

PA Preferred Member Spotlight: Huntsinger Farms

Located in Hegins, Pennsylvania resides ninety-seven year old Huntsinger Farms, the perfect place to be if you love potatoes! The farm was previously owned and operated by John and Fronie Huntsinger under the name “Huntsinger’s Mill.” They started farming the surrounding land that they are still using for their potato crops on the farm today. In 1921, Elvin Huntsinger, John and Fronie’s son, started Huntsinger’s Farm, Inc. Today, the farm is being run by Elvin’s daughter, Ruth Terwilliger, and his son-in-law, Alan Terwilliger, as well as his three grandsons, John, Stephen, and Neil Terwilliger.

Huntsinger Farms is committed to a quality, wholesome product for the American people. They plant, grow, harvest, store, wash, sort and pack their potatoes differently than most American potato operations by adopting technology from European agricultural practices in order to maximize the quality of their finished product. They plant their crops using a de-stoner in the spring and were the first farm in the U.S. to adopt this type of equipment from England for the production of potatoes. They also inspect their fields regularly, applying an integrated pest management approach to maintain healthy plants, using only approved Environmental Protection Agency agricultural products.

Currently, they are growing about 80 to 100 acres of red, white and gold potato varieties. When it is time to harvest the potatoes a Pearson harvester from England is utilized, which is specifically designed to harvest potatoes in de-stoned beds. Once plucked from the field from the harvester, the potatoes are then placed directly into 1,000-pound storage bins and are not touched again until it is time for washing, sorting and packing. The farm prefers to use storage bins as opposed to very large piles for storing their potatoes for several reasons: it allows them to easily isolate quality issues, lessen the effect of pressure bruising, and ensure better traceability. These bins are kept at 95% humidity and strict measures are taken to ensure that light is prevented from entering. High quality potatoes, if harvested properly, can last in these storage bins from approximately August to June.

Being listed as PA Preferred makes the Terwilliger’s quite proud. They display the logo prominently on their packaging, and desire to use their product to promote Pennsylvania’s agriculture. Looking to the future, they wish to see the farm continue steady growth and increase their storage capabilities. They are always looking for improvements to be made when it comes to the farming and production operations.

They invite anyone interested to come to visit and tour the facility if they wish. They would be delighted to show anyone their operation, answer any questions and educate further on the potato industry.