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## Old World recipes, New World technologies

The owners of Lioni Latticini find success in the United States by producing the same authentic fresh mozzarella their family made in Italy for generations. New equipment and technology makes the cheesemaker more efficient.

By Sarah Kennedy, associate editor

**G**iuseppe Salzarulo, who goes by Sal, came to America in 1966 from Lioni, a small town in Italy, with no intention of making the fresh mozzarella he and his family had been producing for five generations in Italy. He joined his mother and a couple of his brothers in Brooklyn, N.Y., worked in his brother's store, and just tried to make ends meet while selling imported pasta to small stores in New York.

He saw that these stores were also selling fresh mozzarella, but not the quality he was used to. He wasted no time telling them that "I could make it better!" He started making about 100 pounds a week of fresh mozzarella in his mother's garage using the recipe and traditions his family had been using in Italy for years. He sold the cheese to the same local stores and they kept asking for more.

Around 1980 his nephew Salvatore Salzarulo also migrated to New York from Lioni after an earthquake destroyed the Salzarulo family's hometown. Before long the two Sals joined together with their years of experience to form Lioni Latticini Inc., a maker of traditional fresh mozzarella products. From there the business grew mostly on word-of-mouth. They purchased a small store in Brooklyn and started selling to local restaurants and stores. At the same time they purchased their first plant in Corning, N.Y., to start producing their own curd supply for production.

Today, the family-owned business makes and distributes fresh mozzarella to over 35 states across the United States. The company has grown by approximately 8% to 10% each year. The company still makes the majority of its own curd in the Corning plant although it also has strong curd supplier relationships. It has two main milk suppliers (sometimes three if demand calls for it) and receives about five to six trailer-loads of milk. The curd is shipped daily to its 50,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility in Union, N.J., where all of the fresh mozzarella products are produced. Approximately 30,000 to 40,000 pounds of fresh mozzarella are produced each day to satisfy Lioni's customer demand.

The company makes over 40 different fresh mozzarella products in various sizes, all made-to-order, including specialty mozzarella products. It does not keep an inventory of any product. It also makes fresh ricotta and its newest product Burrata Con Panna, a fresh mozzarella filled with a light and creamy authentic panna di latte and pasta filata. The company also sells Mozzarella di Bufala, an Italian specialty, imported from Italy and made from premium water buffalo milk. It's imported within 48 hours of its production.

Today the Lioni brand is made up of about 80% retail and foodservice, and about 20% private label (retail and foodservice). The company exhibits its products each year at the Summer

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## LIONI THRIVES ON FRESH CHEESE

The Burrata Con Panna is a fresh mozzarella filled with a light and creamy authentic panna di latte and pasta filata. Since the company introduced it in March 2012, it's seen huge success, including winning a Gold medal at last year's World Cheese Awards in England.

### Production of mozzarella steadily increases in last 10 years

Year	Production (pounds)
2012	3,672,000,000
2011	3,374,626,000
2010	3,170,841,000
2009	2,967,524,000
2008	2,722,765,000
2007	2,529,540,000
2006	2,344,445,000
2005	2,169,052,000
2004	2,016,558,000
2003	2,000,188,000

### More plants are producing mozzarella cheese in 2012

Year	Production (pounds)
2012	125
2011	124
2010	121
2009	126
2008	115
2007	119
2006	109
2005	118
2004	120
2003	117

The new machines have helped satisfy the growing demand for the retail product line. The company's overall growth led to a better in-house lab as well. For Giuseppe Salzarulo, who often tastes everything himself, making sure the product is perfect every time is important to him. The new lab helped achieve the level of perfection he was looking for.

"As we grew, we grew because of our quality of product. So as we grew, along with the new energy and going green has contributed by recycling as well as taken measures to installing light controlling that it could make a significant difference in our energy consumption. The company installed a 400.4 kilowatt solar system on the roof of its manufacturing facility. This system will produce approximately 474,000 kilowatts per year. That's enough clean energy to offset the carbon dioxide emissions from over 1,000 barrels of oil and 50,000 gallons of gasoline. The company, recycle," said integrated in, say: they just hinted that it year, but new, Burrata and steady aid. ■

From left, Salvatore and Giuseppe Salzarulo stand in the company's main manufacturing plant in Union, N.J.

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