

CANADIAN

January/February 2012

# Meat Business

*The Beef, Pork & Poultry Industry Magazine*

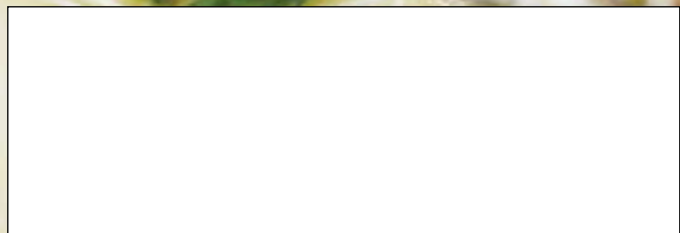


## South Korea Opens Border to Canadian Beef

Novel Meat Packaging

2012 Food Trends

Stars lining up for  
regulatory changes in 2012  
pg. 5



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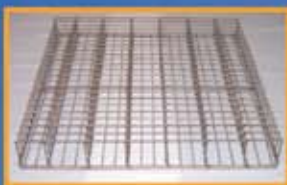
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**PUBLISHER**

Ray Blumenfeld  
ray@meatbusiness.ca

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

Alan MacKenzie  
alan@meatbusiness.ca

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

James Laws, Daniel Burrus, Virginia Labbie

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Krista Rutledge

**FINANCE**

Jerry Butler

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**We Communications West Inc.**  
7-1080 Waverley Street  
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3T 5S4  
Phone: 204.985.9502 Fax: 204.582.9800  
Toll Free: 1.800.344.7055

E-mail: publishing@meatbusiness.ca  
Website: www.meatbusiness.ca

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## The stars are lining up for regulatory changes in 2012

**IT'S THAT TIME OF** year again when people are updating their annual business plans and goals. Sometimes it all becomes rather discouraging when the same issues remain on the books year after year. But I don't find myself so discouraged this year. In fact, it seems to me that 2012 is the year in which many of the regulatory changes that we at the Canadian Meat Council have been advocating for will finally see some real action.

In the spring of 2011 the American Meat Institute and the Canadian Meat Council submitted comments to the Governments of Canada and the United States on the Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness initiative.

We were very pleased to see the action plans published by the governments of Canada and the U.S. in December 2011 for the Regulatory Cooperation Council and the Beyond the Border initiative of a shared vision for perimeter security and economic competitiveness that incorporated many of our suggestions. (*For details, see page 20*)

Part of the action plans released clearly spelled out that "the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the US Food Safety and Inspection Service will initiate a one-year pilot by June 2012 to provide for advance review and clearance of official certification and alternative approaches to import inspection activities for fresh meat."

We have been arguing that re-inspecting meat in its final package in a box in a truck is not nearly as worthwhile as inspections at the meat processing facility. And, at a time of skyrocketing diesel fuel prices, redirecting all Canadian trucks to "inspection centres" once they cross into the U.S. is a huge cost in time, fuel, and extra wear and tear on the vehicle through more mileage. Extra tests on meat shipments at the border delay timely delivery and shelf life of product that has already been inspected.

We in the industry agree that meat produced under the regulatory systems in both countries is amongst the safest in the world and that it should not be necessary to apply additional inspection or testing requirements simply because meat is crossing the United States-Canada border.

Another part of the action plan calls for streamlining the certification requirements for meat and poultry shipments flowing between Canada and the United States. That should rectify the onerous veterinary signature requirement on our Canadian meat export certificates that U.S. regulators don't even require.

The action plan even calls for the creation of a common meat nomenclature system and a mechanism to maintain the system.

In Canada there is another major initiative underway. In the fall of 2011, the CFIA began a systematic review of its regulatory frameworks for food safety, plant health and animal health. Over the coming months, the CFIA plans to engage with Canadians, industry stakeholders and other government departments, including federal partners, through a series of consultations to discuss its regulatory modernization strategy.

Luckily for us, the CFIA has identified "meat inspection renewal" as one of its short-term priorities for review. We have been advocating for changes to Canada's Meat Inspection Regulations pertaining to pre-market registration of packaging materials and labelling for years. Making changes would still allow the CFIA to support Canadians' access to safe, reliable and wholesome agricultural products, while at the same time creating and maintaining a regulatory environment that supports competitiveness and innovation in the Canadian agricultural sector.

The stars are indeed lining up in 2012 – let's not miss our opportunity of a lifetime to make meaningful change to Canada's meat industry. **M**

*James Laws, P.Ag. is the executive director of the Canadian Meat Council.*



# South Korea Opens Border to Canadian Beef

Significant Asian market immediately accepting Canadian cattle under 30 months.

*By Alan MacKenzie*

**ON JAN. 20**, Canada's meat industry celebrated the long-awaited news that a major hurdle over South Korea's eight-year ban on Canadian cattle has been reached.

The South Korean government announced it would immediately open its border to imports of Canadian animals under 30 months of age. The country is the last significant Asian market to lift the ban after the 2003 bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) outbreak.

"For the first time in nearly a decade, Canadian beef can be exported again to what was our fourth-largest market, South Korea," Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz stated at a press conference in Spruce Grove, Alta. "Improved trade with South Korea is a priority for the Canadian agriculture industry and the South Korean government's co-operation in restoring access to

Canadian beef will further strengthen trade relations between our two countries."

After Canada's first case of BSE was confirmed in Alberta on May 20, 2003, the governments of 34 countries banned imports of Canadian cattle and beef products. According to a 2006 report from the Canadian Agricultural Trade Policy Research Network, the beef sector in Canada was losing an estimated \$11 million a day because following the trade bans and the resulting collapse in domestic prices.

Prior to BSE, the U.S. was the largest importer of Canadian beef and cattle, followed by Mexico, Japan and South Korea. South Korean exports at that time are estimated at approximately 17,300 tonnes, worth \$60 million.

The Canadian government began seeking re-entry into South

Korea ever since the market was closed, and in 2009 made a request for a World Trade Organization (WTO) Panel, based on science and the safety and quality of Canadian beef, which is shipped worldwide.

On Dec. 30, 2011 the South Korean National Assembly passed import health requirements to allow for the importation of Canadian beef and veal from cattle under 30 months of age. The South Korean Government published its approval of the Import Health Requirements (IHRs) on Jan. 20 and notified the Government of Canada that all certification conditions are in place, meaning exports could commence immediately from the Canadian beef establishments approved for export.

“Our government understands the importance of trade to the jobs and livelihoods of hardworking Canadians and their families, and the importance of helping our farmers and producers access global markets,” International Trade Minister Ed Fast said. “That’s why we have consistently fought for fair and open access for our producers and exporters around the world, and against unscientific trade restrictions on Canadian products. Our government has worked tirelessly to ensure the Korean market is re-opened to high-quality Canadian beef, and the Korean government’s decision to restore access is the direct result of these efforts.”

### Industry praise

The news was praised by cattle and meat industry representatives.

Brad Wildeman, chair of Canada Beef Inc. said the entire beef and veal industry is “relieved and energized” over the announcement.

“With re-entry, we believe the Canadian industry is positioned to benefit from exports of 6,500 tonnes worth about \$30 million by 2015, with potential to grow to 14,000 tonnes worth \$65 million by 2020,” Wildeman stated. “While these are relatively modest figures compared to Canadian beef and veal trade with some other countries, it does provide additional sales opportunities for our high quality beef and veal and helps diversify our export customer base.”



“The return of safe, high-quality Canadian beef to South Korea after nearly a decade is a significant achievement and one that’s been a long time coming.”

– Travis Toews, Canadian Cattlemen’s Association

Manitoba cattle farmer and newly appointed Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn welcomed the move as well.

“As a cattle farmer, I know first-hand the negative effects BSE imposed on the cattle industry in our province and across the country,” Kostyshyn said. “South Korea is an important market

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for Manitoba producers and regaining access to it will give farmers across the country another option when marketing their beef.”

Manitoba has the third-largest beef herd in Canada with 558,000 cows. Beef cattle production represents roughly nine per cent of the province’s farm cash receipts, which translates into \$362 million of a total of \$4.2 billion in 2011.

“We’re pleased by this move and the opportunities it opens to farmers in our province,” said Kostyshyn. “We’re hopeful this will facilitate free trade negotiations with South Korea which may provide positive trade benefits for pork as well.”

Canadian Cattlemen’s Association (CCA) president Travis Toews thanked Agriculture Ministers Ritz and Fast for their diligence on the issue.

“The return of safe, high-quality Canadian beef to South Korea after nearly a decade is a significant achievement and one that’s been a long time coming,” Toews said in a release. “The CCA agreed to this process as an alternate solution to the WTO Dispute Panel report in order to get Canadian beef moving into South Korea more quickly. It was the right call and we thank Ministers Ritz and Fast for seeing this to a successful conclusion.”

Toews added that efforts are expected to continue in South Korea to recapture access for over-30-month beef as well, in line with World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) science-based guidelines.

The U.S. was the first to re-open its borders to Canadian cattle in March 2005 for animals under 30 months. In November 2007 cattle of all ages was being accepted. Mexico partially lifted its ban around the same time as the U.S. and Japan eased its ban in December 2005 to allow the import of cattle under 21 months – but both nations still do not allow unrestricted imports of Canadian beef.

Toews told *Canadian Meat Business* that the deal with South Korea is a positive step toward increasing market access in Japan and Mexico as well.

“I think any time there are meaningful market access openings it’s positive to our global negotiations. I think it builds some momentum,” he said. “The fact that we’ve achieved in Korea what we believe is the next step in Japan, I think that is positive.”

“Everybody’s aware that Canada had a WTO case against Korea, and that the Koreans moved forward at the eleventh hour to resume trade and the report never came out,” Toews added. “I think that has a bearing too for other countries. I think a lot of people could conclude that the expectation was that Canada was going to win that case.”

### Hopes for renewed free trade talks

In a release, the Canadian Meat Council (CMC) also praised the government’s multi-year endeavour to restore access to South Korea for Canadian beef.

“South Korea represents one of the last remaining major countries to resume trade in beef and beef products with Canada. Finally, following an absence of eight years this country will be able, once again, to export its quality beef products to the world’s tenth largest importer,” Canadian Meat Council president Scott Entz stated.

Entz added the resumption of trade in beef products brings hope of renewed free trade agreement negotiations between Canada and Korea, which the beef and pork industries have been calling for since talks were interrupted since 2008.

The European Union, the United States and Chile have all negotiated bilateral free trade agreements with South Korea. The CMC estimates the Korean market is valued at \$30 million for Canadian beef and \$300 million for pork.

“The longer that Canada lags behind the U.S., the EU and Chile in the implementation of progressive tariff reductions, the greater the negative effect will be on Canadian exports to this important market. Not only will Canada lose very quickly its vital status as a competitive supplier to South Korea, the Canadian disadvantage could endure throughout and even beyond the entire 15-year tariff reduction implementation period. Now that the beef access technical issues have been resolved, we should move forward swiftly with the free trade agreement negotiations,” stated Entz. **M**

## Prime Minister Harper on resumption of beef and cattle exports to South Korea

“Our Government is very pleased that South Korea has decided to reopen its market to Canadian beef and cattle. This decision confirms what we have been saying all along: Canadian cattle, beef and beef products are safe, high quality, and should be available in countries around the world.

“(This) announcement demonstrates that our Government is working hard to create jobs and revenue for Canada’s beef and cattle farmers by maximizing access to international markets.

“While this relationship will be very beneficial to Canada’s beef industry, our Government remains confident that this decision will also help create a favourable climate which will lead to a deeper trade relationship with South Korea – a priority market for Canada.”





# Top Food Trends 2012

“Supermarket Guru” Phil Lempert predicts trends to watch this year.

CONAGRA FOODS, one of North America’s largest food companies, has released predictions of the top 10 food trends for 2012, compiled by “Supermarket Guru” Phil Lempert.

## Food prices keep rising:

Continuing a trend from 2011, environmental conditions and higher production costs will bring rising food prices in the coming year. As a result, consumers will emphasize the use of printable grocery coupons and frequent shopper cards, while also shopping at non-traditional food stores and trading down to less expensive options as part of their routine.

## Never eat – or shop – alone again:

The rise of food blogs has set a foundation for group experiences. Food trucks tweet their locations and flash food raves assemble underground at midnight. Expect app updates to include “social rewards” for groups who shop together – much like the original concept of warehouse clubs.

## Baby boomers keep right on truckin’:

Expect supermarkets to cater to those who started turning 65 last year by offering foods and services to satisfy their growing interest in and need for more healthful options. Nostalgia also plays a role, as consumers turn to brands they’ve known and loved for decades.

## Increased emphasis on “farm to fork” journey:

Shoppers are increasingly interested in knowing where their food comes from, which is why 2012 will bring a different kind of food celebrity: the farmer. A growing numbers of farmers are leading the conversation by using blogs and social media to bring their story to consumers. Expect to see more advertising and television programs starring these real food experts.

## The end of the checkout lane:

Many shoppers are learning to appreciate the tech-savvy nature of self-checkouts, comparing prices at nearby retailers, in-store interactive media devices, QR codes and mobile coupons. For many shoppers high-tech adds to personalization with suggested purchases and targeted offers based on their histories in the store.

## Ethnic food revolution:

Food trucks are replacing gourmet and specialty stores as the channel to experiment and discover new food experiences – especially when it comes to ethnic foods. More often than not, these ethnic food trucks are manned by descendants of the actual cuisines and cultures being offered, with the ability and knowledge to share the heritage and romance of the food.

## New role of the male shopper:

Today’s dads want to be engaged parents and successful professionals. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that 41 per cent of men are now doing the food preparation, as compared to half that amount in 2003.

## Eating at home = “Extreme Home Cooking”:

More men and women will pride themselves on making the most food for the least amount of money at home. This trend also will help drive a new definition for the “value meal,” with fast food establishments and other restaurants offering discounts based on the number of diners. Instead of senior discounts, think party-of-five discounts.




Expect supermarkets to cater to those who started turning 65 last year by offering foods and services to satisfy their growing interest in and need for more healthful options...

## How sweet it isn’t:

Look for reduced sugar products to be the biggest health claim in the coming year, along with a revised Nutrition Facts panel on food.

## Listen for the sound of food:

People judge the readiness of some foods (like microwave popcorn or grilled burgers), by the sounds the foods make. Multisensory perception will be one of the new “food sciences” in 2012, as psychologists and food scientists join forces to design, create and influence the sounds of our foods to convey freshness, taste and even health attributes.

For more information about Phil Lempert’s 2012 predictions, visit [www.supermarketguru.com](http://www.supermarketguru.com). 

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# Fearing Food Safety Cuts

Agriculture Union asks industry to oppose CFIA cutbacks.

**ACCORDING TO THE** Agriculture Union – PSAC, which represents federal food safety inspectors, planned cuts by the federal government to food safety initiatives may risk another major food borne illness outbreak along the lines of the 2008 listeriosis outbreak killed 23 Canadians.

The union said the CFIA's 2011-12 Estimates Report on Plans and Priorities forecasts a smaller CFIA by 2013-14 with \$21.5 million less funding than current levels and 234 fewer staff. The agency's Food Safety Program would see cuts of \$21.1 million and 207 fewer food safety staff, much of which was hired following the 2008 outbreak.

"This looks like an exercise to make regulation cheaper, not safer or smarter. Ottawa should worry about undermining public confidence with food safety cuts because that will be bad for the industry," stated union president Bob Kingston.

"Cuts of this magnitude would leave the food safety program reeling and severely diminish an inspector's ability to complete assignments, and that means risk of another major foodborne illness outbreak will be elevated," he added.

At a news conference in Ottawa, Kingston was joined by Karen Clark, whose mother Francis died in 2008 from listeriosis after eating tainted cold cuts.

"It scares me, quite honestly, to see the federal government's attitude. It looks like they think Canadians have forgotten about the listeriosis outbreak and all the people it affected," Clark stated. "That they can reduce these inspectors and safety programs and no one will notice. Something terrible happened to me and my family. We're not special. If the federal government does not maintain adequate safety oversight and inspection it could happen again to anyone's family."

The union is concerned these cuts could unravel important improvements to Canada's food safety over the past few years and potentially threaten access to U.S. markets for Canadian producers.

"U.S. regulators pushed the Government of Canada to increase the presence of food safety inspectors in plants producing for export to the U.S. Ottawa's current plans to cut funding the CFIA needs to meet U.S. inspection requirements will send warning signals to regulators south of the border," Kingston said.

## CFIA: "No cuts"

However, the CFIA and Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz denied the budget for food safety has been cut. The CFIA said it is not conducting interviews on this topic, but did state that it is "fully committed to ensuring that Canada's food safety system provides

consumers the protection they expect and deserve (*for details on some of the actions taken by the CFIA following the listeriosis outbreak in 2008, see page 11*).

In a statement, Ritz slammed Kingston's union tactics as doing a "great disservice to Canadian farmers, processors and consumers."

"While we recognize that our food safety system is much stronger than it was five years ago, there is still work to be done," Ritz stated. "Most recently we committed \$100 million over five



"Cuts of this magnitude would leave the food safety program reeling and severely diminish an inspector's ability to complete assignments..."

– Bob Kingston, Agriculture Union

years to further invest in inspector training, tools and technology. In fact, a report on OECD countries recognized Canada's 'superior' food safety system that ranks us the best in the world on food recalls."

The union announced it is launching a campaign to recruit major players in Canada's food industry, starting with Maple Leaf Foods, the company at the centre of the 2008 outbreak. The online campaign at [www.foodsafetyfirst.ca](http://www.foodsafetyfirst.ca) allows users to send a message to food industry leaders urging them to get on board.

"To begin, we will be inviting our supporters to urge Michael McCain to tell Ottawa to re-consider these cuts. Maple Leaf Foods is symbolic of a failed food safety system. Their company suffered tremendous reputational and economic damage when the food safety system failed Canadians," Kingston said.

The campaign will also reach out to other Canadian food producers and manufacturers.

Maple Leaf Foods declined comment on this story. **M**

- staff

# Final Report on Outbreak

Recommendations from Weatherill report now in place, Government of Canada says.

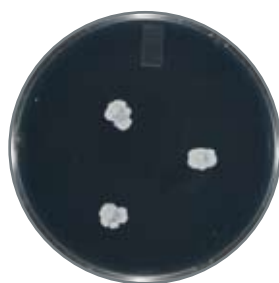


Photo: NRCC

**THE GOVERNMENT OF** Canada on Dec. 19 released its final report on the action it has taken to respond to all recommendations in Sheila Weatherill's report on the 2008 listeriosis outbreak.

"*Action on Weatherill Report Recommendations to Strengthen the Food Safety System: Final Report To Canadians* outlines the government's continuous work to reduce food safety risks, enhance surveillance and early detection of foodborne pathogens and illnesses, and improve emergency response," Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz stated in a release.


"We have taken concrete action to improve how we detect and respond to foodborne illness outbreaks," added Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq. "From stronger response plans with our food safety partners to using innovative technologies in our labs, we are better prepared to protect the health of Canadians."

The federal government stated it has made significant investments to improve the food safety system. In 2009, a \$75 million investment was provided to further improve Canada's ability to prevent, detect and respond to future foodborne illness outbreaks. The 2010 federal budget allotted an additional \$13 million annually for two years to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to fund increased inspection capacity for meat and poultry processing facilities. The 2011 budget provided a further \$100 million over five years to invest in inspector training, tools and technology, and science capacity. All of these investments build on the government's 2008 commitment to invest \$489.5 million over five years in the Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan.

In 2009, the Government of Canada committed to act on all of Weatherill's 57 recommendations. The final report highlights the actions taken to strengthen the food safety

system, including:

- Identifying and fast-tracking the approval of food safety interventions such as food additives that reduce the growth of listeria monocytogenes and other pathogens;
- Hiring 170 additional full-time inspectors to increase CFIA's presence in federally registered meat processing plants;
- Developing new detection methods for listeria and other hazards in food that reduce testing time and enable more rapid response during food safety investigations;
- Using innovative laboratory technologies in outbreak investigations and expanding the outbreak detection lab network to include public health and food safety partners across Canada;
- Supporting national public health surveillance to improve collection, reporting and analysis of a wide range of health information;
- Providing Canadians, including those most vulnerable, with the information they need to reduce the risk of a foodborne illness through a new online food safety portal and national public information campaigns;
- Updating the Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response Protocol, which guides how all levels of government work together to respond to a national or international outbreak;
- Ensuring that health risk assessment teams are available 24/7 to support food safety investigations;
- Building surge capacity in order to respond more quickly and effectively to potential future foodborne illness outbreaks.

The final report can be found on the Government of Canada's food safety portal at [www.foodsafety.gc.ca](http://www.foodsafety.gc.ca).  - staff

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Events Calendar promotes upcoming trade shows, conferences, workshops and other events for the meat industry. For up to date listings, visit [meatbusiness.ca/events](http://meatbusiness.ca/events).

### Broadcaster Ron MacLean to join restaurant leaders at CRFA event

Sportscaster Ron MacLean of Hockey Night in Canada will be the keynote speaker at the new Breakfast with Champions event at the CRFA Show, organizers announced.

The quick-witted and engaging MacLean has won ten Gemini awards for broadcasting and is best known for being the host of Hockey Night in Canada on CBC Television. He also recently released a memoir, *Cornered* written with Kirstie McLellan Day.

In addition to MacLean, several well-known industry leaders will appear at the event and share their insights panel-style, with business lessons for real-life situations, organizers said. These speakers include:

- Mark Pacinda, president and CEO of Boston Pizza International;
- Donna Dooher, president of the Mildred Pierce Group;
- John Betts, president of McDonald's Restaurants of Canada;
- Kevin Friesen, chief operating officer of Scores Rotisserie, Invescor Restaurant Group;
- Warren Erhart, president and CEO of White Spot Hospitality.

The CRFA Show takes place March 4 to 6 at the Direct Energy Centre at Exhibition Place in Toronto. The inaugural Breakfast with Champions event will be held March 6 from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. For more information, visit [www.crfashow.ca](http://www.crfashow.ca).

### BRC conference to address challenges in retail supply chain

The British Retail Consortium (BRC), a leading retail trade association from the U.K., is bringing together speakers representing retail, food services and food manufacturing to share insights and knowledge on the significant global challenges in today's retail supply chain at an upcoming conference.

The event, taking place in Chicago from March 26 to 30, will offer training courses, best practice case studies and strategy building workshops.

Key topics include:

- U.S. legal development;
- optimizing operations through the use of the BRC Global Standards;
- risk assessment;
- incident management;
- sustainability and the carbon footprint;
- root cause analysis.

Speakers include:

- Gordon Hayburn, technical director (agri-foods) for Americas, QMI-SAI Global;

- Andrew Dehont, director of food safety compliance, Bimbo Bakeries USA;
- Brandon Headlee, quality director, ConAgra Foods;
- Sara Mortimore, vice president of quality and regulatory, Land O'Lakes;
- Dr. Randall Huffman, chief food safety officer, Maple Leaf Foods;
- Andrew Clappen, vice president of quality assurance, Loblaw;
- Gillian Kelleher, vice president of food safety and quality assurance, Wegmans Food Markets;
- Craig Wilson, vice president of food safety, Costco;
- John Batz, director of quality and food safety, Malt-O-Meal;
- Rhonda Wellik, CEO, Cert ID LC;
- Len Steed, head of certification, AIB International;
- Alfonso Capuchino, U.S. food safety technical manager, DNV Business Assurance;
- Tracey Sheehan, VP of food safety and quality, ARYZTA;
- Robert Gaze, HACCP and quality systems section manager, Campden BRI.

For further information, visit [www.brcfoodsafety2012.com](http://www.brcfoodsafety2012.com).

### ICoMST 2012 set for Montreal in August

The Canadian Meat Science Association and the Canadian Meat Council supported by INITIA (The Agri-food Foundation) are hosting the 58th International Congress of Meat Science and Technology (ICoMST 2012), Aug. 12 to 17 in Montreal.

The world's most renowned specialists will explore the healthy world of meat from sustainable and environmentally sound production systems through to healthy products for the consumer, organizers said in a release. The latest developments in meat science including consumer trends, nutrition and health, quality, tenderness, biochemistry, microbial quality and safety, sustainability, and animal welfare will be shared.

ICoMST 2012 will feature two special events. From Aug. 9 to 11, 30 graduate students will have the opportunity to attend a course lectured by world leading experts. Thursday, Aug. 16 will be dedicated to topics that specifically address the meat industry's needs: the CMSA Global Meat Quality and Safety Industry Day.

With 28 plenary speakers, 21 short oral presentations and over 300 poster presentations, ICoMST 2012 promises to be a great opportunity to network with meat research scientists and exchange ideas on the current challenges in the production of healthy meats, organizers said.

For more information, visit [www.icomst2012.ca](http://www.icomst2012.ca).

# Upcoming Events

## March 2012

4 – 6  
CRFA Show  
Direct Energy Centre  
Toronto, Ont.  
crfa.ca

16 – 18  
NAMP Meat Industry  
Management Conference  
The Drake Hotel  
Chicago, Illinois  
namp.com

26 – 30  
BRC Global Food Safety '12

Sheraton Chicago  
Hotel & Towers  
Chicago, Illinois  
brcfoodsafety2012.com

## April 2012

15 – 16  
ApEx  
Exhibition Park  
Halifax, N.S.  
crfa.ca

17 – 19  
Food Safety Summit  
Washington, DC  
foodsafetysummit.com

## May 2012

1 – 3  
AMI International Expo  
Dallas Convention Center  
Dallas, Texas  
meatami.com

9 – 11  
SIAL Canada  
Palais des Congrès  
Montreal, Que.  
sialcanada.com



*Thefoodnewz* is an on line events calendar created by Debra Bradshaw of Zep Food & Beverage Division. To find out more about the events listed in this magazine visit [thefoodnewz.com](http://thefoodnewz.com). If you know of events not listed please email Debra directly at [zerep@rogers.com](mailto:zerep@rogers.com).



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# Novel Meat Packaging and the Willingness-to-Pay

Studies recently conducted at the University of Alberta looked at consumers' reactions to innovative meat packaging technologies.

By Alan MacKenzie

**EMERGING, INNOVATIVE PACKAGING** methods may offer increased shelf life and other benefits to meat eaters and processing companies, but some consumers may be reluctant to purchase fresh meats packaged using novel technologies, according to studies done at the University of Alberta.

"It is important to inform consumers about the properties of food innovation, in order to let them make an informed decision and overcome their resistance to food technologies," Sven Anders, an economics professor at the university said.

"Food businesses and retailers need to develop information and labelling strategies to go with their innovations that are transparent and understandable to the general public – so if somebody's unsure about why they should pay a little more for, say, a vacuum packaged steak, they might be convinced to pay a higher price if they see and understand the new properties that might benefit them."

Anders led several Canadian studies in the last few years on consumer acceptance and willingness to pay for meat marketing techniques, including two experimental studies on novel meat packaging technologies. One, conducted in 2008 (with Iowa State University), looked at how consumers perceive fresh ground meat

products packaged using modified atmosphere packaging with carbon monoxide (MAP); the other, conducted last year, studied consumer perceptions of vacuum packaged beef steak.

## Modified atmosphere packaging

MAP is a technology commonly used to extend the shelf life of fresh food products, including cheese, vegetables, bread and processed meats, by altering the composition of gases inside the packaging. The ratio of oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide and/or carbon monoxide is altered to best suit the product, according to a fact sheet from the Canadian Meat Council (CMC).

For example, a high oxygen MAP system gives meat a bright red colour that consumers associate with freshness – but the high oxygen content may compromise the shelf life. Conversely, a low oxygen MAP system slows the potential growth of spoilage organisms but may give the meat an unappealing purple colour.

But, in a carbon monoxide MAP system, the carbon monoxide reacts with the myoglobin in the meat to give the product a desired bright red colour, while the low oxygen mixture limits the growth of organisms that cause spoilage. Carbon monoxide, while fatal if inhaled in large quantities, is harmless to humans

when ingested, Anders noted.

Using MAP technology can extend the shelf life of fresh meats to up to 14 days – compared to two-three days when using traditional foam tray and plastic wrap packaging methods. While common in processed meats such as hot dogs and deli cuts, the concept is relatively new to the fresh meat market.

MAP packaged ground beef using carbon monoxide gas has received regulatory approval in the U.S. and is sold through the big-box retailers Wal-Mart and Target, but is currently not available in the Canadian retail market, said Anders.

“The CFIA and Health Canada only started the regulatory process in 2010,” he added, noting that last year the technology received approval for individual packaging plants that apply to the CFIA and want to “experiment” with the technology.

“This status was partially the outcome of our research which supported industry demands for allowing this technology in Canada,” he said. “The industry is concerned that it might lose its competitive edge against its U.S. counterparts if technologies such as MAP are not approved by the Canadian regulators.”

According to Anders, the 2008 study showed that consumers are willing to pay more for the MAP-packaged meat when the product was shown side-by-side with a traditionally packaged product, because of the appealing “cherry red” colour. However, study participants’ willingness-to-pay for MPA packaging decreased when the subjects were informed about the full properties of the technology used.

“We learned that certain consumers are quite concerned about the potential implications of such novel technologies on the food that they buy,” Anders said, noting that income and education levels, gender and other socio-demographic variables are good predictors of concern levels and hence packaging technology rejection rates.

“We found that women are generally more resistant to food innovations,” he said. “In terms of age, we found that younger consumers, those aged 18 to 24 and those aged 25 to 34, showed the highest level of food technology resistance, whereas older consumers were more open to trying new food innovations.”

Anders said one of the key lessons learned from the studies is the need to better understand which factors – beliefs, norms, attitudes, etc. – influence consumers’ resistance to such food innovations.

“If we understand the reasons why people reject MAP packaging or vacuum packaging, then the meat industry and marketing specialists may be able to develop better strategies to make people overcome their resistance,” he said.

Anders, noting a study from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, estimated over 90 per cent of all food innovations that make it onto retail shelves fail within a short period of time.

“By better understanding consumer resistance to food innovations we may be able to lower that failure rate.”

## Vacuum packaging

In 2011 Anders led a study on whether consumers would be willing to pay a premium price for vacuum packaged fresh meats, which was an innovation introduced into the Western Canadian market in 2010, specifically with striploin steaks (other varieties have been added since the time of the study).

Vacuum packaging offers positive aging properties and, like MAP, can extend the shelf life of fresh meats up to 14 days. There is also a convenience factor of individually packaged cuts that many could see as desirable.

One downside to the process, however, is its effect on the colour of the meat, making it appear purple rather than red – although, according to David Hamill, a representative of Winpak,

a Winnipeg-based packaging manufacturer, that changes once the package is opened.

“When you open that product up and expose it to air, it will immediately bloom and turn red,” he noted.

Anders agreed that there is a colour change to meat when taken out of a vacuum package, but noted consumers would have to know about this process beforehand in order to choose a vacuum-packaged product despite its purple colour.

“We are all pretty driven by habits,” he said. “Changing that behaviour – getting people to accept purple coloured steaks – takes effort, even if we tell them the colour will come back to bright red after opening the package at home.”

Anders noted that 108 Edmonton area participants in the University of Alberta study, most had a positive willingness-to-pay when they were told about some of the convenient properties. “But, again, colour was a very critical element in many purchase decisions.”

Anders added that after participants were told of some of the potential risks that may come with vacuum packaging – specifically the danger of packaging being punctured, which could accelerate spoilage – their willingness-to-pay surprisingly did not drop.

“People still thought in total more positive about the technology than they did when they had no information,” he said. “But when we dug deeper into our data, the people who had high-level food safety concerns, and were resistant to food innovation in general, they were the individuals that we could see their willingness-to-pay was dropping significantly.”

Most packaging decisions in the meat industry and agri-food sectors are often driven by cost-saving technology innovations not having consumer demand in mind, Anders noted. “At a 90 per cent failure rate in the retail market a lot of companies are well advised to listen more to what their end-customers think.” **M**

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### Open design concept Swifty Bagger easy to set-up, operate, and maintain

The Swifty Bagger is designed to handle a broad range of pre-made bags including: pillow, stand-up, carry handle, centre/corner capping, with or without zipper closures. Using pre-made bags, the Swifty Bagger automatically grabs, opens, fills, and seals bags.

With an open, straight flow through design, the operator can see all stations from the touch screen controls making the Swifty Bagger very user friendly, easy to operate, and effortless to clean. Supplied with a PLC, operating parameters are simple to access and quick to adjust, and assures consistent movement with no risk of de-synchronization.

Built with name brand components, the Swifty Bagger features Festo cylinders and valves, Allen Bradley PLC and colour touch screen and also includes a variable speed control, no-bag / no-fill sensor, a heavy-duty mechanical cam shaft drive, and integrated exit conveyor.

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### Many mechanical benefits with PrimoWeigher combination scales



PrimoWeigher combination scales from CombiScale offer many mechanical benefits that maximize productivity, minimize changeover time, and streamline maintenance.

The open frame design provides easy access to all components, and can be stripped to its core in minutes.

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With individual chutes beneath each head, product

spiralling is eliminated increasing productivity. The NEMA 4X panel houses core electronics, and is remotely located from the scale eliminating any possibility of water infiltration during wash-down.

*combiscale.com*

### Eagle Packaging's new vacuum system palletizer



Designed to pick and place cases, the Z.ZAG Palletizer, from Eagle Packaging Machinery LLC, uses a vacuum system to automatically pick up a case or cases and place it on a pallet. The Z.ZAG is designed for end of line applications where

production is distributed over several production lines. Placing a Z.ZAG at the end of each production line is more affordable than using costly conveyors to transport cases to a centralized high cost, high-speed palletizer.

The position of each case is calculated automatically according to the desired pattern and dimensions of the case. The Z.ZAG palletizer will locate all cases on one pallet and upon completion will begin filling the next pallet as the first pallet is replaced. The End Effector uses vacuum generators to pick up and place the cases from above. It has a suction capacity of over 250 pounds and is capable of lifting 40-pound boxes at speeds up to 240 pounds / 6 lifts per minute.

Designed to SCARA Standards in a compact footprint, the Z.ZAG is designed for multiple pack patterns for both column-stacked and interlocked configurations. Servo-driven with PLC controls and a colour touch screen make setting up and operating the palletizer extremely user-friendly.

Eagle Packaging Machinery is a U.S. manufacturer of tray forming, case erecting, palletizing, and case sealing equipment. Established in 1998, Eagle has developed a diverse product line that includes the capability of forming and sealing corrugated trays or cases with glue, tape, and/or self-locking.

The company has designed, engineered and successfully installed machines in a diverse range of industries including beverage, apparel, health, beauty, printing, pharmaceutical, automotive, bakery, food and for a wide variety of consumer products.

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Arnold Drung, President, Conestoga Meat Packers, Breslau, Ont.

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## Global feed tonnage reaches record 873 million

The world's feed production has reached an estimated 873 million metric tons, according to a global survey commissioned by Alltech. Conducted through Alltech's regional managers, the survey assessed the tonnage of 132 countries and all species.

"This new global estimate is quite significant, especially when compared to the 2010 WATT report, which indicated 717.6 million metric tons," Aidan Connolly, vice president of corporate accounts at Alltech, said in a release. "Feed production is an increasingly global phenomenon and this survey is the broadest in its reach and, therefore, also complete in terms of its review of the state of play in the world feed industry."

Asia has secured a role as the number one feed producing region with a tonnage of 305 million, and China is the leading country with a total tonnage of 175.4 million. Europe follows Asia with 200 million. North America, Latin America and the Middle East/Africa round out the listing with 185 million, 125 million and 47 million respectively.

In terms of species, poultry feed now represents 44 per cent of world feed, which may reflect the cost, health and religious preferences of this white meat. Ruminant feed is calculated at more than 220 million tons but this does not include a similar quantity of dry matter fed as silage or forage on farm. Pig, equine and pet feeds have not changed significantly, but aquaculture is the fastest growing feed sector, totalling nearly 30 million tons.

## Cargill reports drop in Q2 earnings

Minneapolis-based Cargill reported \$100 million in earnings from continuing operations in the fiscal 2012 second quarter, an 88 per cent decrease from \$832 million in the same period last year.

"The second quarter was significantly below expectations, especially in contrast to last year when we posted our strongest quarter ever," Cargill chairman and chief executive officer Greg Page stated, noting the company's meat businesses experienced one of their weakest quarters.

Page said the company is actively working to reduce its costs and simplify its work processes, and he is optimistic about the company's earnings prospects for the remainder of the fiscal year.

"Cargill has been through difficult cycles before, made changes and emerged stronger for it. We are confident that the actions we are taking to create a more agile enterprise will better position us in the current economic environment," he noted.

Cargill is a privately held company that employs 142,000 people in 66 countries. The company, which has its Canadian headquarters in Winnipeg, employs 10,000 people across Canada.

Under the name Cargill Meat Solutions, the company operates two beef processing facilities in Canada - in High River, Alta. and Guelph, Ont. Combined, these facilities make up 55 per cent of the beef processing market in Canada.

## Gov't investing in projects to eliminate viral disease in pork

The Canadian government on Jan. 4 announced an investment of \$294,500 to initiate small-scale projects for controlling and eradicating Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS), a viral disease that causes reproductive failure in breeding stock and respiratory tract illness in young pigs.

The disease costs the Canadian pork industry an estimated \$130 million per year, according to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

The collaborative two-year project will involve producers, veterinarians and industry and will pilot a strategy for advanced biosecurity and disease control. Over the long term, the project will improve strategies used by producers and service providers to reduce the transmission of PRRS. The project will be coordinated by the Ontario Pork Industry Council's Swine Health Advisory Board (OSHAB) and serve as a model for other provinces, with the results shared with industry and the Canadian Swine Health Board.

"This funding will allow the Advisory Board to provide ongoing leadership to develop PRRS area regional control and elimination projects here in Ontario. This approach is unique in that it allows for grassroots engagement by producers who are ready to implement change in areas throughout Ontario whether it is a control or elimination program," Dr. Jane Carpenter, OSHAB's lead on the project, stated.

## Survey says Canadians pessimistic, reluctant to open wallets

Canadians are doubtful about job prospects, their personal finances and whether it's wise to spend money right now, according to a survey recently released by leading analytical group Nielsen.

The Global Consumer Confidence Survey, established in 2005, tracks consumer confidence, major concerns and spending intentions among more than 28,000 online consumers in 56 countries. Consumer confidence levels above and below a baseline of 100 indicate degrees of optimism and pessimism. Consumer confidence fell globally from 89 to 88, down for the seventh consecutive quarter.

"We've been on a roller-coaster ride, with a lot of ups and downs and screaming along the way and the ride is not over yet," Carman Allison, Nielsen's director of consumer insights, stated in a release. "We're about to hit another turn."

According to the survey, employment is up, but so is pessimism. Fifty four per cent of those surveyed rated job prospects as good or excellent, better than the global average of 43 per cent, but down from 58 per cent in Q2 of 2011.

Canadians also continue to grow more negative about how they view their personal finances, the report said. Globally, 51 per cent of respondents felt good or excellent about the state of their finances over the next 12 months, up one per cent from the Q2 survey. Yet Canada trends in the opposite direction, with 54 per cent of Canadian respondents rating their finances as good or excellent,

down from 61 per cent just three months earlier.

“Canadians may be feeling more optimistic than the global average, amidst some positive economic trends in this country over the past year. Yet a combination of recent factors, such as rising prices of goods, stock market turbulence and bad economic news from the U.S. and Europe, are affecting consumer confidence,” noted Allison.

When asked what they are doing with spare cash, 37 per cent of Canadians said they direct spare cash to paying off debts and another 30 per cent pour it into savings.

“Households are showing increasing fiscal responsibility. Spending is also hampered by this new reality; almost one-quarter of consumers (23 per cent) report that no spending money remains after they’ve paid for the essentials,” Allison said.

### AMI Foundation unveils new website

The American Meat Institute Foundation (AMIF) recently unveiled a revamped and redesigned website aimed at the scientific community, policymakers and media as a user-friendly source of meat and poultry science information.

The site also will prominently feature information about research funding opportunities and findings, AMIF said.

The site includes a new Foundation blog, which will serve as a forum for discussion about meat and poultry science, animal science and emerging food safety and nutrition issues. It also includes an RSS news feed that will be updated frequently with the most recent scientific news, information and research and education opportunities. This information, along with links to the most recent blog posts, will also be available on the Foundation’s new companion Facebook page.

Founded in 1944 in Chicago, AMIF was one of the original research bodies dedicated to harnessing science toward better, safer and more nutritious meat and poultry products. Since its founding, AMIF has funded important research exploring key challenges faced by the industry like control of listeria in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products, shiga toxin-producing E. coli in beef products and salmonella in both raw meat and poultry as well as ready-to-eat products.

### Government investment to help food and beverage exporters

The Government of Canada recently announced funding of over \$600,000 for Food Beverage Canada (FBC) to expand sales and product awareness.

The investment will allow FBC to help lead a joint trade mission to the Gulfood Show next month in Dubai, where they will bring Canadian companies to showcase their products at the world’s largest annual food and hospitality show. The funding has allowed FBC to extend its marketing through other key international food and beverage shows, including Anuga and the Hong Kong Food Expo.

“FBC is very grateful for the funding support that helps us achieve our long term international goals for value-added small and medium sized companies,” FBC executive director Wendy Hindle stated in a release. “This investment enables us to continue to offer programs that

work to maintain and develop markets around the world. Without this support it would be very difficult for smaller companies to be competitive in a global market.”

FBC is a non-profit industry association with a mandate to unite the international marketing efforts of the food processing industry while assisting companies in their efforts to become export ready and export capable.

Exports of processed food and beverage products totalled \$20.8 billion in 2010, and reached some 180 countries.

### CPC elects new chair

The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) recently announced that Jean-Guy Vincent will lead the charge for the Canadian pork industry in the upcoming year as the council’s chair.

“The Canadian hog industry is a vital contributor to the country’s economy. I am honoured to have been chosen to help shape the future of our industry, and look forward to working with my colleagues to address the many challenges and opportunities we will meet over the next year,” he said in a release.

Vincent, a representative of the Fédération des producteurs de porcs du Québec (FPPQ), is joined by two other newly elected executive officers, consisting of first vice-president, Rick Bergmann from Manitoba Pork Council and second vice-president, Florian Possberg from Saskatchewan Pork.

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# Improving Trade and Competitiveness

## Cattle and pork industries praise Canada-U.S. border deal.

PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER and U.S. President Barack Obama on Dec. 7 unveiled two action plans designed to speed up legitimate trade and travel, improve security in North America, and align regulatory approaches between the two countries.

“Billions of dollars worth of goods and hundreds of thousands of people cross our shared border every day,” Harper stated in a release. “Moving security to the perimeter of our continent will transform our border and create jobs and growth in Canada by improving the flow of goods and people between our two countries.”

The Action Plan on Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness focuses on four areas of cooperation: addressing threats early; facilitating trade, economic growth and jobs; integrating cross-border law enforcement; and improving critical infrastructure and cyber-security.

The Action Plan on Regulatory Cooperation will help reduce barriers to trade, lower costs for consumers and business, and create economic opportunities on both sides of the border. It identifies 29 initiatives where Canada and the U.S. will align their regulatory approaches in the areas of agriculture and food, transportation, health and personal care products, chemical management, the environment, and other cross-sectoral areas, while not compromising our health, safety or environmental protection standards. The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) and the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association (CCA) both had input into the plan through the Canada-United States Regulation Cooperation Council (RCC).

The Canadian Pork Council said it is pleased that the industry’s input to the RCC has been fully covered in the plan.

“The Canadian swine industry is very supportive of cooperation activities that would help to eliminate or reduce unnecessary regulatory divergences between Canada and the United States,” CPC chair Jurgen Preugschas stated in a release. “The industry is pleased the RCC accepted CPC’s recommendations that will improve the trading climate and competitiveness of Canadian pork.”

“The United States is our number one customer for pork and live animals and the RCC’s Joint Action Plan offers the North American hog sector the opportunity to harmonize standards and production technology, consistent with an already highly integrated market,” he added.

In cooperation with the CCA, the CPC highlighted the importance of regulatory cooperation in areas such as: the implementation of electronic export certificates for meat and

live animals crossing the U.S./Canada border; harmonization of the approval process for veterinary drugs, and; mutually recognizable zoning systems and veterinary equivalency.

The CCA also welcomed the news. The Canadian beef industry exports approximately 40 per cent of its production and 80 per cent of that goes to the United States, CCA president Travis Toews stated in a separate release.

“We have an immense interest in ensuring that the Canada-U.S. border operates as efficiently as possible,” he said.

Canadian beef and cattle exports to the U.S. are projected to total \$1.6 billion in 2011. Farm cash receipts for cattle and calves are projected to surpass \$6.5 billion in 2011 and the beef



“The Canadian swine industry is very supportive of cooperation activities that would help to eliminate or reduce unnecessary regulatory divergences between Canada and the United States.”

– CPC chair Jurgen Preugschas

industry’s contribution to the Canadian economy is projected to reach \$26.2 billion, the CCA noted.

Under the announcement, there are commitments to:

- implement electronic border-related document transmission and receipt of clearance decisions for food and meat products no later than December 2013;
- reduce and eliminate duplicate meat inspections at the border through enhanced meat safety equivalence agreements;
- align Canadian and U.S. approaches to the naming of meat cuts;
- align application and review processes for veterinary drug approvals including efforts to establish identical maximum

drug residue limits in both countries;

- and a number of other initiatives both within agriculture and related to movement of people and transporters across sectors.

The Canadian Meat Council (CMC) issued a statement saying the Joint Action Plan will lead to the timely implementation of measures that will reduce investments by both Canadians and Americans in unnecessary regulations.

“Food safety is the most important priority of the meat industry,” CMC president Scott Entz stated. “Unfortunately, some of the measures in place today divert valuable government and industry resources to activities that increase costs while not enhancing food safety. I am very pleased Prime Minister Harper and President Obama have included consideration of these unnecessary measures in the Regulatory Cooperation Council Joint Action Plan.”

“Trade is incredibly important to our meat industry in Canada,” he added. “We believe that the time has come for Canada and the U.S. to move forward with meat inspection reform and to work harder to recognize and build on the strengths of the Canadian and U.S. meat inspection systems.”

According to the CMC, meat imported from the United States has been inspected by the US Department of Agriculture and marked with “US Inspected and Passed Department of Agriculture.” Canadian meat exported to the U.S. has been inspected by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and marked with the Meat Inspection Legend. The border inspections are “re-inspections” of already approved USDA and CFIA inspected meat. Re-inspecting meat in its final package in a box from a truck is not nearly as efficient or as effective as inspecting meat while it is being transformed in a meat processing facility.

In 2010 Canada exported 378,000 tonnes of beef valued at \$1.4 billion to 71 countries, of which the U.S. accounted for exports totalling 308,768 tonnes valued at \$1.0 billion.

In the same year, Canada exported over one million tonnes of pork valued at over \$2.8 billion to 114 countries, with 336,111 tonnes valued at \$951 million going to the U.S.

The American Meat Institute said the new pilot program to conduct inspections in plants in-country will help facilitate trade between the U.S. and Canada and prevent delays at the border.

“We commend the U.S. and Canadian governments for this common sense pilot program,” AMI president J. Patrick Boyle stated. “Our U.S. and Canadian meat and poultry processing systems are nearly identical, as are our federal meat inspection regulations. Our nations are uniquely suited to this kind of collaborate effort and it stands to benefit both of our countries and our citizens.”

-staff

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## ALBERTA

### Grocery chain introduces pork with DNA-based meat traceability guarantee

An Alberta grocery chain is offering “fully DNA-traceable fresh premium Alberta pork” at its stores from Sturgeon Valley Pork, one of the first Canadian meat processors to employ DNA TraceBack from IdentiGEN Canada to trace its pork from the grocer’s meat case back to the processing plant and farm of origin.

The product is now available at all 15 Freson Bros. grocery stores in Alberta.

“When we made the decision to source all of our pork from local Alberta farms, we wanted DNA traceability to give assurances to our customers,” Doug Lovsin, V.P. of operations at Freson Bros., said in a release.

Sturgeon Valley Pork is a federally inspected processing plant that supplies fresh pork to grocers in Western Canada. In early 2009, the company began using DNA TraceBack, which has been in use in Europe since 2000. Under the system, DNA samples are taken from Sturgeon Valley hogs at the processing plant and then again at the retail store. Samples are sent to IdentiGEN’s U.S. laboratory in Lawrence, Kansas, where their DNA identifiers are used to verify product origins.

## MANITOBA

### Keystone Processors undergoes name change

Keystone Processors, the company that plans on constructing a 250 head per day beef slaughter plant in Winnipeg, has changed its name due to infringement concerns from a Pennsylvania-based beef company.

The company will now be known as ProNatur, according to Doug Cooper, president of the Astana Group, which has been hired by the Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council to build and manage the proposed plant.

Managers at the 250 head per day slaughter plant unveiled the new brand at the Manitoba Grazing School in Winnipeg on Dec. 5.

According to reports, the company is still working on financing for the plant, after the Government of Canada retracted a conditional \$10 million loan this summer. Plans are to break ground on the 65,000 square foot facility in the spring.

### Cattle producer named Manitoba’s new ag minister

Manitoba cattle producer Ron Kostyshyn on Jan. 13 was named the province’s Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

The Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) in a press release congratulated Kostyshyn on his appointment. The group said it looks forward to working with him on issues affecting beef sector in Manitoba.

“We are committed to working with the Minister and continuing a positive working relationship with the

government,” MBP president Ray Armbruster said. “We are eager to collaborate and work with the province on the opportunities and challenges that are ahead in 2012 to ensure the long-term viability of beef producers and their operations in Manitoba.”

Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger stated that, as a farmer himself, Kostyshyn “will bring a strong voice for the priorities of farmers, producers and rural families to the cabinet table.”

The Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) also said Kostyshyn, with his farming background and previous work with the Manitoba Conservation District Association, will bring some valuable experience to the portfolio.

“This is a critical time for government and farmers to work together and we look forward to meeting with the new minister,” said Doug Chorney, KAP president.

Kostyshyn runs a 200-head cow-calf operation near Ethelbert. He takes over his new role from Stan Struthers, who will stay on as finance minister.

## ONTARIO

### Grand River Foods finalizes sale of fresh poultry division to Maple Lodge Farms

Cambridge, Ont. based Grand River Foods has finalized the sale of its fresh poultry processing division to Maple Lodge Farms for an undisclosed sum. The sale was finalized in early December.

Grand River Foods is a fully integrated food processing company with a fresh poultry processing facility in Beamsville, Ont. and a prepared food production facility in Cambridge Ont.

Maple Lodge Farms is a family owned chicken processor with primary processing operations in Brampton and St Francois, N.B., further processing operations in Mississauga and fully cooked operations in Brampton and Etobicoke, Ont. respectively.

Grand River Foods will now concentrate resources on its foods division, serving customers in the grocery and food service sectors. Maple Lodge Farms is expected to scale up its primary processing operations to more effectively serve its customer base in the retail, foodservice, further processed and other market sectors.

Maple Lodge Farms is also currently partnering with Nova Scotia and PEI growers to build a new primary processing operation in Berwick, Nova Scotia. Other Ontario operations include hatcheries, feed mills and a product safety laboratory.

“We remain committed to Ontario’s food processing industry,” Grand River Foods president Craig Richardson stated in a release. “Our intention is to reinvest in our operations, funding growth and development of our ready-to-eat, prepared foods division, which produces over 200 chicken protein products for the North American foodservice and retail segments.”

The terms of the sale agreement also provide for Grand River Foods’ purchase of fresh, processed chicken from Maple Lodge Farms for food product production.

## QUEBEC

### Olymel workers in St-Damase vote in favour of new labour contract

Workers at an Olymel poultry slaughtering plant at St-Damase in the Montérégie region of southwestern Quebec voted 59 per cent in favour of an eight-year labour agreement with the company.

The agreement, which was signed on Dec. 20, will expire on Aug. 31, 2019. The previous labour contract had expired on Aug. 31 last year.

The facility employs 325 persons, who are affiliated with Local 1991-P of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

The plant, which has a weekly slaughtering capacity of 750,000 birds, supplies Olymel processing plants in the poultry industry, and also satisfies specific orders from several major customers.

### AAFC invests in SRM removal research

The federal government on Dec. 16 announced an investment of over \$404,000 in Industries Riopel, a Quebec-based manufacturer of meat processing equipment, for two research and development projects to maximize the removal of SRM and high-risk tissues from carcasses processed by Canadian abattoirs.

The new SRM handling equipment being developed will reduce waste materials and disposal costs, cutting back on the volume of SRM sent to landfills and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with their transportation. The meat processing industry is expected to benefit from the knowledge and expertise related to SRM handling that will be gained from the research aspect of these projects, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada stated in a release.

“Through this investment, our government is helping develop new technology for meat processing plants across Canada which will reduce costs and increase productivity,” stated Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism) and MP for Beauce, Maxime Bernier. “The new equipment being developed will also reduce the volume of Specified Risk Material (SRM) being disposed of, while at the same time ensuring compliance with Canada’s regulatory requirements.”

“This investment under the Slaughter Waste Innovation Program (SWIP) recognizes the role of Industries Riopel Inc. as a leader in technological advances in the meat industry,” added the company’s general manager, Rocky Lessard.

Part of Canada’s Economic Action Plan, SWIP is making available up to \$40 million to support the study, development and adoption of innovative technologies or processes that help reduce processing costs or generate profits through the use or elimination of SRM.

## NEW BRUNSWICK

### Nadeau Maple Lodge appeal denied

The Supreme Court of Canada has refused to hear an appeal by Nadeau Maple Lodge in its long legal battle with the Olymel/Groupe Westco Sunnymel project in New Brunswick.

Westco issued a release Dec. 22 saying the Nadeau will now “be obliged to lay down its arms and accept Westco’s business decision to slaughter its own live chickens in a partnership with Olymel l.p., a decision made nearly 4 years ago.”

“I am happy to see that all the courts are unanimous in deciding in favour of Westco. I am especially pleased to see that we have finally reached the end of this legal battle, which was initiated by Nadeau three years ago,” stated Westco president and CEO Thomas Soucy. “All our efforts will now be focused on completing our major slaughterhouse project in Clair and creating a large number of stable jobs in the region.”

According to the release, construction of the slaughterhouse is going ahead on schedule and workers will start their jobs toward the end of next autumn.

Nadeau’s general manager, Yves Landry, stated that the decision, although disappointing, will not deter the company from continuing its efforts to compel the New Brunswick government to bring about a fair solution to the instability that exists in the New Brunswick chicken industry.

“The two issues are entirely separate issues,” Landry said in a release. “If the New Brunswick government had not failed to properly regulate the chicken industry as required by law, then we would never have had to resort to going to the courts.”

According to Landry, the conclusion that has been drawn and promoted by Groupe Westco that the court decisions allow them to sell their chickens wherever they want, and that the courts support Westco, is “grossly exaggerated and a very liberal interpretation of the rulings.”

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# Saving the Manufacturing Sector in 2012

It's time to embrace the principles of Next Generation Manufacturing.

By Daniel Burrus

**LIKE MOST INDUSTRIES**, the manufacturing sector is transforming rapidly. Because of recent technological advances and globalization, North American manufacturing is facing intense international competition, increasing market volatility and complexity, a declining workforce, and a host of other challenges. Yet we know that in order to have a strong economy, we need a strong manufacturing base. So what's the answer?

Today's manufacturers must transform along with the rest of the world by adopting Next Generation Manufacturing principles. And while many manufacturers have started to adopt some next generation manufacturing principles, there are six advanced principles they need to embrace in order to move forward now. Let's look at both categories – the current and the advanced.

## Current principles in practice

- Connected to the global economy – Now that manufacturers are connected to the global

economy, they can reach more consumers and can sell in ways that they couldn't have sold before.

- Has higher productivity – Technologies such as low-cost advanced robotics, private and hybrid cloud computing, software as a service (SaaS), hardware as a service (HaaS), virtualization, and mobility using smartphones, tablets and business apps can yield new levels of productivity at lower price points every year.
- Is lean and agile – Lean means not carrying a lot of inventory, maximizing the supply chain and logistics, and keeping costs down. Being agile means being flexible to respond to market conditions faster and not be stuck with a lot of parts or raw materials should the market suddenly shift.
- Innovates using cutting-edge technology – Manufacturers are looking at how new technologies can allow them to do things they couldn't do before. These technologies can include everything from robotics to new devices that allow you to print three-dimensional objects.

*(Continued on page 26)*





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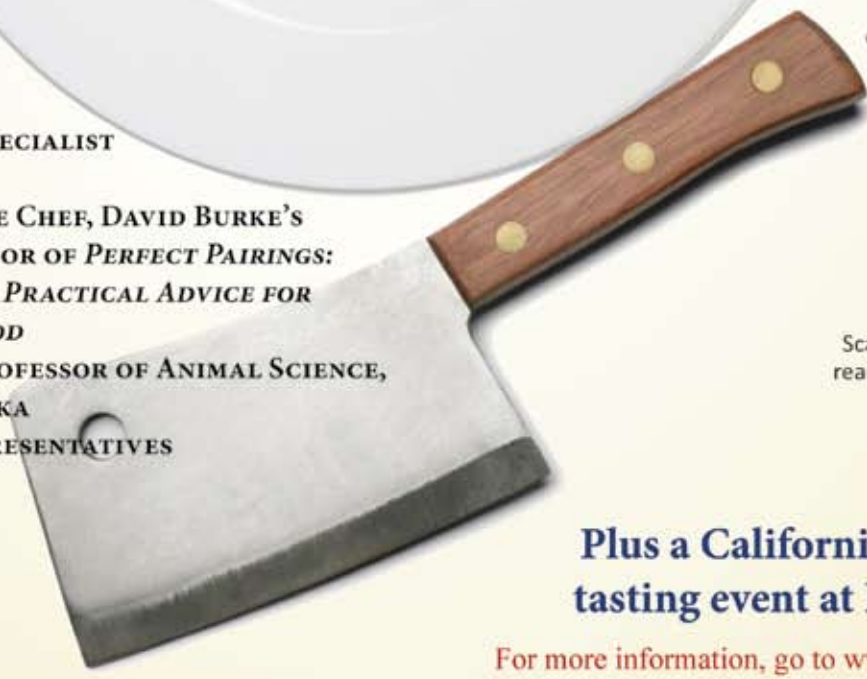
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- Attracts, develops, and retains talent – While today’s manufacturers are using fewer employees, the ones they do hire are often more specialized. Attracting, developing, and retaining these skilled workers has become a top priority for manufacturers to stay competitive.

### Six advanced principles to adopt

Fortunately, most manufacturers have already adopted the previous mentioned principles. To take the manufacturing sector to the next level, here are six more advanced next generation manufacturing principles to employ.

- **Anticipate customer needs**

It’s vital that manufacturers anticipate customer needs based on hard trends. Therefore, look at your customers’ future and focus on what you do know rather than what you don’t know. Ask, “What are the hard trends, the things that will happen, versus the things that might happen? What are the industries that are converging around our customers that our customers currently don’t see?” Then you can start seeing both needs and opportunities before they happen.



One of the reasons you need to be more anticipatory is that things are changing so fast.

One of the reasons you need to be more anticipatory is that things are changing so fast. Typically manufacturers ask the customer what they want and then give it to them. But by the time you have it designed and manufactured and give it to them, their needs have changed or the economy has shifted again. The relevancy of the need is no longer as great. Second, if you ask customers what they want and give it to them, they’re going to under-ask, because they’re focused on what they know is possible, not what you know is possible. Customers, just like most companies, don’t know how to anticipate. But when you adopt this principle, you’ll be able deliver what your customers need just as they need it.

- **Innovate around the core**

What are your core competencies? Are you still using your core competencies? In the past, manufacturers could go decades between innovations. That strategy doesn’t work anymore. The world has changed, and more important, change itself has changed. Information and new knowledge now travel around the world at the speed of light, and technological innovation proceeds at close to the speed of thought. Today you cannot just innovate now and then: to survive and thrive in a time of vertical change, you have to be innovating around your core competencies continuously. So what is your core, and are you using it?

Also consider if there’s a new core you need. Because of the rapid transformation we’re going through right now, which is driven by technology, there may be a new core you need to develop or acquire.

- **Focus on collaboration**

We are transforming how we collaborate right now. Realize that collaboration is much different than cooperation. Cooperation is based on scarcity and it contains within it the assumption that your interests and mine are inherently in conflict; however, we will temporarily set aside those cross-purposes to find some cautious tactical common ground. In essence, cooperation is about protecting your piece of the economic pie and doing everything you can to make it bigger. In contrast, collaboration is when we co-create the future together. It’s about working with everyone else, even your competitors, to make a bigger pie for all. It’s based on abundance and requires working together under higher levels of trust and connectivity.

The move from scarcity thinking to abundance thinking, from zero-sum competition to one-hundred-sum collaboration, is not just a “nice” or “moral” idea. In the twenty-first century, it’s plain good sense. Scarcity says, “I’m going to keep all my ideas to myself and sell more than anyone else.” Abundance says, “By mentoring, coaching, and sharing all our best ideas, we’re going to create a powerful tide that raises all our ships – and we’ll all sell more as a result.”

- **Pre-solve problems**

The best way to avoid problems is to use hard trends to both predict and pre-solve them. Based on my own studies of manufacturing firms and other companies, I’ve found that 98 per cent of the biggest problems companies faced were fully predictable before they

happened. This is hindsight, and hindsight always brings lament.

Hard trends add certainty to foresight. If a problem is fully predictable, that means it's fully avoidable. Therefore, manufacturers have to use those hard trends to look into the visible future and ask, "What are the problems that we can see based on anticipating customer needs?" Get that down to a short list that's aligned with your core competencies. That's where you focus, because you can see which problems are coming. Additionally, look at your own company in the same manner to determine the problems you're about to face. Solve them before they happen so they don't occur in the midst of rapid change and transformation. That's the only way to stay ahead of the curve.



Because of the rapid transformation we're going through right now, which is driven by technology, there may be a new core you need to develop or acquire.

#### • Inform and communicate

In the past, we developed information-age organizations. As a result, companies do a lot of informing and are very good at it. But most are not good at communicating, both internally and externally. Companies now have to inform and communicate. What's the difference?

Informing is one-way. It's static and doesn't always cause action. Communicating is two-way. It's dynamic and usually causes action. Social media is a good example of engagement in communication, which is why it's spreading so rapidly and becoming a business tool. Next generation manufacturers understand that you don't just inform; you also communicate, develop that strategy, and move it out internally as well as externally.


#### • Do continuous de-commoditization

Just as we had continuous improvement in the past, manufactures need to continually de-commoditize their products and services. Realize that every product and service can be de-commoditized repeatedly. Unfortunately, most companies don't do this. Instead, they come up with a new product or service and they milk it. They make their money on it and by default let the product or service become a commodity.

The minute you come up with something new, a competitor will copy it. As they do so, your de-commoditized and innovative product or service slowly becomes a commodity. The margins get thinner as time goes on. You find yourself competing more on price and eventually remove the product or service from your line.

Here's a better approach: Instead of letting the margins get thinner and riding them down, you can wrap a service around a product or wrap a service around a service to add new value. You can think creatively about your product or service so you can repackage it, redefine it, revamp it, or somehow make it unique in the marketplace again. So do continuous de-commoditization. Not only will you raise the bar based on trends, but you'll also find yourself with good margins and a growing business.

### Manufacturing for the future

In a competitive global economy that is becoming more tightly connected every day, manufacturers can no longer do things the way they've always been done. To be successful in the future, to stay competitive and relevant, and to revive and save the manufacturing sector, all manufacturers must adopt next generation manufacturing principles. That's the only way to obtain the talents, capabilities, and resources necessary to build a highly effective enterprise that thrives in a global marketplace. 

*Daniel Burrus is considered one of the world's leading technology forecasters and business strategists, and is the founder and CEO of Burrus Research, a research and consulting firm that monitors global advancements in technology-driven trends. He is the author of six books, including Technotrends and Flash Foresight: How to See the Invisible and Do the Impossible.*



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# Red Tape in the Agriculture Sector

The time is ripe to take action on regulatory reform.

By Virginia Labbie

**RED TAPE. WHAT DOES IT MEAN** to you? For many agri-business owners, those two words are synonymous with frustration and anxiety.

It means losing hours on the phone with government agencies. It means complying with confusing and arbitrary rules. Red tape is also about dealing with unhelpful and even aggressive customer service agents, inspectors or auditors. Many see this as just the cost of doing business. Not the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB).

Red tape should not be confused with necessary regulations. Red tape is something else – including unnecessary rules and bad customer service. While a certain amount of regulation is important for food safety, human health and protecting the environment, small business owners estimate 25 per cent of red tape and regulations could be eliminated without harming those legitimate goals of regulation.

CFIB has fought for many years to get governments to recognize that red tape is a burden that hurts us all and frustrates



CFIB has estimated the burden of red tape at the federal, provincial and municipal level costs Canadian businesses a staggering \$30 billion in compliance costs.

small business owners. That's why CFIB dedicated January 16 to 20, 2012 as the third annual Red Tape Awareness Week.

During Red Tape Awareness Week in January 2011, Prime Minister Harper announced he would create a Red Tape Reduction Commission to fight what he called a "silent killer of jobs" and a "hidden tax."

One year later, the commission released its final report containing 15 solid recommendations on how to reduce and control red tape in the long term. The report recognizes that red tape is not just about dumb rules, it is also about poor customer service. The federal government and Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Gerry Ritz have already committed to implementing one of the recommendations – "one for one" legislation that will eliminate one existing regulation and its associated costs for every new regulation introduced.



Minister Ritz has also tasked Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canadian Grain Commission to "streamline regulations, remove duplicate requirements, do away with overlapping obligations and decrease the frequency of document filing."

This is a great start. We certainly hope the federal government also moves on the other recommendations of the report. For example, tasking the Auditor General of Canada with reviewing and reporting on the government's progress in reducing red tape would offer some independent oversight. If these additional recommendations are implemented, this could be a major game changer in Canada.

CFIB has estimated the burden of red tape at the federal, provincial and municipal level costs Canadian businesses a staggering \$30 billion in compliance costs. When asked how the burden had changed during a three year period, 67 per cent of agri-businesses reported an increase in regulatory requirements, more than any other type of small business in Canada.

In fact, when we surveyed our agri-business members, 23 per cent said that if they had known the burden of regulation, they may have not gone into business.

What would happen to food prices if nearly a quarter of agri-business owners in Canada disappeared? And, how many never start because of the regulatory burden?

The time is ripe to take action on regulatory reform in the agriculture sector. With 40 per cent of agri-business owners planning to retire in the next 10 years, flooding the sector with red tape will only make it harder to pass the baton onto the next generation of agricultural entrepreneurs.

This is also about competitiveness and ensuring Canada has a fair and competitive regulatory framework. Seventy-two per cent of agri-business owners say they want governments to place a higher priority on cutting red tape – more than any other measure – to help them compete and remain in business.

With governments in the midst of finalizing Growing Forward 2, the next agriculture policy agreement between federal, provincial, and territorial governments, a concrete plan is needed to reduce the burden on the agriculture sector.

The federal government is on the right track – let's hope this translates into meaningful red tape reduction in the near future. It's time to give agri-business owners back the time to focus on the really important things like growing their business, creating jobs and contributing to the Canadian economy. **M**



*Virginia Labbie is a senior policy analyst, agri-business with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canada's largest association of small- and medium-sized businesses. She can be reached at [virginia.labbie@cfib.ca](mailto:virginia.labbie@cfib.ca)*

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