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FOOD CANADA

Canada's food & beverage processing magazine

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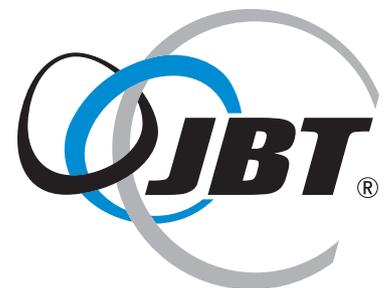


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Meat of the matter

Meal time in my household is often chaotic. Not because there are so many mouths to feed — there are, but that’s another story — but because we often have two different meals on the go. It’s the result of having a family that is half vegetarian, half meat-loving. Usually we’re able to settle on healthy meals that combine the best of both worlds, with a variety of legumes and vegetables and at least two protein options. It’s a situation a lot of families find themselves in, especially when you throw in hectic schedules and on-the-go lifestyles.

Luckily there are so many different protein sources readily available today, from traditional sources like beans, fish and dairy, to re-discovered sources like ancient grains and seeds. Add to that the number of prepared vegetarian meal options and even snacks containing protein, and the options for getting enough protein into your diet become endless.

All of this has meant more competition for the meat industry, as even meat-eating consumers increasingly opt for a diet featuring a variety of protein sources. But it’s not a bad news story — far from it. As a result of this compe-

titition, as well as heightened consumer interest and pressure, the meat industry is beginning to move in a direction it must to survive.

Those meat producers and processors that will thrive already have or are implementing credible animal welfare policies, food safety programs, traceability programs, and environmental stewardship programs (and so do their food business partners down the supply chain). And they are being completely transparent about it. Successful meat companies are also innovating to introduce healthier meat products, like organic beef, or to provide for undersupplied niches, like the halal category. And the door is slowly opening for nutritious red meat options like bison or goat.

It’s these sorts of measures that will make the industry stronger and more competitive, and will help it endure changing consumer trends and taste preferences. It’s an evolution that must happen. ●

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn".

i
For more on where the meat industry in Canada is heading, see “Meat’s new message” on page 22.

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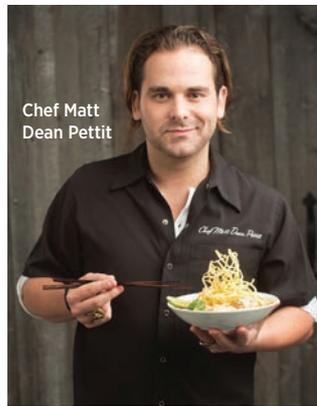
Doritos celebrated Valentine’s Day with a unique marketing promotion this year. The company offered bouquets of “Doritos Ketchup Roses,” described in Doritos marketing material as “a beautiful bouquet of 12 long-stem roses made from tangy Doritos Ketchup tortilla chips...Each individually hand-crafted bloom is made up of delicate petals hand-selected from the finest Doritos Ketchup tortilla chips.” The Doritos Ketchup Roses could be ordered online for free for a limited time in “very limited” quantities (they ran out very quickly!), available for delivery to select areas of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.



News > file



photos: Campbell Canada



Chef Matt Dean Pettit

“Soup’s on” at the Cantina by Campbell’s

For three weeks in February, Campbell Canada conducted a fun and interesting marketing campaign: in a mash-up between the worlds of food production and foodservice, the soup giant opened a “pop-up restaurant” called The Cantina by Campbell’s.



photo: Andrew Williamson

Located on Toronto’s trendy Queen Street West, the pop-up restaurant served up four tasty soup varieties designed by local chef Matt Dean Pettit. Adding his own personal flair and culinary tech-

niques, Pettit used traditional Campbell’s soup products as a basis for his own creations. Cantina visitors could further personalize the experience by adding fresh garnishes to their soup to “make it their own.”

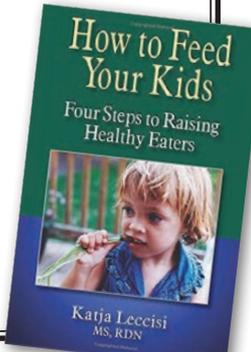
“I created these delicious recipes in such a way that they can be recreated at home,” says Pettit, founder and chef at Toronto’s Rock Lobster restaurants. “We have so many diverse cultures and flavours available to us here in Toronto. Soup is one of those universal foods that unites people from around the globe.”

The Cantina offered complimentary walk-in lunch and dinnertime soup tasting options as a way to shine the spotlight on the variety available in the Campbell’s soup portfolio, as well as the numerous appealing recipes using Campbell’s broths that Canadians can make in their own kitchens. Guests were also able to take away free samples of the newly launched Campbell’s Soup Kits so they could make their own at home. ➔



For parents who struggle with overly busy schedules, or picky eaters, or kids who just don’t want to sit down at the family dinner table, mealtime can often be a real source of stress. But it doesn’t have to be that way, according to a new book by Katja Leccisi. In her book *How to Feed Your Kids: Four Steps to Raising Healthy Eaters*, the author offers help for various mealtime struggles, drawing upon her 20 years of experience as a nutritionist. She offers parents practical, compassionate advice on establishing healthy and harmonious family mealtimes.

How to Feed Your Kids walks parents through all the variables: from choosing a place to eat and setting the mood for the family mealtime, to establishing a schedule the whole family can count on while leaving room for flexibility when necessary. It also looks at what’s involved with planning menus and cooking wholesome food for (and with) kids, and stresses the importance of giving youngsters a chance to develop their own tastes and preferences. The author’s practical suggestions and extensive resource section will appeal to all levels of culinary skill, from novice cooks to seasoned foodies.



Visually the pop-up restaurant had an artistic vibe, and featured a mosaic wall where each guest could place a sticker that will help build a piece of pop art. For each sticker placed, Campbell Canada made a donation of one can of soup to Daily Bread Food Bank.

Photo: Mushrooms Canada



Mushroom market boosted by The Blend

Demand for mushrooms is at an all time high. Consumers and the foodservice market have discovered the magic of mushrooms to transform meat-based dishes such as burgers, meatballs and tacos to healthier low-fat, low-calorie options.

Researchers at University of California, Davis

in collaboration with the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) found that a blend of 20 to 30 per cent chopped mushrooms to ground beef goes fairly undetected in traditional meat-based dishes. Consumers tasting dishes with a 50- to 80-per-cent blend did notice a difference; however, they liked the dish as much as the original versions.

When cooked properly mushrooms take on a meaty texture and savoury flavour or umami taste that heightens individual ingredients as well as giving the entire dish a flavour boost.

“The Blend” has the potential to make a big impact on the foodservice market, says U.S. Mushroom Council’s Bart Minor. “We’re really just scratching the surface when it comes to potential here,” he told FoodNavigator-USA.

Mushrooms Canada would like Canadians to know about the blend as well. Shannon Bryan, marketing and digital content manager, says a promotion called Blend and Extend, in partnership with Ontario Beef, encouraged consumers to combine finely chopped mushrooms and beef in recipes, and focused on the nutritious reasons why. “Consumers bring another serving of vegetables to the plate, add volume to meals and extend portions,” says Bryan, adding that mushrooms lower calories, saturated fat and cholesterol in meals while boosting the vitamin and mineral profile of the dish.

The global mushroom market was valued at \$29,427.92

million in 2013, according to Markets and Markets, with the research firm predicting it to reach \$50,034.12 million by 2019. Production in the U.S. jumped 10 per cent from 2013 to 2014, according to the U.S. Mushroom Council, citing data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Canadian mushroom production also saw a leap of 6.7 per cent per year from 2010 to 2014, according to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Statistics Canada. Farm-gate value increased at the rate of 10.3 per cent during this period.

Specialty mushrooms such as shiitake, oyster, enoki and king oyster mushrooms are surging in popularity too. Micky Wylie of Wylie Mycologicals, an organic specialty mushroom facility in Ontario, says multiculturalism has driven up the demand for specialty mushrooms, as has foodservice. “Restaurants are at the forefront of experimenting with newer and exotic mushrooms,” she says.

— Natalie Cajic



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Food producer laying down major footprint in Manitoba

BroadGrain Commodities Inc., a leading Canadian-based marketer and handler of grains, oilseeds, by-products and specialty crops for feed and food markets, is in the process of establishing a major presence in Winnipeg.

The Toronto-based company has announced that it will be building a \$25-million terminal to handle grains and beans at the CentrePort Canada Rail Park west of Winnipeg’s James Richardson International Airport. The BroadGrain project will take up close to 30 acres of the new 700-acre rail park, and will be the first anchor tenant for the new development.



Jason Phillips, BroadGrain’s vice-president, Strategic Business Development, reports that the company will be constructing two facilities at the CentrePort site: a high-throughput grain elevator with 25,000 to 30,000 metric tonnes of storage and an expected annual throughput of 450,000 to 500,000 metric tonnes, and later a specialty crops processing facility. “The majority of the product we will be handling at the

CentrePort facility will be destined for export, primarily to markets in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin,” Phillips says.

BroadGrain Commodities has existing facilities in Ontario and Saskatchewan. “Manitoba is an important source for our products,” says Phillips. “We were attracted to the CentrePort location by its easy access both to rail access and truck traffic. That gives us a logistical advantage.” Phillips reports that BroadGrain already has a couple of traders in place in Winnipeg and will soon be hiring a plant manager and workers. He estimates that the two facilities will be staffed by 15 to 20 full-time workers supplemented by seasonal hires.

The company will be seeking tenders for construction of the two structures within the next few weeks. “We are hoping to get started on construction in the spring and are pushing for completion by the end of the year,” Phillips says.

BroadGrain Commodities is owned and operated by the Qadoumi family, which has been in the grain and food business for three generations. The company employs more than 100 people and operates worldwide.

— Myron Love

Are bugs the next superfood?

No, it’s not an old episode of Fear Factor — it seems edible insects are truly being touted by some in the food industry as the next big superfood. Jarrod, Darren and Ryan Goldin, owners of Campbellford, Ont.’s Entomo Farms (formerly called Next Millennium Farms), are among those who think edible bugs will be a big part of the future of food. Their company is one of North America’s largest producers of edible insects (primarily crickets and worms) for human consumption. As the world population grows and resources become scarcer, the Goldins argue, edible insects will help solve global food security issues.



Füdi collaborates with food bloggers

As a creative way to showcase its products this January, Canadian gourmet frozen food brand füdi collaborated with seven popular Toronto food bloggers. The bloggers critiqued and photographed an array of füdi entrées, after which the frozen food company gave the public the chance to vote on their favourite blogger submission. The winning entry received a month’s supply of füdi meals and the entire line of the complementary füdi spice blends.

“The idea behind the collaboration was to gain valuable feedback from each of the food bloggers. We also wanted to see how the food bloggers would interpret the füdi entrées,” says Maurizio Racco, founder of füdi. “Although preparing the meal (ready for consumption) just involves placing the two bags →

U OF G PROF HONoured BY POULTRY INDUSTRY

Thanks to his outstanding contributions to egg and poultry food safety and processing, University of Guelph professor Shai Barbut was among four international researchers who were inducted into the American Poultry Historical Society’s Poultry Industry Hall of Fame on Jan. 27. The Hall of Fame was created in 1953 to recognize researchers whose work and accomplishments benefit the North American poultry industry. Up to five scientists are inducted every five years.

Barbut is an internationally respected expert on meat and food safety, especially poultry processing, hazard analysis, and the relationships between microstructure and texture.





Winning photo by blogger Xiao

in any fūdi package into a pot of boiling water, we also want to see how each blogger would present the meals on their plate.”

The process began with fūdi sending all of its entrées to each of the seven bloggers to try. The bloggers were instructed to document their entire cooking

process, providing feedback and sharing it on their social media pages. Then each blogger submitted high-resolution pictures of the meals, which were uploaded and featured on fūdi’s website, social media pages and traditional marketing channels. The best image by each blogger went to a public vote on fūdi’s website and Facebook page. The winner was a blogger named Xiao, whose website can be viewed at <http://xiaoeats.com>.

A PROBIOTIC INNOVATION BOOST



With an eye on boosting probiotic innovation in the functional food and beverage market, Cleveland, Ohio-based Ganeden has launched “Probiotic Innovation Jumpstart,” an entrepreneurial program

designed to help companies launch new probiotic products. Ganeden is inviting all scientists, entrepreneurs and inventors with a new probiotic food or beverage product concept to submit their idea. The grand prize winner receives \$25,000 in support to use GanedenBC30 probiotics in their product, as well as any guidance, assistance and expertise that they might need in order to develop and launch their innovation. All initial concepts must be submitted on the Probiotic Innovation Jumpstart website (www.ganedenprobiotics.com/jumpstart) by May 6, 2016. Canadian companies are encouraged to enter, but must be launching their product in a U.S. market in order to qualify. ➔

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Decoding Consumer Trust

By Cher Mereweather

Last November I attended the Canadian Agri-food Policy Institute’s Forum on Canada’s Agri-Food Future. I had the pleasure of sitting on the steering committee and working with industry leaders on making sure we had the right discussion framework. The primary question of Forum participants was straightforward — Should Canada aim to become the most trusted food system in the world? If you were in Ottawa at the event you already know attendance was strong. Food and beverage leaders from across Canada, and officials from government and academia, assembled to listen and learn from international speakers who provoked thinking and welcomed debate on challenges and opportunities confronting Canada’s reputation.

Recommendations from the Forum have just been published in the report, *Achieving What’s Possible For Canada’s Agri-Food Sector* (<http://bit.ly/1U8g2o9>) — so the next obvious question is how does industry take collective action? And are the recommendations really top of mind for food businesses across



Canada? From my seat at Provision Coalition — an organization that is concerned with how we advance sustainability and, by extension, food manufacturer productivity and competitiveness — I would say the answer is yes.

At Provision, we have a number of successful examples of how industry evolves one business at a time. Two good references are Marsan Foods

Limited and EarthFresh Foods. Both these companies have been quick to recognize that making changes within their facilities to improve the bottom line, while also reducing impact on the environment and improving workplace culture, are of broad value. The team at Provision has learned as much assisting these companies in developing and implementing their sustainability action plans, as Marsan Foods Limited and EarthFresh Foods have learned from us.

Both companies cite operational and business cultural changes that facilitate greater transparency and ultimately build trust with their employees and customers, as tremendously important to the success of their business. In turn, their customers in retail and foodservice are in a stronger position to build trust with the consumer.

In the food industry, we are no stranger to the concept of transparency. We understand that the more authentic and upfront we are about our business conduct the better our relationships across the supply chain. A recent study out of the U.S. has confirmed this and more. Consumers have a growing interest, and concern, with how businesses manage themselves in terms of the impact of food on health, food safety, environmental impact, animal wellbeing, business ethics and labour rights.

The report, *A Clear View of Transparency and How it Builds Trust* (<http://bit.ly/1XYXhSK>), published by The Centre for Food Integrity, which has an excellent reputation for credible consumer research, released results from a multi-year study that shows consumer trust is directly correlated to business transparency.

Canada’s reputation as a trusted food system is then a sum of its many food supply chain business parts. Becoming a more sustainable and transparent food business does take time and commitment, which is why Provision Coalition was founded by industry groups and funded in part by Growing Forward 2. Our work helps Canadian food manufacturing businesses navigate sustainability changes one step at a time.

Cher Mereweather is executive director of Provision Coalition. Contact her at cmereweather@provisioncoalition.com or visit www.provisioncoalition.com

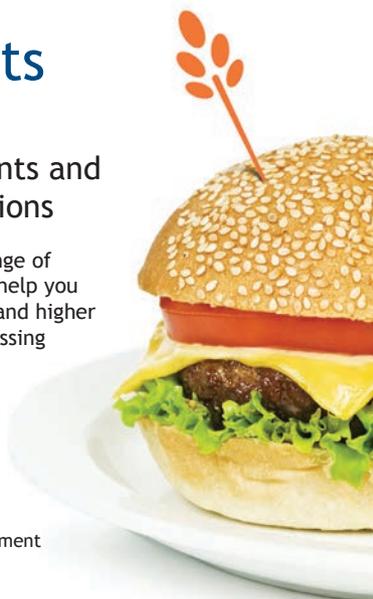


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THE POWER OF EGGS

January marked a milestone for an important agricultural development project supported by Egg Farmers of Canada and the International Egg Foundation in the African country of Swaziland: their newly built egg-laying operation welcomed its first flock of pullets (young hens).

The egg barns, built in collaboration with the non-profit organization Heart for Africa, are expected to deliver thousands of eggs to orphans. This will augment Heart for Africa's existing program, which already delivers 74,000 hand-packed meals to rural communities each month.

This partnership between Egg Farmers of Canada and Heart for Africa was announced in late 2014. Since then, volunteers from the Canadian egg industry have helped locals in Swaziland build the entire egg farm.

"When we first heard about Heart for Africa, we recognized an opportunity for the humble egg and knew we wanted to be involved," says Tim Lambert, Chief Executive Officer at Egg Farmers of Canada. "With six grams of high-quality protein and 14 essential vitamins and nutrients, eggs are the perfect food to feed a hungry world. Egg Farmers of Canada, through the International Egg Foundation, is proud to be part of this project."



The newly built egg-laying farm welcomed its first flock in January. PHOTO:CNW Group/Egg Farmers of Canada

INBRIEF

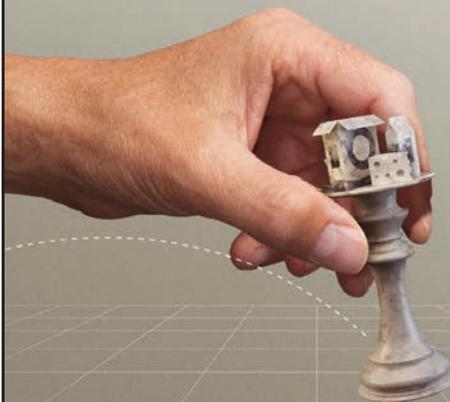


> Brea, Calif.-based **Ventura Foods**, a leading U.S.-based manufacturer of custom and branded sauces, dressings and food oils, has acquired the sauces and condiments business of Toronto- and Edmonton-based **Wing's Foods**. The newly acquired business will become **Ventura Foods Canada**, and will operate as a wholly owned subsidiary. Wing's Asian Heritage business, including the company's Noodle, Wrap and Cookie business, is not part of the acquisition.

> **ACE Bakery** has attained Non-GMO Project Verification for its lineup of full size baguettes. ACE Baguettes bearing the Non-GMO Project Verified seal appeared across Canada beginning early February 2016. Verification of the ACE Baguette represents the first phase of ACE Bakery's plan to verify its artisan portfolio by the end of 2016. ➔



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> A \$4-million settlement in a class action suit related to the massive recall of beef products processed by **XL Foods** in Brooks, Alta. in 2012 has officially been approved. On Feb. 17, 2016, the law firms involved (Siskinds LLP of London, Ont., James H. Brown and Associates of Edmonton and D'Arcy &

Deacon LLP of Calgary) announced the court approval of a protocol for the distribution of settlement funds in the class action.

> New York-based **K10 Holdings LLC**, the makers of the K-10+ line of health and wellness products for dogs, has announced a new partnership for national distribution with Phil-

lips Pet Food & Supplies. Phillips began rolling out the complete line of K-10+ products through 16 distribution centres this February.

> Fine food products manufacturer **Delcato Foods** has received federal certification from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for its newly opened Toronto area processing facility.

> The **Alberta Pulse Growers** has selected esteemed pulse researcher **Ken Lopetinsky** as the winner of the second annual Alberta Pulse Industry Innovator Award.



> Montreal-based **Expresco Foods** has announced the appointment of **United Food Brokers** to represent its complete foodservice line of fully cooked grilled protein products in the Atlantic market place. Expresco Foods has also appointed **C.W. Shasky & Associates** to represent its complete foodservice line of fully cooked grilled protein products in the Ontario market place.

> Vancouver-based **Intercity Packers Ltd.** and Vancouver-based **Albion Fisheries Ltd.** have announced the strategic alignment of their two companies, operating under the new name **Albion Farms and Fisheries**. Effective at the end of this May, this alignment is expected to position Albion Farms and Fisheries as one of Western Canada's largest fully integrated suppliers of meat and seafood.

> The Government of Canada is investing up to \$709,138 in a project with the **University of Prince Edward Island's Atlantic Veterinary College** to create diagnostic tests that will make it easier to keep Canada's bovine and swine herds healthy. The college's research team plans to develop new tests that are faster, more sensitive and less costly to detect bovine and swine viruses.



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SUPPLIER NEWS



> **JBT Corporation**, a global technology solutions provider to high-value segments of the food and beverage industry, has purchased certain assets of **Novus X-Ray LLC**, a provider of advanced X-ray food inspection systems. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed. Novus X-ray technology will be integrated into JBT's Protein and Liquid Foods system offerings.

> Grimsby, Ont.'s **Cimcorp Automation Ltd.**, a manufacturer and integrator of turnkey robotic gantry-based order fulfillment and tire handling solutions, has announced that **Derek Rickard**, distribution systems sales manager, and **Don Heelis**, Tire and AGV systems sales manager, have both been named to Supply & Demand Chain Executive's 2016 Provider Pros to Know list. This is Rickard's second year in a row being honoured with this award.

> **PGP International** has successfully passed the Version 7 BRC Certification audit with an AA rating, which translates as zero non-conformances.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



> **Alison Robertson**, executive director of Agri-Food Management Institute, has been appointed the next chair of the Ontario Food Terminal.



Robertson

> Bacchus Wineworks, the Geyserville, Calif.-based sales and marketing company founded by Sam Bronfman, Peter Kaufman and Henry Owsley of Bacchus Capital Management, has announced the



Simpson

appointment of **David Simpson** to vice-president of Sales and Marketing. > San Antonio, Tex.-based Food Safety Net Services (FSNS) is welcoming **Jeff Carpenter** as vice-president of

Strategic Planning. > Winston-Salem, N.C.-based Moffat USA has appointed **Kristian Kuh** as the new general manager. Kuh will oversee operations for Moffat USA.



Carpenter

> New York-based K10 Holdings LLC, the makers of the K-10+ line of health and wellness products for dogs, has hired **Matt Wurtzel** as vice-president of Sales. > Muskegon, Mich.-based Dynamic Conveyor Corporation has hired **Jeremy Loyselle** as a sales territory manager. Loyselle will focus on assisting customers in conveyor design and layout for both the DynaCon and DynaClean conveyor lines.

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COMMENTARY

Three factors discussed in current markets need some perspective:

1. It is said warmer than normal weather in key U.S. wheat states will affect winter wheat production. Several people analyzed past years when February temperatures were above and below normal. The conclusion is that there is absolutely no correlation between February temperatures and winter wheat yields. Don't bet your company's purchasing budget on that one.

2. It's entertaining to listen to politicians and "sudden" academic "experts" about the role of speculators. In 2008 and 2012 speculators were the rascals who drove up grain prices. Ever notice that they only do that in years when there are extremely low stocks/use ratios? Hmmmm. A lot of really good research has since debunked that accusation. This is interesting now with managed funds holding record net short positions in the grains. That's part of the reason prices are near the low

end of sideways channels. The shorts may be right that prices will fall further, with wheat perhaps being the first victim as discussed above. But they've been dead wrong several times in the past few months, resulting in some bankruptcies. If the support planes hold, then these massive shorts will get covered and could lead to a rapid rise in prices. Purchasers need to watch both the charts and the positions of managed funds in the next few weeks because they will be related.

3. At the end of most every bear market there is at least one key reversal in the grain and oilseed markets. There was one in May soybean meal in mid-March. It is also being tested currently. Before you read this both meal and wheat futures will tell us which direction the market is going. ●

Market Trends is prepared by Dr. Larry Martin, who offers a course on managing risk with futures and options in Guelph, Ont. through agrifoodtraining.com. Contact him at DLM@explornet.com or (519) 841-1698.

MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Grain, oil and Canadian dollar prices show signs of bottoming, soy oil and sugar have potential strength, and natural gas keeps dropping.

> Grains: Corn, wheat and soybean prices have moved sideways for two to four months. All three have been battered by both supply and demand bearish news. Managed funds have built record large net short positions. Yet the lows of the range continue to provide support. This can be viewed in two ways: either the downtrend is ending or a breakout of support will send markets skidding lower.

> Corn: May has bottomed at \$3.54 before recovering to the current \$3.66. U.S. inventories remain high while South American production is expected at record levels. Recent U.S. exports have been positive to prices, as has ethanol production, at about two per cent ahead of last year. A large U.S. crop, a larger one than expected in South America, and/or a decline in export demand are the three factors that will break through support. The opposite on any of these three factors could take the market up through resistance. Short-term support is at \$3.54. Major support is around \$3.46. Considerable resistance is around \$3.85. We continue to buy hand to mouth for now, but would cover against \$3.87 and/or lock prices in around \$3.54 if support holds at \$3.46.

> Soy oil: Prices continue being pushed down by the large supply of soybeans and supported by palm oil prices. Brazil's soy production is forecast above 100 mmt with ideal weather. Palm oil faces upward pressure as use is outstripping drought-reduced production. We continue to see major support and resistance at \$0.265 and \$0.325 on the May, currently at \$0.317. Continue to buy hand to mouth with protection above \$0.325 on the May.

> Wheat: Wheat stocks continue huge, especially Europe's. Egypt is buying again after the dispute about ergot, and India may have a short crop because of drought. But U.S. exports remain disappointing and may not reach USDA projections. May futures are testing support at \$4.61¼. If they can't break through, it is a terrific place to do some pricing. If they break through, then the next level of support is \$4.25.

> Sugar: May sugar peaked in December at \$0.1535 because of Brazil's dryness, then declined when it rained to \$0.126. Now projected drought shortages in India and Thailand spurred it up to \$0.139. We suggest protecting above \$0.1535.

> Natural gas: Just when you think prices can't go lower, they go lower! Spurred by mild temperatures and, therefore, reduced demand, as well as ample supply, inventories just keep growing. The March contract is at 1.76 cents. This and December 2015 are the lowest gas

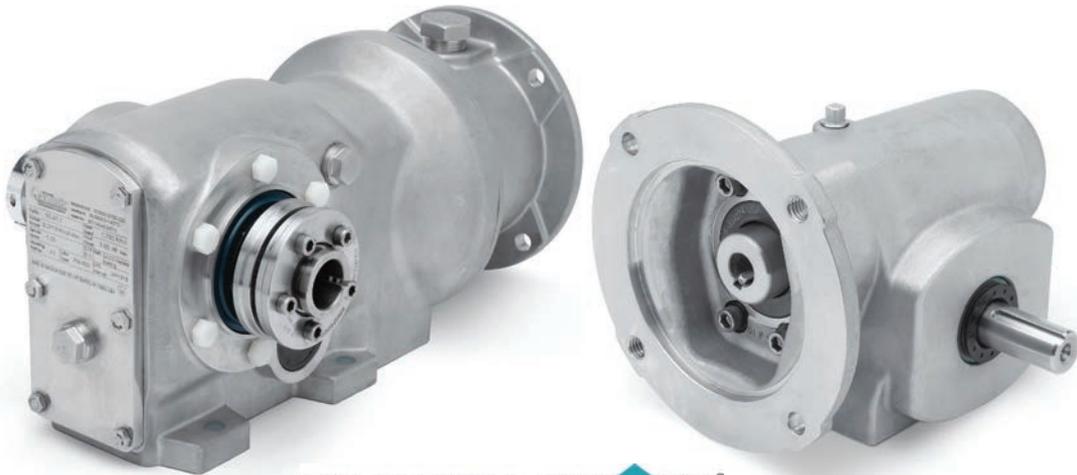
prices since 1999. We've suggested to protect against \$0.03. But we would lock it in as far forward as possible.

> Crude oil: April Brent crude started a dead cat bounce, moving from \$28.62 to \$36.77 before diving. Then OPEC started talking about reducing output, rallying prices to the \$35 range. Problems with that abound: not everyone who contributed to the glut is a member of OPEC (Russia, US, Canada!); all members didn't contribute in the same proportions (Venezuela, not much at all); and Iran was out because of sanctions and doesn't feel they should be cut as much as the Saudis. Now Saudi has declared that production should be "frozen." That doesn't do much to correct the issues, but it brought oil prices down to the current \$33.10. We still like buying hand to mouth to take advantage of low prices while protecting against resistance in the \$36.20 area.

> Canadian dollar: The loonie followed oil, but it's a little more bullish. This might be because of Canada's improved balance of payments and because of the expected stimulation of a massive \$18-billion federal deficit (not to mention the continuing lack of fiscal accountability in the largest province!). In January the loonie bottomed with March at \$0.681, the lowest since 2003. We would hold the \$0.815 Puts, but take profit if the loonie approaches contract lows again.



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Safe Food Canada: The Learning Partnership – Part 2

In March 2015 I introduced readers to Safe Food Canada: The Learning Partnership (SFC). This month's column is an update on recent developments and SFC's plans for the future.

Food safety learning in Canada is fragmented and there is much duplication of effort and expense. Since there is no standardization of food safety training today, every organization develops its own employee training program and/or it purchases courses from a variety of outside sources. Yet the foundational elements of science, technology, practices and outcomes are common across the food sector.

SFC is a new public-private partnership of food system stakeholders with a mission to modernize the way industry and government professionals learn about food safety and food protection. This partnership comprises producers, food processors, policy makers, statisticians, scholars, regulators, researchers, food protection experts, retailers, economists and others, including consumers.

Milestones

Funding: SFC received \$850,000 in critical funding from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in July 2015, giving the program the operating funds needed to sustain itself and to conduct research projects over the next couple of years.

Leadership: Brian Sterling became the president and CEO of SFC in early

August 2015. Prior to his appointment he was the managing director of the Global Food Traceability Center, an initiative sponsored by the Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFT), an internationally recognized food science innovator headquartered in Chicago.

Official launch: With funding and leadership in place, the SFC was officially launched on Nov. 27, 2015 in Toronto. The inaugural event also featured a roundtable panel discussion with top regulatory, industry and academic personnel, namely: Bruce Archibald, president of the CFIA; Ted Bilyea, chair of the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI); Michael Burrows, CEO of Maple Lodge Farms; and Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, professor, Marketing and Consumer Studies, University of Guelph. The panel discussion confirmed the importance of SFC's mission to ensure the competitiveness of Canada's agri-food industry in the coming years by promoting food protection excellence through learning partnerships.

Research underway

Even before SFC was formally underway it conducted an exploratory market study in the summer of 2015 with the purpose of understanding current spending on food safety training amongst Canadian food companies. Nine small, four medium and seven large companies representing a broad cross-section of the food processing industry were asked:

- » What does your organization spend on food safety training?
- » What is the payback from that education and how do you measure that return on investment (ROI)?
- » Is the investment delivering value to your organization? How do you know?

- » How easy is it to find employees with the proper training?

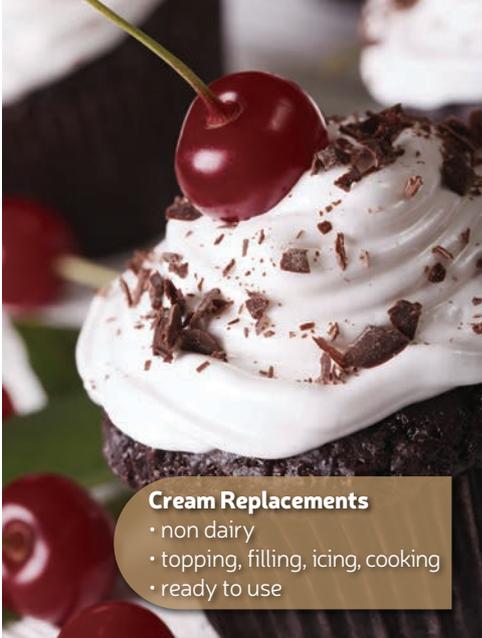
The preliminary responses indicate that there is no ROI for food safety training in Canada. Only 50 per cent of the participating companies tracked their spending on food protection training, even though all claimed to be providing at least four hours of training per year (this is not unique to Canada; these statistics are also hard to find for other countries). The SFC study also found that 59 per cent of respondents had difficulty finding adequately trained candidates. The results of the study will be published early this year.

SFC plans to expand this study with the objective of establishing a benchmark that companies and regulators can use to compare their food safety training investments against national averages. By establishing a benchmark for industry spending on food safety training and education, companies will be in a better position to understand whether their investment in this activity is keeping pace, lagging, or perhaps leading the industry.

Please participate

To participate in SFC's benchmark study on food safety training expenditures and ROI, please visit safefoodcanada.com or email contact@safefoodcanada.com. You may also be interested in signing up to participate in other research the SFC is planning on training quality standards. To quote Michael McCain of Maple Leaf Foods, "Food safety should not be a competitive advantage." Please participate! 🍎

Dr. R.J. (Ron) Wasik PhD, MBA, CFS, is president, RJW Consulting Canada Ltd. Contact him at rwasik@rjwconsultingcanada.com



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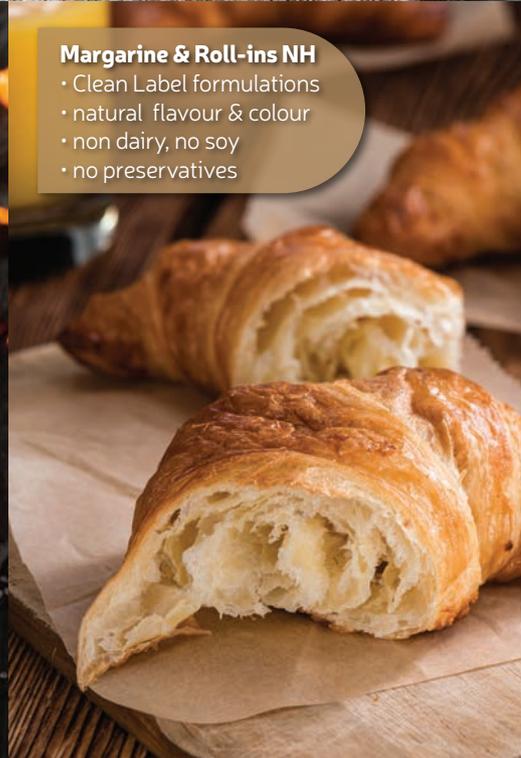
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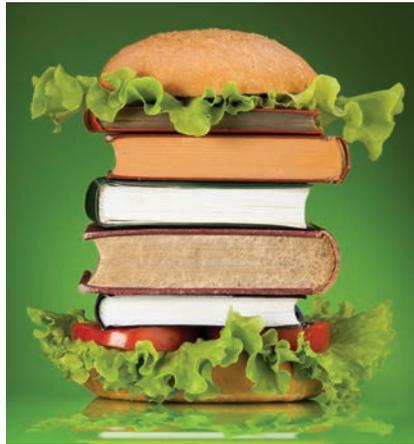


A novel approach for novel foods

As Canada's food supply continues to diversify, foods that have not been traditionally consumed in Western cultures are becoming part of the Canadian diet. In mainstream stores it's now commonplace to find foods from different cultures, like aloe beverages, or traditional foods with exotic additions, like maca ice cream. Globalization, lower transportation costs, and changing consumer preferences towards functional foods are driving the increased introduction of foods and ingredients that could be considered "novel" into the Canadian marketplace.

The consumer-driven demand for these products poses a dilemma for industry and regulators alike — can the novel food regulatory framework provide the necessary flexibility to adapt to these trends while maintaining the safety standards Canadians expect? With the regulatory tools at our disposal, and a fresh perspective, the potential exists for both needs to be met.

The legal requirement to notify Health Canada prior to sale of a novel food places the burden of determining if a food or ingredient is novel on manufacturers/importers. This determination can be complex, as the legal definition for "novel food" is broad and includes foods or ingredients that do not have a history of safe use as food. Novelty status can be especially difficult to assess where an ingredient is an extract of a herb or food that does have a history of safe use, or where the food is consumed in other



parts of the world but information is difficult to access or apply to use in Canada.

So how do you know definitively if a food is novel? Well, foods are assessed on a case-by-case basis and when in doubt, manufacturers/importers are encouraged to consult with the Novel Foods Section. In my experience, depending on the nature of the ingredient, the information provided, the volume of requests and whether a previous determination has been made, a response can be received within a short timeframe, or several months.

Given the rapidly changing marketplace, can this process be improved? Part of the answer might be in the new template for novelty determination developed by Food Directorate, which may provide structure to the process. As well, it may be in the approach Food Directorate is considering to address novel ingredients in products that transitioned from the NHP to the food regulatory framework and are currently being sold under Temporary Marketing Authorizations (TMAs) as supplemented foods.

When these products originally gained market access as NHPs, they were subject to a safety assessment based on consumption of a limited dose — a different criteria than novel foods which are expected to be consumed freely (at one's pleasure). Now that these products



are regulated as foods, to address this issue without immediate disruption to the marketplace, Food Directorate is considering using the TMA tool to exempt supplemented foods containing certain novel food ingredients from the novel food notification process. Under this approach, a list of ingredients eligible for exemption would be published and if a supplemented food contains those ingredients, a safety assessment would be undertaken during the TMA period.

The list of ingredients eligible for exemption is not an indication that these ingredients are safe for use in foods — rather these ingredients are being assessed for use only in supplemented foods considering that the sale of these products could be subject to certain conditions (such as labelling statements, directions of use, or maximum levels of use). What remains to be determined is what will occur with respect to the novel status of these ingredients upon the expiry of the TMAs.

In exploring new approaches, it may be possible to continue to improve the novel foods framework. For example, expanding the TMA approach to a wider variety of potentially novel ingredients with a history of use in other cultures, or developing a searchable database identifying those ingredients that have been assessed for use in all foods and found either not to be novel or safe within certain usage levels. Improved transparency and efficiency would help Canada keep pace with the evolving global marketplace. 🍎

Laura Gomez is an associate at the Ottawa offices of Gowling WLG, practicing in the area of food and drug regulatory law. Ron Doering returns next month.



A country with “original” labelling

Food labelling modernization in Canada has many fronts. Nutrition and ingredient labelling have received much of the attention thus far. Less well known are the many other label features — like common name, dealer name and address, best before dates, net quantity and country of origin — that are also subject to modernization. All combined, Canada’s federal food labelling modernization is an enormous undertaking by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada.

For most foods, country of origin labelling is governed principally by federal legislation. Provincial origin labelling requirements tend to be more commodity specific. The most well recognized of these provincial origin labelling rules are those governing fresh produce.

Foods are not captured under Canada’s *Marking of Imported Goods Regulations* (Customs Tariff). Federal country of origin rules cover a wider spectrum of food, under a patchwork legislation. The result is a lack of uniformity in how foods are labelled. In fact, not all foods are captured by country of origin labelling regulations. Consumer packaged foods are subject to the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and Regulations* (CPLA and CPLAR). Only those products that are wholly manufactured or produced in a country other than

Canada, and which include a Canadian domicile statement on its label, are required to disclose either the country of origin by name or as an alternative by a statement such as “Imported by” or “Imported for,” adjacent to the Canadian domicile statement.

The CPLA does not apply to non-consumer packaged foods, such as those destined for further manufacture or foodservice. The CPLR also yields to other federal legislation that may require specific country of origin labelling. The *Meat Inspection Act* and *Meat Inspection Regulations 1990* (MIR) trump the CPLR in this matter. The MIR requires an imported meat product to be labelled with a prominent country of origin statement in close proximity to the common name on the main panel. In contrast, the *Processed Products Regulations* (PPR), which are subordinate regulations under the *Canada Agricultural Products Act*, require a country of origin declaration on a label of an imported food it governs that includes a Canadian domicile on the label. For a product with a domicile statement other than that of a Canadian dealer, the origin of the dealer would be assumed to be the origin of the food.

With the introduction of proposed *Safe Food for Canadian Regulations* (SFCR) drawing near, so too does the retirement date of the legislation mentioned above. When it comes into force the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* (SFCA) will repeal the CAPA, MIR and FIA. The Act will also withdraw food from the CPLA. The *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations* (FDA, FDR), will not be repealed. It is not conceivable that the CFIA will forgo more robust regulations



on country of origin labelling. We therefore expect that the SFCR will include, with few exceptions, uniform mandatory country of origin labelling for all imported foods.

The discussions to date on the matter are aimed at a unified statement such as “Product of (naming the country)” to be shown either on the main panel or adjacent to the domicile statement. Seems simple enough. Where complications can arise is in figuring out what the origin of the food might actually be. Under the current country of origin labelling rules for food, unlike products subject to the *Marking of Imported Goods Regulations*, the mechanism by which a country of origin is determined is not well defined. What does “wholly manufactured in a country other than Canada” mean in the case of the CPLR? Can such general criteria be relied on, or does the CFIA have other things in mind? Will a reconstituted apple juice made in Canada with concentrated apple juice from China be a product of China? Under current Product of Canada guidelines, which is a separate subject matter, such a product could not be a product of Canada. It could be “Made in Canada with imported ingredients.” Will the CFIA require more than we expect now? For that we will need to wait and see the next draft of the agency’s labelling modernization, which like everything else, is a bit overdue. 🍎

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

Education, new products and transparency are leading to booming sales for conscientious companies

● BY TREENA HEIN

In 2016, successful producers and marketers of meat, poultry and eggs know it's all about delivering on your promises. While consumers are increasingly looking for protein to satiate their appetites, to get them to choose meat, poultry and eggs over dairy, nuts, ancient grains and more, companies must be conscientious and transparent.

In recent years, serious animal welfare issues have been unearthed. In 2013, an undercover investigation by the television program W5 revealed conditions on Alberta egg farms called "horrific" by media outlets. In 2014, extensive and sickening abuse of cows was revealed on B.C.'s largest dairy farm. In September 2015, PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) hit high-end grocery chain Whole Foods with a class-action lawsuit, claiming customers were being misled into paying higher prices for meat raised on at least one U.S. farm where conditions were not significantly different than those of the rest of the industry. Also last year, Chipotle Mexican Grill (an international chain with restaurants in Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Germany and France) suspended the sale of pork at hundreds of its restaurants, claiming at least one supplier didn't meet animal welfare standards. The founder stated in July that the vast majority of pigs farmed in the U.S. are not raised to its standards.



Meat

new message



Cowboy rib

Photo: Pine View Farms

But some Canadian companies have been ensuring humane animal treatment and offering natural products for some time, building reputations consumers can trust. At Toronto-based Rowe Farms, for example, strict environmental and animal welfare protocols are upheld on partner farms through annual inspections, an annual third-party audit, signed affidavits and more. Animals are treated with respect, raised with vegetarian feed in a low-stress environment without the preventative use of antibiotics. If an animal gets sick and does require antibiotics, the animal is eventually sold in other markets.

Rowe Farms spokesperson Jamie Cooney says animal welfare concerns are growing, both in the general population and among vegetarian consumers who buy for meat-eating family members. Rowe Farm sales have seen double-digit growth each year for the last eight years due to both rising consumer demand and the fact that it and other firms have expanded product availability. “This is positive for the segment overall and the competition it creates forces everyone to be more consumer-focused,” says Cooney. Chicken is their top-selling item, followed by beef and pork. Cooney describes their bacon as “epic.” It’s made from Tamworth pigs that have a thicker layer of fat which produces more rich, tender and well-textured meat.

At Pine View Farms and butcher shop just north of Saskatoon, Kevin and Melanie Boldt have been offering innovative natural meat products for about 18 years. The Boldts also raise their animals with vegetarian feed in a low-stress and low-density environment, so that illness is much less likely. Their cattle are not exclusively grass-fed, partly due to the winter snows, but also because of taste. “Grass-fed beef tastes differently and has a different fat composition, and some people might want that,” says Melanie Boldt, “but we feel grain finish gives the flavour that most consumers expect.” While demand is high for convenient products like Rouladen, smoked eggs and specialty sausages, people can’t get enough of previously low-demand items like bones, for their trendy marrow. Their business has grown, Boldt notes, because people increasingly view food as a health investment, but also care about supporting local producers. “The tie between local and natural is not exclusive, but if a product is local, I think you have a better chance of knowing how it got to you,” she observes. “But no matter how the food was produced, it still has to taste good and meet or exceed expectations. Quality matters, big time.” ↪

“No matter how the food was produced, it still has to taste good and meet or exceed expectations. Quality matters, big time.”

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Photos: Nutrafarms



For Barrie, Ont.-based Nutrafarms, consumer interest in animal welfare comes first. The company offers natural, antibiotic-free beef, poultry, pork and fish, with their cattle free-roaming and pigs cage-free. Vice-president of Sales Dave Steele says Nutrafarms began offering natural products in 2001, but has not changed its practices, and can “balance great taste with humane and drug-free processes.”

Many natural and humane meat products are also marketed by One Earth Farms under several brands across Canada. These currently include Beretta Farms (Ontario grass-fed beef, organic free-range chickens and antibiotic-free pork), Heritage Angus (ranch-d Western Canadian Angus beef), Black Apron Beef (Angus beef free from antibiotics), and Chinook Organics (organic Western Canada beef also sold under the Diamond Willow label). “Humane treatment of animals is one of the foundations of our business,” says One Earth Farms Marketing director Cynthia Beretta. “In the cattle division, we own and raise our cattle from birth to finish... along with owning a harvesting facility in Lacombe, Alta.... we are there to monitor the animal’s life and treatment every step of the way. We are also audited several times a year from different certifying bodies to ensure everything is up to code when it comes to the animals’ quality of life. As a business, we are completely transparent.”

Beretta notes that the demand for organic meat is higher than ever. For its part, Rowe Farms finds the price of organic meat out of reach for many people, but it does currently offer organic chicken, and may offer more organic products in the future if a reasonable price point can be achieved. Ontario-based Yorkshire Valley Farms is the largest organic chicken producer in Canada, and has seen phenomenal growth since it began in 2010.

Leading the country in meat marketshare is Mississauga, Ont.-based Maple Leaf Foods. Spokesperson

David Bauer says 2016 will be an exciting year, with more product launches and a continued focus on sustainability. The company recently started promoting the benefits of high-quality animal-based protein through a series of short videos, one of which features Olympian Hayley Wickenheiser. The videos state that young girls and athletes have unique nutrition needs, and high-quality protein (found in red meat, poultry, eggs and dairy) helps muscles recover after sports. “The reality is young girls are under-consuming pro-

tein and it’s a problem for their overall health,” says Bauer. “Girls in Canada eat about 14 per cent of their diet as protein, when it’s recommended children eat 10 to 30 per cent.”

Natural products are also important to Maple Leaf, as is animal welfare. Their 41 Natural Selections line now includes eight new Protinis chicken snack products. In December 2015, Maple Leaf announced a new animal care initiative. “We are committed to providing the resources, leadership and organizational focus to elevate animal care to a cornerstone of being a sustainable protein company,” explains Bauer. “For example, we were the first company in Canada to convert all of our sows to open housing.” ●

EGGS ON THE MENU

It was in late 2014 that major fast-food restaurants began making changes in their sourcing of eggs and chicken. In September that year, Canada’s A&W announced that it would be the first North American fast-food chain to serve eggs only from hens fed a vegetarian diet. As of September 2015, McDonald’s in Canada and the U.S. committed to transitioning to serving only eggs from cage-free hens by 2025. Known as “free-run” here, it’s a production system where hens move freely in the barn and go to a nest area to lay an egg when they have the urge. A large number of other major firms, including Starbucks, have also made this promise.

McDonald’s had been pressured by the Humane Society of the United States for over 10 years to make the move. McDonald’s Canada has more than 1,400 outlets, and began its transition immediately by sourcing five per cent free-run eggs (from Burnbrae Farms, its sole egg supplier). The restaurant chain is part of a group called the Coalition for a Sustainable Egg Supply, which in early 2015 released results from a three-year study showing that free-run systems have advantages and disadvantages relating to both consumers and birds — as do enriched cages (cages with features that allow birds to have an enriched and more natural life). McDonald’s has obviously chosen free-run/cage-free, but recently stated in *Canadian Poultry* magazine that it will use the study results “to help identify opportunities and direct our focus on ways to improve cage-free hen housing systems.”





Brandy cones with creamy filling

Spirited away

Alcohol and spirits are increasingly being used to flavour food products in creative ways, and the trend is showing no signs of slowing down

As any stalwart fans of cooking legend Julia Child would know, using wine as an ingredient in French cuisine has always been a standard. And adding beer as an ingredient in soups, stews and batters is certainly nothing new in the culinary world. Now we're seeing a broader range of alcohol flavourings and spirits being used innovatively as an ingredient in recipes and food products across North America.

Dave Sackett, executive director of Sales and Marketing for Mizkan Americas Food Ingredients Division, notes that between 2013 and 2014, Mintel found that retail cooking sauces with spirits as an ingredient increased by 160 per cent. "Mainstream introductions don't show any signs of slowing down," explains Sackett, who points to recent new products featuring bourbon that are hitting grocery shelves, including Campbell's Slow Cooker Apple Bourbon Sauce, Perdue Bourbon Chicken and Kroger Bourbon Peppercorn 30-Minute Marinade. "Vodka is also growing on both restaurant menus' and manufacturers' ingredient lists," he adds.

What's driving this trend?

"The trend of adding spirits to recipes is driven by the popularity today of craft cocktails and interest in bourbon," says Garth Vdoviak, Product Development manager for Mizkan Americas. "Wine, and to some extent beer, has been used

in cooking almost as long as it's been consumed to mellow, deglaze, braise or finish a dish. Today's rise of spirits in formulations stems from relaxing the hard and fast rules while still following traditional pairings of food and spirits."

Overall, spirits can be a powerful flavour addition to rich sauces, dishes and desserts, says Vdoviak. "Lighter spirits, such as moonshine or tequila, pair well with lighter foods such as seafood and chicken. Darker spirits like bourbon and rum can really enhance the flavours of dark meats including beef, lamb or game," he explains. "For desserts, bourbon, dark rum and brandy pair well with vanilla and maple flavours to make decadent sweets including Maple Bourbon Frosting."

Tricks to keep in mind

For food manufacturers who want to add spirits and alcohol as flavourings, the process can be a bit of a balancing act. "Manufacturers can use spirits to complement and enhance the formulation of a product, yet not overwhelm the final product," says Vdoviak. "If the final product has a spirit in it, the consumer expects to taste that spirit. The percentage of alcohol that food processors use when producing foods made with alcohol can vary between five per cent and 20 per cent, and manufacturers should be cautious to heat the spirits enough to remove the alcohol, but not the flavour of the spirit."

Depending on cooking methods and heat exchange systems, manufacturers can decide whether to add the spirit at the beginning, middle or end of the cooking process, says Sackett. "Formulators are mimicking what is happening in restaurants around the country, using spirits in traditional cooking methods, such as

brining, braising, reducing, curing, glazing and in batter applications," he explains. "When producing large-scale food products, manufacturers should use an industrial spirit designed for large-scale production or otherwise risk the flavour profile of their product varying year to year."

Beyond bourbon

While bourbon and vodka are both among the "rising stars" in alcohol and spirit flavourings for food, they're definitely not the only game in town. Mizkan sells a whole line of denatured spirits, for instance, and two new recent introductions to its line are Moonshine and Porter Ale.

Moonshine, according to Sackett, is "an unaged whisky and has moved from the backwoods to mainstream in the past few years. It works well in glazes and braises, sauces, side dishes and desserts. It also does well in soups, prepared meals and pretzels. Moonshine pairs nicely with beef and chicken."

And Sackett describes the Porter Ale as "a pleasing combination of stout and ale – less toasty than stout and less bitter than pale ale. It pairs well with hearty proteins and works well with brats, batters, breads, cheeses, gumbos and soups." It can be added to braises, BBQ sauces, marinades, stews, soups, condiments and potatoes, according to Sackett, who notes, "Again, the popularity of the craft beer movement is driving the trend for beer as a food ingredient." 🍷



Let's talk turkey bacon

ah, bacon. It's one of the ultimate comfort foods and a staple of North American food culture. Our longstanding passion for everything bacon is undeniably linked to its unique and next-to-perfect product profile — its crispy, grease enwrapped texture and rich, fat-filled, salty flavour. But alas, like most of our sinful indulgences, our yearning for bacon comes with a big catch. It is widely accepted that our undying love for the mouth-watering taste of bacon carries the burden of some undesirable health risks. However, with every shift in consumer tastes also comes opportunity... cue the turkey bacon! Turkey bacon may not pack the same punch of mouth-watering, fat-filled flavour as traditional pork bacon, but it has managed to carve out a permanent place in the grocery store meat cooler.

We recently took a closer look at the sensory profiles of three popular brands of turkey bacon to find out whether any of these “fake bacons” are the real deal when it comes to their sensory profiles.

The turkey gobblers

We recruited 50 females from the Greater Toronto Area, all users of both regular bacon and turkey bacon, to taste test three mainstream brands of turkey bacon. Each evaluated one strip of each turkey bacon sample, served in varied order. The samples were cooked as per each of the package directions.

What's shakin'

Two of the three turkey bacon brands were preferred over the third underachieving brand. Both of the top performing brands had good scores for overall liking, and 60 per cent of our testers indicated a willingness to purchase them in the future. However, despite these “not-so-bad” results, the top performers still left much to be desired in terms of their flavour and textural quality. In fact, all three turkey bacon brands had some mentionable problems with flavour — for two of them it was a very distinct lack of it. These brands offered very little smoky flavour and overall their taste profile was extremely bland. The third product offered a little more flavour complexity, but it was too salty and still failed to impress on the flavour scale.

Something to chew on

But perhaps the most concerning problem with all three of these meats was the texture, and in particular, a serious lack of crispness. These meats were almost unanimously deemed to be “not crispy enough” and “too chewy.” For testing purposes we followed package instructions for preparation. However, even if the packages instructed for a longer fry time, turkey bacon is unlikely to come anywhere near the textural expectations of higher-fat meats such as regular bacon.

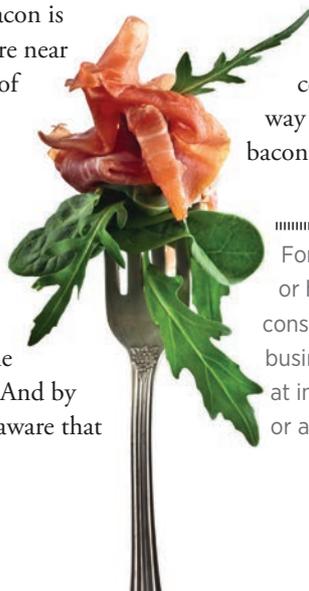
It's a turkey shoot

It's been a few decades since food manufacturers started carving out segments marketed on the idea of healthier choices. And by now, consumers are well aware that

healthier food choices often come with trade-offs. There is a willingness on the part of consumers to sacrifice some flavour or textural quality for a food choice that is more aligned with their personal health objectives. But over time, this willingness is dwindling.

In the beginning, the novelty of healthier-for-you products was enough to generate sales and consumer interest. Over time, however, the battle for brand share in these segments has become just as fierce as the rest. Food manufacturers are continuously looking for ways to stretch these segments further by offering more alternatives. Consumers have increasingly more choice and are becoming more informed about these choices, and are becoming less accepting of trade-offs — particularly when it comes to sacrifices related to their sensory experience.

Turkey bacon may never be able to reach the same iconic sensory heights as pork bacon. But that's ok. The true competition for turkey bacon and other better-for-you alternatives is other better-for-you alternatives, which are improving all the time. The turkey bacon brands in our test had many flavour and textural downfalls — leaving the door wide open for more satisfying alternatives. Raising the bar on the product experience in this consumer space may be the only way to continue bringing home the bacon...turkey bacon that is. 🍎



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

ON THE MOVE

FOOD & LOGISTICS IN CANADA



News > file

VersaCold acquires assets of Gary Heer Transport

Vancouver-based VersaCold Logistic Services, a Canadian supply chain solutions company focused exclusively on the handling of temperature-sensitive products, has acquired the assets of Calgary-based Gary Heer Transport Ltd.

Gary Heer Transport provides refrigerated truckload cross-border transportation services between Western Canada and the U.S. The asset acquisition marks VersaCold's entrance into the U.S. cross-border transportation market segment. It will also establish the company's newest subsidiary, VersaCold North America Transportation Solutions Limited (VNATS), which is set to launch in early 2016.

"This acquisition marks an exciting time of growth and service expansion at our company," says Douglas Harrison, president and CEO of VersaCold. "By offering cross-border transportation services through VNATS, we continue

to live our vision of being our customer's most trusted and reliable long-term partner by providing new and innovative solutions and services that enable them to achieve great business success."

"We are proud to join VersaCold and to be a part of a team that is not only the leader in its space, but the fastest growing," adds Gary Heer, president of Gary Heer Transport Ltd. "We are excited to combine our decades of experience and expertise to provide exceptional cross-border transportation services to customers across North America."

New truck safety rules in the works

Canada's federal government says it's working to implement new electronic-based safety regulations aimed at tackling

fatigue among truck and bus drivers, according to a February report from the Canadian Press.

These new regulations would require commercial truck and bus drivers to electronically record their hours behind the wheel with devices that automatically record driving time by monitoring engine hours, vehicle movement, kilometres driven and location information. This will be a huge change from the mandatory paper logs that have been in use since the 1930s. Transport Canada says the regulations would cover cross-border and interprovincial travel, and while the government doesn't commit to an implementation date, they have said they would aim to have these regulations in place at around the same time similar rules in the U.S. come into force in late 2017.

UniCarriers expands team



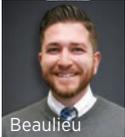
Karnitz

Marengo, Ill.-based UniCarriers Americas Corporation has expanded its national accounts team by hiring



Brady

Tim Karnitz as senior manager of national accounts, **David Brady**



Beaulieu

as national accounts manager and **Sean Beaulieu** as national accounts technical specialist.

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Heavy duty

PowerJak Electric Pallet Trucks from Presto Lifts feature powered lift and powered drive for effortless transport of palletized loads in a wide variety of manufacturing, warehousing and retail applications. Two models are available with load capacities of 3,000 lb and 4,500 lb. They are equipped with heavy-duty reinforced forks that have a lowered height of 3.4 in. and raised height of up to eight inches. PowerJak Pallet Trucks are loaded with performance, reliability and safety features, while an ergonomically designed handle puts all controls within easy reach for maximum operator comfort and convenience. www.prestolifts.com



Flexibility & portability

Verti-Lift has introduced a line of Portable Scissor Lifts that are ideal for moving heavy loads between work cells. These units provide the flexibility of a scissor lift with the portability of an adjustable work platform to enhance ergonomics. These lifts feature heavy-duty cylinders, lifetime lubricated bearings, safety maintenance blocks, and either foot brake or locking wheels. Hydraulic units can be either electric, with internal power unit, or provided with 24V DC battery-powered power unit. With load capacities from 1,000 to 6,000 lb, Portable Scissor Lifts can be fitted with various sized platforms, turn tables, or conveyors to suit virtually any in-plant material-handling requirement.

www.verti-lift.com

Door —to— door

New food delivery systems are changing the way consumers interact with food companies

BY CAROLYN GRUSKE

Buying consumer goods has never been easier. With a few mouse clicks items from around the world can be delivered to the doorstep within hours. But rapid retail hasn't just changed the way items are purchased. It has also altered the way people expect food companies to interact with them, and those expectations are leading to the creation of new business models and practices.

When it comes to developing a new way of doing business, Vancouver Food Pedalers Cooperative has been blazing new trails with its production and delivery methods. The co-operative grows microgreens, including buckwheat, pea, sunflowers and radish sprouts, along with wheatgrass, and microgreens including cilantro, kale and arugula. The sprouts are planted in trays containing organic soil and are grown inside a shipping container that has been retrofitted into a greenhouse. Harvesting twice a week nets the co-op between 200 and 250 trays of microgreens for its restaurant, grocery store, farmers' market and residential customers.

But beyond the location of the farm, which is adjacent to a factory property in a light industrial area of



the city, and the unconventional greenhouse, Vancouver Food Pedalers has made a name for itself thanks to its delivery methods. The co-op uses bicycles to get around the city.

When fully loaded with equipment (including a hand-cranked juicer for producing wheatgrass drinks) and produce for a day at a farmers' market, the electric bikes pull trailers weighing up to 200 lbs. For general deliveries to the co-op's residential, retail and restaurant customers, smaller, lighter trailers are typically used on delivery routes that can cover up to 40 or 50 km. The compact nature of the city makes bikes the ideal delivery vehicles, but the efficiency of the delivery process is a key to maintaining profitability.

"We're strategic in terms of markets. Some are just off limits due to terrain. They're just not accessible as they are uphill," says Ross Jarvis, pedal services specialist for the co-op. "We make people aware that we need to be able to deliver. We're fairly accommodating and we do what we can, but time is money to a degree. If we have to spend 25 minutes on a delivery it almost becomes financially not that viable."

Sharing more of its vendors' stories online is one of the goals of Local and Fresh Food Marketing Inc., a Regina-based online vendor of Saskatchewan-produced food items. Since launching 18 months ago, approximately 40 producers have begun to offer over 900 different products, including pulses, value-added dry goods, fresh and frozen meats, fresh produce and general grocery staples.

Local and Fresh's owner and general manager Andrew Rathwell believes that connecting consumers with producers is a way to not only increase interest in local food, but to create trust that permeates throughout the food



“In an online business, or on the doorstep, we are able to tell that story. That’s what creates the accountability in the food system.”



chain. “We have the ability to tell producers’ stories to let consumers know it isn’t just lettuce, it’s Mary Campbell’s lettuce and this is how Mary makes her lettuce and this is why she’s passionate about it. Some of those parts that have been driven out of a world that says food is a commodity sold by the pound. In an online business, or on the doorstep, we are able to tell that story. That’s what creates the accountability in the food system.”

Rathwell is also determined to develop trust with local producers. That’s being done in part by using the capabilities of the inventory and delivery management software from Colorado-based Delivery Biz PRO to better predict future orders and to give producers a more accurate sense of

the trucks aren’t being used for catering deliveries. The company is currently updating its website to be more user friendly on the front end to simplify the ordering process and become more efficient on the back end.

“The back end will be printing out the reports we need so there are not mistakes made,” says Reisman. “One big thing now is everybody is on special diets so they want this removed and that removed. Right now we are doing it manually so mistakes happen. The new system will allow us to have all the reports documented, so they will see them right away, so there will be no errors. It is almost as if it’s magical how it happens.”

While Reisman thinks the meal delivery business has a hit a plateau, others see nothing but growth as consumers become accustomed to getting not just groceries but meals delivered to their doors.

In summer 2015 the UberEverything division of Uber launched its UberEats restaurant meal delivery service in a number of cities, including Toronto. Since then the service has expanded its hours of operation, and increased the number of its restaurant partners. For a delivery charge of \$4.99 an Uber driver will pick up a take-out order and deliver it anywhere across the Greater Toronto Area (there is also a \$1.99 delivery option that covers a few select lunchtime menu offerings that can be prepared and delivered in 10 minutes or less). As with Uber passenger transactions, the car making the delivery is tracked and visible within the app. That same app is what notifies the restaurant of the order and summons the driver just before the food is ready for delivery.

According to Bowie Cheung, the Toronto-based general manager of UberEverything, restaurants are able to expand the clientele even if they aren’t dining in. “Our restaurants are seeing quite a lot of incremental volume, which is intuitive in a lot of ways. Because if you think about lunch as an example, the distance, the area you are able to cover through delivery is so much greater than your typical walk-in traffic.”

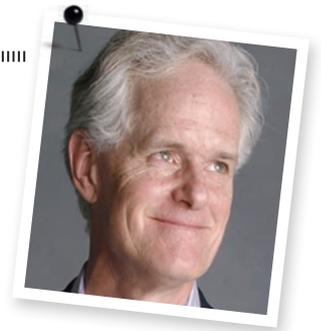
how much to supply in order to meet growing demand for their goods. The other way it is done is to promote lesser known brands or products.

Creating a demand for a new product is something Nimi Kular, co-founder of Toronto-based Nutrisense Inc., is learning to do. The company produces the Jaswant’s Kitchen brand of Indian cooking spices based on recipes created by Nimi’s mother, Jawant Kular, a nutritionist and food scientist, whose recipes and spice blends are designed to make it easier to learn how to cook traditional Indian dishes.

Promoting the company’s products has meant mixing long-established practices (such as offering up tastings in stores) with newer approaches. Setting up booths at craft shows (where there is less competition from other food vendors), such as the One of a Kind Show & Sale has worked well. And partnering with The Shopping Channel has also started to yield results. While the TV shopping network hasn’t yet featured Jaswant’s Kitchen in its own on-air segment, it does list the products on its website and cross-promotes them to TV viewers. “There have been a couple of times they’ve had celebrity chefs who sell different types of products like pans,” says Kular. “So when they are doing those demos, they try to take products that they also sell on TSC and do a cross-promo. It always boosts our sales.”

Making things easier for consumers is also what Rose Reisman, owner of Rose Reisman Catering in Toronto, is doing. In addition to providing catering for corporate events and supplying meals to schools and camps, the company offers its Personal Gourmet line that delivers fresh or frozen meals to customers on a daily basis. Doing this means running a 24/7 operation so orders can be dropped off at people’s homes between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. when

Peter Henderson



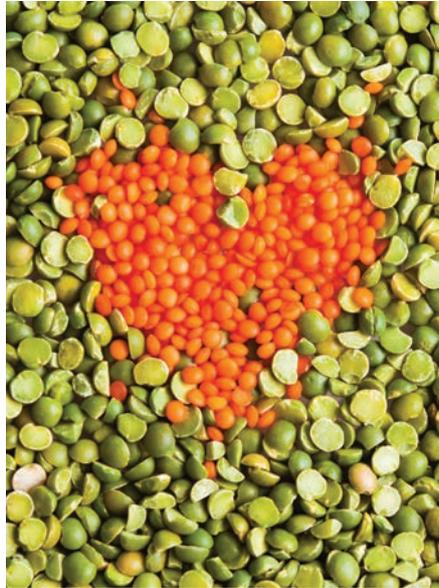
Ideas can drive breakthrough innovation

Sometimes breakthroughs come from simple focused ideas. In the spirit of International Year of Pulses (IYP) and Nutrition Month, here's one for retailers and enterprising businesses within the global pulse industry.

What if retailers pilot a "Pulse Purpose Bar," akin to an olive bar or as a dedicated component of the HMR counter, for ultimate expansion throughout urban North America and other developed countries? This pulse bar would consist of nutritious prepared lentil, chickpea, and assorted pea and bean dishes and sides, such as bean salads, bean paste, dal, hummus, falafels, chana masala and so on. It could potentially feature rotating nutritious high-pulse containing baked goods, snacks and other grocery items.

As with any consumer-focused breakthrough marketing innovation, the pulse bar would communicate a meaningful purpose. Image-branding would evoke global health (body, mind and planet). It would promote consumption of pulses at least two or three times per week (for optimal human-health advantage) and would be linked to donations equal to one or two per cent of pulse bar sales. Donations could be invested to accelerate expansion of more advanced farming techniques for pulses in developing countries.

There are numerous reasons why



“Pulses have unique benefits for environmental sustainability and related global food security.”

this approach makes good sense for all farmers (not just existing pulse farmers), further processors, participating retailers and society. Let's start by putting this into context.

The human health and environmental impact of advancing pulses consumption and farming systems and practices world over is perhaps a million times greater than that of quinoa. When consumed two or three times per week, pulses can have a positive impact on human health, due to numerous nutrition factors, including high protein, low glycemic index (GI), satiety, low fat or no gluten.

Pulses have unique benefits for environmental sustainability and related global food security. Compared to other

sources of protein, like meat, milk and nuts, pulses are a low-GHG/carbon protein source and have excellent water efficiency. For instance, when comparing a kilogram of beef to a kilogram of pulse crops, beef produces between 10 and 30 times more GHGs/carbon, and requires about 40 times more water than pulses.

Uniquely, pulses are one of a very few "nitrogen fixing" crops for human consumption. Studies have indicated that when pulses are used as a rotation crop, they result in restoring soil health and eliminating the need to add commercial nitrogen, which requires considerable energy and emits GHGs to produce.

South Asia is by far the largest consumer of pulses — lentils and peas together make India's staple meal dal, which is typically eaten twice daily. India, for example, has about 360 million vegetarians, and many people simply can't afford meat. Of deep concern is that the cost to Indian consumers has at least doubled over the past few years. It has been reported that in many Indian cities an equivalent weight of pulses is now often more expensive than chicken.

More on this next month.

For more information about IYP initiatives and information visit www.fao.org/pulses-2016/en, www.iyp2016.org, www.pulsecanada.com, www.saskpulse.com/, www.lentils.ca and www.agtfoods.com 🍎

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



Planting the right seeds

Future focus key to successful technology investments

Here in Canada, participants in the agri-food supply chain typically fit somewhere on a continuum. This band stretches from supply-managed industries like poultry and dairy — where trade is more highly regulated — to more open market industries like grain, pork and livestock, which can be more affected by country restrictions, fluctuating prices and exchange rates. Based on where an organization fits along the scale, its challenges, business strategies and appetite for innovation, specifically investment in technology, will be quite different.

The challenge is that where you fit along the continuum can easily change. Many industries that are supply managed today are being pushed down the continuum, opening them to risks they haven't historically considered. For example, producers who once relied on the Canadian Wheat Board to sell their product are now relying on their corporate partners to export to places like China and Mexico. Although the risks are indirect, the level of insulation provided is not what it once was.

These producers have also had to invest in technologies to gain a leg up in a more competitive market. For crop production, precision agriculture companies have paved the technology



way in this regard, investing in technology that gives producers a digital solution to the age-old question: How do I get the highest yield while managing my input costs?

There is little doubt they've seen value. Despite a dismal start to the crop year in Western Canada, the final crop from a volume perspective was similar to the prior, and in some cases record, year. While part of this may be ascribed to Mother Nature, technology's assistance cannot be understated. The reality is that leveraging technology in a bad year can be the make or break point for producers, and this impact can trickle its way down the supply chain.

But what does this mean for producers, processors and distributors in the supply chain looking to invest in technology? How can you determine what will help most? As a starting point, you should ask yourself three questions:

1. Where do you sit on the continuum?

If you operate in a supply-managed industry, the benefits you can gain from technology will be different from those operating in more volatile industries. In both instances, knowing where you are today can help you make more informed investments.

2. What do you expect to change in the future?

Based on where you sit along the

continuum, look at how your industry is evolving. Consider what parts of your supply chain you control and what you rely on other organizations for, and then determine how these might change over time.

3. What do you need to be able to do tomorrow that you can't do today?

Thinking about where your industry is going, what skills will your organization need to be successful? If you're not a data and logistics expert, you may need to become one as your industry moves down the continuum. This could mean investing in data mining technologies to create new products, to provide saleable intellectual property, or to make more informed business decisions.

When it comes to food production in Canada, the future will not likely be a reflection of the past. It's more likely that change is coming. If you take the time now to evaluate what the future might hold and to invest in technology that will meet your future needs, you will be better positioned to succeed as your industry evolves. 🍀

Hans Andersen is a Partner and Agribusiness Leader at PwC Canada, located in Winnipeg. Contact him at hans.c.andersen@pwc.com

Carol Neshevich

Packaging excellence celebrated at PAC Global Leadership Awards

The PAC, Packaging Consortium's 2016 Global Leadership Awards Competition celebrated excellence in packaging, from branding and graphic design to technical aspects and sustainability. Entries were submitted online and judged online, with entrants including retailers, brand owners, branding and design agencies, package container and technology processors, and raw material manufacturers. A total of 129 entries were submitted from 39 companies and six countries.

The awards gala took place on Jan. 21, 2016 at the Package Design Matters Conference in Bonita Springs, Fla. **The Best of Show – PAC Packaging Award** went to Grant's Elementary Range from William Grant & Sons, by brand/graphic designer Webb deVlam; and the **Best of Show – Packaging Design Award** went to Goodtimes Lunchmates from Goodtimes Brand Inc., by brand/graphic designer Bridgemark.

Other top food- and beverage-related awards included:

Brand Marketing – New Brand, Food & Beverage – Gold Awards:

- » EAT THESE PICKLES from EAT THESE FOODS INC., by brand/graphic designer Overflow Design.
- » Frozen Organic Vegetables from Federated Co-operatives Limited,

by brand/graphic designer TC Transcontinental.

- » Grant's Elementary Range from William Grant & Sons, by brand/graphic designer Webb deVlam.



- » Jamie Oliver by Compliments from Sobeys, by brand/graphic designer Fish out of Water Design.
- » Sobeys Burgers by Sobeys, by brand/graphic designer Fish out of Water Design.



- » Star of Bombay from Bacardi, by Webb deVlam.
- » SunRype Organic Fruit & Vegetable Snack from Sun-Rype Products Ltd., by brand/graphic designer Anthem WW.



Brand Marketing – Brand Revitalization, Food & Beverage – Gold Awards:

- » Cracker Barrel from the Kraft Heinz

Company (Canada), by brand/graphic designer Davis.

- » Jack Link's from Jack Link's Beef Jerky, by brand/graphic designer Davis.
- » Le Grand from Maison Legrand/Bernard Le Grand, from brand/graphic designer Pigeon Brands.
- » Montellier from Alex Coulombe Ltée, by brand/graphic designer Shikatani Lacroix Design Inc.
- » Nutrisystem from Nutrisystem, by brand/graphic designer SGS International Design.
- » Prana from Prana Biovegan Inc., by brand/graphic designer Pigeon Brands.
- » Sauza Tequila from Beam Suntory, by brand/graphic designer Webb deVlam.
- » Tim Hortons from TDL Limited, by brand/graphic designer Pigeon Brands.

Package Innovation – Gold Awards:

- » Coors Light from Molson Coors Canada, by brand/graphic designer Turner Duckworth/Molson Coors Studio Canada.
- » Daisy Brand Sour Cream from Daisy Brand LLC, by Sonoco.
- » Green Mountain Coffee from Keurig Green Mountain, Inc., by Interbrand/Keurig Green Mountain, Inc. and Schawk!/PaperWorks Industries, Inc.
- » Irresistibles Olive Oil Spray from Metro Inc., by brand/graphic designer St. Joseph Communications.
- » Keurig Green Mountain/Starbucks from Keurig Green Mountain Inc./Starbucks, by Starbucks Global Creative Studio and Schawk!/Malnove Incorporated.
- » M&M's from Mars Canada Inc.
- » SUNSET Minzano from Mastronardi Produce Ltd.



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sur le Québec

NOUVELLES

Fonds de solidarité FTQ investit 3 M\$ dans Zinda

Le Fonds de solidarité FTQ investit 3 millions de dollars dans Produits Zinda, une compagnie agroalimentaire de Candiatic, pour contribuer à l'acquisition et l'installation d'une nouvelle chaîne de production de couscous perlé, que Zinda importe actuellement.

Zinda est spécialisée dans la production d'une large variété de couscous, nature et de différentes saveurs. La compagnie a connu une forte croissance depuis sa fondation par le propriétaire Majid Jamaledine à la fin des années 1990. En 2008, M. Jamaledine a intégré ses trois filles — Zineb, Youssa et Houda — à l'exploitation avec un plan visant



Zineb, Youssa, Majid et Houda Jamaledine de Produits Zinda.

à leur transférer progressivement les connaissances, la gestion et la propriété de l'entreprise.

«La croissance soutenue de Zinda au cours des dernières années témoigne de la profonde connaissance de Majid Jamaledine quant aux enjeux du

BIENS DE CONSOMMATION

> **Espuña**, producteur de tapas espagnoles authentiques et de charcuterie, a lancé la collection de **tapas Essentiels** au Québec et en Ontario. Cette collection se veut une variante unique de ses classiques, et elle comprend une variété d'options savoureuses pour les consommateurs. Des dattes enveloppées dans le bacon au Canitas, en passant par le jambon Serrano, ces tapas regorgent des saveurs de l'Espagne. www.espuña.es



> Les nouvelles barres nutritives **Special K** de **Kellogg** renferment des ingrédients qui se voient et se goûtent. Elles sont également sans gluten, pauvre en sodium et ne contiennent aucun arôme ni colorant artificiels. Elles s'avèrent une source de nutriments essentiels, afin que les Canadiens puissent se sentir confiants

lorsqu'ils doivent manger sur le pouce. Les barres nutritives Special K sont offertes en deux délicieuses saveurs : canneberges et amandes, ainsi que brisures de chocolat noir et amandes. www.specialk.ca

> **Les pâtes Felicetti** contiennent de l'épeautre, du blé khorasan et une variété de blé dur biologiques soigneusement choisis pour leur mariage harmonieux dans les pâtes, donnant à chaque variété une texture riche, un goût rehaussé et de bonnes valeurs nutritives. Moulus quotidiennement, les grains sont mélangés avec de l'eau de source Dolomite Mountain, avec l'autorisation spéciale du gouvernement italien d'utiliser ce site protégé par l'UNESCO. Regroupant 11 variétés de pâtes de 200 formes différentes, les produits Felicetti sont certifiés biologiques et casher. www.felicetti.it



secteur agroalimentaire et des marchés d'exportation. Avec un solide plan de relève déjà en place, l'avenir est prometteur pour Zinda et ses employés», affirme Janie Béique, vice-présidente principale de la division Industries, divertissement et biens de consommation du Fonds FTQ.

«Grâce à l'Accord conclu avec l'Union européenne, le Canada va avoir accès à l'un des plus gros et des plus riches marchés au monde, soit 500 millions de consommateurs répartis dans 28 États membres. Grâce à nos avantages concurrentiels, nous sommes prêts à conquérir cet important marché»,

poursuit Majid Jamaledine, président-directeur général de Produits Zinda.

Selon la saison et les quarts de travail, l'entreprise compte entre 65 et 70 employés, dont une quarantaine de personnes sont affectées à la production. On prévoit l'ajout d'une quinzaine de nouveaux emplois dans un horizon de 18 à 24 mois.

Environ 25% de la production de Zinda est biologique, avec des produits vendus sous les marques Zinda au Canada et Casablanca Gardens aux États-Unis. L'entreprise fabrique également des produits pour plusieurs marques privées.

Colabor annonce un plan de rationalisation
 Groupe Colabor inc. de Boucherville, un distributeur et grossiste de produits alimentaires et non alimentaires desservant le marché des services alimentaires a annoncé un plan de rationalisation et d'optimisation de ses activités d'exploitation.

Ce plan vise permettre à Colabor d'améliorer son efficacité opérationnelle et sa rentabilité dans un contexte d'affaires qui demeure difficile pour l'industrie de la distribution des services alimentaires, ainsi que de finaliser l'intégration des acquisitions réalisées au cours des dernières années. Il consiste principalement à centraliser et consolider certaines activités au siège social de la Société ou à celui de ses divisions. La mise en oeuvre

du plan se traduira par l'abolition d'environ 120 postes, soit environ 8% des effectifs totaux de l'entreprise.

Les mesures de rationalisation devraient entraîner des réductions annuelles de coûts estimées à plus de 6,0 M\$. Selon un communiqué de presse émis par la compagnie, ces économies se matérialiseront progressivement au cours de l'exercice 2016 et auront plein effet au cours de l'exercice 2017. ↪

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Les Producteurs laitiers du Canada (PLC) ont remis le quatrième Prix de développement durable en production laitière à la Ferme Bois Mou 2001 inc. de Saint-Félix-de-Kingsey. La ferme est la propriété de Mario Lefebvre et Denise Joyal ainsi que de leurs trois filles. La famille a reçu une récompense en argent de 2 000 \$ pour ses pratiques agricoles durables.

Les pratiques de gestion des Lefebvre se sont démarquées de plusieurs façons, entre autres par l'utilisation de lits d'eau et de barres d'attache en plastique plutôt qu'en métal pour améliorer le confort des vaches lorsqu'elles bougent. Ils ont fait fabriquer un compacteur pour récupérer les pellicules de plastique enveloppant les balles de foin rondes avant de les apporter eux-mêmes à l'entreprise spécialisée en gestion des déchets. Ils partagent d'ailleurs cet appareil avec leur voisin. De plus, depuis 2006, ils utilisent la technique du travail minimal du sol pour tous leurs champs. Et finalement, ils portent un intérêt particulier à la biosécurité.

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Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu en partenariat avec Moisson Montréal

Moisson Montréal a annoncé que la Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu est devenue partenaire principal du Programme de récupération en supermarchés grâce à un don de 1,5 million de dollars, en assurant le financement jusqu'en 2018.

«Au cours des dernières années, le Programme de récupération en supermarchés a recueilli près de 800 tonnes de nourriture — dont 323 tonnes de viande — dans 76 épicerie. Il était toutefois devenu impossible pour Moisson Montréal d'envisager la progression de l'initiative dans plus d'épicerie sans l'implication d'un partenaire financier majeur», a indiqué Julie Bourbonnière, directrice des



communications et du financement de Moisson Montréal. «Et, bien que les coûts opérationnels du programme soient très importants — près d'un million de dollars par année — l'impact sur les personnes dans le besoin l'est bien plus encore.»

Ce don de la Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu devrait couvrir les frais de formation du personnel, l'achat et l'entretien de camions réfrigérés, l'achat de congélateurs, la construction d'un

laboratoire d'analyses, l'embauche de nouveaux chauffeurs et bien plus.

«Le Programme de récupération en supermarchés encadré par Moisson Montréal est une initiative ayant un impact considérable sur la communauté et sur l'environnement», a précisé Marie-Josée Coutu, présidente de la Fondation. «La Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu est fière de contribuer à son développement. Nous sommes assurés que notre contribution permettra à l'organisation de répondre à sa double mission, qui se veut d'abord d'assurer un approvisionnement alimentaire optimal des organismes communautaires de l'île de Montréal, en offrant des denrées de qualité; et ensuite de réduire le gaspillage alimentaire, en développant des solutions durables.»

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La deuxième fois sera la bonne

Le producteur de veau du Québec Écolait relance sa marque Vivo de produits innovateurs

PAR MARK CARDWELL

Comme le foie gras et les nageoires de requin, le veau a toujours été difficile à vendre aux consommateurs. Mais cela n'empêche pas Mario Maillet d'essayer — encore une fois — de rendre le veau plus tendance. «Je suis persuadé que nous allons réussir», commente M. Maillet, président d'Écolait, le plus grand producteur de veau au Québec.

Ce mois-ci, la compagnie relance sa marque Vivo de nouvelles coupes de veau et de produits alimentaires innovateurs, incluant le bacon, le jambon, la viande fumée et les rôtis prêts à manger. Le premier produit,



le bacon au veau, avait été lancé à la fin 2014 dans les épiceries Metro et IGA du Québec.

Selon M. Maillet, les ventes de bacon au veau ont grésillé dès le départ, avec une production hebdomadaire doublée, passant de 500 à 1200 caisses au cours des six premiers mois. «Nous avons été extrêmement satisfaits par la réaction des consommateurs face au nouveau produit, qui s'est révélé le premier bacon de veau fabriqué en production massive dans le monde», ajoute-t-il.

Néanmoins, ce produit, tout comme la gamme Vivo, a vu sa production suspendue l'été dernier lorsque l'entreprise de transformation de la viande de la région montréalaise — partenaire avec Écolait pour développer et produire le bacon et d'autres produits issus du veau — a été vendue, mettant un terme à la relation d'affaires. Écolait s'est depuis trouvé un nouveau partenaire — ↪

Levitts Kosher Foods, un transformateur de viande situé à LaSalle, membre du groupe d'entreprises alimentaires Lauzon — et la marque Vivo est maintenant prête pour un retour sur le marché. Aux dires de M. Maillet, le bacon de veau va commencer à reprendre sa place sur les tablettes à compter de ce mois-ci dans les magasins d'alimentation IGA, Metro et Loblaws du Québec, et Safeway en Ontario et dans l'Ouest canadien.

Un second produit — le jambon de veau Forêt-Noire — commencera à circuler en avril, ainsi que plusieurs autres produits dont l'apparition est prévue dans les prochains mois; chacun d'eux à faible teneur en sodium, sans gluten et de qualité halal. «Nous allons sortir une gamme complète de produits cette fois-ci», précise M. Maillet. Il espère que ces produits aideront à augmenter l'attrait du veau tout en améliorant le sort de ce segment de niche critiqué et source de défis économiques du marché canadien de la viande rouge. «L'industrie du veau se situe à un carrefour,» considère M. Maillet. «Le veau frais se vend en deçà des coûts de production. Nous devons être plus imaginatifs sur le marché.»

Voilà l'état d'esprit dans lequel il est arrivé il y a trois ans quand il a été embauché par Écolait: le plus grand producteur de veau de lait (à chair blanche) du Canada. Écolait abat environ 1500 jeunes taureaux par semaine, provenant de 120 fermes du Québec, à ses abattoir et usine de transformation de Terrebonne ainsi qu'à son usine de découpe dans le nord de l'État de New York. Il abat et transforme également à peu près le même nombre de porcs pour des clients de marque privée aux États-Unis.

Écolait commercialise environ 40% de son veau frais au Québec, où la consommation annuelle s'élève à environ deux kilogrammes par personne. Il s'agit à peu près du triple de la consommation du reste du Canada, qui est d'environ 700 g par personne. 30% du veau d'Écolait prend la direction des États-Unis, tandis que le pourcentage restant se dirige vers d'autres provinces et des marchés outre-mer, notamment le Japon et le Moyen-Orient.

Écolait est une filiale de Grober — une compagnie située à Cambridge en Ontario — qui se révèle la plus grande entreprise de transformation intégrée du veau de lait en Amérique du Nord, regroupant plusieurs divisions s'acquittant de toutes les étapes de cette industrie: de la fabrication de succédané de lait



à l'élevage, la transformation et la commercialisation de quelque 150 000 veaux de boucherie par an au Canada et aux États-Unis. Il est également stratégiquement jumelé à une autre compagnie affiliée de Grober en Ontario: Delft Blue Food Innovations.

M. Maillet, agronome et ancien sous-ministre de l'agriculture du Nouveau-Brunswick, qui a agi une décennie comme directeur général d'une usine de transformation du porc pour Les viandes du Breton au Québec, et qui a travaillé pour des géants canadiens de produits alimentaires comme Maple Leaf et High Life, fait valoir que la nature et l'histoire du veau en ont fait une vente traditionnellement difficile pour les clients au détail de produits alimentaires modernes.

Habitude développée par les producteurs laitiers en Europe de l'Ouest comme une façon savoureuse et nutritive d'utiliser les jeunes taureaux indésirables, le veau s'est vite retrouvé au Canada dans les années d'après-guerre grâce à la demande des immigrants et la croissance de l'industrie laitière du Québec.

Selon les statistiques du gouvernement fédéral et de l'industrie du veau du Québec et de l'Ontario — qui cumule 95% du marché canadien du veau — le Québec représente 80% de la production nationale de veau. La grande partie de cette production s'avère du veau de lait, lequel est populaire pour sa tendreté et sa couleur rose pâle. Malgré leur nom, les veaux de lait sont en fait nourris avec un succédané de lait liquide qui contribue à la couleur pâle de leur chair, un aspect recherché. Moins populaires, les veaux de grain sont nourris de foin et de céréales, ce qui entraîne une viande à la couleur plus foncée, dont le goût se rapproche plus du boeuf. Écolait domine le marché du veau de lait, tandis que son rival, Montpak de Montréal, occupe une position similaire pour le veau de grain.

Indépendamment de leur classification, la vie des veaux de boucherie se veut décidément courte, allant de quelques jours pour les veaux naissants



zen. «Nous voulons établir des protocoles de bonnes pratiques pour nous assurer que les veaux sont élevés avec le bien-être de l'animal en tête,» explique-t-il. «Nos deux principales motivations se révèlent la protection des animaux et la production de veaux de lait authentiques.»

M. Maillet espère que ces efforts aboutiront à une vision plus équilibrée de la production du veau, et il encourage les jeunes consommateurs à découvrir le goût raffiné et doux d'une viande comportant moins de gras ainsi que plus de fer et de protéines que la viande de porc, et moins de gras saturés que le bœuf. Voilà la principale raison pour laquelle un rôti de veau prêt à manger et d'autres mets préparés sont en cours d'élaboration. «Il faut beaucoup de R et D,» conclut M. Maillet. «Le veau n'est pas facile à cuisiner pour les gens qui ne sont pas habitués à ses particularités. Les mets préparés permettent d'en avoir une bonne expérience.» ●

à quelques semaines ou quelques mois pour les animaux vendus aux producteurs. D'une manière ou d'une autre, ce très jeune âge, ajouté aux caissons de confinement de type cercueil largement répandus parmi les producteurs de veaux d'ici depuis des décennies ont attiré la disgrâce de nombreux consommateurs, qui considère ce produit comme une source cruelle et inhumaine de protéines.

M. Maillet dit travailler à changer cette perception. Une des façons préconisées consiste à utiliser les carcasses de veau, qui sont selon lui similaires à celles des porcs, en développant une gamme de produits comme le bacon de veau. Il a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec Bohdan Lozynsky, le propriétaire d'origine ukrainienne de la compagnie de transformation de la viande qui a été vendue l'année dernière. Il a fallu huit mois pour développer un bacon de veau à faible teneur en gras avec le même profil de texture, d'odeur et de goût que celui du bacon de porc, prisé par les consommateurs.

C'est maintenant Livetts qui produit le bacon, le jambon et autres produits en cours de développement et/ou d'amélioration, incluant la viande fumée et des coupes de spécialité en provenance des jambes, du dos, des longes, des épaules et des jarrets; servant à concocter escalopes de veau, osso-buco, carrés de veau à la française, et viande en dés.

En septembre 2014, Écolait a également signé un accord de partenariat de 10 ans avec le Collège vétérinaire de l'Atlantique de l'Université de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Selon les conditions de cet accord, des chercheurs rédigent des politiques sur les meilleures pratiques visant la protection et le bien-être des animaux de boucherie, la santé du troupeau, la conception des abris, les essais de médication et la qualité de la viande. Des manuels de formation et des guides sont également en cours d'élaboration à l'intention des producteurs de veau de lait traitant avec Écolait.

M. Maillet souligne que de nombreuses fermes sont actuellement visitées et notées selon les normes de production Kai-

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A touch of fruit

Manufacturers of baked goods and snacks can now include concentrated fruit pieces with authentic provenance in their products, thanks to the latest innovation by Taura Natural Ingredients. Tapping into the theme of “Rooted & Real,” Taura’s new URC specialty range includes named-variety fruit ingredients made from France’s unique Normandie apples and apricots du Roussillon, as well as American Concord grapes. www.tauraurc.com

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Pleasingly purple

Healthy Food Ingredients (HFI) — the parent company of SK Food International, Hesco/Dakota Organic Products, and the most recent addition, Suntava Corporation — has introduced Suntava Purple Corn. Suntava Purple Corn is full of antioxidants and polyphenols, including very high amounts of anthocyanins, which HFI is now able to offer in

additional processed forms such as a raw flour, meal, or grit; precooked flake, flour or grit; pregelatinized flour; snack grit and sprouted. Suntava Purple Corn recently became Certified Gluten Free by NSF, and is also certified organic and Non-GMO Project Verified.

www.suntava.com

Uniform blending

Munson has released a new Ribbon Blender that meets sanitary standards and blends up to 1.84 m³ of powders, pastes or slurries. The blender’s 2:1 length-to-diameter ratio helps distribute ingredients uniformly during



loading, blending and discharge. It forces a split double-helical agitator through stationary material, typically producing homogeneous blends in five to six minutes. Tight tolerances of 1.6

to 0.8 mm between ribbon blades and the vessel wall help to minimize residual product in the trough following discharge, reducing material waste and cleaning time.

www.munsonmachinery.com

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www.hinds-bock.com

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Hollymatic is making marinating easy with its HVT-30 Vacuum Tumbler, which provides consistent quality for

marinated menu items. This tumbling process increases yield, tenderizes products, reduces cook time, and evenly distributes flavour throughout product, whether it's meat, fish or poultry. Using Hollymatic's HVT-30 Vacuum Tumbler is an ideal way to add creative variety to food offerings while increasing sales and profits.

www.hollymatic.com

Chilling out

Century Refrigeration, a division of RAE Corporation, is announcing the availability of its N-Series



Chillers, ideal for winery chilling applications. The N-Series Chiller provides all the advantages of a proven Century Comdustrial design in a complete, factory run-tested chiller package engineered for durability and serviceability. With a variety of available options and accessories, Century Refrigeration's engineering experts can design and build N-Series Chiller units for a range of chilling applications with no need for modification in the field. www.raecorp.com

Super berry

Frutarom Health BU has launched its new Incaberrix superberry ingredient formulations for confectionery products. Incaberrix is an all-natural ingredient sourced from Inca golden berries, the ancient Andean physalis fruit (*Physalis peruviana*). It combines the health benefits of superfruits with an exotic sweet-and-sour

flavour. Incaberrix is rich in B-complex vitamins, protein and minerals, and is high in vitamin C and carotenoids.

www.frutaromhealth.com

Darkly appealing

Sethness Products Company introduces its darkest Class I Powdered Caramel Color – SB245. Exclusive to Sethness, SB245 is the newest addition to the company's expanding portfolio of Class I Caramel Colors. With a Tinctorial Power of 0.2350 – 0.265, this unique Caramel Color is significantly darker than traditional Class I Powders. Unlike the characteristic red tones of other Class I Powdered Caramel Colors, SB245 offers an appealing brown hue. This innovative feature allows food and beverage manufacturers to switch from brown-toned Class IV Caramel Colors to a more label-friendly Class I. www.sethness.com

Hitting the sweet spot

To address the growing need for natural vanilla alternatives, Comax Flavors is offering Natural Comax Product V (100 per cent Natural Vanillin ex Clove) and VANI-MAX (100 per cent Natural Vanillin ex Ferulic Acid) ingredients. Both natural vanillin products are Non-GMO, and are suitable for use in organic applications. Featuring a sweet, creamy vanilla aroma, both products are available in crystals or powder and can be used in a variety of applications including dairy, bakery, confections and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

www.ComaxFlavors.com



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Carol Neshevich



Mike Whittaker, president of Bonté Foods

Bonté Foods Limited Dieppe, N.B.

When Dieppe, N.B.'s Bonté Foods began operating in 1977, it was primarily a supply house that made donair meat cones for the Greco Donair restaurant chain. But over the years, as the business grew, Bonté greatly diversified its product offerings. It may have diversified a little too much, however, in the opinion of Bonté's current president, Mike Whittaker.

"We became a multi-category food producer," says Whittaker. "We had a bakery, a sauce division, we made cookie dough, we did pasta, meats, meals... Then in 2005, we did another big expansion and we kind of over built. We also made a couple of acquisitions that didn't quite pan out. And then we went through a very difficult period in 2007/2008."

Something had to change. "We were really struggling," says Whittaker. "So we

changed our total focus. The situation was, we were pretty good at a lot of things, but we weren't excellent at anything." They looked at what they had the potential to be "excellent" in, and it was unquestionably the meat division, particularly deli meats.

"We had a brokerage division, and we got rid of that. We had a sauce division, and we outsourced all of our sauces so now we have them all done by co-packers. And we had a bakery division, so a couple of years ago we closed that, which was kind of the final piece of the puzzle," recalls Whittaker. "And the whole time we're doing this, our company's getting more and more focused on our core strength, which is meat processing."

According to Whittaker, the strategy of zeroing in on deli meats has been a terrific move. "It's the age-old business advice: make sure you do something really, really well and focus on that," he says. "It's worked extremely well for us."

How well? Deli meat sales have risen by 225 per cent in the last six years, says Whittaker, and they've been winning award after award for business success. In 2015, Bonté won the Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce's Excellence in Business award for large enterprises, along with the Chamber's first-ever People's Choice Award. That same year, Bonté was also named New Brunswick's Exporter of the Year and was the winner of Dieppe's Business Excellence Award.

Sticking with its focus, the company has recently launched a number of new deli products, including its first-ever shaved meats, two new kinds of bologna and a new line of "light and lean" deli meats. "Half our business is foodservice

and the other half is retail. So it's a nice balance of share of stomach," says Whittaker, adding, "We sell across Canada, but probably about 70 per cent of our business is in Atlantic Canada."

But what about those donair supplies that formed the basis for the business in 1977? Whittaker says Bonté is still a major donair producer. And it's not just an Atlantic Canada thing — while donairs have been a tough sell in Ontario and Quebec, they're actually very popular out West. "So it's still a really good business, but it's not where our growth is — our growth is in deli meats," he explains. "Our vision is to dominate the delis." ●

Q&A



Q: How do you see your product line evolving in the future?

A: "We're looking at rolling out a lot more raw meat products. Right now we're about 95 per cent fully cooked meats, processed and cooked. So it's a natural extension for us to get more into steaks and ribs and maybe marinated, value-added raw meat products."

Q: Why is Bonté (and its brands) particularly popular in Atlantic Canada?

A: "We have a really strong cult following in Atlantic Canada, especially with our Chris Brothers [deli meat] brand — to the point where it's even been featured in some of the old Trailer Park Boys episodes. It's a very strong brand following, so we leverage that brand equity."



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