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35 FOOD-GRADE LUBRICANTS

FOOD *in* CANADA

Canada's food & beverage processing magazine

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Cover photo: Anastasia_Stoma/Getty Images Plus



Next generation retail

When was the last time you bought your dinner from a vending machine? If that question conjures up images of stale tuna sandwiches, it's probably been a while. You may also be surprised to learn that these retail gold mines are undergoing a revival.

This month Byte Foods, a vending machine business specializing in high-end fresh and healthy foods, made headlines when it announced that it was partnering with Chef'd, a Los Angeles-based meal kit company, to bring the latter's dinner solutions to 100 Byte retail units in Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area. Byte has more than 500 of its unattended vending machines in the region, and plans to expand the meal solutions to all of these within the next six months.

Byte offers the next generation of retail — patented “smart” refrigerators placed in offices, apartment buildings, gyms, universities and hospitals. According to the company, its “real-time data allow Byte to algorithmically customize the assortment at every location.” The units are the ideal retailer (and an important new channel) for ready-to-cook, pre-portioned meals, especially considering the number of consumers who prefer not to leave the office for lunch, or who routinely shop for dinner items on their way home.

For food and beverage manufacturers, vending machines are another important point of sale, one that can quickly and easily go where your customers go. As a result, vending machines are popping up at sports games, music festivals, theatres, malls and other public spaces, offering every type of food and beverage

imaginable. Attention-grabbing product launches and limited-edition items are a popular choice for vending, especially when there's an imaginative twist to the experience. Younger consumers are especially drawn to the format for its speed, convenience and fun factor.

That may be why Reis & Irvy's (the franchise brand of San Diego's Generation NEXT Vending Robots) had pre-sold more than 1,000 units worth an estimated US\$40 million before it even hit the market in April in the U.S. This month it announced it had master franchise agreements in place for Edmonton and Calgary worth over \$5.2 million. The company's FroYo Kiosk, a fully automated frozen yogurt robot vending machine, offers Dannon YoCream's frozen yogurt, ice cream, sorbets and gelatos, as well as a wide choice of toppings. Customers interact with the robotic unit through a touchscreen, with a lot of action to keep them engaged.

This new format vending machine — part retailer and part entertainer — is designed to disrupt the ubiquitous ice cream/frozen yogurt store format. If it succeeds we'll likely see the concept spread into other foodservice and food products. With the traditional grocery store no longer the only retailer in town, vending offers an interesting option. To learn more about the revival of vending, turn to “Vending va-va-voom” on pg. 18. ●

Carolyn

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This treat has a long tail, er...tale

An iconic Canadian treat is celebrating its 40th anniversary. To celebrate, BeaverTails will have its first-ever National BeaverTails Pastry Day on June 1, 2018 at a select number of store locations across Canada. Those stores will be giving away unlimited free Classic Cinnamon & Sugar pastries. The company will also have a limited-edition Birthday Cake BeaverTails pastry available from June 4 to Sept. 30 at most locations in Canada.



News > file

PHOTO: CNW Group/Daily Bread Food Bank



Matt Kennedy of Kennedy Orchards with "rescued" apples about to be donated to Second Harvest.

Momentum growing to fight food waste

The Walmart Foundation has given grants to several expert organizations based in Ontario in an effort to help reduce food loss and waste.

The foundation donated \$3,453,576 to The Daily Bread Food Bank and Second Harvest to share. The Daily Bread Food Bank will use the funding to support its Farm to Food Bank program, which will provide more fresh produce to food bank clients and reduce food waste from local farms. Second Harvest will use its share of the funding to support evidence-based solutions for food recovery. The organization will work with Value Chain Management International to examine why and how food loss happens. It will also launch FoodRescue.ca, an online system that provides businesses with the ability to more quickly donate surplus food.

Food Banks Canada received \$2.8 million from the foundation, which it will use to help food banks better obtain and store fresh and perishable items, and expand food acquisition technology.

The Walmart Foundation also gave \$520,049 to the Guelph, Ont.-based Canadian Centre for Food Integrity, which will work with Provision Coalition to examine Canadian attitudes on food waste and assist food and beverage businesses make measurable food waste reductions in their facilities.



Bring on the bacon!

In April Maple Leaf Foods partnered with Smoke's Poutinerie to launch a contest for bacon lovers. Customers at Smoke's Poutinerie locations had the option of adding bacon to their favourite poutine dishes, which also gave them the chance to fill out a ballot to win free bacon for a year.

photo: TheCrimsonMonkey/Getty Images

We got the beets



The National Garden Bureau (NGB) of Downers Grove, Ill. has named 2018 the year of the beet. According to NGB's website, beets are found pretty much in all parts of the world and consumed in a multitude of ways: roasted, in salads, in soups, pickled, shredded. According to NGB, beets are high in fibre, vitamins A and C, have more iron than most vegetables, and are rich in antioxidants, calcium, potassium, phosphorous and folic acid.



In April Corbin Tomaszeski, a Toronto-based chef who was raised on a farm outside of Edmonton, Alta., launched his first cookbook through Figure 1 Publishing. *In Good Company* emphasizes foods for gatherings with friends and family, and includes more than 100 recipes for breakfast fare, savoury small plates and super salads, tasty mains and favourite desserts. The recipes also feature a nod to the chef's Polish-Canadian upbringing as well as his past 30 years of experience as a chef. A few favourites are Baba's Pierogis, Tomaszeski Family Borscht, Four Season Tartines and Fennel-and-Pistachio-Crusted Lamb Rack.





Agribusiness to build innovation centre

Richardson International, one of Canada’s largest agribusiness companies, is investing \$30 million to build an innovation centre in downtown Winnipeg.

The company says the four-storey, 62,000-sq.-ft. facility will feature state-of-the-art technology and equipment, and will include Richardson’s food development team, product development suites, an analytical laboratory, and a culinary test and demonstration kitchen. The centre will also house a microbiology lab and a quality analysis area, and features room for expansion for innovation such as robotics and automation in food packaging and processing. Chuck Cohen, senior vice-president of Technology for Richardson, says in a statement that the goal of the centre is to become “a training facility for our employees and customers and an education centre for food science students and the culinary community.”

ARE YOU CANADA’S SWEETEST BAKERY?

Dawn Food Products Inc. is asking Canadians to name the country’s sweetest bakery. The U.S. bakery manufacturer and ingredients supplier has launched its first annual Sweetest Bakery in Canada competition. Bakeries from across the country can enter to win the title, a \$10,000 prize package, national publicity and a celebration party in their community. Contest voting ends July 31. For more information, visit sweetestbakeryincanada.com



WHO wants trans fats out of global food supply

The World Health Organization (WHO) wants the food industry to eliminate industrially produced trans fats from the global food supply. The WHO released a statement (“WHO plan



to eliminate industrially produced trans-fatty acids from global food supply”) on May 14, 2018 explaining that trans fats “lead to more than 500,000 deaths of people from cardiovascular disease” each year. The WHO also released REPLACE, a step-by-step guide for food manufacturers. REPLACE offers six strategies to “ensure the prompt, complete and sustained elimination” of trans fats. Canada announced its ban of partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), the main source of industrially produced trans fats, from our food supply in 2017. The ban takes effect Sept. 15, 2018.



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IN BRIEF

> Norwood, Ont.-based **Entomo Farms** recently raised Series A funding with the help of **Maple Leaf Foods**, which now has a minority investment in the cricket, insect and mealworm producer. Entomo Farms says the funding will help it expand to keep up with growing demand in the alternative proteins market. Both companies will continue as separate entities.

> The British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) says once legalized, public cannabis stores and the online retail store for



non-medical cannabis will operate under the brand **BC Cannabis Stores**. LDB says it expects to open the first government-operated retail store and to offer online sales to the public by the end of this summer. BC Cannabis Stores will be the province's sole online cannabis retailer.

> Canada's Greenest Employers is an editorial competition organized by the Canada's Top

INSPIRING GREENS

Alberta-based The Star Group says its Inspired Greens greenhouse program is ready for phase two — growing up to 20 million heads of lettuce per year. The \$30-million first phase of the project took two years to complete, and involved the acquisition of new greenhouse technology from around the globe. The company's products, sold under the Inspired Greens brand, include Multileaf Trio, Butter, Batavia, Oak and Romaine.



Ancient onion won't bring tears to your eyes

Anthropologists in Sweden have found an onion that is more than 1,500 years old. The article "Ancient onion reveals Roman links with 'Sweden's Pompeii'" (The Local, April 11, 2018) explains that the preserved bulb was found on the island of Öland and shows that trade with Rome went far beyond the gold coins and jewellery previously found at the site. Onions weren't generally used in Scandinavian cooking, says the article, so it would have been considered exotic.



100 Employers project. There were several food businesses among this year's winners, including: **Aramark Canada Ltd., Griffith Foods Ltd., Labatt Brewing Company Limited, Nature's Path Foods Inc., Ocean Wise Conservation Association, and Reunion Island Coffee Ltd.**

> The Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating presented Toronto's **Steam Whistle Brewing** with its National Water Wise Award for the brewery's commitment to water conservation and purification in its core operations.



(Middle) Tim McLaughlin, director of Marketing for Steam Whistle Brewing, accepts the Water Wise Award from Matt Wiesenfeld, program manager for the Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating, and Stephanie Steiner, director of Sales at Dahl Valves.

> Vancouver-based **Valens GroWorks Corp.**, a multi-licensed, vertically integrated provider of cannabis products, has increased its processing capacity of supercritical CO₂-extracted cannabis oil at its wholly owned subsidiary Valens AgriTech in Kelowna, BC.

> Loblaw Companies Limited awarded **Mucci Farms** its President's Choice Fresh Product of



Agriculture and Forestry Minister Oneil Carlier (middle) and Edmonton-Centre MLA David Shepherd (R) sample local food creations from Chef Blair Lebsack of RGE RD restaurant.

> **Paturel International Co.** received \$36,000 from the province of Newfoundland to establish a frozen lobster production line at its facility on Deer Island. The project will allow the company to increase production and return more employees to work.



(L-R) Stuart MacKay, general manager of Paturel's operations on Deer Island, and Rick Doucet, the provincial Aquaculture and Fisheries minister.

the Year Award for the company's PC Ontario Greenhouse Strawberries.

> **Campari Canada** has updated the labelling on its Grand Marnier beverage, noting that the new label is more modern and uses softer text. In other news, Grand Marnier's master blender, **Patrick Raguenaud**, was elected president of the France-based National Interprofessional Bureau of Cognac.



> The province of Alberta plans to support the province's \$1-billion local food industry through the **Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector Act**. The proposed legislation would raise the profile of the local food and beverage industry, strengthen consumer confidence, identify solutions to challenges facing producers and processors, and support sustainable growth in the agriculture and food processing sector.

> **Cindy Lee**, founder of T&T Supermarkets, and CEO **Tina Lee** are the winners of the 2018 Canadian Grand Prix Trailblazer Lifetime Achievement Award from the Retail Council of Canada



to Starting a Craft Brewery in Ontario. The guide covers planning, financing, marketing and branding, business insurance, brewery floor plan and design, becoming a brewmaster, start-up support, sourcing supplies, packaging, distribution, and government requirements.

> **Aurora Importing & Distributing** is the exclusive food sponsor for National Italian Heritage Month, which is this June. To mark the occasion, **Christian Pritchard**, Aurora's executive chef and culinary adventurer, has developed a selection of original food and drink recipes showcasing the company's ingredients.



Farfalle with zucchini and pesto.

> The government of Canada and the province of BC are funding a feasibility study for a **BC Wine Centre of Excellence**. The centre would offer wine and tourism education, and would link BC's wine industry with the tourism industry and with post-secondary institutions. An industry advisory committee is leading the study on existing international

wine Centres of Excellence. Both phases of the study are expected to be complete by this summer.

> In March the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs released its **Guide**

> Toronto-based brewer **Old Tomorrow Ltd.** has acquired **Double Trouble Brewing**, an Ontario company that markets craft beers in Ontario, BC, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Verkaaik

> Blommer Chocolate Co., a cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier, has named **Bernard Verkaaik** as its new sales agent for Canada.

> **Peter Bilodeau** is now the interim CEO and president of Toronto-based Lineage



Seifert

Grow Company Ltd., which focuses on establishing cannabis businesses.

> **Eric Barlow** has joined the sales team for Arthur, Ont.-based Troll Creek Bridge Inc.



Hartline

> **John Seifert** is now CFO for Pennsylvania-based Tekni-Plex Inc.

> Dynamic Conveyor Corporation has hired

Andrew Hartline as sales manager.

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Maple Leaf revamps entire portfolio

Maple Leaf Foods is revamping its entire portfolio of products to meet “the changing needs of Canadian families.” Maple Leaf says it will ensure that all of its products are made with premium meat and real, simple or natural ingredients, without artificial preservatives, flavours, colours or sweeteners. The company adds that ingredient lists will contain only “pronounceable ingredients that consumers trust.” The changes are part of the company’s new Food Manifesto. The products, which began rolling out in May, will feature a new logo, packaging design and more prominent ingredient list.



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SUPPLIERS NEWS

> **Frulact Canada Inc.** has established a new 58,000-sq.-ft. research and development and food processing facility in Kingston, Ont., with the support of \$6 million from the government of Canada and the province of Ontario. The facility will add 55 new permanent full-time jobs in the area. Frulact supplies value-added ingredients, mainly custom fruit and vegetable preparations for the food and beverage manufacturing industry.

> London, Ont.-based **Crawford Packaging Inc.** has acquired **Celplast Packaging Systems Ltd.**, a provider of shrink films, food trays and lids, lidding films and heat sealable films; and **BVM USA**, the North American distribution arm of BVM Brunner packaging equipment, which is based in Germany.

> Georgia-based **CP Kelco** says nine of its **KELTROL Xanthan Gum** products are now Non-GMO Project (NGP) verified. NGP is a non-profit organization that works to build and protect a non-GMO food supply in North America.



> The Toronto-based **Supply Chain Management Association (SCMA)** has named **Douglas Harrison**, president and CEO of VersaCold Logistics Services, a Fellow of the SCMA, recognizing his great contributions to the field.

> **Blendtek Fine Ingredients Inc.** won two awards at the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. The company received the Business of the Year award and its president, **Steve Zinger**, was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

> The government of Ontario has invested \$1.4 million toward **Griffith Foods Limited’s** \$14.2-million Commercialization Scale-up of Innovative Products project. Funding was available through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund — Food and Beverage Growth Fund. Griffith Foods is a family-owned designer and manufacturer of ingredient systems for food companies.

> **Honeywell Process Solutions** has named **CB Process Instrumentation and Controls** as its authorized channel partner in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan. **Honeywell Thermal Solutions** also named CB Process as its channel partner in BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

> U.S.-based **International Flavors & Fragrances Inc.** has acquired Israel-based **Frutarom**, a flavour and fine ingredients company.

> Switzerland-based **Tetra Pak** has announced it will launch a paper straw for its portion-size carton packages by the end of 2018.

> **SIG** has announced that it will source 100 per cent of its direct materials from only certified sources. Together with **Amcork**, one of its main suppliers, SIG will ensure the aluminum foil supply chain is working toward the performance standard of the **Aluminum Stewardship Initiative**.

> **Givaudan**, a manufacturer of flavours and fragrances, has acquired France-based **Naturex**, a manufacturer of specialty plant-based natural ingredients.



MARKET COMMENTARY: Fruit & vegetable sector under pressure

It will be interesting (and painful) to watch what happens to the fruit and vegetable industry in Ontario. Between the government and grocery chains, F&V is under huge pressure. Higher energy prices because of Cap and Trade, as well as the green energy program, have obviously driven up energy costs, but have had a major impact on packaging costs, which are significant for this industry.

Then there are ever-increasing regulatory requirements creating new hoops and new required jobs to ensure food safety, worker safety and environmental safety standards are met. Of course, we have the sudden lurch up in minimum wages which have stimulated the economies of Mexico and Jamaica, the major sources of F&V labour.

On the other side, Canadian retailers refuse to pass the higher costs on to consumers. Despite the higher costs and

a Canadian dollar dropping from the \$0.90-range to the current high \$0.70s, prices for many horticultural products are actually lower today than four years ago.

Flat to lower selling prices and astonishing increases in packaging, labour and energy prices mean that direct operating costs rose from about 25 per cent of revenue to as much as 60 per cent for many operations. This doesn't leave much to service debt and pay owners/managers.

For sale signs are growing. Government and retailers will be sorry in a few years when all that's left is imports and a few very large conglomerate growers. Watch the wailing and gnashing of teeth when they get what they created — and damn well deserve. ●

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

MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

> Grains: Argentina's dry weather appears to have moved into Brazil and is causing concerns with second crop yields, which is mainly corn. Late spring in the U.S., along with drought in the Southwestern corn belt, are adding uncertainty. Perhaps most importantly, the International Grain Council forecast a decline in stocks of wheat, corn and soy at the end of the next crop year, so there is likely more upside price potential from any adverse crop issues than in recent years.

> Corn: Corn is likely to have the lowest stocks/use ratio of the major grains with normal yields because of lower acres in the U.S., South American drought and strong demand from more livestock and total exports. However, recent improvements in U.S. weather and lack of progress with the China issue are occurring just as July is approaching the \$4.05 to \$4.10 technical resistance. USDA planting progress reports and exports will be key in the very near future. Last month we said if you have futures to watch the \$4.05 area and hold if it goes through. It closed once above it and is backing off. If it can't go through, consider taking profits, but protect above. The next level of resistance is \$4.18 ¾. If you protected with Calls, hold them.

> Wheat: Last month's advice to price

at \$4.68 on July looks good at the moment because the U.S. drought has reduced yield potential, driving the market back up to \$5.30. Improved U.S. weather and likely Black Sea bumper crops are weighing on the market. If you priced with futures, take profit here, but protect above \$5.30.

> Soy oil: Soy oil slid further with July bottoming at \$0.3165, pushed by rising palm oil supplies and India's tariffs. Recent strong exports moved prices back up to the current \$0.323. The market shows signs of breaking out of the downtrend. Protect above \$0.336.

> Sugar: Sugar prices fell even further with reports of a 20-million to 22-million ton surplus. India is beginning to subsidize growers, which will not help end the surplus. July futures dropped another cent plus to the current \$0.112. Long-term support remains at \$0.1013. We still like buying hand to mouth, but would move our protection down to \$0.13, and would forward price a substantial portion of needs near that \$0.1013 area.

> Natural gas: July natural gas has been in a sideways channel since January between \$2.565 and \$2.826, and is currently \$2.76. Inventories remain low though new production is substantial. The main demand question is when and how much will summer heat affect air conditioning. We think that \$2.60 area is a good place for end users to lock in, and/or

protect above \$2.83.

> Crude Oil: July Brent futures broke out above strong resistance at \$70 and, at \$75.52, are the highest since 2014. The trend was created by OPEC controlling supplies effectively enough to drive inventories down and strong demand. The most recent bump is concern over Trump backing out of the Iran nuclear agreement. It means that Iran's oil exports will decline in a few months. We have long suggested that buyers of oil cover above \$60 until there is clear topping action. We would stay covered, risking a move back below \$70. The next levels of resistance are at \$77.30 (weak) and \$90.

> Canadian dollar: The June loonie has been between \$0.765 and \$0.80 since February. Since April 24, it's been bouncing off \$0.776. It's obviously waiting to see which way to move next. A larger Canadian trade deficit and the lowest U.S. unemployment rate since 1983 failed to make it drop. Higher oil prices failed to make it rise. Something will change soon, but this period of stability is decreasing the price volatility, so options premiums are relatively cheap. We continue to like a strategy, if your risk is a lower loonie, of buying Puts with premiums less than three per cent of the strike price, preferably on the September contract. We would look at the \$0.76s or \$0.77s now and hold any you bought when the loonie was higher.





Reducing *Salmonella* in breaded poultry products

Ron Wasik



On March 12, 2018, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) announced that it will be “requiring industry to implement measures at the manufacturing/processing level to reduce *Salmonella* to below detectable amounts in frozen raw breaded products that are packaged for retail sale.” The initiative does not include stuffed raw breaded poultry products and any raw breaded products intended for restaurant and institutional use. The CFIA justified this move, saying that efforts initiated in 2015 requiring the “labelling on frozen raw breaded chicken products that included more prominent messaging such as ‘raw,’ ‘uncooked,’ or ‘must be cooked’ as well as explicit instructions not to microwave the product as well as adding cooking instructions on the inner-packaging bags,” had not worked. This whole thing baffles me, and here is why.

Disconnect between Health Canada & CFIA

The CFIA admits that strong food safety warnings on the front of package and cooking instructions on the inner package haven’t worked after three years. Given this evidence, one has to question the effectiveness of Health Canada’s (HC) proposed legislation on front-of-package nutritional labelling. Hopefully someone will point this out to HC.

Puzzling risk assessment

Setting the level of *Salmonella* “to below detectable amounts,” means that the organism will have to be virtually eliminated

from the product. Aside from the technical challenges industry will face in trying to conform to this standard, there are questions about the degree of risk posed by *Salmonella* at various levels and the need to reduce it “to below detectable amounts.” For example, “category 2” ready-to-eat (RTE) products can carry up to 100 cfu/g of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Codex guidelines recommend that the level of a hazard be reduced and limited to a level that provides the “appropriate level of protection” (ALOP), which rarely needs to be “below detectable amounts.” So what does the level of *Salmonella* in breaded products really need to be to reduce the risk of salmonellosis from undercooking to an acceptable outcome? I doubt that it has to be “below detectable amounts.” Another question is what have other jurisdictions around the world done to mitigate this hazard and how effective have their measures been?

Substantial added cost to consumers & industry

Like *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* is everywhere in our environment and is very hard, if not impossible, to eliminate in raw products using sanitation alone. Ionizing irradiation is arguably the most effective way but it poses some problems. One problem is that the public doesn’t understand ionizing radiation and products so treated have not been commercially successful. Secondly, even if the public suddenly accepted ionizing radiation, the infrastructure is not in place in Canada, which would delay compliance.

The rationale for raw-breaded vs

fully cooked products includes ease of production, lower cost, superior eating quality, longer frozen shelf life and a greater variety of products. Implementing measures to virtually eliminate *Salmonella* as currently proposed could have the following effects:

- » The retail prices of raw breaded poultry products could increase by as much as 50 per cent over current prices. This will force some consumers to make other food choices and thus drive down sales of these products.
- » Processors unable to comply with the current proposal will have to forego supplying those products. Given that food processors survive on paper-thin margins, red ink could flow for those that depend on this category of products.
- » There could be less variety of raw breaded poultry products on store shelves, or raw breaded poultry products might disappear from retail shelves altogether.

If the CFIA is determined to go ahead with this proposal as currently written, it should first pilot the program in a facility such as the Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc, Alta. Options so developed should then be field tested in at least two (small and large) processing facilities for up to a year to validate process effectiveness and the real costs. Let the CFIA know your thoughts on this at www.inspection.gc.ca. Act now! 🍀

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Bait and switch? Incorporation by reference of FOP labelling symbols

Lewis Retik

The consultation period has now closed on Health Canada's (HC) proposed *Regulations Amending the Food and Drug Regulations (Nutrition Symbols, Other Labelling Provisions, Partially Hydrogenated Oils and Vitamin D)* ("Proposed Amendments"). The Proposed Amendments, among other things, would implement HC's front-of-package (FOP) nutrition labelling requirement for certain foods in Canada, with the goal of reducing obesity in Canada. To fully understand how this will impact Canadian food companies, we must wait for the final version of the Proposed Amendments, which could include changes.

FOP symbols have spurred significant debate including on whether food should have negative symbols; whether more aggressive education on existing labelling requirements and overall food literacy has been overlooked; and whether the symbol itself should be factual based (i.e. quantitative), judgmental based (i.e. qualitative) or a hybrid of both qualitative and quantitative information. There is also a question as to whether experiences in other countries, such as Chile, have demonstrated that such FOPs work as a tool towards battling obesity, or whether over time consumers are simply desensitized to the FOP symbols.

An issue that requires further scrutiny, however, is the incorporation by reference of the FOP symbols into the *Food and Drug Regulations*, instead of having the FOP symbols appear directly in the *Food and Drug Regulations*. Effectively, this allows HC to update the FOP

symbols through a bureaucratic process, rather than through a regulatory amendment. This approach to legislation raises a significant issue of process. Incorporation by reference has been a tool used in other areas of Canadian food law as a mechanism to increase efficiency. For example, the previous approach to approving food additives required a regulatory amendment, but is now based on an incorporation by reference approach so that routine food additive submissions no longer take many years to obtain a decision — a logical step towards a more efficient regulatory approach.

The problem is that while an incorporation by reference approach makes sense in certain areas, the fact that it bypasses the normal regulatory process for amendments makes it inappropriate in other areas. Regulatory amendments require, amongst other things, a deeper level of consultation and analysis. The bottom line is that if the final version of the Proposed Amendments allow for FOPs to be incorporated by reference, it will also allow the Minister of Health, through HC, to very easily change the symbol requirements without going through the same analysis, consultation and legislative approach currently ongoing under the Proposed Amendments.

HC's proposed modified FOP symbols were developed, in part, through consultation with industry, academics and consumers in late 2017. Earlier iterations for foods high in certain nutrients included, for example, a stop sign and other hazard symbol shapes that many found more appropriate for dangerous chemicals. The

new symbols feature a rectangular shape, containing a qualitative "high in" statement, potentially with an accompanying exclamation point or a magnifying glass symbol. However, such consultations may in fact be moot, if for whatever reason, HC chooses to make changes to the FOP symbols following the final publication of the Proposed Amendments. Thus the incorporation by reference of FOP symbols could have a significant impact on industry and consumers.

While at the time of writing this article we do not know how this story will end, we do know that obesity will not end with FOPs. I hope that HC will ensure that any future changes to FOPs require a regulatory level of analysis and consultation. If it turns out that this experiment fails, I also hope that HC shifts its investment to educate our children about food literacy and proper balanced food choices outside the traditional Canada Food Guide approach.

If as a country we want to reduce obesity, that journey starts in our homes and our primary schools. We all want our children to be healthy, it is just a question of how we get there. 🍎



Lewis Retik is a partner in Gowling WLG's Ottawa office, practicing primarily in the food and natural health product regulatory law. He co-leads the Food and Beverage group and leads the Advertising and Product Regulatory group at GowlingWLG. He can be reached at Lewis.Retik@gowlingwlg.com.



Truth in labelling

Gary Gnirss



These days there are endless streams of media reports on food labelling, each claiming the high road on truth. But what exactly is the “truth.” When a headline reads, “Canadian Food Labels to Become More Truthful,” as a recent media report on proposed front of packaging (FOP) regulation did, it gives the impression that labels are not truthful. In the case of FOP, nutrients like sugar, sodium and saturated fat are declared in the nutrition facts table (NFT). It’s just when they exceed 15 per cent of the daily value that they will be declared on the front panel and in the NFT, which is usually on another label panel. It’s making things easier for consumers, but it’s not making labelling more truthful.

It is important that industry and government take back some turf on truthful food labelling. Industry spends a considerable effort to ensure label information is accurate and compliant with regulations so that consumers have the best available information to make choices about the foods they purchase. Undermining confidence in food labelling can lead to consumers turning to inaccurate or misleading information. Following are some considerations to better understand the “truth” in labelling.

Everything appearing on a label, whether written or images, is subject to provisions within food legislation that governs misrepresentations. While it is truthful to say that governments do not explicitly regulate every representation, they do often provide guidance to ensure such representations remain within the guardrails of being truthful. That

includes foods claimed as “natural” or made without preservatives.

Another issue is that factual information is not always truthful. For instance, it may be factual to state that a food does not contain added preservatives, but if that food is not permitted to contain added preservatives it would be misleading unless it was qualified with a statement noting that all such foods are not permitted to contain preservatives. This concept of a false uniqueness underpins many negative type claims.

The use of food additives and novel ingredients — including those that may be derived from genetically engineered sources — are highly regulated. New novel foods and food additives must first be evaluated for safety, and undergo rigorous scientific scrutiny by Health Canada (HC) before being accepted for sale here. Canadian regulations are designed to ensure all foods sold in Canada are safe — that’s a truth.

Manufacturers are prohibited from making nutrient content claims, except for those provided in the *Canadian Food and Drug Regulations*. That’s also a truth. While the use of permitted nutrient content claims are voluntary and can be used to promote a food, they are actually designed by HC to help consumers select foods that fit into their overall objectives of healthy eating. At the same time, food may not be represented as a drug, or otherwise for the treatment of diseases or disorders. Health claims permitted in other countries may also not be acceptable in Canada, so it’s important that international media reports are appreciated in a Canadian context.

Ingredient labelling is one of the most regulated parts of labelling. New regulations on ingredient labelling will provide a more consistent approach to how ingredients are presented on a label. Modernization is aimed at enhancing the presentation of meaningful information for consumers, but modernization should not be seen as implying that labels under former regulations were untruthful. Ingredient labelling a few decades ago may have been adequate at the time, but today there is a larger and more focused appetite for information, and modernization efforts are aimed at satisfying that as practically as possible.

Food labelling is complex, with a high degree of expected precision. However, not all food labels meet expectations. This is a concern as well to the many people in the food industry that work hard to ensure their foods are labelled properly. Modernization is also placing greater emphasis on manufacturers to manage compliance as part of their preventive controls. However, it is important that government agencies remain engaged in policy and enforcement. In contrast, the U.S. industry is often embattled with civil lawsuits over labelling representations, which to some degree is fostered by the appearance of a less than eager regulator. We are best to avoid this U.S. experience. Truth is a shared responsibility. 🍎

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Sweet seasonal *success*

Seasonal confectionery hits a homerun for candy makers, while meeting the shopping demands of consumers

By Rebecca Harris

Chocolate and candy brands do a hopping business around the holidays. According to Nielsen, the total confectionery category is worth nearly \$2.5 billion in Canada, and the top five sales weeks for candy and chocolate all surround holidays.

Halloween leads candy sales with nearly five per cent of annual sales, compared to 1.9 per cent for the average week. Chocolate, on the other hand, has its highest sales around Christmas/Hanukkah (5.8 per cent) and Easter (5.2 per cent).

It's clear that there is strong demand for holiday treats, but as the seasons change so do consumers' needs and preferences. For example, they'll likely buy in bulk for trick-or-treaters at Halloween, or fall for a heart-shaped box to gift at Valentine's Day. The key for confectionery manufacturers and retailers is to offer customers the right selection in the right format for all the different holiday occasions. ➔

“The opportunity [in the seasonal category] is maximizing reach and participation in each one of the need states for each season,” says Martin Spencer, vice-president, Strategic Demand, at Mars Wrigley Confectionery. “For example, when we think about Easter, we think about what formats could work for Easter morning, what formats could work for sharing and what formats could work for single or personal consumption.”

Looking at Nielsen data from the U.S., items that are growing within Easter are formats associated with sharing, notes Spencer. In 2016, the Easter decorating and snacking segment accounted for 46 per cent of dollar sales for the season. While medium-size bags account for nearly half of decorating and snacking sales, extra-large bags saw the fastest growth.

“Our product portfolio has really complemented the trend that we see there,” says Spencer. “What’s really selling are items in sharing bags or things that are sold in bags that parents can put into their own plastic eggs for the egg hunt on Easter morning.” For example, M&M’s Peanut Butter Speckled Eggs now come in a new “sharing size” 7.05-oz (200-g) package.

Generally speaking, there are two product types that work well within seasonal confectionery, says Spencer. “The first is traditional favourites that you would associate with the seasons, for example, the iconic Lifesavers storybook at Christmas time,” he says. “The second is everyday brands in a seasonal format.” For example, during the Christmas season, Mars Wrigley sells a reindeer-shaped version of Maltesers called Merryteaser, and a bunny shaped one at Easter called MaltEaster. “Maltesers is a brand that people know and love on an everyday basis, and to get it in a seasonal variance is something that resonates,” says Spencer. Also at Easter, Mars Wrigley sells M&M’s Milk Chocolate Speckled Eggs and Peanut Butter Speckled Eggs. “Everybody loves M&M’s...and at Easter time we provide it to [consumers] in a speckled egg format, with a unique shape and fun colours that are associated with springtime.”

Chocolate is an important part of gifting throughout the winter holiday season, so it’s important for consumers to be able to purchase a variety of sizes and packaging, says May Zeibak, Consumer Insights manager at Nestlé Canada. Nestlé’s Turtles brand, for example, is available in a small stocking-stuffer size (83 g), casual gifting size (200 g), hostess gifting size (350 g) and a formal gifting premium tin (333 g).

“Bigger boxes are used for more formal gifts or to bring as a hostess gift, while the smaller boxes are used for stocking stuffers or as emergency gifts to have on hand,” says Zeibak. “Shoppers



want everyday brands at Christmas, but they have to offer something extra with strong seasonal cues — either in product or packaging. While shoppers pay some attention to price, it’s not a top factor in the decision process during the season. The product itself, as well as giftable packaging, are much more important considerations.”

While Christmas is a big holiday for gifting chocolate, “what’s missing is a bit of fun,” says Spencer. “It’s a pretty boring category, it’s re-

peated every year and the formats are quite known.” To bring some fun into the gift-giving category, last Christmas Mars Wrigley launched Celebrations, a plastic champagne bottle filled with a variety of treat-size chocolates such as Dove, Twix, Snickers and Milky Way. “We think it’s great because it’s way more exclusive than alcohol as a gift, and everyone can celebrate,” says Spencer. “The real opportunities within Christmas are sharing formats and gifting formats that are fun.”

Nestlé also got in on the fun with its new 3D Castle Smarties Advent Calendar. “It delivered on a great consumer need: shoppers who wanted an everyday brand delivered in a unique and fun pack,” says Maria DiLeo, Category Shopper Development manager at Nestlé Canada. “We expect even greater excitement for this SKU this upcoming season.”

Advent-type calendars can also be extended beyond Christmas. Vancouver-based chocolate retailer Purdys launched a haunted house calendar that counts down to Halloween. “Our haunted house was inspired by the trend of specialty packaging for specific holidays,” says Rachel McKinley, chocolatier at Purdys Chocolatier. “What I love about it is that it is refillable and reusable, so people can collect them for their kids and refill with delicious chocolate year after year.”

For manufacturers, Halloween is a very different season than most others, notes Spencer. “You’re buying things to give out to strangers,” he says. That said, consumers still give a lot of consideration to their trick-or-treating purchases. “Shoppers have a tendency to purchase what they consume on an everyday basis to hand out at Halloween,” says Spencer. “So, what works well are simply small versions of our everyday top sellers, including



ACCORDING TO NIELSEN, THE TOTAL CONFECTIONERY CATEGORY IS WORTH NEARLY **\$2.5 BILLION** IN CANADA, AND THE **TOP FIVE SALES WEEKS** FOR CANDY AND CHOCOLATE **ALL SURROUND HOLIDAYS.**

photos: Mars Wrigley

photo: Jupiterimages/Getty Images



“Christmas, Easter and Valentine’s Day are the biggest seasons, but we work really hard to celebrate seasons from as many cultures as possible.”

Starburst, Skittles, Mars, Snickers, Twix and M&M’s.”

Zeibak notes that many people want to be viewed as the “good house” at Halloween, so they buy brands that trick-or-treaters will enjoy, as well as brands their family likes in case there are left-overs. “Since they want brands that they know family and friends will love, they are hesitant to try or give out unknown brands or new products,” she says.

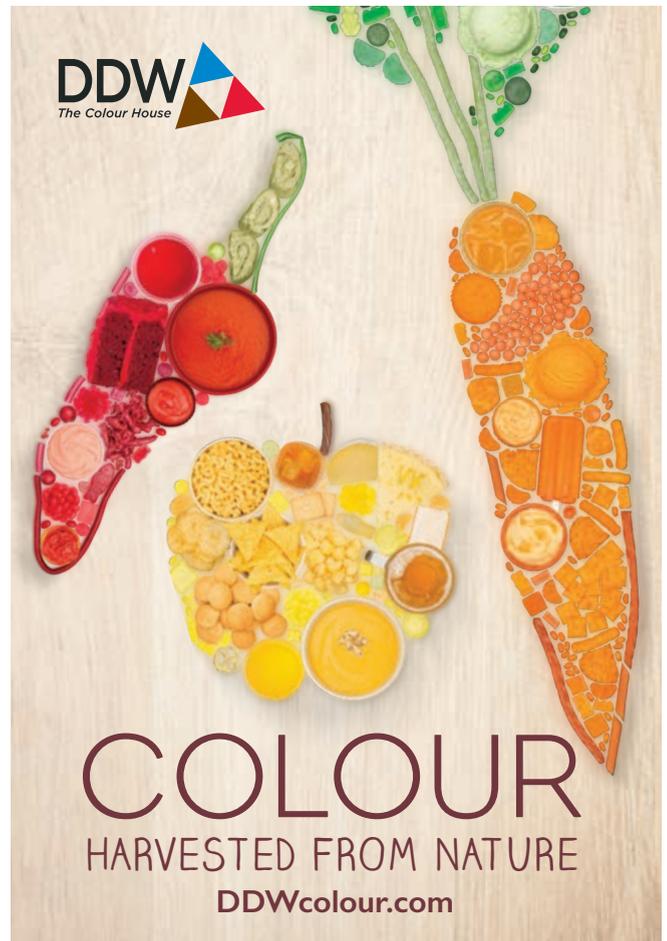
Peanut-free is also important at Halloween, as is count size. “Value to the shopper comes in the form of the combination of brand, count size, offering and price, so retailers need to stock up on the leading brands and sizes that meet the shopper needs including 30 count, 50 count and 100 count,” says Zeibak.

For Valentine’s Day, it’s all about the packaging. “If it’s in a big heart-shaped box, people are happy,” says McKinley. While shoppers seek products that showcase their sentimental side, Purdys also appeals to the anti-Valentine’s Day crowd with cheeky boxes of chocolates. One six-piece box, for example, features the copy “Valentine’s Shmalentine’s,” while another says, “Forget love, I’d rather have chocolate.” “Those have sold quite well because not everybody is into romance, but there’s also that specialty packaging aspect,” says McKinley.

Retailers and manufacturers are also tapping into multicultural holidays and seasons, given Canada’s changing demographics. For Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, Purdys has developed a new chocolate-based mango bon bon. “It’s in a white shell and it’s coloured with a shimmery, orangey colouring so it actually looks like it shines, which is perfect for Diwali,” says McKinley. In addition, Purdys took inspiration from Songkran, the Thai New Year, for a new jasmine caramel piece last year. “Obviously, Christmas, Easter and Valentine’s Day are the biggest seasons, but we work

really hard to celebrate seasons from as many cultures as possible,” says McKinley.

Nestlé has also introduced some of its brands to celebrate specific occasions. For Diwali, Nestlé’s lead brand is Quality Street. “It is a natural fit with its festive bright colours, and the variety of chocolates in each tin make it well-suited for large family gatherings,” says DiLeo. “For Chinese New Year we introduced Kit Kat Green Tea, a flavour variant that performs very well with this consumer. We plan on growing our presence in other holidays over the next three years.” 🍀



Vending *va-va-voom*

Healthy food and drink choices, cashless payment, analytics and alcohol are the leading trends in automated consumption

— By Treena Hein —





Vending machines have been around a long, long time, and it's safe to say, with our modern on-the-go lifestyles, that they are likely here to stay.

The very first vending machine was invented 2,000 years ago by a mathematician in what was Alexandria. Believe it or not, in exchange for coin, it dispensed holy water using a system of pulleys and weights. What we would recognize as the first modern vending machines appear in the late 1800s in big centres like London and New York, offering postcards and chewing gum. Some of the products that followed might be expected — snacks, cigarettes and common pharmacy items — but others, such as flight insurance, makeup, books, bicycle parts, shoes and flowers, are more bizarre.

The mainstay of the vending industry has always been beverages and food, including pop, coffee and candy, as well as fruit, cupcakes, instant noodles, fresh lettuce, caviar, bananas, French fries, sausages, eggs, milk, cheese, burgers, rice, hotdogs, ice cream and much more. A vending machine in Nanjing, China now offers live crabs, kept in a cool temperature to promote a sort of hibernation (if you receive a dead crab, the company offers to compensate you with three live ones). Mashed potatoes are currently available in vending machines in Singapore, and Le Bread Xpress now sells freshly baked baguettes through two machines in San Francisco. In the Netherlands, FEBO outlets are going strong, with over 60 shops stuffed wall-to-wall with machines offering many snacks, drinks and fully cooked meal items. A favourite is kaassoufflé, a dish of puffed pastry filled with melted cheese.

Current estimates put the worth of the U.S. vending sector at more than \$25 billion a year, with five million machines across the country. This continued industry success is largely due to meeting consumer demand for healthy product choices. At the tradeshow of the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) held in late March in Las Vegas, presentations included “Using Behavioral Design to Create Experiences Where Healthy Choices are the Easy Choice” and “Better-for-You Insights & Product Recommendations: What You Should Know About This Profitable Category.” Smart vending firms are also offering easy and quick cashless payment, and making

sure customers are getting what they want through analytics software that tracks sales at every machine, allowing operators to make real-time adjustments to the lineup and therefore maximizing profit.

Vend Natural uses all three strategies. The company started about 10 years ago and now has machines and micro-markets across 25 U.S. states in approximately 1,000 locations, mostly at educational facilities, with an interest in the Canadian market. Its machines not only offer cashless options and healthy snacks (tested for quality, taste and profitability), but also feature large touchscreen displays where consumers can access information about each product's nutritional content and calories before they make a purchase. The firm changes about 25 per cent of its product inventory every year for several reasons, according to CEO Bill Carpenter Jr. Food companies are creating so many new healthy products worth a try, he says, and changing the selection is also a factor in repeat visits. “We treat it like a store, even though it's a vending machine,” explains Carpenter. “We view it as a shopping experience, so we update the look and the selection of items, and build customer loyalty that way.”

Farmers Fridge is another healthy vending firm, with more than 100 locations in Chicago, including O'Hare airport, apartment buildings and various medical facilities. It offers premium salads and ➔



CURRENT ESTIMATES PUT THE WORTH OF THE U.S. VENDING SECTOR AT MORE THAN **\$25 BILLION** A YEAR, WITH FIVE MILLION MACHINES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.



photo: Canadian Automatic Merchandising Association



photo: BeerBox

bowls (for example, ginger-sesame cauliflower and rice with edamame), protein snacks such as dark chocolate trail mix, and premium healthy beverages. Global fruit grower and processor Del Monte also offers firms a “vending line” of ready-to-eat fruit and vegetable products in clear containers.

Because the need for healthy choices in vending machines has become so important to the Canadian vending industry, five years ago the Canadian Automated Merchandising Association (CAMA) began development of a member program called SMART PICK. It launched in 2016. “In the past five to seven years, every response to an RFP includes a section on healthy choices,” notes CAMA executive director Marie Saint-Ivany. “Operators [must] meet nutritional mandates from school boards and other governing bodies...[and] traditional vending items like chips, sodas and chocolate bars, in many cases, do not meet these guidelines. Operators will tell you horror stories where they have been asked to remove these popular items from their machines, only to see revenue at these locations drop drastically.”

Saint-Ivany says that although the selection of items that meet these guidelines is improving, “it is still challenging for the operators to find enough variety to satisfy their clients and fill the machines.” SMART PICK includes a complete toolkit — a partial list of products that meet the program’s nutritional standards, an implementation plan, marketing strategies and tools (such as stickers) and an evaluation plan.

If you’ve never visited a micro-market, picture a small self-serve store, usually located in a workplace. Customers are offered a wide array of healthy snacks, drinks and freshly made meal items such as wraps and sushi. There is also no cashier — customers pay through an automated checkout system, with theft



“We treat it like a store, even though it’s a vending machine. We view it as a shopping experience, so we update the look and the selection of items, and build customer loyalty that way.”

prevented by security cameras. Saint-Ivany believes the Canadian vending industry will experience a major micro-market growth spurt in years to come. “Many workplaces,” she notes, “cannot support or do not have the facilities to operate a manual foodservice cafeteria,” and micro-markets provide a suitable alternative.

Another growing vending industry trend is alcohol. In October 2017, for example, a firm called La Galere Markets asked Florida lawmakers to allow placement of its secure alcohol micro-markets in several condos in that state. Under security camera surveillance, only residents can enter these markets, with identity verified through fingerprint technology. In several U.S. states, bars and restaurants are now allowed to sell specially coded cards to patrons who then use them to serve themselves beer or wine from a self-serve area onsite.

BeerBox, a start-up owned by Anheuser Busch, has a different model, with its beer can-dispensing machines placed by concessionaires at events and other venues. In legal drinking areas, self-serve obviously works, but in areas where underage individuals are present, concessionaires must provide staff to check identification. The machines open each can upon dispensing (in the U.S., up to two beers are permitted per transaction) as containers are legally required to be open at public events.

The company piloted its machines at various festivals last fall in Philadelphia, New York and Las Vegas. BeerBox founder and CEO Bobby Gaafar says the company is now finalizing machine design details relating to offering different-size cans and different forms of payment, as well as sales-tracking analytics. A large rollout is planned for later this year at stadiums, arenas and bars. Gaafar says concessionaires will be able to offer whatever beer brands they feel would sell best, as well as non-alcoholic beverages. ●



Chocolate and pretzel tie the knot

Daniel Scholes



Chocolate confectionery sales continue to grow, and one popular trend is branching away from traditional chocolate formats. Confectioners are creating new clusters of yumminess, combining ingredients to create more complex flavour profiles and multi-textural experiences. One such product is the marriage of chocolate and pretzels.

Pretzels date back to early European monasteries, when the bread was folded to resemble the arms crossing the chest and was used as a reward for children learning their prayers — lending itself to the original Latin name, *pretiala*, meaning “little rewards.” The popularity of the twisted bread spread across Europe, and they were introduced to North America in the 1800s by German immigrants settling in Pennsylvania, which remains the pretzel-making capital of North America.

The pairing of pretzels and chocolate began in the mid-1500s in Hamburg, Germany when baker Herr Franz Joseph Leibniz joined forces with his chocolatier neighbour to combine their products. The chocolate-pretzel combo has gained popularity in the last few decades, so we recently took a closer look at four chocolate snack brands to see if the latest versions of the chocolate and pretzel marriage are equally harmonious.

We asked 100 females between the ages of 25 and 54 from the Greater Toronto Area, who were all regular consumers of chocolate snacks, to evaluate four different varieties of confectionery with chocolate and pretzels as key ingredients. Both dark and milk chocolate samples were represented, and each brand had its

own unique combination of inclusions in its “cluster,” such as caramel, chips, sea salt or peanut butter. All four brands had similar nutritional declarations — these were all full-fat indulgences.

The top knot

One of these decadent treats outperformed the others, with 60 per cent of participants saying they would be likely to purchase it — nearly twice as high as the other three brands. This brand boasted a significantly higher quality rating, and scored significantly higher on the hedonic attributes of overall liking, pretzel flavour, and the overall combination of ingredients. It also stood apart with superior textural properties: the inclusions had just the right amount of crunchiness, and the chocolate was the most likely to be described as creamy, smooth and melt in your mouth.

Despite this winning performance, the key performance measures for this cluster were not as high as expected for a product in the chocolate confectionery category, and there were aspects that didn't have widespread appeal among our participants: the chocolate flavour was too weak; some thought there was too much peanut butter flavour; and although it had the best ratio of sweet and salty flavours, this treat was too sweet for more than a third of participants.

The other three brands did not meet the same standards as the first due to various issues with the combination of ingredients. For instance, the addition of caramel led to the awkward issue of sticky fingers — a more moderate use of caramel would have elevated the

performance of this brand. The integration of sea salt in a couple of the cluster samples also proved to be problematic, particularly for one brand which was much too salty. The ratio of chocolate to other ingredients was also up for debate. One sample didn't have enough of a pretzel presence, while another brand was much too thick and crunchy. Overall, the dark chocolate contenders did not perform as well as the milk chocolate.

Tying the Knot

Chocolate drizzle may be the latest sizzle in the chocolate confectionery world, as are more complex flavour mixtures and multi-textural mouthfuls. Brand innovation in this space lends itself to unique pairings like sweet with savoury, or creamy with crunchy. This trend of combining complex flavours and textural combinations means fusing multiple ingredients so they work together in balance, which can make for greater product development challenges.

Among our participants, one of the top reasons for purchasing one brand over the other was because “it's a brand that they crave at the moment.” Clever confectioners are constantly looking to satiate those cravings. But like any relationship, this takes a lot of work, and may make the difference between creating a marriage made in heaven... or irreconcilable differences. 🍷

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

TOP 10

Top 10 Canadian food & beverage companies to watch in 2018

Every year *Food in Canada* shines the spotlight on 10 growing Canadian food and beverage businesses we think will be making headlines in the coming year. Following, in no particular order, are our Top 10 to watch in 2018.



1642 Sodas

Bastien Poulain founded 1642 Sodas in 2014 in Montreal. Today the company has five employees and its sodas are

found in IGA and Metro in Ontario and Quebec, and several gourmet grocers.

www.1642sodas.ca

Q: What made you start the company?

Entrepreneurs find ways to solve a problem or a situation that is not right for them. In 2013 I was eating with friends and the only sodas on the menu were the red brand and the blue brand. My heart and head said, “it’s not right.” I began researching and found that we could change the situation by offering good craft sodas, making them in Canada and increasing the quality.

Q: What challenges did you face?

How do you make soda when you don’t have experience? The main challenges were getting space on the shelves, finding a good distributor, and marketing with zero budget. We wanted to change the norm in the industry by not adding benzoate sodium, no plastic bottles, no artificial sweeteners. It was not easy, but we are really happy now.



Bastien Poulain



Q: What makes your product unique?

We really take our time developing our recipe. We use natural spring water, natural sugars such as maple syrup or honey, and 95 per cent of our suppliers

are from Canada — that is really important for us.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

We were very surprised to have such a warm welcome from consumers. They were able to drink something better and local. We had the chance to appear on *Dragons’ Den* in 2015 and the cola became very popular.

Q: Future plans?

We are launching an orange and sea buckthorn oil flavour this summer. We are selling in the Greater Toronto Area, as well as in Vancouver.

Q: What are some recent highlights?

We work with Canadian sommelier Véronique Rivest’s (who was the 2012 Best Sommelier of the Americas and came in second in the 2013 World’s Best Sommelier Competition) restaurant *Soif Bar à Vin* in Gatineau, Que. We also won two awards at the *Les Prix Foodies-QC* for our 1642 Tonic and 1642 Ginger in 2015 and 2016, respectively. We supply *Cirque du Soleil* and we had the chance to offer a bottle of 1642 Cola to Celine Dion at her restaurant *Schwartz’s* in Montreal.

2

Blue Harbour Cheese

Lyndell Findlay launched Blue Harbour Cheese in Halifax in 2013. Today there are three employees who help produce three different cheeses, which are found in Sobeys,

independent cheese retailers, restaurants and hotels. www.blueharbourcheese.com



Lyndell Findlay



cheese consumers into enthusiasts. We also make two sheep milk cheeses. Our Electric Blue is inspired by the French Fourme style of cheese, and the HipHop cheese is a semi-soft smear rind

Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

After years of working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the conflict zones of Africa and Asia, I retired in 2011. Looking for a new career is challenging and I wanted satisfying work that I could do in Halifax. I turned to my interest in cheese making and in 2012 I interned with a farmstead cheese maker in Ohio, and attended the Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese. I returned to set up my own artisan cheese facility, with a focus on blue cheese.

Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

We're one of Canada's very few urban cheese producers. Finding a space with the right zoning and complying with city regulations was definitely a challenge as well as milk supply.

Q: What makes your products unique?

Urban Blue, which has been called "blue butter," is a mild and approachable creamy cheese that is turning non-blue

cheese, washed with a special blend of local craft beer.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

Comments go something like, "I don't like blue cheese" to "oh, that's amazing" the first time people try Urban Blue. Demand has rapidly grown. Every week emails arrive from all over Canada, asking where our cheese is available.

Q: What are your future plans?

I'm on a mission to convert everyone to the love of blue cheese! We're planning a new plant this year (still within the city), with expanded capacity and a federal registration, which will remove trade barriers. We'll also develop new types of cheeses.

Q: What are some recent highlights for the company?

BHC showcased our cheeses in Berlin this year as part of a trade mission. We're looking at export opportunities through CETA. And we're sourcing high-quality sheep milk.

3

Gravelbourg Gourmet Mustard

Val Michaud runs Gravelbourg Gourmet Mustard, with a few contractors who help. The company, which was founded in 2011, manufactures 13 different products. www.gravelbourgmustard.ca

Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

When a local miller was established in Gravelbourg, Sask., we thought why not develop something with that resource? Availability was easy. The milling plant has since closed, so I source from another location.

Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

Distribution is one, and with growth there have been other challenges like producing new flavours and co-packing.

Q: What makes your product unique?

We have flavours like Saskatoon Berry Mustard. Saskatchewan grows between 75 and 80 per cent of Canada's mustard and between 40 and 50 per cent of the world's mustard. It's an important resource we have to use to create something unique. It's disheartening to see our

resource exported out of country and made into gourmet mustards elsewhere and we Canadians buy it back.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

Consumers are delighted and impressed with the quality and uniqueness. A number of chefs have commented on the high-quality and great-tasting product and said they recommend my mustards to other chefs.

Q: What are your future plans?



Val Michaud

I want to ensure that Gravelbourg Mustard is across Canada and easily available. I want to export it, so everyone can experience a taste of Saskatchewan. I want to educate people more about the uses of mustard, its health benefits and different ways to cook and incorporate mustard in your meals. Mustard is

a must!

Q: What are some recent highlights for the company?

Gravelbourg Gourmet Mustard was on Dragons' Den in December 2017. We had three deals on the table and we accepted one. The exposure has been fantastic! Consumers across Canada saw the show and immediately contacted me with orders and comments. It was rewarding for me; my hard work and perseverance is finally paying off.

4

Health Addict Inc.

Carrie Darmaga founded Stouffville, Ont.-based Health Addict Inc. in 2012. The maker of whole food, superfood frozen smoothie kits sells her blender-ready products under the Fru-V brand in

Longo's and Vince's Markets.

www.fruvsmoothie.com

Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

I used to have smoothies in college and wished there was a quicker version to buy. When I started working for the school board I helped to launch a Breakfast Club and saw so many kids. I thought again about my smoothie idea and how I could work with the Breakfast Club of Canada and help kids have a great breakfast.

Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

Everything was a challenge as I didn't have a background in the food industry. It was difficult finding support for someone working from the ground up. I found help at the University of Guelph, where they took my concept to a product, but it was another four year before it got to a store shelf.

Q: What makes your product unique?

Fru-V has 10 ingredients, so nutrients come from multiple sources. It's low in sugar. It's not all pre-blended but consumers just need to add water (or dairy or a dairy alternative). It's vegan, high in fibre, has three to four grams of protein and five to six essential nutrients. Donations go to the Breakfast Club of Canada with every purchase.



Carrie Darmaga

Q: What has consumer response been like?

People are amazed at how they love the greens in Tropical — Veggie. The Berry — Veggie is tailored to consumers who want something not crazy sweet. If you like fresh-pressed juices but want more fibre, you'll love this product. When I did sensory testing with 100 Canadians, 74 per cent liked the product very much or extremely.

Q: What are your future plans?

I'm working on two new flavours and getting the product across Canada.

Q: What are some recent highlights for the company?

Vince's Markets was the first to take the product. I will always appreciate that. Getting into Longo's Brothers Fruit Markets was also big since they have so many stores. I sent samples to a distributor in BC who wants exclusive rights for the West Coast. It's reassuring when others have faith in the product you worked so hard on.

6

A&M Gourmet Foods Inc.

CEO and owner Irina Vialykh started A&M Gourmet Foods in 2007.

The company, which has approximately 30 employees, produces 80 different products for retail and foodservice, such as dips and spreads, protein snacks, sunflower oil, vegan mayo, and Kefir+ Overnight Oats under the Simply Simple brand. The products are found in Canada and the U.S. www.amgourmetfoods.com

Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

I immigrated to Canada from Eastern Europe about 20 years ago and found that there weren't many nutritious food product options available. After a period of cultural adjustment, education and valuable work experience, I started my own food company, with a focus on creating products that are tasty, clean and healthy. Our motto is that the most delicious and nutritious foods come from simple, fresh, high-quality ingredients.

Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

We went through a major learning curve



Irina Vialykh (centre)

at the beginning. We faced some financial challenges and the existing competition. In addition, there were numerous regulations and manufacturing processes that we needed to learn.



Pepper North Artisan Foods

Ana and Drew Stevens of Oshawa, Ont. launched Pepper North Artisan

Foods in 2013. The company makes hot sauces that are found in 300 grocery chains in Ontario, as well as some sales in Quebec and BC.

www.peppernorth.com

Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

Drew Stevens: We began like many others, by growing hot peppers in our home garden and turning them into delicious spicy products for friends and family. As demand began to grow, so did our batch sizes. Adding eye-catching labels, we started attending local farmers markets and festivals. Before long, we were making a name for ourselves across Canada.

Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

Our biggest challenge has been finding a production facility that we can take full advantage of and that can keep up with demand. We are still hand produc-



ing our sauces, so finding a processing kitchen that is willing to work with us was a huge step. Also, as we were scaling up our business we had to find local suppliers that could handle the increase in orders without affecting the quality of ingredients.

Q: What makes your product unique?

We use rare and unique hot peppers paired with interesting ingredients. We create hot sauces that enhance your meals, are flavourful and are not too overpowering. We also make a couple of sauces that are in the ultra-hot range. All of our food products are hand crafted and individually quality inspected. We use locally sourced ingredients.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

Consumer response has been incredibly positive. Loyal customers tell us they are so happy we are an all-Canadian

brand and that our unique flavours and various heat levels are totally different than what's currently available in the market.

Q: What are your future plans?

We want to further expand outside of Ontario and are hoping that in the near future we will be across Canada. We are strategic about who we partner with, whether that be a distributor or retail chain, and we make sure that their core values are in line with ours.

Q: What are some recent highlights?

We won three awards at the 2018 Fiery Food Challenge in Texas including second place in the Fruit Based — Hot/X-Hot category; second place in the Ultra Hot Pepper category; and third place in the Barbeque Sauce — Alcohol Infused category.



The Stevens



Q: What makes your product unique?

We use unique ingredients that are becoming trendy in North America but have been known in Europe for years. We combined probiotic kefir

with gluten-free oats, fruits and spices to make our Simply Simple Overnight Oats. They were a staple breakfast and snack during my childhood and they make a great on-the-go breakfast or snack option for Canadian consumers. We use kefir and pressed cottage cheese in most of our dips and spreads.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

We have had very positive responses from our customers on how innovative we are by adding a twist to traditional ingredients and formulating them into unique recipes.

Q: What are your future plans?

We are excited about our brand-new Vegan Certified product line, which is about to launch within the next couple of months.

Q: What are some recent highlights for the company?

Our facility achieved SQF (Safe Quality Food) Level 3 Certification. Also our products made the Grocery Innovations Canada Top 10 Most Innovative Products two years in a row (Simply Simple Protein Pickup in 2016 and Simply Simple Kefir+ Overnight Oats in 2017).

7 Modhani Yogurt

Barinder Singh Badwal is the presi-

dent of Modhani Yogurt, which was founded in 2015 and launched its first “Herb In & Spiced Up” yogurt in 2017. The Brampton, Ont.-based company, which has eight employees, makes Greek yogurts with fruit, turmeric and other spices. Its 16 products are found in various chain grocery, independent and ethnic stores.

www.modhani.ca
Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

We use turmeric for such a wide range of things. In addition to cooking, we use it for burns, to boost our immune systems in flu season, or in my wife’s case, to help alleviate her rheumatoid arthritis. My wife and I were discussing this one day and felt that Canadians were missing out on the benefits of this incredible spice. I have always had an entrepreneurial spirit and next thing I know, I’m looking into how I can find ways to bring turmeric to the market. This wasn’t just about bringing awareness to a vaguely known spice, but also making it a

household item that Canadians can leverage the way my family has been doing so for centuries.

Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

Turmeric is not all that well known as an ingredient, let alone its benefits. Fortunately, we are not the only ones who are interested in turmeric — we quickly found there was plenty of scientific research touting its benefits. It has been our goal to equip ourselves with this information and try to get out there and educate as many people as possible.

Q: What makes your product unique?

Our “not-so-secret” ingredient is turmeric! Everyone knows the health benefits of consuming yogurt. But there isn’t a product out there that adds turmeric and not just any kind of turmeric, but fresh turmeric that has been carefully cooked to enhance its properties.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

We absolutely love opportunities to go out and get people to try our yogurt because we get to share first hand in their experience. Whether they’ve heard of turmeric or not, we’re incredibly happy with how much people have loved the yogurt. We had one customer say, “I feel like I’m eating cheesecake without the guilt!”



8

Left Field Foods

Dave Pullar, CEO of Calgary-based Left Field Foods, says the company’s



Dave Pullar

launch of the Spokes brand air-puffed potato snacks late last year was a game changer. Today there are nine flavours and the product is found across Canada in more than 3,000 retail stores.

www.leftfieldfoods.ca

Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

Left Field Foods started in 1999 as a very small grassroots, better-for-you snack company. We have innovative consumer solutions that appear to come “out of Left Field,” and we make our snacks with simple and better-for-you ingredients from the “Left Field.” Our new SPOKES brand product has been transformative in the growth and success of the company. We spent many hours talking with consumers to create the brand.



Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

Building a team to take us through accelerating growth was critical. It took some searching to bring the right talent into the business. We worked hard to know what was important to our consumers. We also needed resources and capital to meet our vision. We connected with Avrio Capital about two years ago, and they supported our growth and provided capital, insights and connections.

Q: What makes your product unique?

SPOKES is a better-for-you potato snack with only 40 calories per cup. We never oil-fry and only use a mist of sunflower oil so that seasonings stick. SPOKES deliver a great crispy potato snack without needing to compromise. They’re free of 11 major allergens, are Non-GMO Project Verified and have no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

I love the look on peoples’ faces when they try SPOKES for the first time. It’s like a light just turned on and then they check the ingredients and nutrition facts. You can see another light go on when they realize that SPOKES has only 300 calories in the whole bag.

Q: What are your future plans?

To work with retail partners in Canada to drive growth and help with innovative merchandising solutions. We’re working on expanding into the U.S. and across North America.

Q: What are some recent highlights for the company?

We are one of the finalists in the Retail Council of Canada’s Grand Prix New Product Awards.



Naledo Foods and Beverages Inc.

Vancouver-based Naledo was co-founded by Nareena Switlo and her mother Umeeda Switlo in May 2016. The company makes wild crafted whole root turmeric paste under the Truly Turmeric

brand. The turmeric root comes from 350 small-scale farmer partners in Belize, where the company has a production office. Today the product is found in 600 stores in Canada, Belize, the U.S. and the Caribbean. www.naledo.com

Q: Where did you get the idea for the company?

Nareena Switlo: Umeeda's family came to Canada as refugees in the 1970s. Fresh spices they used were not available here, so Umeeda's mother began making homemade pastes to help preserve fresh spices. Fast-forward to 2014, Umeeda was on a CUSO International volunteer placement in Belize where she saw the best wild turmeric. We came up with the world's first wild crafted, fresh turmeric paste. We decided to build a social enterprise that would support growers in Toledo, Belize, and produce products sustainably.

Q: What challenges did you face getting started?

We started very small, with one blender. Then we had to learn how to scale up production quickly once we launched. There were a lot of challenges with our supply chain. Find a mentor who can help you. We were lucky to have Ishkandar Ahmed of Choices Markets, and Marie Sharp in Belize.



Umeeda Switlo & Nareena Switlo



Q: What makes your product unique?

Instead of using turmeric powder we start with whole turmeric root and mix with all-natural ingredients. We had the BC Institute of Technology test our turmeric root for its curcuminoid content and found that our wild variety from Belize has three times the curcuminoids as other roots.

Q: What has consumer response been like?

The response has been incredible. We have done very little marketing so word of mouth has been instrumental.

Q: What are your future plans?

We are expanding our product line and are launching into the U.S. and Caribbean countries this year. We found out in May that we have been invited to pitch on CBC's Dragons' Den.

Q: What are some recent highlights for the company?

We have two of our Belize team members attending university, three with new businesses, and all supporting their family and saving for the future.



Feige's Gourmet Dressings

Monica Filman and

Mark Snowden are both the owners and president and vice-president, respectively, of Listowel, Ont.-based Feige's Gourmet Dressings. They currently have five products available throughout Ontario. www.feiges.ca

Q: What made you start the company?

Monica Filman: We were in foodservice (MoDeans Roadhouse for 18 years and Feige's Fine Dining for 11 years) and the dressings were house dressings I created for our fine-dining restaurant. Customers wanted to purchase them, and a local store (Kitchen Cupboard & Icebox) wanted to carry them. When demand grew my husband and I decided to devote our time to making and selling the dressings.



Mark Snowden & Monica Filman



Q: What challenges did you face?

Not really knowing where to start. Our first step was to purchase a bottling machine and a place to produce the dressings. Funding was tight, but we did receive some government assistance. Breaking into a market that has so many choices and making contacts was challenging, but the product seemed to sell itself.

Q: What makes your product unique?

Our product is a cold-pressed sunflower seed oil with no added preservatives. It's not overpowering — it's a very light dressing that lets the flavours of your vegetables come through with a clean finish on your palate. They're also versatile

and can be used to marinate meat, make dips and roast vegetables. You can take our dressings to your table from start to finish, including dessert.

Q: What has consumer response been?

It's been overwhelming. Moms tell us that their kids and husbands would never eat salads before. I think it's because the dressings are a sweet/sour base. Retailers have come across our dressings and contacted us, and they've had consumers request they carry them.

Q: Future plans?

We would like to expand across all of Ontario and Canada, creating employment and new products. We get calls from people out West and even from the U.S., wanting to purchase our products.

Q: What are some recent highlights?

The growth in production due to increased sales is surprising. Our sales have grown every year. 🍓



Seven Fs for inspiring breakthrough innovations

Peter Henderson



The need for breakthrough innovations has perhaps never been more pressing and challenging for established food and beverage marketers, and society, in face of a variety of issues. These include supply chain intensification and related margin pressures; consumer expectations for greater transparency, mindful sourcing and instant digital access; staff and talent attraction/retention; and the reactive nature of multinational companies to new consumer trends (for example, cage-free eggs, non-GMO, raised without antibiotics, or plant-based).

First, what is “breakthrough innovation?” Several years ago Nielsen deemed a breakthrough innovation for consumer packaged goods (CPG) as a new product line which generates at least US\$50 million in year one, and at least 90 per cent of year one sales in year two.

Regardless of the size of your organization, the point is that size, scale and speed to market still matter, as do convenience, human health and wellness, and environmental concerns. Whether your organization is innovating internally, or in collaboration with external entrepreneurs/researchers, supplier(s), customer(s), sector competitor(s) and/or an organized industry cluster, the following is a taste of what can be applied to enable breakthroughs.

1. Foresight

Leading food and beverage marketers are deploying rigorous strategic foresight and design techniques to assist with prioritizing problem and opportunity identification.

Where possible gather, monitor and mine detailed end-user and consumer usage data (fuel); develop customer/consumer roadmaps; measuring response to various marketing techniques, and so on.

Foresight experts utilize systems models to project a future state, including competitive responses and landscape change. Information and analysis gathering can be accomplished independently or in partnership with customers and/or marketing partners with digital platforms. For instance, a June 2017 Cognizant report projects digital routes for centre of the store volume will “mushroom” from five per cent (in 2017) to 40 per cent by 2025.

2. Fuel

According to *The Economist*, “Data are to this century what oil was to the last one: a driver of growth and change. Flows of data have created new infrastructure, new businesses, new monopolies, new politics and — crucially — new economics.”

3. Framing

With foresight in hand, framing a problem or challenge can help guide your team and hired experts to come up with solutions. Large organizations are using their own open innovation platforms, to convey their challenges (like Nestlé’s HENRi). Smaller Canadian organizations can tap superclusters and/or research and technology institutions.

4. Facilitation

Facilitators can help companies utilize

the right tools, and build collaborations and partnerships (internal and external) to maximize potential for success. Most successful organizations utilize external facilitators, who are unbiased (free of internal politics) and can help with the innovation process, including: challenging/disrupting the status quo; bringing out the best ideas; injecting external insights, technologies and partnerships; enabling best practices; and managing timelines, execution and overall process.

5. Fine-tune

Innovation is iterative. Continuously learn from and fine-tune the process of innovation and resulting products/services.

6. Fail-fast

Still applies.

7. Funding

In some instances tapping into external venture capital can be a solution to breakthrough innovation in today’s landscape. It’s extremely important to think outside the conventional ways of doing business.

Be well. Happy innovating! 🍎

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

NOUVELLES

Nouvelle stratégie du secteur alimentaire québécois



En avril, le Québec a dévoilé sa Politique bioalimentaire 2018-2025, Alimenter notre monde: une stratégie qui générera des investissements de cinq milliards de dollars dans l'industrie alimentaire de la province au cours des cinq prochaines années.

Le bioalimentaire se rapporte à toutes les industries liées à l'alimentation, telles que l'agriculture, l'aquaculture, la transformation des aliments, la pêche, la distribution de nourriture et les services alimentaires. L'objectif de la politique se veut de "mieux répondre aux attentes des consommateurs tout en soutenant davantage les entrepreneurs et les organismes oeuvrant dans ce secteur," a fait valoir le gouvernement du Québec.

L'avenir du secteur bioalimentaire repose sur sept cibles:

- » investir 15 G\$ en production agricole et aquacole, dans les pêches et en transformation alimentaire;
- » accroître de 6 G\$ les exportations bioalimentaires internationales du Québec;
- » ajouter 10 G\$ de contenu québécois

Entreprise québécoise partenaire d'un nouveau couvoir ontarien

Boire & Frères inc. de Wickham au Québec et Sargent Farms de Milton en Ontario se sont associées pour lancer conjointement un couvoir à la fine pointe de la technologie à Woodstock en Ontario. Les entreprises ont annoncé que ce nouveau couvoir de \$15 M sera exploité sous le nom de Thames River Hatchery. Il devrait créer environ 30 emplois et produire 20 millions de poussins par an.



- dans les produits bioalimentaires achetés au Québec;
- » augmenter la part des entreprises agricoles et de transformation alimentaire québécoises ayant implanté des pratiques d'affaires responsables;
- » doubler la superficie en production biologique;
- » augmenter de 52 à 70 par cent la part des volumes de produits aquatiques québécois écocertifiés;
- » améliorer la valeur nutritive des aliments transformés au Québec.

Lassonde fait l'acquisition d'un fabricant de jus américain

Lassonde Industries inc. a procédé à l'achat de Old Orchard Brands, un fabricant de jus et de boissons familial du Michigan, pour une somme de 146 millions de dollars américains. Lassonde affirme que cette acquisition l'aidera à renforcer sa présence sur le marché américain et lui donnera accès à une chaîne de production de produits concentrés surgelés. Old Orchards, fondée en 1985, fabrique près de 100 variétés de boissons, dont des jus à 100 par cent, des mélanges de jus à 100 par cent, des cocktails de jus à teneur réduite en sucre, des limonades saisonnières et des thés aromatisés. Old Orchards a réalisé des ventes de US\$103.3 M en 2017. ↗



photo: Lassonde Industries inc.



photo: showcake/Getty Images

Érable, musique et gastronomie

Cette année, la Fédération des producteurs acéricoles du Québec (FPAQ) était le partenaire officiel de l'événement Montréal en Lumière — un festival hivernal regroupant des activités culinaires, de la

musique, du théâtre, de la danse, des arts du cirque — incluant un site extérieur avec des spectacles gratuits et des kiosques alimentaires. Pendant le festival, qui s'est déroulé du 22 février au 4 mars, la FPAQ a rendu hommage aux artisans, chefs et producteurs avec un repas gastronomique animé par Sébastien Benoît, une personnalité populaire de la télévision et de la radio. Les invités ont eu droit à un menu gastronomique mettant en vedette les quatre nouvelles catégories de sirop d'érable.

EN BREF

> **Rochef Chocolatier inc.** de Gatineau instaure actuellement un système d'analyse des risques et maîtrise des points critiques (HACCP) avec une aide financière de \$77,640 d'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada. L'entreprise compte 12 employés et fabrique des chocolats fins pour les magasins de cuisine raffinée, les chaînes d'épicerie et les hôtels. La compagnie utilisera également les fonds pour créer un nouveau plan de commercialisation internationale et agrandir ses locaux de production et de stockage.



> **Danone Canada** est maintenant une entreprise certifiée B Corp. L'organisation à but non lucratif B Lab a décerné à Danone cette certification à la suite

d'un examen rigoureux d'impact B qui a évalué la compagnie selon les normes les plus élevées de performance sociale et environnementale, de responsabilité et de transparence.

> **Fou du Cochon et Scie** de Kamouraska a remporté le Saucisson d'Or au concours Saucicrêor de France pour ses saucisses Grelot des battures. DuBreton fournit tout le porc que l'entreprise utilise dans ses produits.

> Santé Canada a accordé deux nouvelles allégations santé à la souche probiotique *Lactobacillus helveticus* LAFTI L10 à l'endroit des adultes actifs. Le probiotique est fabriqué par **Lallemand Solutions Santé** de Montréal. Les nouvelles allégations sont les suivantes: "Favorise la santé gastro-intestinale chez les adultes actifs" et "Aide à réduire l'incidence des symptômes de type rhume chez les adultes souffrant de stress induit par l'exercice."

> **Saputo inc.** de Montréal a annoncé que **Carl Colizza**, président et directeur de l'exploitation de sa division laitière au Canada, dirigera également la division laitière en Argentine. Comme autre nouvelle, **Paul Corney**, président et directeur de l'exploitation de la division des produits laitiers de Saputo aux États-Unis, prendra sa retraite d'ici la fin de 2018.

> **Patates Dolbec** de Saint-Ubalde dans le comté de Portneuf a récemment terminé l'agrandissement et la modernisation de son usine d'emballage de pommes de terre grâce à une aide financière d'environ \$4.5 M d'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada. L'entreprise a utilisé ce financement pour acheter et installer de nouveaux équipements robotisés qui permettront de trier, classer et emballer plus de pommes de terre fraîches en moins de temps. Patates Dolbec est une entreprise familiale fondée en 1967. Elle est spécialisée dans l'emballage de pommes de terre et compte plus de 125 employés.



photo: RedHeiga/Getty Images

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Des insectes bons à croquer

Des entreprises québécoises répondent à l'intérêt grandissant des aliments à base d'insectes grâce à des produits novateurs

PAR MARK CARDWELL



Yann Hébert admet que manger des insectes n'est pas la tasse de thé de tout le monde. Mais le jeune entrepreneur mise sur l'appétit grandissant des Québécois pour les produits alimentaires à base de grillons, de ténébrions meuniers et autres insectes comestibles.

“Il s'agit toujours d'un marché de niche, mais il se développe rapidement,” commente Hébert, l'un des quatre partenaires de Tottem Nutrition à Mirabel. “Je crois que le potentiel est énorme.” Au début de 2017, M. Hébert — expert en grêle et évaluateur en sinistres à la recherche d'une nouvelle carrière — s'est associé à Claude Girard, chef et herboriste qui fait de la recherche culinaire avec des ingrédients naturels. Le duo d'entrepreneurs a commencé à fabriquer et à commercialiser de petits lots de deux types de pâtes en forme de coquilles à base d'insectes dans un local loué au Centre de recherche agroalimentaire de Mirabel (CRAM), un organisme sans but lucratif.

Les entomopastas de Tottem (appelées ainsi en référence à “entomologie,” l'étude scientifique des insectes) sont faites d'un mélange de blé biologique, de farines de sarrasin et de kamut, de farine enrichie de gluten ainsi que de poudre de grillons et ténébrions meuniers fournis par Entomo Farms, un chef de file dans la culture de la farine/poudre de grillons et les protéines d'insectes, établi à Norwood en Ontario. Les entomopastas sont offertes en emballages de 190 et 95 g, contenant respectivement 18 et sept d'ingrédients d'insectes. Les deux pâtes — qui se vendent au prix de détail suggéré de \$6.75 et \$3.75 — fournissent 32 et

24 g de protéines par portion, et contiennent deux portions par sac.

Au cours de la dernière année, Hébert a fait valoir les vertus de ce cocktail de protéines et des pâtes comportant des niveaux élevés de l'apport quotidien recommandé en fibres et en fer aux marchés de producteurs de la ferme, magasins d'alimentation naturelle, comptoirs de vente en vrac et autres lieux d'approvisionnement alimentaire, présentant ces produits comme des ventes rapides auprès des consommateurs soucieux de leur santé et des curieux culinaires.

Dans le but de répondre à l'intérêt croissant et l'augmentation de la demande en aliments à base d'insectes, Tottem a récemment retenu les services de deux nouveaux partenaires: Brenda Plant, consultante en développement durable et en gestion; et Céline Comeau, experte en services alimentaires et sensibilisée à la préservation environnementale. La compagnie a également ajouté un troisième produit: une entomopoudre faite à partir d'un mélange de poudre d'insectes et de caroube. Elle s'affaire actuellement à peaufiner sa mission, ses objectifs et ses produits.

“Les insectes deviennent très à la mode comme source de protéines de rechange dans les aliments,” explique Hébert. Notre objectif se veut de stimuler l'éducation et la sensibilisation du public au Québec, et de nous concentrer sur le développement du marché ici en premier. Nous espérons néanmoins étendre éventuellement nos activités au reste du pays.” Il ajoute que ses partenaires et lui sont encouragés par le grand intérêt du public envers les insectes comestibles et les produits offerts par son entreprise. “Nous recevons beaucoup d'appels et d'occasions médiatiques, ➔

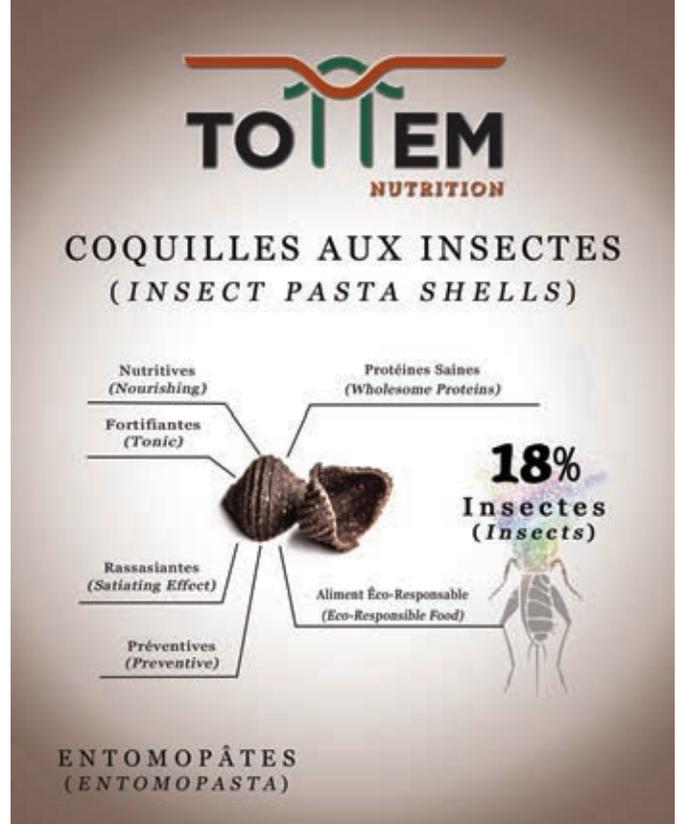
poursuit-il. Il semble que tout le monde veut en savoir plus sur les avantages de manger des insectes et de les déguster.”

Tottem est la dernière d’une poignée de petites entreprises québécoises qui tentent de tirer parti des avantages environnementaux de la consommation d’insectes. Diverses études menées au cours de la dernière décennie ont mis en évidence les nombreux avantages environnementaux, et même de santé publique, d’élever des insectes riches en protéines plutôt que des animaux traditionnels comme des vaches et des porcs qui produisent d’énormes quantités de gaz à effet de serre (GES) et d’ammoniac.

“Nourrir une population mondiale croissante de consommateurs plus exigeants nécessitera inévitablement une augmentation de la production alimentaire,” peut-on lire dans un rapport publié en 2013 par l’Organisation des Nations Unies pour l’alimentation et l’agriculture: Insectes comestibles Perspectives pour la sécurité alimentaire et l’alimentation animale. “Cette situation exercera une pression incontournable sur des ressources déjà limitées, telles que les terres, les océans, les engrais, l’eau et l’énergie. Si la production agricole conserve sa forme actuelle, l’augmentation des émissions de GES ainsi que la déforestation et la dégradation de l’environnement vont poursuivre leur course. Ces problèmes environnementaux, en particulier ceux liés à l’élevage du bétail, nécessitent une attention urgente.”

En plus de réduire les problèmes liés à l’élevage, les insectes comestibles se révèlent également des sources supérieures de protéines et de minéraux. Deux larves de ver à soie, par exemple, procurent 10 fois plus de fer que 100 g de boeuf. Ces mêmes 100 g d’insectes — incluant des grillons, des fourmis rouges et des sauterelles — offrent des quantités similaires de protéines que les viandes, mais moins de lipides entraînant l’obstruction des artères et moins de calories. Certains insectes comestibles sont également réputés contenir des protéines stimulant la santé comme la chitine, laquelle déclenche la croissance de bonnes bactéries dans l’estomac humain.

Selon différentes sources, près de 2000 espèces d’insectes sont consommées — soit en entier, soit en tant qu’ingrédients dans les aliments — par environ 80 par cent de la population mondiale. Ces insectes sont principalement consommés en Asie, en Afrique et en Amérique latine. Un rapport publié en 2016 par Persistence Market Research (PMR), une firme d’études de marché basée à New York, estime que le marché mondial des insectes comestibles devrait atteindre US\$722,9 millions d’ici la fin de 2024 — comparativement à \$423,8 millions en 2016 — avec un TCAC (taux de crois-



sance annuel composé) du marché attendu autour de 6.1 par cent.

“Selon PMR,” fait état un article sur le rapport paru au foodincanada.com en septembre 2016 — Strong growth forecast for global edible insects market (Forte croissance prévue pour le marché mondial des insectes comestibles), “les faibles coûts de production des produits à base d’insectes — comparativement au poulet, au boeuf et au porc — continueront à être l’un des principaux moteurs de croissance de ce marché. La popularité grandissante des produits à base d’insectes comestibles comme substitut aux protéines d’œuf et de lait joue également un rôle clé dans l’accroissement de la demande, en même temps qu’une sensibilisation accrue aux avantages écologiques de manger des insectes. Il y a aussi moins de risques de problèmes de salubrité alimentaire avec les insectes comestibles (par rapport à d’autres protéines), ce qui contribuera à leur croissance.”

Le rapport prédit également une croissance des insectes comestibles, à la fois comme un produit en soi et comme ingrédient dans d’autres produits alimentaires, notamment des boissons, des confiseries, des collations et des produits de boulangerie. Les grillons, les sauterelles et les criquets sont également considérés comme les meilleurs candidats à la consommation de masse.

Cependant, l’industrie des insectes comestibles ne fourmille pas encore au Canada. En dehors d’Entomo Farms, il n’y a pas de grands producteurs. De même, il n’y a que quelques fabricants de produits à base d’insectes.

Au Québec, l’entreprise la plus connue dans ce domaine est Naak. Fondée à la fin de 2016 par Minh-Anh Pham et William Walcker, et dont les fonds ont d’abord été issus d’une campagne de financement participatif sur le site internet de l’entreprise, au nom audacieux de tabarrenaak.com. La compagnie fabrique une demi-douzaine de barres, bouchées et poudres protéinées



SELON DIFFÉRENTES SOURCES, PRÈS DE **2000 ESPÈCES D’INSECTES** SONT CONSOMMÉES — SOIT EN ENTIER, SOIT EN TANT QU’INGRÉDIENTS DANS LES ALIMENTS — PAR ENVIRON **80 PAR CENT** DE LA POPULATION MONDIALE.

à base de grillons pour les athlètes de compétition et les férus d'entraînement physique.

Populaires sur les médias sociaux, l'entreprise a commencé à produire à l'échelle industrielle (principalement pour l'exportation vers le marché américain) il y a un an, lorsque les partenaires ont fait une apparition à l'émission Dans l'œil du dragon, la version franco-canadienne de Dragon's Den, où ils ont conclu des ententes avec les dragons Martin-Luc Archambault et Caroline Néron.

Une autre entreprise alimentaire québécoise qui fabrique et vend des produits à base d'insectes comestibles est Gourmex. Fondée à Montréal en 2012 par Emilio et Sophie Hernandez, l'entreprise produit des spécialités d'inspiration mexicaine comme des sauterelles séchées au piment jalapeno, des grillons rôtis et des larves de cactus.

Hébert précise que ses partenaires et lui prévoient concentrer les activités de Tottem



Propriétaires de Tottem nutrition: Brenda Plant, Yann Hébert, Céline Comeau et Claude Girard.

sur les produits à base de ténébrions meuniers, lesquels ont un goût qui rappelle la noix ou l'amande, plutôt que de grillons dont le goût s'avère plus amer et acide. Ils prévoient notamment ouvrir la première ferme de ténébrions meuniers au Québec, probablement à l'automne. Parasites pour les boulangers et les pâtisseries du monde entier, les larves de ténébrions meuniers naissent et vivent dans la farine. Dans les fermes de ténébrions meuniers, la farine est tamisée tous les quelques jours pour enlever les œufs et les excréments. Les insectes sont finalement récoltés avant qu'ils ne se transforment en pupe et en coléoptères adultes. "Nous espérons produire quatre tonnes de poudre de ténébrions meuniers par année, ce qui représente environ 10 tonnes d'insectes," souligne Hébert.

Élever ses propres vers, confie-t-il, permettra à sa jeune entreprise de contrôler

à la fois la qualité et l'approvisionnement, et augmenter éventuellement la variété des produits. "Nous continuerons à servir nos clients actuels ainsi que nos clients institutionnels et ceux du marché du sport," déclare Hébert. "Nous allons prendre notre temps et ajuster notre capacité de production en fonction de la demande du marché que nous allons essayer de développer." ●

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Keeping the wheels rolling

High-wear equipment parts require a maintenance strategy

Yvonne Dick

Keeping machines going is a top priority in the food packaging industry. Equally important is food safety. Regular inspections and servicing of food packaging machines can achieve both goals for a manufacturer/packer. In the industrial machine industry, every moving part of a machine is a potential line stopper.

Derek Wood of Abbey Packaging shares some tips about maintenance and prevention. “Last minute emergency interventions are expensive. Generally, they don’t happen when you want them to. Having a skilled on-site technician or staff for preventative maintenance and support can make the difference. For example, after identifying which parts of the machine may have been causing alerts or errors, sometimes our company can help troubleshoot a temporary solution over the phone. We then follow up with a scheduled maintenance session at the client’s convenience. That way their product line can stay operational when they need it to.”

Moving parts in packaging machines cause the largest number of machine issues. Computer and electronic systems require the least maintenance by comparison. Mechanical wear and tear of any part of the machine can cause downtime, so wear and tear or obvious signs of damage are one of the first things a packaging machine technician will look for. This is part of regular maintenance and prevention. Food safety is also vital. During the inspection, moving and non-moving



A technician troubleshoots an XR75 Anritsu X-Ray machine used for testing food packaging equipment and the finished products to ensure there are no soft or hard contaminants left in the product by the machine.

parts are checked in operation as well as at reset. This helps to ensure that the results of machine wear or damage have not had a chance to interfere with the safe operation of the machine.

Sensors in the factory help prevent compromised products or machines, so optical sensors, X-ray machines, and metal detectors are standard equipment. However, what is common inside a machine for other industrial use may not be available for a food packaging machine. For example, plastic items and ceramic bearings may not be part of a machine which has contact with food due to detection by inspection machinery. If parts cannot be detected by a metal detector as part of regular machine inspection, they likely won’t be included as there may not be a way to know if

these non-metal parts are wearing and shedding inside the machine. With no other means of detection for small particles, certain materials pose safety risks. Machine manufacturers, says Wood, are always looking for the best materials to prolong the life of their machines, and as always, food safety is the key concern for food packaging machines.

Regular maintenance is crucial to prevent equipment issues. Meat packaging machine parts, for example, must be in contact with caustic cleaners and washed more often than other food production lines such as bakery machines, which accelerates wear and tear. Therefore, the environment in which the machines are working is an important factor. This helps technicians decide how often to perform maintenance, schedule diagnostic tests and more. Some machines need checking every three to six months while others may need yearly work.

Ninety per cent of preventative maintenance happens on the factory level. The client is set up to perform these tasks on a daily or weekly basis, and higher maintenance items and inspections are done by service company technicians and through specialty inspections. It takes lots of lubrication, adjusting and tightening, but ultimately packaging machines that are well-maintained work better than those left untouched. ●

Five tips for proper packaging machine maintenance:

1. Stick to your preventative maintenance schedule. Do not skip it because the machine seems to be running normally.
2. Combine your regular machine maintenance with other routine maintenance tasks. This will help you remember to do them.
3. Consider your packaging machine provider as a partner in your production line. Keep them informed of machine changes, alerts, or anything out of the ordinary.
4. Understand the specific parts which you need to keep in stock in order to perform regular maintenance and keep the production line running smoothly.
5. Plan for the machine’s upgrading or eventual obsolescence. Nothing lasts forever. Plan for future upgrades or the need to invest in new equipment now, before you need it.

Greasing the line

Food-grade lubricant plays an important role in the manufacture and packaging of food

Yvonne Dick

Food processing plants may make low-fat products, but they still require a little grease to get the job done. Food-grade lubricant plays an important role in the manufacture and packaging of food for consumer use. Lubricants in the food industry come in a variety of sizes and delivery methods. A hydraulic compressor may use a spray-based oil, while another part of the machinery requires a thick grease or grease cartridge. The number of lubricants a single machine will need varies too.

“Let’s say on average [an operator may need] three depending on the number of gearboxes. Then there are food-grade compressor lubricants, and chain lubricants which may be used to load bakery items into a very hot oven,” says Louis Lalonde, co-founder of Lalonde, Lalonde & Assoc. Inc. Manufacturer’s Agents. “Food-grade machines include those for packaging, bottling water and other liquids, processing food. They will all need lubricant depending on if they have compressors, vacuum pumps, or bearings.”

In the bakery sector, machines requiring a good food-grade lubricant may include one or more: conveyer, conveying blower, bakery conveyer, dough roll line, forklift truck, kneading, mixing, packaging, palletizer, cold storage room, and ventilation fans. The conveyer alone may use three different types of lubricants, and the dough roll line a variety of up to seven different lubricants. The oven machinery and gear chain may require lubrication



photo: travenian/Getty Images

more often. This is because of the heat generated by the oven.

“Depending on the size of the plant, they may go through anywhere from \$5,000 worth of lubricants in a year or as much as \$100,000 worth of lubricants. It really depends on the type of machines, how many, and what their function is. Some machinery has a self-lubricating



Certified lubricants undergo stringent testing, production line audits, yearly reports and more.

applicator, while others need to be manually serviced. Motors may only need oil changes based on performance hours, similar to a car,” says Lalonde.

Types of lubricant oils and greases may vary in both composition and viscosity. There are also food-grade lubricants which are certified kosher and/or halal. The detection of food-grade lubricants in food is generally low-key. “A little of compressor lubricant mist does get in the air,” notes Lalonde. “The lubricants are tested and certified to be safe by the U.S. FDA as well as, in Canada, the CFIA. Even if there is a trace amount in the food product it is still safe to consume.”

Food-grade lubricants generally fall into one of two categories — either H1 or H2 lubricants. H1 lubricants are

certified for use in Canada by the CFIA. Newer lubricants are tested and rated by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), which is considered the main standard worldwide. H1 lubricants may have “incidental” contact with food. These include release agents for gaskets or seals and anti-rust agents. Only the minimum amount of these lubricants is used on the equipment. An anti-rust agent will need to be removed from machinery by washing or wiping before the equipment may be used again.

H2 lubricants are required to have no food contact. They are used in locations of machinery where no edible parts of products ever make contact. Within this category, there may be a list of unacceptable lubricants due to unfavourable toxicity.

There are other oils considered to be lubricants. These are generally related to preparing equipment for baking (oil sprayers) and preventing the adhesion of food. They include 3H release agents, which are made from edible oils. Another category is H3, lubricants made of food-grade ingredients, mineral oil, or soluble oil. HT1 lubricants are known as heat transfer lubricants and they may have “incidental” contact with food.

To become registered by the NSF, a food-grade lubricant must be evaluated against 21 CFR Section 178.3570, and be composed of ingredients listed in the regulation. Accurate labelling is vital, and the lubricant must have clear and complete instructions for end-user application. On approval, the product must contain the NSF Registration Mark and H1 category code and product registration number. There are currently 7,700 food-grade products listed with the NSF, and more than 700 H1 lubricant manufacturers listed worldwide. Certified lubricants undergo stringent testing, production line audits, yearly reports and more. 🍎

Bakery Showcase 2018

Bakery Showcase Tradeshow & Conference took place in Toronto April 29 and 30. The tradeshow featured all manner of products, equipment and services for manufacturers in the bake and snack sector. The show also offered a packed conference lineup covering topics such as NAFTA, fulfilling consumer needs, consumer behaviours and expectations, and meeting challenges in the baking sector. If you missed the show, here's a roundup of some of the products and services that were there.

Good health

EmulGold Fibre from Kerry Inc. is a natural, non-GMO source of soluble dietary fibre, produced from high-quality gum acacia, which can be used in snack bars, baked foods and confectionery. The company also offers Wellmune, a natural ingredient that can help strengthen the immune system that is safe for everyday consumption, and is gluten-free, kosher and halal. It can be used in bakery and cereals, prepared snacks, performance nutrition, weight management and confectionery. www.kerry.com

Bakery equipment

Handtmann Canada Limited offers a range of bakery equipment solutions. The company's lineup includes depositing and filling machines, such as the Depositing Station 551 and Multi-Lane Flow Divider; sheeting equipment like the Handtmann SN Sheeting Head; extruding and forming equipment, such as the FS 510 and Handtmann Multi-Lane Continuous Co-Extruder; and dividing and cutting attachments like the Cutting Unit 442 and Multi-Lane Forming Device. The company has equipment solutions for cakes, pocket products, cookies, pizza, muffins and brownies. www.handtmann.ca

Healthful oils

Nutra-Clear High Stability Canola Oil from Bunge Lodars Crocklaan is a high oleic, low linoleic canola oil developed for extensive deep frying and baking, that is non-hydrogenated, low in saturated fat, and trans fat-free. Also from Bunge is Whole Harvest Non-GMO Project Verified Canola Oil, part of its expeller pressed oils that are highly stable oil ingredients for both cooking and baking.

www.bunge.com



Multi solutions

Quadra Ingredients supplies a range of product solutions for baked goods manufacturers. The company offers a patented Potassium Bicarbonate to replace Sodium Bicarb to help reduce sodium. The company also offers a range of soluble and insoluble fibres, including Inulin & Oligofructose, pea fibre, beet fibre, citrus fibre and wheat fibre. Quadra also has gluten-free options in flours, starches, hydrocolloids and emulsifiers.

www.quadra.ca

Quality ingredients

Horizon Food Industry Inc. sells a variety of bakery ingredients, including raisins (Sultana, Golden, Green and Sun-Dried Raisins Thompson and more), pistachios, chickpeas, and saffron. The company also offers unpitted, pitted, chopped and sliced dates, date paste and date syrup. Dates contain pectin, dietary fibre and syrup, and can act as a thickener or gelling agent in processed foods. www.horizonfoodindustry.com



Keeping it clean

Kärcher Canada Inc. offers a range of cleaning machines, accessories and detergents, as well as repair services. Its products include pressure washers, steam cleaners, extractors, commercial vacuums, floor scrubbers, floor machines, floor sweepers and specialty equipment, such as dry ice blasting machines. The company also offers a line of products under its ecoefficiency brand.

www.kaercher.com

Mechanical solutions

SEW-Eurodrive Canada provides drive systems and electronics for the food and beverage industry. It offers pre-defined solutions for stationary conveying; mobile conveying and lifting; vertical conveying and hoisting; turning and pivoting; cooling; handling and sorting; storage; winding; mixing and stirring, packaging; grinding, breaking and pulverizing; and washing and drying. www.sew-eurodrive.ca

Add fibre

ADM/Matsutani America Inc. offers its Fibersol line of fibre ingredients for baking applications. Fibersol offers dietary fibre that doesn't affect taste, aroma or texture.

It also replaces calories from sugar and fat and increases satiety. Fibersol is heat stable, acid stable, and works in breads, cakes, pastries, brownies, scones, cookies, crackers, energy and cereal bars, whole wheat products and fillings for crackers and cookies.

www.fibersol.com

Bouquet of flours

P & H Milling Group sources wheat from Western Canada, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada to produce flour and cereal products. The company's lineup includes hard red spring wheat flour for breads and other bakery products; soft winter wheat flour for cakes and cookies; semolina flour for pasta; and organic flour, rye flour and atta flour for chappati. Other products include blended flours, No Time Flour, Cracked Wheat, Heat Treated Flour, Barley Flour and Wheat Bran. www.phmilling.com

Add flavour

Carmi Flavor and Fragrance Co. Inc. has a range of products for the bakery sector. As well as providing customized bakery solutions, the company offers vanilla concentrate kits, chocolate flavours, coffee flavours, including flavours that are heat-stable and low-cost, and available in liquid or powder form in a variety of concentrations.

www.carmiflavors.com

Agri-food support

Farm Credit Canada is a leading agriculture lender, and works with organizations in Canada's agriculture, agribusiness and agrifood sector. As well as offering various financing options, including a Young Entrepreneur Loan, FCC provides services such as lines of credit, equipment financing, and environmental solutions. FCC also produces the annual Farmland Values Report.

www.fcc-fac.ca

Easy éclairs

Puratos Canada Inc. highlighted its Tegral Clara Ultra, an efficient solution for making éclairs. Users simply add water, oil and eggs to the Tegral Clara Ultra mix, without requiring cooking to produce the traditional taste and texture of choux pastry. www.puratos.ca



Breading products

Aliments ED Foods Inc. (LUDA) offers breading products, such as Batter Mix No M.S.G. and All Purpose Breading Mix. Both products are vegetarian, trans fat free, and contain no artificial colours or flavours. The company says the Batter Mix is a fine, free-flowing, pink-beige powder that can enhance fried meats. All Purpose Breading Mix is also fine and free-flowing, but is a cream-colour powder with cream colour particles which can add a dark beige colour with granular texture to fried foods. It has a mild flavour enhanced with spice notes. www.ed.ca

Perfect textures

Dealers Ingredients Inc. is the distributor for Hydrosol in Canada. Germany-based Hydrosol GmbH & Co. develops and produces tailor-made stabilizer systems for dairy products, ice cream and desserts, ready meals, meat, cold cuts and fish products. Through Dealers Ingredients, clients can also access vegan, vegetarian and flexitarian stabilizer solutions. Hydrosol can simplify complex product challenges with customized food stabilizing and texturing systems. www.dealersingredients.com



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Allison's Fine Foods Ltd.
Toronto

Deanna Rosolen

The story behind Allison's Fine Foods Ltd. is a little different from the typical entrepreneur story. Joan Allison McClure, who today is president of the candy company, didn't find a gap in the market to fill. Instead, it was more of a "necessity is the mother of invention" story — with a Canadian twist. About 21 years ago, McClure's youngest son Jesse wanted to play hockey, and as his talent grew so did the costs.

McClure, a single mom then working full-time, explains that she told her youngest son that if he wanted to continue with hockey they'd have to make some extra money. She had seen candies on a stick and decided they could make their own confectionery to sell. The two bought candy and together worked at their kitchen table to make their first kabobs to sell at local fairs and markets. "It was challenging at first because not all candy will work," says

McClure, "some of it will split and fall off the stick. A lot of it at first was trial and error. Initially we were buying just whatever candy we could find and trying them and then coming up with new ideas."

It was slow and steady at first, and after a few years McClure decided to exhibit at the Toronto Gift Fair. At first she thought she'd made a mistake; it wasn't a busy show and she was investing money she didn't have. But two things happened at the show — McClure met a candy manufacturer who she would partner with to make her custom and signature jellies and gummies, and she



signed with Hallmark Canada and a few other independent stores. The company was beginning to grow, but the family kept their operations in McClure's kitchen, and McClure kept her full-time job.

Then around 2000, McClure exhibited at a gourmet food show. Although no one signed with her at the show, a month later Laura Secord contacted McClure wanting kabobs for its stores. At this point, she says, they rented a space and hired people to help. By the early 2000s, McClure had to make a decision. "I either continue with my full-time job and shut this down, or stop it from growing," she explains. "Or I leave my job and just trust that I can build this."

McClure chose the second option and today the Toronto-based company has its own facility, and 12 employees. Allison produces candy kabobs, jelly candies, lollipops and seasonal candies, which are found across Canada and now into the U.S. Jesse is full time with the company and his two brothers and sister-in-law are also on staff. 🍬

Q&A



Q: Why did you struggle with launching the company?

A: "Coming from a health food background I struggled with selling candy and sugar. I had to put it into perspective. It's a treat — it's not your dinner, it's not your breakfast. It brings a lot of joy. When kids see them they light up and their faces are so happy. I thought, I'm providing jobs, I'm bringing joy to peoples' lives. You know what, I can live with that."

Q: What challenges do you face today?

A: "One challenge is finding where we fit in the marketplace because the retail market is changing. We started with a lot of mom-and-pop shops, Hallmark stores and independent stores, but smaller stores are disappearing because of online business. The way business is done is a lot different today than when we first started. The challenge is how do we continue? We have been very, very fortunate and blessed that we have retailers who have been with us from the time we started. But if we're to expand — we're expanding into the U.S. — at some point we will do online direct-to-consumer as well."

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