

FOOD *in* CANADA

Canada's food & beverage processing magazine

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Meeting the demand for healthier, natural food and drinks featuring real fruit and veggies

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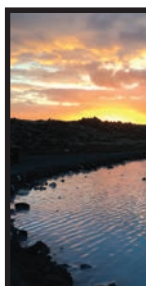


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Trend watching at IFT17

IFT, the Institute of Food Technologists annual meeting and tradeshow, is a high point in the calendar of many food industry professionals. Now in its 77th year, IFT brings together more than 20,000 visitors from around the world to see, taste and touch leading-edge products from roughly 1,200 international exhibitors.

I've been attending the show for more than a decade, and look forward to it each year to see how ingredient companies are addressing changing consumer demands. It's also an ideal opportunity to uncover how today's key trends are playing out in the ingredient market. According to IFT, approximately half of attendees who work in the industry come from companies with more than 500 employees — in other words, large food and beverage companies are also perusing the show aisles to source solutions and find R&D inspiration.

IFT17, themed “Go with Purpose,” did not disappoint. Held in Las Vegas from June 25 to 28, this year's show included an exciting combination of educational sessions, poster presentations and new products. It also included the world film premiere of *Food Evolution* — an IFT commissioned documentary by director Scott Hamilton Kennedy that presents a rational, science-based conversation about GMOs and the global food industry. If you're not familiar with this important film, visit

foodevolutionmovie.com for information or to arrange a screening.

Many of the trends evident at IFT this year included solutions for sugar and salt reduction, clean label, sustainability, reducing food waste, all-natural ingredients for colour and flavour, and plant protein alternatives. Ingredients and new products making headlines were monk fruit, matcha, spirulina, rooibos, vinegars, cold brew coffee, vanilla, pumpkin seed oil, jackfruit, sorghum, and specialty flours like green banana. Mushrooms were everywhere, including in Everspring Farms' Veg D+ as a source of vitamin D; in Scelta Taste Accelerators to reduce salt; and in ClearTaste from MycoTechnology to reduce sugar and address flavour challenges.

One of the most ground-breaking products I saw this year was Neo-Pure, an organic food safety solution derived from plants by Toronto-based Agri-Neo. Using proprietary equipment Neo-Pure is applied to seeds, grains and nuts to destroy pathogens without the use of heat. According to president and COO Rob Wong, the unique product, which biodegrades into water after it has been applied, has potential for use in pulses, lentils, grains and more.

For more from the show, turn to Product Showcase on p. 35. ●

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Hot sauce

Sabra Canada Inc. recently released the results of an Ipsos survey it commissioned. The survey asked Canadians about their use of sauces and marinades and found that “15 per cent of Canadians who barbecue have a secret go-to sauce that they won’t share with anyone. Men (18 per cent) are more likely than women (11 per cent) to keep their sauce recipe to themselves, while women (29 per cent) are more likely than men (21 per cent) to share.” Sabra also announced that it teamed up with chef Matt Basile to incorporate hummus into a “not-so-secret” sauce. To find out more, visit Sabra Canada’s Facebook page.



photo: Thinkstock

News > file



Winnipeg’s Cookie Girl gains celebrity fans

Jill Atnikov is a former pharmaceutical rep and stay-at-home mom who is turning her passion for baking cookies into a growing business. “I’ve always loved to bake cookies,” says the Winnipeg-based principal behind Cookie Girl. “And I’ve always enjoyed playing around with different cookie recipes and experimenting with different ingredients to make something special.”

As a sales rep Atnikov often brought homemade cookies as presents to clients and friends. And it was at the urging of friends that she launched Cookie Girl in 2013, after leaving the workforce five years ago to look after ailing parents and her young daughter. She first took her recipes to a commercial kitchen, Kitchen Sync in Winnipeg’s Exchange District, and now also bakes out of the city’s Oscar’s Deli. Oscar’s currently carries her cookies, as do a number of other restaurants in Winnipeg. One restaurant owner in the city, she says, commissioned her to

develop a cookie specifically for his chain of three Asian restaurants, while another retailer wants to use her cookies to make ice cream sandwiches.

Atnikov has also filled several mail order requests from cookie aficionados in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta. “My cookies are my calling card,” she says. “Ninety per cent of my business is from word of mouth. People like my cookies.” Among her fans are celebrities such as Jim Treiving of Dragons’ Den, hip-hop star Wiz Khalifa, British pop singer Ed Sheeran, and former NHL hockey star Teemu Selanne. When Selanne was recently back in Winnipeg as the guest of honour at the 45th Annual Rady JCC Sports Dinner, a tray of Cookie Girl cookies was waiting for him in his hotel room.

Cookie Girl’s current cookie varieties include Caramilk Chocolate Chip, Salted Caramel, Chocolate Chunk, Oatmeal Raisin, Molasses, S’Mores, Peanut Butter Cup and Funfetti. Atnikov bakes all of the cookies from scratch with the help of one paid employee and a friend who volunteers to help. The entrepreneur puts in anywhere from three to seven days a week baking — ranging from 30 to 80 hours per week, depending on the volume of orders. “We can bake between 250 and 300 cookies an hour,” she says. “My price points are fair. I use all-premium ingredients and I package my cookies in attractive boxes.”

Atnikov would like to open a small storefront one day to be able to sell retail

and to commercial customers. “The only thing I miss in this business,” she says, “is the person-to-person interaction.”

— Myron Love





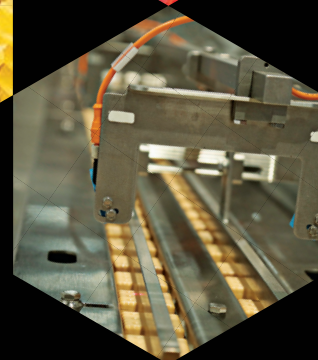
What was it like to be a homemaker in the 1850s in Canada? McGill-Queen’s University Press has re-released a book that was published at the time by Catharine Parr Traill called *The Female Emigrant’s Guide* that features recipes, advice and information on local foods and how to source them. Parr Traill’s work offers “an intimate glimpse into the daily domestic and seasonal routines of settler life,” says the publisher.

The book has been redesigned and annotated so readers today can use and experiment with recipes from the original work. To help, the book includes a measurement conversion chart and a glossary. This edition, according to the publisher, also “includes discussions of cooking conventions, terms, techniques and ingredients that contextualize the social attitudes, expectations and challenges of Traill’s world and the emigrant experience.”





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BC celebrates food leaders



Sylvia Martinelli of Otimo's/S&B Gluten Free (centre) accepts the Rising Star Award, which was sponsored by Farm Credit Canada and presented by Blaine Gorrell (left), senior director of Agribusiness & Agrifood at Farm Credit Canada. Kennedy Tait (right) was the awards hostess.

The BC Food Processors Association (BCFPA) held its annual Awards Gala & Dinner during FoodProWest to honour "the best of the best in the food and beverage processing industry."

The winners included Debra Hellbach of Grounded Strategies, which helps

Say Ketchup!

This summer Heinz Ketchup is travelling across Canada with the Heinz Mobile Tour pop-up. Consumers and fans can pose for a photo at the pop-up or type out a message to create a customized bottle of the condiment. The pop-up will be making stops at major Canadian events, as well as stops at some foodservice establishments. Heinz plans to give away 12,000 bottles.



Retired Blue Jay Carlos Delgado (blue jacket) surprised cottage-goers in Orillia, Ont. at the Heinz Ketchup pop-up.

food and natural health product entrepreneurs grow their markets, Leadership Award; Sylvia Martinelli of Otimo's/S&B Gluten Free, Rising Star Award; Mazza Innovation, which specializes in extracting bioactive compounds, Innovation Award; Left Coast Naturals, an organic and natural food manufacturer and distributor, Sustainability Award; and Garden Protein (Gardein), manufacturer of high-quality meatless foods, Workplace Safety Award.

The BCFPA inducted JD Sweid Foods, which manufactures beef and chicken products, into the BC Food Processors Hall of Fame. The Leadership Award went to accounting, tax and consulting firm MNP. The BCFPA also announced the winners of the Product of the Year Awards: Chez Christophe (gold), Spread'Em Kitchen (silver), Quesava Kitchen (bronze), and Wooden Boat Food Company (honourable mention).



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Students win bursary

Food and Beverage Ontario's (FBO) Taste Your Future program has announced the winners of its Stir Up a Career contest. The contest launched earlier this year and was open to high school and university students.

University of Guelph student Danielle Laforest won in the Maker & Designer category for her Pure Herb product idea, which are frozen herbs packaged into meal- and cocktail-themed kits to help reduce food waste. McMaster University student Angie Ibrahim won in the Scientist, Programmer, or Engineer category for her ICI Water product idea to make room temperature beverages feel cold by infusing them with a flavourless compound that stimulates the mouth's coldness receptors. Each student won a \$2,000 bursary.

For more on the contest and the winners, visit TasteYourFuture.ca/contest

Cheena's heritage gift box

To celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, Vancouver-based seafood manufacturer Cheena Canada Ltd. introduced a double-smoked wild salmon peppered candy packaged in a limited-edition Canada's 150 Years gift box. The artwork features Adam Grant Home, a BC pioneer and fur



trader, and Home's great-granddaughter, the artist Georgina Abrams-Lytton. Cheena's founder Wayne Lytton and his son Shawn, who is Cheena's current president, are direct descendants. ↪

DARE FOODS TURNS 125!

While Canada celebrated its 150th birthday, Dare Foods is celebrating its 125th anniversary. The Kitchener, Ont.-based cookie and cracker manufacturer commemorated the occasion by launching a limited-edition batch of its Ultimate Maple Crème cookies, made with maple syrup from a tree in Quebec that is as old as the company. Consumers can visit Dare125.ca to see a video showing how the cookies were made.



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TALKING SOCIAL MEDIA



Anyone can be social

One of the most common reasons we hear from companies which aren't jumping on social media is that they don't have the time, budget and/or resources. That especially applies to smaller companies which don't have someone dedicated to social media or as part of their job description.

In my first article, I explained why you need to get "on" social media even if you don't think it'll impact your sales (but trust me, it will). In my second article, I said you don't have to go "all-in" on every platform. Instead, you'd be better off setting some realistic goals for yourself and easing into it with one platform.

I may get some pushback on this from some, but I truly believe growers, manufacturers and distributors are in prime positions to soar in social media. There are countless sharing opportunities around every day!

Here are examples of how some companies are going about it.

Manitoba's Peak of the Market is now in its 75th year and just had its most successful sales year to date. CEO Larry McIntosh has amassed a terrific following on social media (especially Twitter) by sharing great recipes and industry news,

and by being an advocate for fresh produce regardless of where its grown. He shares recipes from the company's own site, but will also share recipes they've found online for their followers to enjoy. If a recipe sparks a purchase, it's a win for all!

In BC, greenhouse growers Windset Farms uses social media to encourage its consumers to share what they're making with their produce. Using the hashtag #WindsetRecipes, it incentivizes consumers to post their dish on Instagram, thereby giving Windset Farms permission to repost (and credit the consumer), creating content for Windset Farms and most importantly, making a real connection with the consumer.

And lastly, in Ontario Martin's Apples shares its daily activities on Instagram. The company shares images from the orchard all year during growing, harvesting and processing, as well as images of its homemade cider, retail store and more. This way the company shows that they're about more than apples.

At the end of the day, let your readers/audience/consumers into your world. As you can see, it can be through sharing recipes, encouraging them to connect with you, or by offering a peek into your day-to-day activities.

Ethan Adeland is the co-founder and managing director of Partnerships for Food Bloggers of Canada. Contact him at Ethan@FoodBloggersofCanada.com, or @Ethan Adeland, or visit foodbloggersofcanada.com



Häagen-Dazs pops up in Toronto!



During June and July in Toronto Nestlé opened the doors to Bär Häagen-Dazs, a pop-up store offering high-quality ice cream, customized bars and ice cream scoops, and macaron pairings.

Nestlé says the pop-up took its cues from wine tastings and whisky samplings and allowed "guests to explore a variety of flavours carefully curated around different passion points of the Häagen-Dazs portfolio."

In addition, the pop-up hosted Häagen-Dazs Hour for consumers 19 and older, as well as a Nespresso coffee bar. Consumers could also indulge in a new collection of flavours exclusive to Canada.

Food Banks Canada award recipients

Food Banks Canada has announced the winners of its annual 2017 Corporate Donor awards. This year the Award of Excellence went to Kellogg's Canada, the 2017 Donor of the Year Award went to French's, and the 2017 Innovator of the Year award went to Subway Canada.



IN BRIEF



Don Livermore

> **J.P. Wiser's Dissertation**, a whisky from Corby Spirit and Wine Limited, was named the World's Best Blended Limited Release and Best Canadian Blended Limited

Release at the 2017 World Whiskies Awards. Dr. Don Livermore created the whisky, of which there are only 12,000 bottles. It's available at the LCBO in Ontario for \$64.95.

> **One Earth Farms** of Toronto announced that it has changed its name back to **Beretta Farms Inc.** One Earth Farms acquired Beretta in early 2013. Beretta owns and operates Beretta Kitchen, a catering company; Heritage Angus, a protein brand that is exported to Europe, Asia and the Middle East; The Frozen Butcher, an e-commerce site to retail fresh proteins and prepared meals; and Canadian Premium Meats, an Alberta-based harvesting facility.

> The **Prince Edward Island Brewing Company** has announced that its flagship brand, Beach Chair Lager, can now be found in Ontario at Beer Store locations. The company's Gahan Blueberry Ale is also available at LCBO locations for a limited time.



> Turner Valley, Alta.-based **Eau Claire Distillery** won gold at the 2017 San Francisco World Spirits Competition in the flavoured Vodka category for its Prickly Pear EquineOx, and bronze in the Gin category for its Parlour Gin. At the 2017 Spirits International Prestige Awards, the distiller's Parlour Gin won one of two Consumer Choice Awards and a Best in Class — Platinum Award. The Prickly Pear EquineOx won silver in the Infused/flavoured Vodka category. ➔

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> In June the **North American Meat Institute** released the 20th Anniversary Edition of its *Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines and Audit Guide*, which was written by Temple Grandin, an animal behaviour expert at Colorado State University. The new edition can be downloaded from AnimalHandling.org


> Toronto-based **Indie Alehouse's Spadina Monkey Sour Cherry beer** has won the Beer of the Year at the Canadian Brewing Awards. The brew also won a gold medal in the Wood and Barrel Aged Sour Beer Category.



Jeff Broeders, head brewer at Indie Alehouse (left), and Nick Bobas, Barrel Aged and Funkworks beer program director at Indie Alehouse.

> Edmonton-based **Champion Petfoods'** facility in Kentucky was awarded the GFSI Global Markets Programme award during this year's Global Food Safety Conference in Texas.

> **Sobeys Inc.** launched a brand campaign called **What Newcomers Bring to Canada** in honour of Canada's 150th anniversary and Sobeys' 110th birthday. The campaign included a selection of special-edition products



> Montreal's **Bridor Inc.** has launched its Clean Label program. In a statement the company explains that the program "bans over a 150 undesirable ingredients." The bread and pastry manufacturer now offers a portfolio of Clean Label products in its Bridor and Au Pain Doré lines in Canada and the U.S.

that are available across Canada.

> Kelowna, BC-based **BC Tree Fruits Cooperative** has applied to expand its Winfield packinghouse to accommodate a new apple bagging line. If approved, the new line will be ready for operation this fall.

> Toronto's **Junction Craft Brewing** and charity fundraising organization **100 Who Care** have teamed up to create **Caribru**, a charitable craft beer company. The partners launched the first brew, Caribru Mango IPA, in June in Toronto. A portion of the sale of every pint, can and bottle goes toward the 100 Who Care's group donation to local charities.

> The Washington, DC-based United Fresh Produce Association has recognised **Peter Quiring**, greenhouse vegetable grower and owner and president of Leamington, Ont.-based **NatureFresh Farms**, with a 2017 FreshTec Achievement Award. Quiring received the award in June at the association's annual FreshTEC Expo and FreshMKT Expo and Conference in Chicago.

SUPPLIER NEWS

> **Bosch Rexroth Canada Corp.** of Welland, Ont. has appointed **TRC Hydraulics** as its authorized distributor for industrial and mobile hydraulics products for all of Atlantic Canada.



> **Frutarom Natural Solutions**

is working with a local agriculture partner in Central America "to encourage local women to become independent farmers and grow annatto in their fields." **Annatto** is an oily

seed from the Achiote tree, which grows in Peru, Brazil and Guatemala, that provides natural colours from yellow to orange tones. Frutarom says it will buy all the fresh annatto harvested at a fair price.

> Wisconsin-based **First Choice Ingredients**, a dairy flavour company, has donated a five-litre Stephan Cooker to the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Dairy Research. The cooker is used to make cheese sauces, processed cheeses, gravies, imitation cheeses and other products that require



a high sheer mixture.

(L-R): First Choice Ingredients' Roger Mullins, vice-president of R&D and Operations, and Brian Riesterer, manager of Dairy Innovation, deliver a five-litre Stephan Cooker to Gina Mode, assistant coordinator, Cheese Industry & Applications Group, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Dairy Research.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

> **Bethany Alards** and **Duane Hood** have joined Winnipeg's Peak of the Market as Quality Control manager and Calgary Distribution Centre manager, respectively.

> **Carol Goriup** is the new president of the Ontario Independent Meat Processors.

> Toronto's VersaCold Logistics Services has appointed **Michele Arcamone** as its COO.

> The Canadian Corrugated and Containerboard Association has elected **John Pepper** as its chairman. Pepper is director of Sales — Mills for Atlantic Packaging. The new board also includes **Gary Johnson**, secretary/treasurer; **Jean Parent**, first vice-chairman; and **Jimmy Garfinkle**, second vice-chairman.

> The Canadian Produce Marketing

Association has a new board: **Rick Alcocer** of Duda Fresh Foods Inc., chair; **Sam Silvestro** of Sam Silvestro Consulting Company, past chair; Les Mallard of Chiquita Brands North America, first vice-chair; **Oleen Smethurst** of Costco Wholesale Canada, second vice-chair; and **Davis Yung** of Fresh Direct Produce Ltd., executive committee member.



MARKET COMMENTARY: The exchange rate

With the strength of the Canadian dollar, it's important to underline how critical exchange rate is to the cost of commodities. Pricing in Canada for most commodities is quoted with basis in Canadian funds relative to the U.S. price. This means that when the loonie rallies against the U.S. dollar, basis declines. In the current markets, grain prices rose in U.S. dollars, but the Canadian dollar also rose, cutting the effect in Canada.

While there are several factors that affect basis, it's clear that one of them is exchange rate. On May 15, the Ontario basis for new crop soybeans was CDN\$2.70 over November futures. At press time, it was \$1.85 over. November futures

rose from US\$9.60 to \$10.005. So, the price of soybeans in Canadian dollars is actually lower today because the \$0.395 increase in futures was more than offset by the \$0.95 drop in the basis. Corn and wheat basis declined by CDN\$0.25 and \$0.39 during the same period.

This underlines the importance of managing exchange rates. A drop back to CDN\$1 = US\$0.73 would cost Canadian commodity buyers over CDN\$0.70/bu at the current soybean futures price. ●

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

MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Poor weather and continued strong demand for grains and oilseeds contributed to considerable volatility in their markets, while energy dropped and the Canadian dollar is in a strong uptrend.

> Grains: Hot, dry weather in the U.S. upper Midwest, Canada's southern Prairies and southern Europe have reduced the supply of high-protein wheat, taking Minneapolis wheat futures to a \$2.45 premium over Chicago and Kansas City. The rest of the Corn Belt has also been dry, resulting in increased price volatility for corn and soybeans, especially with strong export demand and record U.S. ethanol production. In a switch, Canadian farmers are facing downward price pressure because of a strong loonie.

> Corn: December futures ranged from \$3.75 to \$4.17 in the past month, with variations in weather and ups and downs in export inspections, and are currently at \$3.84 as rains are expected to improve crop conditions. Managed funds switched positions from strongly bearish to slightly bullish just in time to lose, so expect another sell off. We would use bottoming around \$3.75 to signal timing of protection, and/or protect against a breakout above resistance at \$4.05.

> Wheat: December Chicago wheat rallied from lows at \$4.56 to \$5.93 in sympathy with spring wheat in Minneapolis, before dropping to \$5.06 currently. Improving weather and crop prospects are pushing it back down. \$5.10 is major support:

if the market trades through it, look for it to return to the \$4.56 area. If it can't stay through \$5.10, this is a good place to do some pricing, but if it does go through, look for bottoming action around \$4.55 for your next opportunity.

> Soy oil: The soybean complex is strengthening due to poor U.S. crop conditions and strong demand for both meal and oil. September bean oil rallied from \$0.315 to the current \$0.34 area. There is significant support at \$0.3426. If you priced near the bottom, take profits here, but be covered above \$0.3426.

> Sugar: The bottom has fallen out of the sugar market since May on very strong production, especially in Brazil. September plunged through \$0.16 all the way to \$0.1274 before rallying to \$0.1398 currently. There is considerable technical resistance at \$0.1464. Be prepared to do some pricing on bottoming action around \$0.1275 or a breakout of \$0.1464.

> Natural gas: Natural gas prices tanked with oil, light demand and heavy U.S. supplies since May. September dropped from the \$3.40 area to under \$2.85, and is currently at \$2.92. The chart has major support at \$2.80 and strong resistance at \$3.11. Oil is rallying and U.S. inventories are tightening. We would do some pricing on another move down toward \$2.85, and protect above \$3.11.

> Crude oil: September Brent crude dropped as low as \$45 before rallying back to the current \$49.90. OPEC's discipline continues to be non-existent, while non-OPEC countries expand in the face of increased Chinese and Indian demand. Currently, Saudi Arabia is offering to cut production, even though the

Saudi share of Chinese and Indian imports is already falling. Technical support is at the current price, then more at \$55, \$57 and \$60. There is a chance we could see a rally, so pricing above the current level and looking for topping action to take profits at any of the resistance planes would be appropriate. Another alternative is simply to buy hand to mouth at prices below \$60, and buy \$60 Calls as insurance.

> Canadian dollar: The loonie is soaring, with the September contract trading two days in a row over \$0.80. The rally (despite weak oil prices) from under \$0.73 results from several factors, starting with the rumour and then the fact of the first interest rate hike by the bank of Canada in years. Then there was good employment and growth numbers, followed by rumours of another rate hike in October. Part of the loonie's strength is actually U.S. dollar weakness brought on by the great dealmaker, who can't get anyone to agree to anything, and it's beginning to negatively affect the U.S. economy. When the world has lost faith in the U.S. government, it will show up in volatile gold prices. There is major resistance on gold futures at \$1,303/troy ounce. September is trading at \$1,252. A break above \$1,303 could bring more U.S. dollar weakness. With this rally, the old suggestions of buying \$0.755 or lower Puts for commodity buyers are now out of date. If the loonie continues through \$0.80 toward the next level of resistance at \$0.83, then we would buy \$0.80 Puts. If it appears to be topping here, then \$0.785 Puts are warranted.





Advances in plant sanitation

Ron Wasik

I recently attended a food safety symposium on plant sanitation sponsored by the BC Food Protection Association. To my surprise, the speakers were from a Canadian company, Victoriaville, Que.-based Sani Marc. The company provides innovative products and services to Canadian food processors, including:

Innovations – Sani Marc invests significantly in research and development, looking for innovations that meet the needs of the Canadian food industry and respond to emerging issues.

Gel technology cleaners – Sani Marc has successfully enhanced this technology to boost cleaning efficiency, reduce chemical consumption and decrease water usage. In some cases, gel technology has even decreased labour costs.

Biofilm detection and removal – Working in collaboration with the Center for Biofilm Research at the University of Montana, in the U.S., Sani Marc has developed two products, BioDetect and BioDestroy, to address biofilm issues.

BioDetect is an instant test that provides a presence/absence result to confirm the existence of biofilm on a tested surface containing a minimum of 10,000 cfu/gm of the principal strains of concern in the food industry, including *listeria monocytogenes*, *E. coli*, *staphylococcus aureus*, *salmonella* and *pseudomonas aeruginosa*. BioDestroy is a product that dissolves the external protective biofilm and then destroys all the microorganisms living within.



Food safety software – A software program called CEPS (Continuous Evaluation Program for Sanitation) was designed to ease compliance. Developed with the input of food processors, auditors and the CFIA, this Windows-based, user-friendly software manages the sanitation program of a food manufacturing facility, including its SSOPs, the master sanitation schedule, as well as daily, weekly and monthly work orders.

Sanitation program management – Sani Marc developed its OPTisafe Program in response to the need in the market for a comprehensive approach to food plant sanitation. The program assembles a bundle of value-added products and services under the OPTisafe maxim: optimizing food safety. The five pillars of OPTisafe are its innovative products, CEPS software, engineering support, equipment technical services, and training. These are regularly utilized by clients who participate in the program.

The first step in the OPTisafe Program is a one- to three-day visit from a team of specialists who review your sanitation operations. Their aggregate observations and recommendations are provided in a confidential Facility Evaluation Report,

which will present fact-based suggestions for improvement and transparent calculations for cost savings.

The day-to-day support for sanitation operations is then provided by an experienced account manager, who advises on how to optimize processes and reduce costs. Dilution control and dispensing equipment is maintained by a fleet of mobile service technicians. A technical project manager with training and experience in quality control, microbiology and GFSI protocols provides documentation, audit and GMP support. And a team of knowledgeable customer service representatives help with orders, shipping, tracking and delivery.

Should a crisis arise, Sani Marc makes available additional resources including food scientists, microbiologists, engineering system specialists and personnel of the Level II Microbiology lab located at Sani Marc's head office.

Born in Canada and focused on Canada, Sani Marc takes pride in claiming that it is the fastest-growing and largest manufacturer of sanitation products for the food manufacturing industry in Canada. With more than 500 employees and distribution centres serving every province, the company believes that its products and services provide comprehensive and cost-effective solutions to this industry's current and emerging sanitation/food safety challenges. ●

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Yes, **CFIA**, safe food is the priority but **it's not your only job**

Ron Doering

In a recent column I wrote on the occasion of the 20th birthday of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), I proudly concluded that the CFIA had mostly met its original objectives. Since then I have received several responses from industry leaders suggesting I was overly generous in my assessment. Several responses focused particularly on one complaint: that too many at the CFIA seemed to have forgotten that in addition to its primary role to protect the health and safety of Canadians, the CFIA also has a clear legislative mandate to help the commercial interests of Canadian industry.

From the very beginning of the 1995 consultations with industry, all sectors expressed grave concern that while consolidating 16 programs delivered by four different departments might promote efficiency and effectiveness and provide a single point of contact for consumers, industry and the provinces, such consolidation might also result in an erosion of the longstanding understanding that while safe food was the overarching priority, all programs also had an important role in promoting the commercial health of the various sectors. To answer this fear, we changed the draft legislation to specify that the minister responsible for the CFIA would be the minister of Agriculture, and we built right into the legislation that the CFIA's mandate included the "promotion of trade and commerce." Without this solemn promise to industry, it's unlikely that the CFIA would have been created.

Of course, except in situations where

consumer health and safety is threatened, such as in a case of an outbreak of foodborne illness, inspecting for safe food and promoting market access are not conflicting objectives. The most important marketing advantage for the Canadian food industry is Canada's reputation for safe food and the credibility of our rigorous regulatory system. Putting the whole food chain — seeds, feeds, fertilizer, plant protection, animal health, and all food commodities including fish — under the same umbrella agency created a real opportunity for a more comprehensive and focused approach to promoting international market access for Canadian products. Moreover, still unique in the world, we would have one agency to negotiate equivalency agreements and other arrangements for access. Many products can only be exported if they first receive CFIA certification. That is how we export food, plants and animals to over 100 countries, usually without re-inspection.

After raising this issue in my speech at the recent annual meeting of the Canadian Meat Council, many participants confirmed the problem and stressed that it has been seriously worsening in the last three years since the Conservative government changed the primary reporting relationship of the CFIA to the minister of Health. One industry leader insisted that it was obvious that since then "the CFIA is giving less time, resources and attention to industry's commercial needs." Another reported that "most CFIA inspectors now seem to think their sole job is consumer protection, and



market access is just not part of their job." Another added that "increasingly, and particularly in the last few years, the culture of the CFIA is that they're in the public health business; the health of the industry is none of their concern."

There is a great deal of talk these days about the potential for Canada to be an agri-food powerhouse. Canadians can't eat much more food, so the key is to increase exports. Our industry is up to the task, but the agri-food business (unlike many other industry sectors) cannot even begin to achieve its potential unless the government does its job to: 1. Provide a clear, responsive and well implemented regulatory system that will serve to improve competitiveness, enhance investment and promote innovation; and 2. Remind the CFIA that it is also its responsibility to help industry gain greater market access and then adequately resource this function.

Meat industry leaders tell me that they have already met the new CFIA president and stressed the need to change attitudes and to reinvigorate the market access function. This is a good start, but real progress will require a united and sustained push. ●

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The **new** Canada's Food Guide

Gary Gnirss

Coming in 2018 is the new Canada's Food Guide (CFG). If all goes according to plan, Health Canada (HC) will unveil the newest edition in the early part of the year.

Insight into what the final version may offer hinges on three guiding principles that came out of the first phase of consultations. They appear consistent with HC's more recent nutrition messaging: that a variety of nutritious foods and beverages are the foundation of healthy eating; that prepared foods high in sodium, saturated fat and sugars undermine healthy eating; and that knowledge and skill is needed to support healthy eating.

So what's different? In the case of the first principle, there will continue to be a strong emphasis on fruits, vegetables and whole-grain foods. Greater importance will be placed on protein, and in particular those from plant sources. More emphasis will be placed on foods with fat primarily from unsaturated rather than saturated fat, and water. The second principle speaks more about foods to limit or avoid. It's no surprise that processed and prepared beverages high in sugars should be avoided, and that processed foods high in sodium, sugars and saturated fat are to be limited in a healthy diet.

One of the key messages from sector groups participating in the consultations was to keep it simple. One example is the visual proportions of the Eat Well Plate used to provide guidance on building a healthy meal based on "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide." Translating the goals of the three driving principles into an effective outcome hinges on simple,

sellable information about portion sizes, proportions in a meal, and frequency of daily consumption. HC is also working on mandatory front-of-packaging labelling for prepacked foods in order to help consumers select healthy food and avoid or limit foods which are high in saturated fat, sugars and sodium.

HC is working to classify industrially produced trans fats as food adulterants, effectively eliminating man-made trans fat from the food supply. The remaining trans fat from natural sources would not be a significant health concern as part of an overall diet, so trans fat is not a major discussion point in the new CFG.

A healthy diet is like a two-sided coin. On one side there are foods which are less desirable; on the other are preferred healthy foods to be consumed in moderation. Processed foods today are being vilified as unhealthy, but it seems a bigger challenge to understand what foods might be healthy, including processed foods that feature protein, whole grain and unsaturated fat. Most foods are processed to some degree, and nutrient-enriched products do have a role in a healthy diet. HC has also recently recognized the now defunct interim marketing authorizations, such as the one related to the fortification of plant-based beverages. These interim measures are needed since HC's modernization of food fortification regulations is lagging. Food fortification modernization is an important consideration in providing healthy food choices, and is a complex area that HC needs to catch up on.

The messaging around the new CFG

will need to provide guidance on selecting healthy processed foods. It will also likely emphasize preparing meals using fresh local foods, and eating with family and friends. This supports the third principle, knowledge and skills, since sharing meals is seen as an aid in supporting healthy eating habits. The new guide may also include environmental considerations, such as food waste, since knowledge and skill is necessary in order to plan and prepare meals with minimal waste.

One challenging feature to explain to Canadians will be the differences between a CFG serving and a serving of stated size as part of nutrition facts. A Food Guide serving is based on the suggested proportion of food in regard to dietary recommendations. These will be modernized. A serving of stated size in a nutrition facts table is based on the amount that consumers generally consume. The new *Food and Drug Regulations* have been amended to provide a more uniform serving size used in a nutrition facts table. While this may still be different from a Food Guide serving, under the new regulations there will be at least more consistency.


The new CFG will most likely not be a radical change from its former version, although it appears HC has carefully considered the areas to focus on modernizing. We'll have to wait to see what the final version will look like. 🍎

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

Keeping it *real*

Manufacturers are meeting consumer demand for healthier, natural food and beverages by featuring real fruit and veggies in their products

BY REBECCA HARRIS



We've always been told to "eat your fruit and veggies," but today, people are increasingly living by that mantra. The rise in sales of fresh produce in grocery stores shows that consumers are indeed choosing the real deal. In the latest 52-week period (to May 27, 2017), volume sales of fruit increased by four per cent compared to the previous year, and vegetable volume sales grew by three per cent, according to Nielsen Canada.

While the healthy food revolution is certainly playing out in the produce section, food and beverage processors don't have to be left in the cold. Today, smart manufacturers are responding to consumer demand by featuring real fruit and veggies in a wide and often innovative range of applications. ↗

photo: sveta_zarizamorova/Thinkstock



“For most Canadians, eating healthy is a vital part of their lives, but when you consider that 64 per cent of them find eating right a challenge, anything that the CPG industry can do to lighten that burden will be a welcomed aid,” says Isabel Morales, consumer insights manager at Nielsen Canada. “Over half of Canadians (55 per cent) agree that eating fruits and vegetables is the number-one factor in a healthy diet, so incorporating more of them — in any form — is a way to improve the quality of a diet.”

Organic Slammers is one brand that’s packaging up the goodness of real fruit and vegetables. Made by Calgary-based Baby Gourmet, Organic Slammers are a 100-per-cent organic, drinkable fruit and veggie “superfood snack.” The varieties include the “Awesome” blend with bananas, blueberries, strawberries, beets, acai berries and amaranth; and the “Chill’n” blend with bananas, blueberries, butternut squash, Greek yogurt and yumberry.

Organic Slammers were created four years ago as an evolution of Baby Gourmet’s baby food lineup. “We needed to do something with a slightly different taste profile for school-age kids, but still in our core competency of sophisticated blends of fruits, vegetables, ancient grains and Greek yogurts that taste good,” says Michael Watt, CEO of Baby Gourmet Foods Inc. “Mom knows it’s a guilt-free, nutritious snack, but she also knows her kids are going to eat it and like it.”

In the yogurt category, where many products contain fruit flavourings, iögo has a back-to-basics approach. All iögo products are made with real fruit

and contain no artificial colours or flavours. “Staying focused on being real is a big part of what iögo does,” says Simon Small, vice-president of Marketing at Ultima Foods. “If we understand that people are adding more fruits and vegetables [to their diets], it’s our job to help bring that into the category.”

Since launching in 2012, iögo has continued to find new ways to do just that. In 2015, the brand launched a line of yogurt-based smoothies containing real fruit and vegetables. The latest addition — kiwi, pineapple, mango, spinach and kale — launched in January 2017. Last year, the brand’s kid-focused Nano line introduced a line of flavours that mix fruit with vegetables, including Peach-Carrot, Banana-Squash, and Blueberry-Beet.

Being predominantly a dairy product, the yogurt doesn’t deliver a full serving of fruit and vegetables, notes Small. It’s more about helping parents introduce their kids to different vegetables and fruits in a fun way. “Parents feel that much better knowing they’re delivering something that’s a mixture of both fruit and vegetables in this deliciously good dairy product,” he says.

On the more grownup side, Kellogg’s Special K launched its Nourish line of products in 2015, as it repositioned from a weight-management brand to a wellness brand. The line includes Apples, Raspberries & Almonds cereal, Mixed Berries Popped Granola with Quinoa, and Cranberries & Almonds Bars. This past January, two new granolas were introduced: Mixed Berries and Dark Chocolate Coconut.

“When developing Kellogg’s Special K Nourish, we listened to our consumers,” says Natasha Millar, Kellogg Canada’s senior Marketing director, Breakfast Cereal and Beverages. “We are giving them more of what they want in their foods, such as great taste and real, visible ingredients, including real fruit.”

Dole recently launched a fresh innovation for ready-to-eat fruit: Resealable Fruit Pouches. The line includes five flavours: Tropical Gold Pineapple Chunks, Mandarin Oranges and Sliced Pears, Fruit Cocktail with Cherries and Sliced Peaches. “We’re trying to bring innovation into the canned fruit category with new modern packaging,” says Peter Stewart, director of Business Development and Sales Strategy at Dole Foods of Canada. “Typically when you open a can of fruit, if you don’t use it all, you’ve got to decant that into another container. Our pouch has a re-sealable zipper closure, so you can leave the fruit inside the pouch. It’s a lot more convenient and contemporary for the user.”



In the snack category, New York-based Kind is ticking all the boxes of consumer needs with its first-ever fruit bar, Pressed by Kind. The fruit bar is made with only fruit and chia, or fruit and vegetables, with no sugar added and no preservatives. The product was first



introduced in the U.S. in 2016 and is launching in Canada this fall. Three varieties will be available in Canada: Apple, Strawberry, Chia; Mango, Apple, Chia; and Pineapple Banana, Kale and Spinach.

“Our ingredient deck is really short and clean and it’s all recognizable ingredients so that people really know what they’re getting,” says Stacey Bowman, Kind’s director of Marketing — Canada. One Pressed by Kind fruit bar has two daily servings of fruit. “Similar to what we found in the U.S., Canadians are not getting the amount of recommended daily fruit in their diets,” says Bowman. “With people needing convenience and wanting to have healthy foods, but not being able to sit down and prepare fruit the way that they would like to, we wanted to make sure that we had a solution for that trend.”

Djordje Krstich is a Toronto-based entrepreneur who also sees a big opportunity in the marketplace for real fruit bars. The company he co-founded, Ipanema Valley, imports 100-per-cent banana brownies from Brazil. During the cooking process, bananas are put in high-pressure cooking kettles where vapor pressure concentrates the bananas by as much as 80 per cent. “In doing so, it turns into this fudgy, dark mass that you see there on the store shelves,” says Krstich. “It’s born from a marriage of Mother Nature coming together with food science to produce something very different, unique and delicious. Essentially, you’re eating a banana in a way that you’ve never eaten before.”

Rather than a “made with real fruit” claim, the packaging features the message “100 million fruit cells pressed together.” The reasoning for that is “it’s a verbal hammer,” says Krstich. “It’s a way to say, yes it is a fruit snack, but it’s a different one. It’s more of an experience. There are thousands of 100-per-cent fruit snacks and it’s just going to be commonplace. [Our approach] is going to really make an impact for the customer.” Ipanema Valley also sells three other banana brownies accented with either pineapple, guava or fig.

Another banana product on the market is Oh! Naturals banana chips, made from real, ripe bananas. The bananas are vacuum fried at a low temperature, which locks in the flavour of the banana and produces a chip that has lower fat than other banana chips on the market, says Rhonda Goldberg, president of Calgary-based Oh! Naturals Flavoured Snacks. “Consumers want fast, healthier-for-you snacks and our products [deliver] because of our cooking process. Our products are also vegan, and that’s a

huge category that’s also on the growth spectrum.”

In addition to health messaging, the packaging features the words “real bananas.” That’s an important distinction because a lot of manufacturers use pictures of fruit and vegetables on their packaging, but those items are not the first ingredient, says Goldberg. “If something is made with cornmeal as a first ingredient and [the packaging] has a picture of sweet potato, I don’t know if it should be showing the sweet potato,” she says. “It’s quite deceiving and nobody has time to read every single label.”

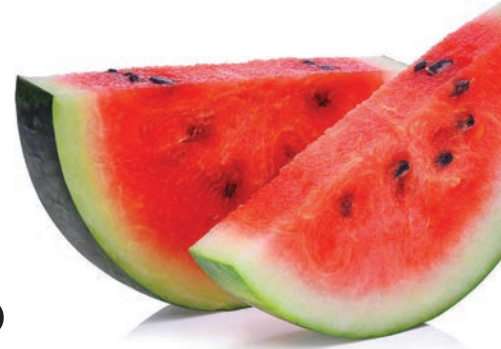
In some parts of the world, such as the U.K., manufacturers have to show the percentage of an ingredient if it is highlighted by the labelling or a picture on the package. Goldberg would like to see similar standards in Canada. “I think the government should be stepping in to say, ‘What percentage of your product is actually that ingredient in order to call it that on the bag?’” she says.

While consumers may not have time to read every label, they are more label-savvy today. “A health or attribute claim on its own is no longer enough to gain more product fans,” says Nielsen Canada’s Morales. “Consumers respond better to a genuine effort from companies which are constantly trying to improve themselves and take the time to build a name they can trust. Transparency is always a sure way to win consumers over.”

With consumers’ views on health and wellness continually evolving, Morales says the best approach to innovation is to keep on top of what consumers consider “healthy” and to understand purchase motivation. “We’re witnessing a back-to-basics trend in which Canadians prefer more natural ingredients with less artificial additives, so ingredient transparency is key when communicating benefits and attributes,” she says. “But consumers are not only looking to solve their healthy diet puzzle. In addition to health, they’re also looking for solutions that provide convenience. That’s a winning formula.”

OVER HALF OF CANADIANS (55 PER CENT) AGREE THAT EATING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IS THE NUMBER-ONE FACTOR IN A HEALTHY DIET





There's much more to watermelon than simply water

Deanna Rosolen

If you love watermelon, or if you're just curious, search online for Giovanni Stanchi, an Italian artist from the 17th century. What you'll find from the still-life artist is quite likely one of the earliest paintings of watermelons. Compared to how we know watermelons today, his depiction is surprisingly unappetizing.

It's also fascinating, though, to have a glimpse of what wild watermelon may have looked like before people began breeding it to create the watermelon we know today — lush, juicy red and most of the time, seedless.

But watermelon's story goes farther back than the 17th century. Most experts agree that it originated in Africa, and appeared in Egypt about 5,000 years ago. Stephanie Barlow, senior director of Communications for the Florida-based National Watermelon Promotion Board, says the early watermelons likely “grew on vines, wild and on the ground. And people first started cracking into them for sources of hydration.”

What makes it good for us?

It should come as no surprise that watermelon is made up of 94 per cent water. But, says Felicia Newell, a nutritionist and registered dietitian candidate and owner of Newfoundland's Sustain Nutrition, “it is still packed with health-promoting nutrients. As an excellent source of vitamin C and other antioxidants, watermelon can help prevent cell damage and combat the formation of free radicals known to cause cancer. It is also a source of vitamin A, vitamin B6 and amino acids.”



Newell says watermelon also has more beta-carotene than berries, and contains carotenoid phytochemicals, such as lycopene (in red watermelon). “Diets high in carotenoid-rich fruits and vegetables are associated with helping to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers,” she explains. Watermelon has as much lycopene as cooked tomatoes, but compared to a raw tomato a serving of watermelon “has three times as much lycopene,” adds Newell.

But what about the sugar content? *The New York Times* posted an article on watermelon on July 1, 2016 called “Ask Well: Is Watermelon Good for You?” In the article Jennifer McDaniel, a registered dietitian and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, says “the sugar content [in watermelon] is actually lower than some other fruits.” A medium banana, says the article, has 14 to 15 g of sugar, while a cup of diced watermelon has about nine grams. McDaniel adds that watermelon's water content “gives it a low glycemic load.”

Scientists such as Shubin Saha are also looking at watermelon's nutritional benefits. Saha, who now works in the private sector, has a Doctorate of Plant Medicine as well as a PhD in Horticultural Sciences, and used to work at Purdue University in Indiana as an Extension Vegetable Specialist. There Saha saw the waste in watermelons and decided to investigate whether the fruit had health benefits that would help the industry both environmentally and economically. He conducted his studies on mice and found that “mice given a two-per-cent watermelon juice drinking solution saw a reduction in body mass (specifically body fat), reduction in cholesterol levels and reversal of atherosclerosis in the aorta.” He says the work they did is promising, but more research is needed.

How should we eat watermelon?

While Barlow can speak to watermelon's nutrient content, she also points to the fun of “playing with watermelon recipes and different carving ideas.” Watermelon works in salsas and salads, and goes well with herbs, citrus and salty cheese such as feta. She adds that most consumers don't realize their value concept — you can get about three dozen servings out of an average watermelon, she explains — and you can consume the whole thing, including the rind. “You can use the rind in a slaw or a stir fry, kimchi and other types of pickling,” she says. In fact, a recipe for pickling the rind dates back to the first cookbook in the U.S., *The First American Cookbook: A Facsimile of “American Cookery”* by Amelia Simmons, from 1796. 🍉



Cool beans — the fresh vs. frozen debate

Daniel Scholes



For many Canadians, the summer season brings more than sunny skies and warm breezes — it also marks the beginning of the short-lived luxury of locally grown fruits and vegetables. But much to our chagrin, it will soon be back to the reality of high-priced imported produce, or opting for frozen and canned vegetables.

Throughout history, humans have searched for ways to make food last longer. One famous milestone in this quest was achieved in the early 1800s by French chef Nicolas Appert, also known as the “father of canning.” Another popular preservation method is freezing, which also has long historical roots. The Chinese were the first known culture to freeze foods using ice cellars as early as 1000 B.C., and there are many other historical accounts of freezing vessels used in the early food cultures of the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians. The modern day frozen food industry was born in the early 1900s and is widely credited to American Clarence Birdseye, whose discovery of flash freezing technologies began in Labrador and was inspired by his learnings from the Inuit.

In the past, many Canadians did their own preserving. Fortunately nowadays, there are many options to choose from at retail. But do canned and frozen vegetables really stack up to fresh, or are they left feeling green with envy? We recently conducted a sensory test of green beans to find out.

Full of beans

We asked 50 females between the ages of 25 and 54 from the Greater Toronto Area

who regularly consume green beans to weigh-in on the differences between fresh, frozen and canned green beans. All three formats were boiled, and participants were asked to evaluate the appearance, flavour and texture of the green beans.

Not surprisingly, fresh green beans significantly out-ranked both the frozen and canned formats, with overall liking scores of 7.8, 5.6, and 4.4, respectively. They also scored significantly higher on all other measures of liking, such as purchase intent, quality, appearance, flavour and texture, putting to rest any doubts that “fresh is best.” It was also not too surprising that the frozen format was the runner-up. While they could not achieve the same natural taste as the fresh green bean, the frozen beans were very similar. The canned version of the green bean was weaker in flavour and didn’t have the same bright appearance as either fresh or frozen, but the softness of the bite was truly its biggest downfall. Overall when it came to the sensory profiles, our testers could not be fooled — the advantages of the fresh beans far outweighed the preserved versions.

Spilling the beans

When it comes to the nutritional benefits, all three types of beans are excellent options. They are low in sugar, fat and calories, are high in fibre content, and are rich in vitamin A, C and K, as well as minerals like magnesium, phosphorus, iron and potassium. Contrary to popular belief, canned and frozen options may hold equal if not greater nutritional value than fresh, depending on the season. They are picked at the peak of freshness

and flash frozen or canned, retaining nutrients that can be lost in the transportation and storage process of fresh options.

But it seems this fact was lost on most of our participants. When probed on the benefits of fresh, frozen and canned green beans, everyone agreed that fresh green beans were a significantly greater source of fibre, vitamins and minerals, while less than half of our group thought canned green beans carried the same advantages. There is a commonly held perception that canning depletes all the goodness from the vegetable, and this was only slightly better for frozen vegetables.

The green light

Canada’s Food Guide recommends at least seven servings of fruit or vegetables per day, and most Canadians consume less than half that. Diets higher in fruits and vegetables have been linked to the prevention of cardiovascular disease, certain cancers and obesity, so the lack of adequate consumption has become an important public health issue. Food manufacturers are a lynchpin in the solution, providing Canadians with accessible and affordable vegetables year-round. Preserved vegetables may never meet the taste and textural quality of fresh, but the misconception that these options are nutritionally inferior is something that the industry should address through education efforts. 🍓

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

Growing *wild*

Going into the wilderness to forage for ingredients is back and gaining momentum | By Jonathan Hiltz

It's hard to believe, but humankind didn't always have supermarkets. In fact, we used to go out into the wild and search for our food.

After centuries of eating prepared meals with manufactured ingredients, the practice of foraging is back and gaining momentum. Not in the sense that everyday people are going to seek out forest mushrooms for dinner, more like food and beverage companies committing to using wild ingredients for their unique flavours.





photo: ekaranouh/Thinkstock



Wild strawberries



The leaves of a bog myrtle

photo: Dace Znotina/Thinkstock

A case in point is Beau's All Natural Brewing Company. The Vankleek, Ont.-based gourmet beer producer has made foraging for ingredients a common thing in its suds. "The beers that contain foraged ingredients are what we call our Gruit Series," says Jennifer Beauchesne, director of Communications for Beau's. "Most beers are barley, hops, water and yeast. With the Gruit Series we dial back the hop characteristics and in place of the hops we use other herbs or botanicals and highlight different combinations of spice."

Using that formula, Beauchesne says the company was able to get creative with various wild ingredients that were previously unknown to some consumers. "The first time we used foraged ingredients in a beer was in 2008 when we made a beer called Bog Water. It was ground breaking at the time because not a lot of people were using botanicals in their beer. We added in this herb called bog myrtle, which we realized we could get from a local forager."

Beau's uses an exclusive forager for its product, who literally goes out and searches for wild ingredients on their property, to be experimented with for unique beer flavours. "[Our forager] collects bog myrtle for us as well as spruce tips. We use that in two or three different beers as well," says Beauchesne. She explains that the forager they use near the Ontario-Quebec border does most of the foraging for the company, but they do go out occasionally and look for wild ingredients themselves. "We did make a beer with sumac a couple of years ago. [Sumac] is a tree with many kinds of characteristics."

Beau's has also ventured out to other parts of Canada for wild ingredients, including to Fogo Island, Nfld. "We wanted to make a beer that was in partnership with the island itself," says Beauchesne. "In that case we went out and did the initial foraging ourselves on the island." Some of the foraged ingredients that were found on Fogo Island include Newfoundland partridge berries and myrrh, which is a hardened tree sap from spruce and pine in this case.

But using foraged ingredients is not an automatic win for Beau's. Using wild ingredients requires a significant amount of trial and error to get a great beer with wild herbs and spices. "It's a lot of experimentation. ➔



THERE ARE
"MORE THAN **350**
DIFFERENT SPECIES
OF WILD
EDIBLES ACROSS"
CANADA, SAYS
OUTDOORCANADA.CA.
(*"15 WILD PLANTS YOU
CAN EAT," BY NANCY
JOHNSTON FROM
AUG. 2, 2011*)



Wild juniper berries

photo: Argument/Thinkstock



Wild leeks

photo: CalderVanGogh/Thinkstock

The process usually starts with bringing in the ingredients and playing around with them,” explains Beauchesne. “If they’re dry [our brewing team] might make a tea out of them. We can then use that to gauge how strongly the ingredient is going to present in the beer itself.”

Another Ontario-based brewery that has decided to go the way of the wild is Bush Pilot. Vlado Pavicic is the director of Sales and Marketing, and is also known affectionately as the “co-pilot.” The company makes a beer called Pengo Pally using foraged arctic herbs. “We decided to put an arctic element [into the beer]. We experimented and got five different wild, handpicked herbs and for a good month we were brewing tea,” says Pavicic. “We use three handpicked herbs: labrador, small labrador and crowberry.” The brewery has a variety of products but only one other that contains a wild ingredient, and that’s its Stormy Monday brew, which contains handpicked juniper berries.

Forbes Wild Foods is a major Canadian distributor of foraged ingredients. For 18 years the company has been at the forefront of foraged ingredients, catering to both consumers and businesses. “We work with Indigenous communities, folks that have access to large, pristine land and who have the ability to forage wild foods,” says Dyson Forbes, a spokesperson for the company. “We sell to kitchens and restaurants all across the country.”

Forbes forages for a laundry list of products to sell to a wide variety of consumers. “At the beginning of the year there’s a few different mushrooms like morels and pheasant back mushrooms, and wild leeks.” After those season openers comes fiddlehead mushroom season, then once summer hits the company offers

““They may be new to everybody today, but these were the things our grandparents ate because they didn’t have access to everything they have in grocery stores now.””

wild Saskatoon berries and wild strawberries, although Forbes says the latter are “extremely finicky and difficult to pick.” Forbes also currently has fridges stuffed with sea asparagus and will soon get their hands on some wild watercress.

“There’s a small handful of our products that are not foraged, but they are still wild products,” adds Forbes. “For example, maple syrup. Nobody went and planted the forest. It’s always been a maple forest, they just came with the tubes and stuck them in the trees.” As well as offering maple syrup Forbes distributes birch syrup and various others.

The company also searches out hard-to-find wild ingredients. “There are a lot of wild foods where the abundance and the availability are different,” says Forbes. “They may be abundant in some areas, but not available or easily accessed by people. So we work with people to try and bring those down and reintroduce them to areas where they may have been lost.”

Forbes says that awareness of foraging ingredients has definitely grown in recent years. “Eighteen years ago when we first started doing this, I would walk around from restaurant to restaurant trying to introduce people to the products and talk about what we had,” recalls Forbes. “Chefs were looking at me like, what kind of scam am I trying to pull? And what on Earth is a red hairy skunk currant? But there were a certain amount of restaurants that knew we were onto something.” Customers also began taking note of these unique ingredients as well, and were inspired to try them again.

The company is now a leader in wild foods and sells to clients of all kinds. And foraged ingredients can now be found in a number of different restaurants, food and beverage products and at farmers markets and retailers. And for the most part they’re not new ingredients. “All the different foods that we have now, they’re not new, they were just forgotten,” explains Forbes. “They may be new to everybody today, but these were the things our grandparents ate because they didn’t have access to everything they have in grocery stores now.”



Food waste reduction: Can packaging play a role?

Carol Zweep

Food waste is a global issue that has gained much attention recently. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has shown that roughly one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally. This amounts to about 1.3 billion tons per year. Food is lost or wasted throughout the supply chain, from agricultural production to household consumption. In Canada, \$31 billion worth of food ends up in landfills or composters each year, with 47 per cent of food waste happening in the home (Value Chain Management International, 2014 report). Countries all over the world are taking initiatives to reduce and divert food waste.

Composted food waste generates carbon dioxide. Food that decomposes in landfills in the absence of oxygen releases methane. Methane is a greenhouse gas (GHG) that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide, according to the U.S. EPA. Additionally, discarding food wastes water, oil and other natural resources that go into growing and delivering food.

Packaging can play a large role in preventing food waste throughout the supply chain. The package contains the product, protects and preserves the contents, and facilitates safe and efficient distribution and storage of the product. Under-packaged food can result in food damage and spoilage, but over-packaging can lead to additional costs and a negative impact on the environment. Designed properly, packaging provides longer shelf life and encourages consumer purchase.

Keeping food fresh is a key challenge for the packaging industry. Modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) and new packaging technologies such as active packaging (oxygen and ethylene scavengers) can extend shelf life. Modified atmosphere packaging substitutes air in the package with another gas mixture. Mixtures of carbon dioxide and nitrogen can deter microbial growth for commodities such as meats and poultry, ready-to-eat chilled foods and baked goods.

Active packaging changes the environment of the packaged food to extend shelf life. Ethylene scavengers can be embedded within the package. Absorption of the ripening hormone, ethylene, reduces premature aging and degradation, and has been successfully used to extend shelf life of bananas, strawberries and other fresh produce. Oxygen scavengers remove headspace oxygen and dissolved oxygen within the packaged food as well as oxygen permeating into the package. Depending on the product, reduction of oxygen within the package can prevent the growth of aerobic bacteria and moulds, or can prevent oxidation of the food.

The European Organization for Packaging and the Environment (EUROPEN) states that “Packaging prevents food spoilage, ensures food quality and safety along the supply chain and at home, informs consumers on how to use and store packaged food products, increases shelf-life and provides portion sizes answering the multiple needs of consumer lifestyles and demographic changes.”



Appropriate packaging results in longer shelf life, less food waste and a lower overall carbon footprint. The *How Packaging Contributes to Food Waste Prevention* study (by denkstatt GmbH in co-operation with the Austrian packaging recycling association) examined the life cycle of packaged and unpackaged fresh food such as meat, cheese and dairy products, vegetable and fruits, and baked products. The GHG emissions of production, transport, use and waste treatment of food and packaging were analyzed. The study found that although packaging contributes to GHG emissions, there are greater GHG emission savings from reduced food waste.

Packaging can be part of the solution to tackling the food waste issue. Packaging is able to extend product shelf life to prevent food waste. A quality package protects and preserves the product and delivers it safely to the consumer. Consumer awareness of food waste and packaging's value will go a long way to address the food waste problem. 🍎

Carol Zweep is manager of Packaging, Food and Label Compliance for NSF International. Contact her at czweep@nsf.org



DELIVERING RESULTS

Part II of our look at logistics in the food and beverage industry looks at methods for boosting efficiency, from technology and scheduling to working with the competition **By Carolyn Gruske**

Technology, including temperature control monitoring systems, is becoming more ubiquitous during the transportation of food and beverages.

It's a trend Doug Barnes, senior manager, Inventory Planning and 3PL Warehouses, at Maple Leaf Foods in Mississauga, Ont., expects to see even more of in logistics operations, due to the ever-increasing need for efficiency. "Whether it's autonomous trucks, robotics, or mechanized warehouse equipment, it's really important to have the right skill set of people in-house who can look at these new technologies and best-in-class systems to identify the opportunities, implement them and then optimize those technologies. It's being able to take advantage of those technologies and balance their cost versus the cost benefit of implementing them."

Barnes believes automation will make things safer and more efficient. "I think it removes some of the potential for human error. When you get into robotics and automation, it's pretty error-free. Many of our logistics providers today that are using automation seem to really drive very accurate inventories, very accurate picking and product controls."

Maple Leaf is also looking beyond technology in order to find efficiencies in its logistics operations, notes Barnes. For instance, the company has changed the way its carrier partners deliver Maple Leaf products in order to maximize business efficiencies and improve the shelf life of the goods consumers see in the stores. "We do deliveries and pickups where we're seeing that some of the retailers want to optimize their fleet for backhaul opportunities. When they deliver to their stores they want to pick up from our warehouse locations, which works for us," says Barnes. "We also do a lot of deliveries into our customers, big and small. So we may have full trailer loads with full containers going to customers, but we also have a lot of mixed loads where we're basically doing milk runs and dropping off smaller quantities at numerous facilities."

Barnes adds that the company scrutinizes its loads to further focus on efficiency. "We work a lot, as well, internally looking at pallet configurations and ensuring we're maximizing the footprint on the pallet, and cube utilization



for our loads to make sure we are keeping trailers full, but not to the point where they become unsafe,” he stresses. “We really want to maximize the footprint as well as every space in the warehouse. We don’t want partial pallets in our business. We try to transact in full pallets where possible and full trailer loads where possible.”

Like Maple Leaf, Toronto-based Nestlé Canada has spent a lot of time re-examining exactly how it does everything, from scheduling its deliveries to packing its containers. Greig Jewell, director of Consumer Value Chain Optimization, says the company is undergoing the process of becoming a LEAN operation. “It starts with constant measurement,” he says. “We are moving to a LEAN enterprise model, so there is a focus on operational reviews: it’s having the right measures in place especially when you are seeing a deviation from the acceptable, finding out what the root cause is and correcting it — sometimes it’s a shift in delivery days, sometimes it’s a shift in transit times, sometimes it’s a shift in product mix. Then our operations people get to the root cause and resolve the issue and return us to where we need to be. Sometimes it’s looking at how frequently we go to a customer and what their buying pattern is and aligning their buying pattern with how we ship to them.”

“ At some point we are going to be co-operating with our competition to co-load. ”

Just because Nestlé Canada relies on warehousing partners to run its distribution centres, it doesn’t mean the company doesn’t pay strict attention to its warehousing operations. “In warehouses, labour is always a cost driver, so we look at the movement of goods, the picking of goods,” says Jewell. “We were able to work with a third-party provider and come up with a layer pick operation which took away most of the case pick at a much reduced cost, as well as reducing damages because you aren’t handling as many cases. It also adds an element of safety because now you don’t have people lifting all the cases, you have machines doing it.”

Not only has the company’s picking operations undergone changes in the name of efficiency, so has its approach to deliveries. Jewell says Nestlé has turned to making more frequent, smaller deliveries and to self-consolidating deliveries with an assortment of product categories, and he doesn’t expect the changes to stop there.

“At some point we are going to be co-operating with our competition to co-load,” says Jewell, “and reduce the amount of trucks on the road and the amount of trucks showing up at our customers’ doors. Years ago you’d never do anything with a competitor, but now if you are shipping something somewhere and they are too and you are both shipping half a truck to the same customer, why isn’t everything on the same truck if it makes sense?” Jewell adds that he doesn’t think there will be a choice in the long term. “I think in some cases companies will be smart enough to work together and say ‘this is how we do it,’ and in some cases I think customers are going to force it.” ●



Revisiting the tipping point to **product transparency**

Peter Henderson

The tipping point to greater product transparency just got a whole lot closer.

In July, Camden, NJ-based Campbell Soup Company boldly and very publicly announced that it was leaving the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) and the joint GMA-FMI SmartLabel initiative. Perhaps the announcement was a marketing stunt, and perhaps it was to encourage other companies to follow — a surprise all the same.

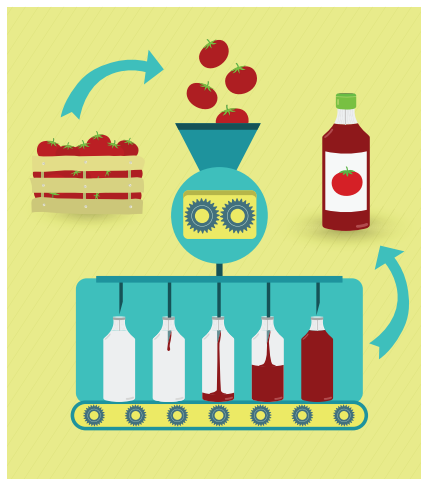
The company is leaving SmartLabel in favour of a new ecosystem-platform called the Sage Project, which until Campbell Soup Company joined, served sustainability-positioned brands.

The Sage Project's approach/platform to transparency is disruptive. It is graphically very slick, contains rich data on branded and unbranded fresh products, and it's personalized! Sageproject.com is a must visit intelligent site. It's very slick, and it personalizes rich food-related data. Visitors can set up a customized view with 58 preference-variables spanning: certifications, health, diet, allergens and social.

The Sage Project has an integrated team of purpose-driven “designers, dietitians, data scientists, and creative technologists,” which includes Canadian Brendan Brazier, co-founder and formulator of Vega.

The project was hatched as a result of a school project, which Sam Slover conducted for his Interactive Telecommunications Masters at NYU. In Slover's world view, “The food we buy matters. As our food systems become increasingly

complex, the food we choose to consume affects not only our own health, but also the environment, our ethical framework, the Earth's biodiversity, and so much more.” Slover's journey began by mapping out his grocery shopping experience. For more details on his mapping process, visit wrapgenius.me.



Back to Campbell Soup Company. What else is behind its move? Campbell Fresh (aka C-Fresh) helps provide an explanation. It is a US\$1-billion division of Campbell Soup Company, with four manufacturing plants as well as farming operations on about 35,000 acres. Close to 40 per cent of net sales are farm products, with the balance (60 per cent) being consumer packaged goods packed under brand names Bolthouse, and Garden Fresh Gourmet and Campbell Fresh Soup.

Strategically the C-Fresh division has positioned itself to leverage efficiencies of BIG with the emotional touch points

and humanization which comes with a collection of SMALL company brands. Edward L. Carolan, president of the C-Fresh division, described it as follows during a July investor presentation. C-Fresh combines:

“Best of BIG: CAPABILITIES” which leverage: 1. Manufacturing Expertise; 2. Customer Partnerships; 3. Scale Logistics; and 4. R&D and Consumer Insight, with “Best of SMALL: BRAND APPROACH” which embodies/enables: 1. Real Roots; 2. Mission-Driven; 3. Incubate Innovation; and 4. Experiential.

Campbell Soup Company is just one example. In a similar world-view move, Danone recently announced, remarkably, that it will become the largest public benefit corporation, which puts social good ahead of its business interests. The company is rallying around positive action for planet and human health.

Undoubtedly, the potential Amazon-Whole Foods acquisition is another story to watch.

These recent transformations may suggest a tipping point to more holistic transparency is coming soon. Platforms such as the Sage Project may be the future foundation of innovation.

Comments are most welcome! Keep them coming. 🍎

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

RESEARCH CHEFS IN CANADA



News > file

UofG students shine at RCA conference

University of Guelph food science students showed their skills during the Research Chefs Association Annual Conference & Culinology Expo, which this year took place in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The university announced on its website that Colin Booth, Yinglei Li, Brittany Chow and Monica Chau were the winners of the Research Chefs Association Student National Pastry Culinology Competition. The students won with their “guava bizcocho (tart) with rum ice cream and roasted pineapple sauce.”

Another team of students — Myra Siddiqi, Natalie Ng, Rachel Tseng and Rodeth Asis — came in second in the National Savory Culinology Competition with their “sausage criolla and mofongo dumpling dish.”



U of G RCA pastry team



U of G RCA savoury team

S.Pellegrino Young Chef event announces competitors

The 2018 S.Pellegrino Young Chef Competition has announced that more than 200 chefs from around the world have been selected to compete at the semi-final competitions.

The Canadian semi-finalists include: Alessandro Bergamo (Maison Boulud, Montreal), Benjamin Mauroy-Langlais (Automne, Montreal), Dominic Giroux (L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon, Montreal), Jean-Philippe Cloutier (Beckta Dining & Wine, Ottawa), John Ngo (Ritz-Carlton, Toronto), Mark Classen (Villa Eyrie Resort, Malahat, BC), Oh Jun Kwon (Oma, Toronto), and Amanda Lambert (North 44, Toronto). Jorge Muñoz Santos (Bar Oso, Whistler, BC) and Yoann Therer (Araxi Restaurant, Brackendale, BC) will compete for a second year.

The chef contestants will compete against each other at the Canadian semi-finals on Oct. 2 at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. The winning chef will receive a mentorship with a leading Canadian chef, before advancing to compete for the 2018 S.Pellegrino Young Chef title in Milan.

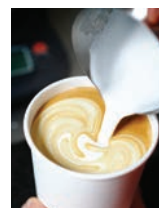
IN BRIEF

> **Dwayne MacLeod** of **The Barrington Steakhouse & Oyster Bar** was the winner in the Halifax stop on the **BattleApps** series of chef competitions. The event, presented by **McCain Foodservice** and **Underground Chef Co.**, was one in a series of eight which began in November 2016 in Toronto and ended in Kelowna in July. During each competition battling chefs were given a new McCain product and other ingredients and challenged with creating three appetizers. The organizers describe the BattleApps competition as “a new way for independent restaurant operators to discover McCain product.” It “gives industry chefs a chance to see how they can take a McCain product and make it their own.”

> In April in Vaughan, Ont. two former U.S. White House chefs — **Guy Mitchell** and **Michael Woody Raber** — went “knife to knife.” **The Canadian Liver Foundation**



organized the event, called **Step Up to the Plate Chef Challenge**, at which chefs were tasked with creating “the best liver-healthy gourmet meal using a pre-selected list of ingredients.” Each chef had a team and their meals were prepared for a panel of judges. Chefs-in-training from the Liaison College Culinary Schools also prepared and served competing appetizer recipes submitted by each of the chefs.



> **Comax Flavors** recently conducted a study on coffee under the company's new food and beverage primary market research program. The program aims to help industry “better understand consumers’

behaviour, usage and attitudes towards a variety of food and beverages,” says the company. The Wake Up and Smell the Coffee study, which had 500 U.S. respondents between the ages of 18 and 70, found that flavour is the “number-one driver of coffee purchases among all generations,” “40 per cent of respondents’ coffee habits change depending on the season” and “67 per cent of baby boomers and 81 per cent of those 71 and older do not drink RTD coffee.”

FLAVOUR SAVER?



Researchers in the Food Technology department at Sweden's Lund University have found that “electric shocks make dried herbs taste better.” In fact they taste and smell almost as if they were fresh, according to the university. So far the researchers have tested the pulsed electric field technology on basil and plan to try dill next.



By John Placko

The Blue Lagoon at sunset

Destination Iceland



Icelandic classics at North West



(L-R): Ari Freyr Valdimarsson, head chef at Foodcellar (Matarkjallarinn) with Judie and John Placko

Just five and a half hours flight from Toronto, Iceland is a busy tourist destination these days. One in five people on this Nordic island is a tourist, making tourism the number-one industry, followed by fishing. The 103,000-sq.-km island, population 338,000, is home to some of the most dedicated and talented chefs on the planet. I met up with five of them in my travels around Iceland.

Local ingredients in Iceland include puffin, crowberry, blueberry, rhubarb, wild mushrooms, wild thyme, lovage, angelica, dried seaweed, and skyr (a low-fat, high-protein cultured dairy product). And Iceland is certainly known for its salmon, scallops, haddock, plaice, halibut, herring, shrimp, and Norway lobster (also called Dublin Bay prawn, langoustine or scampi) has been called “the most important commercial crustacean in Europe.” Icelandic (Northern European short-tailed) sheep, which you see everywhere as you drive around Iceland, have a fine grain and distinct, delicate flavour. CDN\$1 gets you 78 Icelandic króna (ISK). A main course in a mid-scale restaurant will set you back CDN\$45 to \$60. It’s not inexpensive to visit, but worth every penny.

One of our many stops around Iceland was North West restaurant and hotel, located in the northwest of Iceland, two and a half hours north of Reykjavik where we met Kristinn Bjarnason, chef/owner at North West. Trained in Reykjavik, Bjarnason opened the business just two years ago. My wife Judie and I had a wonderful dinner and I toured their newly renovated kitchen.

We started with a platter of Icelandic classics such as thinly sliced smoked lamb, marinated salmon, dill mustard sauce, skyr, hardfiskur (dried fish) with butter, pickled herring and rye bread, followed by freshly made fish cakes and pan-fried faul fillet (horse) with wild mushroom sauce, which was excellent.

Ari Freyr Valdimarsson, head chef at Foodcellar (Matarkjallarinn) located in the city centre, spent seven years working in Copenhagen, during which he won gold and silver medals with the Junior National Team and was a finalist for Iceland’s Chef of the Year in 2007. I asked Valdimarsson what unique products he uses that most chefs wouldn’t know about and he offered



Scallops at Foodcellar



me a sample of “sea truffle” (bangskegg), Norwegian Kelp. They’re hand-picked sustainably along Iceland’s coast, smell and taste similar to truffle mushrooms, and when dried are excellent as a seasoning.

Foodcellar has a varied menu of local specialties and an impressive beverage menu with award-winning cocktails featuring modernist techniques. Dinner consisted of a rich seafood soup with smoked haddock, scallop and shrimp followed by grilled lamb tenderloin and then tusk (a North Atlantic cod-like fish) and salmon cooked sous vide at 40°C. I gave Valdimarsson a sample of edible helium balloon mix and we made a few balloons. He seemed quite excited about the prospect of serving the balloons at a future event.

Hilmar Jonsson is most certainly a household name in Iceland. In 1981 chef Jonsson, with his wife Elin, founded *Gestgjafinn*, the only gourmet magazine in Iceland. In 1987 they sold *Gestgjafinn* and started their cooking school, Matreidsluskolinn OKKAR, which they ran for three years.

Jonsson was kind enough to invite us to stay with him on our last night in the country, Iceland’s National Day, and was very proud to be flying the Icelandic flag outside his home. We dined on freshly grilled langoustines and we sampled Börkur, a bitter made from Icelandic birch bark. Jonsson really knows his seafood, having been corporate chef for Icelandic Seafood for 22 years, 12 of them in the U.S. Having earned his Master Chef Certification in 1969, Hilmar went on to prepare most banquets given by the former Icelandic president Vigdis Finnbogadottir, both abroad and at Bessastadir, Iceland during the 1980s and 1990s.

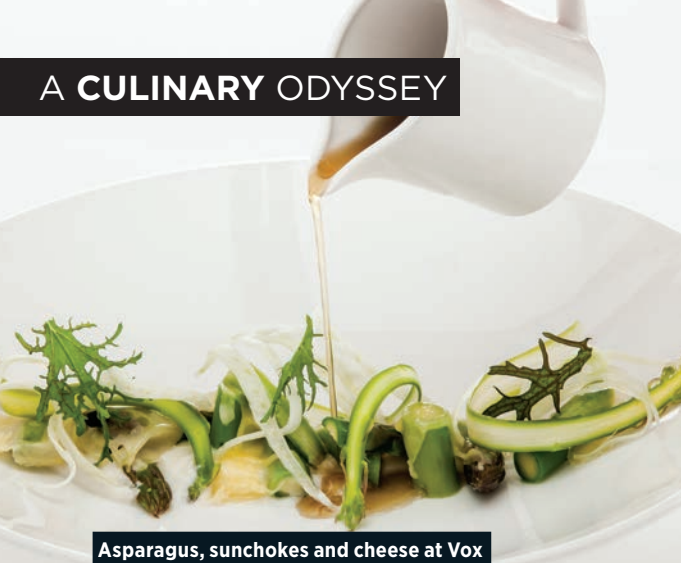
We talked about his life growing up on a farm, as well as the unique Icelandic preserving method that uses soured whey left over from making skyr for storing meat over the winter months (the key was to cook the meat very well before placing it into to the fermented whey so it wouldn’t spoil). Jonsson received the Honorary Service Order from the Icelandic president, the president of Finland, King of Spain, and the Queen of England, and was president of the Icelandic Chefs Association for six years and vice-president of the World Association of Chefs’ Societies from 2008 to 2014.



(L-R): Hilmar Jonsson and John

Jonsson had recommended we dine at Vox, so I met up with Fannar Vernharðsson at the Hilton Reykjavik Nordica. Vox is proud to introduce the manifesto of New Nordic Cuisine, placing emphasis on fresh Icelandic and Scandinavian sources for their modern menus. The seven-course tasting menu consisted of langoustine, salmon tartar, beef tataki, smoked haddock, scallops from Breiðafjörður, fillet of lamb and Icelandic berries from Kvistar. The bread, with freshly churned butter, was dusted with angelica powder, which has a similar taste to juniper berries. I hadn’t tasted angelica since my days at culinary school, when we used the candied root ➔

A CULINARY ODYSSEY



Asparagus, sunchokes and cheese at Vox



Andrésson's bronze winning platter

to garnish desserts. At CDN\$165 (ISK 12,900) for the entire tasting menu, it was an amazing value for a spectacular dinner in one of Iceland's best restaurants.

Vernharðsson is a dedicated chef, having been a member of the Icelandic Culinary Team from 2011 to 2017, the winner of Dessert of the Year in 2012, and a competitor in Chef of the Year and the Culinary World Cup in 2011 and 2014 respectively. He trained in Reykjavik and worked at Apótek restaurant for three years. When asked about his stagiare at Mathias Dahlgren's Stockholm restaurants Matbaren and Matsalen, Vernharðsson couldn't say enough

about the impact his time there had on his career. His time spent travelling throughout Asia is also evident in a few of the dishes at Vox, which he became executive chef of in 2011. Vernharðsson believes that Iceland's chef schooling system, which allows students to spend a majority of their four-year apprenticeship learning all aspects of the kitchen, has been a major influence on the success of Iceland in the international culinary world.

I had arranged to meet up with the recent bronze winner of the 2017 Bocuse d'Or, Viktor Örn Andrésson, just north of Reykjavík on the Langa River at an upscale fishing lodge that he and his team would be catering to for the summer salmon fly fishing season. With the amount of fish Icelandic chefs work with on a daily basis, it's not surprising that Andrésson won a special prize for the best fish dish in the 2016 Bocuse d'Or Europe. Up until then, an Icelandic competitor had not made it onto the podium at the Bocuse d'Or since 2001, but Andrésson's two turns as the assistant to the Iceland competitor in 2005 and 2009 certainly gave him the experience he needed to win. He believes the formula for success is the continuity of information and experience that is always transferred to the next chef competing, a sentiment echoed by Vernharðsson.

Andrésson, a member of the Icelandic National Culinary Team since 2009, was executive chef of the high-end spa The Blue Lagoon from 2010 until 2015. He's won gold and silver medals at the Culinary World Cup in 2010, was Icelandic Chef of the Year in 2013 and Nordic Chef of the Year in 2014. He's a big fan of sous vide, and has many kitchen gadgets, including a Thermomix, and uses custom moulds and modernist ingredients like gellen, agar and xanthan gum as needed.

Andrésson believes the financial crisis that began in Iceland in 2008 had a positive impact on the country's cuisine. Before the crisis Icelandic cuisine included ingredients from all over the world, including kangaroo, and didn't have an identity. After the crisis the costs of imported food almost doubled and chefs had to look from within to find their Nordic roots. Today the cuisine is thriving, and there is worldwide recognition for the country's fishing grounds, which are without a doubt among the purest in the world.

The good news is that you can taste some of Andrésson's creations in Canada. He'll be in Toronto for Taste of Iceland, from Nov. 9 to Nov. 12, at Leña Restaurante. ●



(L-R): Fannar Vernharðsson of Vox with John



(L-R): Viktor Örn Andrésson, bronze winner of the 2017 Bocuse d'Or, with John

John Placko is culinary director of Modern Culinary Academy and Bar 120: Cuisine Transformed, Pearson International Airport. Contact him at (416) 666-9544, or at johneplacko@gmail.com



How to promote your brand on a **tight budget**

Birgit Blain

The formula for a brand's success starts with the basics: a taste profile and point of difference that are relevant to the target customer; consistent quality and a commitment to food safety; functional packaging that has shelf impact and effectively communicates the brand message; and the right price.

Without these ingredients, getting and keeping listings will be a tough battle.

Many brand owners don't realize they are responsible for marketing their products to move them off the store shelf into shopping carts. This requires a well-thought-out marketing plan to get the word out to retailers and consumers. The objective is to raise awareness and drive trial and repurchase.

Creative thinking is required to promote a brand on a tight budget. Here are nine simple recommendations.

1. Put the horse before the cart.

Before investing time and money in promotions, ensure products are available for purchase.

2. Maximize exposure to buyers.

Exhibiting at trade shows is worth the investment to gain exposure to numerous buyers simultaneously, provided it's done effectively. Partnering with complementary, non-competing brands can reduce the cost. Inquire about government subsidies for trade shows. Shows often have competitions for the best new product, packaging or innovation — a great way to get publicity, especially for winning products.

3. Jump at speaking engagements.

Get in front of retailers by speaking at



conferences. Many are looking for innovative, on-trend products to meet customer needs and differentiate their offering from competitors. Communicate how you are promoting the brand to drive traffic to their stores.

4. Hone the message. Trying to be all things to all people by making multiple claims confuses consumers. Ask yourself "How does our brand satisfy our customers' needs better than our competitors?" Distill the message down to the one big reason people need the product.

5. Show the face of the brand. People love a compelling story and meeting the brand owner. No one can tell the story with more passion. Authenticity trumps marketing speak.

6. Build a consumer database.

A consumer contact list is like gold. It can be as simple as a spreadsheet. Use it to keep in touch and share valued-added content through newsletters, blogs and surveys. Understanding areas of interest enables personalization of communications. But ensure they have given permission to be contacted, in compliance with Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation.

7. A taste is worth a thousand

pictures. In-store demos get product into customers' mouths. It's also an opportunity to engage with shoppers and gain valuable insights.

8. Support your community.

Give target customers a taste by participating in events where they hang out. If they like a product, their first question is "Where can I buy it?" Anticipate the question and broadcast the answer. Note that sample giveaways must meet labelling regulations.

9. Use social media effectively.

Although social media is perceived as being "free," using it effectively to communicate a consistent brand message requires time and resources. A misstep can damage a brand instantly. Develop a social media strategy including goals and objectives. Commit to the platform that is most popular with your target audience. Post relevant, value-added content that aligns with your brand, drafting statements with care. Exploit media coverage to its fullest by sharing it expeditiously.

Never miss an opportunity to promote your brand. Get the buzz going and keep it going. A little ingenuity can stretch a tight budget to raise awareness, drive trial and capture sales. ●

As a packaged foods consultant, Birgit Blain helps brands that struggle to maintain listings. Her experience includes 17 years with Loblaw and President's Choice. Contact her at Birgit@BBandAssoc.com or learn more at www.BBandAssoc.com

Advanced Design & Manufacturing Expo Review

Advanced Design & Manufacturing (ADM) Expo Toronto took place May 16 to 18, 2017. The show brought together Automation Technology Expo, Design & Manufacturing, Packex, Plast-Ex, and Powder & Bulk Solids all under one roof. The show returns to Toronto again June 4 to 6, 2019. Here are a few highlights *Food in Canada* saw during the show.

Industrial gas supply

With a focus on reliable and safe industrial gas supply (such as nitrogen, oxygen, and argon) and advanced gas technologies, Air Products and Chemicals Inc. helps customers improve efficiency for applications, including size reduction, combustible dust explosion prevention through inerting, process cooling, and gas-assist moulding. www.airproducts.ca

Bundle it!

ATS-Tanner Banding Systems Inc. offers machines that gently strap products together. Its paper and plastic bands eliminate damage to bundled products and also offer a branding opportunity. The company's ATS ultrasonic welding technology provides a seal that holds throughout the supply chain. www.ats-tanner.ca

Detection specialist

Eriez Magnetics manufactures a full line of metal detectors and magnetic separators that remove unwanted tramp metal. It also offers vibratory feeders and conveyors and bin vibrators that help keep production moving and classify dry products by size. www.eriez.com

Material handling & more

Eckert Machines Inc. represents several manufacturers of equipment for processors of fresh-cut, canned and frozen foods, as well as the bakery, beverage, snack food and non-food industries.

The company offers machinery to enhance viability and safety of customers' final products.

www.eckertmachines.com



Perfect printing

Harlund Industries Inc. offers solutions for product coding and identification. The company showcased its new Hitachi UX Series continuous ink jet printers, and the new Foxjet E Series Printheads. www.harlund.com

Fill, portion and cut

Handtmann Canada provides vacuum filling technology and portioning systems for the food industry. The company also offers continuous vacuum filling machines, high-speed portioning and linking machines, and hanging and cutting lines for the meat and bakery industries. www.handtmann.us

Keep it safe

NSF International - Canada offers food services such as food safety and quality consulting, auditing and certification, training, quality and technical services, and innovative solutions for the food and beverage industries. www.nsf.org

Custom detection

Fortress Technology Inc. manufactures custom metal detector systems such as its new Interceptor metal detector with simultaneous multi-frequency operation, and Halo automatic testing system, an automatic metal detector testing device. www.fortresstechnology.com

Vacuum pumps & blowers

R.E. Morrison Equipment manufactures vacuum systems and air knife drying systems under the Adamark brand. During the show the company introduced its air knife drying product test facility. The company distributes Becker vacuum pumps and Republic blowers. www.remequip.com

Form/fill/seal machines

Reiser Canada Co. featured its food packaging equipment and solutions, including the Repack form/fill/seal packaging machines, Ross tray seal equipment, Supervac vacuum chamber packaging machines, Fabbri automatic stretch wrappers, and Variovac form/fill/seal packaging machines. www.reiser.com

Pack it up!

VC999 Canada highlighted its Packaging Systems such as its thermoformer packaging machines, vacuum chamber machines, shrink tank, dryer and tray sealing systems. www.home.vc999.com

IFT17 Review

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) held IFT17 in Las Vegas from June 25 to 28. This year's show attracted more than 20,000 attendees, included 100 sessions and more than 1,200 exhibitors. *Food in Canada* was at the show and offers our take on some of the hottest products and services. In 2018, the show takes place in Chicago from July 15 to 18.

Food safety & marination

WTI Inc. was founded in 1978 and has grown from a small specialty ingredients company into a leading supplier of food safety and marination products and technologies. www.wtiinc.com

High-end flavour

Carmi Flavor & Fragrance Co. manufactures high-quality natural, natural/artificial and artificial flavours in liquid or powder form for the entire food and beverage industries. www.carmiflavors.com

Powdered ingredients

Amtech Ingredients manufactures a range of powdered specialty food ingredients. The company offers a proprietary line of sweeteners, condiments, specialty, non-dairy creamers and powdered vegetable shortenings. www.amtechingredients.com

Non-GM potato starch

Avebe America Inc. offers solutions for texture improvement, protein enrichment or more advanced fat or gelatin replacement. Avebe is a leading company in potato starch and potato protein. www.avebe.com

Taste & nutrition

Caldic can help develop customer-specific formulations and solutions. Its areas of expertise include animal nutrition, bakery, confectionery, dairy, savoury, beverages, fruit preserves, and nutritional products. www.caldic.com



Berry good

Fruit d'Or is the leader in organic cranberry processing in North America. Fruit d'Or offers a wide range of cranberry and blueberry products: dried, concentrate, juice, frozen or fresh fruits and nutraceuticals. www.fruit-dor.ca



Pack it up!

Buckhorn, a Myers Industries, Inc. company, provides reusable plastic packaging systems to help food and beverage customers improve supply chain performance and reduce material handling costs. Buckhorn offers unique packaging products that solve problems for the world's best brands. www.buckhorninc.com

Flavours from nature

Bell Flavors & Fragrances creates and delivers flavours, fragrances, botanical extracts and specialty ingredients. The company aims to capture, perfect and bottle nature's flavours and essences. www.bellff.com



Unlocking flavour

Butter Buds Food Ingredients uses proprietary enzyme modification technology to unlock the potent flavour elements in butter, cheese and other flavourful fats to deliver concentrated natural flavours. The ingredients are economical and offer clean label statements. www.butterbuds.com

Enhance taste

DSM Food Specialties supplies food enzymes, cultures, bio-preservation, hydrocolloids, taste and health ingredients. The company tailors its ingredients to local requirements. www.dsm.com

Flavour blends

French's Flavor Ingredients' lineup of French's Dry Flavors delivers four popular consumer flavours: Buffalo, Barbecue, Caesar and Cajun. The flavours are free-flowing dehydrated blends, are easily reconstituted with water, and add flavour without adding moisture. www.frenchsflavoringredients.com



*Gord DeJong, vice-president,
Siwin Foods*

Siwin Foods Edmonton, Alta.

Deanna Rosolen

If it hadn't been for Alberta's Beijing Office, Siwin Foods Ltd. might not ever have been established. Today it's a growing manufacturer of ethnic foods based in Edmonton that relies on local ingredients and people.

But back in the early 2000s, says the company's vice-president Gord DeJong, Siwin Foods was just an idea. As DeJong explains, the China-based parent company, Yantia Xiwang Foods Company Ltd., "wanted to export into different countries and thought it would be best to set up shop in the West."

The company met with representatives at Alberta's international office in Beijing, a meeting that led them to Alberta's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and then to the Food Processing Development Centre (FPDC) in Leduc. The Chinese were impressed, says DeJong, with the support offered to them at every step of getting a company off the ground in Canada – so much so that they stayed and formed Siwin Foods in 2004. Siwin Foods is a fully Canadian company today; the parent company provides financial support.



At about the same time, DeJong, who has a background in food manufacturing, left the company he worked for to take a job with Alberta's Agriculture ministry. Siwin Foods became one of his clients.

In 2005, Siwin Foods began working with the FPDC, which helped the company understand everything "from the cultural differences to food regulations in Canada," says DeJong. Siwin Foods began producing sausage products at the centre (Yantia Xiwang Foods produces sausages and other meat products in China). By 2007, a new resource became available to Siwin Foods. The Agrivalue Processing Business Incubator opened and that year Siwin Foods became the incubator's first client.

Siwin Foods started out renting one suite at the incubator. It also began producing other products such as pot stickers and dumplings, which didn't have as many players in Canada. The company then started making Filipino meat products such as Longanisa and Tosino. Those decisions to make unique products were strategic, says DeJong, as it was a challenge for the company to distinguish itself at the start. "There were a lot of companies out there that have been around for generations," he says. "So to start up with a new name that no one has heard of and not having a brand, that was a challenge."

But the company defied the hurdles. By 2012 Siwin Foods needed another suite at the incubator. At the same time, the company was designing and beginning to build its state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly, 35,000-sq.-ft. custom facility. It was DeJong who

advised the fledgling manufacturer along the way on selecting a property and the building design. Siwin Foods hired DeJong in 2013 and then by early 2014 moved into the new facility.

The company's products today are found across Canada, and growth, says DeJong, has been "fantastic." The company's success, he says, comes from setting themselves apart and using "the best ingredients to make the best quality products. We keep sodium levels lower than our competitors, protein high, carbs low. Everything the consumer is looking for." ●

Q&A



Q: What challenges do you face today?

A: "We've seen our utility costs rising and the carbon tax is adding to that. That's a challenge. Our minimum wage is affecting us or it will. Labour costs in Alberta are getting to be quite a bit higher than other provinces."

Q: What opportunities are there?

A: "Companies are getting bigger and acquiring other companies. As they get so big it leaves a lot of opportunities on the table for SMEs, since some of the smaller retailers are getting left behind. We feel we can capture those opportunities. Also, Canada and China are putting new regulations in place for trade. We are working towards positioning ourselves to take advantage of those opportunities. We're looking at adding square footage to our facility. We purchased the property with the ability to double our footprint at this location. We won't be in the ground this year but we are starting to design now."

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