

One of the main ingredients in carbonated soft drinks is **high fructose corn syrup (HFCS)**. What are the steps between the corn growing in the field and the can of soda on the grocery store shelf? Let's trace back a can of soda to find out where the corn might have come from...



Cub Foods, a grocery store in Madison, WI gets its Coca Cola products from a local distributor in Madison.

The distributor in turn picks up the bottled and canned soda from the Coca Cola Bottling Company of Wisconsin, located in Milwaukee, WI and transports the drinks to the Madison store by truck.

The Cedar Rapids plant refines corn grain into oil, animal feeds, and sweeteners, including high fructose corn syrup. They ship the sweeteners in bulk tanks by truck and rail. Depending on demand and transportation costs, they sell to any part of the continental US. The Milwaukee bottling plant is relatively close, so their sweetener arrives by bulk tank truck.

The Bottling Company combines water, CO₂, flavorings, and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) to make the drink and packages it in bottles and cans. They obtain the high fructose corn syrup from Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), a major grain handling and processing company. ADM is headquartered in Decatur, IL, but the HFCS used in the Milwaukee bottling plant comes from their wet milling plant in Cedar Rapids, IA, one of the biggest corn milling plants in the world.

The plant in Cedar Rapids obtains most of its corn from Iowa grain elevators. They buy from both co-ops and privately owned elevators, including elevators owned by ADM or company subsidiaries. Corn arrives by truck or rail, depending on the elevator. For example, some of the corn in the Cedar Rapids ADM plant might come from the Mid-Iowa Cooperative, located in Beaman, IA.

Country elevators in Iowa buy the grain directly from farmers, who truck their harvest to the elevator, where it is weighed, stored, and then transported to buyers by rail or truck and/or processed and sold on-site (mostly for feed).