



Butterball Farms Makes MMPA Butter

Beautiful

By Mindy Pratt

Butter roses, butter pucks, butter balls and nearly any other shape that turns MMPA butter into table art are created by Butterball Farms in Grand Rapids.

Why emboss butter? "Because butter should be beautiful," says Butterball Farms President and CEO Mark Peters.

Mark's father Leo was fascinated by the intricate detail achieved by the chocolate and candy industry. An inventor at heart, Leo founded the company and spent the rest of his life working on embossing butter. Leo was very active in the company until he passed away in 1995.

"My first memories of Butterball go back to a plant visit I made early in my career," recalls MMPA Director of Manufactured Sales and Operations Clay Galarneau. "I met with the late Mr. Leo Peters and he showed me with great pride the process they used to make their butter roses. He was a very astute businessman who established an entrepreneurial mindset that continues to guide the success of their business today."

Food service customers from around the globe have come to know Butterball Farms for their unique talent of making butter beautiful and offering a consistently high quality, good tasting product. From custom embossed butter with restaurant and hotel logos, to geometric shapes and even a gecko or two, the company provides its corporate customers with a multitude of options.

Butterball Farms has been a steady and loyal MMPA customer for several decades. The company purchases salted and unsalted bulk butter produced mainly at MMPA's Constantine plant.

"Butterball Farms is our largest butter customer," Clay says. "They insist on only premium Grade AA quality butter."

Without high quality, good tasting butter from MMPA, Butterball Farms embossed butter would not receive the accolades it gets for combining beauty and taste. Chefs from around the nation (Butterball has customers in every state except Alaska) praise the product for its great flavor, convenience and beautiful look.

"We receive many compliments on the taste of our butter – MMPA gets the credit for that," says David Riemersma, Butterball Farms Executive Vice President.

Executive Chef Jan Pfeiffer at the Hilton Costa Mesa in Costa Mesa, CA, wrote on Butterball Farm's Web testimonial page: *We use Butterball Butter in our restaurant on a daily basis. I appreciate being able to provide our guests with a consistent, high quality product. Your products are great!*

The core of Butterball Farms' business is the signature embossed and shaped butter products. Competition is always out there, but, according to Mark, a lot of people have attempted to make formed butters that turned out badly. Butterball Farms is the only USDA approved manufacturer of embossed butter in the country, a certification that sets them apart from their competition.

One of Butterball Farms' oldest on-going customer relationships has been providing embossed butter for McDonald's since the fast food chain began serving breakfast in the 1970's. At the time, most butter pats were packaged in foil or wax

paper, making Leo's proposal of a sculpted piece of butter stand out. McDonald's president, Ray Kroc, chose the embossed butter because he felt it would add a touch of class to the fast-food chain's breakfast.

Today, Butterball Farms supplies all of the McDonald's in the United States – over 13,000 locations – with sculpted butter made from MMPA butter. They also provide the restaurant with sculpted margarine.

"Butterball's supply relationship with McDonalds assures me that I can find good quality MMPA butter in nearly every city in the U.S.," Clay says.

Butterball Farms butter can also be found in your grocer's dairy case three times a year. Of course, it is sculpted into eye-catching shapes to add beauty to your holiday table: a lamb for Easter, a turkey for Thanksgiving and a tree for Christmas.

The company has also attempted to mass market their signature frozen butter balls, but have scaled back on that project because it was difficult to steer customers toward the freezer section to buy butter.

Mark and David say they are still interested in making Butterball Farms butter a household name, and are looking into partnerships with other companies to create additional retail products. The company is currently working on an international deal where

they would export the embossed butter product to New Zealand.

Butterball Farms is also rolling out a new line called "Chef Selects" consisting of high quality flavored embossed butters for their corporate customers. They will introduce a raspberry butter rose this month and plan to add other flavors, like garlic, soon.



Butterball Farms' signature butter balls are known world wide for their beauty, ease of use and great taste. As Butterball Farms' butter supplier, MMPA can take all the credit for the great taste.

Enriching Lives

Invention and innovation do not stop at Butterball Farms' products, they cross over into the way the company treats its employees. The company's senior staff, guided by Mark, is instructed to follow Butterball Farms mission statement: "Enrich Lives," when interacting with both customers and employees.

The company provides tuition reimbursement, skills training and other enrichment programs for their employees, including finding them jobs with other companies. Since many positions at Butterball Farms are entry level, the company encourages its workers to improve

Continued on page 17

Erin is beginning her second year of study in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program at the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine in East Lansing. She graduated in 2004 from MSU with a bachelor's degree in Animal Science.

During her undergraduate studies, Erin assisted MSU faculty and graduate student researchers studying dairy reproduction and nutrition. She has also worked as an assistant at several veterinary offices where she helped with routine and surgical procedures.

"My undergraduate studies and research in large animal sciences have paved a course that I would like to continue throughout my career," Erin says. "I plan to pursue a career in large animal medicine and would like to specialize in dairy production and reproduction."

Erin currently works part time at Apple Grove Veterinary Care in Charlotte, where she organizes John's testing through MDA/USDA and helps prepare John's Disease Risk Assessment Plans and Testing among many other duties.

Butterball Farms

Continued from page 11

their skill set to achieve higher paying jobs even if it means leaving the company.

"Our HR department actually gets a bonus for everyone that gets promoted out of the company," Mark explains.

The company helps employees through their partnership with an organization called the SOURCE, a not-for-profit employee support organization designed to help employees keep their jobs, receive training to enhance their employment, and help employees move into better positions within or across companies.

"Everything we do here goes back to our mission statement – Enrich Lives," David says.

Learn more about Butterball Farms on the Web at www.butterballfarms.com. Learn more about the SOURCE at www.grsource.org.

What about the Turkey?

The name similarity between the butter business and the famous Butterball turkey are no coincidence. Leo Peters invented the Butterball turkey in 1954. When he sold the name "Butterball" and the patents covering the Butterball Turkey in the mid-60's, he included in the terms the right to license back the name "Butterball" for use with butter.

BUTTERBALL BUTTER
Because Butter Should Be Beautiful.

2006 MMPA District Outstanding Young Dairy Cooperators

Congratulations to the following individuals who have been selected to represent their MMPA District at the 2006 Outstanding Young Dairy Cooperator Conference in Novi on August 2-4.

District 1

Brian and Carrie Preston
Hillsdale-Litchfield Local
 Quincy, MI

District 2

John and Amanda Jackson
Kalamazoo Local
 Allegan, MI

District 4

Christina Powell
Ingham County Local
 Elsie, MI

District 5

Doeke and Melissa Prins
Alma Local
 Lakeview, MI

District 6

Tom and Dianne Cook
Mid-Michigan Local
 Pewamo, MI

District 7

Eric and Amy Bergdolt
Vassar Local
 Vassar, MI

District 8

Andy and Bobbie Zagata
West Huron Local
 Sebewaing, MI

District 10

No Nominee

District 11

John and Karin Uebbing
West Michigan Local
 Bryon Center, MI

District 12

Matt and Ginger Sterly
Upstate Local
 Petoskey, MI