



A Growing Forward 2 Success Story

Artisan cheese maker poised for growth

The Growing Forward 2 Food Safety Systems Processor Program helped this passionate entrepreneur advance his ambitious plans.

If names like *Fior di Latte*, *Nodini* and *Caciocavallo* are unfamiliar to you, Calgary cheese maker Frank Fiorini would like a few minutes of your time.

As the owner of White Gold Cheese Factory Ltd., he's on a mission to introduce Albertans – and eventually, many Canadians – to the wonders of traditional handmade Italian cheeses.

“We want to always be artisans, even as we grow,” Fiorini says. “We want to be sure our product is the highest quality available.”

Fiorini explains that quality starts with a few pure ingredients. The company's handmade fresh and aged cheeses contain only 100% Canadian pasteurized non-modified cow's milk, sea salt and vegetable rennet. In Fiorini's experience, this makes a world of difference to the taste of the cheese.

Food safety is key to quality promise

To Fiorini's way of thinking, another important ingredient in making quality cheese is following rigorous food safety practices. He notes you can make a great product, but if you don't treat it right, the quality suffers.

“When you are trying to create a quality product, you want to create a total quality environment,” Fiorini says. “When it comes to food safety, we take all aspects of this seriously. From the minute we receive the milk, to when the finished product is loaded on a refrigerated truck, everything must follow a certain pattern. The end result is a 100% quality product.”

With strong demand for his authentic Italian cheeses, Fiorini is poised for progress. His company outgrew its existing plant in northeast Calgary and moved to a larger facility in 2015 that multiplied their capacity by a factor of four.

With this expansion, Fiorini has an eye on the larger Canadian market. For this, the company is making important strides toward a food safety certification such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points).

To move towards certification, Fiorini turned to *Growing Forward 2's* Food Safety Systems Processor Program. The program helps food processors invest in new or improved food safety systems and production practices to enhance their competitiveness.



Fiorini has a rigorous system in place and regularly trains staff on mitigating food safety risks, tracks his products' shelf life and has a computer system that can follow a single product through the production chain. The company's recent progress towards certification will demonstrate to retailers outside Alberta that its cheese production processes meet the highest standards.

Toward a Canadian market presence

"For the next steps, we want White Gold to be able to attack a much bigger market," Fiorini says. "We go above and beyond what the expectations are because quality and food safety all tie together. That's how we'll get to be the best in the market."

All this will move White Gold Cheese Factory closer to its goal of sharing authentic Italian cheeses with a wider range of Canadian consumers, restaurants and retailers. To Fiorini, it's simple. Get more people to taste a superior handmade Italian cheese, and they'll be hooked.

With an expanding customer base, growing demand for his high-quality cheese products, plus a new facility on the horizon, Fiorini is looking forward to a bright future.

"I have to thank the team at *Growing Forward 2*. They've been really fantastic," he says. "They were with me step by step, and have been really amazing at helping us step it up a few notches."

For information on products from White Gold Cheese Factory, visit www.fiordilatte.ca.