

## A Heritage of Sharing Delight



Anna Olsen  
Senior Director of  
Research & Development  
Ferrara Candy

**Ferrara**  
CANDY COMPANY

*It all started in 1908, when an Italian immigrant brought the joy of his homeland's traditional candy to Chicago and began testing new techniques*

For more than 115 years, Ferrara has created sugar confections that push innovation boundaries. It all started in 1908, when an Italian immigrant brought the joy of his homeland's traditional candy to Chicago and began testing new techniques. Today, the privately held company that creates more than 30 recognizable brands is the nation's top-selling sugar confections company, employing more than 8,200 people throughout the world, across 17 facilities and offices in the US, Mexico, and Thailand. Ferrara's headquarters remains in Chicago, continuing the city and state's legacy as America's "candy capital".

### BRANDS YOU KNOW AND LOVE

From iconic products that bring back childhood memories to today's innovations that are bestsellers – NERDS®, Trolli®, SweeTARTS®, Lemonheads®, Laffy Taffy® Black Forest® and BRACH'S® -- Ferrara's sugar confections push innovation boundaries while also sparking nostalgia.

In 2023, Ferrara acquired another classic candy company, California-based Jelly Belly Candy Company (founded in Illinois in 1869) as well as Dori Alimentos, one of Brazil's leading manufacturers and distributors of sweets and snacking products. Both brands support Ferrara's international growth as they springboard from Illinois roots to share products with international consumers, carrying the message that our state is a global food innovation hub.

### GETTING NERDY

A 2020 innovation, NERDS® Gummy Clusters™ – a multi-sensorial and poppable combination of a gummy center surrounded by crunchy tart Original NERDS® candy – has rocketed to the top of the US candy market, propelling NERDS® from \$40 million in annual sales to more than half a billion dollars in annual retail sales in just six years. Today, Ferrara sells NERDS Gummy Clusters in the U.S., Canada, and the UK.



### CONTINUED INNOVATION

"Our singular focus on sugar confections allows us to focus our investments – be it in consumer insights or specified technologies – to meet consumer's desires, imagining what's possible as we dream big in sugar," said Anna Olsen, Ferrara's Senior Director of Research & Development.

In 2023, Ferrara extended their commitment to creating the future of sugar confections by building a state-of-the-art Innovation Center in Ferrara's downtown Chicago headquarters. Designed to create and test new candy concepts, the center is home to their deep bench of food scientists, researchers and technicians crafting and testing new, delectable creations. This commitment is exemplary of Ferrara's spot at the forefront of the city and state's position as a global leader in food innovation.

Ferrara also is passionate about engaging with the next generation of home-grown talent, investing in the future of the industry in Illinois by actively recruiting from leading universities such as University of Illinois-Chicago, Northwestern, DePaul, Loyola, Northern Illinois University and University of Chicago. The com-



pany also engages with Chicago-area teens and young adults through STEM nonprofit Lumity.

Always present in Ferrara's forward-looking perspective is the importance of food safety and quality. Through a robust and validated food safety management system, Ferrara completes approximately 33,000 quality checks every week.

"People outside of the industry often comment on how fun it must be to work in candy and food innovation," said Olsen. "They are right! In addition to our role in making the world sweeter, our team truly considers it a privilege to work in Illinois, amongst the world's most iconic food companies."

