

In 2011, when sushi was growing rapidly in popularity in the US and beyond, Richard Cronk and son, Kyle Cronk, began their quest to achieve a finished sushi rice that could be frozen and return, upon slacking, to a fresh taste and texture.

Ricewrap Foods is currently leading the way in solving the challenge of consistent and sustainable sushi rice preparation. Rice is a key ingredient for the Japanese dish and true Japanese-trained sushi chefs spend up to five years learning the intricacies of making the rice. The Father-Son duo knew this would be no easy feat, but they remained optimistic and began experimenting with different processes and ingredients. Remaining diligent on solving this problem, the Cronks and their team made steady progress on this lofty goal.

By 2016, Ricewrap Foods had outgrown its first factory in Henderson, North Carolina, so the Cronks moved the family business to Raleigh. It was here that they finally perfected and accomplished the goal they set out to meet five years prior – to produce frozen, preformed sushi rice shapes, that the end user could thaw in minutes, while retaining a consistent flavor and texture.

As the company began to gain momentum, earning recognition for their innovative approach to food service – creating a complete sushi program for an easy, “In-House Sushi Station” – the Cronks knew they would need to find a larger factory, and hire more employees to keep pace with their rapid growth. In 2018, with the help of a strategic investment, they developed a plan to build a 90,000 square foot factory in Butner; offering easy access to I-85 for quick and efficient distribution. A company of this magnitude, projected to offer hundreds of jobs to those in and around Granville County, gained immediate support from the community.

Production officially began at the Butner facility in May 2019 and by December, Ricewrap Foods had gained national re-distribution through Dot Foods. For a manufacturing start-up company in the food service industry, this accomplishment helped to propel their already remarkable success.

In October 2021, another Cronk family member joined the Ricewrap team. Chris Cronk, son and brother to Richard and Kyle, teamed up as the company’s Chief Marketing Officer, responsible for the management of customer relationships, sales, and marketing initiatives. Building strong relationships with their customers has always been of utmost importance, but, equally as important, the Cronks have sought to ensure their employees felt the same warm welcome when they enter the factory doors. Even during times of rapid growth, they stayed true to their core values and beliefs; continuing to offer their employees flexible, family-oriented employment schedules and promoting a positive work-life balance.

Fast forward to today, you can find Ricewrap Foods’ products across the country: serving catering companies, hospital cafeterias, restaurant chains, and everything in-between. Offering a variety of rice shapes – cups, pillows, and sheets – and sourcing its pre-portioned protein products, this product line is the ultimate “one-stop shop” for any skill level.

