

Company Background

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**Uncle Charley's Sausage Company** is a manufacturer of fresh pork sausage products, available in flavors such as Country, Sweet Italian, Hot Italian, Extra Hot Italian, Hot Italian with Peppers and Onions, Bratwurst and Fresh Kielbasa. The company also makes and sells Private Label products for other companies. Uncle Charley's sells Smoked Products that they have made with their label.

Established in 1988, Uncle Charley's Sausage Co., founded by Charles S. Armitage, President and the distinctive voice of "Uncle Charley" in the company's radio and television advertising, has grown from a garage-sized production facility in North Vandergrift with a few employees to Western Pennsylvania's premier producer of fresh sausages. Production in 1988 was about 2,000 pounds per week and has grown about 30 percent annually.

Uncle Charley's new production facility, which opened in Vandergrift's Parks Bend Industrial Park in 1999, employs 40 employees working three stuffer lines and a Flat Griller (patties) line and will increase to 60 or 65 employees this spring or early summer. The company has five trucks that it uses to distribute to supermarkets, grocery and convenience stores in Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio and Northern West Virginia. It also uses independent contract haulers and distributors to service customers in these markets.

From its inception Uncle Charley's has concentrated product quality efforts on custom blended recipes for outstanding taste as well as extraordinary service and speedy delivery to ensure the ultimate in freshness. Charley grew up working in his parent's small grocery store in nearby Apollo, PA, and over the years gained valuable experience in all aspects of the meat business, from sales and distribution to manufacturing. Today, he and some of his co-workers develop the proprietary recipes for some of Uncle Charley's products.

Charley's son, Chas, has been a large part of the company from the start and is now the Vice President and Director of Operations. Charley's wife, Frances, serves as Corporate Secretary and always has played a significant role in business decisions.

Playing key roles in the distinctive taste of Uncle Charley's sausage products are the use of natural casings, a unique blend of quality spices and the use of lower fat pork. Uncle Charley's pork, purchased from quality suppliers who meet Uncle Charley's strict specifications, are on average 80 percent lean, which exceeds USDA standards for leanness by 35 to 45 percent.

Adding to the freshness which Uncle Charley's customers have come to expect is the packaging of the products in tray packs with an over wrap and the eye-catching red, yellow and green labels that they apply. The company also executes an unusual twice-daily equipment cleanup to meet their stringent quality assurance standards. All these efforts combine to enhance taste, eye appeal and shelf life, while offering cost-savings and convenience. As each production run is palletized and cooled, Uncle Charley's trucks stand ready for early-morning delivery to customers.

Uncle Charley's brought the "griller link" to Western Pennsylvania for consumers who enjoy cooking out for picnics and summer parties. In the past few months the company created a new product called a "Flat Griller," a 4 oz. Patty that is selling very well. These items will add to the consumers' choice.

In a recent taste test conducted by an independent research firm, Uncle Charley's sausage was judged FIRST overall by consumer groups in taste and product quality attributes when compared to other local and national brands of sausage. The consumers scored Uncle Charley's number one in taste, color, freshness and low fat content.

Uncle Charley's Sausage Company, a privately held corporation located in Vandergrift, PA, is a premier manufacturer of fresh pork sausage products. The company is committed to providing customers fast, reliable service and consistently superior products.

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