

Kemin and Fareway Partner with Family-Owned Food Company Enabling Growth in the Local Market and Beyond

Local tortilla company partnered with Kemin and Fareway to enhance product with research and development, ingredient improvement and local manufacturing

DES MOINES, Iowa, U.S. (May 1, 2019) – Kemin Industries, a global ingredient manufacturer focused on improving the quality of life for more than half the world's population, and Fareway Stores, a growing Midwest grocery company currently operating 124 store locations in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota, have been working with locally owned and operated Tortilleria Sonora on product development to assist the small business in getting back on grocery store shelves.

Betty Garcia, the co-owner of Tortilleria Sonora, a tortilla manufacturing company, had previously worked with Kemin and its Food Technologies business unit. Through its Des Moines area stores, Fareway had fostered a relationship with Tortilleria Sonora many years ago. In the summer of 2010, the Sonora brand was placed in the Fareway warehouse for distribution to all stores, and in 2015, Fareway and Tortilleria Sonora worked together to launch a line of private-label Fareway tortillas.

When a Fareway buyer reached out to Tortilleria Sonora last February about a possible issue with tortillas hardening, Garcia knew she had a problem that needed to be fixed. Tortilleria Sonora worked with Kemin to improve the freshness, quality and formula of its tortillas.

"I knew that Kemin's positive reputation and its local presence in Des Moines would be a big benefit in helping me resolve my ingredient issues quickly," said Garcia. "Their formulation team are experienced experts, and while doing all the necessary trials and tests, they were able to improve my products and quickly get them back on the shelves within a year. Now, I use all local products from Kemin and no longer ship from places like California, which is a huge benefit as a small-business owner."

Currently, Tortilleria Sonora produces wheat and flour tortillas and flavored wraps. It sells products to a variety of grocery stores, including local Hispanic grocery stores in the Des Moines area, and provides private-label tortillas for Fareway's five-state region. The company was started in the mid-1990s by Garcia's parents, Oswaldo and Esther Barcelo. Garcia and her parents are the co-owners of the family business.

"When Betty told us she was losing business as her tortillas were drying, breaking and tearing on rolling, which are critical performance requirements for any burrito-style tortilla, we started by looking into her formula and process. By using our technical expertise in process and ingredient functionality, we were able to find the problem in her product," said Anita Srivastava, Senior Product Development Manager – Bakery, Kemin Food Technologies – Americas.

"We provided her tortilla formula with desired tortilla characteristics – improved softness, flexibility, stretch ability and the sustainability to be on store shelves for 30 days. Even with the challenge of procuring ingredients and producing formula in a short period of time, the Kemin teams in operations, procurement and R&D all worked together to correct the issue and provide her product in less than a month."

After the ingredient assistance from Kemin, the new product was launched in Fareway stores in April, with four flour varieties, including taco, fajita, burrito and whole wheat, as well as a corn tortilla.

"Fareway is proud to partner with local suppliers to provide customers with fresh, high-quality and locally sourced products," said Clint Jenkins, Fareway Director of Wholesale Purchasing. "Working with Tortilleria Sonora is just another example of how we support other Iowa-based businesses."

"This is how we pay our bills, feed our family – this business is our livelihood. Without the willingness of Kemin to help me and my business, we would've had to close our doors. Fareway has been a longtime partner and was willing to work with me until my product was ready to be back on the shelves," said Garcia. "I am so grateful to Kemin and Fareway for being the type of companies that go above and beyond to help a business like mine. When local companies work together, it is so much more meaningful and makes a huge impact in the lives of many."

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About Kemin Industries

Kemin Industries (www.kemin.com) is a global ingredient manufacturer with a focus on improving the quality of life for more than 3.8 billion people every day with over 500 specialty ingredients made for the human and

animal health, aquaculture, pet food, nutraceutical, food technology, crop technologies and textile industries.


For over half a century, Kemin has been dedicated to using applied science to address industry challenges and offer product solutions to customers in more than 120 countries. Kemin provides ingredients to feed a growing population with its commitment to the quality, safety and efficacy of food, feed and health-related products.

Established in 1961, Kemin is a privately held, family-owned-and-operated company with more than 2,800 global employees and operations in 90 countries, including manufacturing facilities in Belgium, Brazil, China, India, Italy, Russia, San Marino, Singapore, South Africa and the United States.

About Fareway Stores

Fareway Stores, Inc. is a growing Midwest grocery company currently operating 124 store locations in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Fareway holds family values in the highest regard, demonstrating integrity, fairness, and honesty in relationships with customers, employees, vendors, and suppliers. Visit [Fareway.com](https://fareway.com) for more information.

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