

# Supplier Business

## BRIEFS

### High Liner Foods Opens New U.S. Headquarters

High Liner Foods Incorporated, the leading North American value-added frozen seafood company, recently announced the official opening of its newly-constructed U.S. headquarters, a 38,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility located at the Pease International Tradeport in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

The new U.S. headquarters will feature 110 full-time employees from administration, sales and marketing, research and development, and culinary. The building features advanced communications technology, a cutting-edge culinary innovation center and research and development facility, with an open workspace environment for enhanced employee collaboration. It was designed and built using sustainable building principles. The new facility offers ample space for future expansion and is located only two miles away from the company's Portsmouth manufacturing facility at 1 Highliner Avenue, bringing management and the culinary team in closer proximity to this key manufacturing site.

### Chatfield Dairy Farm Family Named 2014 Producer of the Year

Minnesota Milk Producers Association named Hinckley Holsteins, a family owned and operated farm in Chatfield, Minnesota as its Minnesota 2014 Producer of the Year. Dale and Marlys Hinckley and their sons, Matt and Adam, were selected for their commitment and dedication to the dairy industry, managing their farm for future generations and being active in their local community.

"We are honored to have been named Minnesota Producers of the Year," said Dale. "We take great pride in our farm, as we plan to keep it in our family for many generations. Marlys and I have started to step back on the daily management of the farm as Matt and Adam take the reins, but that hasn't stopped us from promoting the dairy industry that we love."

To learn more about Hinckley Holsteins, visit [www.mnmilk.org/poy](http://www.mnmilk.org/poy).

### Fannie May Fine Chocolates Bounces Back after Warehouse Fire

On Thanksgiving Day, a fire destroyed Fannie May Fine Chocolates' warehouse and distribution facility in Maple Heights, Ohio. Fortunately, no injuries were reported due to the blaze. Since the building was severely damaged, the company's peak holiday season operations were affected, as the company temporarily suspended online orders. Fannie May Fine Chocolates' state-of-the-art production facility was fortunately not affected by the fire.

As the Fannie May team activated contingency plans and worked around-the-clock producing more of the company's iconic chocolates at its state-of-the-art production facility, it was able to bounce back quickly from the tragedy. Within days of the destructive fire, the Fannie May website ([www.fanniemay.com](http://www.fanniemay.com)) was back online, and the company is already back accepting e-commerce orders. The team at Fannie May promises to continue to work diligently to make additional confections.

## Missouri Producer Brings a Taste of Middle Eastern Date Culture to the American Market

BY DAVID BERNARD

When you live abroad and cannot keep up with the demand from friends and family for the interesting food products you ferry home in suitcases each year, it might be time to start your own business. So it was with Colleen Sundlie, who had discovered date syrup while living in the United Arab Emirates with her professor husband and son. Now back in Springfield, Missouri and two and a half years into her business, Date Lady, Sundlie no longer has to seek out the obscure Middle Eastern market to locate a bottle of this nutritious and surprisingly versatile syrup.

After tasting many products and coming to appreciate Middle Eastern "date culture," where hosts typically serve coffee and dates, and bowls of the fruit are a staple at gyms, hotels and car dealerships, Sundlie put her marketing and business background to work. In addition to the date syrup, Date Lady sells a caramel sauce, a chocolate spread sweetened only by dates, packaged dates and a new date balsamic vinegar. The all-natural products are sold nationwide, including at many prominent retailers, such as Murray's Cheese, Whole Foods and Mom's Organic Markets, as well as in many smaller specialty food stores. Sundlie reports the company's sales have roughly doubled in the last year.

According to Sundlie, consumer demand for Date Lady's flagship date syrup

has exploded in recent months. "We have a lot of people that are addicted to it," she said. "We've had people asking us if they can order it by the gallon." While the company is looking into larger packaging, it recently added convenience with squeeze bottles for its date syrup and caramel sauce. These products previously came in glass jars. "People were just using it more often and asking, 'How can you make this easier for us?'" said Sundlie.

When it comes to the company's packaged date offerings, Date Lady's uniqueness extends to this product line as well. While most dates sold in the United States are Medjools or Deglet Noors, Date Lady sells organic California Barhi and Halawi dates. Sundlie likens these less common dried fruits to pieces of caramel. The company does use Medjool and Deglet Noor dates in its other products.

In addition to climbing retail sales of Date Lady's date syrup, some manufacturers have begun substituting the 100 percent fruit syrup for other sweeteners, for example in chocolate and fruit and nut bars, smoothies, ice cream and even beer. Interestingly, none of these products are date-flavored. The syrup has the sweetness of maple syrup but carries a more complex flavor, with hints of caramel, toffee and molasses. The date flavor itself is often masked when the syrup is used to sweeten other foods. However, when used alone as a syrup, for example on pancakes, notes of date

do come through.

To meet growing demand from consumers and manufacturers, Date Lady recently moved to a new Springfield headquarters and production facility, tripling its capacity. The company benefits from a relative lack of competition within the larger specialty food landscape.

While other companies sell whole dates, Date Lady's syrup, caramel sauce, chocolate spread and balsamic vinegar go virtually unmatched. Even most Middle Eastern products do not compete directly with Date Lady products. Many include added sugar, and, according to Sundlie, some products touted as "all-natural" frequently fall short of the claim.

Always looking to branch out into the gourmet market with new products, Date Lady launched its new date sugar last month and plans to debut additional products later this year. For more information, visit [www.ilovedatelady.com](http://www.ilovedatelady.com). **GN**



## Talenti Gelato & Sorbetto Acquired by Packaged Food Leader Unilever

Top-selling packaged frozen dessert brand Talenti Gelato & Sorbetto recently announced that it has been acquired by Unilever, one of the world's leading suppliers of food, home and personal care products. The acquisition gives Talenti an unprecedented opportunity to grow and expand its footprint and reach more consumers. The terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Under Unilever, Talenti will continue to craft gelato and sorbetto using old world methods – a quality that has distinguished the brand since its beginning. This commitment includes carefully sourcing the best ingredients from around the world. Talenti will continue to maintain and operate its production facility in Marietta, Georgia and

will present the same unique flavor offerings in the brand's recognizable transparent packaging.

"We are thrilled to join the Unilever family, work together to expand distribution and share Talenti love with even more ice cream consumers," said Steve Gill, Talenti's CEO.

As part of the acquisition, Talenti will have access to Unilever's extensive distribution network and supplier's resources to accelerate its growth and leadership in the premium ice cream category. Talenti is expected to complement Unilever's existing family of established ice cream brands, including Ben & Jerry's, Breyers, Fruttare, Good Humor, Klondike, Magnum and Popsicle.

Founded by Josh Hochschuler as a store-

front gelateria in Dallas, Texas in 2003, Talenti has since experienced strong growth with sales of over \$120 million in the past year. Talenti is committed to using artisanal methods. The company uses only the finest, carefully sourced ingredients, such as Belgian chocolate, fresh whole Tahitian vanilla beans from Papua New Guinea, select coconuts from the Philippines and real Argentine dulce de leche. Both Talenti's gelatos and sorbettos showcase the company's commitment to providing frozen desserts that taste amazing.

For a full list of Talenti products and to find retail locations that sell Talenti, visit [www.TalentiGelato.com](http://www.TalentiGelato.com). To keep up with Talenti news, visit Talenti on Facebook or follow the company on Twitter. **GN**