

Sargento Cheese: More Than a Cheese Company

“America’s Dairyland,” is the motto on Wisconsin state license plates. I was seven when my dad first took me to the race track up north. There you see the bright yellow Sargento cheese bridge stretching across the track with a very large semi-truck on top— something so eye-catching to look at as a small child. From that point forward, that was the only brand in the cheese aisle that I recognized and begged my parents to buy for me. The array of shredded and sliced cheese lining the aisle was mesmerizing.

Sargento is a third-generation, family-owned cheese company that has roots in Wisconsin dating back to 1953— the first time ever that pre-packed sliced and shredded natural cheeses were successfully sold in stores, packaged in plastic zipper pouches without any issues pertaining to quality. To this day, the company has four plants in Wisconsin— Plymouth, Kiel, Hilbert, and Elkhart Lake. They make approximately 130 items that incorporate cheese— anything from snack packs to large blocks of cheese. The company has most cheeses that you can think of, from parmesan to specialty cheeses such as Gouda. Sargento is the face of Wisconsin's cheese, and it can be purchased just about anywhere in the United States. It’s the only brand my family will buy, even when on vacation far away from home. Nothing compares to the quality of the cheese, rich with flavor and perfectly sliced, the ideal piece of cheese for a sandwich. A small family-owned cheese company has grown to become nationally known, taking over the industry.

Sargento cheese will always be found when you need it, just as the company helps its consumers. Since 1992, its employees have assisted in building thirty-two Habitat for Humanity homes in Milwaukee and most recently donated 572,173 pounds of cheese to the needy in Wisconsin just last year. This is particularly admirable because one of the largest companies in the cheese industry is giving back to its consumers, right in its own production state. Thus,

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showing that the company is not only dedicated to its cheese making and production, but also to the consumers that purchase its products.

Sargento has a long history in Wisconsin, when Leonard Gentine and Joseph Sartori became business partners and came up with the name “Sargento,” a combination of the two men's last names. Initially, the two men focused on Italian cheeses and added the letter “O” to the end of Sargento to sound more Italian. The company has since grown into a family of employees, each serving different roles that are vital to the company's success. Every package of cheese is just as good as the last, and the rich delicious flavor of the sliced cheese never gets old. There is no other cheese brand that compares to Sargento. To be known as the dairy capital of the United States and to have one of the largest cheese companies in the country right in your home state feels surreal. Why not pick another state to host four plants?

“2021 Sargento Impact Report .” *Sargento Foods*, 2021,

https://www.sargentofoods.com/assets/SGFGEN22014_Sargento_ImpactReport_FINAL_3a.pdf.

“3 Generations of Real.” *Sargento® Foods Incorporated*, 4 Aug. 2020,

<https://www.sargento.com/our-story/>.