



Rural Grocery Case Study:

Big "G" Foods



Store owner:
Brian Graft



Location:
Marengo, Iowa

This case study series showcases rural grocery stores across Iowa, highlighting four small-town groceries, their histories, and what it takes to run a small grocery store in rural America. The Center for Rural Affairs provides one-on-one counseling to store owners in southwest Iowa and advocates for rural food issues across the state. Visit cfra.org/rural-grocery for more information.

Big "G" Foods

Family-owned Big "G" Foods has been serving the Marengo, Iowa, area for 47 years. As an independent grocery store, they have the ability to create a shopping experience that meets the specific needs of their community. Customer demand determines which products are stocked and in what quantities, making a strong case for grocers to feature local products.

“ There is a reciprocal relationship between the store and the community. The town and area support us, so we do our best to support local schools and organizations with donations and fundraising opportunities.

–Brian Graft



Local sourcing

Rural grocers rely on relationships between customers and farmers to keep rural economies strong. Due to small profit margins, most grocers source their products from wholesalers, who offer items in bulk to keep costs down. Big "G" Foods is no different; however, they are also able to stock a certain amount of locally produced items such as milk, ice cream, beer, bourbon, and beef sticks.

“ There's definitely opportunity for more local sourcing. We have some small local vendors that have small displays or products here and there, but we would welcome more if our customer base is interested.

–Brian Graft



Keeping grocery stores in rural communities

Like many local businesses, customer consistency is essential for preserving their shopper base and upholding store stability. Additionally, the Graft family has regularly reinvested in the store to sustain a modern and clean feel through continued maintenance and updated signs and technology. Together, these strengths contribute to overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

“ We work to prioritize consumers at our store to ensure a positive shopping experience. The welcoming atmosphere encourages customers to return and shop for their grocery needs.

–Brian Graft



Top priorities

Serving their community and supplying consumers with necessities as well as fulfilling customer requests has been and continues to be a focus of Big “G” Foods.

“ Marengo is a great town with great people, and has a can-do spirit when it comes to projects to improve the quality of life for its residents.

–Brian Graft

