also learn how Hunter Farms makes the delicious Wendy's Frosty Mix.

At the end of their tour, kids of all ages will enjoy a bowl of fresh Hunter Farms ice cream and take home a coloring book about their adventures.

Hunter Farms is also giving each child a chance to win a year's supply of ice cream and other prizes in the "Name The Hunter Farms Mascot" contest. The selection process will take place and the winner named by May 1, 2004.

**For more information or to sign up for a tour
call Hunter Farms at 336-889-1301
Tours are by appointment only**