

The Story of Soda

“What would you like to drink with your meal?” It seems like a simple question, but have you ever really thought about where your drink comes from? It isn’t like there is a soda tree somewhere growing soda fruits that someone can squeeze the soda juice out of. So how do they make the fizzy, sweet drink that is added to so many fast food meals? The story of soda might surprise you.



Corn in My Soda?



The story of soda starts out in an unexpected place: the corn field! The United States produces more corn than any other crop, and most of it is grown in Iowa and Illinois. Many other states in the Midwest also grow large fields of corn. This corn is grown in huge fields. Corn farmers use chemicals that can lead to water pollution from fertilizers and pesticides. But what does this have

to do with soda? One of the most main products of corn is high fructose corn syrup. It is the second ingredient, after water.

Corn Syrup—Yum?

To make high fructose corn syrup, the corn is harvested by large machines called combines and trucked to factories. In the factory, the corn is ground up and starches are separated out. Starches are then mixed with chemicals called enzymes that break them down into sugars called glucose. This glucose is regular corn



syrup. The corn syrup is treated with two more kinds of enzymes that change some of glucose into fructose, a sugar that tastes even sweeter. This mixture of glucose and fructose is called high fructose corn syrup.

The high fructose corn syrup is packaged and trucked to soda plants across the country. Then it is mixed with water that has been filtered and purified. Other chemicals are also added for flavoring and as a preservative. The ingredients are measured very carefully by machines, and then the liquid is made fizzy by adding carbon dioxide. The soda must be poured into bottles or cans and sealed quickly. The bottles or cans may be packaged in boxes before being trucked to stores and restaurants for people to enjoy.

Soda Fountain

But what if someone wants soda out of a soda machine? The high fructose corn syrup, flavors and other chemicals are mixed together at the soda factory. The flavored syrup is packaged and trucked to the restaurants. Soda machines in the restaurant carbonate the water and add the syrup right before it flows all the way from the corn fields into a paper cup.

