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Canada's food & beverage processing magazine

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THE MEAT REPORT

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FOOD in CANADA

Canada's food & beverage processing magazine



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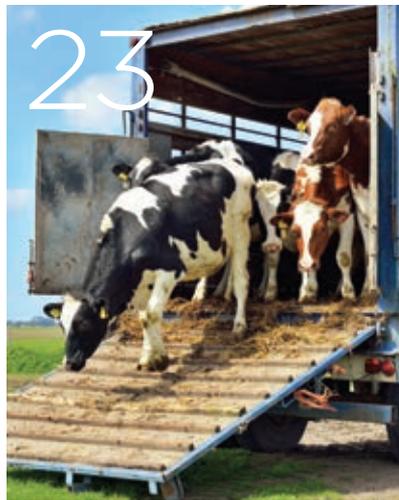
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The value question

One of the challenges that food and beverage producers continue to struggle with is anticipating and meeting consumer demands. This has become especially important as the diversity of demands grow and become much more targeted. At the same time, the Canadian retailing landscape continues to consolidate, and the competition for shelf space tightens.

That's why it's so important to ensure your products are the highest-quality possible, your packaging design is efficient and eye-catching, and your marketing message is on point. But, of course, adding value also often adds cost – something that consumers are particularly sensitive to today. In fact, offering the best value for the lowest price-point possible is the sweet spot that Canadians continue to seek out.

A recently released report by Mintel reveals the extent of that seemingly contradictory search. Not surprisingly, it found that when it comes to purchasing food and beverage products, Canadian consumers are not as brand loyal as they once were. *The Budget Shopper Canada 2017* report notes that 41 per cent of Canadians say they are not brand loyal, with a whopping 95 per cent saying they now regularly buy private-label products. Of that number 19 per cent say they always buy an in-store brand, while 48 per cent will check out an unknown brand if they like the price.

While taste and quality should be top of mind when making purchasing decisions, Mintel found that a low price point is often the deciding factor

for consumers. In fact, 39 per cent of respondents say they routinely buy discounted items, 33 per cent say they price shop between retailers for the best deals, and 24 per cent say they always buy the cheapest products.

On the other hand, Canadians aren't budgeting their food and beverage purchases (50 per cent of respondents say they watch their spending habits, but only 14 per cent say they actually follow a strict budget). Not surprisingly then, Mintel found that only 14 per cent of shoppers say they clip coupons, 13 per cent look for online promo codes, and 12 per cent use an app to find deals. Instead, says Carol Wong-Li, senior lifestyles and leisure analyst for Mintel, undecided customers rely on connecting with product specials through in-store signage, "well displayed sale or promotional signs, or leveraging technology that alerts customers to sales while they are at the physical location of purchase."

Interestingly, Wong-Li also notes that 47 per cent of Canadians say they watch their spending simply because they love a bargain. "Experiencing joy from finding a good deal is inherent in all consumers," she says. "Retailers would do well to cater to general sentiments of maximizing value rather than trying specifically to meet preconceived notions of the 'budget shopper.'" 🍎

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Pizza lovers meet chocoholics

From Feb. 9 to 14, 2018, consumers in Toronto could visit Cioccolato's Ristorante and order a chocolate pizza. Dr. Oetker created the pop-up in time to launch its new chocolate dessert pizza called Ristorante Cioccolato — the first frozen retail chocolate pizza in Canada. The “pizza” includes toppings such as chocolate sauce, dark chocolate chips, milk chocolate shavings and white chocolate chunks, all on chocolate crust. The pop-up restaurant featured a chocolate pizza oven, a chocolate chandelier and a diamond ring made from chocolate pizza.



News > file



Feds announce supercluster winners

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada has announced the five successful superclusters — Digital Technology Supercluster, Protein Industries Supercluster, Advanced Manufacturing Supercluster, AI-Powered Supply Chains Supercluster (SCALE.AI) and Ocean Supercluster — that will share \$950 million.

The federal government launched the Innovation Superclusters Initiative last summer, calling on industries to submit proposals showing a clear “strategy for creating and growing new companies, creating jobs...attracting private investment and generating meaningful economic activity.”

The Protein Industries Canada (PIC) is an industry-led alliance of more than 120 private sector companies, academic institutions, and other stakeholders across Western Canada “aimed at fully developing the potential of plant-based

proteins from crops such as canola pulses, grains, hemp and flax.”

PIC says its work will focus on crop breeding, crop production value-added processing, and export development. According to an independent study, it’s estimated the PIC supercluster will “generate over \$700 million in new commercial activity and billions in incremental GDP over the next decade together with approximately 4,700 new jobs.”

Love it, wear it

PepsiCo launched Doritos Ketchup Chips for a limited time earlier this year. To mark its return, the company unveiled the Doritos Ketchup collection of limited-edition streetwear including a jacket, T-shirts, a snapback cap and duffle bag. The company released one new item each week for five weeks, beginning on Jan. 31, 2018. The items could be viewed and purchased at DoritosDrop.ca or CollectionDoritos.ca



Brick Brewing invests in upgrades

Kitchener, Ont.-based Brick Brewing Co. Limited is investing \$3.5 million to upgrade its can line capacity. The company says it will install a new can filler and pasteurizer, which will bring annual canning capacity up to approximately 400,000 hectolitres. The installation is expected to be complete by May and fully operational by the end of June.



FROM OUR LIBRARY

In February, *Lure: Sustainable Seafood Recipes from the West Coast* was shortlisted for the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) 2018 IACP Awards in the Food Matters category. The book’s publisher, Figure 1 Publishing, says the cookbook takes readers on a “wild Pacific adventure” where they learn about the benefits of healthy oils and the nutrients found in seafood. The book features simple techniques and straightforward sustainability guidelines around Pacific species of seafood and includes 80 recipes. The recipes cover everything from tacos to fish burgers, to chowders, crudo, ceviche and caviar butter.



SIAL 2018 comes to Montreal!

SIAL Canada takes place this year in Montreal from May 2 to 4. The show will feature more than 1,000 national and international exhibitors – Spain is the country of honour – and expects more than 18,500 visitors. This year’s roster of events includes:

- » The SIAL Innovation contest.
- » Canada’s largest extra-virgin olive oil competition, Olive d’Or.
- » An Atlantic Pavilion, which is new this year.
- » The SIAL Food Hub.
- » The Experts’ Hub of industry professionals with expertise in certain sectors, all of whom will be onsite.
- » Culinary demonstrations at La Cuisine by SIAL.
- » Two new sections: one for cheeses and microbrewery beers, and the other for drinks.

And finally, there’s SoSIAL, a program that will collect all food products at the end of the show and distribute them to local food banks.

Spotlight on beverages at SIAL

SIAL’s beverage expert is Jean-Sebastien Michel, president of Alambika and Jesemi Distribution, two companies that specialize in wine, beer, spirits and cocktail ingredients and accessories.

Food in Canada spoke to Michel about drink trends for 2018.



Jean-Sebastien Michel

Q: What beverage trends will make a splash this year?



A: “Simple, short, high-quality lists of ingredients; not too much processing or preservatives. We’ll also see more ethical alternatives, such as ‘ugly’ fruits used in juices and sodas, and unaltered natural wines or ciders. We’ll see sugarless sodas, zero-caffeine colas. Mocktails or cocktails without, or with very low, alcohol content are here to stay. Another trend is using local sources of acidity instead of citrus. Shrubs (a mix of fruit juice, sugar and vinegar), verjuice (made by pressing the juice of unripe grapes) and surette (a tart apple molasses made in Canada that is gaining international love) are giving new life to old recipes.”

Q: Are the trends different between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages?

A: “We see common trends such as health, a newfound love of terroir, local plants (such as northern berries, pine trees, apples), and simplicity.”

Q: What’s new in beverage packaging?

A: “Plastic is making a comeback as it is lightweight and uses less energy to transport and is less prone to breakage. Heavy, apothecary-type packaging for cocktails,

or bright and colourful packaging for health juices are still there. Clean labels instead of gimmicks.”

Q: How have consumers’ attitudes changed?

A: “People are far more curious and open to innovation. I remember talking about craft tonics and seeing people’s eyes glaze over. Now they expect to see new products. It is especially true with craft beer where there isn’t a lot of brand loyalty; craft beer lovers want the latest special releases.”

Q: Which trends or consumer behaviours should manufacturers watch closely?

A: “Cutting corners won’t cut it anymore. Consumers want integrity and an appealing, genuine brand message. The beverage market is getting increasingly crowded and former distinctions are starting to blur with crossover products. I believe hedonistic products designed to have a limited negative impact on consumers’ health will keep doing well. We want to have fun, drink pleasurable products and keep doing so until we grow old.”

IN BRIEF

> Kaslo, B.C.-based **Kaslo Sourdough** has received funding from the federal government to study the health benefits of its novel sourdough fermented pasta, including research to determine if it encourages lower blood glucose responses, influences insulin levels and benefits the gut microbiome. The company says its fermented pastas already offer improved digestibility, nutrient absorption and faster cooking times, characteristics not found in conventional wheat pastas.



> **Brickworks Ciderhouse** opened last month in Toronto, making it Canada's first urban ciderhouse, according to the company. The premium craft cider maker launched in 2013 and uses only apples found within a 300-km radius of the city.

> **J.P. Wiser's 35**, made by **Corby Spirit and Wine**, won Canadian Whisky of the Year and Distiller of the Year at the 2018 Canadian Whisky Awards. The awards were held in Victoria, B.C.

> Toronto-based **Tinley Beverage Company Inc.** has leased a 20,000-sq.-ft. facility in California for its cannabis beverage production. The company says it plans to install batching

POTATO POWER

According to Statistics Canada, potato production was 4.8 million tonnes in 2017, which is up 0.4 per cent from 2016. P.E.I. represented 22.3 per cent of total potato production in 2017, followed by Manitoba (21 per cent) and Alberta (19 per cent).



and bottling equipment, and plans to build a permitted cannabis distributor.

> **PEI Potato Solutions** in P.E.I. has acquired a chemical imaging machine with two metal detectors that will help the company identify any foreign objects in potatoes. The company

provides a potato wash service to local farmers before the potatoes are sold to potato processors such as Cavendish Farms.

> Toronto-based **Nestlé Professional Canada** has partnered with **Carla's Pasta** as the pastemaker's exclusive distributor. Carla's Pasta's lineup includes Lobster Ravioli, Beet & Goat Cheese Pacchetti, and Shrimp Scampi Ravioli.

> The federal government is helping P.E.I.-based **Atlantic Grown Organics** expand its facility and purchase automated grading and packaging equipment. The repayable contribution of \$238,007 was provided through Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Business Development Program.

> During the month of February Toronto's **Steam Whistle Brewing** donated 50 per cent of all profits from beer sales to the Downie Wenjack Fund. **The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund** calls on Canadians to work towards solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

> Pointe-Claire, Que.-based **LUDA Foods** won the Improved Products — SMB award at the DUX Gala for its line of soup stocks for the foodservice and processor markets. The line is called LUDA Pro Clean Label Concentrates and is low in salt, and is gluten-

Green eggs, hold the ham



If you can't get enough of avocados — and you happen to be visiting the UK — you can get your hands on the avocado Easter egg at grocery chain Waitrose. The grocer describes the "avocado" as having "a dark chocolate shell, white chocolate with natural green colouring and a cocoa dusted 'stone.'" The shell and stone are made with Belgian chocolate. And it gets even more egg-citing for chocoholics: there's no avocado or avocado flavour anywhere, just pure chocolate. The treat weighs 250 g and retails for £8.

and allergen-free. The DUX Eat Better, Live Better event is from EDIKOM media group and recognizes food leadership. LUDA was previously known as Aliments ED Foods. The company, which makes soups, sauces and seasonings for foodservice and industrial markets, changed its name to LUDA Foods in February 2018.

> The CFIA and Health Canada have approved the third non-browning Arctic apple variety, this one called Arctic Fuji, by B.C.-based **Okanagan Specialty Fruits Inc.** The Arctic apples line will not brown even after they are sliced, bitten or bruised.

> Waterstone Human Capital, an executive search firm, has named the **Egg Farmers of Canada** one of the country's Most Admired Corporate Cultures. This is the second time in a row that the organization has been recognized.



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Côté

> Toronto-based Dealers Ingredients has named **Myriam Côté** manager of national accounts, and **Chris Kovachis** controller.



Kovachis

In other news, the company has made the ghp (Global Health Pharma) list of top 10 companies that have made contributions to healthcare and pharma in 2017.

> Georgia-based Huber Engineered Materials, a producer of specialty performance ingredients, has appointed **Dan Krawczyk**



Krawczyk

as its new president.

SUPPLIER NEWS

> Saskatoon, Sask.-based **Nutrien Ltd.** has acquired **Agrichem**, a plant nutrition and plant health company based in Brazil. Nutrien provides crop inputs and services, helping growers sustainably increase food production.



> IOI **Loders Crocklaan** has partnered with **Kerry Group, Wild Asia** and the **Fortuna Palm Oil Mill** to implement a three-year Small-Growers Support Program.

As well as helping farmers boost their productivity, the program will help IOI's third-party supplying mills achieve compliance to its "Sustainable Palm Policy" and

> Norway-based **Orkla Food Ingredients**, a business area of Orkla ASA, and Vancouver-based **Renaissance BioScience Corp.** have agreed to expand their licence agreement for Orkla to exclusively manufacture and sell Renaissance's acrylamide-reducing yeast **Acrylow** to food manufacturers in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.



guide them in preparing for certification requirements.

> Montreal-based **Lallemand Health Solutions** says Health Canada has recognized its probiotic strain *Bifidobacterium animalis ssp. Lactis LAFTI B94* for its gut health benefits in children, adolescents and adults. In particular the Canadian government

recognized it for its ability to reduce constipation and bloating in children and adolescents with Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

> Wisconsin-based **Sensient Technologies** has acquired the natural colour business of **GlobeNatural**, a Peru-based natural food and ingredient company.

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MARKET TRENDS

Larry Martin

MARKET COMMENTARY: Changes in the market

The sudden rise in grain prices is potentially significant. I'm writing this part of the column on a Sunday when the overnight oilseed markets are breaking through resistance. Two factors mentioned in the Market Highlights below are particularly important in anticipating where prices are likely to go. First, Brazil is taking export share to China from the U.S., partly because of low protein in U.S. beans, and particularly because of the trade spat. January's U.S. soy exports to China dropped to about 5.8 million tonnes from 6.6 million tonnes last year. Brazil's China exports grew from 1.4 to 2.3 million tonnes during the same period, underlining the relative changes in a month during which Brazil's harvest was getting a good start.

Simultaneously, managed funds changed their net positions

from 258,000 contracts net short on Jan. 16 to 43,000 contracts net long on Feb. 20. Soy positions went from 137,000 net short to 66,000 net long. Mid-January's conversation was about very large short positions driving prices down. A month later both went modestly positive, contributing to the uptrend.

As usual, there are both bullish and bearish market fundamentals. But watch the funds' positions to see whether they become bulls or switch back to the bear side. This will affect the short-term price trend. ●

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

MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Grain and oilseed prices recovered in the past month while energy prices and the Canadian dollar are bouncing.

> Grains: All eyes remain on U.S. exports and Argentina. The latter country's dry weather will likely limit their corn and soybean production. U.S. weekly exports have been quite variable, creating uncertainty about the year's total, spurred on by a U.S. president constantly criticizing China and others. China already restricted imports of U.S. sorghum, and senior USDA officials are concerned about similar action against U.S. soybeans. Meanwhile, Brazil's production of both grains is better than expected, so China is having few problems importing their needs from that source.

Managed funds did a rapid about face, moving from a strong bearish to mild bullish position on corn and soy, helping the current uptrend. Will they buy more with this uncertainty? March and May futures trended up toward the resistance planes discussed in the last column, but have not been able to break through.

> Corn: March futures rose to \$3.66¼, below resistance at \$3.74½ (\$3.82 on the May chart). The rally lost its momentum the past few days as improvements in Brazil's crop offset concerns with Argentina. Only additional bad weather will likely take the market higher. It remains above USDA's \$3.20 forecast, which is long-term support. We suggested two

alternatives last month, either buy futures then or buy hand to mouth below the \$3.82 resistance and protect above it. If you did the former, we would take profits here unless there is a major break out in the next few days. If the latter, stay the course and protect above \$3.80.

> Wheat: Chicago wheat rallied \$0.40 along with corn and soybeans, but at the current \$4.64 is well below \$4.95 resistance on May. Minneapolis is even flatter. We reiterate that the world has lots of wheat, Argentina is not a major producer and it's too soon for problems with Russia, Ukraine and the U.S. We would buy hand to mouth but protect \$4.95 on the May.

> Soy oil: The soy complex is headed two directions: meal is trending up, while oil is headed down. The differences are that demand for protein is high with concerns about Argentinian supply. For oil, several reports call for increased palm production, especially in Malaysia. May futures declined from the \$0.33 area to \$0.316 before adding a cent back. We continue to suggest protecting above \$0.34.

> Sugar: Sugar supplies continue to be excessive with May discounted to March. May made new lows of \$0.131, currently at \$0.135. Weak resistance is at \$0.14, and strong resistance is at \$0.156. We continue to suggest covering against \$0.155, but would buy hand to mouth below that level.

> Natural gas: This is a roller coaster. March natural gas briefly broke above the \$3.25 resistance plane to \$3.65 when the U.S. had

major cold weather. Then it warmed and prices fell back to the current \$2.55. Stocks are being decreased, but the short-term weather forecast is for warm. Prices have been lower, but this is a good place to buy, or protect above \$3.40.

> Crude oil: May Brent futures topped at \$70.45 before doing a 38-per-cent retracement to \$61.55, then started back up to the current \$67.04. Recent comments about "re-balancing" by the Saudi oil minister suggests continuing OPEC discipline on supply control in the face of strong Asian demand. We have long suggested that buyers of oil cover above \$60. Nothing changes. Hold positions until there is clear topping action under \$70.45. If profits are taken, protect again above \$70.45.

> Canadian dollar: The loonie rallied from \$0.775 to the current \$0.812 on the March contract since mid-December. Some of that is strength in the Canadian dollar, but some is weakness in the U.S. dollar. The strength of the loonie comes from rising oil and metal prices, and the Bank of Canada's interest rate hike. But the weakness of the greenback is also due to a huge budget deficit after the tax cut, Treasury secretary Mnuchin's tacit support of a weak currency, and small rate hikes by the Fed. As in the past, there is too much politics to have any clear idea where the loonie is going. If your risk is a lower loonie, buy Puts with a premium less than three per cent of the strike price, preferably on the September contract. We would look at the \$0.775 to start.





GFSI and food safety

Ron Wasik



I'm probably not alone in wondering why government food safety authorities such as the CFIA and the USFDA seem to be reluctant in accepting a food processor's GFSI audit results as validation of a company's compliance with national food safety standards. After all, doesn't GFSI stand for Global Food Safety Initiative, of which there are now 13 accredited schemes in North America?

Many food processors believe that being accredited under a GFSI scheme is the cost of doing business today. Worldwide it is estimated that there are over 15,000 food and beverage manufacturers certified in a GFSI scheme. Billions of dollars continue to be invested in getting and staying accredited, and considerable sums of money continue to be invested in developing and administering GFSI schemes. Surprisingly, these investments to improve food safety seem to have had little impact on reducing the number of food recalls in Canada and the U.S.

The efficacy of GFSI

A peer-reviewed paper appeared in the *Journal of Food Protection* late last year entitled "Impact of the Global Food Safety Initiative on Food Safety Worldwide: Statistical Analysis of a Survey of International Food Processors." The lead researcher was Philip Crandall of the University of Arkansas, and included others such as Frank Viannas, vice-president of Food Safety at Walmart. The researchers emailed more than 15,000 questionnaires to employees of

GFSI-certified companies who had been identified by that company's GFSI-certifying third-party auditor as "knowledgeable about the food safety culture in their facilities." Of the 828 completed questionnaires returned, 52 per cent were from North America (Canada, U.S. and Mexico), 34 per cent came from Europe, 10 per cent came from the Pacific region, and the remainder were from other parts of the globe. Most of the respondents were certified in either BRC or SQF schemes.

After analyzing the responses, the researchers reported the following results and observations:

- » Most companies became certified to comply with a customer's request.
- » The potential for new customers was another reason for getting certified.
- » A majority of respondents reported that being certified had improved the safety of their company's food products.
- » Some reported a reduction in recalls, waste, customer complaints and out-of-specification products.
- » Close to half of the respondents reported a decrease in the "required corrective actions following audits after certification."
- » A significant number of respondents reported improvements in product quality.
- » Many felt that their company had increased sales as a result of GFSI certification.
- » Nearly three-quarters of respondents who were not required by customers to become GFSI certified said that they would recertify.

On a less positive note, the researchers also reported the following findings:

- » The frequency of third-party audits only decreased marginally.
- » Over 80 per cent of companies reported that certification required "a significant investment of staff time."
- » Over half of responding companies had to make "significant changes" to their original food safety programs.
- » The majority were spending more time doing internal audits and training of both production and management personnel.
- » Half of the respondents reported having to make "significant capital investments."
- » Slightly less than half of respondents had to hire additional personnel.
- » "There has been no significant decrease in the number of food safety recalls" in the U.S. between 2013 and 2015, when this study was done.

As the researchers reported, U.S. and Canadian food recall numbers have not decreased. One explanation could be that the improvements in food safety coming from GFSI schemes are being offset by more recalls initiated by the GFSI schemes themselves. However, I believe that over the long term GFSI schemes will reduce the number of food safety recalls. Until that happens, I can understand the positions taken by the regulatory agencies. ●

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



Probiotic gut (claims) check

Jon-Paul Powers and William Bjornsson



The use of probiotics in foods in Canada has become commonplace, but current policy toward probiotic claims is limited. For food producers willing to engage, Health Canada's Food Directorate can provide helpful premarket guidance.

Safety considerations notwithstanding, an otherwise compliant food producer could run afoul of the *Food and Drugs Act* (FDA) or Health Canada's policies on the labelling or advertising of probiotics in food, by making or implying unsubstantiated health claims regarding the probiotic itself. Health Canada has adopted the FAO/WHO definition of probiotics as "live microorganisms which, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host." Thus, there is an implied health claim associated simply with the use of the term "probiotic" itself due to the "health benefit" aspect highlighted in this definition. Such claims trigger the obligations that a food must not be false, misleading or deceptive. Therefore, the mere mention of a probiotic in food seemingly requires a food producer to have scientific data in support of such claims, or risk being in violation of the FDA.

In 2009, due to the multitude of products in the Canadian marketplace making probiotic claims, Health Canada authored guidance to assist producers in making compliant health claims for their probiotic products (*Guidance Document — The Use of Probiotic Microorganisms in Food*, Food Directorate, Health Products and Food Branch). The CFIA has also published guidelines on probiotic claims

(visit <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/labelling/food-labelling-for-industry/health-claims/eng/1392834838383/1392834887794?chap=9>). This guidance establishes low-risk, function claims for a variety of bacterial strains generally regarded as both safe and efficacious. Specifically, the Table of Acceptable Non-Strain Specific Claims for Probiotics, therein, provides a list of pre-cleared probiotic claims for products providing a minimum total quantity of one billion colony forming units (cfu) per serving, of one or more of the specified bacterial species. In such instances, strain specific efficacy data is not required to support the specified probiotic claims.

While this provides a simplified path to market for producers using Health Canada approved probiotic species, it is possible to build upon this guidance without starting anew. As written, producers using otherwise safe species that do not appear in Health Canada's table, or using approved species in amounts less than one billion cfu per serving, must ensure they have sufficient evidence in support of the health benefit of their probiotic, or remain silent regarding the probiotic benefits of their product.

It has been our experience that engaging with Health Canada on the use of probiotic claims can be a beneficial strategy. Food producers using probiotic species not listed in the Table may make non-strain specific claims by preparing a scientifically supported rationale that evidences the safety and limited efficacy of their strain. For example, if a food contains a species not included in Health

Canada's table, but has been otherwise established as safe (perhaps through demonstrated presence in the food system), and provides some form of health benefit — even as simple as colonization of the gut — a producer may be able to avail themselves of a non-strain specific claim. This approach may be highly desirable since such rationale need not be clinical, provided that a sufficient body of published data exists.

Similarly, with respect to dose, a food producer may be able to support the health benefits of a quantity less than the specified one billion cfu per serving if a reasonable argument may be made that a consumer would consume multiple servings over the course of the day, such that the total daily consumption provides at least one billion cfu. In these situations, engaging the regulator may be worthwhile, as the threshold to demonstrate a non-strain specific benefit may be lower than amassing clinical data supporting a strain-specific claim. Based on a thorough review of published data, coupled with a degree of creativity, proactive food producers may benefit from Health Canada's seemingly inapplicable guidance. 🍓

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FOPs: In-your-face nutrition symbols

Gary Gnirss

The proposed regulations on front of packaging (FOP) nutrition symbols were published in *Canada Gazette I* on Feb. 10, 2018 (*Regulations Amending Certain Regulations Made Under the Food and Drugs Act – Nutrition Symbols, Other Labelling Provisions, Partially Hydrogenated Oils and Vitamin D*).

The chief focus is on the mandatory display of FOP nutrition symbols where a food is high in the FOP nutrients sodium, sugars and saturated fat. High is generally considered 15 per cent or more of the daily value (DV) of the FOP nutrients, per serving of stated size or per reference amounts, whichever is greater. The requirement for food with serving sizes and reference amounts less than 50 g would be based on a 50-g amount of food, where the per cent DV of the FOP nutrients are five per cent or more per serving of stated size and per reference amount. In the case of prepackaged meals and main dishes with a serving of stated size of 200 g or more, the criteria are based on 30 per cent or more of the DV for the FOP nutrients.

As the name of the proposed regulations suggests, certain foods, like dairy products and margarine that are already required to contain vitamin D, will see amounts increased to help bring intakes closer to dietary recommendations. The *Food and Drug Regulations* (FDR) will also undergo some housekeeping with regard to Health Canada's initiative to ban partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), which is targeted for Sept. 15, 2018. At that time Health Canada plans on adding PHOs to the List of Contami-



nants and Other Adulterating Substances in Foods, which is incorporated by reference under the FDR, effectively banning their use in food. The housekeeping part relates to the use of “fully hydrogenated” terminology in the FDR to distinguish these from PHOs which will soon be prohibited.

The proposed regulations include the repeal of the new FDR regulations which require the identity of specific allergens and gluten sources when a precautionary allergen statement would be used. Health Canada will also be repealing the FOP and quantitative declarations for certain high-intensity sweeteners such as aspartame, sucralose, neotame and ace-K.

The current table of nutrient content claims codified in the FDR is to be repealed and incorporated by reference as the Table of Permitted Nutrient Content Statements and Claims. A new claim related to “low in sugar” will also be added. The claim “sugar-free” will be based on the criteria of the food being low in calories as opposed to being calorie free, permitting a broader range of foods to be claimed as “free of sugars.” Unsweetened and “no added sugars” claims will be tied to the definition of “sugars-based ingredients” and criteria related to high-in-sugar FOP considerations.

At the core of these new proposed regulations is a requirement for foods with high amounts of saturated fat, sugars and sodium to include a nutrition symbol on the front of package, or the principal

display panel (PDP). The nutrition symbols are not finalized, but Health Canada has proposed four versions (*see above*).

The size of the nutrition symbols will be governed by the Directory of Nutrition Symbol Formats, which is to be incorporated by reference under the FDR. There are six size categories depending on the area of the principal display surface (PDS) of the package, and placement of the symbols on the PDP is carefully governed. As with most rules, there will be exceptions. These include: infant formula; formulated liquid diets; fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables with no other ingredients other than water; packages for food with an available display surface less than 15 cm²; certain milk products; and more.

Canada has had mandatory nutrition labelling for about 15 years now. The idea was that consumers would gravitate to this information in making dietary choices, but a nutrition facts table (NFr) is not required to appear on a main panel. This novel approach of in-your-face nutrition information related to foods high in saturated fat, sodium and sugar will certainly not go unnoticed. As such, it is expected to have a more direct and immediate effect on food choices. The proof will be in the pudding. 🍪

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

Making the connection

Meat and poultry companies strive to build meaningful relationships with customers in the crowded protein marketplace | **By Treena Hein**



photo: Beretta Farms



Beretta Farms has long posted video and images from their farms and the people who own them in order to click with consumers.

In these days of drooping public trust in the food system, it's not just important to connect effectively with consumers, it's a must.

Along with offering products that are humanely raised, organic and antibiotic-free (and even products that are not conventional meat, or meat at all), Canadian meat and poultry businesses big and small have stepped up efforts to build and maintain strong customer ties.

Connections must be built in the meat sector for the same reasons they must be cultivated in any sector: in order to stave off or get ahead of the competition. But that's a hard go when consumers are constantly bombarded with marketing messages from all directions, notes Melanie Boldt, who owns Pine View Farms and Butcher Shop just north of Saskatoon, Sask. with her husband Kevin. The Boldts have been producing a variety of meat products for about 20 years from animals fed vegetarian feed in a low-stress and low-density environment, which provides a higher quality of life and reduces chance of illnesses. "Connecting with customers is our biggest challenge...[and] what is most important to us is talking to the customer, in the language of the customer, about things the customer cares about," Boldt explains. "If we can do that, we can maintain our share of voice in a crowded marketplace."

But just how are meat companies specifically connecting with consumers? Boldt says it's definitely a matter of being genuine and truthful. "Customers can access information anywhere, any time," she says. "It's all in the palm of their hands. Now more than ever, brands must walk the talk. Brands and their owners must be authentic and transparent...We continue to tell the story of how and why we do what we do, try to accelerate word of mouth through our investments in media and then delight the customer through his or her experience with our farm and butcher shop."

For her part, Cynthia Beretta believes the best connections with customers are always personal and imbued with meaning. "Whether that includes a phone call, email or a one-on-one meeting with our customers,



Canadian meat and poultry businesses big and small have stepped up efforts to build and maintain strong customer ties.

my husband Mike and I are always available and welcome consumer feedback," she says. "When this approach is not an option, social media has been very influential in giving our consumers a look at what we do, how we do it and why it's meaningful." Cynthia and Mike own Beretta Farms, which markets natural meat products (organic beef and chicken, antibiotic-free and hormone-free beef and pork and antibiotic-free chicken) from dozens of affiliate ranches/farms across Canada and one in Australia.

Beretta Farms has long posted video and images from their farms and the people who own them in order to click with consumers. This year the company will also hold family and corporate "Farm Days" and several customer dinners at the original farm in King City, Ont. "Our goal is to provide our consumers a direct line to what is happening at Beretta so that they can be collaborative partners and help us ↪



shape the future of farming,” says Beretta. “Education is key for our consumers, and keeping them educated and informed is our number-one job.”

Beretta Farms also makes sure to use a wide range of social media tools, as does Maple Leaf Foods, Canada’s largest meat firm. “We are active on numerous platforms of social media including Facebook, YouTube and Instagram across multiple brands, as this is where today’s consumers live,” says Annemarie Dijkhuis, director of Public Relations for Maple Leaf. “We can speak directly to our consumers through these platforms and have the opportunity for two-way dialogue.”

Cargill Protein, which markets 28 meat product brands in North America, also uses social media and the internet to connect with customers, but like many other businesses, it doesn’t stop there. “We are continuously connecting with consumers via in-store intercepts, in-home interviews and online research to find out what motivates, interests and concerns them,” explains Cory Lommel, director of Consumer Insight for Cargill Protein. “Cargill is committed to truly understanding consumer needs and trends, as we believe doing so will allow us to provide desired goods and services while also giving us a competitive advantage in the marketplace, regardless of how the marketplace evolves going forward.”

Already the protein products marketplace is increasingly evolving away from conventional meat and towards alternative products. Maple Leaf has noticed that today’s consumers still enjoy meat, “but they are looking for more options and to diversify their protein choices and moderate their meat protein consumption for numerous reasons,” says Dijkhuis. Maple Leaf believes there is currently a lack of variety and quality in the meat alternatives market, so to connect with consumers who want more and better



Pork Chorizo Verde Sausage from Pine View Farms.

photo: Pine View Farms

choice, the firm acquired U.S.-based alternative protein brands Field Roast and Lightlife in 2017.

Field Roast’s ingredients include grains, fresh vegetables, dried fruits, wine and spices, combined into fresh and frozen roasts, loaves, sausages, burgers, deli slices and appetizers. The company also produces Chao brand vegan cheese slices and entrées. Lightlife produces a range of frozen and refrigerated plant-based protein products, from Veggie Sausage Ravioli to Smart Tenders Savory Chick’n.

For its part, Cargill Protein is connecting with consumers who still want to eat meat, but meat produced off the farm. Along with many other major investors, it is backing U.S.-based Memphis Meats, which has a target of launching cell-cultured meat products (beef, chicken and duck so far) by 2021.

To connect with the rapidly rising number of consumers who now understand the impact that the global food system has on our planet, Maple Leaf committed in mid-2017 to being “the most sustainable protein company on Earth.” It will achieve this “based on a sweeping set of principles and an expansive sustainability agenda that has yielded substantial advancements in nutrition and environmental impact, elevated animal care and step-changed the company’s investment in social change.” It may be too soon to see how much consumer connection will be reaped from the initiative.

What is certain is that consumer connection efforts are keeping pace with new technologies. For example, many food companies, from berry farms to Cargill Protein, already offer customers a way to trace products back to the farm level, typically by inputting a product code into a website. Lommel says Cargill Protein is evaluating what it’s learned from its Honeysuckle White turkey traceability project to determine how the firm might apply technology in the future to build further consumer connections. “Our purpose is to nourish the world in a safe, responsible and sustainable way,” he says. “Optimizing our effectiveness in connecting with consumers helps us to better achieve this goal.”



photos: Maple Leaf Foods



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Plant-based **proteins**

Deanna Rosolen

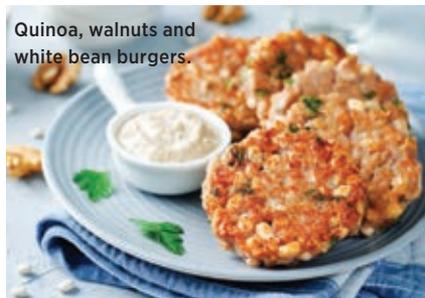
They fit perfectly with clean-label marketing. They're healthy. They're sustainable. They're nutrient dense. What's not to like about plant-based proteins?

They're also a market that's growing. According to a report called *Plant-Based Profits: Investment Risks & Opportunities in Sustainable Food Systems*, "annual global sales of plant-based meat alternatives have grown on average eight per cent a year since 2010." The report, by U.K.-based Farm Animal Investment Risk and Return (FAIRR), also adds that, "alternative proteins and flexitarian diets were named key food trends in 2017 and 2018."

Plant-based proteins include pulses, algae, duckweed or water lentils, chia, hemp and faba. But they can also include pumpkin and butternut squash, says Ben Carnevale, manager of Sales and Research & Development for London, Ont.-based Blendtek. "Butternut squash and pumpkin, believe it or not, have a high ratio of protein," he says. Carnevale is looking at pumpkin and hemp and combinations of the two, which he says can be used in baked goods and beverages. And by combining them, he adds, you've created a nutrient-dense product.

Why are they good for us?

Alison Duncan says plant proteins have some benefits that are unique to them. Duncan, who is professor in the Department of Human Health and Nutritional Sciences at the University of Guelph, explains that plant proteins don't contain cholesterol, do contain



dietary fibre, are low in fat (with the exception of nuts), and often contain phytochemicals. The phytochemicals are a bonus. The compounds "help plants in many ways to survive and fight stress," says Duncan, "and there's more and more research showing they also help our bodies survive longer and fight off disease."

Plant proteins also offer health benefits. Duncan points to a recent study from the University of Toronto that found replacing one or two servings of animal proteins with different types of plant proteins each week can help "decrease heart disease risk factors like LDL cholesterol."

Carnevale says another benefit of plant proteins is that they're more absorbable. As he explains, "Vegan proteins are much more easily identified in your body... and they absorb better, meaning they metabolize more readily."

And while plant proteins are good for

any group at any life stage, both Duncan and Carnevale happen to be doing research with older adults. Duncan has studied bean consumption by older adults, since this age group can particularly benefit from the nutrient density that beans and pulses offer. "As we age we might have lower appetites," says Duncan, "and so we need to be more strategic about the foods we choose, ensuring that they have as many nutrients as we can get — we don't want older adults to be eating low-nutrient foods and getting full on those."

Carnevale's work has focused on creating nutrient-dense, low-cost products for older adults. For instance, in many cases the oatmeal and puddings they are served "are very low-cost and low-nutrient products, so they're not getting the right vitamins and nutrients," he explains. But if hemp or pumpkin protein, or a combination of the two, is added to a regular chocolate pudding, "you can impact even a low-cost, low-nutrient product with something as simple as protein powders."

The sustainability factor of plant-based proteins has been a huge draw for consumers, especially millennials. Both Duncan and Carnevale say most consumers are keen to know how their food choices affect the environment. "Consumers are thinking about the foods they consume and they're thinking about the future — ensuring that future generations have a healthy and secure food supply," says Duncan. "There's data showing that when plant proteins replace animal proteins there is less environmental impact." ●



Let's talk turkey

Daniel Scholes

As the star of many holiday feasts, turkey is a quintessential favourite in North American food culture. Originally known by the Aztec word *huexoloti*, turkeys are indigenous to the Americas, and according to paleontologists have likely been here for about 11 million years.

The name turkey dates back to 15th century Europe when it was first attached to a much skinnier edible bird, the guineafowl of Africa, which made its way to Europe by way of Turkish merchant ships and became widely known as the Turkey bird. When the much plumper New World bird (the *huexoloti*) eventually made its way to Europe via Spanish explorers, it adopted the turkey moniker as it became popularized.

As a protein with a low-fat content and mild flavour, turkey is a growing part of the Canadian diet. In fact, Canadians now consume more than 10 million turkeys a year. Because of the need for convenience, demand for processed and ready-to-eat meat products is also expected to grow. We recently put four brands of packaged sliced turkey to the test to find out whether all packaged turkey slices truly flock together.

We recruited 50 females between the ages of 25 and 54 from the Greater Toronto Area who are the primary grocery shopper in the household and who are regular consumers of packaged sliced turkey. Each participant received a slice of each of the four brands, and were asked a series of detailed hedonic and “just about right” questions regarding the appearance, flavour and textural profiles of the turkey.

A feather in the cap

One brand was a clear winner in this category, scoring significantly higher than the three other contenders for overall liking, overall flavour, and purchase intent. In fact, with mean scores of 7.7 for overall liking and flavour, and a whopping 52 per cent definite purchase intent, we can officially declare it a gold standard of the packaged sliced turkey category.

The flavour profile of this front-runner was described as “delicious,” smokier than the others, with just the right amount of saltiness and an unmatched “naturalness.” It also outperformed the competitors due to its thicker texture and appetizing appearance.

In contrast, one brand dismally anchored the other end of the performance spectrum with some very unappealing qualities. This turkey slice barely achieved a mean score of five (out of nine) on many important hedonic attributes, including flavour, texture and appearance. They were much too salty, with hardly any smoky notes, their texture was much too thin, wet and floppy, and their very light colour was a big turn-off. It came as no surprise that this underachieving brand had the lowest weight per slice and the highest declared sodium levels.

A bird's eye view

Among our participants, the top stated features driving their purchase decisions were “no preservatives,” “natural ingredients,” and the “expiry date.” It may seem counterintuitive that consumers look for packaged foods that last the



longest, while wanting them to be free of any ingredients that actually help to achieve this goal, but we've heard this message before. Consumers want to be told what they're eating is good for them, while desiring the convenience and good value that is sometimes at odds with that objective.

Among the sliced turkey brands in our test, some called out claims of natural or allergen free, while others focused on the absence of nitrates or gluten. Consumers respond to these reassurances and positive messaging, but they're also looking to satisfy their needs for convenience, value, and — above everything else — a taste they love. Our test highlighted one premium brand that achieved a gold standard performance for its sensory profile, and it revealed one value brand that fell below all sensory standards with very few redeeming qualities, a sign that the company has made big trade-offs in quality in order to achieve its value positioning.

While birds of a feather may flock together, this flock of turkey slices proved to have great variation in the quality of the product, revealing both a golden goose and, well, a big turkey. ♥

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

Street Cred

Hit the street for globally inspired portable cuisine

BY REBECCA HARRIS

Authentic al pastor street tacos with pineapple and beer.

While street food has been around for centuries, its popularity is exploding around the world. In North America, the food truck movement is going strong and consumers are hitting the streets for globally inspired, handheld eats.

“Consumers are using the platform of street food or food trucks to explore and become familiar with new, mostly ethnic-inspired flavours,” says Juriaan Snellen, executive corporate chef at McCormick Canada. “And it’s a low-cost risk they’re taking. On average, an ethnic hand-held item is going to set you back \$10 to \$12, which is a small price to pay for something you might

photo: rez-art/Thinkstock



Big Katuna Burrito



Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie

not be as familiar with. So, it's a great way to try new and different flavours."

As research shows, Canadians are more eager than ever to try ethnic cuisine. According to Mintel's 2016 *Ethnic Foods and Flavours Report*, 57 per cent of Canadians agreed they're more open to eating ethnic foods than they were a few years ago, and 73 per cent said they like to experience other cultures through food. In addition, 36 per cent said they're interested in portable meals more commonly eaten in other countries or regions, and 36 per cent said they're interested in pre-packaged, ethnic-inspired meals that only require heating.

"Street food is a conduit to experience other cultures, and when you say something is ethnic-inspired, it gives it a sense of flavour adventurousism," says Joel Gregoire, associate director, Food and Drink, at Mintel. "It also gives [product developers and chefs] the opportunity to blend different food styles."

In fact, McCormick's 2018 Flavour Forecast lists "hand-held flavour fusions" as one of the big trends. For example, "gyros meet arepas," is a taco hybrid consisting of crispy corn cakes with sliced meat, veggies and spicy tzatziki sauce, combining tastes and textures from Greece and South America. "Desert bao buns" pairs soft steamed buns popular in China with classic pie fillings to create a handheld dessert.

"As the street food phenomenon continues to grow, it's actually morphing into more of an ethnic fusion blend of different types of flavours," says Snellen. "People are using familiar carriers and stuffing them with unfamiliar [ingredients]. Or vice versa, they're using unique carriers but filling them with more familiar flavours. It's a balance between bringing something unique to the table, but with a familiar twist so that consumers can still relate to it."

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Aside from consumers' hunger for new flavours, street food is taking off because of today's busy lifestyles. "[Food] has to be portable so people can consume it on the go," says Snellen. "In addition, there's a lot of snacking that's happening and people are having smaller bites and smaller meals throughout the day."

Last year, Bento Sushi jumped on the hand-held trend with the launch of three varieties of sushi burritos, which are essentially giant sushi rolls. Each variety contains a different version of Hawaiian poké (such as the Big Katuna Burrito with tuna, mango, sesame seeds and teriyaki sauce), wrapped in sushi rice and nori.

John Hashimoto, director of product development at Bento Sushi, says his company is always looking for what inspires people to try new things. "When it comes to food, a lot of times it's about bringing different cultures and new experiences to the customers. And the whole street food scene is definitely on trend right now," he says. "People are realizing that you don't have to have a fanciful dining experience and white linens to have really good food. You can have it on the street."

Bento Sushi's sushi burritos initially launched at major grocery chains across the country, but are now largely sold at universities. "It's resonating more with younger consumers, who are all about new experiences in life and food," says Hashimoto.

Street food was the inspiration behind Espresso Foods' new ProSticks, a line of on-the-go chicken skewers that launched last year. There are three flavours in the line: Mediterranean, which comes with a sweet teriyaki sauce; Sweet Sriracha-Style, which comes with sriracha sauce; and Chipotle-Style, which comes with chipotle barbecue sauce.

"Some of the leading flavours in North America today are the spicier, bolder flavours that come ➔



photo: McCormick Canada

Arepas with Greek Tabbouleh Salad and Ancho Pepper Yogurt Sauce.

from international markets, and that's where street food excels," says Michael Delli Colli, retail brand manager at Expresco Foods. "The [ProSticks] flavours are on trend, but the product is also convenient and easy to eat. You don't necessarily need a knife and fork...It's something people can just grab and go."

How else can the street food trend translate to CPG brands? Mintel's Gregoire says one opportunity for food manufacturers could be in the snack category, as snacking occasions continue to rise. He points to Pringles, which launched a limited-time "Street Food Edition" in the U.K. last summer. The line came in four flavours: Spicy BBQ, Hot Chili Sauce, Mac & Cheese, and Thai Green Curry.

"The one 'watch it,' though, when you consider a product like that, is the fear of diluting the authenticity of the food," says Gregoire. "If you say these chips taste like street food, are consumers really getting that street food experience? So that would be my caution for CPG manufacturers in different spaces."

Another potential opportunity is in the home-meal replacement (HMR) segment. "The rise of home-meal replacement is becoming more important for a number of different reasons,"

says Gregoire. "Street food-inspired items could be an opportunity to give some authenticity and differentiation in HMR, particularly in urban areas."

McCormick's Snellen agrees that HMR sections are a good way for food manufacturers and grocers to capitalize on the street food trend. "It's the perfect platform to feature these types of hand-held items," he says. "We tend to say that our flavour forecast predicts two to three years out...So I definitely foresee an increase in more ethnic-inspired street foods [across categories]." ●

FOOD TRUCKS ARE ON A ROLL



photo: Thinkstock

Street food in North America may have long been synonymous with hot dogs, but a new wave of food trucks is bringing gourmet fare and fusion foods to the streets. In Vancouver, chef and Squamish Nation member Paul Natrall recently opened the city's first Indigenous food truck, Mr. Bannock. The fusion menu includes Indian Tacos, with taco ingredients served on fried bannock; Bannock Calzones; and Waffle Bannock, with juniper berry dry-rubbed pulled pork. "I wanted to key in on fusion, using traditional ingredients and cooking methods, but adding some modernized elements," says Natrall.

In Toronto, one food truck that's mixing it up is The Kathi Roll Express, which specializes in Indian fusion street food. The menu includes Indian Fusion Burritos such as the Butter Chicken Burrito and Piri Piri Chicken Burrito, as well as a variety of Indian Tacos. On the gourmet front, Montreal's Mobile Europea, from Europea restaurant's chef-owner Jérôme Ferrer, serves up French bistro dishes such as shrimp risotto and poutine with mushrooms and foie gras at pop-up events and on the streets.

According to IBISWorld, the Canadian "street vendors" industry has been one of the best-performing industries in the foodservice sector during the past five years, with 2017 revenue forecasted to reach \$305 million, growing at an annualized 2.9 per cent over the five years to 2017. An IBIS-World Report states: "Entrepreneurial food truck operators have entered the industry to cater to changing consumer preferences that favour gourmet offerings and unique food concepts. As a result of Canada's gastronomic explosion, traditional street foods, such as hot dogs and poutine, have given way to a diverse range of gourmet street cuisine."



photo: Expresco Foods



photo: Gerard Koudenburg/Thinkstock

FIT TO TRAVEL

**Ensure that livestock has optimal care
and compliance during transportation**

By Yvonne Dick

A producer's concern for the welfare of the animal they have raised does not stop once it is loaded into a truck. There is far more involved in animal transportation than loading and unloading, but it is a key point in the process of getting the meat Canadians consume from pasture to plate. In addition, many agencies and animal welfare groups play a role in ensuring that livestock is healthy and treated humanely. ➔



photo: Thinkstock

Canada's regulations for transporting animals includes the federal *Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII*, which is enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and applicable provincial authorities. The regulations cover the movement of all animals (including pets), and transportation methods by land, air and sea. The primary points cover the condition of animals prior to and after transport, such as how long it takes to transport, required rest stops, and duration time.

Current legislation is based on species and their specific needs. For example, pigs and chickens may be in transport for up to 36 hours, and cattle for up to 48 hours. Different species also have varying needs for food and water. Cattle, for instance, can go much longer without water than poultry, while pigs must not eat for three or more hours before loading. The total time of transport, which includes time sitting in the livestock truck plus any rest stops, is divided into short hauls of four hours or less, and long hauls of six or more hours.

The clock for transportation time begins at the moment of loading and ends at unloading. Drivers must provide a record of rest stops, food, and all treatment and handling of livestock en route.

According to Brady Stadnicki, policy analyst for the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, "Back in December of 2016, there were calls for input into the *Health of Animals Act* and suggestions for updates to the regulations. Over 75 days public input was taken. Some of the recommendations which came up were regarding transport time [as it relates to cattle], from 48 hours to 36 hours, changing the duration of rest stops." Currently, the recommended rest stop (for long hauls) is up to five hours of feed, water and rest. That means the maximum number of hours for transport are 48 hours for cattle and sheep. Other divisions include: 36 hours for poultry and hogs; 24 hours for horses; 18 hours for nursing and pail-fed calves; and 12 hours for lactating dairy cows and calves on a special diet.

"There is also research which has been done, and further research which will be done to determine the best outcome for cattle in transportation," says Stadnicki. "We [Canadian Cattlemen] take a proactive approach to transportation. We approach the planning scientifically with the best outcome in mind. Recent research shows that in 90 to 99 per cent of cattle transportation, the cattle arrive in the same condition as they started — in good condition. We are always working to make that 100 per cent of the time."

Animal transportation licensing (Section 153 of the *Health of Animals Regulations*) applies to sea carriers. They are required to keep a person experienced in livestock on the vessel in transport, although it does not specify a level of training or specific experience. Land transportation by road, rail and air does not require animal welfare training, nor are there equipment or compliance requirements. However, successful producers know that it's essential to follow a code of best practices in livestock transportation. A multi-tiered approach to planning livestock transportation will ensure the best welfare of the animals.



Find a good, reputable transport company with experience in hauling the livestock you need.

While the *Health of Animals Act* is a federal government law, each province may have varying requirements. For a detailed list by province see Provincial and Territorial Legislation Concerning Farm Animal Welfare, www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/humane-transport/provincial-and-territorial-legislation/eng/1358482954113/1358483058784.

Another useful source is the National Farm Animal Care Council's free Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals at www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice. Penalties for violating the *Health of Animals Act* can be severe — imprisonment for up to two years, or fines of up to \$250,000. Under the *Meat Inspection Act*, violations of the regulations have fines of up to \$50,000.

Although no animal activist groups were available for comment as of press time, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals do have livestock handling recommendations, including that transport drivers are adequately trained in driving with livestock on board. The report, *Recommendations for Improvements to the Health of Animals Regulations*, states: "Recommendation 34. Drivers of conveyances should receive training and certification in safe driving techniques, animal handling, and emergency actions in much the same way that drivers of hazardous materials are required to complete specialized training in that field." Read the full report at https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cfhs/pages/573/attachments/original/1498747514/2016_Report_-_Recommendations_on_Transportation_Regulations.pdf?1498747514

When it comes to livestock transport, there is much to consider. Sharp turns, breaking and accelerations can be stressful to animals. Some livestock needs to be able to stand, while others need the option of lying down. So where should you start when planning and facilitating animal transportation? Stadnicki recommends starting with the carrier. Find a good, reputable

transport company with experience in hauling the livestock you need. There are many who take the Canadian Livestock Transportation (CLT) Certification Program.

The CLT Certificate teaches producers, handlers (farms, auction markets, order buyers, feedlots) plant crews, loading crews, and of course livestock haulers, the legislation and best practices for transporting livestock. Through four modules learners obtain specific techniques for cattle, sheep, hogs, horses and poultry. Topics of study include animal welfare, handling and behaviour, environmental considerations, equipment use and what to do in emergency situations.

For more information, as well as to search for CLT-verified livestock companies, visit: www.livestocktransport.ca 🍎

BEST PRACTICES FOR LIVESTOCK:

- > Don't overcrowd.
- > Use a species-specific scale, such as the body condition score, to rate each animal's health — only transport the robust.
- > Ensure animals are dry, with adequate bedding.
- > Plan for contingencies such as detours, humidity, cold or heat.
- > Use proper feed, water and rest durations throughout transportation.
- > Send livestock to a processor which uses humane practices.



NOUVELLES



photo: FoodBytes!

Réinventer les produits laitiers

En janvier, Agropur Coopérative a lancé la deuxième édition du concours Inno Challenge: un concours international de cocreation de produits laitiers innovateurs soutenu par financement participatif et réalisé en partenariat avec le Quartier de l'innovation et FoodBytes! de Rabobank.

Le défi Inno Challenge s'adresse aux entrepreneurs qui viennent de lancer leurs produits sur le marché, ou qui sont sur le point de le faire, et qui "veulent accroître le potentiel de leur entreprise en démarrage oeuvrant dans l'industrie laitière," a fait savoir Agropur. Cette année, l'accent a été mis sur le soutien des compagnies émergentes. C'est aussi la première année qu'Agropur s'associe à FoodBytes! dans le cadre d'une série d'événements créés par Rabobank pour mettre en relation les chefs de file et les investisseurs de l'industrie alimentaire avec les entreprises en démarrage porteuses d'"idées novatrices" en matière d'alimentation.

L'Inno Challenge était ouvert aux candidats du Canada et du monde entier, lesquels avaient jusqu'au 11 mars pour soumettre leurs projets de nouveaux

BIENS DE CONSOMMATION

> **GoGo Quinoa** a lancé des pâtes aux lentilles rouges et au quinoa blanc. Ces nouvelles pâtes sont certifiées sans gluten et végétaliennes. Comme toutes les pâtes GoGo Quinoa, leur texture se révèle al dente, et elles font partie du projet Sans-OGM. Avec 21 g de protéines par portion, les pâtes de lentilles et de quinoa constituent également une très haute source de fibres et de fer. www.gogoquinoa.com/fr



équipements, technologies ou emballages liés au domaine laitier. Le 16 mai, les candidats présélectionnés dévoileront leurs projets. Les gagnants recevront des prix d'une valeur de \$25,000, incluant \$15,000 en espèces. Pour en savoir plus sur le défi, visitez innoagropur.com.

Une étape importante pour duBreton

C'est une année importante pour duBreton, un producteur et transformateur de porc biologique et naturel de Rivière-du-Loup. Selon la compagnie, elle respectera cette année son engagement à produire 300,000 animaux de plus sans cage.

duBreton avait annoncé en septembre 2015 des plans pour investir plus de 30 millions de dollars sur trois ans pour convertir toutes ses fermes aux normes supérieures de bien-être animal de la Human Farm Animal Care (Certified Humane) et de Régime Bio-Canada.

Jusqu'à présent, les changements apportés par l'entreprise lui ont permis de produire 219,832 porcs de plus vivant dans des conditions dépassant les normes les plus élevées en matière de bien-être animal au Canada.



La FPAQ lance un nouveau logo

La Fédération des producteurs acéricoles du Québec (FPAQ) de Longueuil a dévoilé un nouveau logo et deux nouveaux slogans: "Érable du Québec" pour le marché québécois et "Maple from Canada" pour les activités promotionnelles à l'international.

Selon Nathalie Langlois, directrice du marketing, de l'innovation et du développement des marchés de la FPAQ, la Fédération a créé ce nouveau logo et ces slogans "pour renforcer notre positionnement local et élargir notre présence sur les marchés internationaux."

La nouvelle voix de l'industrie

Plus de 1,500 entreprises de transformation des aliments et des boissons de partout au pays se sont unies pour lancer une nouvelle organisation nationale appelée Aliments et boissons Canada (ABC), basée à Ottawa.

La nouvelle organisation prévoit s'investir dans des dynamiques clés, comme assurer une réglementation



intelligente qui sert l'intérêt public tout en maintenant un environnement concurrentiel; construire un système alimentaire plus sain, plus durable et plus éthique; promouvoir l'innovation dans les processus et les pratiques de fabrication

des aliments et des boissons; créer des occasions commerciales mondiales pour les produits alimentaires; protéger et informer les consommateurs tout en facilitant leurs choix; et fournir des emplois qualifiés et enrichissants aux Canadiens.

L'association regroupe sept associations provinciales de fabrication d'aliments et de boissons d'un océan à l'autre, ainsi que des entreprises membres et d'autres intervenants. Le conseil d'administration fondateur est composé des membres de la direction suivants: les coprésidents Michael Burrows, chef de la direction de Maple Lodge Farms et Daniel Vielfaure, directeur général de Bonduelle; la vice-présidente Sylvie Cloutier, PDG du Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec (CTAQ), la secrétaire Rosemary MacLellan, vice-présidente de la stratégie et de l'industrie chez Gay Lea Foods; le trésorier Joe Makowecki, PDG de Heritage Frozen Foods; et le directeur Rory McAlpine, vice-président principal Relations avec le gouvernement et l'industrie chez Aliments Maple Leaf.

UN RIRE QU'ON ENTEND JUSQU'AU QUÉBEC

La Fromagerie Bergeron de Saint-Nicolas en banlieue de Québec et le Groupe Bel de France célèbrent le 10e anniversaire de leur partenariat. La marque La vache qui rit détenue par Bel est fabriquée par Fromagerie Bergeron pour le marché canadien. Ce fromage a été importé de France au Canada pour la première fois en 1956. En 2007, le Groupe Bel a décidé de transférer la production à une entreprise locale.



(G-D) Roger Bergeron, directeur général de la Fromagerie Bergeron; Catherine Thomas, présidente de Fromageries Bel Canada inc.; Marc Picard, député provincial de Chutes-de-la-Chaudière; Laurent Lessard, député de Lotbinière-Frontenac et ministre de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation; et Mario Bergeron, directeur général de la Maison d'Affinage Bergeron

EN BREF

> Le ministère de l'Innovation, des Sciences et du Développement

économique a consenti un prêt remboursable de \$2.1 million à **Produits alimentaires Viau** de Laval pour aider la compagnie à investir dans du nouvel équipement et améliorer sa capacité de production. Le gouvernement fédéral a souligné que cette entreprise a été la première à élaborer, produire et commercialiser le pepperoni salé et séché au Canada, en plus d'en être le plus important producteur. L'entreprise fabrique trois marques: SILA, qui fournit des assaisonnements et de la viande aux services alimentaires; Fantino & Modello, une marque de produits de charcuterie cuits destinée aux consommateurs; et VIAU, la marque originale de pepperoni de l'entreprise, un produit composé de porc, de bœuf et d'assaisonnements. Cet investissement devrait permettre de créer 125 emplois.

> **La Coop fédérée de Montréal et Les fermes Lufa** ont conclu une entente de partenariat en vue de partager des occasions d'affaires. Les compagnies ont fait savoir que ce partenariat pourrait mener à l'achat, par Les fermes Lufa, de produits agricoles auprès du réseau de membres de La Coop; permettre l'ouverture par Lufa de points de cueillette dans les établissements du





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réseau de La Coop; et rendre possible le partage d'expertise en matière de technologies web, logistique et distribution. La Coop fédérée s'avère la plus importante entreprise agroalimentaire au Québec. Les fermes Lufa cultivent toute l'année grâce à un réseau en croissance de serres hydroponiques urbaines

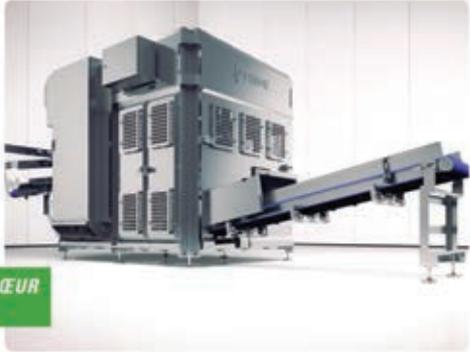
sur des toits. Comme autre nouvelle, La Coop s'est classée parmi les meilleurs employeurs de Montréal en 2018 par Mediacorp Canada et les éditeurs des 100 meilleurs employeurs du Canada.

> Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada et la province de Québec ont annoncé

un appui financier de plus de \$70,000 à **Aliments Tristan** pour aider l'entreprise à mettre en place un système de gestion de la qualité répondant aux normes du système de salubrité alimentaire HACCP. L'entreprise de Drummondville fabrique des mélanges pour crêpes, des condiments et des confiseries.
> Le fabricant de produits de boulangerie montréalais **Maison Cousin** a dévoilé une nouvelle image, un nouveau site Web et un assortiment de nouveaux pains d'inspiration européenne. La compagnie affirme que les nouveaux produits ont été "fraîchement

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> **Air Liquide Canada** de Montréal, une filiale du Groupe Air Liquide, a inauguré une nouvelle usine de récupération de dioxyde de carbone (CO²) située à Johnstown en Ontario. Cette usine détient une licence d'établissement de Santé Canada autorisant la fabrication, le contrôle, l'emballage et l'étiquetage de CO² de qualité médicale, conformément aux exigences de la Loi canadienne sur les aliments et drogues et des Bonnes pratiques de fabrication (BPF) stipulées à la réglementation canadienne sur les aliments et drogues. D'une capacité de plus de 300 tonnes par jour, l'usine fonctionne maintenant à plein régime et produit du CO² de qualité supérieure, certifié FSSC (Food Safety System Certification) et NSF (National Sanitation Foundation).



(G-D) Gord Brown, député pour Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes; Pay Sayeau, maire du canton d'Edwardsburgh/Cardinal; Bertrand Masselot, président et chef de la direction d'Air Liquide Canada; Steve Clark, membre du parlement de Leeds-Grenville; et Ross Fuller, vice-président Industries des procédés d'Air Liquide Canada.

> **Cascades inc.** de Kingsey Falls, un fabricant de produits d'emballage et de papier tissu écologiques, a reçu un prix Innovation en alimentation, catégorie Emballage du Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec (CTAQ) pour sa nouvelle boîte isolante recyclable northbox.



sélectionnés pour le marché Québécois” et qu'ils comprennent des pains brioches, calabrese et bretzel ainsi que des rouleaux portugais. Aucun des pains ne contient d'agents de conservation, de colorants ou de saveurs artificielles. Les produits multigrains Filone et petit Filone affichent également le sceau certifié sans OGM. Le nouveau site Web s'avère convivial, propose des recettes et fournit la description de la gamme de pains de Maison Cousin.

> **Groupe Colabor inc.** de Boucherville a nommé Lionel Etedgui comme nouveau président et chef de la direction. Colabor est

un distributeur et un grossiste de produits alimentaires et produits connexes.

> **Claridge inc.**, qui représente la famille Bronfman, a déclaré avoir l'intention de réaliser de nouveaux investissements dans le secteur des aliments et boissons par le biais d'un modèle de partenariat différencié. Les futurs investissements de la société se concentreront sur les entreprises d'aliments et de boissons de type “meilleur pour votre santé” exploitant leurs affaires au Canada et aux États-Unis. Claridge a déjà investi dans SunOpta, Plats du Chef, Glutino, La Terra Fina, Circle Foods et Janes Family Foods.

LE BON SOJA

Une étude de l'Université McGill de Montréal a révélé qu'après le lait de vache, le lait de soja s'avère le plus nutritif. L'université a publié les résultats de l'étude — Dans quelle mesure les substituts végétaux se comparent-ils au lait de vache sur le plan nutritionnel? — sur son site Internet (“Le lait de soya, meilleur lait végétal sur le plan nutritionnel” — 29 janvier 2018) et dans le *Journal of Food Science Technology*.

L'université a examiné quatre types de boissons lactées provenant de sources végétales: l'amande, le soja, le riz et la noix de coco. Les chercheurs ont comparé les valeurs nutritives de ces aliments à celles du lait de vache. Dans tous les cas, ils ont examiné les versions non sucrées de chaque lait végétal. Leur constat se révèle que le soja possède “le profil nutritif le plus équilibré.”

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AIR PRODUCTS

Pur délice

La Petite Bretonne de Montréal célèbre
50 ans de savoureux succès

PAR MARK CARDWELL



Chocolatines

photos: La Petite Bretonne

Dominique Bohec dit qu'il entend régulièrement des gens dire que les délicieux produits de pâtisserie fabriqués par sa famille depuis 50 ans font depuis longtemps partie du menu de leur déjeuner.

“Souvent, quand les gens réalisent qui nous sommes, leurs visages s'illuminent et ils s'exclament:

“Je mangeais vos produits tous les matins quand j'étais enfant — et c'est maintenant au tour de mes enfants de le faire,” fait remarquer Bohec, vice-président des ventes et du marketing pour La Petite Bretonne. “J'entends des histoires comme ça tous les jours, et elles sont toujours aussi douces à mes oreilles.” Les consommateurs ne semblent jamais rassasier des produits de son entreprise, à en juger par la croissance constante des ventes et le développement rapide de nouveaux marchés.”



Croissant Sliders



Micro Croissants

Établie à Blainville sur la couronne nord de Montréal, La Petite Bretonne fabrique une demi-douzaine de produits vendus dans les épicerie du Canada et des États-Unis et, de plus en plus, au Mexique et dans les Caraïbes.

Les quelque 175 employés qui travaillent à l'usine de Blainville — laquelle abrite le siège social, un centre de distribution et des installations de production — fabriquent chaque jour 1.2 million des populaires microcroissants et presque autant de croissants au chocolat, tous deux en format habituel et mini. L'usine produit également des croissants cocktail en forme de cônes, le croissant MicroOmega à 14 grains faible en gras trans, ainsi que des biscuits à l'avoine traditionnels, au chocolat-quinoa et à la mélasse.

Les madeleines — gâteaux-éponges français traditionnels en forme de coquillages — sont principalement produites dans un deuxième site de production récemment acquis et dans une ancienne usine de fabrication de gâteaux à Joliette, où travaillent environ 90 personnes.

Selon Bohec, les croissants micro et choco représentent environ les trois quarts des ventes annuelles de l'entreprise, qui s'élèvent entre \$30 et \$50 millions. Un pourcentage égal de ces ventes est réalisé au Québec et en Ontario, où une équipe de 16 représentants aide l'entreprise à dominer le marché avec 98 par cent des parts. Ce chiffre atteint 100 par cent dans d'autres régions du pays. "Nous avons très peu de concurrence au Canada," souligne Bohec. "Cela nous a aidés à développer nos affaires et à accéder à de nouveaux marchés en y étant concurrentiels."

La Petite Bretonne a commencé à exporter à New York en 1999 par l'entremise de courtiers en alimentation. Elle compte maintenant plus de

3,000 points de vente aux États-Unis. Étonnamment, l'entreprise compte trois fois plus de points de vente au Mexique, à la suite d'un accord conclu en 2014 avec les dépanneurs OXXO.

"Nos produits s'avèrent très populaires au Mexique et dans les Caraïbes, où nous commençons à voir de la croissance, car les gens ont une dent sucrée et sont habitués à manger des croissants," expose Bohec. C'est toutefois un défi de maximiser les coûts lorsque vous transigez avec autant de magasins."

De tels défis étaient inexistantes lorsque le père de Dominique, Serge, est arrivé à Montréal avec son père en 1964 à l'âge de 16 ans. Ensemble, ils ont commencé à fabriquer des madeleines — d'abord dans le four de la cuisine familiale, puis dans un four à pizza au sous-sol — vendues aux voisins et aux dépanneurs du coin. En 1969, Serge Bohec et sa nouvelle épouse, Michèle, déménagent l'entreprise dans une petite usine de Laval, où ils mettent en place la première chaîne de production de croissants au Canada.

Au début des années 1970, l'entreprise déménage à nouveau dans des installations modernes à Blainville, et elle commence à fabriquer des microcroissants. Les Bohec ont également déménagé à Blainville, où ils ont élevé leurs deux enfants: Dominique et Annick. Cette dernière a d'ailleurs servi de modèle pour le logo La Petite Bretonne, et elle agit comme directrice de la logistique, du transport et de l'entreposage depuis 2013.

Selon Dominique, l'entreprise familiale a continué de croître et d'évoluer dans les années 1980. Les choses ont néanmoins changé brusquement en 1988 avec la mort de sa mère d'un cancer du poumon à l'âge de 35 ans. "Elle avait un grand sens ↪



Madeleines



“Souvent, quand les gens réalisent qui nous sommes, leurs visages s’illuminent et ils s’exclament: ‘Je mangeais vos produits tous les matins quand j’étais enfant – et c’est maintenant au tour de mes enfants de le faire.’”

Biscuitsavoine choco-quinoa

des affaires. Mon père a perdu sa motivation et son enthousiasme pour l’entreprise après cela,” se souvient Dominique, qui n’avait que neuf ans à ce moment-là. “Il a commencé à embaucher des gens pour s’occuper du quotidien et a adopté une approche plus passive.”

Bien que Dominique ait travaillé dans le service d’expédition de l’entreprise dès l’âge de 12 ans et dans celui de la production après avoir terminé un cours en pâtisserie dans une école hôtelière locale, il a décidé de se dévouer aux ventes en 1999; ce qui a contribué à changer la trajectoire et le destin de La Petite Bretonne. “À l’époque, nous réalisons \$3.6 million de ventes avec 40 employés, mais nous manquons de volume,” se souvient Bohec. “Nous comptons sur des associés aux ventes, mais ils ne poussaient pas assez nos produits. J’ai donc décidé de prendre le taureau par les cornes et de le faire moi-même.”

Motivé par l’obtention d’une entente avec un nouveau magasin Metro pour présenter les produits La Petite Bretonne, Bohec a parcouru plus de 70,000 kilomètres par année à travers le Québec et dans l’est de l’Ontario pour rencontrer les propriétaires et les distributeurs. Il a notamment généré des ouvertures à l’échelle nationale avec Costco et Loblaw au Québec, et il a commencé à exporter à New York.

En 2008, Bohec a commencé à s’intéresser aux occasions d’affaires sur le marché mexicain qui, selon lui, était à l’époque pratiquement servi en exclusivité par Grupo Bimbo: le plus grand fabricant de produits de boulangerie au monde. “Nous avons

fait une étude de marché avec l’Université Laval, et nous avons conclu que nous pouvions être compétitifs au Mexique en raison de la grande qualité de nos produits et de leur caractère novateur,” fait valoir Bohec, ajoutant que le marché mexicain a agréablement souri à La Petite Bretonne. “Nous avons tôt fait de constater que les cultures mexicaine et québécoise sont très semblables. D’une part, les aliments comme des croissants et des madeleines font partie du régime quotidien de leurs gens. D’autre part, leur façon de travailler, de vivre et de faire des affaires nous est très familière. Nous avons découvert et développé une réelle synergie humaine avec nos partenaires commerciaux là-bas.”

Bohec mentionne que le succès de la compagnie, la croissance continue des ventes dans les marchés traditionnels et l’implication de la famille dans les affaires ont ravivé la passion de son père pour l’entreprise, qu’il possède d’ailleurs toujours. “Il prend soin de l’ingénierie et assure l’harmonie entre les quatre dirigeants,” poursuit Bohec. “Nous sommes comme une famille.” Son père, ajoute-t-il, s’avère particulièrement enthousiaste à l’idée de commencer à distribuer les produits de la compagnie en France, laquelle, espère-t-il, constituera un tremplin vers les marchés asiatiques. “Nous travaillons à développer des produits avec du sirop d’érable, très populaire en France,” indique Bohec. “Mon père est impatient de voir le premier camion quitter notre usine pour l’aéroport.” ●





Chicory & peas

Cosucra Groupe Warcoing offers Fibruline, an inulin extracted from chicory root. Fibruline is a natural bulking agent that is developed for sugar replacement. It is easy to disperse, has a white colour, is tasteless and odourless, and is good for gut health and calorie reduction. The company also offers Swelite made from peas. Swelite can be used in processed ground meat products such as burgers, meatballs and sausages. It offers water-binding and emulsifying capacity, and is ideal for vegetarians. www.cosucra.com



Water lentil protein

Parabel USA Inc. has developed Lentein, a plant-based green protein made from water lentils. Lentein is non-GMO, contains up to 50-per-cent crude protein, is minimally processed, and is rich in essential amino acids and antioxidants. The company says that the highly digestible protein is rich in chlorophyll, which gives it a mild taste and green colour, as well as carotenoids. It is free of dairy, lactose, gluten, soy and sugar. www.parabel.com

Milk & whey

Milk Specialties Co. offers CasPro, produced from fresh skimmed milk using microfiltration. According to the company, CasPro functions like a milk protein concentrate but has higher heat stability, a low level of lactose, a mild flavour, and delivers calcium and phosphorus, making it ideal for cheese and yogurt manufacturing. The company also offers PRObev, a heat-stable whey protein isolate made for drinks. With a 24-month shelf life, PRObev is a good source of essential amino acids and is very low in fat and carbohydrates. It features a clean taste and more than 90-per-cent protein. www.milkspecialties.com

Good-for-you almonds

Blue Diamond Growers is the world's largest processor and marketer of almonds. Blue Diamond's Global Ingredients Division offers in-shell, brown and manufactured almonds in a variety of forms for applications across a range of categories, including confectionery, bakery, dairy, cereal, energy bars and ice cream. www.bluediamond.com



Let's be clear

Watson Inc. offers its BetaClear ingredient, which contains 25 per cent of the daily value for vitamin A from beta carotene, but without the orange colour. The company offers BetaClear 768, which has gum Arabic, beta carotene, sodium ascorbate, antioxidant blend and xantham gum, making it perfect for beverages, powder blends and tablets; and BetaClear 263, which has gum Arabic, beta carotene and sodium ascorbate. www.watson-inc.com

Switch it up

Automation Products Inc. — Dynatrol Division features Dynatrol G Series Level Switches for the confectionery industry. The switches are designed for special problem applications that involve extremely lightweight or fluffy products.



Dynatrol Type GS and Type GSS can be used on extremely fine powder, while the Dynatrol Type GJ provides consistent results on applications of flour, cocoa and confectioners sugar, as well as various materials with a tendency to bridge or pack. The company says the level switches are accurate on high, intermediate, or low-point level detection. www.dynatrolusa.com

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Russ Mallard, president of Atlantic Beef Products Inc.

Atlantic Beef Products Inc. Albany, P.E.I.

Deanna Rosolen

If there's a food story that includes charm and challenges, Atlantic Beef Products Inc. (ABPI) would be it. Faced with the closure of the only federally inspected beef plant in the region in the early 2000s, local family farmers got together and saved it.

"It was a grassroots movement to save the industry and a way of life by the farmers at that time," says Russ Mallard, president of ABPI.

The farmers established the co-operative by 2004, but ran into challenges right away. BSE had been found in Alberta in 2003 and the Canadian market was still feeling the effects. "It was a rough time to be in the industry and not the best time to open up a plant," says Mallard. ABPI was also small compared to mammoth beef operations in Central and Western Canada, so it was hard to compete. Eventually the co-op ran into financial difficulties.

Then in 2009 ABPI reorganized and installed a new board of directors — Mallard being one of them (he left when

his term ended, but was asked to become president in 2014). From that point, he says, it took about five or six years "to get the plant where it is today — a vibrant, branded beef plant. We don't just have commodity beef."

ABPI has four brands, which are sold in Ontario, Quebec and into Western Canada. The brands are Blue Dot Reserve, a high-end brand for foodservice; Island View Farms, which Sobeys has taken



Coffee crusted prime rib.

into all its banners in P.E.I. as its main brand; Certified Island Beef, a high-end triple A beef; and True Beef, which is designed for independent retailers that want a branded beef program from ABPI.

What makes the company unique — and gives it its charm — may also pose some challenges, but nothing the company can't surmount. ABPI is small but it's nimble, says Mallard, and can "entertain certain cuts and requirements that for large companies may not be worthwhile." Volume is often an issue, since the family farms may not be able to deliver cattle each week. Beef is also slow grown, taking up to 28 months before it gets to market, and is traceable

back to the farm. Or as Mallard says, "it's beef with an address."

It's also beef with its own terroir, says Mallard. "We have red soil, and a certain climate. In this part of the country [cattle] are potato fed, and fed on greens, forage and grasses. We believe it just has a different flavour." ●

Q&A



Q: What opportunities do you see for your business?

A: "The ground beef business is very significant to us and we believe that there's more available than what we're currently doing. In the last year we've been looking seriously at China and have been there a few times. We're also looking at the Northeast U.S. And we're looking to do more value-added products. I want to grow the company so I've encouraged more producers to grow their cattle herds to maybe where they were before the BSE crisis."

Q: What other role does the plant have?

A: "A lot of the family farms are mixed operations — they grow potatoes, grains or other things. Potatoes can only be grown once every three years. The other two years you grow things that can feed cattle, such as grains or alfalfa. This way the fields regenerate. Cattle also love to eat potatoes, so the potatoes that aren't fit for marketing can be fed to the cattle. Cattle produce manure, which when spread across fields creates better soil health so you don't have to chemically boost your fields. It's a very sustainable, integrated model. Without the beef plant, we would be taking a piece of the beef ecosystem out of the economic agricultural sector here."

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