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# FOOD *in* CANADA

Canada's food & beverage processing magazine

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## Inspired leadership

*“A great leader’s courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.”*  
—John Maxwell

We’ve been talking a lot about leadership around our office lately. As we prepared this month’s issue of *Food in Canada*, complete with coverage of the winners of our 2016 Leadership Awards, we contemplated what it means to demonstrate inspired leadership in the food industry.

That’s one reason I was so happy to attend NSF-GFTC’s Canadian Food Safety Forum and Award Recognition Event, which took place in February. As well as including the organization’s 2016 Food Safety Awards (for winners see pg. 8), the forum featured a thought-provoking session on leadership in food safety by Brad McKay, CEO of Ottawa-based Healthcare Food Services.

Drawing on the writing of leadership gurus like John Maxwell and business veterans such as Jack Welch, McKay noted that, “leaders must be able to create positive change.” It’s something that could be true about all company operations, but which is essential when it comes to creating a strong, company-wide food safety culture.

McKay stressed that leadership doesn’t only come from the top — it can come

from anywhere within the organization. Good leaders are able to identify opportunities for positive change within their companies, and they have the passion to make it happen. And while everyone’s leadership style is different, McKay’s model for effective leadership involves three aspects: creating a compelling and inspiring vision; ensuring accountability of everyone involved in achieving that vision; and infusing the whole process with energy.

It was something to keep in mind as we chose the winners of this year’s Leadership Awards. While we received an overwhelming number of outstanding submissions, we think the five companies we’ve chosen to highlight all exemplify effective leadership. All are extremely different, but each of the companies is led by individuals who are passionate about their vision and their organization. I’m willing to bet that each of these organizations also has many effective leaders, in a variety of roles. We hope their stories will inspire you to affect positive change in your organization and in your sector of the food industry. ●

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

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## Maple syrup for brain health?

Maple syrup may be more than just a delicious pancake topping: it could also have important brain benefits, according to scientists. At the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society, a group of international scientists shared results from 24 studies exploring the beneficial effects of natural products on the prevention of neurodegenerative diseases (particularly Alzheimer's disease) — and for the first time, pure maple syrup was included among foods that show promise in protecting brain cells against the kind of damage found in Alzheimer's disease.



## News > file



### 2016 Food Safety Recognition Awards

NSF-GFTC, part of NSF International's Global Food Division, announced the winners of its 2016 Food Safety Recognition Awards on Feb. 25, 2016 at the Canadian Food Safety Forum. The forum was hosted by NSF-GFTC at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, Ont.

NSF-GFTC established this awards program to recognize Canadian food and beverage companies and individuals who are helping to advance food safety and quality. Winners of the 2016 NSF GFTC Canada Food Safety Recognition Awards were:

**Food Safety Leadership Award:** Tom Graham, director, National Inspection Division, Operations Policy & Systems Directorate, Operations Branch, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Ottawa.

**Food Safety Excellence Award:** Malabar Super Spice, Burlington, Ont. (runner up was E.D. Smith, Winona, Ont.)

**Allied Trades Food Safety Award:** Abell Pest Control, Canada-wide (runner up was Holland Marsh Growers' Association, Bradford, Ont.) ➔

**1)** E.D. Smith (*left to right*): Theresa Upshall, Wayne Yardley, Salvador Aviles and Steve Brannen.

**2)** Holland Marsh Grower's Association (*left to right*): Bridget Visser and Jody Mott.

**3)** Tom Graham, director, National Inspection Division, Operations Policy & Systems Directorate, Operations Branch, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Ottawa.

**4)** Malabar Super Spice (*left to right*): Brenda Mizzan, Doris Valade and Alana Kolby.

**5)** Abell Pest Control (*left to right*): Tim Coleman, Mike Heimbach and Steve Graff.

**FROM OUR LIBRARY**

What's the next big nutrition trend on the horizon? According to a new book, "big" isn't quite the right word to describe this trend. "Tiny" would be a much better descriptor — as in tiny seeds, to be more precise.

In *The Need for Seeds: How to Make Seeds an Everyday Food in Your Healthy Diet*, author Jane Dummer touts the benefit of eating seeds, which can be packed with essential nutrients like protein, fibre, vitamins, minerals and fatty acids including omega-3s. As a dietitian, Dummer has helped numerous clients make seeds an everyday food in their healthy diets.

The author explores the health benefits of chia, flax, hemp, pumpkin, quinoa, sesame and sunflower seeds. Readers will learn why seeds should be an everyday food and easy ways to add them to meals and snacks. With chapters devoted to each seed, the book categorizes the seed benefits in terms of bone, brain, digestive, fitness, heart, immune and skin health.

Dummer has included 21 of her favourite seed-based recipes in the book, such as On-the-go Blueberry Mango Hemp Seed Smoothie, White Bean Chia Seed Salad, Grilled Chicken with Pumpkin Seed Sauce, Quinoa Spinach Bake with Sesame Seeds, Crunchy Sunflower Tuna Melts, and Flax Cocoa Lentil Bars.

“There are many food safety success stories in Canada and our awards are a mechanism to share and celebrate those successes,” says Paul Medeiros, managing director, Consulting and Technical Services at NSF-GFTC. “The safety and quality of the global food supply is important. This is why NSF International recognizes these leaders and companies who are in the forefront of innovation and continuous improvement, excellent food safety performance, and for embracing a food safety culture.”

**Pulse maker sells assets, shuts down**

The demise of leading Canadian pulse and specialty crops processor Legumex Walker is another one of those cautionary tales about growing too big too fast.

It was just over four years ago that specialty crop producers the Roy Legumex Group of Companies and Walker Seeds Ltd. joined forces to form Legumex Walker Inc., one of Canada’s largest processors and merchandisers of pulses and specialty crops. The new company — with its head office in Winnipeg — operated 14 processing plants in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the United States and China.

A year later, the company added Keystone Grain in Winkler, Man. to its portfolio (the Winkler plant is Canada’s largest processor of sunflowers and sunflower products), Minnesota-based St. Hilaire Seed Company, one of America’s largest dry bean processors, and a sunflower seed processor also located in Minnesota.

In September 2011, the then new partnership broke ground on a canola →

**BAKERY SHOWCASE COMING IN MAY**

The 2016 Bakery Showcase will be taking place at the International Centre in Mississauga, Ont., from May 1 to 3, 2016. This year’s program will be filled with an array of informative and interesting sessions — from an in-depth recap of the story of Bake Team Canada’s journey to the Baking World Cup in France, to a “state of the industry” panel on how the baking industry is responding to consumers and governments regarding today’s food and nutritional challenges. For more information on the three-day event, go to [www.baking.ca](http://www.baking.ca)



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oilseed processing plant in Warden, Wash. The plant, which began operations in January 2013, was Legumex Walker's first American plant and the \$109-million project proved to be the company's undoing.

Joel Horn, Legumex Walker's president, was quoted as saying in the Sept. 17, 2015 issue of the *Western Producer*, that while "the company built a great collection of assets in the special crops business, with 14 plants located in Canada, the United States and China, it couldn't get out of the financial hole it dug with the construction of its Pacific Coast Canola (PCC) crush facility in Warden, Wash."

In September 2015 Legumex Walker announced that its special crops division — which handles sunflower seeds, flax, canary seed and pulses, including lentils, peas, beans and chickpeas — had been sold to the Scoular Company for \$94 million plus the amount of net working capital at closing. Scoular is a 123-year-old grain company headquartered in Omaha, Neb., with about \$6 billion in annual sales. Following its acquisition of the LWI special crops business, the

**Expired food only, please!**

In a move to tackle the growing global problem of food waste, Denmark has opened a supermarket that sells only expired food. Called WeFood and located in Copenhagen, the prices at this shop are up to 50-per-cent lower than any other grocery store in the city. The food is all either past its official expiry date or has damaged packaging that would have caused it to be thrown away at a regular store.



company now has more than 120 offices and facilities with more than 1,200 employees engaged in the business of sourcing, processing and distributing traditional grains and oilseeds, as well as specialty food and feed ingredients.

The Scoular Company and Legumex Walker established a long-term working

relationship in the fall of 2014. At that time, the American company agreed to finance the canola seed as well as the meal and oil receivables for the financially troubled Washington state plant and invest in a \$16.5-million Legumex Walker Inc. convertible debenture that was expected to help link Scoular's marketing and transportation networks to Legumex Walker's specialty crops business. The deal gave Scoular a 13-per-cent ownership stake in Legumex Walker.

"We've been looking to enter the special crops market for some time, and we're thrilled to finalize the purchase of a business that brings a wealth of special crops experience and expertise to our growing company," said Scoular CEO Chuck Elsea in a company press release. "We will invest additional resources to expand the business and pursue

**ACTIVATE VITAMIN DRINKS DONATED TO FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES**

Unique Foods Canada Inc., distributors of Activate Vitamin Drinks, in collaboration with Brands for Canada, a registered charitable organization, is donating thousands of bottles of Activate Vitamin Drinks water to First Nations communities across Canada where the quality of drinking water is compromised.

The first initiative kicked off on March 3 at Six Nations of the Grand River in

Brantford, Ont., the most populous First Nations community in Canada, with a donation of 30,000 bottles. The second initiative took place at Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, located in the Eastman Region of Manitoba and the Kenora District of Ontario, with a donation of an additional 30,000 bottles.



Activate Vitamin Drinks being delivered to Six Nations Thermal Treatment Building in Ohsweken, Ont.

opportunities that result in more value for growers and a high-quality, reliable supply of specialty products for customers around the globe.”

Anthony Kulbacki, vice-president of Scoular’s special crops business, reports that the American company is not planning any layoffs or changes to senior management at the former Legumex Walker operations. “So far, the transition has gone very well,” he says. “This is a terrific deal for all stakeholders in our special crops business — employees, suppliers, producers and customers. We are eager to start leveraging Scoular’s resources to solidify and expand our unique food and feed ingredient business. The addition of Scoular’s expertise in wheat, canola and other commodities will enable

us to create more opportunities for the producers and customers we serve.”

Legumex Walker completed the liquidation of the company in early January with the transfer of 50-per-cent ownership of Pacific Coast Canola to Glencore Grain Investment (which was previously a shareholder), an affiliate of Viterra, for no cash, and the other 50 per cent to McKinstry Holdings, Inc.

The deal with PCC allows Viterra to expand its processing capacity, in addition to its crush plant in Ste. Agathe, Man., and complements Viterra’s recent acquisition of TRT-ET-GO in Becancour, Que., says Kyle Jeworski, Viterra’s president and CEO for North America.

— Myron Love

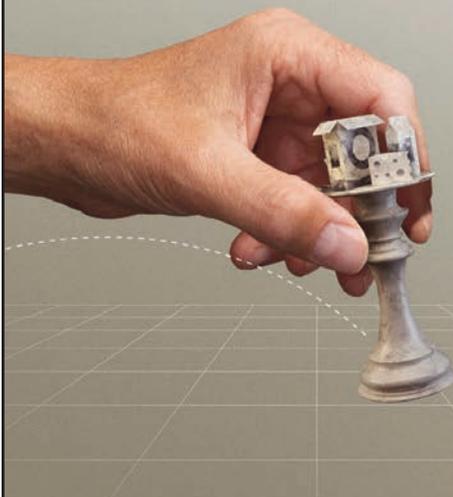
### Classic peanut brand enters peanut butter market

There’s a new peanut butter hitting grocery shelves — but the brand itself is actually a very familiar one for most Canadians.

Countless Canadian consumers will recognize the Planters Mr. Peanut character, with his distinctive cane, top hat and monocle, from the packages of Planters brand peanuts and assorted nuts. Mr. Peanut will now be adorning the label of the new Planters Peanut Butter, capitalizing on that familiar brand recognition to open the doors to a new product market.



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**Mission: ImpULSEible competition crowns winners**

At the ninth annual Mission: ImpULSEible food product development competition, an innovative high-fibre

meat extender was crowned national champion. Called “Fiberger,” the winning entry is made from red lentils, green peas and chickpeas, and was created by Caleigh Smith and Evelyn Helps of the University of Guelph.

Mission: ImpULSEible is a competition that challenges Canadian post-secondary students to create new food products featuring Canadian pulses (peas, lentils, beans and chickpeas). “We are thrilled that Fiberger was voted this year’s winner,” says Smith. “We wanted to highlight the versatility of pulses by showing the average diet doesn’t have to make drastic changes to see improvements. We believe that Fiberger is a convenient and innovative food that will allow North American

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Caleigh Smith and Evelyn Helps of the University of Guelph.

families to realize this pulse potential.”  
 “Fiberger can be used in many different ways,” adds Helps. “For example, adding Fiberger to patties and meatballs can reduce the amount of meat required, while adding fibre and protein to enhance the nutrition of the meal. Fiberger can also help families decrease their food costs by giving them a healthy, affordable ingredient to add to their protein dishes.”  
 Forty-two student teams from 17 schools from across the country took part in this year’s Mission: ImpULSEible competition. “The 2016 Mission: ImpULSEible competition featured some of the most innovative products we have ever seen,” says Christine Farkas,

manager of Food Product & Culinary Innovation with Pulse Canada, and organizer of the event. “2016 is the International Year of Pulses, and the students were encouraged to get innovative and re-create traditional dishes that wouldn’t normally be associated with pulses. They all rose to the challenge!”

Second place went to Austen Neil, Chandre Van de Merwe and Nicolle Mah of the University of Alberta for their Biotagelata, a gelato-inspired dessert made with fermented bean milk; while third place went to Lisa Cook and Hailey Madill of Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax for their Vital Impulse Bar, a breakfast bar containing faba bean flour, chickpea flour and green lentils.



### Global seaweed production standard in the works

The world is one step closer to having a global certification standard for seaweed. The Marine Stewardship Council has announced it will be working with the Aquaculture Stewardship Council to create a global certification standard for seaweed. Together, the two bodies are hoping to produce a standard that will build on their respective seafood certification and labelling programs, while also including a public consultation process.

The proposed standard aims to allow certification from both wild harvest and farmed seaweed, regardless of the scale or location of the operation. The assessment of the seaweed farms and fisheries will be guided by five core principles: sustainable populations, minimizing environmental impact, effective management, social responsibility and community relations/interactions.

## Bioenterprise launches seed funding program

Bioenterprise Corporation, a Guelph, Ont.-based agri-technology business accelerator, has launched the Bioenterprise Seed Funding Program. This program aims to support the growth and expansion of start-ups and small- to medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in the agricultural technology sector within Southern Ontario. It’s being supported by FedDev Ontario and will be delivered in partnership with Innovation Guelph. FedDev Ontario is investing up to \$4,840,000 to help Bioenterprise Corporation jointly deliver this project with Innovation Guelph.



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**“Goofy and loveable dad” promotes Olivieri**

Catelli Foods Corporation launched a new national TV campaign to promote its re-formulated lineup of Olivieri Fresh Pasta & Sauces. Developed by Toronto agency Bob’s Your Uncle, the campaign includes three English and French spots for new Olivieri Basil Fettucine, Olivieri Signature Formaggi Tortelloni and Olivieri Gnocchi.

The campaign centres on what the company’s press release describes as a “goofy and loveable dad — doing his utmost to impress his family with his culinary prowess.” The dad delivers key messages about the product’s ease of preparation, appetite appeal and potential for enjoyment.

Olivieri’s re-formulated filled pastas



feature thinner pasta, increasing the ratio of filling to shell. Two new SKUs include flavoured flat pastas as well as gnocchi.

This campaign is the culmination of a refresh for the Olivieri brand that includes new packaging and a promise to consumers of “the joy of an Italian meal” in a modern context without having to start from scratch.

“It’s the first new work for the Olivieri brand in over three years and we’re confident it’s the right foundation for our brand refresh and new product launch,” says Lidia Taylor, VP Business Strategy, Catelli Foods Corporation. “This was a great campaign to develop. We had meaningful new product news and a brand positioning we know draws consumers to the brand,” adds Bob Froese, CEO of Bob’s Your Uncle. “We brought the joy of Olivieri Fresh Pasta & Sauces to life in a way our viewers can experience before they bring it home.”

**Molson Coors recreates 108-year-old beer**

It’s a beer for the history books.

Molson Coors Canada has introduced the John H.R Molson and Bros. 1908 Historic Pale Ale, a limited release beer brewed from a recipe dug up from the company’s archives. The recipe is one of many historic documents found in approximately 400 cartons of Molson archives.



According to a company media release, Molson Coors Canada brewmasters worked extremely hard to authentically recreate the 1908 ale, right down to the smallest details. They even used century-old fermentation techniques.

“To try and replicate the flavours and nuances of the early 20th century recipe, we went deep into the archives to uncover every last detail behind this historic brew,” says Keith Armstrong, brewmaster at Molson Coors Canada. “We sat down

with maltsters, barley and hops breeders from across the globe to identify the correct ingredients to mix with Molson’s ancient ale yeast derived from the same primordial strand John Molson used in the 1700s.”

**Senate report recommends Canada Food Guide overhaul**

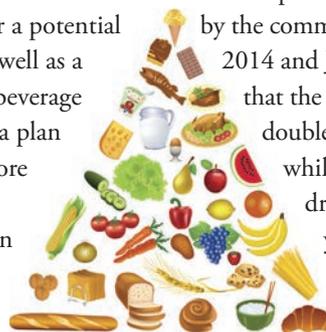
A new Senate committee report is recommending a national campaign to address obesity in Canada and a major overhaul of the Canada Food Guide to reflect current scientific evidence. The report is also calling for a potential tax on sugary beverages, as well as a ban on directing food and beverage advertising at children and a plan for making healthy food more affordable.

The Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology released the

report, called *Obesity in Canada: a whole of society approach for a healthier Canada*, on March 1, 2016.

“Obesity is a crucial determinant of serious health issues and declining quality of life, with enormous resulting costs to society. Poor diet is a major risk factor in obesity. A substantial reduction in sugar (carbohydrate) consumption would go a long way toward restoring a normal body weight and improved health. Diet can be controlled, but you cannot out-exercise a poor diet,” says Senator Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie, chair of the committee.

The report follows a study conducted by the committee between February 2014 and June 2015. The report notes that the number of obese adults has doubled in Canada since 1980, while the number of obese children has tripled, and that each year 48,000 to 66,000 Canadians die from conditions linked to excess weight.



## Government invests in beef cattle genetics

The Government of Canada is investing up to \$2,588,000 to help support international and domestic market development activities for Canadian beef cattle genetics.

According to a Canadian government press release, this investment will enable the Canadian Beef Breeds Council (CBBC) to implement a market development strategy, attend international trade shows and lead missions to raise awareness of Canadian beef genetics, concentrating efforts on expanding key markets including the U.S., Mexico, Europe, China and Kazakhstan.

“This investment is a great example of industry and government working together to help create new economic opportunities and demand for Canadian beef genetics at home, and around the world,” says Lawrence MacAulay, Canada’s Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

This government investment is being made under the Growing Forward 2 AgriMarketing Program, a five-year, \$341-million initiative. “The continued support from the Government of Canada has been instrumental in enabling CBBC to showcase our exceptional beef cattle genetics to the world resulting in new opportunities that directly contribute to the economic sustainability of the family farm,” says David Bolduc, president, Canadian Beef Breeds Council.

## Loblaws flip-flops on French’s ketchup decision after social media frenzy

Patriotic Canadian fans of French’s ketchup — made exclusively with Ontario tomatoes — were up in arms this March when grocery giant Loblaws briefly said it would be taking French’s ketchup off its shelves. Loblaws cited weak sales for its initial decision to pull the product off its shelves, but after a huge public outcry involving a deluge of social media complaints, Loblaws quickly decided to give the ketchup a second chance on March 16. Fans of the ketchup are so vocally supportive of the French’s product because it’s made with tomatoes grown in Leamington, Ont. “We’ve heard our Loblaws customers,” says Kevin Groh, the company’s vice-president of Corporate Affairs and Communication, in a media statement.



## IN BRIEF



- > **Becel** has announced that its margarine is now available with simpler ingredients, free from artificial preservatives, flavours and colours.
- > A large Filipino grocery chain called **Seafood City Supermarket** will open its first Canadian store near Toronto early next year. The store stocks staple pantry goods and fresh ingredients for cooking Filipino and pan-Asian dishes. It already has 22 American locations along the West Coast and Hawaii. The first Canadian store will open at Heartland Town Centre in Mississauga, Ont., in the first quarter of 2017. ↪

> **Mutti**, a fourth generation family-run Italian company well known for its tomato products, has launched in Canada. Founded in 1899, all Mutti products are made from 100-per-cent Italian tomatoes and are GMO-free. Mutti products are available at Loblaws, Fortinos, Sobey's and Real Canadian Superstores in Ontario; Overwaitea, Thrifty Foods, Federated Co-op and Whole Foods in Western Canada; and Maxi in Quebec. Mutti is distributed in Canada by Italtasta Limited.



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> A new traditional foods processing course in Inuvik, N.W.T., is aiming to help extend the shelf-life of country food and make it more readily available in northern supermarkets. The territorial government is supporting the program, which is being run in conjunction

with **Aurora College** and the economic development arm of the **Inuvialuit group**. They hope to bring the course to more communities around the Beaufort-Delta region.



> To address the serious problem of bee population instability, **Honey Nut Cheerios** has launched a campaign calling on Canadians to help "Bring Back The Bees." As part of this campaign, Honey Nut Cheerios is giving away free wildflower seed packs and encouraging consumers to visit [BringBackTheBees.ca](http://BringBackTheBees.ca) to request their own.

> For the first time in 10 years, **Windsor Salt** has launched a comprehensive brand refresh, which included an updated logo and product packaging. The new look and feel of the brand also extends to the company's website and social media channels.



SUPPLIER NEWS



> **Corbion**, a global leader in biobased ingredients for the food industry, has announced new distribution arrangements in Canada. **L.V. Lomas** will distribute Corbion's lactic acid and derivative ingredients in the beverage, confectionery, dairy and prepared foods industries. It will also continue to offer Corbion's emulsifier and bakery ingredient portfolio. The meat and poultry sectors will now be served by **Viscofan**.

> Vancouver-based **Mazza Innovation Ltd.**, a provider of high-quality solvent-free botanical extracts, is opening its first large-scale commercial extraction processing facility to produce its



PhytoClean Cranberry, Green Tea and Blueberry extracts as well as other clean label ingredients for its customers. The 38,000-sq.-ft. facility has received its GMP certification and is fully compliant with the quality requirements of dietary supplements and natural health product manufacturers.

> **Handtmann Mochinenfabrik GmbH** has announced the opening of Handtmann Mexico and the appointment of **Aldo Ramos** as its managing director. Handtmann Mexico, the Handtmann Maschinenfabrik subsidiary responsible for factory-direct sales and service in Mexico, represents a significant corporate investment and important expansion of Handtmann's global organization.



> **The Manufacturing Institute** has announced it will present **Chelsea Becker** with the Women in Manufacturing STEP (Science, Technology,

Engineering and Production) Ahead Award at an April 21 reception in Washington, D.C. Becker is a strategic project manager for Baldor Electric Company, a member of the ABB Group. The STEP Ahead Awards honour women who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in their careers and represent all levels of the manufacturing industry.

## Supplying Dairy Ingredients for 40 years

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> **Motion Industries, Inc.**, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Genuine Parts Company**, has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire **Epperson and Company**, an industrial distributor specializing in material handling products and services since 1932.

> **Dealers Ingredients** is marking 2016 as its 40th anniversary of providing a reliable and stable range of cost-competitive dairy product ingredient solutions and custom blend options in an ever-changing Canadian marketplace. The company also has another reason to celebrate: its PROFIL product, a high-protein plant based composite (HPPC), was winner of the 2016 DUX Ingredients and Technology award.



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Allen

> Restaurants Canada has announced that **Bill Allen**, president of Fresh Casual Restaurants based in Aulac, N.B., is the new Chair of the Board for 2016/2017.



Loftsgard

> The Canada Organic Trade Association's Board of Directors has appointed **Tia Loftsgard** as executive director of the association.



Bowen

> The Canadian Seed Growers' Association (CSGA) has hired **Mike Scheffel** as its new director of Policy.

> Monroe, N.C.-based bulk material handling and powder processing company Spiroflow has appointed **Kevin Bowen** as a member of its Strategic Advisory Board.

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## FBO launches career awareness program

Food and Beverage Ontario (FBO) has launched a new career awareness program called Taste Your Future, which focuses on bringing attention to the abundance of jobs available in Ontario's food and beverage processing sector.



"I congratulate the industry on the launch of Taste Your Future and look forward to more Ontarians embarking on careers within the agri-food and beverage processing sector," says Jeff Leal, Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "Ontario is the ideal place for the industry to grow and thrive, with a robust population, colleges and universities training the future workforce, access to local and export markets and an entrepreneurial culture."

According to an FBO media release, the Taste Your Future multi-year campaign shares stories, videos and more outlining education and job opportunities to help people learn about the industry and find their place within it. There is also a 10-question quiz to help people match interests with career

opportunities, and all of this can be found at [TasteYourFuture.ca](http://TasteYourFuture.ca).

"Canada's food and beverage processors drive our economy, connecting producers to consumers and touching the lives of all Canadians. The Government of Canada is pleased to support the food sector in a way that allows it to be a leader in job creation and innovation," says Lawrence MacAulay, Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

"We're looking forward to sharing information about the post-secondary opportunities in the food and beverage processing sector with parents and students trying to figure out what they want to study," says Linda Franklin, president of Colleges Ontario and a member of the committee working with FBO to develop and execute the Taste Your Future program. "Through this campaign, we're also working with employers to better identify the specific roles they are trying to fill so we can profile them on [tasteyourfuture.ca](http://tasteyourfuture.ca) and find the students and future employees that are right for them."

Taste Your Future is supported by Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

## Saputo to close three plants

Montreal-based Saputo Inc., Canada's largest cheese manufacturer, has announced that it is closing three of its plants in an effort to improve operational efficiency.

The three facilities affected are located in Sydney, N.S., Princeville, Que., and Ottawa. The closures are scheduled in June 2016, August 2016 and December 2017 respectively. The current production will be integrated into other Saputo facilities.

Approximately 230 employees will be affected. According to a Saputo media release, these employees will be provided

with severance and outplacement support. Some will be offered the possibility of transferring to other Saputo locations.

The Saputo media release explains that in recent years, "Saputo has maintained efforts to pursue additional efficiencies and decrease costs while strengthening its market presence. The announced measures are part of the Company's continual analysis of its overall activities."

## Canada regains access to Mexico for poultry exports

The Canadian government announced last week that Mexico has reopened its border to Canadian fresh poultry meat, including chicken, turkey and duck meat. Mexico had closed its borders to these products in 2004 following an outbreak of Avian Influenza.

According to a media release from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, it's estimated that restored access to the Mexican market for fresh duck meat and other high-quality, fresh poultry meat will be worth approximately \$3 million annually. While Mexico still maintains some limited Avian Influenza-related restrictions, the Government of Canada is working with Mexican authorities to remove these as quickly as possible.





**MARKET COMMENTARY: Canada and the TPP**

The University of Guelph's first George Morris lecture was presented by Dr. Rick Barichello, an economist whom I respect. He provided some early estimates of the potential impacts of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on four of Canada's agricultural industries: wheat, beef, pork and dairy. His analysis is based on conservative assumptions and market parameters that are estimated from the past, when trade was not liberalized.

History shows that, with liberalization, Canada makes adjustments that give more benefit than the initial analysis suggests.

Nonetheless, the numbers are significant. For wheat and beef, assuming Canada merely hangs onto its share of increased imports, the benefits are in the millions of dollars. These are modest increases in exports compared to recent history. For pork, the very large improvements in market access to Japan and Vietnam would make the benefits much larger, in the neighborhood of 25 per cent of current exports, which are already significant.

The estimated effects on the dairy industry are insignificant because increased imports are well within the expected growth in domestic consumption.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Barichello's presentation is what would happen if Canada does not join the TPP. The difference between joining and not joining is a loss of at least a half billion dollars per year, indicating the obvious for an economy based on trade.

This dovetails with other recent analyses that show Canada has a rapidly growing trade deficit in processed food products amounting to a whopping \$9 billion annual greater imports than exports. Hand in hand with that is the analysis showing that Canadian investment in food processing is less than depreciation. So, in a world of rapidly increasing food trade and food demand, Canada is exporting relatively less and disinvesting in the food processing industry. What's wrong with this picture?

The most fundamental need is market access, which TPP provides. The barriers will be removed. The next challenge is to create a vibrant and productive food industry that can take advantage of that access. ●

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

**MARKET HIGHLIGHTS**

As we hinted last issue, for the first time in months, some of the commodity charts are moving upward, led by crude oil, soy oil, and sugar. Most remain in sideways channels, still looking for direction.

**Grains:** Wheat broke below support briefly in early March, but recovered. It, along with corn and soybeans, are back in the sideways channels. All three have withstood bearish news, but now have a little of the bull side. Managed funds built record large net short positions through early March, but reduced them late in the month, taking off some downward pressure.

**Corn:** May again bottomed at \$3.54 before recovering to the current \$3.70, with minor resistance in the \$3.80 to \$3.90 area. There is little bullish news: Argentina's production and exports are record high, U.S. exports are not strong, and Brazil's safrinha looks to be record high. Watch USDA's March 31 report for one more chance to buy low. Support remains at \$3.54. Major support is \$3.46. Resistance is around \$3.85. We continue to buy hand to mouth for now, but would cover against \$3.87 and/or lock prices in around \$3.54 or lower if support holds at \$3.46.

**Soy oil:** At \$0.336, May oil has rallied back almost 50 per cent of its losses from the 2014 peak to last August. Soy oil is driven in part by palm oil prices, which are making new highs on lower palm production and increased demand. U.S. soybean exports are also strong, even with a very large South American crop. We suggested buying hand to mouth with protection above \$0.325 on the May. If you bought Calls, hold them, if futures, aim for at least \$0.35, but protect above \$0.35.

**Wheat:** May wheat broke through support then rallied from the low of \$4.42 to the current \$4.67 on two heavy frosts in the U.S., drought in India, and expected lower yields in Europe. The fact that these factors, along with lower U.S. winter wheat seeding can only add \$0.25 to the price underlines just how large wheat inventories are. There is major support at \$4.25, short-term support at \$4.42; good places to price.

**Sugar:** May sugar continues to make highs not seen in 15 months (currently \$0.166) because of shortages in India, Thailand and earlier in Brazil. Concerns are rising about shortages later in the year. Technical support is just overhead at \$0.168, then nothing major until \$0.20.

We would be protected at \$0.168 if not already at \$0.1535, as suggested last month.

**Natural gas:** Natural gas followed crude a bit in the past month. After new lows at 1.73 cents, May rallied back to 1.93 cents currently. As has been the case, we think locking in prices on any pull back makes sense.

**Crude oil:** Uncertainty reigns as OPEC calls a meeting to propose production controls which Iran and Libya refuse to attend, and another attack shocks Brussels. May futures drifted up to the \$41.50 area, but with little momentum. We suggested protection above \$36.20. If you did, the next level of resistance is \$45.20. We'd take profits just below, but be covered above.

**Canadian dollar:** The loonie is stronger than expected, partly as a result of oil prices, partly because of improved trade numbers and partly in reaction to the U.S. Fed holding interest rates steady. June is currently bumping up against major resistance around \$0.77, with strong bearish divergence on the technical momentum measures. We held the Puts too long, but would be covered at \$0.77 or with \$0.74s.



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1. Fry study conducted by Cargill, spring 2009.



## Are you ready for FSMA?

On Jan. 4, 2011 the United States launched the development of the FDA *Food Safety Modernization Act* (FSMA), “the most sweeping reform of U.S. food safety laws in more than 70 years.” Recognizing the need for information regarding these new regulatory requirements, the Food Processors of Canada (FPC) recently held a technical information session for its members on the impacts of the Preventive Control Rule. The session was well attended by more than 50 participants representing a wide variety of Canadian food manufacturers.

The FPC invited Dr. David Acheson and Cameron Prince of The Acheson Group to provide background on FSMA and highlight the main impacts of the Preventive Control Rule on Canadian food producers exporting to the U.S. Here are some key points that came out of the session.

### HACCP+

FSMA requirements focus on preventing, rather than reacting to problems that can cause foodborne illness. The new requirements will apply to firms that manufacture, process, pack or hold human food. These firms will be required to have written plans that identify hazards, specify the steps that will be put in place to minimize or prevent those hazards, identify monitoring procedures and record monitoring results, and specify what actions will be taken to correct problems that arise.

Although these requirements appear very similar to HACCP and GFSI programs, there are differences in the new FSMA Preventive Controls Rule that will require companies to re-evaluate and adjust their programs. Under the Preventive Control approach, hazards related to the process and to the plant operation are controlled under a prerequisite program that will now require the same level of documentation, monitoring, record

“FSMA requirements focus on preventing, rather than reacting to problems that can cause foodborne illness.”

keeping and corrective actions as a CCP under HACCP. The Preventive Control approach is portrayed as “HACCP+” in which Prerequisite Programs such as “Cleaning and Sanitation,” “Allergen Control” and “Recall” could be identified as Preventive Controls and require the same level of control as a CCP. Existing HACCP plans will remain in effect.

### Ready-to-eat products

Processors of Ready-to-Eat (RTE) products exporting to the U.S. may also be required to implement an environmental pathogen monitoring program. If the RTE product is open to the environment after processing and before packaging and a kill step does not follow the packaging step, an environmental pathogen monitoring program will be required.

### Qualified personnel

The Preventive Control Rule requires that a qualified individual develop, implement, and monitor the Preventive

Controls Program. This individual is known as a Preventive Controls Qualified Individual (PCQI). It is strongly recommended that companies have a certified PCQI on staff. In most cases this will mean that a QA manager will be required to take a two-and-a-half day certified training program.

### Timing

The date for implementation is September 2016 for large companies with more than 500 employees, and September 2017 for medium and smaller companies. Certain commodities are exempt, including fish/seafood and produce (already covered by existing FDA rules), and USDA commodities (meat, catfish).

### Start getting ready

FPC is now working with The Acheson Group (TAG) to set up a series of in-depth FSMA workshops and training in Canada. The training will be based on the FDA Preventive Controls training but will also be customized to Canadian food processors and exporters. Details on locations and costs are now being evaluated. I encourage food processors to contact the FPC at [fpc@foodprocessors.ca](mailto:fpc@foodprocessors.ca) to enroll in this great training opportunity.

All Canadian food processors are advised to take advantage of this training opportunity whether exporting to the U.S. or not. Don't be surprised if the *Safe Foods for Canadians Act* will have similar requirements as FSMA when finally enacted. ●

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



## Supplemented foods, a new framework

In March 2016, Health Canada released the *Category Specific Guidance for Temporary Marketing Authorization: Supplemented Foods*, dated February 2016 (Guide). The Guide is intended to provide a process through the use of a Temporary Marketing Authorization Letter (TMAL), allowing for the temporary sale of foods defined in the Guide as “supplemented foods.” Consumption and usage data will be collected from TMAL holders to fill data gaps and allow for the development of amendments to the *Food and Drug Regulations* (FDR) facilitating market access for supplemented foods under the same regulatory system that applies to most other categories of foods.

A supplemented food is broadly defined as a pre-packaged product that is manufactured, sold or represented as a food, which contains added vitamins, minerals, amino acids, herbal or bioactive ingredients. It is recognized that these ingredients may perform a physiological role beyond the provision of nutritive requirements. It is also anticipated that for most supplemented foods there may be language limiting the total daily consumption of supplemented foods, not consumed ad libitum.

The Guide is not intended to be a process to permit the addition of vitamins, minerals or amino acids for broad population-based public health needs, traditionally known as food fortification.

The Guide does not apply to supplemented foods that contain unapproved food additives, novel food ingredients (other than those set out in Appendix 2), alcohol, or caffeine outside of the permitted use as a food additive. The Guide does not apply to: foods recommended for children less than four years of age or pregnant/breastfeeding women, infant foods (Division 25 of the FDR), or foods for special dietary uses (Division 24 of the FDR, i.e. meal replacements, nutritional supplements).

The Guide limits the use of some vitamins and minerals, either by exclusion, setting out maximum limits on a “per serving basis,” Path 1, or “per daily basis,” Path 2, based on the age of the targeted population. No maximum limits are included for amino acids, which are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The Guide sets out various tables: Table 1, vitamins and minerals that are not acceptable for addition for supplemented foods; Table 2, Path 1 limitations for products recommended for the general population, four years of age and older; and Table 3, Path 2 limitations for products intended for “adult use only.” The “adult use only” limitation permits higher levels of vitamins and minerals to be added, but labelling is required to contain certain cautionary statements. The use of these statements is dependent on the perceived potential for adverse health effects. Table 5 sets out the labelling statements and corresponding nutrient threshold levels where cautionary statements are required.

Where cautionary statements are required, the holder of a TMAL is also required to maintain and submit an annual summary of all consumption in-



cidents. A consumption incident is characterized by a suspected causal relationship between the consumption of a food and an adverse event.

Health Canada is exploring the possibility of requiring a front of pack identifier, visual or in text, to be included on the PDP of supplemented foods to help the consumer recognize that these foods are different from regular foods.

It is encouraging that the Food Directorate continues to look at ways to modernize the regulatory regime for a new category of products, allowing for industry to meet the increasing demands of consumers looking for an expanded food offering containing nutrients, including bioactive substances, with the intention of supplementing their health. A further encouraging note is the new approach implemented by the Food Directorate with respect to the inclusion of some novel food ingredients in supplemented foods. These novel food ingredients are not required to follow the traditional path, recognizing that supplemented foods are not likely to be consumed ad libitum and as such, the review will take this more limited consumption into account. With the change in oversight and interpretation of claims for foods, this new category of foods may represent a real opportunity for those wishing to bring supplemented foods to the marketplace. Let's hope the Food Directorate's effort to modernize continues. ●

Joel B. Taller is a partner at the Ottawa offices of Gowling WLG practicing primarily in drug, natural health product and food regulatory law. Contact him at [joel.taller@gowlingwlg.com](mailto:joel.taller@gowlingwlg.com). Ron Doering returns next month.



## The heat on Canada's food guide

Canada's senators, not the hockey team, have recently come out of the closet with their view of Canada's Food Guide. The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology looked at the increasing incidence of obesity in Canada. The Senate report is the result of testimony presented between October 2014 and June 2015, under the previous Conservative parliament.

Since then, and under the new Liberal government, a Mandate Letter presented to the Minister of Health would, among other public health promotion initiatives, look at "introducing new restrictions on the commercial marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children, similar to those now in place in Quebec; bringing in tougher regulations to eliminate trans fats and to reduce salt in processed foods, similar to those in the United States; and improving food labels to give more information on added sugars and artificial dyes in processed foods."

The Senate report is based on information presented by witnesses, which include very distinguished and respected individuals and organizations. The media has picked up on the report's reference that several witnesses have suggested that, "Canada's Food Guide has been at best ineffective, and at worst enabling, with respect to the rising levels of unhealthy weights and diet-related chronic diseases in Canada." So is Canada's Food



Guide really that bad?

Obesity is a concern. Since 1980, obesity has been on the increase. There have also been three revisions to the Guide since then, which made its debut in 1942 (Canada's Official Food Rules). A chief focus of discontent concerning the current 2007 Food Guide is its presumed silence on discouraging food choices that contain high amounts of sugars and very little of other healthful nutrition. In the spotlight are fruit juices, demonized along with carbonated soft drinks, as providing empty calories from sugar. Even orange juice, a source of vitamin C, is targeted as a "bad" sugary juice. The objection is that the food does not provide other significant nutritional benefits, like a bit of fibre that is present in whole orange. An orange, a "good" food, still provides a high proportion of calories from sugar. The point here is that it is not easy to differentiate between what foods, despite the sugar content, are good and which are not. Should the guide identify good and bad food, or continue providing guidance on simply making wise choices?

Another focus of the Senate report is on processed food, which is also demonized. The current Food Guide does not speak specifically on processed food. It does promote the selection of servings from the four food groups: vegetables and fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives, and meat and alternatives. The guide does aim the selection at whole and

less processed food, even though it does not arbitrarily disparage processed food. There are good food choices in the processed food category. This includes wheat flour, which under federal law must be fortified with vitamins and minerals. The guide at its best aims at wise food choices. Nutrition labelling provides additional information to ensure foods are consumed in moderation, regardless of what food group they are in.

The goal of the Food Guide is to provide consistent messaging to help Canadians select foods that provide adequate nutrition, while reducing the risk of diet-related chronic diseases. The number of serving suggestions are based on general daily caloric and nutrient content, for various age groups. Individuals have the responsibility of becoming informed and following healthy eating guidelines suited to them.

While the current Food Guide might benefit from perhaps simplifying and refocusing some of its messaging, it is really not that out of tune. The number of suggested servings from each food group might also warrant some tweaking to ensure Canadians are on track with dietary goals. There is certainly no reason to label it as an enabling cause of obesity. That simply casts doubt on validity of Guide, at a time when Canadians should heed its advice more often. Health Canada will be conducting a more robust science-based review of the Guide to see what changes might actually be warranted. 🍎

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



## The 2016 Leadership Awards

It is our pleasure to partner with *Food in Canada* once again in sponsoring the 2016 Leadership Awards. The companies that have been selected this year are great examples of industry leaders that have demonstrated a significant contribution to the food and beverage industry, and are well deserving of the recognition. Their achievements in the areas of growth, innovation, stewardship, community involvement, and health and wellness, are a credit to their ownership, management and employees. We are truly proud to have this opportunity to recognize them this year.

Consumers here in Canada and around the world continue to look for value and improved quality when making their food and beverage choices. As such, producers must provide products that retailers believe will meet these evolving consumer demands. To do so, producers must understand the end consumers' needs and invest in new markets and offerings to meet them. Notably, this also creates opportunities for producers to positively impact their communities and markets by producing healthy products in an environmentally friendly way.

Innovation is critical to success in the industry today. As you will see, *haskapa* clearly demonstrates an innovative approach to its business and well represents the industry from an innovation perspective. Equally as impressive are the measures and initiatives

that Nestlé Canada has undertaken from a sustainability standpoint, an aspect of doing business in today's world that has ever-increasing importance.

For its part, *Real Food for Real Kids* strives to “enable and inspire healthy eating,” proudly demonstrating how companies in the industry can make a real difference. Similarly, the community involvement and industry leadership exemplified by *Steam Whistle Brewing* clearly shows how individual producers can positively impact the industry as a whole. Finally, the impressive growth recently experienced by *G.E. Barbour* is a credit to the company's strategic and aggressive approach to managing its business; it is a true model of success.

These companies are inspirational examples of the strength of the industry in Canada and the ability of producers to meet the significant challenges that businesses face in today's world. As a firm dedicated to serving the food and beverage industry, we at Grant Thornton feel very privileged to recognize these 2016 industry leaders.

Jim Menzies, National Leader,  
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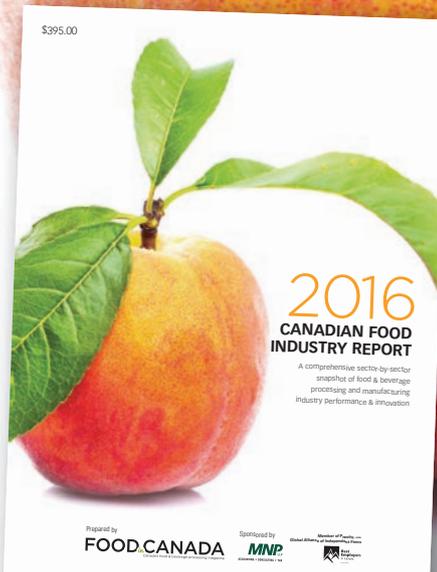
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**FOOD** *in* **CANADA**  
Canada's food & beverage processing magazine



President Sylvia MacVey

# G.E. Barbour

## GROWTH AWARD

Photography: Daniel St. Louis/KlixPix

BY CAROLYN COOPER

**a**fter almost 150 years in business, family-owned G.E. Barbour clearly has a history of long-term success. But it's been in the last five years that the company has seen one of its greatest jumps in sales and volumes, thanks to its commitment to quality, service and building strong relationships with customers.

Founded the same year as Confederation, G.E. Barbour made a name for itself through sales of spices, baking extracts

and the iconic East Coast brew King Cole Tea. The company was purchased by the Brenan family in the 1950s, and for the next four decades its various product lines continued to flourish throughout Atlantic Canada. By the 1990s the company had moved into private-label production and co-packing of nut butters, but growth wasn't a focus.

Then in 2011, after ownership was consolidated within the family, the company underwent a major turnover of senior management, allowing it to move

forward with a new vision and strategy. After establishing itself as a reliable supplier of natural and organic food with an excellent food safety record, G.E. Barbour began focusing on selling its capabilities, and building private-label and co-packing partnerships with retailers and food producers in which "lowest cost" wasn't the primary factor. Internally the company made significant investments in human resources, product development, supply chain and IT support.

"The big growth came from the nut



butters in 2013,” recalls G.E. Barbour president and Brenan family member Sylvia MacVey. “We ended up right across the country, which was major growth for us.” MacVey admits a spike in commodity prices along with quality and safety concerns in the category at the time meant Barbour’s, as a trusted manufacturer, was pushed into the limelight. “It was a little opportunistic, there’s no question, but we spent 2011 and 2012 getting ready for it, seeing those opportunities in the market, getting our ducks in a row so that when we started to pursue those opportunities we had the credentials to take us to the next level,” says MacVey.

Today 80 per cent of Barbour’s sales come from private-label and co-packing of specialty and natural nut butters, says MacVey. Total sales for 2015 were \$60.2 million (5.7 million kg in volume), compared to less than \$17 million in 2011 (with a volume of 2.2 million kg). Much of that growth has also come through exporting to the U.S. — 2015 U.S. export sales were \$43.8 million, a huge jump from just \$1 million in 2011. King Cole Tea is the company’s second-largest division, and still number-one in its category in the region. Meanwhile, Barbour’s baking products lineup, including flavour extracts and popcorn seasonings, is its second-fastest growing division. “Success at G.E. Barbour really is about being able to achieve growth in all our divisions and still maintain a sense of family,” says MacVey. “To spread success from one division to another, so we can continue our growth and diversification — that’s very important.”

Because of the highly competitive nature of co-packing, MacVey says building strong relationships has been essential. “What also differentiates us is just how collaborative we are with our customers,” she adds. “We’re constantly looking at the trends. But most of what we’re doing is because the customer will come to us and say we’re looking for something interesting and innovative, and we’re really willing to work with them to find out exactly what that is. It’s about being open to new ideas.” MacVey also says “differentiating ourselves by doing some really interesting things with flavours and formulas” will continue to set G.E. Barbour apart.

One struggle MacVey says the company continues to face is high commodity costs. “We’re trying to keep our costs down, and we want to make sure we’re achieving the value to pass onto our customers, understanding that we will never be the low-cost option,” she says. “That’s probably our biggest challenge — getting people to understand that although you could probably get a better-priced nut butter, our service and our quality are worth the little bit extra.” ●



**FOUNDED: 1867**



**HEADQUARTERS:**  
SUSSEX, N.B.



**PRODUCTS:**  
NUT BUTTERS, TEA,  
SPICES, BAKING  
EXTRACTS



Liam Taylor,  
commercial  
director

# haskapa

## INNOVATION AWARD

Photography: Nance Ackerman/KlixPix

BY CAROLYN COOPER

Liam Taylor recalls the early days of the haskapa brand, when the market for haskap berries in Canada was virtually non-existent: “One of the elements that we discovered was that no one got excited about the haskap berry until they could actually taste the haskap berry, and taste the products of the haskap berry.” That’s why the company began researching and developing products almost immediately, says Taylor, commercial director for LaHave Forests, Inc. (operating under the brand haskapa).

As the first commercial brand of haskap berries in North America, haskapa has had to innovate in everything it does, from harvesting to processing and marketing. “By constantly innovating, constantly bringing out new products, that’s how you keep consumers engaged, especially when you’re building a brand,” says Taylor. From its initial 11-acre orchard, planted in 2011, the company is on track within the next 18 months to have more than 140 acres of haskap berries growing and more than 100

tonnes processed. “Our orchards are only five years old, so they’re just beginning to come to full yield,” explains Taylor, noting that the company initially brought in berries from Quebec, Saskatchewan and Poland. “But we created the products here, using all local knowledge and processing, and we now have products that get people excited; people then want to put plants in the ground, which means we can get local berries to make products.”

A native of Japan, the haskap berry was introduced to Canada in the late 1960s



and used mainly as an ornamental plant rather than an edible crop. The dark blue fruit resembles an elongated blueberry, but is a member of the honeysuckle family. According to haskapa, the berries are high in anthocyanins, vitamin C, phenolic compounds and other antioxidants, with a flavour reminiscent of “a zingy combination of blueberry and raspberry with a hint of elderberry.”

Because it is new to the Canadian market, Taylor says it was essential that the company support ongoing research on the haskapa berry. Working with Dalhousie University, the company is en-

gaged in a number of studies aimed at optimizing harvesting and freezing processes to maximize the bioactive content of its products. Another study is looking at the chemopreventative properties of polyphenols on cancer cells. “There’s a lot of hype around berries and antioxidants,” says Taylor. “We feel we’re doing our due diligence, our research, to be able to really stand behind our products. We’re very aware that we have to be market leaders — we have to establish our brand as the premium brand of products out there that in many ways is going to set the bar. This is also key to the longevity of the brand.”

In 2014 haskapa launched North America’s first haskapa berry product line, including its award-winning juice, jam and dried berries. The line has since expanded to include haskapa maple syrup, jalapeno relish, chutney, and even haskapa berry gin, all made by processors in Atlantic Canada. In the coming year the company will introduce a health line featuring a pure haskapa berry juice, powder and a haskapa/chia mix. Developed with Newfoundland’s Sedna Nutra using its Refractance Window Drying process, the latter two products will maintain more than 90 per cent of the bioactives of the berries. A grocery collection including haskapa green tea, herbal tea, cranberry sauce and a reduction will round out this year’s new products.

“Now we’ve completed our research, we’re happy that we have maximized the processing to such an extent that we’re comfortable launching our health products,” says Taylor, who notes that the company will make education on the haskapa berry’s various health benefits a key part of its marketing message as it rolls out its products in the regional market, and then into Ontario. “In everything we do it’s absolutely key to explain to everyone what the haskapa berry is, its heritage, and its potential health properties,” he says. 🍓



**FOUNDED:** 2010



**HEADQUARTERS:**  
MAHONE BAY, N.S.



**PRODUCTS:**  
HASKAPA BERRIES



# Nestlé Canada Inc.

## STEWARDSHIP AWARD

**S**BY CAROL NESHEVICH  
tewardship and sustainability have been important to Nestlé for 150 years, according to Shelley Martin, president and CEO of Nestlé Canada Inc. — even if those weren't the exact words they used for it back when the now-global company was first established in Switzerland in 1866.

“It’s our 150th anniversary, and for any company to be around for that long and to be this successful, sustainability needs to be foundational,” says Martin. “At

Nestlé we call it creating shared value, and it’s integrated into everything we do. So from our very early days of Henri Nestlé developing the first infant formula to save his neighbour’s baby, to making sure we have sustainable resources in terms of cocoa and coffee, to making sure we leave a positive footprint everywhere we are in 130 countries around the world, it is what we do.”

From an environmental footprint perspective, Nestlé has committed to zero waste for disposal by 2020, along with a

35-per-cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 35-per-cent reduction of water usage in its operations between 2010 and 2020. Nestlé Canada Inc. is well on its way toward this goal, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by seven per cent across Nestlé Canada between 2012 and 2014, which includes an 8.2-per-cent reduction at the Sterling Road Chocolate Factory in Toronto and a 10-per-cent reduction at the company’s Ice Cream Factory in London, Ont.; and reducing water usage by 22.5 per cent

Shelley Martin,  
president and CEO



Photo: Nestlé Canada Inc.

across Nestlé Canada between 2012 and 2014, including a 25-per-cent reduction at the Sterling Road Chocolate Factory and a 22.4-per-cent reduction at the London Ice Cream Factory. Both the Sterling Road factory and the London factory have already achieved zero waste to landfill.

Sustainable sourcing is also something Nestlé takes seriously. “We have developed our Responsible Sourcing Guidelines and we use these to ensure that the raw materials we are buying are both sustainable and responsible,” says Martin. For coffee production, for instance, Nestlé has rolled out the Nescafé Plan to help coffee farmers

rejuvenate their plantations, multiply the yield on existing land and increase their income. And on the chocolate side, Martin points again to the Sterling Road Chocolate Factory as a good example of sustainable sourcing: “100 per cent of the chocolate produced in that factory is certified for sustainability, and it is sourced within our own Nestlé Cocoa Plan, which is a plan we have in terms of supporting farmers and sustainability of cocoa within the Ivory Coast,” she says. “So all of the product coming out of that factory is sustainable chocolate.”

Packaging plays a major role in Nestlé’s stewardship practices as well. “We’re always looking at ways to reduce the packaging and its impact on the environment,” says Martin. “We have an internal design tool that we use to determine which packaging design is the most environmentally friendly; this looks at it from the raw materials used in packaging all the way to consumer use, so we can work with our packaging team to determine the most efficient design.”

For example, the company’s Eco-Shape 500-mL water bottle contains 60 per cent less plastic than the bottles Nestlé used in 2000. And in 2015 it moved to a smaller carton for Delissio pizza boxes, allowing paperboard savings of 4.4 per cent annually. That same year, the Nestlé Sundae Cups were moved from a case to a tray and film, providing a 29.3-per-cent paperboard savings (61,000 kg annually).

While Martin admits it takes great effort to maintain sustainability commitments in such a large organization, she says the rewards are countless. “The first obvious thing is that we’re leaving a positive imprint on the communities in terms of the environment, and the people, and the ecosystems,” she says. “But other positives include watching [our employees’ response]. We have 3,500 employees in Canada, and seeing their engagement, their concern, their passion, their commitment to our journey of continuous improvement in everything we do, including sustainability, has been great...It builds momentum and it builds pride, and that’s a real reward.” 🍎



**FOUNDED: NESTLÉ**  
CANADA WAS  
INCORPORATED IN 1922;  
NESTLÉ BEGAN IN 1866  
IN SWITZERLAND



**HEADQUARTERS:**  
TORONTO (WITH GLOBAL  
HEADQUARTERS IN  
SWITZERLAND)



**PRODUCTS:**  
MATERNAL AND INFANT  
NUTRITION, BEVERAGES,  
CHOCOLATE, COFFEE,  
FROZEN MEALS, HEALTH  
SCIENCES, ICE CREAM  
AND FROZEN DESSERTS,  
PET FOODS, BOTTLED  
WATERS



Co-founders  
Greg Taylor (left)  
& Cam Heaps

# Steam Whistle Brewing

## COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP AWARD

**f** BY CAROL NESHEVICH

or the folks who run Toronto's Steam Whistle Brewing, being connected to the local community is simply a part of who they are. In fact, co-founders Greg Taylor and Cam Heaps often credit the company's close ties to Torontonians and the city's cultural scene for much of the craft brewery's success. "If you don't have a connection with the community, nobody will support your brand," says Taylor. "Craft beer is all about local. Your most important customers are often the ones who live next door."

To help foster those community ties, Steam Whistle sponsors more than 800 charitable, cultural and community events each year. In particular, the brewery tends to focus strongly on the arts. "On the branding side, there's no question

that it makes a lot of sense to connect with social leaders and folks who people look up to in the music industry, and so on," says Taylor. "We don't have the resources to advertise extensively — and this was especially true when we first started — so what we did was take the little we had and start helping and supporting the arts community around us."

When it comes to visual arts, the Steam Whistle Gallery (located in the brewery's downtown Toronto headquarters) hosts a new art show every month to showcase the work of local artists. And on the music side, the brewery's highly successful UNSIGNED concert series aims to showcase Canadian indie music talent, with all proceeds from the ticket sales going back into the arts community. To date, UNSIGNED has featured more

than 100 independent acts and raised more than \$75,000 for non-profits such as Artists Health Alliance, Music Ontario, and the Unison Benevolent Fund.

Charitable involvement is similarly a high priority for the craft brewer, with the Ride to Conquer Cancer being their biggest charitable cause. Donating more than 20,000 beers to the high-profile event each year, Taylor and Heaps see it as a great way to support an important cause while also raising the profile of the brand. "At the end of each ride, [participants] get a nice cold Steam Whistle," says Taylor. "We have a big team that takes part too, and we sponsor a mile on the course. So people see our involvement in a genuine way because they see our staff right out there." Much like its connection to the arts community, Steam



Craft Beer Fest



Steam Whistle also holds a solid place in the local cycling community

Photos: Steam Whistle Brewing

Whistle also holds a solid place in the local cycling community — regularly offering free bike tune-up seminars and community rides, for example, among other initiatives — so a charitable event like this one is truly a natural fit for the brewery.

As another way to foster community connections, Steam Whistle puts a lot of effort into making its guided brewery tours fun and interesting. Their tours are so impressive, in fact, that Steam Whistle’s brewery has recently been recommended as a tourist destination in the Huffington Post, *Toronto Star*, Notable.ca, Trip Advisor and the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance’s website, among others. Their unique location (the brewery is housed in Toronto’s historic John Street Roundhouse, which is a Canadian National Historic Site that once functioned as CP Rail steam locomotive repair facility) also gives people a sense that the

beer has a link to Canadian history, which causes proud Canadian customers to “psychologically connect with the brand,” according to Taylor.

For Steam Whistle, it’s not just about its own brand either — the brewery has a deep commitment to strengthening the Canadian craft beer industry as a whole. Heaps is currently chair of the Ontario Craft Brewers, an association of more than 50 small brewers in the province. They work hard to level the playing field for craft brewers competing against the large multinational beer companies. “Craft beer in Canada needs heroes, and we’re doing what we can to be one of those,” says Taylor, noting that he and Heaps strongly encourage other Canadian craft brewers to join associations to help strengthen the industry. “We don’t see it as something that simply sounds like a good idea; we see it as essential for the growth and health of craft beer in Canada.” 🍷



**FOUNDED:** 1998,  
WITH THE FIRST BOTTLES  
ROLLING OFF THE LINE  
IN 2000



**HEADQUARTERS:**  
TORONTO



**PRODUCT CATEGORIES:**  
BEER



FOOD IN CANADA'S  
2016 LEADERSHIP  
AWARDS



Co-owners, Lulu Cohen-  
Farnell and David Farnell

# Real Food for Real Kids

HEALTH & WELLNESS AWARD

Photography: Stephen Ferrie

BY CAROL NESHEVICH

**L**ulu Cohen-Farnell and her husband David Farnell are on a mission. As owners of Real Food for Real Kids (RFRK), a Toronto-based company that prepares and delivers healthy meals and snacks to schools, daycares and camps across the city, they see their business as more than just a business — it's a calling, really, to train children and their parents to make healthy eating an integral part of their lives.

“We understand the responsibility we have in shaping the trajectory of any given

child's palate towards healthy,” says Farnell, who is also the company's CEO. “And we find it absolutely essential for them to develop familiarity (with varied tastes) early, which we all know leads to greater likelihood of acceptance through life.”

To that end, their menus are specifically designed to expand children's palates. In contrast to the chicken nuggets and mini pizzas that have been known to dominate daycare menus, RFRK entrées range from ratatouille with organic tofu to white bean curry or fish bolognese.

“There's this whole notion here in North America that kids' food has to be different from grown-up food,” says Cohen-Farnell, whose title is founder, president and CFIO (Chief Food Innovation Officer). “In other countries where real food has a major place in the culture, and kids are exposed to a number of flavours, textures, spices and herbs from a young age, the children are more adventurous eaters.”

Unlike many of their competitors who rely on large global food distributors and simply reheat the food, RFRK has



its own kitchen that's equipped to make food from scratch. "In order to ensure healthy, delicious and nutritious food, you need to be in control of your ingredients, and the only way to do that is to have a from-scratch kitchen," says Farnell. "We produce everything in-house that we possibly can, so that means all the proteins, grains, marinades, dips, dressings — we even make our own sugar-free ketchup," he adds, noting there are some items they simply can't make themselves, such as crackers, cheese and yogurt (due to dairy regulations), but in those cases they ensure all ingredients conform

to RFRK's quality standards.

And those standards are quite exacting. "For everything from the grass-fed beef we serve to the sea salt we use in our cooking, we investigate every single ingredient that comes into our kitchen," says Cohen-Farnell. "We put an enormous amount of questions to the supplier, wanting to know what the animals are fed and how they are treated, where the salt is coming from, how it's been processed. We avoid GMOs, artificial colours and preservatives. We prefer to work with growers and suppliers who are close to us so we can visit their plants, visit the farmers, and make sure we share the same values and ethics."

Besides producing and providing healthy food for kids, RFRK's mission includes an educational component as well. "We call ourselves an edu-caterer," says Cohen-Farnell. "We do a lot of parent seminars. I do talks at different conferences. We've also done kids' workshops where we taught the kids about fruits and vegetables."

In addition to the 85 staff employed at the Real Food kitchen in downtown Toronto, RFRK hires about 100 contractors called Real Food Lunch Club Coaches who serve lunches in elementary schools. Trained by RFRK, the "coaches" are also expected to be food educators, telling the kids nutritional facts and stories about the food served, and encouraging them to try everything.

Even though the world may be starting to move toward a greater desire for clean and healthy food overall, maintaining a strong commitment to health and wellness isn't always easy in a world where the bottom line is often king. "It's really been a huge challenge to be entrepreneurs who are mission driven, with a social mission and a purpose that goes beyond profitability," says Farnell. "It's hard. But it's extremely important to us. It goes towards helping kids and parents have a greater likelihood of high health outcomes throughout their lives." 🍎



**FOUNDED:** 2004



**HEADQUARTERS:**  
TORONTO



**PRODUCTS:**  
HEALTHY LUNCHES AND  
SNACKS FOR CHILD CARE  
CENTRES, SCHOOLS AND  
CAMPS, SERVING MORE  
THAN 15,000 KIDS DAILY

# CREAM of the CROP

BY DON DOULOFF

**f**ew segments captivate like dairy. Cheese, ice cream and yogurt are universally loved treats, and milk is often an ingrained part of the diet, beginning in childhood. With respect to Canadians' preferences, indulgent experiences, global flavours and locally sourced reign.

In the cheese category, 2015 retail sales volumes nationally (excluding Newfoundland and Labrador) totalled almost 288 million kg (almost \$4.2 billion), according to Dairy Farmers of Canada. Fastest-growing cheeses on Canadian menus are Stilton, Gouda, American cheese, nacho cheese and queso, according to foodservice consultants Technomic.

"There is an increased desire for occasional and fine cheese," says Sandra Da Silva, assistant director, External Communications, Dairy Farmers of Canada. "In fact, the desire for Canadian cheese, as established in Quebec and Ontario, is moving west." With the influence of television and local consumer food shows, local/artisan foods are of great importance, which influences purchase choices, she says.



**When it comes to Canadians' tastes in cheese, yogurt and ice cream, indulgent experiences, global flavours and locally sourced rule the day**



“Our customers like big, bold flavours — we sell more 10-year-old Cheddar than one-year-old,” said Afrim Pristine, co-owner of Cheese Boutique, in Toronto, who adds that Canadian cheesemakers are “at the top of their game.” Not surprisingly, then, customers are requesting Canadian. “We sell more Bleu d’Elizabeth, from Quebec, than Roquefort.” Earlier this year, Loblaw introduced PC two-year-old Canadian smoked Cheddar.

Pristine’s store curates cheese programs for more than 100 Toronto restaurants, and on those boards, he’s noticing a “big push” for Canadian products.

Driving deli cheese trends is the foodie “looking for unique packaging, flavours and formats. They are willing to pay a premium price for quality and innovation,” says Sylvia Moskala and Rob London, of Gay Lea Foods’ marketing team. Accordingly, the company has introduced Nordica Smooth Cottage Cheese in Salted Caramel, Vanilla Bean and Lemon, and planned to launch, in late spring, Ivanhoe firm brick goat cheese in Jalapeno and Salsa flavours.

Targeting the growing demographic craving higher-protein, nutrient-dense, low-carb snacks, Gay Lea introduced Nothing but Cheese, crunchy bite-size nibbles available in Cheddar and pepper-speckled Monterey Jack.

A growing sub-category is non-dairy cheese catering to the seven million Canadians who are lactose-intolerant and 20 million suffering digestive disorders. Indeed, the Canadian alternative-cheese category is growing at a rate of almost 6.5 per cent annually, according to Nielsen data. Enjoying a 61-per-cent market share of that category is Vancouver-based Daiya Foods. Consumer requests for “cheesier than ever” products resulted in Daiya improving the flavour and texture of its Farmhouse Blocks (which include Smoked Gouda Style) using a blend of tapioca starch and pea protein.

Regarding fluid milk, Canadian 2015 retail sales totalled \$2.68 billion, equating to retail sales volumes of just over 1.82 billion L, a 1.1-per-cent drop vs. 2014. At the Top 200 limited-service restaurants in Canada, milk/chocolate milk is among the fastest-declining types of non-alcoholic beverages, according to Technomic. Driving the drop in milk consumption, says Da Silva, is an aging population, an immigrant



population not accustomed to drinking fluid milk, and the increased desire for other protein sources.

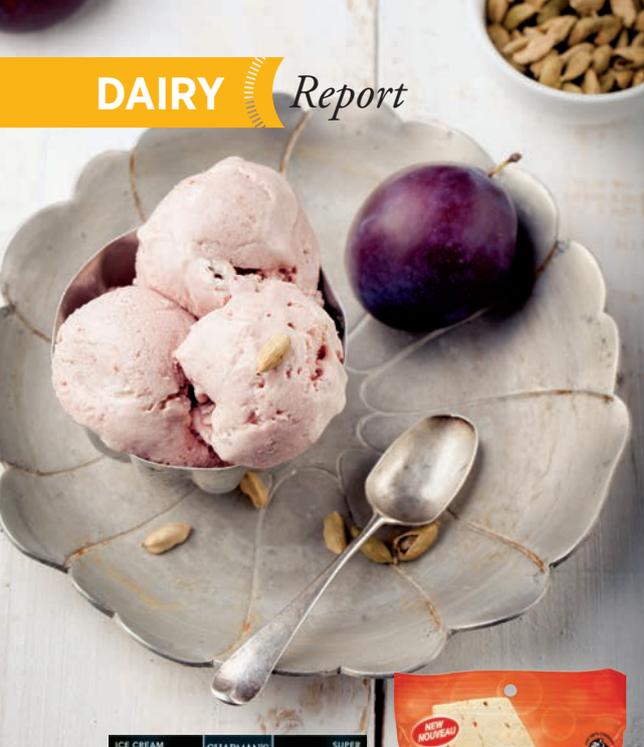
“For fluid milk, there is a shift in purchase habits toward higher-fat dairy products,” she adds. “As Canadian consumers are made aware that higher-fat dairy products do not negatively impact their health but, rather, the contrary, the desire to consume them is becoming more prevalent.” Gay Lea’s marketing team reports growing interest in specialty milk products, including goat milk, driven “primarily by Canada’s diverse population.”

On a more health-conscious note is PC Organics Plain Kefir Probiotic Fermented Milk, introduced earlier this year by Loblaw.

Non-dairy alternatives such as unsweetened almond and coconut milk are gaining traction on menus as well, according to Technomic. West Coast coffee shop chain Blenz, for example, now offers coconut milk as a dairy-free option for all its drinks. ➔

THE CANADIAN **ALTERNATIVE-CHEESE** CATEGORY IS GROWING AT A RATE OF ALMOST **6.5 PER CENT** ANNUALLY





In Canada, plant-based beverages represent an approximately \$200-million business, according to Nielsen figures. The largest product segment is almond, with soy being the second largest. The unsweetened segment leads all categories in growth.

“Health-conscious consumers are becoming more aware of added sugar in their products and seek low-sugar options,” says Meg Miller, brand manager, Canada, for plant-based beverage manufacturer Silk. Trending are Silk’s Original and Unsweetened Coconut beverages, popular as an additive/ingredient in recipes and smoothies. Launched in 2014, Silk’s Creamy Cashew beverages are now available in Original, Unsweetened Original and Unsweetened Vanilla, introduced in late 2015.

In contrast to fluid milk’s slight decline, the yogurt category saw 2015 Canadian retail sales volumes increase by 3.4 per cent vs. 2014, with last year’s volumes totalling just over 346.6 million kg (just under \$1.7 billion).

Similar to fluid milk, however, there is a shift in yogurt purchasing habits toward natural, higher-fat products, says Da Silva. Greek yogurt, a good source of protein, continues to increase in popularity and sales.

Many chain restaurants are adding Greek yogurt, particularly as a healthy morning option, according to Technomic — Booster Juice has added probiotic

vanilla Greek yogurt with fresh-fruit toppings. Technomic reports that 28 per cent of Canadian consumers, particularly the younger demographic, prefer Greek yogurt to regular.

In September 2015, Daiya introduced Greek Yogurt Alternative, made from coconut and pea protein and available in varieties like Peach and Black Cherry. Sales “significantly” exceeded the company’s expectations, according to vice-president of Marketing Michael Lynch in a release.

Moving on from Greek yogurt, early this year Loblaw introduced high-protein PC Skyr Icelandic Style Yogurt in flavours like Power Fruit and Strawberry.

In the ice cream category, Canadian 2015 retail sales volume totalled just over 115 million L (\$345.5 million), an increase of 0.5 per cent versus 2014. Fastest-growing flavours are chocolate chip, maple, pistachio, black cherry and pineapple, according to Technomic.

Da Silva notes that consumer ice cream habits are shifting towards natural, higher-fat products. “There is an increased consumer awareness between ice cream and frozen desserts — real ice cream is made with cream, while frozen desserts are usually made with oil.”

Mary Breedon, sales and marketing manager at Chapman’s, Canada’s largest independent ice cream maker, reports that industry-wide sales of packaged ice cream are flat, but the novelty sector — individually wrapped items, in a retail pack, that include cones, sandwiches, bars — is experiencing “steady growth,” likely because it offers convenience and portion control.

Canadian consumers are “looking for something unique to spice up their lives,” and are also seeking “other flavour profiles,” she says. Everyday value plays a large role for today’s consumer. Due to Canada’s ethnic diversity, those sought-after new flavours are often globally influenced. Chapman’s gelato, introduced in 2015 and available in flavours like Amaretto Biscotti and Sour Cherry Tango, was “well received by consumers,” and although vanilla ranks first in all other Chapman’s ice cream categories, among gelato, Amaretto Biscotti rules, says Breedon. In 2016, the line will grow to include Blackberry Lychee and Sticky Toffee Pudding.

More exotic still are global flavours available at small independents like Kekou Gelato House, whose Toronto shops sell inventive Asian-influenced creations like Spicy Salted Pineapple, Guava Plum Salt and Hong Kong Milk Tea, and Death in Venice Gelato, also in Toronto, where Pecorino with Porcini, Dark Chocolate with Olives and Salted Honey with Barnyard Hay tempt the adventurous.

Primarily targeting men aged 25 to 54, and sized 140 mL and 150 mL respectively, larger than the Chapman’s norm, in celebration of our vast country, the Great Canadian Yukon Bar (vanilla ice cream enrobed in proprietary chocolate) and Yukon Sandwich (French vanilla ice cream encased in chocolate wafers) will hit stores this year, says Breedon.

Furthermore, Canadian consumers “claim they want indulgence, yet also want good-for-you.” For that demographic, Chapman’s Sweet Canadian Options feature lower-fat yogurt or sorbet on a stick, some half-dipped in milk or dark chocolate, and some available in 55-mL size, smaller than the industry average. This line, too, has been well received, she adds. 🍓



## Say cheese!

While no one really knows the exact origins of the first cheese, cheese production is said to date back more than 4,000 years. It's hard to imagine life without cheese — whether eaten on its own, as a topper on salad or nachos, in a sandwich, stirred in a sauce, shredded on pizza or sprinkled on pasta, cheese is as versatile as it is delicious.

And at the top of the glorious cheesy mountain lies the undeniable classic favourite (at least in our part of the world), Cheddar. We recently took a closer look at the mainstream cheese category to find out whether all brands of Cheddar are worth heading for.

### The cheese heads

We asked 50 female cheese lovers from the Greater Toronto Area to taste six brands of regular medium Cheddar, all sold in the grocery store dairy section in 450- to 460-g block formats. The brands were procured at a similar price point of between \$5.47 and \$5.97, and included samples of both national and private-label brands. The cheese samples were tasted blind and presented in varied order with a three-digit code.

### The big cheese

One of our six brands emerged as a clear leader within our test array. This brand achieved exceptional scores for overall liking and future purchase intent, clearly surpassing the other five brands — it was truly the better Cheddar. And while it heralded the top scores on many product attributes, where it really gained its edge



was in the Cheddar flavour.

In fact, 54 per cent of our testers gave this brand top scores (eight or nine) for liking of the Cheddar flavour, compared to 32 per cent for the second runner-up brand. It also performed well for naturalness of the flavour, and had a particularly pleasant aftertaste. Diagnostically, this brand had the best balance of both tangy and salty taste notes, and just the right amount of lingering aftertaste. There really wasn't much wrong with this cheese — although for some, it was slightly too dry and not creamy enough.

### Cheesed off

At the other end of our Cheddar assortment was a far less impressive candidate. Few respondents described this underdog as delicious and most did not intend to ever buy it. And while this cheese definitely had the right look and feel of Cheddar, it failed dismally on the palate. In fact 42 per cent of respondents felt that it did not provide enough Cheddar flavour.

And while flavour was the top driver of liking, the textural profile of the cheese was also an important factor. Most of our Cheddars seemed to achieve the right degree of firmness, but one stood apart as being far too soft, translating into a serious liability for this brand of Cheddar.

### Better Cheddar

Nowadays, non-premium Cheddar

cheese brands are not highly differentiable in mainstream grocery. These big blocks of cheesy goodness come in similar packages, are sold at similar price points, and are essentially competing for the same consumer. In fact, among our cheese lovers, close to 70 per cent claim that they buy many different brands of Cheddar — foregoing any sense of brand loyalty for the more compelling motivation to choose a brand that's on sale.

Retail pricing strategies are certainly effective levers for generating short-term share gains in this category and others like it. But in some cases, there may be other unique selling propositions that are being overlooked. Our taste test revealed significant differences in product quality among these Cheddars, yet we found no evidence of any marketing claims regarding taste or other product credentials. The only thing really differentiating these products was their brand names. Like all mainstream grocery categories, product quality is not the only motivating factor of purchase interest, but it is certainly a marketable benefit.

If you have a product that stands above the rest, would you know it? If your product is the top cheese, are you marketing those credentials? Competitive product assessments can provide a window into your product advantages (or your competitor's disadvantages) which may translate into compelling selling propositions and share growth... otherwise you may just be leaving the Cheddar on the table. 🍷

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

Carol Neshevich

## Historically hip

From its early popularity as an 18th- and 19th-century American farmer's drink, switchel is making a comeback as a hipster favourite in 2016

Before there was Gatorade or Coca Cola, there was switchel. A concoction made from water, apple cider vinegar, ginger and some kind of sweetener (typically maple syrup, molasses, honey or whatever was locally available), switchel was the thirst quencher of choice for many American farmers — particularly those in New England — in the 18th and 19th centuries.

“Switchel is a drink that originated probably in the Caribbean, and made its way to the U.S. colonies way back at the start of the country,” explains Kevin Duffy, founder and CEO of CideRoad, a Mendham, N.J.-based company that began selling switchel commercially about a year ago. “It was America’s original thirst quencher.”

As mass-produced soft drinks took over in the 20th century, switchel faded from prominence but never completely disappeared. Over the decades, people continued to make it at home in pockets of the U.S. “I’ve been making it at home for more than 30 years. I raised a couple of kids on it,” says Susan Alexander, owner of the Vermont Switchel Company in Cabot, Vt. “When I first tasted it at a family gathering, I immediately fell in love with it and said, ‘Someday I’m going to bottle this.’ So two kids and two careers later, I finally took the plunge and commercially began to sell it in 2009/2010.”



### Why the resurgence?

If you do a Google search on switchel, you’re sure to see the word “hipster” in more than a few search results. Switchel has made a recent comeback as a beverage with cool factor, both in its relatively new ready-to-drink commercial form and as something people are increasingly learning to whip up at home. But why now?

“I think the resurgence is in part because of consumers turning back the clock on food, and wanting to eat healthier, eat authentic, eat food that has a story,” says CideRoad’s Duffy. “So it’s a simple beverage that has some implied health benefits from the ingredients, it tastes delicious, and it’s fun. It also hits all those buzzwords of today’s trends: apple cider vinegar is pretty hot these days, and ginger is really hot right now.”

### How are people drinking switchel?

According to Alexander, switchel is a drink that transcends categorization. “It’s sort of a hybrid — it’s clean and crisp like tea, but it’s also like an energy drink because it’s got a lot of electrolytes and minerals,” she says. Duffy has similar opinions on the drink’s versatility. “We’ve been hearing it’s a great hangover cure from some younger people,” he says, “and as a morning beverage. With the ginger, it makes you feel good in the morning. I tend to drink it in the afternoon as my afternoon treat.”

Alexander adds that it’s often mixed with alcohol in bars these days. “You can also heat it up with a bit of cinnamon

in the winter time so it’s kind of like a mulled cider,” she says. “And one of my favourite things to do recently is to take a little glass and put about an inch of switchel in it in the morning and put it in the freezer, and that becomes my ice cube. Then when I’m ready to serve it, I add a splash of vodka and lemon if it’s summertime, and if it’s winter I’ll do it with bourbon and orange bitters.”

### How is switchel evolving?

Some switchel producers are experimenting with flavours to jazz up the traditional recipe. CideRoad, for instance, offers cherry and blueberry flavours. And another Vermont-based switchel maker called Up Mountain Switchel produces lemon switchel, yerba mate switchel and even cayenne switchel. CideRoad’s Duffy, who hopes to launch his products in Canada soon (likely starting with the West Coast), says he is currently looking for ways to produce a lower-calorie option as well.

In addition to its ready-to-drink product, the Vermont Switchel Company also offers a switchel concentrate, allowing people to make it at home by simply adding water. This is more cost-effective for consumers, says Alexander, and it also opens the door for customizing your switchel. “If you like it carbonated, you can add seltzer instead of water,” she says. “And a lot of people also use the concentrate as a base for a cocktail syrup, a marinade, or a salad dressing. We’ve had people send us all sorts of crazy recipes that they use our concentrate for.”

# Sea superfood

Canada and other Western countries have been slow to realize the benefits of seaweed — but that's now changing

BY TREENA HEIN

A top-down view of a white plate filled with a vibrant seaweed salad. The salad consists of dark red kidney beans, finely shredded green seaweed, sliced radishes, and small pieces of red chili. The plate is garnished with black sesame seeds and several lemon wedges. The background is a light blue wooden surface.

**S**eaweeds (marine macro-algae) have been a dietary staple for centuries or even millennia in coastal regions around the world, from Asia to Iceland to New Zealand, from many European countries to the Canadian Maritime provinces. Now, despite having been consumed for centuries, seaweeds are being touted as a new superfood in North America. ↪



Photo: FMC Corporation

Packed with fibres, proteins, micro-elements and minerals, seaweeds are already recognized as versatile and adaptable ingredients in a number of different applications within and outside the food industry, in everything from flavoured nuts to cosmetics to fertilizers. Of the approximately 10,500 known seaweed species, about 500 have been used throughout history for human consumption. Of those, about 220 are now cultivated, almost all in six Asian countries. But make no mistake — it is a huge industry. While it may be a surprise to us Westerners, seaweed production represents a whopping 49 per cent of total world marine aquaculture, with fish cultivation at only 11 per cent.

So those who wish to promote more seaweed consumption in the Western world are battling a decided lack of appreciation and knowledge for this resource. “How do we go beyond these stories that pop up every six months in the press about seaweeds being the next superfood?” asks Dr. Thierry Chopin, former president at the Aquaculture Association of Canada, scientific director of the Canadian Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture Network (CIMTAN) and professor of marine biology at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John. “In the Western World, people still mostly view seaweeds as yucky stuff strewn on the beach. They don’t realize it’s in the products they use every day from morning to night.



OF THE APPROXIMATELY **10,500** KNOWN SEAWEED SPECIES, ABOUT **500** HAVE BEEN USED THROUGHOUT HISTORY FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.



Photo: Acadian Seaplants

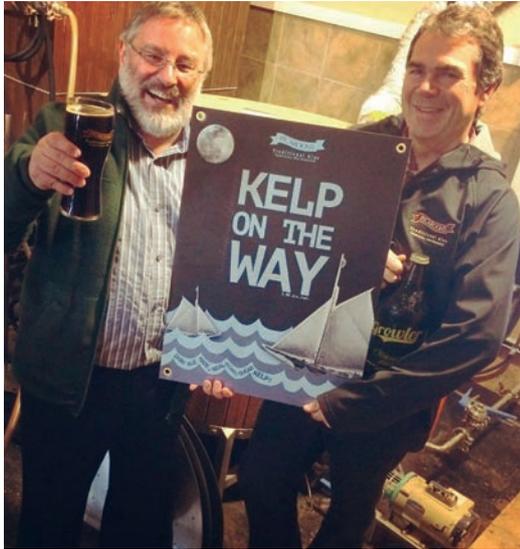
#### Acadian Seaplants' Hana Tsunomata seafood “sea vegetables.”

Carrageenans from red seaweeds are in orange juice to suspend the pulp, and alginates from brown seaweeds are in your toothpaste to keep it a paste. Sushi is getting more popular all the time, yes, but people don’t really realize they are eating nori, a red seaweed, as the wrapper. No one gets excited about the wrapper!”

Seaweed is harvested for two purposes, one being the extraction of hydrocolloids (alginate, agar and carrageenan) which are used for their gelling, water-retaining and emulsifying properties in many different food and non-food products. The other reason seaweed is harvested (from wild or cultivated sources) is for direct consumption in food products.

“Edible seaweeds are becoming more popular in Western countries and have undergone explosive growth in recent years,” notes Nicholas Gardner, general manager at Marinealg International, a global trade association. “While still not embraced by the mass market consumer as a superfood, probably due to some aspects of taste and texture, as the industry learns how to harness the valuable aspects of seaweed (including umami flavour) while managing some of the negative perceptions, growth will be even brighter.” Seaweed snacks are getting popular, and it’s also now found in noodles and used to flavour snacks such as nuts and chips. Marinealg says that seaweed snacks grew from \$250 million to \$500 million in 2014 in the U.S. alone, and are expected to grow substantially each year going forward.

Several Canadian companies are building the hydrocolloid and direct consumption seaweed markets. One is BC KELP, which harvests seaweed by hand from a government-licensed area close to the Alaska border between Haida Gwaii and Prince Rupert. It mostly harvests Bullwhip kelp and Bladderwrack, but also small batches of Macro, Wakame and Kombu. The processed seaweeds are sold directly to customers as well as through retail and wholesale avenues. “The demand for seaweed has fluctuated in recent years, but in the longer-term trajectory, it has slowly increased,” notes BC KELP



Last year Picaroons Traditional Ales released its Kelp on the Way Ale.

owner Holger Dreskrueger. He attributes that to the growing availability of online information, and says that some seaweeds can be eaten “as is” in different dishes, while others should be soaked to make tea or added to other ingredients as they cook.

Acadian Seaplants, which was founded in Dartmouth, N.S. in 1981, is a global leader in seaweed cultivation and processing for many markets. Media manager Ashlea Barr says the demand for seaweed in food products has gone up in the last few years as today’s consumers become better

“Edible seaweeds are becoming more popular in Western countries and have undergone explosive growth in recent years”



educated about the health benefits of many foods. They also, she notes, have a greater understanding of and exposure to foods from around the world because of increasing travel and migration trends.

The company’s Hana Tsunomata seaweed “sea vegetables” products are grown in a land-based aquaculture system, and Barr says sales are booming all over Canada and the U.S. through both traditional and online distribution channels. Acadian Seaplants also grows Irish Moss seaweed, used for filtering in breweries. “Demand peaked and was in decline when cheaper chemical clarifiers became available,” Barr explains, “but with the growth of microbreweries and organic brews, we expect demand to expand.”

Seaweeds are not just used to clarify beer. In March 2015, Picaroons

Traditional Ales in Fredericton, N.B., released Kelp on the Way, an ale that contains Sugar Kelp seaweeds produced by Cooke Aquaculture, a CIMTAN partner. Described as dark and smoky, the ale’s first batch sold out in three days. “I think it sold out so fast because it was new, local and it has great flavour,” Chopin says.

With the momentum that now exists in Canada, Chopin believes it’s high time for more seaweed product development and aquaculture. “Marine cultivation of seaweeds in an Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) system with other species like salmon, mussels, sea cucumbers and sea urchins provides many ecosystem services and benefits, such as capture of released nutrients from the feeding of other species in the system. Growing seaweeds in these systems also provides oxygen, sequesters carbon and could locally reduce ocean acidification.”

In an effort to diversify seaweed use as much as possible, Chopin and Cooke Aquaculture of Blacks Harbour, N.B. are looking into new ways to boost human consumption, but also at cosmetic applications and the use of seaweed to partially replace fishmeal in the feed given to cultivated salmon and sea urchins. They are also working on transforming some of the crop into biochar for use as a plant substrate in freshwater IMTA systems (also called aquaponics). The two species of kelps cultivated by Cooke Aquaculture both gained organic certification in 2014. “We are growing, harvesting, drying and developing markets for these organically certified seaweeds,” says Nell Halse, Cooke vice-president, Communications. “This is an interesting opportunity for us and it is generating interest in the marketplace. However, the project is still at a small scale so it is too soon to comment on progress.”

Diversified aquaculture that includes seaweed is important for another key reason, in Chopin’s view — simply that any monoculture crop is vulnerable to a variety of unforeseen factors, such as bad weather or diseases. “We mostly grow salmon in Canada, and we need to educate consumers that seafood is more than fish,” he says. “Highly colourful and delicious dishes can be prepared with seaweeds that can reveal wonderful flavours and have an excellent nutritional value. Only in English are these organisms called the weeds of the sea. In many other languages, they have much more flattering names!”

Peter Henderson



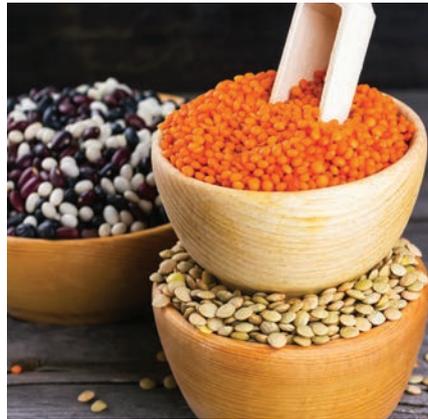
## Industry-led co-operation and collaboration can pay remarkable dividends

Decades of professional co-operation between thousands of Canadian pulse growers is paying considerable dividends for farmers, while stimulating great interest from new customers due to pulses' exceptional nutritional and environmental sustainability.

In 1976 a progressive group of Saskatchewan pulse growers joined forces to form an association (known today as Saskatchewan Pulse Growers or SPG). With an interest in developing the pulse industry, in the 1980s they voted to institute a mandatory non-refundable levy. Fast forward to today and SPG has around 15,000 grower members, manages a \$15-million plus annual budget, and is realizing its vision to "nourish the world with profitable pulse production."

In 2015 Saskatchewan exported lentils and peas valued at \$2.496 billion and \$1.243 billion, respectively. Canadian pulses represent about 35 per cent of the global pulse trade, of which about 90 per cent has come from Saskatchewan. This year acreage is projected to increase by a staggering 30 per cent to 10 million acres across the Prairies.

SPG's success is in part because it channels approximately 60 per cent of its annual budget into collaborative research



**“SPG's success is in part because it channels approximately 60 per cent of its annual budget into collaborative research and innovation.”**

and innovation. This year SPG is investing more than \$11 million across these key research areas: breeding and genetic improvement; agronomy; processing and utilization; and health outcomes.

A key reason for its success has been research collaborations with the University of Saskatchewan Crop Development Centre, Pulse Canada and others. Carl Potts, executive director of Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, explains, "The most important collaboration has been with the University of Saskatchewan Crop Development Centre (CDC), where a royalty-free seed development agreement has enabled rapid adoption of new varieties by farmers." Together with CDC, SPG has developed about 100 seed varieties. Ultimately SPG's goal is to develop pulse crops suitable for growing on every arable acre across Saskatchewan.

SPG and Pulse Canada seem to recognize the environmental sustainability story is becoming of greater value to farmers, as collectively agriculture has a considerable impact on the environment, but also because downstream more businesses — food processors, restaurants and retailers — are looking at measuring the environmental impact of their entire supply chain.

Denis Tremorin, director of Sustainability for Pulse Canada, has been evaluating environmental benefits of rotational pulse crops from commercial nitrogen reduction, crop residues, no till, water retention in soil (due to the short duration of pulse crops), and more. A soil scientist, Tremorin is very enthusiastic about one research area, saying, "it's possible up to 90 per cent of yield boost in crops following a pulse rotation is not from nitrogen fixing. There's a biological story as pulses boost microbial populations (bacteria and fungi), which make nutrients in the soil more readily available for subsequent crops."

It would appear this positive story of professional co-operation and collaboration is just beginning. Is it time to consider taking a new approach in your sector? Regardless, in the spirit of International Year of Pulses, putting more pulses or pulse ingredients into your product mix can be of value to your business while helping to advance this Canadian success story. 🍓

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



## Fresh produce packaging: wrapping it up

Consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables is an integral part of the healthy eating trend. Consumers are looking for nutritious meal options that are safe, convenient, easy to open and suitable for snacking and an on-the-go lifestyle. Consumers are trying new taste experiences that include exotic fruits and vegetables. Rigid plastic containers and stand-up pouches are growing package formats for the fresh produce segment. Clear packaging enables the consumer to see the product, as well as protect the product from damage and facilitate transportation and storage. Produce packaging can also increase brand marketing by promoting the product by providing information about nutrition, preparation instructions and recipe suggestions. Innovation in fresh produce packaging has resulted in value-added packaging such as combination packs, food kits (such as those that contain salad, dressing and toppings), micro-waveable packaging, resealable plastic pouches and ready-to-eat-in containers.

### Food waste

After harvesting, fresh produce starts to ripen and eventually it deteriorates, especially if bruised during handling or transport. Food waste — food suitable for human consumption that is lost, discarded or uneaten at any stage along the value chain — is a global concern.

According to the *Food Waste in Canada* report (Value Chain Management International Inc., December 2014), Canada’s annual quantifiable food waste cost is \$31 billion. Packaging can increase durability by preventing damage throughout the supply chain. Extension of shelf life and maintaining quality can reduce food waste, have cost savings, enable out of season purchases, and expand markets by accessing produce from remote regions.

“Rigid plastic containers and stand-up pouches are growing package formats for the fresh produce segment.”

### Extending shelf life

Even after picking, fresh produce will continue to respire or “breathe” by consuming oxygen and producing carbon dioxide. Modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) has been used to lower respiration rate as well as lower ethylene production and sensitivity to ethylene. Ethylene is a ripening hormone emitted by fresh produce. The modified atmosphere packaging technique replaces air with a gas mixture that is lower in oxygen concentration and higher in carbon dioxide concentration. Respiration rate depends on produce type, growing and harvesting conditions, and post-harvest conditions (storage temperature, levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide, and presence of ethylene). Produce with a higher respiration rate (like strawberries, asparagus and lettuce) deteriorates faster. When cut, fresh fruit and vegetables respire even faster.

### Role of packaging

The combination of lowering storage temperature and using MAP can extend shelf life; however, as fresh produce respire, the packaging must allow for exchange of gases to replenish oxygen and reduce carbon dioxide levels within the package. This can be achieved by micro perforation of films using precise laser control. Amcor offers films with perforations of different sizes and density that can be tailored to match the respiration of the particular type of produce.

Use of active packaging, such as ethylene absorbers, can also extend shelf life of fresh produce. PrimePro is a polyethylene plastic film that contains a synthetic zeolite (microporous minerals) that scavenges ethylene. Studies have shown that PrimePro can extend shelf life of celery, bananas and strawberries. It’s Fresh! strips are made from a combination of minerals and clay. These strips can be placed within a package of strawberries or blueberries to extend their shelf life by absorbing ethylene.

Packaged fresh produce is becoming more popular due to consumers’ desire for ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook offerings. Packaging is able to preserve and promote fresh produce. Using packaging techniques such as MAP, micro perforated films and ethylene absorbers to increase shelf life is resulting in increased sales through new, wider distribution channels and reduction in food waste. ●

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## Adjusting to taste

Reducing the risk of currency price swings

Over the past year, the value of the Canadian dollar has dropped — causing undue financial impact on many food processing and manufacturing companies which hadn't properly hedged for this type of decline, or which didn't have other strategies in place to mitigate currency risk. Companies that import products and raw materials or services from the United States or that pay their supply chain partners in U.S. dollars have been hit the hardest — seeing sharp increases in input prices and sharp declines in margins.

In January, the Canadian dollar went below US\$0.69 — a low last seen more than a decade ago. While the dollar has bounced back slightly, such fluctuations can cause more harm than a dollar on a steady decline curve. This is because many companies don't have the appropriate lead time to plan and react to rapid changes in currency and to clearly understand the impact these changes will have on costs and financial reporting.

The extent of the impact a declining dollar can have may come as a surprise to some companies, particularly small and medium-size businesses which may not have properly planned or forecasted for these events.

While it's difficult to forecast where the dollar will ultimately end up, food

processors and manufacturers should continue to find ways to manage costs while they still have room to manoeuvre. As long as the Canadian dollar is well below the U.S. dollar, companies should consider four key strategies.

### 1. Consider shifting procurement spend and operational strategies

Where possible, consider shifting procurement spend towards domestic suppliers. For example, if you're sourcing corrugated cardboard from New York State, look for equivalent quality products from Canadian suppliers. As an alternative, you can also ask to renegotiate contracts with U.S.-based suppliers. Companies selling products in U.S. dollars may be willing to renegotiate pricing as a result of the falling Canadian currency. If they are unwilling to do this, ask for additional value-add as part of the increase in margin that they are pocketing. However, be wary that if they do drop their prices they could correspondingly look for price increases when the dollar appreciates. Should the Canadian dollar remain low for an extended period of time, leading companies will re-evaluate their outsourcing and shared services models. They'll also further their manufacturing and distribution footprints to take advantage of what might be a longer-term currency correction.

### 2. Recoup losses by increasing prices to buyers

For some companies, it may be possible to pass along the rise in input costs to

customers/retailers or end consumers. This tactic could have negative consequences, though, so you should evaluate it fully prior to making any drastic changes to pricing models. Retailers may look for price reductions when the dollar heads in the opposite direction or when commodity or input costs decrease.

### 3. Consider a hedging program for currency and commodities

If you deal significantly in U.S. dollars, consider a hedging strategy to manage future currency risks. Some forward-thinking companies have been able to delay price increases well into 2016 as a result of hedging strategies put into place prior to the dollar's depreciation.

### 4. Identify operational efficiencies

Focus on finding ways to reduce your operating costs to help offset losses related to the dollar. This can be done by applying LEAN principles or taking some lessons from private equity approaches to cost reduction. You may be able to find ways to enhance your productivity and help shore up your margins. Any changes you make would last even after the Canadian dollar regains value.

There are wide variances between where analysts believe the ultimate value of the Canadian dollar is heading this year, but waiting out the storm could be devastating for food processors and manufacturers. By taking action now, companies can stem the tide of loss and potentially make improvements that will be beneficial in the long term. 🍎

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## News > file



### Beer pairings at Terroir

Terroir, the annual symposium for food and hospitality professionals, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year with Muskoka Brewery as a signature partner. The event, open to chefs, food and beverage professionals, writers and food



business leaders, takes place April 25 at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto.

With the help of certified cicerone and beer sommelier Crystal Luxmore, the brewery will pair an assortment of craft beers with this year's veg-centric lunch theme. In addition, Muskoka Brewery will collaborate with chefs at a special dinner after the symposium at Frank Restaurant in the AGO to include beer as an ingredient in a selection of courses. ↪

### IN BRIEF



> **Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa Culinary Arts Institute**, together with **Canada's Top 100 Restaurants** and **Postmedia Network**, have launched the 2nd Annual Passion for Excellence Scholarship Award. The grand prize for the national scholarship includes a fully funded, nine-month placement in the Diplôme de Cuisine program at Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa Culinary Arts Institute, and a paid internship under Yannick Anton, chef of the Le Cordon Bleu Signatures restaurant in Ottawa (the internship is concurrent with study and offers \$5,000 in remuneration). For more information visit [www.chefscholarship.ca](http://www.chefscholarship.ca). The deadline for applications is July 31, 2016.

> S. Pellegrino has announced the regional jury which will decide Canada's representation at the international **S. Pellegrino Young Chef 2016 competition** in Milan. The jury includes three of Canada's top chefs: **Normand Laprise** of Toqué! and Brasserie T! in Montreal; **Connie DeSousa** of Calgary's Charcut; and **Rob Gentile** of Buca, Bar Buca and Buca Osteria & Bar in Toronto. Gentile will also act as mentor chef to the Canadian representative to develop their signature dish. The competition is open to participants who are 30 years of age or younger, who have worked for at least one year in a restaurant as a chef, sous chef or chef de partie.

> Next month the **Culinary Institute of Canada at Holland College**, **Griffith Foods** and **Canada's Smartest Kitchen** will launch a Certified Culinary Scientist (CCS) examination preparatory program. The course will help working professionals who already hold scientific credentials gain hands-on culinary knowledge and training. It will also prepare participants for the Research Chef Association's CCS certification exam, and fulfill its required 120 contact hours.

### CELEBRATING A LEGEND

In February the group of Bocuse d'Or Winners gathered in Collonges-au-Mont-d'Or, France at the restaurant where famed chef Paul Bocuse was born to celebrate his 90th birthday. For the occasion the group unveiled a statue honoring the chef, a duplicate of the statue by artist Thierry Portier commissioned by the City of Lyon. The Bocuse d'Or competition was launched in 1987, and is viewed as one of the hardest and most prestigious culinary competitions in the world.



Photo: Courtesy of Bocuse d'Or Winners

## RCA gathers in Mile High City

The Annual Conference & Culinology Expo for the Research Chefs Association was held in Denver, Colo. from March 8 to 11 and attended by more than 1,200 food scientists, research chefs, students and food industry affiliates. Attendees of “The Future of Food” participated in networking receptions, educational seminars and a supplier expo.

Canadian attendees gathered the evening before the conference start to enjoy the local flavour of Denver at Coohill’s in the trendy “LoDo” (Lower Denver) area. Organized by Regional Chairs Ellen Powell and Liz Chan of Giraffe Foods Inc., the dinner was sponsored and attended by Griffith Foods and the Culinary Institute of Canada for RCA members from Tim Hortons, Exceldor, Pulse Canada, Plats du Chef, Canada Bread, Lallemand, Kitchen Partners and more. Powell discussed the success of past Ontario “Lunch & Learn” Regional events, citing attendance of between 85 and 100 people at each event and urging members to get more involved and volunteer to become a Regional Chair for their province. Interested parties are encouraged to contact either Ellen Powell at [ellen@giraffefoods.com](mailto:ellen@giraffefoods.com) or John Draz, Regional RCA co-ordinator, at [jdratz@miniat.com](mailto:jdratz@miniat.com), to learn more.

The three-day conference continued with the Opening Ceremonies held at Ellie Caulkin’s Opera House where local restaurants sampled their signature dishes. The most intriguing offering was a Seasoned Popcorn featuring fried crickets for an alternative protein source as well as an added crunch. For the less adventurous, bite-size lamb chops and braised short ribs were also available as more approachable local favourites.

Over the next three days, RCA members chose from over 20 educational seminars on topics such as new and upcoming trends, novel techniques for



Guests enjoyed the Canadian dinner at Coohill’s in Denver.

product development, the use of innovative ingredients and updates on current government legislation. At the session titled, “The GMO Debate,” participants heard from speaker Mark Hughes as he explained the responsibility of the food science community in educating the public on the beneficial applications of genetically modified foods. Hughes noted that the anti-GMO propaganda is currently more visible and more vehement than the pro-GMO debate and urged food science professionals to become more outspoken regarding the benefits of modifying foods.

The session on the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) highlighted the increase in regulation for all food manufacturing facilities located in or exporting to the U.S. Speakers discussed how the final ruling on the Foreign Supplier Verification Program in November 2015 affects Canadian manufacturers exporting to the U.S., stating that, “importers are required to verify that food imported into the United States has been produced in a manner that provides the same level of public health protection as that required of U.S. food producers.”

The Culinology Expo featured specialty ingredients and finished products, such as clean label natural flavours and colours, such as the Black Truffle Soy Sauce from Black Boar Truffle, the winner of the Culinology Expo “Product of the Year” award. Vegetable and legume purées from Canadian Prairie Gardens were the secret ingredients in show



favourites like the Raspberry Cheesecake and Creamy Carrot Smoothie, offering a smooth texture and nutritional advantage over conventional raw

materials like high-fat cream cheese. In a creative twist of culinary innovation, Giraffe Foods garnered the attention of show-goers by serving hot wings coated by a Buffalo Sauce Fountain, utilizing a standard chocolate fountain to highlight its award-winning wing sauce. Pulse Canada focused on pulse integration in finished meal concepts, while the Blueberry Council showcased its high antioxidant fruit in a barbecue sauce on tacos.

During the Expo, students from various colleges and universities completed the final stages of the Student Culinology Competitions in a process that began months before. Teams of four developed a Rocky Mountain/Southwest frozen retail single-serve meal incorporating several predetermined components, ingredients and production parameters, in both a “gold standard” and a commercialized format. The onsite portion involved cooking the gold standard from scratch under strict culinary and time constraints, and judging it against how well the commercialized item matches up. The Canadian team from the University of Guelph placed second of the initial 16 teams competing. Congratulations team members Jennifer Chow, Shelley Kowalik, Emily Lim, and Gloria Wang. First place winners from Taylor’s University won the US\$2,500 top prize for their creation “Spicy Linguine Roulade De Pollo” featuring Black Bean & Lentil Pasta, Chicken Roulade with Prune & Lentil Roasted Vegetables. 🍓

Ellen Powell, CFS, and Liz Chan.



# New Products *Expo West*

BY JOHN PLACKO

**T**his month I decided to write about one of the best trade shows I've ever been to — the 36th New Products Expo West at the Anaheim Convention Center, California. This is the world's largest natural, organic and healthy products event, with 77,000 visitors this year. More than 2,700 exhibitors made it impossible to see them all in the three days I attended the show.

In addition to taking up the entire convention centre, exhibitors showcased their “Hot New Products” at the Hilton Hotel Anaheim, located next to the convention centre. This is where you find new ideas, with people pouring their life savings into a product they hope will make it big. Here I saw a number of exhibitors with freeze-dried fruits, berries and vegetables from Brazil and the U.S.

The show features exhibitors across many different categories, including health and beauty, pet products, organics and supplements, as well as natural and specialty foods. I was really just interested in the natural and specialty foods. It wasn't a surprise to see multiple exhibitors with cold brewed coffee, bone broth and flavoured hummus dips. I noticed a repetition of some popular ingredients and products throughout the show, including turmeric-infused products, jerky made from salmon, turkey, pork or beef in many different flavours, protein bars, and coconut water products.

I was surprised to see the variety of products that Chobani was featuring, including dips, extra virgin olive oil, and whole coffee beans. I tried the company's new Flip yogurt product, which has the dry ingredients in a separate compartment attached to the yogurt that you flip into the yogurt. I had the PB&J — strawberry low-fat yogurt with peanut butter clusters, granola and honey roasted peanuts. I really liked the texture contrast and the ↗





flavour combination. Other flavours in this range were chipotle pineapple and sriracha mango.

The most unusual items here were the camel milk, a sun protective supplement you drink, and a protein bar made with cricket flour. Bitty Foods Chiridos Cricket Flour Snack Chips was a finalist in the category of “Best New Snack or Convenience Food.” Apparently crickets are also one of the most sustainable forms of protein on the planet. Culinary director at Bitty Foods is Food Network star Tyler Florence. Last year the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization published a report concluding that edible insects may be the key to stabilizing the global food supply. So don’t be surprised to see many more products made with cricket flour in the near future.

The number of products that were gluten-free was staggering, and non-GMO labelling on many of the products was widespread.

My favourite products that I sampled included Hope Foods’ new chocolate hummus, which had such a clean label and fabulous taste. Kona coffee tea leaf was very good, as was the green chick pea hummus from Fresh Nature Foods. The elderflower and rose beverage from Belvoir Fruit Farms was also very refreshing. One product I didn’t expect to like was Good Culture’s organic cottage cheese with either sun dried tomato or Kalamata olive. These are both very good in terms of taste and texture. I also loved the beet and kale/spinach chips made by The Better Chip.

Since 2011, event organizers New Hope Network have been giving out Nexty Awards for the most progressive, innovative, inspiring and trustworthy products in the natural products industry. This year’s category winners included EatPops for “Best New Frozen Product,” which puts the juicing trend on a stick. Developed by law student Sophie Milrom, EatPops makes fresh juices more accessible to the masses because of the extended shelf life and lower cost of freezing the nutritious juices. Taste-testers loved this better-for-you frozen dessert, which comes in flavours such as Green Detox, featuring kale, spinach, apple, pineapple, lemon, ginger and cayenne, or Activate, with beet, apple and carrot. This year’s winner in the category of “Best New Organic Food or Beverage” was Rishi Tea’s Turmeric Ginger Chai Concentrate.

Drawing from proprietary data sets, expert interviews, in-market case studies, and the Natural Products Expos, the NEXT Forecast is the industry’s leading source of forward-looking insights. The full report is US\$1,995 and projects strong growth for the natural products industry. U.S. consumer sales of natural, organic and healthy products are forecasted to expand 64 per cent from \$153 billion in 2013 to \$252 billion by 2019, including nine-per-cent growth per year driven in part by new and emerging brands.

There’s also a Natural Products Expo on the East Coast, which will be at the Baltimore Convention Center, Sept. 21 to 24, 2016. Natural Products Expo West 2017 is scheduled to take place March 8 to 12 at the Anaheim Convention Center. If you really want to see and taste what’s new in the natural products world, this is a show you shouldn’t miss. ●

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## Transforming recipes into formulations

It all starts with “the big idea.” But not every big idea is destined for success. Here are some essential factors to keep in mind throughout the product development process.

### Build a foundation

In previous articles I explored how to understand the target customer, analyze the competition, develop a brand strategy and draft a marketing plan. This is the groundwork and provides direction for the product development journey.

### Blend culinary expertise with food science

It takes time and expertise to transform a recipe into a benchtop formulation that will become the commercial prototype.

One of many challenges is achieving the shelf life retailers require. Throughout that shelf life — spanning weeks or months — an unopened product must be safe to eat, and the quality and nutrients must remain within specifications. This is just one of the critical areas where food science comes into play.

Combining the culinary talents of a chef with a food scientist experienced in food processing, food safety and quality assurance, will get you off on the right foot.

### Don't develop products in isolation

Having a cross-functional team involved in the decision-making process improves the prospects for creating a commercially



**“Products that solve a problem and satisfy an unmet need have the ultimate advantage.”**

successful product. Incorporate operations, procurement, regulatory, marketing, sales and finance roles into the development team. For health-focused products bring a dietitian on board. And a brand manager will help to keep the project on strategy.

### Focus on the target consumer

Design the product with attributes and benefits that are relevant to the target consumer. Products that solve a problem and satisfy an unmet need have the ultimate advantage.

Before a prototype is finalized, validate your assumptions and gain valuable insights through consumer testing. Be prepared to make the appropriate modifications.

### Beware of fads

Consumer preferences change quickly. Before jumping on a trend, make sure it's not a short-term fad that will make your product obsolete.

### Keep tabs on competitors

Evaluate how sensory attributes, features,

benefits, points of difference and value stack up against the competition. Adjustments may be in order to meet the required standards or strengthen the point of difference.

### Control the cost of goods

Even the world's best tasting product will not sell if the price is higher than consumers are willing to pay. Monitor raw ingredient and production costs to ensure the target profit, distributor and retailer margins and retail price are achievable.

### Stay true to your brand

During the lengthy product development process, it's easy to deviate from the brand strategy. To meet customer expectations and keep them coming back for more, the product must live up to the brand promise.

However, if the brand promise cannot be achieved, then it is advisable to revise it. For example, a brand committed to producing organic and grain-free products may be unable to source quality ingredients at a reasonable cost. This can have a significant impact on sales and profitability. Modifying the standards may be the only option.

The product development process is complex, with many moving parts. Integrating these ingredients into the process can make it more effective and deliver a more relevant finished product that your target customers will embrace. 🍓

As a packaged foods consultant, Birgit Blain makes food products more marketable. Her experience includes 17 years with Loblaw Brands and President's Choice. Contact her at [Birgit@BBandAssoc.com](mailto:Birgit@BBandAssoc.com)



## Clean, simple & flavourful

Aliments ED Foods has launched LUDA PRO, a new signature line designed with the needs of processors and foodservice companies in mind. Featuring clean label products that are flavourful, simple and efficient to use while only containing essential ingredients, the LUDA PRO line contains five products: three concentrated pastes and two concentrated bases. The pastes are available in three flavours: Beef, Chicken and Vegetable. The bases are available in both Chicken and Vegetable flavour. LUDA PRO products have no declarable allergens and are certified by the Gluten-Free Certification Program, and contain no more than 480 mg of sodium. [www.ed.ca](http://www.ed.ca)

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## Fast & efficient



Standard-Knapp, a manufacturer of innovative packaging machinery, has announced the availability of the Model 199 continuous-motion case sealer, ideal for high-speed sealing of primed flap and re-shipper cases (RSC). This continuous-motion case sealer offers speeds of 50 to 75

cases per minute, and features quick, complete changeover in less than two minutes. The Model 199's high-efficiency inline design allows for high-speed consistent sealing of all incoming cases, while its small-footprint layout means it can be close-coupled to a case packer discharge or installed as a standalone machine. [www.standard-knapp.com](http://www.standard-knapp.com)

## Extraction made simple

Supercritical Fluid Technologies (SFT) is introducing a new pilot scale supercritical extractor for the processing of natural products. The SFT-NPX-10 is designed to simplify extraction for a wide variety of natural products utilizing safe, efficient carbon dioxide. It may be used to facilitate the transition from laboratory scale equipment to large production scale systems. Using supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> to perform extractions on botanicals, herbs, spices and other natural product materials has significant benefits over the use of traditional liquid solvents.

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



## Optimizing ergonomics

Verti-Lift offers a full line of scissor lift tables, turntables, and tilt tables with virtually any type of conveyors built in to optimize production, ergonomics and operator safety. The company works closely with distributors and system integrators to design, build and integrate its material handling equipment with ball transfer conveyors, gravity roller conveyors, heavy duty chain driven live roller conveyors (CDLR) and more. [www.verti-lift.com](http://www.verti-lift.com)



## Problem-solving containers

Buckhorn Inc., a leading provider of reusable plastic packaging and material handling systems, is expanding its Intrepid intermediate bulk container product line. Buckhorn's 48" x 40" Intrepid is now available with or without a drop door in top or bottom discharge configurations. The bottom discharge is designed specifically for ease of use for liquid applications, while the drop door provides better access to contents and improves ergonomics when installing a disposable

liner. The container solves many problems users experience with corrugated bins and wood pallets including leakage, shifting off the pallet during transport, debris, dust, and limited one-time use.

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



## Dust-free transfer

The new TIP-TITE Mobile Drum Dumper from Flexicon allows dust-free transfer of bulk materials from drums into process equipment and storage vessels. Ready to plug in and run, it is mounted on a mobile frame with quick-action floor jacks for stable operation anywhere in the plant. An optional pneumatically actuated vibrator on the discharge cone promotes complete evacuation of non-free-flowing materials. The drum dumper is available constructed of mild steel with durable industrial finishes, with material contact surfaces of stainless steel, or in all-stainless steel finished to food, dairy, pharmaceutical or industrial standards. [www.flexicon.com](http://www.flexicon.com)

## Smooth & even

EXAIR's 1/4 NPT internal mix 360° hollow circular pattern atomizing spray nozzle atomizes fluid and sprays away from the nozzle in all directions. These nozzles are ideal where a smooth, even coating is needed on the inside diameter of a pipe or similar ductwork. They are also effective for operations where mist over a broad area is needed, such as dust suppression, humidification and cooling. They combine liquid and compressed air inside of the air cap to produce the finest mist of atomized liquid that can be easily adjusted to meet the needs of your application. [www.exair.com](http://www.exair.com)

## Time-saving wizardry



Hardy Process Solutions now provides a Set-Up Wizard for its HI 6500 and HI 6300 Weight Processors that greatly reduces the setup time and complexity typical of industrial weight processors. The Set-Up Wizard automatically launches when the instrument is powered up, and is designed to help even beginners succeed at producing fast stable weight data — without having to read a lengthy product manual. Easily accessible through both the front panel display and the built-in webservice, the Wizard covers the set-up of instrument communications, operational parameters, filtering and calibration with simple step-by-step instructions. [www.hardysolutions.com](http://www.hardysolutions.com)

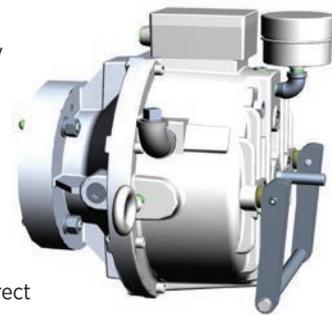
## Filled with value

Hinds-Bock's six-piston four-ounce 6P-04 with servo motor moves the entire filler for spreading product during the fill cycle or to shift the filler for filling into multiple targets. Positive shut-off spouts with an adjustable blow-off feature are used to maintain a clean fill zone, while a tool-free tilt hopper and spout plate, along with two-piece strong back, make for disassembly in under a minute without tools. The 6P-04 is ideal for value-added vacuum pack applications such as adding sauces, marinades, gravies or liquid seasoning to meat, poultry and fish. [www.hinds-bock.com](http://www.hinds-bock.com)



## Longer service life

The new MagnaShear hazardous duty brakes from Force Control Industries, which employ oil shear technology to provide longer service life with virtually no maintenance or adjustment, now meet Class I and Class II Div 2 specifications. MagnaShear motor brakes can be sized to the correct torque independent of the motor frame size or horsepower. They also feature "quick mount" features for quick and easy mounting to drive motors in NEMA frame sizes 56 to 405. MagnaShear motor brakes are ideal for applications where the motor is reversed each cycle such as cranes, winches, and hoists, as well as ship and railcar loader/unloader conveyors, tippers, sweep samplers and more. [www.forcecontrol.com](http://www.forcecontrol.com)



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Carol Neshevich



## Tracey's Ice Cream Renfrew, Ont.

**I**f it ain't broke, don't fix it. That's the general philosophy behind the tried-and-true ice cream formulation used at Tracey's Ice Cream, a Renfrew, Ont.-based ice cream manufacturer.

While the 36-year-old company does often introduce new and interesting flavours that change with the trends of the times, Tracey's basic ice cream formula has remained virtually unchanged since the Tracey family purchased a long-standing milk production plant in 1980 and converted it into a strictly ice cream and frozen yogurt manufacturing facility.

"What makes us stand out is that we've been using the same formula for so long, and this was a traditional formula that my father-in-law learned how to make eons ago," says Melany Tracey, who is now the company's co-owner and operator with her husband, Mark. "Essentially, we haven't changed it because it's what we like. It tastes like milk. I find some ice cream products have mostly sugar in them. Of course there's cream in them and you can tell there's cream, but it doesn't have a milk component in the

same way — because when you put a lot of sugar in, you just don't have to add in as much milk."

The fact that they keep their butterfat levels higher than the average ice creams on the market also makes their product stand out, says Tracey. "The pressure is always on to reduce the butterfat levels because of the price — the cost of butterfat is huge right now — and also because of the availability. But I resist," she says with a laugh. "We also have traditional vat pasteurization... so that develops flavours differently. It really helps the cream blend into the mix better and gives it a warmer taste."

While Tracey's does offer a line of packaged ice cream tubs for the retail/grocery market, its primary specialty is supplying scooping tubs for ice cream parlours. "We try to develop new flavours every year or every couple of years just for the scooping parlours, so that people can go in and try something different," she says, "and that's where we've had our biggest successes."

Being a relatively small company (Tracey says they employ between 15 and 20 staff at any given time), the process of developing a new flavour doesn't get bogged down in red tape like it might at a larger manufacturer. "If all of a sudden we have a brainwave in July, we're not limited; I can go ahead and make it," she says. "I don't have to plan it six months in advance."

She points to the example of a flavour she launched last year in this quick manner, which ended up being extremely popular: "We had discontinued another flavour and I had some ingredients left in the freezer, so I said, 'Hey, let's try this'

— and I made a salted caramel cashew toffee, which we launched last year with the salted caramel ripple, and it was huge!"

With more than 50 flavours available across all their product lines, Tracey's prides itself in having something to satisfy everyone — from those who want the straightforward yet always popular chocolate or vanilla, to those who are eager to try the vibrantly coloured Blue Bubble Gum or the fun Orange Pineapple (a classic Tracey's favourite, complete with real chunks of pineapple).

When Tracey is asked if she hopes to expand and grow the company in the next few years, she says it's a possibility, but not a major priority. "I'm not averse to the idea of expanding but it has to be done right," she says. "I like the idea of plodding along every year with a measure of growth that is manageable." 🍓

### Q&A



**Q:** Where are your products sold?

**A:** "The bulk of our products are sold in Ontario, but we do have some products that are sold all over Canada."

**Q:** What are your most popular products these days?

**A:** "The ice creams with lots of candies and [inclusions] in them are really huge. Everybody's looking for that special treat. They want to get their chocolate bar and their ice cream cone all in one; so lots of caramel, or candy-coated nuts, or chocolate-coated nuts in the ice cream — things like that."



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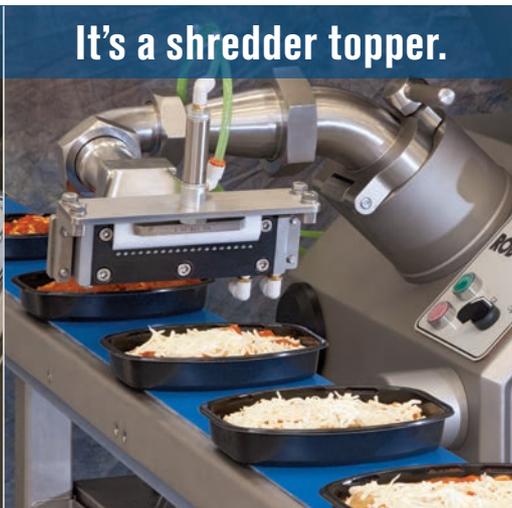
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