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Canada's food & beverage processing magazine

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(DESPERATELY)

## WANTED

The labour crisis in the meat-processing sector

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IN CANADA  
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## RESEARCH CHEFS IN CANADA

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The latest trends in the world of ice cream and frozen treats

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## Follow the Leader

Where Walmart goes, others follow. That's why when the retail giant announced last month that it was asking its U.S. suppliers to begin cutting back and reporting on the use of antibiotics in food animals, the food world listened.

Walmart is urging its suppliers of meat, dairy, seafood and eggs to voluntarily decrease the amount of antibiotics they use in their animals for non-health reasons, such as to promote growth or feed efficiency. The move is prompted in part, says Walmart, by rising consumer concern about the treatment of food animals, and goes along with a call to the industry to follow the internationally recognized "Five Freedoms" of animal welfare. In the case of antibiotics, the concern is the rising risk of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in humans, as contributed through the food chain.

The risk of antimicrobial resistance is real and well documented. It is a global issue, and it means that we are losing the ability to treat new and potentially more harmful infections. In Canada monitoring and reporting on AMR is now the responsibility of the Canadian Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (CARSS), an organization established by the Public Health Agency of Canada to "strengthen the co-ordination and integration of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial use activities and information in Canada." CARSS' first report

came out this March, and the results are not encouraging.

While the report shows that since 2006 the total amount of antimicrobials sold for animal use has stayed the same, that number is 42 times higher than the nation with the lowest use, Norway. In fact, out of 27 countries Canada ranked 21st in terms of antibiotics sold for animal use. In 2013 roughly 1.6 million kg of antimicrobial active ingredients for veterinarian use were sold in Canada. Of that number, says CARSS, just 0.6 per cent were for companion animal use, while 99.4 per cent were for food-production animals. Most worrying is the fact that 68 per cent of those drugs were in the same classes as those used in human medicine.

As a next step CARSS recommends educational campaigns and stewardship programs that will encourage the industry to voluntarily decrease the use of antimicrobials provided unnecessarily. While Walmart's request is also voluntary, its reach will likely affect other retailers, and by extension producers, both in the U.S. and Canada. ●

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## Clusters drive business

A business cluster connects businesses, government and colleges and universities in a particular field. Many exist across Canada and many of them are in food. In April the Food & Consumer Products of Canada (FCPC), with support from public and private sector partners, launched the GTA Food and Beverage Cluster. The cluster aims to make the food industry, one of the Greater Toronto Area's significant economic drivers, even stronger. As Carmela Serebryany-Harris, president of Upper Crust and a cluster co-chair, said in a statement: "Access to helpful information and new connections are powerful tools to help businesses grow."



# News > file



## Chocolate maker is sun and pedal powered

Walking down the street in Toronto you might find yourself window browsing. Don't be surprised if you come across a store where employees are pedalling stationary bicycles. It's the home of ChocoSol.

Michael Sacco, founder of ChocoSol Traders (2004 Oaxaca,



Southern Mexico) truly believes that chocolate is the food of the gods (cacao means "god's food" in Mayan). He says that it is medicinal, nutritional, energizes your mind and makes you joyous.

Bicycle labour is only the start. Chocosol sun roasts cocoa beans using a Fuego Solar reflector, which dries around 260 kg of beans yearly. Blenders and other machines run on bicycle power, while deliveries are made by foot and pedal power. The end product is vegan friendly, dairy free and allergy safe. There are no gluten, soy, nuts, preservatives or additives in a ChocoSol product. Wrappings are compost-friendly and recycled; locals are encouraged to bring their own

container when they buy chocolate. In fact, you have to be local to get their chocolate.

ChocoSol also offers non-chocolate corn products using regional farm goods.

In addition, the company hosts many informational sessions, and workshops teaching people chocolate making while imparting information about sustainable resources and environmental practices. They've hosted topics such as Slavery Free Chocolate Workshops where participants get hands-on experience

making a product called Jaguar chocolate and more information about ethically sound purchasing.

Recently, the company started a community urban agriculture project called Chocosoil. This will provide research and education to the public about compost and "generating" soil using organic waste materials.

"At ChocoSol, the ecological and ethical values remain at the forefront of our business and we have evolved into a learning community and social enterprise that focuses on making cacao into fresh, whole food, at an artisanal scale," says Vivien Wong, Hospitality and Accounts manager at ChocoSol. "We specialize in stone-ground eating chocolate, Mexican drinking chocolate (xocolatl) and maize. Drop by a workshop and learn what we're up to!"

— Yvonne Dick

## Commercial kitchen opens in downtown Winnipeg

Sheila Bennett's newly opened Kitchen Sync in downtown Winnipeg is this city's first privately operated commercial space for budding food processing entrepreneurs to try out and produce small quantities of new products.

"I did a lot of research," says Bennett, who had been in wine sales for 14 years and was looking for a career change. ➔



Lynda Budd is a modern-day alchemist. As a certified tea sommelier and the founder of Toronto-based teALCHEMY, she not only creates different teas, she's reinvented the art of the tea experience. Her research has taken her to exclusive teahouses around the world where she learned first-hand the fine art of tea from different cultures and traditions. The teas are found in restaurants and online.

So it's only fitting that she has just published a book called *Tea-Tails: Party till the Wee Hours of the Afternoon*. The book is a full-colour mixology book of tea-inspired cocktails. There are 27 tea-inspired recipes that can help "bring tea into the every day in every way."





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“There is a void in commercial kitchen space in the city. There are a couple of smaller [than her space] not-for-profit operations working out of churches. But that’s all.”

Kitchen Sync is housed in the basement of a 110-year-old heritage building.

The 4,000-sq.-ft. space is equipped with all the latest kitchen equipment, including two fryers, two flat-top grills, two convection ovens, two large commercial fridges, a dishwasher, a walk-in cooler and three prepping stations. “There is



Bennett

enough room here for my clients to store their equipment so that they don’t have to haul it back and forth,” Bennett notes. “This building also has an elevator and we have three handicap-accessible washrooms here.”

In preparation for going into business, Bennett took a six-week self-employment course at the YMCA-YWCA where she learned how to write a business plan and set up a business. It took her four months to get her occupancy permit. “Because Kitchen Sync is a one of a kind business, it took a while to get my liquor license and zoning variance,” she explains, praising her landlord for how beautifully he modernized the space. “I have one of the nicest kitchens in town,” she says.

Bennett says that thus far, she has had some bakers and caterers express interest in using Kitchen Sync’s services. “I have one woman signed on who is developing a new kind of cookie,” she says. Bennett is charging an hourly rate for use of the kitchen based on the time of day and how many hours are involved. The more hours, she says, the cheaper the rate. “What you would spend renting space at the Manitoba Food Development Centre in Portage La Prairie in a day would be equivalent to a month’s rental at the Kitchen Sync,” she notes.

In addition to renting out the premises, Bennett also intends to help clients promote their products on her website and integrate clients’ products for private and corporate dinners, kitchen parties, and cooking classes for which she will also be offering Kitchen Sync’s space.

— Myron Love

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A WORLD OF COMFORT



## Canadian Meat Council conference

The Canadian Meat Council's (CMC) 95th Annual Conference was held from May 6 to 8, 2015 in Ottawa. As Mark Taylor, an Ottawa deputy mayor, described it in his opening remarks, the city should feel like home — a second home that is — to all Canadians. It was the perfect backdrop for a conference that drew attendees from every category in the meat sector and from almost every province.

The conference's theme was "Step up to the Plate — Time to Play Ball for the Canadian Meat Industry." The speakers not only highlighted the merits of the industry — it employs close to 70,000 Canadians across 1,081 meat processing establishments and had total

annual revenue of more than \$24 billion in 2010 — it also highlighted how to make it better. The Water Brothers, for instance, talked about environmental challenges and how water is connected to every climate change issue. The brothers, Alex and Tyler Mifflin, said how we grow and produce our food can become more efficient, and treating and reusing wastewater and changing how livestock are fed can also help to reduce water usage.

Speakers also highlighted various issues. In his keynote address, Andrew Coyne, a *National Post* writer and CBC "At Issue" panellist, touched on supply management, which he called "an abomination," and the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. Rona Ambrose, Canada's minister of Health, touched on food safety and the Canadian Antimi-

crobial Resistance Surveillance System (CARSS). The CARSS' first report came out in March. On the issue of antimicrobials distributed for animal use, Canada ranked 21 out of 27 countries based on levels of antimicrobial sales. Canada's usage rate came in at 42 times higher than in Norway (the country with the lowest use and which ranked number one). Ambrose called antimicrobial resistance "a shared responsibility" and added that "Canadians want and deserve to have confidence that their food is safe."

The issue of food fads and superfoods was also covered. Joe Schwarcz, director at Montreal's McGill University's Office for Science & Society, told the audience that no food should be revered or reviled. And while food activists such as the Food Babe and →

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health advocates such as Dr. Oz have raised food issues, they've also brought forth a lot of misinformation.

Beyond the sessions, the CMC held committee meetings and networking events such as the Meat & Greet Product Tasting Reception on May 6. The organization also announced the winners of the 2015 Ronald A. Chisholm Undergraduate Scholarships. The winners were:

- **Le (Carol) Chang**, a fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Alberta, majoring in Food Science and Technology. Chang has been offered a position with the Maple Leaf Foods Leadership Track Program.
- **Alison Sullivan**, a fourth year student in Honours Agriculture at the University of Guelph. Sullivan will be starting an M.Sc. in Animal Breeding in the fall of 2015 focusing on quantitative genetics in swine.

The Graduate Scholarships winners were:

- **Cheyenne Conrad**, a Masters student at the University of Lethbridge under Dr. James Thomas' supervision. Her project



is "Monitoring Pathogenic Escherichia coli in Alberta Beef Cattle." (CMC Associate Members Graduate Scholarship).

- **Philip Soladoye**, a PhD student at the University of Saskatchewan under Dr. Phyllis Shand and Dr. Manuel Juarez's supervision. His project is "Exploring bacon quality and safety along its production value chain." (Percy Gitelman Memorial Scholarship).

The CMC also announced its new board of directors. The board includes Joe Reda, who is the new president and chairman; Henry Mizrahi is now past president; Troy Warren is the new first vice-president — treasurer; and Wesley Batista is second vice-president — secretary.

## WTO sides with Canada and Mexico

Not for the first time or the second or third, but for the fourth time the World Trade Organization (WTO) has ruled against the U.S. on its Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) rule.

In May, the WTO handed down its final and fourth ruling, which reaffirms Canada's position that COOL is discriminatory against Canadian cattle and hogs.

"The U.S. has now lost four times at the WTO and has no other appeal options," says Rick Bergmann, chair of the Canadian Pork Council. "It is time that the negative impact of COOL on Canada's exported livestock is recognized by Congress and that they fix the legislation."

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) says in response to this latest ruling, and in accordance with international trade rules, that Canada will seek WTO authorization to retaliate against U.S. exports.

"The WTO has been clear — the U.S. administration must end its discriminatory COOL policy that is causing hurt to beef and pork industries on both sides of the border," says Gerry Ritz, Canada's minister of Agriculture. "Our government is now seeking authority from the WTO to impose retaliatory measures against U.S. exports. We will continue to defend the interests of our cattle and hog sectors while protecting all hardworking Canadians through this process."



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**IN BRIEF**



> Toronto-based **Hollywood Foods**, a manufacturer of fortified and functional foods, has changed its corporate name to **Gabriella's Kitchen** in honour of its late co-founder. The company also just launched a new pasta called Skinnypasta Superfood — a pasta made with teff, a naturally gluten-free superfood. The product will be hitting store shelves this fall.

> Nanaimo, B.C.-based **Paradise Island Foods** received \$47,337 through the province to help it launch and promote a new line of lactose-free cheese.



> The **k'awat'si Economic Development General Partner Corporation (KEDC)**, a company founded to grow opportunities for the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations (GNN), is leading the construction of a new cold storage facility for fish and seafood to serve the North Island in B.C. The k'awat'si Construction Company will build the 2.2-million lb capacity facility, which is set to begin operating this summer, in Port Hardy. The new facility will meet the North Island's growing demand for cold storage, which is currently 10 million lbs short. It will also serve as a processing facility, with the potential to add specialty processing or services onsite.

> **B.C. agrifoods** exports grew 11 per cent in 2014, reaching the highest total ever at just short of \$3 billion. The top three export markets for B.C. agriculture and seafood products in 2014 were the U.S., China and Japan.

> The **government of Ontario** is opening a new international-marketing office in Chongqing, China to help Ontario companies develop strategic partnerships and find investment opportunities in southwest China.

**SUPPLIER NEWS**



> The **Allergen Control Group**, owners of the Gluten-Free Certification Program (GFCP), has formed a strategic business alliance with Mississauga, Ont.-based **Food Technology Consulting International Inc.** to globally deliver GFCP training services.

> **3M Food Safety** was recognized at the 2015 Edison Awards for its 3M Petrifilm Rapid Yeast & Mold Count Plate. The technology earned a bronze Edison Award in the Research & Education category. This is the fourth year in a row 3M Food

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Safety has received an Edison Award for its technologies.

> U.S.-based **Big Ass Solutions** has opened an office in Mississauga, Ont. offering its Big Ass Fans and Big Ass Light products for sale directly from the manufacturer for the first time in Canada.

> Montreal-based **Air Liquide Canada** has launched food. [airliquide.com](http://airliquide.com), a food and beverage website for the North American market.



> **Faerch Plast A/S** is expanding with a network of distributors in Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Canada, South Africa and the Middle East and Israel. The company provides plastic packaging for the food industry.



## PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Akingbade

> Vaughan, Ont.-based VersaCold Warehousing Solutions has made a number of personnel appointments. **Moses Akingbade** has been made a member of the Business Unit Leadership Team and leader of its Cold Chain Assurances Practices; **Jim MacIntosh** joins the executive team and will be leader of its warehousing solutions business unit; and **Sandro Caccaro** joins the executive team and will be leader



MacIntosh



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of its asset-based transportation business unit.

> **Ryder Lee** is the new CEO of the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association.

> **Jacque Trombley** has joined the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers as Marketer Liaison officer.

> **Debra McLennan** is now Food and Nutrition co-ordinator for Leduc, Alta.-based Alberta Pulse.



McLennan



Ledgerwood

> **Kevon Ledgerwood** has been named general manager of Business Development and Technical Services at Jefferson, Ga.-based World Technology Ingredients Inc.

> Food and Beverage Ontario has hired **Anthony Perrotta** as its new director, Membership & Industry Relations.

> The Ontario Independent Meat Processors announced its 2015-2017 board of directors. The executive committee includes **Cory Van Groningen** of VG Meats in Simcoe, Ont. who returns as president; Joe Abate of Abate Packers in Arthur, Ont., past president; **Carol Goriup** of Florence Meats in Oakville, Ont., vice-president; and **Christine Hobson** of Halenda's Fine Foods in Oshawa, Ont., secretary/treasurer.

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## B.C. poultry producers receive funding

The province of B.C. and the federal government have announced two initiatives worth up to \$1.58 million to help poultry producers re-establish their operations after the avian influenza outbreak of this past winter and mitigate the impact of future risks. Many of those poultry producers are in Fraser Valley, B.C.

Reports said that 11 commercial facilities were affected. In addition, about two dozen countries imposed trade restrictions on B.C. poultry products since the outbreak was first detected in two farms in December 2014, says CTVNews.ca.

The funding is expected to help the farmers recover some of the cleaning and disinfection expenses they incurred, resume business operations and to help the poultry sector develop insurance options against future outbreaks.



# The winners are...

Last month *Food in Canada* and Grant Thornton presented the 2015 Leadership Awards to five Canadian food and beverage businesses. To read profiles of each company see our April 2015 issue, or visit [www.foodincanada.com](http://www.foodincanada.com)



## Fiera Foods Company

### GROWTH AWARD



Grant Thornton's Rosanna Lamanna, partner and Ontario Food & Consumer Products Leader, and Jim Menzies, partner and Global Food & Beverage Leader (*far right*), present the Growth Award to Fiera Foods' COO Alex Garber, and CEO and president Boris Serebryany.

## Mother Parkers Tea & Coffee Inc.

### INNOVATION AWARD

Rosanna Lamanna presents the Innovation Award to Lib Trombetta and Margaret La Rocque of Mother Parkers.





## Clearwater Seafoods Limited Partnership

### STEWARDSHIP AWARD



photos: Mike Dembeck/KlixPix

1. Grant Thornton's Kevin Fraser, partner, Corporate Finance (left) and Heath Moore, partner, Tax Services (right), present the Stewardship Award to Clearwater Seafoods' president and CCO Greg Morency.

2. The Clearwater team (left to right) Diana Hanus, Marketing manager; Kyle Roode, assistant Marketing manager, New Products; Catherine Boyd, manager, Sustainability & Public Affairs; Renee Wishart, executive assistant, Global Markets; Greg Morency; Christine Penney, vice-president, Sustainability & Public Affairs; Nikita Ross, sales posting co-ordinator; and Catherine Parker, accounts receivable.

## Devonian Coast Wineries Ltd.

### COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP AWARD



photos: Paul Darrow/KlixPix

1. Devonian Coast's Donna and Carl Sparkes accept the award for Community & Industry Leadership from Grant Thornton's Kevin Fraser and Ryan Power, partner, Tax Services.

2. The Devonian Coast team: (Back row, left to right) Andrea Burbidge, Carl Sparkes, Donna Sparkes, Gina Haverstock (front row, left to right) Becca Griffin, Craig Campbell, Karn Nichols, Jonathan Rodwell.

photos: JDavid Lipnowski/KlixPix



## Manitoba Harvest Hemp Foods

HEALTH & WELLNESS AWARD

(Centre) Manitoba Harvest Hemp Foods CEO Mike Fata accepts the Health & Wellness award from Grant Thornton's Colin MacLean, partner, Assurance Services (left), and Kyle McMurtry, partner, Tax Services.

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Larry Martin



## COMMENTARY: Can We Kiss COOL Goodbye?

I love it when the WTO confirms again why it's so important to protect small economies from bullies. The bully is, as is often the case, the U.S. and its mandatory *Country of Origin Labeling Act* (COOL). COOL required U.S. retailers to separately label meat from animals born, raised and slaughtered in the U.S.; those born, raised and slaughtered outside the U.S.; those born outside the U.S. but raised and slaughtered in the U.S.; and those born and raised outside the U.S. and slaughtered in the U.S.

The resultant cost of identifying, sorting and identity-preserving all those categories has been estimated at US\$1.6 billion per year.

Some whiners in the U.S. say that people have a basic right to know where their food comes from. But the premise of most regulatory systems is to ensure that products are safe. Those four contrived categories say nothing about safety — that's why there is a system in place to inspect for safety. The WTO called COOL what it clearly is — illegal protectionism.

And kudos to Canada's federal government for its plans for retaliation if the U.S. doesn't comply. Under WTO rules, the

harmed country can legally impose import duties on a wide range of U.S. products, including red meat, wine, ketchup, breakfast cereals and chocolate. Contrast this to Paul Martin's Liberals in an earlier dispute, which threatened to put duties on things we don't import! Wow, bet that scared the Americans.

With this government's list, Congress will get to explain why Canadian and Mexican products need to be labelled in this ridiculous manner, from the breakfast food and California wine industries, to Heinz and Hershey. That would be fun to watch!

The House Agricultural Committee passed a bill to repeal COOL by a vote of 38 to six two days after the WTO decision. It will pass the House, but it's yet to be seen how it will go in the Senate, the residence of the protectionist northern tier state senators who are responsible for this insanity. 🍎

Market Trends is prepared by Dr. Larry Martin, who offers a course on managing risk with futures and options, Canadian Food and Agri-business Management Excellence (CFAME), a management training course for food industry personnel. Contact him at [larry@agrifoodtraining.com](mailto:larry@agrifoodtraining.com) or at (519) 841-1698.

## MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Grain and oilseed markets slumped on prospects for excellent crops, while energy moved up.

**> Corn** - Corn prices slid moderately during the month on a large South American crop, excellent planting conditions in the U.S. and prospects for an "El Niño" rainfall summer and weak U.S. exports. The market appears to be expecting an average yield of about 165 bu/acre. A higher yield could push prices down further. Major support is at \$3.47 on the July contract. Resistance is at \$3.75. We continue to like pricing hand to mouth while protecting above resistance at \$3.75.

**> Soy oil** - Soy oil prices got a boost from the discovery of rancid oil in Chinese storages, but continue to move in a range between \$0.3375 and \$0.293 on the July contract. These remain within reach of the lowest prices since 2007. Continue to protect just above major support at \$0.293 or above resistance at \$0.3375.

**> Wheat** - The same weather that put downward pressure on corn prices is strengthening wheat prices: there is too much rain for wheat and just the right amount for corn, apparently! Add this to crop problems in India and

there is concern, despite heavy stocks. July wheat actually made new contract lows before plentiful rains caused traders to worry about yields. This, in turn, induced funds to liquidate their short positions and we saw a \$0.33 price rise in one day. Prices moved up to the current \$5.183/4 with resistance at \$5.48 on the July. We still like the idea of buying hand to mouth and protect above \$5.48.

**> Sugar** - Sugar futures made a new low at the end of April of \$0.119 on the July contract. Since then it bounced \$0.015 before settling to the current \$0.1251. Strength came from heavy Brazilian rains that reduced yields there. There is considerable resistance at \$0.136. We would continue buying hand to mouth and protect above resistance.

**> Natural gas** - After making lows in April at 2.5 cents, June futures rallied to 3.1 cents before backing off to the current 2.94 cents. There is major resistance at 3.35 cents. In the short term, rising stocks of natural gas and declining oil prices will likely keep the lid on gas prices. We suggested pricing near the lows last month. We would continue to look for those opportunities going forward and protect against 3.35 cents.

**> Crude Oil** - Brent crude prices continued

their rally well into May with July futures hitting \$69.30 before dropping and levelling off. Current price is \$66.61. The market is choppy and looking for direction among conflicting data indicating that production is rising, but inventories are less than expected. Technically, there is support at \$61.39 with resistance at \$69.30 and more around \$73. We believe this market is overpriced. If you have Calls or futures, we would take profits near \$69, and look to re-enter near support, or even lower. Continued conflict in the Middle East is the risk factor, so protection above \$73 is probably warranted.

**> Canadian dollar** - The loonie strengthened with oil to \$0.8356, then dropped like a rock when oil prices declined, and finally failed to rally with the most recent oil rally. This leaves it currently at \$0.819, and looking confused about direction. Part of the confusion is a major U.S. bank saying it expects the Bank of Canada to reduce interest rates another quarter of a per cent, and the fact that the U.S. dollar is generally strong. In the short term, we do think the loonie will follow oil and that it will weaken. Hopefully, the Bank will not add additional instability. If you risk a falling dollar, we would buy \$0.815 Calls as insurance.





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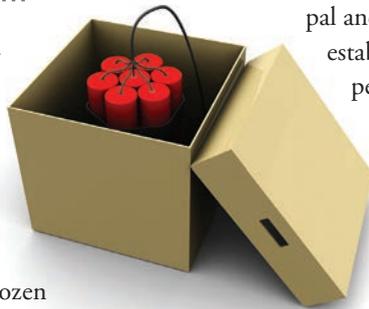


## Dynamite comes in small boxes

After a prolonged silence on the status of Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) modernization and the *Safe Foods for Canadians Act*, my email inbox suddenly received a dozen emails from a variety of sources to announce that these initiatives were still alive. Among the emails were a couple from the CFIA asking for comments and suggestions on possible regulatory approaches for micro and small enterprises. Here are the highlights of my reply to this online questionnaire.

### **Should the proposed requirements for preventative control plan (PCP) record keeping requirements not apply to micro-scale business and to other enterprises? If extended, what measure(s) should be used to qualify such enterprises for an exemption?**

It is in consumers' interest that any enterprise selling food for human consumption intra- or inter-provincially have a documented PCP, a HACCP program, a traceability program and be registered with the CFIA. However, if an exemption program is implemented, any criteria based on revenue, the number of employees and volume of product sold (i.e. self-reporting) is open to manipulation. I am not totally opposed to using self-reported qualifiers but I strongly recommend that a CFIA risk assessment be part of the qualification process.



It is also in the public interest for these micro and small enterprises to be inspected when operating. These inspections needn't be done by the CFIA but could be done by municipal and/or provincial food establishment inspection personnel.

### **Should micro and small businesses have more time to comply?**

Our American neighbours are giving their micro and small enterprises three years to comply with their regulations. It would be hard for Canadian regulators to require anything less. However, it would be a mistake to turn a blind eye to this sector until the day that the regulations come into force. As recommended earlier, I believe that registration with the CFIA should be mandatory for all food processors regardless of size. Once registered, micro and small firms should be required to develop a critical path delineating the dates they will achieve each compliance milestone and ending with full compliance by the time the sector regulations come into force.

### **What kinds of products and support services would be helpful to make compliance easier and less costly for micro and small businesses?**

At no time in human history has it ever been easier and less expensive to share information and to communicate, thanks to web-based and cloud-based solutions.

Prior to retiring in 2007, I had the opportunity to market food safety software and witness the implementation of this software in companies in Canada

and the U.S. This type of software has become easier to use, more effective and less expensive since then.

As a service to micro and small enterprises, the CFIA should develop food safety portals loaded with food safety information and forms that these small firms can tailor to some degree for their own needs. Modern commercial food safety software allows the user to set critical limits which, if exceeded, alert the user to the problem. This and other features can be built into the CFIA-developed software. Today's food safety software also escalates alarms up the chain of command. Records of these events are permanent and cannot be altered.

Such food safety software and training should be provided at no charge to micro and small enterprises, saving them anywhere from \$5 to \$15,000 upfront and much more over time. However, I believe that the CFIA should have some level of access to the user's food safety data, including being alerted when out-of-compliance food safety alarms are not addressed on a timely basis.

The size of a food enterprise has no bearing on the extent of damage and devastation that can be caused from a failure to manage food safety. The precautions taken to handle one stick of dynamite are much the same for the entire box. In the consumer's mind, food safety concerns are the same regardless of the size of the supplier. I am not advocating a one-size-fits-all approach, but at the very least all food enterprises should be registered. ♣

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## Nothing but the half truth?

The need for current and accurate data to support food law

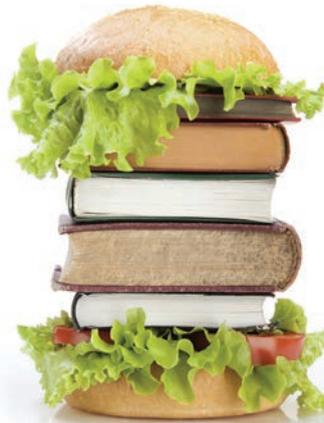
It is no secret that our evidence base for food policy in Canada is less than perfect. Historically, we have relied on research tools that are dated, flawed or inconsistent with the current food marketplace. As food policy grows in prominence, do we need to re-evaluate and update our research tools to the 21st century to ensure that sound food law is made?

The Canadian Nutrient File (CNF) is a food composition database maintained by the federal government. The CNF is used for population nutrition surveillance and risk assessment that inform policies and laws, including fortification, salt reduction, food standards and health claims. Despite rolling updates, the CNF is notoriously out-of-date. The evolving food supply and resource limitations have resulted in a CNF that is often inaccurate as soon as it is published. While initiatives to improve the CNF are underway and a new version is expected out this year, there will likely always be some discrepancy between the marketplace and the database that cannot be solved.

Another roadblock to food law enlightenment is self-reported dietary intake surveys. A self-reported dietary intake survey is a cost-friendly tool used by academics and governments to link diet to health outcomes. As part of these surveys, participants are asked to self-report their food and beverage intake over a

period of time. Despite methodology to reduce errors, participants tend to underestimate their caloric intake by roughly 10 per cent. This can't be surprising. I often lie about what I eat to myself, let alone another person. Even if you were honest, could you accurately estimate the portion size and contents of a take-out sandwich? A recent article in the *International Journal of Obesity* opined that the prevalent use of self-reported data may be leading to conflicting conclusions about the relationship between food components and disease. Further, the authors noted that these conflicting conclusions make it difficult for health professionals to confidently advise their patients and self-reported data should no longer be used for obesity-related policy development.

The limitations of these research tools are well-known and sometimes can be controlled. Nonetheless, should we take a step back to consider the need for greater resource allocation and research innovation at the source? For example, Statistics Canada openly acknowledged that the data used in its 2011 publication on the sugar consumption of Canadians was based on seven-year-old self-reported data using the CNF that was prone to recall bias or selective under-reporting. In addition, the data source did not distinguish between added and naturally occurring sugars. In spite of these limitations, the Statistics Canada sugar report was then used to support the premise that 35 per cent of all sugar in Canadians' diet came from added sugar in Ontario's No Time To Wait: The Healthy Kids



Strategy. However, Statistics Canada's added sugar value was extrapolated from the food group and subject to the flaws mentioned above. To bring this full circle, the Healthy Kids Strategy was a key driver in the Ontario government's school nutrition policy and Bill 45,

*Making Healthier Choices Act, 2015*, which will legislate caloric labelling in restaurants in Ontario.

Overall, conclusions developed using the CNF or self-reported dietary surveys are not without merit. They play a very important role in food policy development and are just examples of weaknesses in our evidence base. Nonetheless, our historical research tools are vulnerable without greater support. The question remains: How do we facilitate policy-makers so they can update and modify these tools on a regular basis? Because we all benefit from sound laws based on current evidence.

In the future, I believe all food stakeholders, including industry, NGOs, academia and government have a role to play in ensuring food law is created from a current and accurate foundation by demanding and contributing to frequent updates to food databases and surveys and by prioritizing research tool innovation. ●

Amanda J. MacNaughton, JD, MSc., BSc. is an associate at Gowlings where she practices in the area of regulatory law, specializing in food, NHPs, drugs and cosmetics. Contact her at amanda.macnaughton@gowlings.com. Ron Doering returns next month.



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Gary Gnirss



## The grieving or greening in Vermont

### Another round in GMO labelling

These days it seems nothing in the U.S. gets done without some good old Yankee litigation.

Soon after May 2014, when Vermont's governor signed into law legislation that would make it mandatory in that state to label retail packaged foods containing food derived via genetic engineering (GMO), the gloves were off again. In June 2014 industry groups filed a lawsuit, claiming among other things that the law violates their First Amendment constitutional rights to free speech, or conversely, speech that would be forced upon them, and that such labelling would be pre-empted by the federal *Food, Drugs and Cosmetic Act* (FD&C).

Vermont's new law, known as Act 120 (*Consumer Protection — Labeling Foods Produced with Genetic Engineering*) is slated to come into effect on July 1, 2016. Food companies in the U.S. and Canada which sell packaged foods in Vermont must now scramble to prepare label changes, or plan an action to deal with a likely implementation of the law.

On March 25, 2015 the *Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act* of 2015, (SAFLA) was introduced in the U.S. Congress. If successful, that Bill would amend the federal FD&C to explicitly include provisions that would effectively pre-empt state governments from introducing mandatory GMO labelling, simply because a food is or includes food derived by this

technology. It would also require the U.S. FDA to create regulation governing the use of the term "natural," but not to the exception of food that includes GMOs.

In addition, the SAFLA would pre-empt states from creating legislation to define "natural" in ways that would differ from a federal definition yet to be drafted. Currently the FDA only provides very generalized guidance on the use of "natural." This generalized definition and the FDA's previous reluctance to create regulations concerning natural,

**“Canadians should be interested in what our neighbours are up to.”**

has spawned a plethora of civil litigation in the U.S. over the term. The federal Bill would also amend the *Agricultural Marketing Act* to create a "national non-bioengineered food certification program" and "national standards for labeling non-bioengineered food."

Aside from the fact that the federal Bill would provide uniformity in U.S. food labelling on this matter, it would also establish a pre-market biotechnology notification program. The safety review of new foods for humans derived from genetic engineering are currently assessed by the FDA, but via a voluntary mechanism.

In contrast, Canada has had a mandatory pre-market notification system for foods derived via genetic engineering, under the *Food and Drug Regulations*, since 1999. Such foods are governed as novel foods. The Canadian system also captures foods defined as "novel food" under a pre-market notification system,

such as those with no safe history of use in foods and those manufactured by a process that causes it to undergo a major change (such as variations that affect the nutritional, microbial or chemical safety of food, or how it is metabolized in a body). Such pre-market notifications must demonstrate that the food is safe.

Canadian and U.S. food authorities have concluded that the genetically engineered foods they have reviewed and deemed safe are not materially different than similar foods not so derived. They further note that there is no compelling safety reason then to specifically label such foods. Despite this, current Canadian regulations would require such foods to be labelled in a manner that distinguishes them from other similar foods, if they were materially different. For example, if the genetically engineered food introduces a food allergen, that would have to be specifically labelled. The proposed Bill in the U.S. would also require such labelling, but only where needed.

If Vermont's legislation is successful it may inspire the state of New York to do the same. Maine and Connecticut already have similar legislation, but are waiting for neighbouring states to enact legislation before they implement theirs. Success in Vermont might be the domino that tips over others. It may very well also inspire similar movements in Canada. Failure in Vermont would remove the wind in the sails of the GMO labelling movement. Canadians should be interested in what our neighbours are up to. ●

Gary Gnirss is a partner and president of Legal Suites Inc., specializing in regulatory software and services. Contact him at [president@legalsuites.com](mailto:president@legalsuites.com)

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# HELP (desperately) WANTED

BY REBECCA HARRIS

**M**ark Chambers describes the labour situation in the meat industry with one word: critical.

Right now, across the country, there are around 1,000 positions available in meat-packing plants alone, says Chambers, senior production manager

at Sunterra Farms, which owns a 3,000-sow operation in Acme, Alta. and a 130-employee processing plant in Trochu.

“We just can’t fill them,” he says. “We’re having a real hard time filling those positions with Canadians because Canadians don’t want to work in meat plants.”

The meat industry is the largest component of Canada’s food-processing sector, accounting for 65,000 jobs, \$24 billion in sales and \$5.6 billion in exports. “Unfortunately, the current shortage of labour in Canadian meat packing and processing establishments is critical, chronic and deteriorating,” says Ron Davidson, director of International Trade, Government and Media Relations at the Canadian Meat Council (CMC).

How the industry got to this point is a combination of factors. First, rural populations are steadily declining, as more and more people relocate to urban centres. On top of that, it’s hard to get people to relocate to small towns to do this type of work. “We’re educating our own population to grow up and do bigger and better things,” says Chambers. “We’re not bringing our children up to work in meat plants.”

Further compounding the issue is that more than a decade ago, the Canadian government decided to give preference to highly skilled immigrants with university and college degrees, which further reduced the available labour pool for the meat sector. “That really closed the taps on what had been an historical way for the industry to get access to workers,” says Davidson.

RIGHT NOW, ACROSS THE COUNTRY,  
THERE ARE AROUND **1,000 POSITIONS** AVAILABLE  
IN MEAT-PACKING PLANTS ALONE

# The labour crisis in the meat-processing sector poses a serious threat to the industry — and more trouble looms

And, let's face it: jobs in slaughterhouses and processing plants are tough. "Our industry is a very arduous industry for people — a lot of the jobs are physically demanding," says Rich Vesta, president and CEO of Harmony Beef, which is opening a new plant northeast of Calgary this fall. Vesta says he doesn't anticipate problems filling positions, partly because of the plant's proximity to the city. But he has a great deal of empathy for workers. "I learned how to cut meat when I was 14 years old and I understand almost every one of the tasks in the plant, and I understand how difficult it is," says Vesta.

To help fill gaps in the workforce, the industry has for years been relying on Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program, which allows employers to hire workers from abroad to fill positions temporarily when qualified Canadians aren't available. The program allows some workers to transition to permanent residency through programs such as the Provincial Nominee Program.

Permanent residency for workers was always the goal for employers in the meat industry, since jobs in the sector aren't

temporary. "[The Temporary Foreign Worker program] was the only way to get workers, so we took the proverbial round hole and tried to put in a square peg," says Davidson. "In combination with the Provincial Nominee Program, we made it work for the industry and for Canada. But that's been interrupted now."

Davidson is referring to sweeping reforms the federal government made to the TFW program in 2014. The government was prompted to take action after a number of abuses came to light, primarily in the fast-food and financial sectors. RBC, for instance, was accused of axing Canadian staff and replacing them with foreign workers, which caused a public uproar.

Among the reforms, most concerning to the meat industry is a cap on the number of low-wage temporary foreign workers employers can hire per work site. The cap is gradually being phased in: it started with 30 per cent last year and will be further reduced to 20 per cent as of July 1, 2015 and 10 per cent by July 1, 2016.

For Chambers, the situation is worrisome, as workers who leave can't be replaced. "As it stands today, we've got 20 empty spots at our meat plant in Trochu, which we can't fill because we're at the cap," he says. Without a full labour force, plants like Sunterra can't maximize the efficiency of their operations. Chambers says if that happens, the company will consider moving part of the operation to Calgary. And if Sunterra can't do that, it will end up shipping work to a U.S. processing plant.

That's exactly what's been happening at other companies. According to the CMC, during the first 11 months of 2014, some 1.1 million live cattle and 4.4 million live pigs were shipped out of Canada to the United States. Chambers says having to export livestock for processing "makes no sense for our trade agenda."

Indeed, new export opportunities have recently opened up with the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA) and the Canada-Europe Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), as well as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is currently in negotiations. "The government of Canada has done a great job of getting these export opportunities, but we're going to have a challenge to fill them," says Chambers.

Not being able to operate at normal capacity cuts into profits on the value-added side of the business across the board. "The chance to make a profit comes from doing the retail-ready or foodservice cuts," explains Davidson. "But because you've got to staff the front end, you don't have employees to do this." ↪





So what are some solutions to the meat sector's labour woes? Since announcing the changes to the TFW program, the government has been stressing a "Canada first" hiring policy. Employers are encouraged to offer higher wages, invest in training and focus on underrepresented groups, such as aboriginals, new immigrants and youth.

But those in the industry are insistent they're doing that already. "We attend job fairs across Canada, we advertise, we assist with relocation costs," says Chambers. "Some companies work with new Canadians who have landed here as permanent residents, such as refugees. It's a small component that helps complement the staff that you have, but it doesn't fix the void." As for wages, most companies offer a wage of between \$12 and \$17 per hour, training programs and full benefits. But the problem persists.

"When you go to a job fair in the East Coast where they've got high levels of unemployment and no one is interested in moving out West to work in a meat plant, what do you do?" asks Chambers.

The meat industry has an answer to that question: create an immigration program that recognizes that there just aren't enough Canadians available or willing to take jobs in certain sectors of the economy.

"The whole premise of temporary and foreign workers does nothing for Canadian agriculture," says Ryder Lee, manager of Federal Provincial Relations at the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. "We need permanent workforce solutions and generally that means we need more Canadian workers. And we're not making them fast enough in Canada."

Industry groups have put forward a workforce plan that focuses on "pathways to permanency," not just bringing people in on a work permit. Even before changes to the TFW program

**“We need permanent workforce solutions and generally that means we need more Canadian workers. And we're not making them fast enough in Canada.”**

were announced, the agricultural industry was working on solutions to the labour challenge across the entire agriculture and agri-food sector, introducing the Agriculture and Agri-Food Industry National Workforce Action Plan in 2013. The initiative is spearheaded by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council.

For the meat industry specifically, other solutions are proposed, such as allowing meat packers and processors to qualify for Express Entry, which lets employers fast-track applications for skilled workers seeking permanent residency. "But the big game is trying to get the government to understand that butchers and meat cutters is an area where the Canadian economy just doesn't have enough supply domestically," says Davidson. "For the rural economy to survive, we have to be able to bring people from abroad who are going to do this work."

Davidson is hopeful that changes will be made, saying it's not a question of whether or not the issue will be resolved: "I believe it is a question of how and when it will be resolved." ●



## Wheatgrass

It has a lot of healthy attributes, but the research still isn't there to back it up

If you search up information on wheatgrass, you'll either be impressed by it, suspicious of it, or both. There's an abundance of information out there, touting wheatgrass as a superfood, as a "nectar of the gods," and as a cure-all of a multitude of ailments.

But it's not clear from a quick Google search how many of the claims are anecdotal or how many have been proven with scientific research. A lot of the research to date, says Jane Dummer, a Kitchener, Ont.-based registered dietitian and president of Jane Dummer Consulting, is based on rodent and not human trials. But stop in at any juice bar, and wheatgrass will be on the menu.

### A bit of history

Wheatgrass goes back thousands of years. Some reports say the ancient Egyptians prized it for what they believed were positive effects on their vitality and health. In the 1930s an agricultural chemist, Charles Schnabel, began documenting the nutrition in wheatgrass. But, says Dummer, it still mostly fell under folklore-type medicine "and hasn't received the attention of big clinical trials."

In the 1970s Ann Wigmore of Boston, Mass. made the wheatgrass diet popular. She believed strongly that wheatgrass could cure disease. According to the American Cancer Society, the Massachusetts Attorney General sued Wig-



more twice — in 1982 and again in 1988 — for making non-substantiated claims about wheatgrass. In 1982, she said wheatgrass could reduce the need for insulin and in 1988 she said that a wheatgrass-based soup she created could cure AIDS. She was ordered to stop representing herself as a physician.

### What are the benefits?

Wheatgrass are the young shoots of the wheat plant, says Laura Iamundo, a nutritionist and customer service representative at Toronto-based natural foods market The Big Carrot. Both wheat and wheatgrass come from the same plant — *Triticum aestivum*. "Wheat generally refers to the grain, which is what's used to make flour, while wheatgrass refers to the young grass that grows before the grain is produced," she says.

Wheatgrass contains vitamin A, E, B12, calcium, selenium, magnesium, iron and 17 amino acids — the building blocks of protein, says Iamundo. It also has vitamin C, and chlorophyll (what gives it the green colour), which contains enzymes and energy. Iamundo adds that while there is no scientific evidence to back this up, anecdotally wheatgrass has been known to help "people with ulcerative colitis and digestion issues.



Wheatgrass supplement powder

Anything green contains fibre and helps with regularity, too."

Dummer also notes that alternative medicine practitioners have been saying that chlorophyll "mimics the action of hemoglobin in your blood so it does help to give you more oxygen and that can give you more energy."

Generally, says the Mayo Clinic, advocates say wheatgrass can boost your immune system, kill harmful bacteria in your digestive system and rid your body of waste. While some advocates say it can treat cancer, anemia, diabetes, constipation, infections, skin conditions, ulcerative colitis and joint pain, "there are few research studies about wheatgrass so it's difficult to assess such health claims."

### Can you formulate with it?

The Mayo Clinic says wheatgrass is mostly sold as a dietary supplement in tablet, capsule and liquid form. And Iamundo adds that it's more often consumed raw, in juices or salads. The Big Carrot sells wheat berries, which can be sprouted at home into wheatgrass, wheatgrass that is already growing, and cut wheatgrass. Wheatgrass can also come in powder form, which can then be added to smoothies or baked goods. But, she notes, "the best way to get the most nutrients, so that it's beneficial, is to consume it raw." Dummer also adds that real devotees of wheatgrass "only have it raw; it's never to be cooked." It's difficult to say, she says, what would happen if it's added to foods and then heated at a high temperature. ●

# What's the Scoop?

BY CAROL NESHEVICH

From sharper flavours and smaller portion sizes to “cleaner” ingredient lists, *Food in Canada* explores the latest trends in the world of ice cream and frozen treats



A

s the weather warms up and the sun starts shining brighter, many Canadians are happily treating themselves to that ice cream cone, frozen yogurt, popsicle, or some other type of fun and tasty frozen treat. But as consumers are becoming more concerned about overall health and wellness, it seems they're also becoming a little

more choosy about the types of frozen goodies they consume.

"While ice cream remains a treat, consumers are looking for more permissible options such as items with lower calories, less sugar and portioned sizes," explains Jane Mackasey, vice-president — Ice Cream, Marketing, at Nestlé Canada. Recently, for instance, Nestlé reduced the added sugar content in several of its products aimed at children, such as the Lifesavers popsicles, Itzakadoozie pops and the Smarties 1.5-L tub of ice cream, as part of its goal to make sure all children's products contain no more than 11 g of added sugar per serving.

At the same time, "cleaner" ingredients are definitely coveted by Canadians who are becoming more and more discerning about what they put into their bodies. "Consumers are looking to the ice cream category for a great tasting treat, but are also looking for options that they can feel good about consuming," says Mackasey. "Products with clean and simple ingredients, as well as fewer artificial colours and flavours are popular." Nestlé's Häagen-Dazs line, with its focus on high-quality simple ingredients, fits with this trend — it's becoming increasingly popular, according to Mackasey, and people seem to have no qualms about paying that little bit extra for the premium quality.

Kawartha Dairy Ltd., an ice cream manufacturer based in Uxbridge, Ont., also enjoys the upside of the growing consumer desire for good old-fashioned recognizable ingredients. "The fact that we're smaller, and we're from a rural area, people see us as old artisan-type ice cream makers," says Blake Frazer, vice-president and general manager of Kawartha Dairy. That said, Frazer says Kawartha doesn't claim to be "all natural," as there are certain stabilizing ingredients (such as guar gum or carageenan) that do need to be included in order to stabilize the ice cream so it can be transported to retail locations and still maintain its quality.

Still, the basic formula for Kawartha's ice creams essentially hasn't changed since the 1950s, says Frazer: "We call it making it the old-fashioned way...Our ice cream has 15 per cent butterfat in it, and most ice cream has 10 per cent, so it's very creamy. That's the big feature of it — when people try our ice cream, they just get an incredible mouth feel because of the amount of cream in it." And while he can't say for certain that it's because people today are seeking that old-fashioned goodness, Frazer says that sales at Kawartha ↪

**“Consumers are looking to the ice cream category for a great tasting treat, but are also looking for options that they can feel good about consuming.”**





have definitely been showing very strong growth in recent years. “Over the last four or five years, we’ve enjoyed double-digit volume growth in percentage terms,” he says.

At the same time, while consumers are certainly looking for old-fashioned, pure and simple-style ice creams, they’re also craving innovative and exciting new flavours. Frazer says Kawartha tries out a few new flavours each year, based on inspiration gained from trade publications, competitors’ offerings and the U.S. marketplace. “Last year, for example, a huge success for us was a new ice cream we launched called salty caramel truffle,” he says.

Indeed, that mix of salty and sweet seems to be a huge hit in the ice cream world these days. “There’s a big surge in the salted caramel,” says Melany Tracey, vice-president of Renfrew, Ont.’s Tracey’s Ice Cream. “There’s a lot of salted caramel ripples out there, salted nuts in the ice cream — that’s the biggest one for us. We came out with a new salted caramel flavour this year, called the salted caramel cashew toffee. The more exotic sounding the name is, of course, the more interested people are,” she laughs.

“People are trying chili in ice cream, and hot sauce...very different types of flavours. People are really looking for ‘different’ these days,” adds Tracey. “I don’t know how successful these types of flavours will be in the long term, because everyone ultimately always goes back to their old standard favourites...but certainly as a little growth niche market, [ice cream manufacturers] are coming up with the chili-chocolates, the gingers — those new and innovative flavours that add a little bit of zing.”

Another trend has to do with decadent

products being offered up in smaller package sizes. In the ice cream world, Nestlé’s Häagen-Dazs line is well known for its smaller 500-mL tubs, for instance, and other ice cream manufacturers really seem to be following suit. “The 500-mL packaging for ice cream has really taken off,” says Tracey. “You can see it in the stores; there are quite a few ice cream players out there messing around with 500-mL packaging. We haven’t gotten there yet, but we are planning to put out a 500-mL package, if not this year then next year.”

At Markdale, Ont.’s Chapman’s Ice Cream, they’re using a similar philosophy — offering decadent options in smaller portion sizes — for some of their frozen treats. As part of Chapman’s Premium Canadian Collection line, for instance, the company offers a selection of chocolate-dipped ice cream bars that are certainly tasty and indulgent, but smaller in size than the standard

““ While ice cream remains a treat, consumers are looking for more permissible options such as items with lower calories, less sugar and portioned sizes. ””

larger-size ice cream bar. “We have a 55-mL bar format, as opposed to the 88-mL super-indulgent bar,” explains Mary Breedon, Sales and Marketing manager at Chapman’s. “If someone says I want to have a treat, they are likely looking at something indulgent. What we’re offering is that indulgence in a smaller portion size.” With a number of varieties to choose from, including Almonds & Milk Chocolate, Creme Caramel & Toffee, and Double Dark Chocolate, as well as several varieties of Chapman’s new “Bumpy Bars” that are filled with chunky inclusions like brownie pieces or pralines throughout, these smaller-size ice cream bars aim to satisfy that desire for a little indulgence without the guilt that often comes with overindulging. “And with eight in each box, the whole family can share,” adds Breedon.

Using that same philosophy, Chapman’s also recently launched something called the Stickwich. The product originally started out as two cookies with ice cream in between, completely enrobed in chocolate, and 125 mL in size. “People were saying, ‘wow, that’s really big. I can’t eat that very often,’” says Breedon. So they decided to trim it down to just one cookie, “then we made it only half-dipped in chocolate — so not quite as indulgent — with a stick stuck in the middle, like a lollipop.” Now at 80 mL, the Stickwich is still not exactly a low-cal treat, but it is certainly smaller and less overwhelmingly decadent.

Chapman’s also launched its Flavours of the World Gelato line this year, which actually reflects two of the prevailing trends: the desire for healthier options (the gelato is 25-per-cent less fat than Chapman’s premium ice cream) and the desire for innovative and exciting new flavours. The

six internationally inspired flavours include Amaretto Biscotti, Sticky Rice & Mango, and Sour Cherry Tango. “So it’s still along that healthy trend, with a lighter mouth feel,” says Breedon, “and it’s definitely something different to entice the palate.” ●



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## Fun and games with frozen treats

As summer fast approaches, kids will soon be saying goodbye to school and hello to fun and freedom — while parents will be saying goodbye to prime real estate in their freezer as the demand for frozen treats starts heating up once again. When it comes to frozen treats, our choices can be overwhelming.

One convenient option popular among both parents and kids are colourful non-dairy icy treats “on a stick,” sold in a multi-pack at the grocery store. We recently decided to explore the playing field of this fun and youthful category to find out what kids like to eat and what their moms like to buy.

### Child’s play

Given the nature of the category, we naturally felt that kids would be the best ones to taste and evaluate these icy treats. So we asked 50 boys and girls between the ages of six and 12 from the Greater Toronto Area to participate in a blind taste test of six national brands. All brands were on a stick, sold in a multi-pack in the freezer aisle and purchased at a local grocery store. And while the children happily tasted their treats, we kept their moms occupied with a survey about decisions in this category.

### The playmakers

One product emerged as the king of the castle, scoring the top scores on all



product attributes, with a whopping 78 per cent of kids giving it the highest honour of being “really good” overall. While kids strongly endorsed its shape, colour and appearance, it also had optimal levels of sweetness and a “bite” texture that was just right. For this giant, 90 per cent of our testers said they would definitely ask their parents to buy it for them.

In contrast, the weakest performer rated “really good” among only 26 per cent of our kids and less than half would actually ask mom or dad to buy it for them. There were quite a few “bad” qualities that contributed to its dismal performance. Kids were quick to point out that it was considerably smaller than the other brands. But this was not the worst of its problems; in fact it was the softness of the texture and the sweetness of the taste that really had the kids complaining about it.

Overall, three of the six brands did not achieve our action standards on overall taste. All three tended to be too sweet; one was too weak in flavour and two were too strong in flavour. Texture was also found to be a game changer in this category, with four of six products not meeting the mark. Our six products were evenly divided on this factor — two were too soft to the bite, two were too hard and our top two performers were just right.

### The gatekeepers

Children’s decision-making power is somewhat limited in this game, because



even if you manage to score with the kids, you still have to make it past the ever-powerful “goalkeepers,” mom and dad.

Remember the top-performing brand among kids? Only 10 per cent of our moms actually chose this brand as the one they are most likely to buy. In contrast, the most popular brand among moms, chosen by 36 per cent, was not one of the top-ranking brands tested among kids.

So what drives parents’ decisions in this category? Well among our moms the number-one factor for brand choice was “a brand they trust,” followed closely by “a brand that’s on sale” and “the best value for money.” In contrast, only one mom said that “fun shapes and sizes” influences her purchase decision.

Another fairly important factor among 40 per cent of our moms was choosing a brand that is “healthiest for my kids.” When asked about specific nutritional benefits, the most important mentions were “made with real fruit or real fruit juice,” following closely by “no artificial colours or flavours.”

Marketing kid-oriented packaged foods comes with a unique set of challenges — appealing to the primary consumer (children) with a fun, engaging image and a taste and texture they love; while at the same time appealing to the primary purchaser (mom or dad) with a sensible product, a brand they trust and perceived value for money. A solid game plan in this category needs to deliver to the needs of both these key players... and that’s the name of the game. 🍓

For questions about this research, or how you can leverage consumer taste buds in your business, contact Dan Scholes at [info@contracttesting.com](mailto:info@contracttesting.com) or (905)-456-0783.



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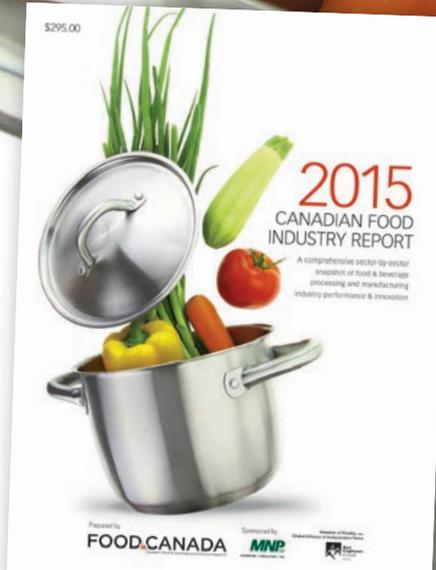
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## Slimming down **Fido** & **Kitty**

Obesity is a large concern with Canada's pets, and pet food companies are responding with more and better products **PG.44**

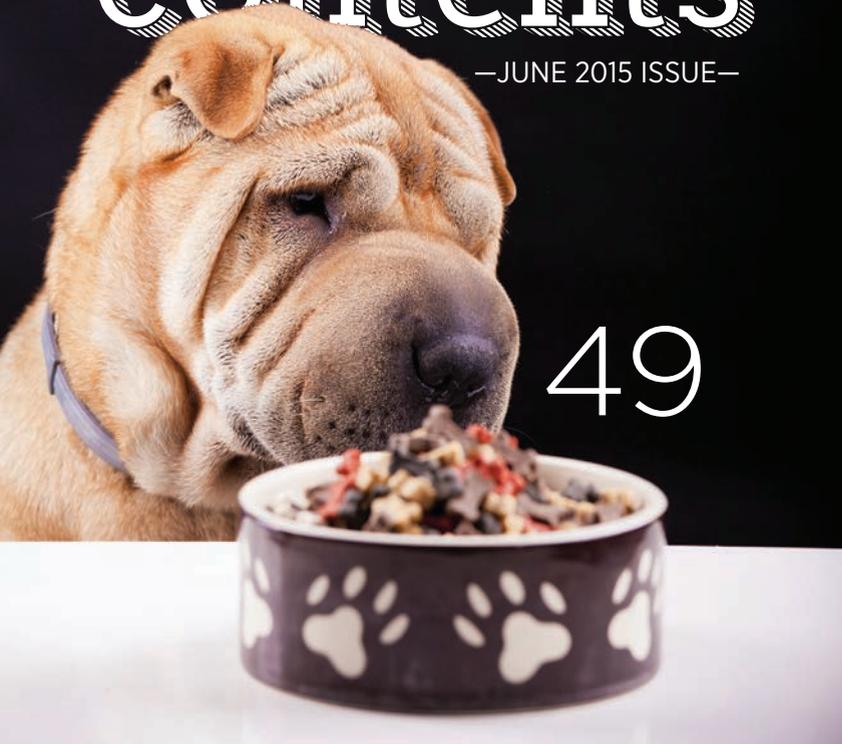


## **READY, SET, REGULATE**

The Canadian pet food industry and the Food Safety Modernization Act **PG.49**

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## EDITORIAL

Carolyn Cooper



## Weighing in on a heavy issue

It's one thing to hear your doctor tell you that it's time to drop those "last 10 pounds." It's even harder to listen to your vet scold you for raising a pudgy pooch, knowing full well that you're responsible for Rover's cheese addiction.

But you're not alone. According to the U.S. Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, weight is becoming as much of a challenge for our pets as it is for us. Based on its 2014 survey of American pet owners, the association believes that 53 per cent of dogs in the U.S. are overweight (17.6 per cent of those are obese), compared to 58 per cent of cats (28.1 per cent of those obese). Surprisingly, however, the association also found that 90 per cent of owners of overweight cats and 95 per cent of owners of overweight dogs believed their pets were "normal" weight.

Like humans, animal companions can suffer from numerous health issues in connection to obesity, including diabetes, osteoarthritis, high blood pressure and cancer. In fact, says the association's website ([www.petobesityprevention.org](http://www.petobesityprevention.org)), referencing Dr. Julie Churchill, veterinary nutritionist at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, pet obesity is the number-one health threat facing companion animals today. Churchill notes that the most important health decision pet owners make is what and how much they feed their animals.

It is of course the responsibility of pet owners to ensure they provide the exercise and nourishment their pets require. But the pet food sector can help by reaching out to customers and offering additional information about the importance of proper weight maintenance. And, of course, by doing more to meet the nourishment needs of this category of pets.

For more on what players in the sector are doing to help with the weight challenge, see the article "Slimming down Fido and Kitty," starting on pg. 44. 📧

*Carolyn*

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## A simple food saver

Tired of ants and insects getting into your pet's food dish? An inventor from Graniteville, S.C. had had enough of the tiny critters. So she developed what she calls a Simple Pet Food Saver. Her prototype (not pictured) is a modified pet-food dish that keeps pet food safe from ants and other crawling insects. It can avoid spoilage and the need for replacement. She submitted her idea and original design to InventHelp, a U.S. company that helps inventors patent their ideas and submit them to companies.



# Barks & bites

Pet food industry news



## Personalized nutrition

Nutrition has a huge impact on our bodies. That's why there's been research and discussion on personalizing ingredients and foods to help humans maintain health and prevent disease. That same trend is spilling over to pet food. Last fall, Nestlé Purina Petcare launched Just Right by Purina ([www.justrightpetfood.com](http://www.justrightpetfood.com)).

Created with dogs in mind, owners visit the site and answer questions about their pet, such as age, breed, activity level, coat condition and stool firmness. They can even enter their pets' names and upload photos. Owners then choose from a range of protein sources, target specific wellness areas and can even consider a blend formulated without grains. The Purina team then recommends a formula. Once the order is complete, the personalized food is shipped to the owner's home — with their dog pictured on the package along with its name.

## Recycle, reused

Toronto-based sustainable, locally grown, humane and family-farmed pet food company Open Farm Inc. is TerraCycle Canada's latest partner.

TerraCycle creates waste collection programs (each one is called a Brigade) for previously non-recyclable or difficult-to-recycle waste. The collected waste is then converted into new products, which can range from recycled park benches to up-cycled backpacks. Consumers of Open Farm



pet food can send the packaging to TerraCycle by downloading a pre-paid shipping label from [www.terracycle.ca](http://www.terracycle.ca). Shipments must weigh at least two pounds.

## More Canadian pet retail data to come

The pet specialty retail universe in Canada now exceeds 2,000 outlets, says GfK, a market and consumer research firm. While it is a rich marketplace, it lacks in basic sales metrics and trend data.

This year GfK says it will fill the research void and expand its point-of-sale pet specialty data collection to Canada and provide benchmark data that could help retailers and pet food manufacturers. ↗

## PET FOOD OUTLOOK

Mintel has issued its Annual Pet Food Market Overview — International — 2015 report.

When looking at consumption per capita (population), says the report, China shows some of the lowest levels among the 20 markets in the report, but with very good growth forecast. Brazil is expected to see both high growth and high consumption within the overall pet food market.

Pet food is a mature market in most developed countries, notes the report, with particularly high consumption per capita in the U.S., Australia, France, Germany and the U.K. Portugal, despite a lower total volume, shows decent growth forecast and high consumption per capita. Japan remained an innovative country in terms of new product development, but shows low levels of consumption and growth.

According to the report, different types of functional claims dominated pet food categories overall, but "natural" nutrition was the main focus — although not necessarily "all natural." In the past year, close to a third of all pet food activity was in the Dog Snacks & Treats sub-category, with a further fifth in the Dry Dog Food sub-category. Chicken, as single protein and in flavour blends, was the most used flavour of 2014 in both cat and dog segments.

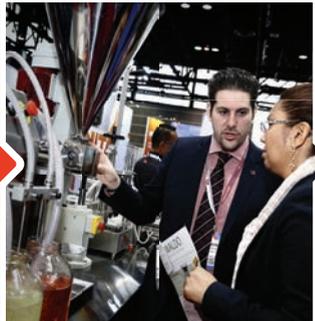




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GfK's study showed that Ontario accounts for more than one-third (835) of 2,063 total pet specialty outlets (excluding mass merchants and grocery stores). Other provinces with a large number of pet stores include: Quebec with 425, B.C. with 343 and Alberta with 249.

## Dogs save the guac

Florida's avocado crops are being threatened by laurel wilt, and our four-legged friends are on the case.

The state's avocado industry is worth around US\$64 million. Laurel wilt is a deadly disease caused by a fungus that is introduced into host trees by the red ambrosia beetle, says FreshfromFlorida.com. To combat the disease, the state has approved a grant to use drones to fly above crops and identify laurel wilt in the fields and to use dogs on ground

## VANCOUVER AQUARIUM'S FIRST CERTIFIED PET FOOD

The Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Wise program has certified its first pet food. On its blog, [www.Aquablog.ca](http://www.Aquablog.ca), the aquarium says that with the sustainable seafood movement on the rise



across Canada, it's only fitting that the same trend would apply to pets.

The aquarium partnered with Toronto-based Open Farm Inc., explaining that the pet food company's Do Some Good concept "allows pet parents to feed their pets the best quality ingredients while

making a positive impact for farm animals, family farms and the environment." The aquarium says pet owners can now purchase Ocean Wise approved fish in Open Farm's Catch-of-the-Day product. The aquarium will work with Open Farm on sustainable seafood selections.



patrol, reports Farm.com.

After a drone completes its flight and determines areas where trees could be at risk,

the ground "troops" move in to pinpoint the trees that really are at risk. Farm.com explains that a dog's nose can pick up the scent the laurel wilt gives off. When the

dogs find an infected tree, they sit beside it to identify it.

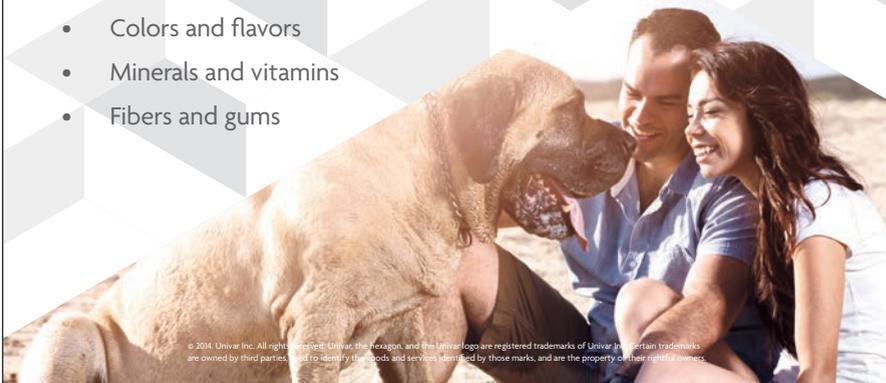
## Petco removes China-made treats

San Diego, Calif.-based Petco announced earlier this year that it would remove all made-in-China dog and cat treats from its shelves at more than 1,300 retail stores across the U.S. The company says the decision allows it to expand the assortment of safe and healthy alternatives that are made in other countries that support complete pet health.

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## HOT OFF THE DOG DISH

A company in Japan says it has created the world's first semi-baked microwave dog food, reports AsiaOne.com. Unicharm Corp. says it is set to launch Gin-No-Sara Attaka Kitchen Gourmet Mix this month (Attaka Kitchen can be translated as "warm" kitchen). The company says the dog food was developed to be consumed warm and that microwaving improves the mouth feel and scent. The product is also meant to be heated inside its packaging, so the dog food smell won't linger inside the microwave, says [www.AsiaOne.com](http://www.AsiaOne.com). The company adds that it is considering a similar product for cats.

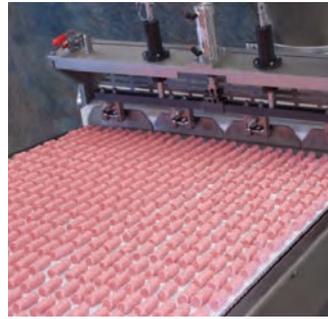




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# Slimming down Fido & Kitty

BY TREENA HEIN

**O**n the whole, we humans in developed countries have a hard time keeping the pounds off, and it's not surprising that a large percentage of our pets are in the same situation. As we age, our activity level usually decreases and long, cold Canadian winters don't help either. But whether it's humans or pets, weight control is worth the effort.

"Obesity is a disease associated with an increased risk of developing diabetes, arthritis, lower urinary issues, cardiorespiratory conditions and many other disease processes," notes Royal Canin veterinarian Dr. Sara Ritzie. She says the rate of overweight and obese pets in North America is increasing, with recent studies suggesting that between 22 to 40 per cent of dogs and up to 30 per cent of cats are overweight.

Michele Dixon, Health and Nutrition Specialist at Petcurean of Chilliwack, B.C., agrees that obesity is a significant risk factor for many life-threatening diseases that affect both dogs and cats. "Diabetes and obesity in cats often go hand-in-hand," she notes. "For dogs, being just slightly above ideal body weight can significantly decrease their lifespan and quality of life."



**Obesity is a large concern with Canada's pets, and pet food companies are responding with more and better products**



This is supported by the research of Nestlé Purina, which conducted the only canine lifelong diet restriction study (over 14 years and involving 48 Labrador Retrievers). The results show that maintaining a lean body condition can extend median life span by 15 per cent — nearly two years. Dean McNeill, manager of Public Relations at Nestlé Purina Petcare Canada, adds that as the dogs in the study aged, the lean-fed group experienced a two-year delay in the loss of lean body mass compared to the control dogs.

## Recommendations and products

Pet food companies generally recommend that consumers team up with their veterinarians when putting a cat or dog on a weight loss program, to aim for slow weight loss and to include exercise. Royal Canin has several different formulas for weight management and weight loss, enabling veterinarians and pet owners to choose the best formula for each pet. “Royal Canin has worked very hard on managing a pet’s hunger between meals by focusing on the satiation aspect of our weight loss diets,” Ritzie says, “making it easier for owners to adhere to the feeding plan.” She notes that one of the key factors in pet weight loss success is owner compliance. In addition to appetite satisfaction, Royal Canin’s weight loss formulas include adjusted nutrient profiles to ensure that calorie restriction does not lead to nutrient deficiencies, and nutritional support to keep the animal in optimal health during weight loss.

Dixon at Petcurean says a significant portion of the customer enquiries they receive are connected to pet obesity and weight management. “Our NOW FRESH Senior dog and cat recipes, as well as our NOW FRESH Small and Large Breed Senior dog recipes contain a moderate amount ↗



STUDIES SUGGEST THAT **BETWEEN 22 TO 40 PER CENT OF DOGS** AND UP TO **30 PER CENT OF CATS** ARE OVERWEIGHT.

of protein, reduced fat, and a moderate level of fibre to create balanced diets that are lower in calories,” says Dixon. “This helps to promote weight loss while helping pets feeling satisfied.” For cats with diabetes (requiring a reduced carbohydrate diet), Petcurean offers GO! FIT + FREE Chicken, Turkey + Duck Pate or GO! SENSITIVITY + SHINE Freshwater Trout + Salmon Pate recipes.

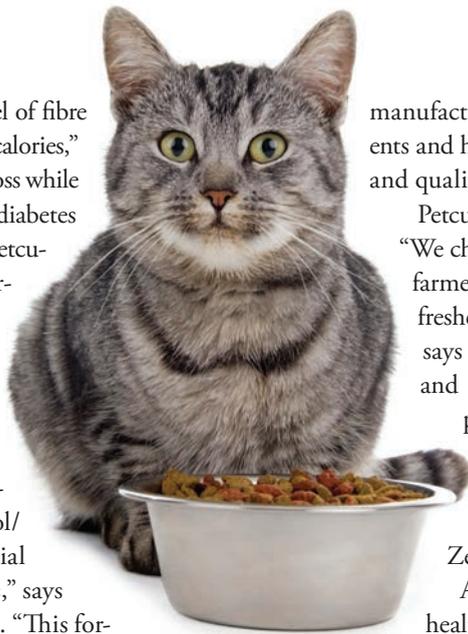
FirstMate Pet Foods in Vancouver, B.C. offers two dog foods for weight loss. “In our ‘Grain Free’ category, our FirstMate Pacific Ocean Fish Weight Control/ Senior formula has gained a substantial amount of demand over the past few years,” says Sales & Marketing manager Matt Wilson. “This formula is a Limited Ingredient Diet (LID), a formulation concept our company developed in 1995. LID diets have grown in popularity since then as they are ideal not only for regular feeding but they are also noted to improve digestion while reducing the likelihood of a food allergy or stomach upset.” The firm’s other weight loss dog food is Trim & Light, which includes grains.

Purina offers several product lines specially formulated for weight management or maintenance. They include Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets OM Overweight Management, Pro Plan Weight Management, Dog Chow Lite and Healthy, Beneful Healthy Weight, and Purina Cat Chow Advanced Nutrition Weight Management.

### Other trends

In a mid-2014 Euromonitor International report, the research firm states that there is currently strong demand for premium, gourmet-style dog food products made from natural and locally sourced ingredients, “as Canadians become more inclined to spoil or pamper their animal companions.”

FirstMate is currently focused on developing products that use both high-quality and regional ingredients — and communicating that to the public. “Consumers today are looking to support companies that are trustworthy,” says Wilson. “To that end we have invested in our own



manufacturing facilities...We source our own ingredients and have a greater level of control over production and quality.”

Petcurean also uses nearby and premium ingredients. “We choose to partner with a trusted network of local farmers and ranchers who can provide us with the freshest and highest-quality ingredients possible,” says Dixon. “All of the meat proteins, grains, fruits and vegetables in our GO! and NOW FRESH products are sourced from North America as close to the production facility as possible, with the exception of our lamb and venison which are sourced from Australia and New Zealand.”

A popular functional premium ingredient is healthy fats. Purina’s dog foods include omega-6 fatty acids from plant sources, and omega-3 fatty acids, typically from marine sources. “These fatty acids are important components of a dog’s diet and have a variety of biological functions,” notes McNeill, “including promoting healthy skin, coat and immune system, and helping to regulate inflammation.”

### Breed-specific food

The Euromonitor report also notes that Canadian consumers are expected to continue buying pet foods that provide optimum benefits for dogs at different life stages, with different activity levels, and of specific breeds. Eukanuba offers seven breed-specific dog foods, including one for Dachshunds and Chihuahuas. However, Harrison Pet Products of Kitchener, Ont. only offers one breed-specific food — for German Shepherds — but it’s mostly sold in Europe and some Asian countries.

“Breed Health Nutrition is a large part of our retail portfolio,” says Ritzie at Royal Canin. “[We offer] formulas for different breeds of dogs and cats based on their size, body type and predispositions, with kibble designs customized to the size and shape of the face and jaw to encourage chewing and improve digestibility.” Royal Canin’s first breed-specific food was for Persian cats, after research revealed that unlike other breeds of cats, Persians pick up food using the bottom of their tongue. This makes it very difficult to pick

up and chew traditional flat kibbles. Launched in 1999, the Royal Canin Persian formula has a nutrition profile to support the unique characteristics of the breed, and an almond-shaped kibble easier for these cats to pick up and eat.

In addition to the Persian cat formula, Royal Canin currently offers four other breed-specific cat foods in Canada and 16 breed-specific dog foods, and Ritzie says it’s possible that the number of Breed Health Nutrition formulas the company offers could increase. 🐾





# Premium pioneers

**Petcurean Pet Nutrition continues to innovate to provide pet owners with healthy and nutritious food for their animals**



**BY DEANNA ROSOLEN**

**I**n the late 1990s there weren't many pet food options for owners. Much of the food available was commercially produced and found in supermarket chains. Often the packaged or canned food contained fillers and other bulking ingredients, making the products relatively cheap to produce.

This was more or less the pet food scene back then — starkly different from the options consumers have today. But back in 1999, two work acquaintances saw an opportunity in the industry. You might call them pioneers. Dan Vanleeuwen and Ron Mayert saw a need for a higher-quality pet food and together created the Chilliwack, B.C.-based Petcurean Pet Nutrition. Jaimie Turkington, the company's director of Marketing, says "maybe 'pioneers' is a bit ambitious but they were one of the leaders in the industry who were making a premium-quality pet food back when they started."

At the time Vanleeuwen was working in agricultural feed and Mayert was working for a large multinational in its pet food division. They had crossed paths over the years through work. It was Vanleeuwen who started the company and asked Mayert to join him. They were likeminded, says Turkington, and joined →

forces. Over the years they also became close friends.

In those early days of the company, they worked out of Vanleeuwen's basement and did everything by hand. Business started slowly, with both Vanleeuwen and Mayert on the front lines, going to each individual retailer to sell not just the product but also the brand and what it stood for. "They just saw this real need for higher-quality pet food with the same convenience as a kibble," says Turkington. For the duo it was a question of is what's available to pet owners today really the best thing for their pets when it comes to health and nutrition? It was a niche that wasn't being properly serviced.

And like many astute entrepreneurs, they were onto something. The company experienced year-over-year growth and competition in the category grew too — both signs that consumers were looking for alternatives. Turkington explains that there was a shift taking place. Pet owners were becoming more aware of the importance of nutrition in their lives and as their pets were more and more like family members, they wanted to extend the same care to them.

It could be the competition that has kept Petcurean on its paws, so to speak, and kept the company at the forefront of innovative products. That and the fact that the team really does listen to its consumers when it comes to which products work and which don't.

Today the company produces 114 different dry pet food products and 14 canned pet food products. The headquarters are still in Chilliwack, but food production takes place in facilities in Elmira, Ont., where dry food is made and Streetsville, Ont., where wet food is made. There's also a facility in Pennsauken, N.J. for wet food. The company has just shy of 50 employees and distributes its products, which include a range of recipes, across Canada, in the U.S. and to 15 countries internationally.

The company's brands include Now Fresh, which is formulated with only fresh ingredients such as 100-per-cent fresh meat and oils. Turkington says it's like the same fresh ingredients you would use in your kitchen. "We're the only pet food company in the industry to use 100-per-cent fresh ingredients," she adds. "The brand is geared to the cat or dog owner who wants a quality product and doesn't want a lot of processing." Ingredients include turkey, salmon and duck, and 100-per-cent fresh omega-3 and omega-6 oils from coconuts



and canola. It also comes with berries, fruits and veggies, such as peas, spinach, cranberries, pumpkin, blackberries, alfalfa sprouts, kelp, lentils and carrots. There are no grains, rendered meats, by-product meals or artificial preservatives. The brand covers all breeds and all life stages.

Another Petcurean brand is Go!, which is more of a solutions food. It's geared to the cat or dog owner whose pet may be experiencing a health issue. The company just launched three new limited-ingredient products to the lineup. "The new products feature a novel protein, one that isn't necessarily commonly found in pet food," explains Turkington. "Chicken, for example, is predominantly used. So allergies in your pet could be a result of exposure. Dogs that have been eating chicken for a long time, might develop an allergy to it." Go! has a unique protein and a limited fresh ingredient list, so it's much like going on an elimination diet. "There are just seven ingredients," says Turkington, "so if your pet is doing well on that food, then it's likely not allergic to any of those things."

The Go! line also includes high protein, lower carb recipes and recipes that provide preventative care. The ingredients can include protein from chicken, lamb, turkey, salmon, duck and trout, plus fruits, veggies, herbs and berries. The line comes in whole grain and grain-free recipes and there are no growth hormones, by-products or artificial preservatives.

While the Now Fresh and Go! brands are considered super-premium, the company also offers Summit, a premium brand only available in Canada. Turkington describes it as a transition product for consumers who want to move away from grocery store brands.

It's those transitioning consumers who may provide some of the biggest opportunities for the company. Turkington estimates that perhaps 15 per cent of pet owners are shopping in the super-premium and premium channel. So there's a huge amount of untapped possibility, and an opportunity to educate those consumers. Consumer confusion is one issue the sector faces. "We want our pets to have long, vibrant and healthy lives," she says. "If you choose to feed them well, they will be more vital and their tails will wag and they'll spend less time at the vet. It costs a little bit more to feed them, but with high-quality food you feed them less. With the quality of the ingredients, the nutrients just get absorbed."

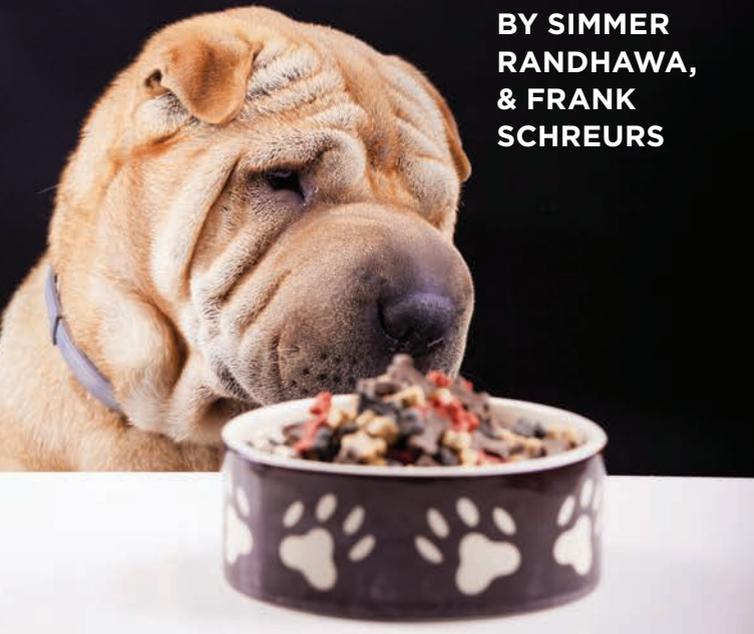
It costs a little bit more to feed them, but with high-quality food you feed them less. With the quality of the ingredients, the nutrients just get absorbed." 🐾

**“The company experienced year-over-year growth and competition in the category grew too — both signs that consumers were looking for alternatives.”**



# Ready, set, regulate

BY SIMMER  
RANDHAWA,  
& FRANK  
SCHREURS



## The Canadian pet food industry and the Food Safety Modernization Act

**S**igned into law on Jan. 4, 2011, the *Food Safety Modernization Act*, or FSMA as it has been coined, is the most sweeping food safety legislation to be passed in the United States in over 70 years. FSMA enables the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop and implement food safety regulations that are shifting focus from reacting to food safety problems to preventing them.

The catalyst for a more robust regulatory regime for food safety arose from widely publicized outbreaks of foodborne illness that weakened consumers' faith in the U.S. food supply in recent

years. The new regulations focus on enhancing the ability of the FDA to proactively intervene and mitigate foodborne illness risks associated with both domestic and imported food.

### Drivers for pet food safety regulations

The global pet food industry was worth US\$58.6 billion in 2011 and is expected to grow to US\$74.8 billion by 2017, according to Transparency Market Research. Under FSMA, the FDA is mandated to issue several new regulations that will impact pet food manufacturers. Pet food manufacturers, globally, are faced with similar challenges: global and complex supply chains, emerging new hazards and contaminants, evolving regulations, and consumers demanding safe and healthy foods for their pets.

It is projected that pet food sales in the U.S. will continuously grow at a strong steady pace, rising 16 per cent between 2015 and 2018 to reach \$33 billion. But like the overall food industry, the pet food sector has witnessed several recalls in the recent past linked to the presence of microbial and chemical hazards and natural toxins in pet foods. From 2006 to 2012, the FDA reported 2,277 recalls of animal food products in the U.S. In 2013, approximately 500 pet food products were recalled in the U.S. because of aflatoxin, mould and *Salmonella* contamination, as well as due to antibiotic residues in pet foods. In 2007 more than 150 brands of pet foods were recalled due to the economically motivated adulteration of pet food ingredients with melamine.

### Impact of FSMA on pet food manufacturers

Pet food safety and quality is of paramount importance to manufacturers of pet food. Process control, sourcing safe ingredients, testing of finished products and supply chain risk assessment are topics of importance in the manufacturing industry. These are also topics that are covered under the new FSMA regulations for pet food manufacturers. The core regulations under FSMA's Proposed Rule for Preventive Controls for Animal Food will have a prominent impact on a majority of manufacturers and importers of animal foods. Some provisions under FSMA impacting the manufacturers of pet food are:

- Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs) – The FDA is now proposing CGMPs that are more applicable to the animal food industry, provide flexibility for a wide diversity in the types of animal food facilities, and establish standards for producing safe animal food.
- Requirements for hazard analysis and preventive controls.
- Regulations related to imported food safety and supplier verification. ➔



- Requirements for sanitary transport of food products.  
The Foreign Supplier Verification Program (FSVP) proposed rule will require importers to verify aspects of their supply chain. This will make importers more responsible for the safety of imported foods and ingredients.

## The proposed rule for animal foods

The mandate of this proposed regulation is to establish Current Good Manufacturing Practices and Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for food for animals. The rule was published in Oct. 29, 2013 and the comment period closed on March 31, 2014. The rule requires facilities manufacturing, processing, packing and holding animal food to implement procedures that will prevent and minimize hazards. The rule also requires them to be in compliance with CGMPs. This proposed rule applies to any food facility, foreign or domestic, that must register with the FDA under the *Bioterrorism Act*. Exemptions exist for facilities engaged in low-risk activities and animal foods subject to other food safety regulations (for example, *Low Acid Canned Food Regulations*). Under FSMA, facilities are required to have a Preventive Control Plan (PCP) in place. The PCP should include:

- A hazard analysis.
  - Preventive controls to provide assurance that significant hazard(s) will be greatly minimized and controlled.
  - Monitoring procedures to ensure that preventive controls are working and records are maintained.
  - Corrective actions to address deviations.
  - Verification activities that ensure that PCs are implemented effectively and are effective.
  - A written recall plan.
- Preventive Control plans should also include microbiological and environmental monitoring, ingredient and finished product testing along with supplier approval and verification.

## Journey to FSMA compliance

- Familiarize yourself with the highlights of all of the proposed FSMA rules. This will help you to better understand the aspects of FSMA that will impact you as an exporter.
- Know the food safety, food defense and food transportation safety protocols, and be prepared to provide appropriate documentation to your importer or FDA upon request.
- Know not only your own food safety, food defense and food transportation practices but also that of your suppliers. The FDA will be focused on ensuring supplier approval, compliance and verification plans across the supply chain. So, be ready.
- Importers should conduct supplier verification activities. This

could include auditing foreign facilities on a regular basis, sampling and testing imported foods and reviewing and maintaining foreign supplier verification (FSV) records at all times.

## High degree of authority for FDA

A high degree of accountability as it relates to the safety of the food imported to the U.S. is now a requirement. Under FSMA, all importers will be required to verify that their foreign suppliers (for instance, Canadian exporters) have appropriate preventive controls in place that are documented in their written food safety plan. This is achieved through the Foreign Supplier Verification Program rule requirements under FSMA. The FDA also has expanded authorities that may directly impact your business:

- **Mandatory recall** – FDA has mandatory recall authority for all food products.
- **Expanded administrative detention** – If imported products are in violation of the law, the FDA will now have greater flexibility in its ability to block entry into the U.S. This can mean burdensome delays for importers whose suppliers are found to be noncompliant.
- **Suspension of registration** – A facility’s registration can be easily suspended if it is believed that its food product poses serious adverse health consequences to humans or animals.
- **Traceability** – FDA has been given the task of establishing enhanced traceability systems under FSMA. Though the requirements have not been wholly specified at this time, you can expect to be required to meet all traceability requirements that will be imposed.
- **Inspections** – FDA is now required to inspect food facilities at a certain frequency based upon the risk posed by the food product being manufactured. As a result, you can expect a greater potential for FDA inspection of your facility.
- **Records access** – FDA will be granted the authority to have access to records including food safety plans and associated records.

It is important to note that, ultimately, there are many new requirements that can impact your business as a result of the U.S. FDA’s *Food Safety Modernization Act*. 📄

For information about how NSF-GFTC can help you with FSMA, visit [www.gftc.ca](http://www.gftc.ca). Take our five-minute survey to see if your systems are in compliance with the new Food Safety Modernization Act at [www.info.nsf.org/extranet/fsma/](http://www.info.nsf.org/extranet/fsma/). Simmer Randhawa, PhD, is a manager, Training Programs, at NSF-GFTC. Contact her at [srandhawa@nsg.org](mailto:srandhawa@nsg.org). Frank Schreurs is the managing director, Food Safety Consulting and Technical Services, for NSF-GFTC. Contact him at [fschreurs@nsf.org](mailto:fschreurs@nsf.org)

**Products for consumers and pet food processors, now on the market**

**Omega-3 source**

Qrill Pet from AkerBioMarine offers superior omega-3 supplements from Antarctic krill, a good source of protein and of the natural antioxidant Astaxanthin. The omega-3 fatty acids in Qrill Pet are mainly in phospholipid form, which as well as having a higher uptake into cell membranes, has shown a positive effect in regulating diet in overweight animals. Omega -3 fatty acids have been shown to positively affect vital organs including the heart, kidney, liver, joints, brain, eyes and skin. [www.akerbiomarine.com/](http://www.akerbiomarine.com/)  
[www.qrill.com](http://www.qrill.com)



**Essential minerals**

Availa Pet Zinpro Performance Minerals are the most bioavailable trace minerals on the market. As a result, when digested more minerals like zinc and manganese are absorbed by the animal to deliver their full benefit. Zinc and manganese are important factors in skin health and coat quality, overall foot health and integrity, immune response, growth and development, reproduction and energy metabolism. [www.zinpro.com](http://www.zinpro.com)



**Pea protein**

Empet pea protein from Horn Animal Wellness is a highly digestible, hypoallergenic protein source that is easy to use and extremely nutritional. With minimum 72 per cent protein, the product has emulsifying properties and can be used for protein enrichment. Empet pea protein is manufactured without the use of GMOs. [www.ethorn.com/animalwellness](http://www.ethorn.com/animalwellness)



**Specialty ingredients**

L.V. Lomas offers a wide variety of pet food ingredients, including animal protein, fish, vegetable proteins, peas, potatoes, specialty grains, specialty vegetable oils, amino acids, specialty emulsifiers, dietary fibres, hydrocolloids, flow additives and more. [www.lvlomas.com](http://www.lvlomas.com)

**Prebiotic fibre**

Fortifeed from Ingredion is a prebiotic soluble fibre derived from pure sugar cane using a bio-fermentation proprietary process and non-GMO ingredients. The fibre has been scientifically shown to support digestion, immune and reduced fecal odour claims. Fortifeed is stable for most processing conditions, making it ideal in a variety of applications for horse, dog and cat diets. [www.ingredion.com](http://www.ingredion.com)

**Natural antioxidant**

Antioxidants from Kalsec provide superior shelf stability with the advantage of a consumer-friendly label. Herbalox HT-O Rosemary Extract is a natural antioxidant with the benefits of low flavour and low aroma, that can be added in either liquid or powder form in varying amounts. Herbalox can be added to animal fat, fish oil, vegetable oil, dehydrated animal protein and kibble. [www.kalsec.com](http://www.kalsec.com)





## Antioxidant blends

Caldic presents its Dadex brand of antioxidant blends for pet food. With more than 85 solutions available to solve any antioxidant challenge, Caldic supports processors with onsite technical assistance from scientists and experts in shelf-life extension. Products are available in organic, locally sourced, non-GMO, soy-free and gluten-free versions, and come in both liquid and dry formats.

[www.caldic.com](http://www.caldic.com)

## Botanical extracts

Naturex offers a large portfolio of natural solutions for pet health and well-being. The company delivers a full range of botanical extracts with key functional benefits, including: digestive health, joint care, stress optimization, energy and vitality, skin and coat care, and weight management. Botanicals can also add sensory appeal to pet food, as well as help with oxidation and pet food preservation. [www.naturex.com](http://www.naturex.com)



## Premixes & blending

ADM Animal Nutrition offers nutritional supplements and feeds for livestock and companion animals, as well as custom blending services, including vitamin and trace mineral premixes, micronutrients, and pre-blends with specialty and functional ingredients.

[www.adm.com/premixes](http://www.adm.com/premixes)



## Joint health

Cargill's Regensasure glucosamine for pet food and animal feed is the only GRAS-approved, fully traceable vegetarian glucosamine produced in North America for the pet food industry. With proven effectiveness on joint health in cats, dogs and horses, Regensasure glucosamine allows pet food manufacturers to more easily create value-added functional foods.

[www.regensasure.com/petfood](http://www.regensasure.com/petfood)

## Probiotics for pets

Liv-Pro from MLF Biotech, Inc. are probiotics that help animals maintain good digestive health. The premium multi-strain blend of beneficial bacteria, which is GRAS-approved, is ideal for offering to pets during periods of stress, during a diet change, after antibiotic therapy, or daily as a preventative measure. [www.liv-propets.com](http://www.liv-propets.com)

## Nutrition solutions

DSM offers a wide range of pet nutrition solutions, including products for weight management and calorie control, healthy joints and strong bones, eye health, immune support, nutrition for skin, hair and fur, oral care, paw protection, cognitive performance and optimum vitamin nutrition. Applications include extruded, baked or wet products, compressed tablets, injection moulding, dry mixes and powders, milk and fatty liquids, and clear solutions. [www.dsmnutritionalproducts.com](http://www.dsmnutritionalproducts.com)





## Fighting food waste

Throwing out food scraps and leftovers hardly seems controversial until you consider the statistics: some 870 million people go to bed hungry every night, notes the World Food Programme.

Pope Francis took this issue to heart and to the public when he equated food waste with “stealing from the table of the poor and hungry,” notes CBC News. The Pope’s remarks are made all the more poignant by the fact that more than \$31 billion worth of food is wasted in Canada every year. And when energy, water and other resources are factored in, the true cost may be almost three times that much, says a new report from the consulting firm Value Chain Management International. Yet for the same time frame, one out of nine people worldwide goes hungry, according to the United Nations.

Paradoxically, the world produces enough food to feed everyone, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. But about 33 per cent of the world’s food supply ends up wasted due to inefficient harvesting, storage, transportation and market and consumer waste, according to a 2013 U.N. report. This costs global economies about US\$750 billion, even as 1.2 billion people do not have enough to eat.

Food waste is more than just poor economics. Uneaten food has an enormous ecological impact. Not only does it waste the resources that went into producing it — water, electricity, fuel and so on — but when the food ends up in landfills it

decomposes, producing up to 20 per cent of Canada’s greenhouse-gas emissions.

Also, in industrialized nations, as opposed to developing countries, consumers contribute significantly to waste. For instance, in developed countries almost 40 per cent of food is wasted after reaching the dinner table, notes the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In contrast, in developing countries almost 40 per cent of food is lost to pests and supply chain issues before reaching the dinner table.

In light of the above, it makes sense why 51 per cent of food waste takes place at home, straight from the refrigerator to the garbage, according to Statistics Canada. One reason may be that consumers preparing food at home often overestimate how much food they need. They also misread “use by” labels, throw away food prematurely, and discard perfectly edible food just because it’s bruised or irregular.

### Packaging can lessen food waste

Research shows that appropriate packaging can help reduce food waste, since it helps food last longer. For example, meat wrapped in case-ready packaging can last up to 21 days as opposed to three days in butcher paper. Given that consumers throw away the equivalent of eight million cows annually, this can make a big difference.

There are a number of ways manufacturers can help combat food waste while limiting the environmental impact of packaging. Three of the most important are:

**1. Offer portion-specific packages** — While many companies already sell their foods in snack, single-portion and single-meal sizes, manufacturers might consider increasing use of these handy sizes to

reflect what diners actually consume. This should result in less waste.

**2. Use technology, not preservatives** — Many companies still rely on preservatives and other additives to keep their foods fresh longer. As processing and packaging technology becomes more sophisticated, food and beverage makers can fulfill the mandate for fresh, safe food and appeal to consumers’ desire for preservative-free products. For instance, aseptic packaging solutions are designed to store liquid food products or beverages for up to a year without the need for preservatives or refrigeration.

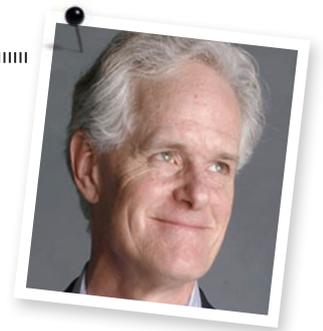
**3. Adopt and use more sustainable packages** — The goal food and beverage makers should keep in mind when selecting product packaging is to select options that maximize food protection and minimize environmental impact.

### Business benefits

The individual and societal benefits of reducing food waste are undeniable, but we rarely mention the benefits to businesses. Food manufacturers that work to conserve food could achieve tangible reductions of up to 20 per cent in costs and see a rise in profits of between five per cent and 11 per cent through the more efficient use of resources, reduced costs along the supply chain and lower disposal costs, according to Value Chain Management International. And in taking the lead in addressing this pressing problem, food producers will benefit equally from increased efficiencies, paving the way for future growth. 🍎

Brian Kennell is president and CEO, Tetra Pak Inc., U.S. & Canada. For more information, visit [www.DoingWhatsGood.ca](http://www.DoingWhatsGood.ca)

Peter Henderson



## Unleashing your innovation potential

Top-down, middle-out and bottom-up

A barrier to innovation can be cultural inertia and fear, as executives and middle management are driven by quarterly results. One way to help minimize this impact can be to embrace a top-down, middle-out and bottom-up approach to innovation.

### Top-Down

Inspire a fertile environment for sustainable growth and prosperity. Franck Riboud, chair of Danone, once said “We cannot grow in the desert.” To Danone these simple words mean a company needs a fertile-thriving society if it wants to be sustainable. This message can apply equally well for a healthy ecosystem within a company.

Successful organizations support a view that human relations are vital to successful growth, and refer to HR as Human Relations. Other leading companies have created positions for vice-president of People, or vice-president of Culture. For smaller or mid-size organizations, this role could be part-time, yet fully embraced by the entire senior leadership team.

Creating and framing challenges are the lifeblood of innovation. A great example of this is Canadian-based Ice River Springs, which asked their bottle supplier to create a bottle from 100-per-



cent recycled bottles. Their supplier wasn't able to do so. Ice River Springs persevered, sourced their own equipment and invented a process themselves. They now have 11 bottling plants and are the leader in private-label water. While everyone may not support the premise of

“Creating and framing challenges are the lifeblood of innovation.”

bottled water, at least Ice River Springs can boast that they re-purpose bottles from Canadian recycling programs.

### Middle-Out

Walk the walk, with design thinking. Design thinking is an approach that uncovers challenges, unmet needs and opportunities, which others can't see. It encourages collaboration (cross-functional and internal-external), and its methodology has been adopted by leading multinational organizations. The book *Business Model Generation* was co-created by 470 practitioners from 45 countries. Published in 2010, it is promoted as “a

handbook for visionaries, game changers and challengers striving to defy out-moded business models and design tomorrow's enterprises.” To download a 72-page preview, visit [www.businessmodelgeneration.com](http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com). The beauty of the design thinking process is it can easily fit within an existing organization structure, as it can be adopted by one or many.

Design thinking, and filling white space can be very rewarding and motivating for all involved. A convenient online business tool that can contribute to effective design thinking and collaboration is [www.mural.ly](http://www.mural.ly). It's a digital mural, or white board, which can enable contribution from the entire innovation team as it enables real-time input and feedback (bottom-up, top-down and from the middle).

### Bottom-Up

All employees can be open to juicing innovation potential. Think about how you can spark new ideas by addressing challenges, which could improve the performance of your colleagues, team and entire organization.

Regardless of your level within your organization, you can be an important contributor. Developing a new and inspiring culture takes time, careful planning and adoption of best practices. Building positive relationships and patience are important. ●

Peter Henderson is a director on the board of the Agri-food Management Institute (AMI). He is also founder and managing director of Ideovation, a Toronto-based growth strategy services company. Contact him at [phenderson@ideovation.com](mailto:phenderson@ideovation.com)

# RESEARCH CHEFS IN CANADA



## News > file

### The great amazing duck race

Niagara College's Canadian Food and Wine Institute took first place in this year's Great Amazing Duck Race, hosted by Newmarket, Ont.-based King Cole Ducks Ltd.

The annual event is the ultimate farm-to-fork competition for culinary students, with participants having to do everything from collecting duck eggs and showcasing knife skills, to shopping for ingredients and cooking the final recipes. This year the event drew teams from nine Ontario culinary schools.

The winning recipes, from students Katherine Kidnie and Jung Hoon You, included a Three King's Cole Duck



appetizer of pulled duck pot sticker, sweet and sour sauce, duck bacon and egg brekkie, pickled market vegetables, southern fried duck liver and caramelized onions and apples. The winning entrée was cinnamon smoked King Cole Duck breast, toasted coriander orange King Cole Duck leg, butternut squash purée,



(LEFT) Teams demonstrated their knife skills at King Cole's federal plant. (RIGHT) The winning team.

farmers' market vegetables and cherry sauce.

Second and third place winners were the teams from George Brown College and Fanshawe College, respectively.

### IN BRIEF



> **Maple Leaf Foods** has named **Andrea Nicholson** as the company's new corporate chef. Nicholson has held positions in various Toronto restaurants and culinary institutes, including Great Cooks, Via Allegro, The Fifth, Humber College, George Brown College, 35 Elm and Cafe Nervosa.

> According to a recent survey of almost 1,300 U.S. chefs by the National Restaurant Association, the number-one current trend in side dishes is wheat-free noodles.



### Top flavour trends for summer

McCormick & Company has released its Club House La Grille Flavour Forecast 2015: Grilling Edition, featuring the hottest flavours and grilling methods of the season. The forecast is put together by a team of chefs and grill masters, and helps to celebrate Club House La Grille's 25th anniversary this year.

This year's forecast includes:

- **Reverse Sear** – Use low heat for even grilling, then turn up the flames for a crispy char.



Toad in the Hole



Pico De Gallo Bruschetta



Bahn Mi Burger

- **Grilled brunch** – Grilling brings out the smoky flavour in breakfast favourites like bacon and eggs.
- **Smokin' veggies** – Vegetables are ideal on the grill.
- **Grilling salts** – Add ingredients for texture and flavour like smoked spices, citrus peel and even bacon.
- **Built up burgers** – Build on unexpected ingredients and flavours, like brown sugar bourbon or shawarma, grilled avocado, mango slaw or lime mayo.

Photos: McCormick Canada

# Molecular cuisine now at Pearson Airport

BY JOHN PLACKO

Two years ago I was approached by HMS Host to collaborate and open a molecular cuisine-inspired restaurant at Pearson Airport as part of its rejuvenation of dining options. I must say I was thrilled at the opportunity to bring a modern twist to some classic dishes like melon and prosciutto, club sandwiches and lemon meringue pie, plus some not-so-traditional dishes. This February Bar 120: Cuisine Transformed opened in Terminal 1, beyond security in Pier D.

Breakfast options consist of some relatively normal breakfast offerings with a modern twist. The eggs for the eggs Benedict, for example, are cooked at 64°C and topped with a sous vide hollandaise. The hollandaise is made by cooking all the ingredients in a sous vide bag for 30 minutes before being placed into a siphon whip and kept hot in a sous vide water bath until needed.

The scrambled eggs are cooked sous vide for eight minutes and served with bacon powder which is made with maltodextrin. The oatmeal and yogurt/fruit parfaits are topped with freeze-dried strawberries, raspberries and blueberries.

There are also some native Australian ingredients on the menu. I started working with these ingredients back in 1991 when they were still very new to the restaurant scene in Sydney. Today the pepper berry powder, which has three times the antioxidants of blueberries and which can be used in the same way as conventional pepper, is used to season kangaroo. Lemon myrtle — one of Australia's most popular native herbs, with a flavour that could be described as a blend of lemongrass and lemon — is used as one



Smoked salmon popsicles

of the marinating ingredients for a cured salmon appetizer. And roasted ground wattleseed is used to make a mousse for the chocolate in a textured dessert dish. Wattleseed has the appearance of coarse ground coffee, but has a unique flavour combination of coffee, chocolate and hazelnut, making it perfect for pairing with a chocolate-based dessert.

Normally a siphon or gourmet whip is used for whipped cream. However, at Bar 120 we use them for hot and cold applications — at the bar for the Clamato foam and in the kitchen for our sous vide cooked meringue, hollandaise sauce, wattleseed mousse, whipped basil olive oil and whipped Parmesan cheese. The whipped Parmesan cheese is gluten free and is made with milk, sodium citrate, grated Parmesan cheese and cream. No starch is used so you get the full and intense flavour of the cheese.

Pocket digital scales are never far from the kitchen. Measuring



Deconstructed  
Caprese salad



Lemon meringue popsicles

ingredients like agar, sodium alginate, xanthan gum, iota and kappa carrageenans are used to create faux caviar, foams or gels, which need a very accurate scaling to 0.1 of a gram. Accurate weights, times and temperatures are the key to the consistency of our preparation and cooking at Bar 120.

Sous vide equipment plays a major role in the menu at Bar 120: Cuisine Transformed. Both Polyscience and Sous Vide Supreme branded units are used to cook our 48-hour ribs, kangaroo, turkey breast, salmon, meringue, hollandaise sauce, steel cut oats, 64°C eggs and scrambled eggs. When cooking foods in a temperature-controlled water bath you're going to obtain consistent results every time with the benefits of the food cooking in its own juices.

“There are also some native Australian ingredients on the menu.”

To seal the product in food-safe plastic bags you need a vacuum sealer or chamber vacuum sealer. We use a chamber vacuum sealer for all our products, as well as using it when compressing melon for two of our dishes. The compressed watermelon with feta cheese frozen on an anti-griddle with mint and a pipette of white balsamic vinegar is a play on the popular watermelon salad.

Although I wasn't able to get liquid nitrogen into the array of ingredients for this restaurant, I certainly was able to get the pacojet and anti-griddle into the kitchen for frozen treats. The anti-griddle is front and centre in the open kitchen so people can see their dishes being created on a counter top grill that freezes food at -34°C. Besides melon and feta popsicles we also make a smoked salmon popsicle. To make the smoked salmon popsicles we add diced bagel, smoked salmon and cream cheese to a one-litre container and freeze it down overnight. The container is then placed into a pacojet machine and shaved into a powder with the blade running at 2,000 rpm, which ends up with the consistency of mayonnaise when thawed. The smoked salmon mix is placed onto the anti-griddle and within two minutes you have the popsicles. The finished dish is dusted with freeze-dried dill powder. The resulting flavour is like a smoked salmon bagel with dill, but frozen in a popsicle form. This is served alongside

a traditional mini bagel with cream cheese and smoked salmon.

Another item we make on the anti-griddle is a lemon meringue popsicle with freeze-dried raspberry. The lemon curd is placed onto the surface and crisp pastry crumbs then go onto the curd. After the popsicle stick is inserted, meringue is dispensed onto the popsicle and a blowtorch toasts the meringue a golden brown before the freeze-dried whole raspberries crown this sweet treat.

We also use some traditional pieces of equipment, including a dehydrator for our raisins on the vine, black olive powder and crisp dried kale leaves. A rotary toaster is used for our Canadian Club sandwich, which may seem quite a normal menu item, other than the fact that we serve freeze-dried vegetables on the side, as well as a play on the “Canadian Club” where we make a brittle jelly with agar and Canadian Club whisky. The jelly is then finely grated to create a unique texture with great flavour release.

A commonly used cooking unit at many airports is the turbo chef. This unit uses a rapid hot airflow with a degree of microwaving to deliver consistent product every time. A toasted sandwich will be perfectly toasted on the outside and hot inside in just one minute.

The bar menu has some unique beverages including the classic Caesar which is topped with a whipped Clamato foam using a siphon whip. And our martini comes with dehydrated green olive powder on the rim of the glass with lemon caviar, made in front of the guest.

There are a variety of restaurants opened by HMS Host at Pearson Airport in collaboration with Food Network celebrity chefs: The Hearth by Lynn Crawford, Twist by Roger Mooking, LEE kitchen by Susur Lee, and Caplansky's delicatessen by Zane Caplansky. You can now enjoy these dining options on your next visit to Pearson when you have some time to spare before your flight. Bar 120: Cuisine Transformed is open seven days a week from 5 a.m. until 11:30 p.m. ●

John Placko is culinary director, Modern Culinary Academy, and Bar 120: Cuisine Transformed, Pearson International Airport. Contact him at [johnplacko@gmail.com](mailto:johnplacko@gmail.com). For more information about molecular cuisine books, equipment and ingredients visit [www.Powderfortexture.com](http://www.Powderfortexture.com)

Birgit Blain



## Getting inside the customer's head

No matter how incredibly delicious a product is, taste alone does not guarantee commercial success. Getting to know customers and meeting their needs are key ingredients for building a sustainable brand.

Food brands must cater to two types of customers: retailers (or foodservice operators) and end users. This article, the third in this series about entering the packaged foods arena, tackles the elusive consumer.

The ultimate challenge is to attract target consumers, influence them to choose your brand above all others and keep them coming back for more.

### Who is your target consumer?

When identifying consumers, it is tempting to cast a wide net in the hopes of reeling in “every fish in the sea.” However, targeting a specific group is a more effective strategy. By establishing a primary target, such as mothers with young children, it is easier to craft a message that resonates with the audience and influences purchases. Brands with a broad appeal may also have secondary and tertiary targets.

### Ferretting out the insights

Start by building a demographic profile based on who is most likely to buy and use the product. Then zero in on needs (both physical and emotional), values



and behaviours to gain insight into what drives purchase decisions.

Survey consumers through social media and in person; the greater the sample size (number of respondents), the better. Choose respondents carefully, ensuring

“Getting inside the consumer's head is crucial to deliver a product that meets their needs and beats the competition.”

they fit into the target group and regularly purchase similar products.

Surveys are most effective when conducted by an independent third party that also analyzes the data. Keeping respondents in the dark about the product and company represented is critical for honest and unbiased feedback.

Interviews conducted in consumers' homes provide insights about lifestyle and how to meet their needs. Taking a peek inside the refrigerator and pantry reveals what they actually buy. Then delve deeper, to learn why the product was purchased and understand the post purchase experience.

Accompanying consumers on grocery shopping trips, with kids in tow, and

observing their behaviour can be an eye-opener, revealing how they make buying decisions.

Consumer taste panels, executed by professionals with sensory training, are an effective tool to test formulations and validate assumptions.

### Creating a consumer persona

Based on consumer insights and data collected, form a picture of the target consumer. The consumer persona for a children's cereal may start like this: “Meagan, age 36, is married and a working mother of two children age two and six. The family has a household income of \$100,000 and lives in the suburbs. Meagan's daily challenges include juggling work and family responsibilities and finding ways to stretch the budget. Her top priority is the health of her children, so she regularly checks the nutrition facts and ingredient statements looking for artificial additives.”

### Keeping the consumer top of mind

The consumer persona is invaluable when making business decisions, providing guidance for purchasing, product development, packaging, marketing, advertising and sales.

Relying on hope, gut feelings and stakeholder opinions is a flawed plan. Getting inside the consumer's head is crucial to deliver a product that meets their needs and beats the competition. ●

As a packaged foods consultant, Birgit Blain makes brands more saleable. Her experience includes 17 years with Loblaw Brands and President's Choice. Learn more at [www.BBAndAssoc.com](http://www.BBAndAssoc.com)

## IFT 2015 Preview

IFT15: Where Science Feeds Innovation takes place this July 11 to 14, 2015 in Chicago at the McCormick Place South. The Institute of Food Technologists' (IFT) annual trade show and conference offers attendees a first-hand look at the latest trends, products and innovations driving food science. The show expects more than 23,000 visitors from over 90 countries. If you're not one of them, take heart, *Food in Canada* has put together its own annual preview of some of the products you'll find there.



### Creating Sparks

Bell Flavors & Fragrances Inc. will showcase Spark, which the company launched to introduce its 2015 flavour and fragrance trend inspirations. The company will also highlight the tastes of Southeast Asia and will feature Bo Kho Bao, a Vietnamese-style steam bun, and a flavoured white tea and Chai cardamom beverage.

Visitors can try a Hotteok, a Korean pancake, as well as a lychee and sweet potato Korean cupcake. **Booth #1267**

### Collagen peptides, gelatins

Nitta Gelatin manufactures food, pharmaceutical and technical gelatins and is the maker of Wellnex Collagen Peptides for bone and joint health and for skin health. Wellnex collagen peptides can help prevent joint cartilage and sub chondral bone cell deformation, and can help prevent and treat bone diseases such as osteoporosis. Wellnex collagen peptides for skin health can help repair UV damage to the skin and can help improve skin structure leading to smoother skin texture. **Booth #3924**

### Functional ingredients

WTI Inc. will highlight ingredients that can inhibit pathogens, extend shelf-life, reduce sodium content, enhance product flavour, maintain yields and improve product quality (including tenderness, flavour, slice-ability and colour). The company will also highlight its clean label, all-natural antimicrobials and all-natural shelf life extenders.

**Booth #267**

### Flavours and extracts

Bonnie & Don Flavours Inc. is an Ontario-based creator and manufacturer of high-quality flavours and extracts. The company will highlight its natural and organic flavours and colours that can also be customized for clients' applications. **Booth # 4257**



### Ingredient solutions

Prinova will highlight its ascorbic acid, B vitamins and amino acids. It also offers PureCircle stevia leaf extracts, as well as services including everything from flavour matching to product fortification. **Booth #2812, #2910**

### Colour it up!

Sensient Technologies will highlight its Sensient Colors, which can bring life to products, and add colour and visual enjoyment to food and beverage applications. The company will also highlight its value-added flavour systems. **Booth #1931**



### Ingredients for success

Ontario-based Caldic manufactures and distributes food ingredients. The company will highlight its antioxidants, oil blends, dough

conditioners, gluten-free bakery blends, functional enzyme blends and release agents. **Booth #454**

### Connecting chemistry

Brenntag North America will highlight its specialty and commodity ingredients. The company offers clients tailor-made, supply-chain solutions and technical and market expertise. Some ingredients include emulsifiers, anticaking agents, chelating agents, humectants and fatty acids. **Booth #3727** ➔

## Colour solutions

DDW The Color House will highlight its colourings, caramel colours and burnt sugars. The company also offers natural food colourings derived from agricultural, biological or mineral sources. **Booth #1914**

## Wholesale flavours & colours

Gold Coast Ingredients Inc. will highlight organic, natural and non-GMO flavours; sweet, savoury or a combination of flavours; powder or liquid forms; powdered encapsulations; oil-soluble or water-soluble; heat stable; and natural or synthetic colourants. **Booth #2614**



## From field to formula

RFI Ingredients will highlight its services such as contract and private-label manufacturing, product development and turnkey operations. The company will also highlight ingredients such as natural colours, dried fruit, dried vegetables and botanicals. **Booth #1543**

## Ingredient standards

The U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) is a scientific non-profit organization that sets standards for the identity, strength, quality

and purity of medicines, food ingredients and dietary supplements. USP's drug standards are enforceable in the U.S., and these standards are used in more than 140 countries. **Booth #2956**

## Cheese makers

The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association serves more than 400 dairy processors, whey processors and food industry suppliers in the growing dairy ingredients sector. **Booth #4956**



## Corn-based products



Grain Processing Corporation will highlight its Maltrin maltodextrins and corn syrup solids, which also come in quick-dispersing versions, as well as its Pure-Cote coating/film-forming starches, Inscosity instant

starches, Pure-Gel stabilized starches, Pure-Set thin-boiling starches and Pure-Dent unmodified and specialty starches. **Booth #2607**

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Deanna Rosolen



From left to right are: Mike Fronte, Robert Kuenzlen, Mike Dattoli and Marco Capizzo.



for our cardboards and plastics,” explains Robert Kuenzlen, the company’s executive vice-president. “We installed LED lighting. We have refrigeration that is much more energy efficient and allows us to reduce our energy footprint.”

Earlier this year the business was also named one of Canada’s Best Managed Companies of 2014. The award, which is sponsored by Deloitte, CIBC, National Post, Queen’s School of Business and MacKay CEO Forums, recognizes Canadian-owned and managed companies with revenues of more than \$10 million in sustained growth, financial performance and management practices. “That was a feather in our cap,” says Kuenzlen. “It speaks to the fact that we are doing our best to run the company, not just as a for-profit enterprise but also as one that respects the environment, sustainability and our social corporate responsibility.”

But the very early years were tough going. As an example, a conventional distributor could send a tractor-trailer to Mexico to pick up tomatoes and then add a skid of organic tomatoes. With the one trip, the truck would be full. As a solely organic distributor at that time, it wasn’t easy filling trucks. “When you start you’re trying to build that truck yourself with a pallet here and there,” says Kuenzlen. “It was challenging logistically and expensive.”

On the other hand, as it grew — and the company did grow quickly — the team offered certain advantages.

Customers looking for only organics started to seek them out. The company also offered a variety the conventional distributors didn’t — for example, one type of organic pear versus Mike & Mike’s six different varieties.

The company hopes to expand by partnering with farmers, says Kuenzlen, and finding new products, such as salsas, guacamoles and soups. And with the help of partners they’d like to produce these products locally. “Our strength is in our logistics infrastructure. We could make it easier for farmers to get their products out to 200 stores because our trucks are there every day.” 🍎

Q&A



**Q:** Has consumer interest in organics changed over the years?

**A:** “Today consumers and millennials in particular are making choices based on health and wellness as well as lifestyle. When they purchase food, they’re interested in the impact on the environment. It used to be the grassroots hippie was concerned about these issues and the rest of us went down the middle. Now more consumers are looking at how their food choices impact their children, the environment and sustainability.”

**Q:** What challenges do you face?

**A:** “Typically consumers perceive organic as more expensive. They also tend to confuse the fact that local doesn’t necessarily mean organic and vice versa. So there are opportunities to educate consumers. You could buy local tomatoes but they still might be sprayed with chemicals. But when you’re buying certified organic — and we stress the term organic — certification is the guarantee.”

## Mike & Mike’s Organics Woodbridge, Ont.

Working in produce gave Mike Fronte and Mike Dattoli a bird’s eye view of the industry. It’s how they knew 10 years ago that the industry was missing a dedicated certified organic fruit and vegetable distributor in Ontario. Many distributors offered organics, but as an add-on to their conventional businesses.

Fast forward to today and Fronte and Dattoli and their team have created a niche and made it work. In addition to the more than 300 kinds of organic fruits and vegetables Mike & Mike’s carries, the company has its own snack line of dried fruits, nuts and seeds, which is all distributed to stores across Ontario and in the Maritimes. The company just expanded from a 20,000-sq.-ft. plant to one that is 43,000 sq. ft. and includes environmentally friendly upgrades. “We have a complete recycling program

# Congratulations to five companies who lead by example.



We want to congratulate **Fiera Foods Company, Devonian Coast Wineries, Manitoba Harvest Hemp Foods, Mother Parkers Tea & Coffee, and Clearwater Seafoods** for winning the prestigious Food in Canada 2015 Leadership Awards. These companies have all made impressive advances in their categories and are true industry leaders. At Grant Thornton LLP, we're proud sponsors of the Leadership Awards because we know that exemplary leadership inspires growth throughout the industry.

Every day our food and beverage practitioners help businesses in the sector thrive and grow. To learn the many ways we can help your business unlock your potential for growth, please visit: [GrantThornton.ca/Manufacturing](http://GrantThornton.ca/Manufacturing).



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