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Who Makes Food Club Products? Do you like this article? Food Club is a popular brand that produces a wide range of food products, including snacks, beverages, pantry staples, and more. Many consumers wonder who is behind the production of these items, and in this article, we will explore the company responsible for making Food Club products. The Manufacturer Food Club products are actually manufactured by Topco Associates, LLC, a cooperative owned by food retailers in the United States and around the world. Topco Associates, LLC is responsible for creating and distributing a variety of private label products, including those under the Food Club brand. Topco Associates, LLC Topco Associates, LLC was established in 1944 and is headquartered in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. The company operates as a member-owned organization and serves as a sourcing, packaging, and marketing company for its member-owners. Topco Associates, LLC works with a diverse group of grocery retailers, foodservice companies, and other businesses to provide high-quality, affordable products to consumers. Frequently Asked Questions 1. Are Food Club products made in the United States? Yes, many Food Club products are manufactured in the United States, although some items may be sourced from other countries to meet demand and provide a wider variety of products to consumers. 2. Are Food Club products high-quality? Food Club products are designed to meet high-quality standards and offer great value to consumers. Topco Associates, LLC works with top-quality manufacturers to ensure that Food Club products are of the highest standard. 3. Can I trust the safety of Food Club products? Topco Associates, LLC is committed to food safety and quality, and the company adheres to strict industry standards and regulations to ensure the safety of all Food Club products. 4. Are Food Club products environmentally friendly? Topco Associates, LLC is dedicated to sustainable practices and works to minimize the environmental impact of its products. Many Food Club items are produced using eco-friendly processes and packaging. 5. How can I find Food Club products in my area? Food Club products are available at a variety of grocery retailers, including those that are members of Topco Associates, LLC. You can find Food Club items at participating stores, and you may also be able to purchase them online. 6. What types of products does Food Club offer? Food Club provides a wide range of products, including snacks, beverages, canned goods, baking supplies, frozen foods, and more. The brand offers a diverse selection of items to meet the needs of consumers. 7. Does Food Club offer organic options? Yes, Food Club offers a selection of organic products, including organic snacks, beverages, and pantry staples. These items are designed to meet the growing demand for organic options among consumers. 8. Can I suggest a new product to Food Club? Topco Associates, LLC welcomes input from consumers and is open to suggestions for new products. You can contact the company to share your ideas for potential additions to the Food Club product line. 9. Are Food Club products affordable? Food Club products are known for their great value and competitive pricing. The brand offers affordable options for consumers without compromising on quality. 10. How does Topco Associates, LLC ensure the quality of Food Club products? Topco Associates, LLC works closely with its member-owners and suppliers to maintain strict quality control standards throughout the production and distribution of Food Club products. 11. Are Food Club products available for foodservice businesses? Yes, Food Club offers a range of products that are suitable for foodservice operations, including restaurants, catering companies, and other businesses in the industry. 12. Where can I find more information about Food Club products? For more information about Food Club products, you can visit the official Topco Associates, LLC website or inquire at your local grocery retailer. The brand's website may also provide additional details on product availability and offerings. Watch this awesome video to spice up your cooking! Your friends have asked us these questions - Check out the answers! Food Club is a well-known brand that offers a wide range of food products, from pantry staples to snacks and beverages. If you've ever wondered about the origins of this popular brand, you've come to the right place. In this blog post, we will delve into the details of who manufactures Food Club brand and provide you with some interesting insights. The Food Club brand is manufactured by Topco Associates, a cooperative organization that works with independent grocery retailers across the United States. Topco Associates was founded in 1944 and has since grown to become one of the largest cooperative buying organizations in the country. Through their network of member stores, Topco Associates is able to offer high-quality products at competitive prices, and Food Club is just one of the many brands they manufacture. So, if you've ever come across the Food Club brand while shopping at your local supermarket, you can trust that it's backed by Topco Associates' commitment to excellence. In the sections to follow, we'll explore more about the history of Food Club and answer some other relevant questions you might have. So, let's dive in and find out everything there is to know about Food Club and its manufacturer! Food Club brand has become a household name in many American kitchens. So, who exactly manufactures Food Club brand? Prepare yourself for some food for thought, as we delve into the fascinating world of Food Club manufacturing! The Mystery of Food Club's Origins You might think that there is some top-secret factory hidden away in the mountains, where a team of culinary geniuses handcrafts every Food Club item. Well, prepare to have your taste buds surprised! The truth is, Food Club is not manufactured by a single entity. The Tale of Many Manufacturers When it comes to Food Club, it's a collaboration of various manufacturers, forming a tasty tapestry of culinary craftsmanship. These manufacturers operate under the watchful eye of TopCo Associates, LLC, a cooperative representing independent grocery retailers across the United States. Quality Control: A Recipe for Success To ensure the highest quality standards, Food Club brand products go through rigorous testing and quality control procedures. This ensures that every item bearing the Food Club label meets the satisfaction of even the pickiest palates. Made in the USA Food Club brand takes pride in its American heritage, with many of its products manufactured right here in the USA. By supporting Food Club, you are not only filling your pantry with delicious goods, but also supporting local businesses and American workers. A Feast of Options Whether you're stocking up on pantry staples or filling your shopping cart with tantalizing treats, Food Club offers a wide range of products to tantalize your taste buds. From condiments to canned goods, snacks to beverages, there's a Food Club item for every culinary adventure. The Joy of Surprises While Food Club's collaboration with multiple manufacturers may not sound as exciting as a top-secret culinary lair, it does ensure that each product brings its own unique flavor and character. So, when you reach for that can of Food Club tomatoes or unroll a pack of Food Club paper towels, you know you're in for a delightful surprise. So, the next time you venture into your local grocery store and spot the beloved Food Club label, remember that it represents a union of culinary expertise, quality control, and a commitment to providing American households with tasty and trustworthy products. Cheers to the unsung heroes behind the scenes who make Food Club an everyday essential in our kitchens! Think Food Club, Think Quality Food Club: The American Pantry Staple Discover the Deliciousness of Food Club FAQ: Who manufactures Food Club brand? Welcome to our FAQ-style guide on the Food Club brand! If you've ever wondered about the manufacturers behind this popular brand, you've come to the right place. We've compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions regarding Food Club, so let's dive in and uncover the answers! Is Western Family still in business If you're wondering about the fate of Western Family, fear not! Despite the ever-changing landscape of the food industry, Western Family is still going strong. This trusted brand continues to provide quality products to consumers, ensuring that their grocery shopping experience remains top-notch. So, rest assured, you can still find your favorite Western Family goodies on the shelves. Is Hy-Vee still limiting meat purchases Ah, the great meat limit debate! As of the current year, 2023, we bring you good news: Hy-Vee has lifted its meat purchase restrictions. So, you can now stock up on your favorite cuts without worrying about any limitations. Fire up that grill and get ready to savor the mouthwatering flavors of your preferred Hy-Vee meats! Who is behind the Food Club brand Curious about the masterminds behind the Food Club brand? Well, you can thank Topco for bringing this beloved brand to your pantry shelves. Topco, short for "Topco Associates LLC," is a cooperative organization that works with a network of independent grocery stores to provide top-quality products to consumers. With their commitment to excellence, it's no wonder Food Club has become a household name! What does Topco stand for Ah, the mystery of acronyms—always keeping us on our toes! Topco, in all its glory, stands for "Topco Associates LLC." This cooperative organization joins forces with independent grocery stores to offer a wide range of high-quality products to shoppers like you. So, next time you spot that Topco logo on your Food Club items, you'll know exactly who's responsible for making your grocery list a delicious reality. How long has Food Club been around Picture this: you're reaching for your favorite Food Club product, and you can't help but wonder how long this brand has been satisfying taste buds. Well, prepare for a tasty trip down memory lane because Food Club has been serving up goodness since 1945! That's right, they've been delighting generations of consumers for over seven decades. Talk about withstanding the test of time! Is Hy-Vee a national brand Calling all Hy-Vee enthusiasts! If you've ever wondered about the reach of this beloved brand, we've got the scoop for you. While Hy-Vee has certainly earned a loyal following, it is primarily a regional delight. With roots in the Midwest United States, you'll find Hy-Vee stores sprinkled across states like Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and more. So, if you ever find yourself in the heartland, be sure to stop by and indulge in some Hy-Vee goodness! And there you have it, folks! We've answered some of the most burning questions about the Food Club brand and its remarkable manufacturers. From the continued presence of Western Family to the cooperative efforts of Topco, this FAQ-style guide has given you the inside scoop. So, next time you reach for that Food Club product, you'll have a newfound appreciation for the people behind the scenes. Happy grocery shopping! Quaker Foods and Beverage is owned by PepsiCo, an American multinational food, snack, and beverage corporation. PepsiCo acquired Quaker Oats Company, which includes Quaker Foods and Beverage, in 2001. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation. No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Wholesaler and cooperative Associated Food Stores has dropped the Western Family brand from Tigard, Ore.-based Western Family Foods and is replacing it with the Food Club brand from Topco Associates LLC, a cooperative based in Elk Grove Village, Ill. The Salt Lake City-based wholesaler is transitioning to the brand as its national-brand-equivalent private label for the independent grocers it serves, with plans to bring a variety of current and new staples under the brands to the more than 400 independent grocery stores it serves across the Intermountain west. Food Club offers such center store products as canned fruits and vegetables, baking goods such as sugar and flour, condiments, cereal, crackers and other snacks, and frozen foods. Along with the new Food Club items, Associated Food Stores is debuting Topco brands Buckley Farms in the meat category and Culinary Tours for specialty foods under its private label program. "We are excited to bring Food Club to our shoppers. We know they will love it as much as they have loved Western Family," said Boyd Irving, director of exclusive brands for Associated Food Stores. "We believe in Food Club so much that we're offering a double-money-back guarantee if any guest is unsatisfied with the product." Food Club comprises 1,600-plus products, all of which come in clean-label packaging with key information callouts on the front. Associated Food Stores was founded on the idea of local grocers banding together to help improve individual businesses and we continue with that philosophy today by sourcing local products when possible.1850 West 2100 South Salt Lake City, UT 84119 (801) 973-4400 info@afstores.comCopyright © 2024. All Rights Reserved. Topco was formed at Chicago hotel 80 years ago, and is now based in suburban Itasca, Ill. PG: The pandemic, close to five years ago now, has lingering effects, doesn't it?DO: Of necessity, people made different purchases and choices. It put a resurgence on own brands and the importance of members' own brands, without compromising quality or value. Shoppers realize that they have an alternative, and given the challenges today, that they don't have to make sacrifices to their families.RS: This is a generalization, but if you look at the teams at independent stores, they tend to be there for a long time and they have personal relationships with customers. There is a big trust factor there. Because they are smaller, the decisions that are made are a lot closer to their stores. PG: As you get ready for your anniversary celebration, how is longevity a part of Topco's own business?RS: Our longest-term employee has been here 52 years. Of the 500 associates, we have that 52-year associate, we have 12 who have been here more than 30 years and almost 10% of our group has been here for more than 20 years. People have historically spent a long time at Topco from a career perspective.The mission of Topco and the impact it has on helping independents and communities and consumers is really impactful for our associates, too, who are working on a good cause. PG: How far has your influence spread in the eight decades that you've served grocers and their customers?DO: We are nearing 70 million consumers who shop at our members' stores.RS: We have 46 member-owners, and they don't do the same thing the same way. That's what makes them successful, and our job is to support member-owners and where they are at. Some things have changed from an innovation perspective. There was a time when the membership was looking to Topco to source things and get them a better value. They still do that, but now they are very much looking to us for innovation and category management, too. I would say Topco has transformed, particularly in the last five or six years, to being much more of a full-service operation. For example, we have a robust category insights team that looks at consumer trends.DO: Our members use Topco brands to supplement their brands, and we have shifted how we work in the brand space. How we bring brands to market is by using shopper data and insights. As the decisions have moved in the shopper space, it's not just about quality and value, but more around values, and our insights team has become even more relevant, because those values are guiding far more decisions.Title: Who Owns Food Club Brand? Do you like this article? Introduction Food Club is a popular brand that offers a wide range of food products, including canned goods, snacks, beverages, and pantry staples. Many consumers enjoy the quality and affordability of Food Club products, but have you ever wondered who owns this brand? History of Food Club Food Club has been around for several decades and has established itself as a trusted name in the food industry. The brand is known for offering a variety of high-quality products that cater to the needs of consumers. But when it comes to ownership, there are some interesting details to uncover. The Ownership of Food Club The ownership of Food Club brand is somewhat of a mystery to many consumers. Unlike other well-known food brands that are owned by major corporations, Food Club is actually a private label brand. This means that the products are produced and distributed by a third-party company, rather than being owned by a specific corporation. Who Owns Food Club? Since Food Club is a private label brand, it is not owned by a single entity. Instead, the brand is owned by a network of independent retailers and wholesalers who have come together to create and distribute the Food Club products. This unique ownership structure allows for greater flexibility and control over the quality and variety of products offered under the Food Club brand. Is Food Club a Trustworthy Brand? Despite not being owned by a major corporation, Food Club has built a solid reputation for offering high-quality products that meet the needs of consumers. The brand is known for its commitment to quality, affordability, and customer satisfaction. With a wide range of products that are consistently reliable and affordable, Food Club continues to be a trusted choice for many consumers. Benefits of Choosing Food Club When you choose Food Club products, you are not only getting high-quality items at an affordable price, you are also supporting a network of independent retailers and wholesalers. This means that your purchase directly benefits local businesses and helps to support the economy. Additionally, the diverse range of products offered by Food Club ensures that you can find everything you need for your pantry, kitchen, and beyond. Why Choose Food Club? If you are looking for a brand that offers excellent value, quality, and variety, Food Club is an excellent choice. With a wide selection of products that are perfect for everyday use, you can trust that Food Club has your kitchen needs covered. Plus, by choosing Food Club, you are supporting independent retailers and wholesalers who are dedicated to offering the best to their customers. Food Club FAQs 1. What types of products does Food Club offer? Food Club offers a wide range of products, including canned goods, snacks, beverages, pantry staples, and more. The brand is known for its quality and affordability across a diverse range of food items. 2. Are Food Club products readily available in stores? Yes, Food Club products are readily available in stores across the country. The brand has a strong presence in many grocery stores and supermarkets, making it easy for consumers to access their products. 3. Can I trust the quality of Food Club products? Absolutely. Food Club is dedicated to offering high-quality products that meet the needs of consumers. The brand has established itself as a trustworthy choice for a variety of food items. 4. Are Food Club products affordable? Yes, one of the key benefits of choosing Food Club products is their affordability. The brand offers excellent value across its entire range of products. 5. Who can benefit from using Food Club products? Anyone who is looking for quality, affordability, and variety in their food products can benefit from choosing Food Club. The brand caters to the needs of a wide range of consumers. 6. Do Food Club products support local businesses? Yes, by choosing Food Club products, you are supporting independent retailers and wholesalers who are dedicated to offering high-quality products to their customers. 7. Where can I find more information about Food Club products? You can find more information about Food Club products on their official website, as well as through various retailers and wholesalers who carry their products. 8. How long has Food Club been in business? Food Club has been in business for several decades and has established itself as a trusted name in the food industry. 9. What sets Food Club apart from other food brands? One of the key factors that sets Food Club apart is its unique ownership structure, which allows for greater flexibility and control over the quality and variety of products offered. 10. Is Food Club committed to customer satisfaction? Absolutely. Food Club is committed to ensuring that their customers are satisfied with the quality and variety of products offered. Customer satisfaction is a top priority for the brand. 11. Can I find Food Club products online? Yes, many retailers and wholesalers offer Food Club products for purchase online, providing consumers with convenient access to their diverse range of items. 12. Are Food Club products suitable for everyday use? Yes, Food Club products are designed to meet the needs of consumers for everyday use, providing high-quality and affordable options for a variety of food items. Watch this awesome video to spice up your cooking! Your friends have asked us these questions - Check out the answers! 7711 Gross Point RoadSkokie, Illinois 60077U.S.A. Company Perspectives: Topco will leverage the volume, knowledge, and commitment of its members to be the least costly and most effective provider of specific quality goods and services for the exclusive benefit of its member-owners. Topco will be an excellent service, sales, marketing, and information resource. History of Topco Associates LLC Topco Associates LLC is a leading procurer and distributor of private label grocery products to retail, wholesale, and foodservice accounts. The firm also offers national brand buying, equipment purchasing, and other services. Topco is a cooperative that is owned by more than 50 member companies, including Associated Grocers, Inc., Meijer, Schnuck Markets, Fresh Brands, Big Y Foods, and Giant Eagle. The company distributes more than 7,000 products such as canned and frozen foods, produce, flowers, paper goods, pet food, and health and beauty care items. In addition to providing in-store brands exclusive to some members, Topco distributes a dozen lines of private label products under such names as Top Crest, Food Club, Full Circle, World Classics, Dining In, Shurfresh and Shurfine. The latter two were added in 2001 when Topco Associates, Inc. and Shurfine International merged to form the present organization. Topco's members are located around the United States well as in Canada, Israel, and Japan. Beginnings The roots of Topco date to World War II, when a group of Wisconsin grocers founded a small buying cooperative to help them procure dairy products and paper goods, which were scarce due to wartime shortages. The company, called Food Cooperatives, Inc. began operations on September 29, 1944. After the war it also began distributing a line of grocery products for members under the Food Club label, and in December 1950 the organization merged with another co-op called Top Frost Foods, with which it shared some members. The combined firms took the name Topco, using part of each company's name. Members at this time included Alpha Beta, Fred Meyer, Hinky Dinky, Penn Fruit Company, Big Bear Stores, Brockton Public Market, Furr's, and Star Markets. Topco's offerings now included products manufactured for it by outside firms under the Food Club, Top Frost, and budget Elna brand names, which were sold in members' stores as so-called "private label" goods. The products in these lines, which included canned and frozen foods and other basic items, sold for less than their nationally advertised counterparts. In addition to giving consumers a price break, they also provided grocers with exclusive products that had higher profit margins. During the 1950s, Topco added new categories such as fresh produce, which it began distributing in 1958. In 1960, general merchandise, store equipment, and some health and beauty care products were introduced as well. By this time, the firm had a total of 27 members, each of whom paid one percent of the cost of their private label goods back to the cooperative to cover its operating expenses. Membership was open to retailers with a minimum of \$10 million in annual sales, and each member was required to pay \$5,000 for common stock and buy an amount of preferred stock that was based on a percentage of annual sales. The advantages to members included lower prices on private label products due to group buying, as well as higher quality achieved through the cooperative's quality assurance program. Topco now had a staff of 70 deployed at its headquarters as well as in several growing regions to oversee purchasing and quality control. The organization was selling about \$60 million worth of products annually. During the 1960s, Topco's offices were moved to new quarters in the Chicago suburb of Skokie, Illinois, and a number of other retailers joined the cooperative, including Tom Thumb, King Soopers, Giant Eagle, and McCarty-Holman. By the middle of the decade, the firm was distributing more than 1,000 food and non-food items to stores in 33 states. Supreme Court Rules against Topco In 1972 In 1968, the U.S. Justice Department filed suit against the company for its practice of giving members exclusive rights to sell the firm's brands in specific territories. Though a lower court found in the company's favor, the case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled against Topco in 1972. Afterwards, the organization began to place a greater emphasis on developing its members' individual private labels. The 1970s saw the introduction of unbranded, starkly-packaged, "generic" low-cost products across the United States, and Topco responded with a new line called Valu Time. This was the first nationally marketed generic brand to include such items as cigarettes and paper products. Its success helped Topco's sales exceed \$1 billion in 1979. In the 1980s, the firm's membership ranks grew with such new additions as Riser Foods, Randall's, Pueblo International, Smith's Food & Drug Centers, and Schnuck Markets. In 1988, Topco added a new line called World Classics, which featured nearly 100 higher-priced, "gourmet" products that were promoted in the style of national brands and offered retailers higher profit margins. Included were such items as white asparagus, raspberry vinegar, and cappuccino wafers. That year also saw a new line of health and beauty care items debut under the name Top Care. One hundred different products were offered, and the brand rapidly became a strong seller for the company. In 1989, Topco named Robert Seelert president and CEO to replace Marcel Lussier, who had run the organization for a decade. Seelert had previously headed General Foods' Worldwide Coffee and International Foods unit. In 1990, the company introduced GreenMark, an environmentally friendly "green" product line. The 20 items initially offered included paper towels and napkins made from recycled paper, biodegradable compost bags, and coffee filters made from unbleached paper. GreenMark caught on quickly with consumers, and other items were soon added. Daymon Associates Named Broker in 1991 In March 1991, Topco named New York-based Daymon Associates to handle private label merchandising at member stores. Daymon was to deploy 150 staffers at retail locations around the United States to assist in positioning and displaying items, doing in-store advertising, and handling coupon giveaways and product demonstrations. Daymon would also provide input about packaging, quality, and other issues. Though the arrangement had already been successfully tested at Giant Foods, and Topco's board had unanimously voted in favor of the move, there was some controversy about the decision among vendors. A short time after the Daymon agreement was reached, CEO Seelert resigned to take a new position, though he denied leaving over the Daymon issue. He was replaced in November by Lyman "John" Beggs, former president of Norelco Consumer Products Company. The U.S. economy was now in a recession, and the economic downturn served to boost sales of less expensive, private-label goods. Their share of overall supermarket sales increased from 16.4 percent in 1987 to 17.5 percent in 1991. For the latter year, Topco's gross sales hit \$2.9 billion, a 21 percent increase over 1990. The organization had grown to 36 members. In 1992, Topco reintroduced its stagnant World Classics line with new packaging and a greater promotional push. It was revised to focus on twelve popular categories, including pasta, carbonated drinks, and cookies. In September, the company named its third CEO in as many years, Steven Rubow. He had been with Topco since 1987, most recently serving as executive vice-president. Topco's membership was now growing and reached a total of 45 by 1994. Member firms had some 3,000 stores around the country, which accounted for 14 percent of supermarket sales in the United States. New companies included the Pennsylvania-based, 30-store Insalaco Markets, the 19-unit Kings Super Markets chain of New Jersey, and Carr Gottstein Foods of Alaska, which had 23 stores and supplied a number of other independent grocers. In 1995, Topco became an international supplier with the membership of Canada's Oshawa Group and the Japanese SEIYU. Companies in Israel and Puerto Rico would later join as well. The company's annual sales now approached \$3.9 billion. In 1990, Topco added a new service for its members in association with Illinois Energy Partners. Illinova would perform utility accounting services to help cut costs and consumption, as well as check for billing errors, contest rate changes, and supply some Topco members with natural gas. That same year also saw Topco redesign its Top Care and Top Crest packaging to help boost sales. Logos were repositioned, the product guarantee was given a more prominent position, and label colors were refined to better mimic those of national brands. Among the firm's best sellers at this time were internal analgesics and cold and cough remedies, as well as batteries and camera film. Private label goods now accounted for 20.1 percent of total sales in supermarkets. The mid-1990s saw the grocery industry experience a wave of consolidation, which caused membership in Topco to decline as member firms were bought up by larger companies. The loss of such chains as Dominic's Finer Foods of Northlake, Illinois, and Burtrey Food & Drug Stores Company of Great Falls, Montana, left the firm with 30 members by early 1999. Some were joining, however, including the 115-store Piggy Wiggly Carolina, which switched its private label health and beauty care line to Top Crest. Despite such gains, membership would later bottom out at 25. In 2000, Topco began marketing a line of organic foods known as Full Circle, which included frozen vegetables, soy milk, and cereal. The firm also boosted its gourmet food offerings, adding Deli meats and cheeses and fancy chocolate bars. Another new product line, dubbed Skillet Dinners, featured meals that could be heated quickly at home. Merger with Shurfine in 2001 In September 2001, the company announced it would merge with Illinois-based Shurfine International, a private label manufacturing and distribution cooperative which primarily served Chronology Key Dates: 1944: Food Cooperatives, Inc. is founded. 1950: Food Cooperatives merges with Top Frost Foods to create Topco. 1958: Topco begins marketing fresh produce. 1960: General merchandise, store supplies, and health and beauty products are added. 1972: The U.S. Supreme Court bars Topco from granting exclusive sales territories. 1979: Revenues top \$1 billion with help from new Valu Time generics. 1980: World Classics premium foods and Top Care health and beauty aids are introduced. 1990: GreenMark "environmentally friendly" products debut. 1991: Daymon Associates is hired as a food broker to boost private-label sales. 1995: Canadian and Japanese retailers join Topco. 2000: Full Circle organics are introduced. 2001: A merger with Shurfine International creates Topco Associates, LLC, wholesale and foodservice accounts. Shurfine, which had been founded in 1948, moved its operations to Skokie, and the expanded company became known as Topco Associates, LLC. The members of Topco would own 85.7 percent and those of Shurfine 14.3 percent. Topco president and CEO Steven Lauer, who had headed the firm since 1999, retained the top posts. Shurfine's experience in wholesaling and foodservice, and Topco's recent efforts to move into the latter category, were expected to help stimulate growth for the firm. After the agreement was finalized, Topco would have 54 members. It was restructured into Retail, Foodservice, and Wholesale divisions, with Shurfine CEO John Stanhaus given charge of the latter. The three units were set up to allow "cross-channel" procurement of products and services. Topco was now distributing 7,000 different products. To obtain goods for its members, the company utilized a staff of 150 buyers who negotiated prices and sought cost savings from suppliers. A group of 20 quality assurance experts tested 130,000 samples annually to insure that they met or exceeded the quality of similar national brands. Topco also negotiated with 30 major vendors to earn discounts for its members on nationally-advertised products. In 2003, Topco expanded the Full Circle natural and organic line with new rice, bean, popcorn, cookie and soy milk products, bringing its offerings to more than 125 items in 24 categories. The company also began using online auctions to speed the procurement process for canned foods and other goods. A new line of 50 prepared food products, dubbed Dining In, was introduced as well. It included microwavable entrees like beef pot roast and Cajun-seasoned chicken breasts, as well as other meat, seafood, and pasta dishes. Topco teamed up with Sweet Baby Ray's Gourmet Sauces and Certified Angus Beef for the project, which had taken a year to develop. The year 2003 also saw the company gain a new member, Stater Bros., which operated 157 grocery stores. After nearly 60 years, Topco had grown into one of the leading procurers and distributors of private-label goods in the United States. The addition of Shurfine International had given it an entrance into the wholesale market, as well as a greater presence in foodservice sales. It continued to produce a wide range of items that gave consumers a lower-cost alternative to national brands. Additional Details Cooperative Incorporated: 1944 as Food Cooperatives, Inc. Employees: 284 Sales: \$3.5 billion (2001 est.) NAIC: 422410 General Line Grocery Wholesaler Further Reference Andreoli, Tom. "The Thriving Private (Label) Side of the Food Business," Crain's Chicago Business, May 4, 1992, p. 4. Coia, Anthony, "Topco Cuts Costs With E-Auctions," Supermarket News, April 21, 2003, p. 78. 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