

# HICKMAN'S

## FAMILY FARMS

Dear *From Farm to Football* students and MVP Teachers,

Thank you for participating in this *eggciting* program! We all appreciate the *connegtion*! You are trying to give your students to the farm and their food! Please accept my apologies for some “*eggcentric*” spelling, as we appreciate your attention to properly spelling words!

My name is Sharman Hickman and I am a proud THIRD GENERATION Arizona egg farmer. What does that mean? My family has been farming for a long time! Over 74 years ago, Guy and Nell Hickman – my grandparents, had chickens in their back yard. This is something most people had back then. Their 25-50 chickens began laying too many eggs for their own family to eat. My Dad, Bill Hickman, noticed that his mom would often trade eggs to the neighbors for item they needed. Or, she would give them to neighbors with large families that needed more food.



My grandparents decided to move their family west to work on the dam construction, so farmers would get water to their crops and the houses that were being built would have water in California and Arizona. They landed in Glendale, Arizona. My Dad grew up and married my mom, Gertie. My mom began to help my grandma with the backyard flock. By the late 1960s, Gertie and Nell has sold so many eggs that my Dad and Grandpa had to quit their day jobs and work full time on the farm. They didn't have all the technology and machines that we do now, which you will see later, but they did have a growing demand for eggs.

My mom and dad worked hard and the farm and also had five kids – Matt, Glenn, Billy, Clint and me-Sharman. We all started working on the farm as soon as we could walk. We would walk the rows to gather eggs. Imagine, before you started kindergarten that you had to walk the length of a football field x 5 rows x 7 chicken barns. We did a lot of walking!

Can you imagine going to school where all the teachers were related, or your parents worked with you aunts and uncles? Today, 4 of us kids work on the farm and 3 of our kids work on the farm along with our 1,000-member team at Hickmans!

Location, Location, Location – Three Farms in Arizona! Today, Hickman’s has two farms in Arlington, Arizona and one in Tonopah. Our Arlington Farms also have the Hickman’s Feed Mill. We all know how important nutrition is, so we make our own feed, and a nutritionist tells us how to formulate feed ration. Precision nutrition just like an Olympian or professional athlete! Our nutritionist does not allow any coffee or soda. They laying hens all drink purified water from sterile nipple systems. The hens will never get French fries, Taki Sticks, or potato chips either. We need our hens to have strong bones and stay healthy.



The Arlington Farms



The Feed Mill

We purchase day old chicks, take care of them until they are 20 weeks, or older teenagers, then they move to their adult home and begin laying eggs.

“T-egg-nology” – Robotic integration, sound measurements, and lightning fast cameras have increase our efficiency in our egg processing plants. Nature’s production curve for our breed, white leghorns, is one egg laid every 26-32+ hours.

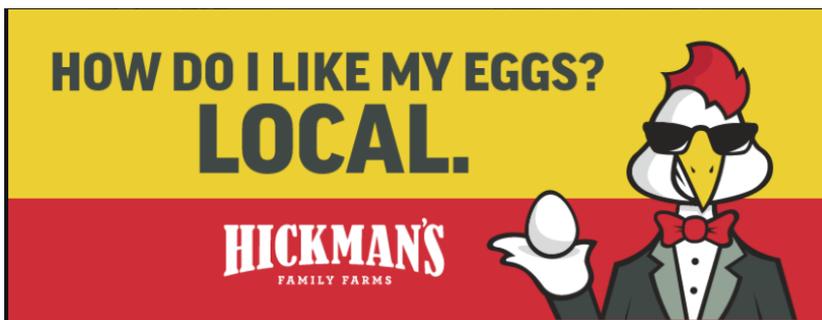


We even have machines to separate the cartons for packing!

Did you watch the video I sent you on our farm? If you did, you will see how thousands of miles of gentle conveyors transport our eggs, so people no longer must gather, lift, load, and load again! We embrace technology to make our daily tasks efficient and easier. In fact, the robots and machines are more gentle than human hands. Thanks to the help of technology, our eggs are never touched by human hands from the time they are laid by the chicken to the time they end up in your grocery store.

As the eggs exit the laying houses on large conveyors, they enter the processing plant. All of the eggs are washed and then sanitized., so when you see them in the grocery store, they are shiny and white with no cracks. A laying hen can lay five sizes of eggs (Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, and Small), depending on her age. As she ages, she lays size Large. Large is the most popular size of egg in the grocery store and is used in most recipes and restaurants.

How do we get our eggs from the farm to the store? On our Hickman's Family Farm semi-trucks of course!



Many of you might say you don't eat a traditional breakfast of eggs before school or weekend activities; however, when you see our further processing plant, you will see how eggs get broken and pasteurized to become part of a delicious treat like ice cream, cookies, pasta, cake, and even french toast sticks! Yes, eggs are used to make other items, which add protein, essential vitamins and minerals, and enhance flavors. Please let me know me know how you like your eggs! Do you remember how Budda Baker likes his eggs?

Wondering how we raise our hens? Not since the mid-1960s have the hens been out of their cages. Since consumers prefer hens not to be kept in cages, our entire 10 million laying hens are being let out of their cages. My nephew, Brett Hickman, is the fourth generation of the Hickman Family to make sure that as we are transitioning to cage-free in our existing houses, and building new ones, that the hens receive the same high quality of care, nutrition, purified water, and safety, and that all the eggs get to the conveyor for processing so you eat them.

Farmers have to be good stewards of their resources. The processing plants and the hen houses are all designed to make sure we do not waste anything. Since we have more than 10 million hens, they provide fertilizer for farmers, playgrounds, golf courses, and orchards. In fact, from the avocados grown in San Diego to the World's Largest Pecan Orchard here in Arizona, farmers use our chicken fertilizer are reusing natural, non-chemical fertilizer.

We are learning new things every year, just like students going to class. You know we are a little afraid of what the future hold, but we are arming ourselves with knowledge to remove the fear. Just like when you go to the next grade each year, you might be afraid, but when you study and get the facts, it makes the change more fun and you are glad you did it!

Although we can't have you visit the farm due to our biosecurity measures (we want to keep our birds safe), you can follow along with our Family and our Farm by following us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We are always giving away free gifts to the consumer who connect with us on these social media channels. Have your class jump on and post a question or share a chicken story, you might just get a prize!

I am excited to read all your questions about our farm and our birds!

Sincerely,

**Sharman**

Sharman Hickman

