

CANADIAN

May/June 2012

# Meat Business

*The Beef, Pork & Poultry Industry Magazine*

## Making Changes for Animal Welfare

The phase-out of hog  
gestation stalls

Temple Grandin Talks  
“Pink Slime”

The Search for Tomorrow’s  
Meat Cutters

Food Security:  
Long-term plan needed  
pg. 5



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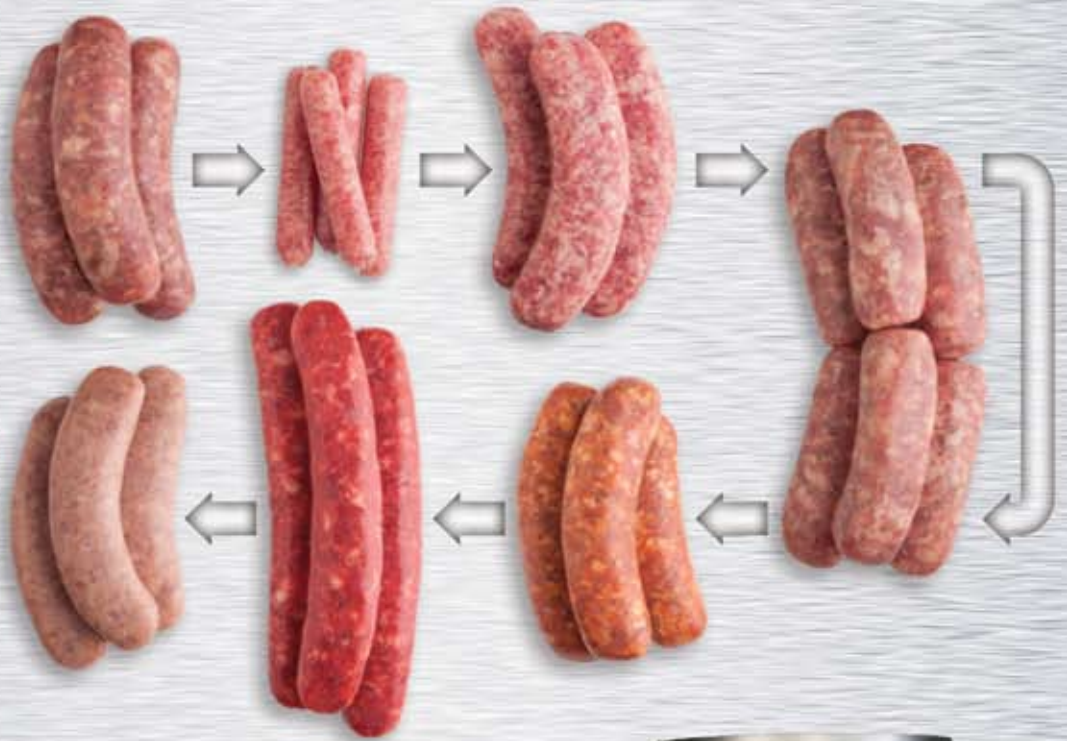


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*Canadian Meat Business* is published  
six times a year by We Communications West Inc.



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Website: www.meatbusiness.ca

*Canadian Meat Business* subscriptions are  
available for \$28.00/year or \$46.00/two years  
and includes the annual Buyers Guide issue.

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Printed in Canada. ISSN 1715-6726

Cover photo: The Humane Society of the United States



## Food Security: Not a food supply issue, long-term plan needed.

**THERE HAS BEEN** a lot of debate in the news lately about the Canadian food system. UN Right to Food Rapporteur, Olivier De Shutter, recently visited Canada and indicated there are currently 800,000 Canadian households that are food insecure. He concluded that Canada has a lot of work to do in making sure more people can afford and have access to appropriate diets and a national strategy is needed to solve these issues. De Schutter noted a national strategy should be centered on nutrition and food security. The CFA supports his call for a strategy, but thinks his scope needs to be broadened with a true understanding of agriculture and the issues surrounding food security.

The CFA, together with players along the food chain, created the National Food Strategy (NFS). The NFS is the industry's vision for the future of food in Canada. It identifies nine objectives that governments and industry must strive for, including, the availability of nutritious food for every Canadian. The objectives of the NFS speak to the need to support the production, processing and distribution and sale of food in Canada and abroad, taking into account everything from promoting the Canadian brand and healthy lifestyles to sustaining economic growth and ecosystems, all the while making sure the players along the chain can conduct a viable business ensuring growth and prosperity for the sector.

It must be understood that the food security problem in Canada is not a food supply issue – Canada produces almost twice as much food as Canadians consume. Rather, the food security issue is a social policy issue – how can the poor or citizens in remote communities in Canada have the same access to adequate and nutritious food as the rest of society? This requires a coordinated strategy to ensure that food production and distribution is tailored to and meets the needs of people in Canada and in export markets.

The CFA welcomes the federal government's recent initiative to develop a National Farm and Food Strategy and has been in discussions with the government on ways to build on what has been developed thus far by industry and demonstrate why the NFS should be the foundation upon which they build their own strategy.

De Shutter's visit was positive in that it brought awareness to the need for a strategy, but many of his comments highlight his lack of understanding in what sustainability means and what is required to address the issue. The paradigm De Shutter is working under is the belief that small-scale, local farms are the answer. While the development of local and niche markets is part of the NFS, these markets are high value and high price. They do provide opportunities to enhance producer returns and satisfy the demands of a more affluent consumer; however, the De Shutter solution is flawed. A strategy driven on shifting towards only smaller scale of farms may only exacerbate the problem of food security. There is no one-size fits all solution, but it does require both large and small scale agriculture. And large-scale agriculture does not equate to a non-sustainable approach as inferred by De Schutter. Agriculture in Canada has intensified, but has continuously improved its practices to make sure it progresses sustainably.

Through the National Food Strategy, CFA has been working with many groups representing various modes of production – the NFS reflects objectives suited and agreed upon by all sides, reflective of the diverse Canadian agriculture and food sector landscape. **M**

*Ron Bonnett is the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA).*



Gestation stalls are narrow two-foot-wide cages used to confine breeding sows and have been criticized in recent years due to animal welfare concerns.

# Making Changes for Animal Welfare

## Safeway, fast-food chains make moves to phase out hog gestation stalls.

By Alan MacKenzie

**GROCERY GIANT SAFEWAY** recently announced it will begin formulating plans to have a gestation stall-free pork supply chain, following similar announcements in recent months from several North American restaurant chains.

"It is Safeway's goal to have a gestation stall-free supply chain," Safeway vice-president of public affairs Brian Dowling said in a May release. "With that in mind, the company is formulating plans to determine how it can reach that goal."

Gestation stalls are narrow two-foot-wide cages used to confine breeding sows and have been criticized in recent years due to animal welfare concerns, according to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

"Safeway's decision to move away from gestation crates is welcome and encouraging news," Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, added. "Given the scope and quantity of pork products sold by Safeway, this announcement is an important step in addressing animal welfare in the company's supply chain."

Safeway is one of the largest food and drug retailers in North America, operating 1,678 stores in the U.S. and Western Canada.

Several pork producers, fast food chains and foodservice company Compass Group have all recently announced moves toward cutting out the use of gestation stalls, Safeway noted.

Fast food giant McDonald's recently announced a plan to source all pork for its U.S. business from producers that do not house pregnant sows in gestation stalls by the end of 2022.

According to a release from McDonald's, major U.S. suppliers such as Cargill and Smithfield Foods are adopting "commercially-viable alternatives."

Fellow quick service chains Wendy's, Burger King and Tim Hortons also announced similar plans.

Wendy's said in March that it is working with its U.S. and Canadian suppliers to eliminate the use of gestation stalls "over time."

In April Burger King announced plans to transition its U.S. supply chain to only purchase pork from suppliers that will stop using gestation crates by 2017. However, at this time, these plans are only for the chain's U.S. operations, according to a Burger King Canada media spokesperson.

*(Continued on page 8)*

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On May 4, Tim Hortons, the largest publicly traded restaurant chain in Canada, called upon the pork industry and its suppliers to eliminate gestation stalls for sows by the end of this year.

Tim Hortons intends to give preferred sourcing to pork suppliers who have clearly documented plans to phase-out the use of gestation stalls. The company said it will share its next steps in early 2013, after reviewing industry plans and having further dialogue with the pork industry and other animal welfare stakeholders.

“We believe there are better, more humane and sustainable housing systems that can improve the quality of animals’ lives. Striking a balanced, realistic solution for the farming community, which will need to make significant investments in new buildings, is also essential, and we fully recognize this will take time,” Tim Hortons president and CEO Paul House stated in a release.

### Grandin’s support

U.S.-based animal welfare expert Temple Grandin applauded the announcements from Safeway and the restaurant chains. She said surveys have shown approximately two-thirds of the public find the use of gestation stalls unacceptable. She noted that phasing into an “open housing” concept will take some time, and not only because of the renovations that obviously will need to be done to the facilities.

“The thing is, you need to have the right genetics of pigs for group housing,” she said. “There are some genetic lines of pigs that are nasty, vicious fighters and it’s just not going to work. You have to have the right kind of pigs.”

“There are certain lean line pigs – not all lean line pigs

– that fight viciously,” she added. “I remember when those pigs were first introduced in the late ’80s/early ’90s and the amount of tail biting I saw at the local meat packing plants was just horrific.”

However, she noted that while Smithfield, the largest pork producer in the U.S., already has a gestation stall phase out plan in effect, there are still some U.S. producers and producer groups that are opposed to the change.

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) is one of those groups. Its president, R.C. Hunt, issued a statement



“We believe there are better, more humane and sustainable housing systems that can improve the quality of animals’ lives.”

– Paul House, Tim Hortons president and CEO

that criticized the phase-out plans, noting the costliness to hog farmers.

“With regard to Safeway’s decision to give preference to pork suppliers who phase out individual sow housing, the National Pork Producers Council is concerned that similar actions taken by governments – or other restaurant or grocery chains – have increased production costs and consumer prices. These actions have forced some hog farmers out of business or caused them to reduce operations, with no demonstrable health benefits to sows,” Hunt stated.

He noted NPPC supports the position taken by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, which recognize gestation stalls as “appropriate for providing for the well-being of sows during pregnancy.”

“While NPPC respects the right of companies to make business decisions that are in their best interests, it seems that Safeway was intimidated by an animal rights group whose ultimate goal is the elimination of food-animal production,” he stated.

### CPC assessment program

The Canadian Pork Council (CPC) recently said Canadian hog producers are taking an active role in animal welfare with the start of a national Animal Care Assessment program. The program sets out animal care requirements and an oversight system ensures the requirements are being met.

CPC noted the current focus for the industry is the review of the existing code of practice for pigs. A revised code will update guidelines for pig care on housing, health, nutrition and other animal husbandry practices through a multi-stakeholder process.

“As producers, we are always working to ensure the best care for our animals,” CPC president Jean-Guy Vincent stated in a release. “Updating the Code makes the approach current. If significant changes are determined, we must have the support of many players to implement them – the burden cannot be handled by farmers alone.” **M**





# Tim Hortons announces animal welfare initiatives

WHEN TIM HORTONS announced on May 7 that it called upon the pork industry and its suppliers to eliminate gestation stalls for sows by the end of this year, it also revealed other animal welfare initiatives, most specifically plans to purchase at least 10 per cent of its eggs from enriched hen housing systems by the end of 2013.

The chain plans to actively evaluate the industry's capacity to provide eggs from enriched housing systems, and to progressively increase its commitment beyond 2013 as additional supply becomes available.

The company also noted that in 2012 it will commission scientific, fact-based animal welfare research with leading academic institutions on sustainable, humane animal housing systems. It is also calling for a North America-wide summit of restaurant companies interested in the humane treatment of animals in the restaurant industry supply chain.

"We hope and expect that our initiatives can help speed up the process by which farmers and producers will phase out gestation stalls for sows and move to alternative hen housing systems, so they can in turn meet industry and guest demand for such products," stated Tim Hortons' president and CEO Paul House.

Currently, the egg and pork industries do not have enough hens in enriched housing or sows not housed in gestation stalls to meet the restaurant industry's needs on a viable scale, the company noted in a release.

The company release noted an estimated 97 per cent of egg-laying hens in North America are housed in non-enriched cages. The company also said more than 70 per cent of breeding sows in the U.S. are housed in gestation crates, while estimates are unknown for Canada as the pork industry has been downsizing over the last number of years.

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# Now Hiring

## Where are the meat cutters of tomorrow going to come from?

By Alan MacKenzie

VETERAN U.S. MEAT cutter Leon Wildeberger spends nearly 10 hours a day managing his online forum, the Meat Cutters Club. He estimates he gets 18,000 hits a day and reaches up to 3,500 industry professionals through the website's links on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. After 51 years in the industry he started the site as a way to converse with others in the trade, but the biggest question on his mind right now is, "Where are the meat cutters of tomorrow going to come from?"

"I have five major companies asking me to find them meat cutters, and I can't find them," Wildeberger says. "I haven't had but four meat cutters ask me to help them find jobs in about a year. If you take a fast count of the meat cutter jobs open across the U.S., we are about 5,000 cutters short."

Wildeberger is concerned that the art of meat cutting has been lost since boxed meat became commonplace in chain retail stores in the 1980s. Boxed beef and pork was first introduced on the market in 1976 by Iowa Beef Packers in the U.S., saving the industry energy and transportation costs by eliminating the shipment of fat, bones and trimmings.

"I think the chain stores got to where they don't look at meat cutters as skilled labour anymore – people don't think of it as a career," he says, adding that less-skilled meat clerks and meat stockers barely make over minimum wage at most stores.

A lack of interest in meat cutting is evident in Canada as well, according to Abe Van Melle, who has been teaching meat cutting at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) in Calgary for 25 years. SAIT is one of only a handful of schools in Canada that still has a full-time meat cutting program (colleges in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Vancouver and Toronto all stopped teaching meat cutting over the last several years) – the others being the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) in Edmonton, Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, B.C., and Olds College in southern Alberta, which focuses more on meat processing, rather than just meat cutting.

SAIT runs two four-month programs every year – one in September and one in January (although, that may change to a full-year course in the near future). Van Melle says the program takes in about 14 students at a time, but adds that this coming year that number might not be met because the high-paying oil industry is starting to pick up in the province again.

"For the last four years we were in pretty good shape, but we're starting to see our numbers drop off as the oil and gas industry ramps up again," Van Melle says. "I can't even imagine what's going on in other parts of the country. I'm sure they're having issues, probably compounded more than here because they don't have training programs."

Van Melle adds that because of these cycles, many store owners, particularly "big box" stores like Costco, buy pre-cut meat from plants, rather than having an onsite butcher.

"That's just a reality – they're starting to treat meat like it's a can of beans or something," he says.

On the other hand, he notes, some stores like Safeway and Sobeys are moving back to a service meat case model, complete with butchers that customers can talk to about what products to buy and how to prepare and cook them.

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Wildeberger is seeing a similar move in some U.S. stores, and thinks this is a key step toward bringing strong customer service, honour and skill back to the meat cutting trade.

"I think one of the worst things that ever happened to this industry is when they enclosed the cutting rooms so the customer couldn't see in," he says. "When I was working and I had that window I could wave at my customers and I could open the sliding window and talk to them. I could sell meat all day long."



"For the last four years we were in pretty good shape, but we're starting to see our numbers drop off as the oil and gas industry ramps up again."

— Abe Van Melle, SAIT

However, the higher skill set required for this kind of meat cutting, compared to what is going on in the big box stores, means more workers need to be recruited into the meat trade.

One positive is that the meat industry is fairly stable compared to the more volatile oil and gas business.

"To some degree we're always going to need butchers in stores, and they still get paid a decent wage," Van Melle says, noting that unionized retail meat cutters typically make between \$20 and \$27 an hour.

Van Melle adds that retail stores need to look at recruiting and

training from within to attract meat cutters, a strategy that he says was successful in the mid-2000s, prior to the last recession.

"At that time Calgary Co-op and Sobeys weren't getting butchers anymore and couldn't recruit them even at store level, so they polled their own people and offered to pay tuition fees and give them a wage while in the program," he says.

Brad McLeod, coordinator of the meat processing program at Old's College, agrees there is growth in the need for skilled retail butchers.

"We're seeing a swing where more people are coming into the butcher industry, but it's not to work in the big plants, it's more for niche marketing," he says.


However, finding enough workers on the industrial end of the industry is a lot tougher, McLeod says. There is no shortage of jobs for graduates of his program, even with the program doubling its intake of students next year.

With vacancies of around 1,000 workers for the next 12 months, McLeod foresees more foreign recruitment and automation coming in to make up for the lack of industrial meat cutters and line workers.

Scott Dundas, a recruitment and retention specialist for the industry, says foreign recruitment is a reality since Canadians often don't look at the meat industry as a career these days.

"We're promoting domestic recruitment as much as possible, but we do end up doing international recruitment as well," he says, noting domestic job fairs that are targeted specifically to the industry have been successful at attracting Alberta workers.

While industrial meat cutting jobs pay less than retail butchery positions, workers can still build a career in a meat plant.

"A lot of folks don't view this industry as a career choice," Dundas says, "but there is room for career development within companies – you just have to be willing to put in the time and earn the opportunity." 



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# Grandin Supports LFTB

“Pink slime” should be on the market, says animal welfare expert.

By Alan MacKenzie

**ACCORDING TO RENOWNED** autistic animal welfare expert Dr. Temple Grandin, lean finely textured beef (LFTB) – the ammonia-treated beef product unfortunately known as “pink slime” – should be on the market.

The treated beef product gained attention last year after Oliver criticized it on his ABC TV show. Earlier this year public backlash led to the closure of several plants that manufacture LFTB in the U.S., resulting in the loss of approximately 700 jobs.

“If we don’t use that product we waste beef,” Grandin told *Canadian Meat Business*, noting that 15 to 30 pounds of beef protein product per animal is being thrown away if not processed into LFTB. “We shouldn’t be throwing that away; we should be recovering the protein from those scraps.”

She added that products containing LFTB should have been labelled properly in the first place, saying the lack of labels, or possibly a detailed video of the process being available to consumers, was a “gigantic mistake.”

Grandin was in Canada recently for a series of speaking engagements, including two appearances in Manitoba. Approximately 700 people attended the event in Brandon on May 23, which was sponsored by the Manitoba Pork Council, Manitoba Beef Producers, Maple Leaf Foods, HyLife Ltd., Quintaine Livestock, Steve’s Livestock Transport, and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

+

“We shouldn’t be throwing that away; we should be recovering the protein from those scraps.”

– Dr. Temple Grandin

“That’s likely the biggest agriculture meeting this province has seen under one roof this year,” Manitoba Pork Council chair Karl Kynoch said in the group’s recent Chop Talk newsletter.

“Dr. Grandin spoke straight to the issues we face and we are on board and intend to keep making positive strides forward in our management practices in the best interests of our animals,” Kynoch added. “She was notably impressed with what she saw when she toured the Maple Leaf plant, for example.”

She acknowledged that we have been moving forward with positive changes in animal welfare. There are areas that require us to keep moving – and we’re doing that – especially in the area



Photos: Winnipeg Humane Society

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of sow gestation stalls. Producers want to ensure that any changes we make are always positive in respect to animal care and never a step backwards.” stated Kynoch.

The Brandon event was sold out nearly two months in advance. The following night, Grandin appeared in front of 500 people in Winnipeg at another sold out event, sponsored by the Winnipeg Humane Society.

“Temple Grandin has a unique insight with when it comes to the humane treatment of animals – in particular farm animals,” said WHS CEO Bill McDonald. “She possesses this remarkable talent and connection to animals because of her autism. The Winnipeg Humane Society wanted to create an opportunity for Manitobans to benefit from seeing this extraordinary woman.”

Grandin said that through public speaking engagements like these she has been able to convince some people that LFTB should be on the market and that the problem is with the unfair moniker “pink slime” that was first used by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver.

“I went to a refried bean factory once and they had a big vat of refried beans – well, that looked like brown slime,” she said. “There’s something about huge amounts of food in big vats that just doesn’t look very nice.”

Grandin also said the use of ammonia to treat LFTB is a turn-off for many consumers. She suggested using a citric-acid treatment instead.

“People would like the idea of lemon juice more than ammonia,” she said at the Winnipeg event.

LFTB is not used in Canada, according to a source at Canada Beef Inc. because the use of ammonia in ground beef to kill E. coli 0157: H7 has not been approved for use in packing plants by Health Canada.

Grandin is a professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University and teaches extensively on animal behaviour and livestock facility design. Last year an HBO film based on her early life won numerous Emmy and Golden Globe awards, including for actress Claire Danes, who portrayed Grandin. In 2010 Grandin was inducted in the inaugural

class of the Meat Industry Hall of Fame. She was also named one of *Time* magazine’s “Top 100 Influential People” that year. 

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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).

## The latest in meat science and technology at ICoMST 2012



Randy Huffman

ICoMST 2012, an international meat science event, will take place Aug. 12 to 17 in Montreal. The event offers an ideal opportunity to learn about the latest advances in meat science and technology.

Well known researchers representing important world markets – Australia, the United States, Europe – will have the latest word on current best practices worldwide. An important addition to this year's program is the CMSA Global Meat Quality and Safety Industry Day on Aug. 16 with sessions that would be particularly relevant to the industry. This is available as part of the whole conference or as a separate event.

In a competitive world, revenue derived from edible meat by products – which may represent up to 40 per cent of the live weight of cattle, pigs and lambs – can make all the difference. Fidel Toldrá, of the Instituto de Agroquímica y Tecnología de Alimentos in Spain, will discuss the latest innovations for optimizing revenue, edible “by products” can become “delicacies” commanding high prices, depending on culture.

Ian Jenson of Meat and Livestock Australia will discuss meat safety, presenting facts and describing standards set elsewhere in the world.

Margaret Hardin of IEHLaboratories and Consulting Group, Washington, USA, will explain how to validate processes to meet food safety objectives, with practical examples from the meat and poultry industry.

Jean François Hocquette of the INRA in Clermont Ferrand, France will describe three ways of predicting and improving beef quality: what he calls the “omics” (genomics, proteomics, etc); the potential for information technology; and mathematics to predict results based on specific criteria.

Lastly, Joseph G. Sebranek of Iowa State University in the United States will discuss post lethality treatments and natural antimicrobials developed to improve the shelf life and safety of naturally cured meat products.

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

## International Bison Conference coming to Quebec

Quebec City will host the International Bison Conference July 24 to 27 at the Hotel Loews Quebec.

Speakers include several industry leaders, as well as business

icon Ted Turner and master storyteller Alvin Law.

Turner's business experience includes billboard advertisement, cable television, sports team ownership and philanthropy. He is chairman of the United Nations Foundation, co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and chairman of Turner Enterprises, Inc., which manages his business interests, land holdings and investments, including the oversight of two million acres in 12 states and in Argentina, and more than 55,000 bison.

Law's storytelling is described as “sometimes humorous, sometimes serious, but always honest.” Born without arms due to the infamous morning sickness drug Thalidomide, Law began his speaking career as a young child in 1981. Today he is a highly sought-after inspirational speaker and travels throughout Canada, the US and around the world.

For more information, visit [www.bison2012.com](http://www.bison2012.com).

## BBQ competition to take centre stage at Winnipeg blues festival



Jimmy Vaughn

A new food and music festival taking place in Winnipeg this summer will feature a barbecue competition with a \$10,000 cash purse – the largest in Canada.

The first Winnipeg BBQ & Blues Festival is set to hit Red River Exhibition Park, on the western outskirts of the city, Aug. 17 to 19. The Winnipeg Free Press Pit Masters Championship, taking place on the Saturday and Sunday, is a Kansas City Barbecue Society sanctioned competition that is open to amateurs and professionals.

The coveted prize for the grand champion will include an automatic invitation to the Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational Barbecue Competition in Lynchburg, Tennessee.

“This is the first time an event like this has taken place in Winnipeg and we've planned a weekend full of great music and a BBQ competition that is already attracting the attention of cooks and connoisseurs across North America,” managing event partner Rick Fenton said in a release.

The mainstage concert lineup over the weekend will include Grammy and Juno award winning blues artists including headliner legendary Jimmie Vaughan formerly of the Fabulous Thunderbirds and the Vaughn Brothers (with the late Stevie Ray Vaughn). Winnipeg musician Big Dave McLean will serve as the event's ambassador.

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

# Upcoming Events

## June 2012

26  
Western Beef Development  
Centre's Annual Summer  
Field Day  
Termuende Research Ranch  
Lanigan, Sask.  
wbdc.sk.ca

## July 2012

24 – 27  
International Bison  
Conference  
Quebec City, Que.  
bison2012.com

## August 2012

12 – 17  
58th International Congress  
of Meat Science and  
Technology  
Montreal, Que.  
icomst2012.ca

## September 2012

20 – 21  
Canada Beef Inc. Annual  
Forum  
Calgary, Alta.  
canadabeef.ca

## October 2012

2 – 3  
NAMA E. Coli Conference  
Sheraton Four Points at  
O'Hare  
Chicago, Illinois  
meatassociation.com

24 – 27  
NAMA Outlook Conference  
J.W. Marriott Hill Country  
San Antonio, Texas  
meatassociation.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 [zeprep@rogers.com](mailto:zeprep@rogers.com).



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## Thermo Fisher Scientific introduces Touchless X-ray System



Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., the world leader in serving science, has launched its new Thermo Scientific EZx 465 Touchless X-ray system to the global marketplace. The new model significantly extends the application range of this proven, entry level food safety x-ray system.

Unlike traditional foreign object x-ray detection systems, the EZx

465 Touchless has been engineered to eliminate the shielding curtains typically used to block radiation, while still complying with all global safety standards. Heavy lead or no-lead curtains frequently prevent lightweight products such as metalized snack bags from being conveyed through the x-ray chamber, resulting in production line jams and downtime.

Unwrapped products, such as frozen meals in foil trays, cannot be passed through shielding curtains due to hygienic concerns as well as the significant risk that the food product inside the tray could be altered.

The EZx 465 Touchless X-ray system eliminates the need for shielding curtains by conveying the product through the inspection chamber via a series of small slopes. Additionally, the unit also features an aperture with reduced height to ensure that x-ray scatter does not escape from the inlet or outlet areas of the system.

The EZx 465 Touchless X-ray system is available with a 400 mm (15.75 inches) wide belt, the most common choice for the majority of applications. The system can handle products 65 mm (2.5 inches) in height. Maximum belt speed is 100 meters or 328 feet per minute.

[www.thermoscientific.com/productinspection](http://www.thermoscientific.com/productinspection)

## New x-ray system designed for harsher packaged food manufacturing environments



Eagle Product Inspection has launched the Eagle Pack 400 HC, an energy-efficient x-ray inspection system designed for easy and efficient cleaning in the harsh wash-down environments of the packaged meat, poultry and dairy industries, where daily sanitization of equipment is mandatory.

The Eagle Pack 400 HC's robust construction features thicker stainless steel plates cut and welded together, rather than bolted, making its design more sanitary

by eliminating food debris collection points. It is also capable of withstanding the impact of repeated use of harsh chemical cleaners and pressurized water. The system offers interlocked hinged louvers which can easily be lifted to allow access to the conveyor, eliminating the need of dismantling traditional heavy louvers to clean inside the machine. This feature reduces the time and labour needed for daily sanitization and assembly, increasing uptime. The hinged louvers also decrease the possibility of damaging or losing equipment pieces during cleaning shifts, enhancing overall safety and productivity.

To reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption, the Eagle Pack 400 HC is designed with an energy-efficient water cooled heat exchanger that eliminates the need for a separate air conditioning unit to cool the system. This also results in a minimal footprint to save space in the production line. Its knurled end drive roller, responsible for the motion of the conveyor, incorporates v-grooves to increase the traction of the conveyor belt so it retains its position even if wet or greasy from cleaning or opened products. With less belt slippage and damage, manufacturers will benefit from less downtime.

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

## HD Barcode for brand protection

Complete Inspection Systems Inc. recently introduced the world's most advanced 2D barcode for absolute product identification and brand protection without Internet lookup and without adding cost to your manufacturing process.

The HD Barcode is a revolution in data density, holding up to 703k of secure, encrypted information. By incorporating the HD Barcode into printed materials such as cartons, labels, or containers, any firm can positively identify their products instantly and securely from anywhere on Earth.

The HD Barcode can be custom configured to provide each manufacturer a unique private version of the code. Additional security features include a separate code generator program, which is sequestered from the readers, ensuring that it can never be reproduced. As a second step, the code can contain data about other covert features and their locations on the materials. These features can be added to the normal printing process, and impossible to copy. This information can be moved as required and only the manufacturer knows that information.

Complete Inspection Systems also provides Android or iOS Smartphone apps that can read the code and provide conclusive data in the form of images and secure ePedigree information, that would reveal diversion or detect wholesale copying of the packaging.

In addition to brand protection, the entire insert or directions can be printed using the HD Barcode.

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





# Class of 2012

Meat Industry Hall of Fame inductees represent all livestock, meatpacking and poultry industries.

**TWELVE EXECUTIVES, SCIENTISTS,** innovators and association leaders from all sectors of the livestock, meatpacking and poultry processing industries were recently announced as the Meat Industry Hall of Fame's (MIHOF) Class of 2012.


"This year's class is one of our strongest and includes some of the industry's true pioneers," MIHOF president and founder Chuck Jolley stated in a release. "Our trustees and members have chosen an elite group of leaders who have not only achieved remarkable business success but have spent their careers contributing to their communities and the progress of the entire industry. We are delighted to be able to honour this group, who truly represent the best of the best, both in business and in life."

The following individuals have been named to the Class of 2012:

- Bill Fielding, who has held executive positions with Cargill, Inc., ConAgra Fresh Meat, Creekstone Farms Premium Beef, LLC and Meyer Natural Foods;
- Ellard Pfaelzer Sr. of Pfaelzer Bros. and Ellard "Butch" Pfaelzer, Jr. of the Bruss Co.;
- Fred Usinger, president of Usinger's Famous Sausage;
- Dave Theno, Ph.D., senior vice president of Jack in the Box and CEO of Gray Dog Partners, Inc.;
- Dave Wood, CEO of Harris Ranch;

- Jim Hodges, executive vice president of the American Meat Institute, and president of the American Meat Institute Foundation;
- Mohammad Koohmarie, Ph.D., chief executive officer of the meat division of IEH Laboratories and Consulting Group;
- Steve Krut, retired CEO of the American Association of Meat Processors;
- Alfred "Al" Kober, retail director for Certified Angus Beef, LLC, and meat director of Clemens Supermarkets;
- Bobby Hatoff, chairman of Allen Brothers;
- Herb Lotman, founder of Keystone Foods;
- Marvin J. Walter of Carriage House Meat & Provision Company, Ames Processed Foods Company, Inc., Webster City Custom Meats, Inc. and W & G Marketing Company, Inc.

The induction ceremony for the new members will take place on Oct. 27 at the J.W. Marriott Hill Country near San Antonio, Texas as part of the North American Meat Association (NAMA) Outlook Conference, one of the first events of the recent consolidation of the North American Meat Processors Association and the National Meat Association. The conference is a continuation of an annual NAMP event.

For more information, visit [www.meatindustryhalloffame.com](http://www.meatindustryhalloffame.com). 

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# Hosting Hispanic Market Partners

Canada Beef Inc. and Cargill partner to highlight the Canadian Beef Advantage.

**CANADA BEEF INC.'S** U.S. market development team works with trade to differentiate Canadian product as a premium beef choice for the U.S. market and to maximize opportunities to build value in key sectors such as Hispanic retailers. This type of outreach helps to enhance the relationship with our closest and most valuable Canadian beef export market.

As part of this strategy, Canada Beef partnered with Cargill Food Distribution from Rancho Cucamonga, California, to host trade partners from the U.S. Hispanic market on a gate-to-plate trade mission of the Canadian beef industry in Alberta, providing a valuable opportunity to highlight the Canadian Beef Advantage (CBA).

"It is important to work closely with our key distribution partners in proper product positioning, as it allows Canada Beef to reach more pre-qualified partner accounts," says Jorge Mendez Manzanilla, senior director of market development for Canada Beef's Hispanic program.

A group of eight Hispanic retail, processor and distribution participants visited the Canadian beef value chain. Guests received presentations on the CBA prior to the seeing different venues in the beef production process including a cow-calf operation, a feedlot and Cargill's processing facility in High River. This tour provided the opportunity for potential trade partners to witness first-hand Canadian beef production practices that strengthened their understanding of Canadian cattle genetics, the food safety systems and grading standards. These standards are an integral part Canadian beef's competitive advantage with respect to other grain fed programs in North America.

The bright red meat colour and the white or slightly amber fat of Canadian beef are perceived as freshness attributes

which are highly valued by the Hispanic consumer. Canada's herd genetics favour yield consistencies that have a direct impact on the retailer's bottom line and are a competitive advantage with respect to beef lines that incorporate Zebu type genetics in their genetic pool.

"Beef consumption habits in the Hispanic market are complementary to those in Canada," says Mendez. "This market is typically looking for beef chucks, clods, skirts and offal among other products, that have a limited market in Canada and which add value to the Canadian cutout."


Successful partnership development for these products is key to enhancing the value of the Canadian carcass cutout



"This market is typically looking for beef chucks, clods, skirts and offal among other products, that have a limited market in Canada..."

— Jorge Mendez Manzanilla, Canada Beef Inc.

and therefore to the producer. The overall potential from this group of accounts represents more than 5,000,000 lbs. per year of Canadian 'priority cuts' such as chuck eye rolls, west coast chucks, bottom sirloin flap meat, shoulder clods. Canada Beef Inc. continues to connect and develop key partner accounts in coordination with Canadian packers targeting Canadian priority cuts.

Canada Beef Inc. is an independent national organization representing the marketing and promotion of the Canadian cattle and beef industry worldwide. Its efforts to maximize demand for Canadian beef and optimize the value of Canadian beef products are funded by cattle producers through the National Beef Check-Off, which in turn makes it possible to access beef industry market development funds provided by the government of Canada and the Government of Alberta. 

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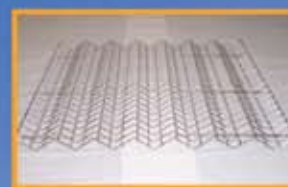
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# Introducing NAMA

North American Meat Association set for July 1 launch.

*By Ed Sullivan*

TWO MAJOR MEAT industry associations – the North American Meat Processors Association (NAMP) and the National Meat Association (NMA) – will cease to exist July 1, the start date for the new North American Meat Association (NAMA).

A consolidation of the two previous groups, NAMA will represent approximately 700 member companies in 44 U.S. states, three Canadian provinces, Mexico, and even Australian and Japan. This will make it one of the largest associations in the global meat trade.

The group announced recently that no board member from the two original associations will be asked to step down, as NAMA's first board of directors will include every board member of NAMP and NMA. This means there will be 98 board members in the first years. In the second year there will be 67 of the current board members, and the following year there will be 33 current members as new members from the entire NAMA membership are elected.

Though members are from the same type of companies, the overlap of processor and supplier members is "surprisingly low," according to a release.

"The number one benefit of the consolidation is the exponential power we have to support the meat industry, with the synergies by bringing together two great staffs and programs," stated NMA CEO Barry Carpenter. "This gives us the ability to give more

assistance to more members on in-plant issues. It gives us a growth opportunity to spring ahead in representing the industry in Canada and Mexico, as well as in the U.S."

"The consolidation means we have a stronger voice together," added NAMP president Jeff Saval. "The combined strength of the two already strong associations comes at a critical time for the industry. We needed to create stronger industry representation on regulatory, scientific and food safety issues."

"There are synergies in these tough economic times. The consolidation means members get more timely information on regulations and legislative issues," he said.

"Our industry gets attacked on a variety of issues – obesity, 'pink slime', whatever. Now we have one voice instead of two separate voices. We as an association need to be a proactive voice to consumers, not a reactive voice. We need to show consumers what we are doing to create safe, legal foods," noted Saval.

The two groups first raised the issue of consolidation in earnest in May 2011, and the decision was made final with an almost unanimous vote in February this year.

For the next five years NAMA will have co-officers, matching the president of NAMP with the president of NMA, for instance. Starting July 1 the NAMA co-presidents will be current NAMP vice-president Mike

Satzow and current NMA vice-president Marty Evanson.

“Just think: two presidents from exact opposite ends of the country, New Hampshire and Southern California and all the land in between including Canada and Mexico. How wonderful is that?” Evanson stated.

The group stressed that its focus will be continent-wide, as issues such as food safety know no international borders.


“It is exciting that NAMA is a North American association with members in Canada and Mexico,” said Satzow. “All of us have the same problems and we’re



“It is exciting that NAMA is a North American association with members in Canada and Mexico. All of us have the same problems and we’re looking for the same solutions – which is the best common denominator there is.”

– Mike Satzow, NAMA

looking for the same solutions – which is the best common denominator there is.”

Both groups also hold major events twice a year. For the next two years NAMA will combine the formats from the two associations. Over the next 12 months, NAMA will offer an E. coli conference in early October near Chicago’s O’Hare Airport, an Outlook Conference in late October in San Antonio, an Annual Conference and MeatExpo ’13 in February in Las Vegas. Other events will also take place over the next year, including Centre of the Plate Training workshops. 

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## NDP's roadkill claims "flat-out not true"

According to a May 15 release from the NDP, proposed changes to Canada's meat inspection regulations (MIR) will leave Canadians wondering if the meat they buy is actually safe. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) called the claims "irresponsible and inaccurate."

The party said the federal government's proposed changes to what meat is deemed acceptable could lead to "roadkill" being allowed on dinner tables.

"First the Conservatives will let private inspectors monitor meat, and now they're essentially allowing road kill-ready meat into the food supply," stated Malcolm Allen, NDP critic for agriculture and agri-food. "Even scarier is the fact that we won't know how long animals have been dead before processing – or even that the meat will be inspected at all."

"In the 1970s, Quebec had no meat processing regulations, meaning already-dead and crippled animals' meat entered the food supply, causing the 'rotten meat' scandal," added Ruth Ellen Brosseau, NDP deputy critic for agriculture and agri-food. "The industry collapsed, and federal regulations were created as a result."

John Masswohl, director of government and international relations for the CCA, said the NDP's claims are "flat-out not true."

He said the proposed regulation the NDP is talking about would see farm animals that are injured allowed to enter the food system if the animal is otherwise healthy and approved by a veterinarian.

"In these rare cases, if an animal has a broken leg or something like that, but it's still perfectly healthy, the farmer's

choices are really to put that animal onto a truck, or euthanize it on the farm and pay somebody to dispose of it," Masswohl said. "Neither of those are very good options."

He added that if the regulation goes through, it gives farmers an option that is respectful of "the need to treat animals well" while also recognizing the animal's economic value to the farmer.

"I really see it as a win-win because it doesn't affect food safety in any way whatsoever," Masswohl said.

## Gap between grain and livestock farms growing

Statistics Canada's 2011 agriculture census, released in May, showed a significant shift away from livestock-based farms to crop-based farms, an overall drop in farm number, and an aging group of farm operators.

"Crop production and beef farming have long been the backbone of Canadian agriculture, but the gap between the two has widened," the agency reported.

In 2006, grain and oilseed farms made up 26.9 per cent of all Canadian farms, while beef farms accounted for 26.6 per cent. But in the 2011 report, the number of grain and oilseed farms increased to 30.0 per cent, while beef farms declined to 18.2 per cent.

The census also reported that in 2010 gross farm receipts rose 3.9 per cent from 2005 to \$51.1 billion. Grain and oilseed farms reported \$18.2 billion in gross farm receipts, a 49.5 per cent increase, representing 35.7 per cent of total receipts. Beef farms reported \$7.3 billion, or 14.3 per cent of the total farm receipts.

The 2011 census counted 205,730 census farms, a decline

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of 23,643 or 10 per cent from the last agriculture census in 2006. The number of farms fell in every province in this time period, except in Nova Scotia, which saw an increase of 2.9 per cent. Farm numbers have been steadily declining since 1941, the agency noted.

The census also reported farm operators are significantly older in 2011, with those aged 55 and older representing the largest share of operators for the first time ever. This group represented 48.3 per cent of Canada's farmers last year, compared to 40.7 per cent in 2006 and 32.1 per cent in 1991.

Farm operators under 35 accounted for 8.2 per cent in 2011, compared to 9.1 per cent in 2006. Those in the 35 to 54 age group made up 43.5 per cent in 2011, down from 50.2 per cent in 2006.

### Maple Leaf Foods reports profit drop in Q1

Maple Leaf Foods on May 2 reported its financial results for the first quarter of 2012, showing a significant drop in net earnings compared to the same period last year due to weak bakery sales.

Net earnings for the quarter ended March 31 were \$0.8 million, compared to \$10.5 million in the first quarter of 2011. Adjusted operating earnings for the first quarter decreased 20 per cent to \$40.5 million. Adjusted earnings per share were \$0.11 compared to \$0.18 last year.

Sales for the first quarter of 2012 increased one per cent to \$1,160.8 million compared to \$1,147.9 million last year, as higher selling prices across the business were partially offset by lower volumes in fresh bakery and fresh pork.

"Our first quarter results were challenged, as expected, due primarily to weak fresh bakery volumes, an issue is affecting the entire industry," Maple Leaf president and CEO Michael H. McCain said in a release. "We are addressing this challenge directly and expect improved results through the remainder of 2012."

"Conversely, we are very pleased with the results in our protein group, particularly considering the significant decline in commodity industry pork processor margins," he added.

### Pfizer introduces new PRRS vaccine for Canadian pigs

Fostera PRRS vaccine is now registered for use in Canada by Pfizer Animal Health as an aid in preventing disease associated with Porcine Reproductive and

Respiratory Syndrome Virus (PRRSV), a disease that costs Canada's pork industry an estimated C\$130 million annually.

Fostera PRRS is a modified live vaccine for the vaccination of healthy, susceptible swine three weeks of age, or older, in PRRSV-positive herds or seronegative pigs deemed at risk for exposure to PRRSV, as an aid in preventing respiratory disease associated with PRRSV.

"PRRSV is endemic in almost all pork-producing areas of the world," Pfizer's Walter Heuser stated in a release. "This new modified live vaccine option will help protect growing pigs facing a PRRSV challenge, and assist the Canadian swine industry in the management of this costly disease."

Fostera PRRS is available exclusively through Canadian veterinarians, the company stated.

### Agri-business optimism dips slightly in April

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) in its Monthly Business Barometer for April noted agri-business owners optimism for the year ahead decreased for the second month in a row.

The report revealed a decrease to 61.7 in April from 62.9 in March and 67.4 in February. Measured on a scale between 0 and 100, an index level above 50 means owners expecting their businesses' performance to be stronger in the next year outnumber those expecting weaker performance.

Thirty-four per cent of agri-business owners rate their overall state of business as good, below the national average of 42 per cent, the report noted. Sixteen per cent of agri-business owners plan to increase full time employment in the next three to four months, which is up ten points and reflective of plans for the upcoming seeding season.

There was little change in the relative results by industry. Manufacturers are more positive than the average by a significant amount. Optimism in the natural resources industries, business services and the health and education sectors are also above the average. Those in agriculture, personal services and hospitality are at the low end of the index-around the 60 level.

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# The Cutting Edge

The ultimate in productivity, yield, and reduced giveaway are all available with today's advanced, multiple independent drive slicing systems.

By Ed Sullivan

**CONSUMERS OF DELI** meats, poultry and cheeses never had it so good when it comes to the variety of sliced products available. Whatever the preference – deli-style shaved, thin-sliced, thick-sliced, or carving board style, stacked or shingled – a consumer can probably find it conveniently packaged and on the shelf.

To take advantage of this burgeoning market, many food processors are turning to more advanced slicing technologies that enable them to increase volumes and efficiencies, improve weight accuracy, deliver consistent slice thicknesses, and interface with associated automated meat and cheese packaging systems.

With the newer slicing systems on the market, one of the most important of the advanced capabilities is the option of having multiple independently controlled slicing drives on a single piece of equipment.

## Single drive slicers versus multiple drives

In an industry that lives by the motto “the money is in the meat or cheese,” the goal is to achieve little to no giveaway, defined as the slight overages in weight of product, for example, in a 454 gram package. Yield is also a concern and food processors work diligently to ensure that 100 kilos of product sent to a slicer yields as close to 100 kilos in the package as possible.

Even as little as 2.3 grams per package of product giveaway or 0.5 per cent less yield can equate to tens of thousands of dollars given the volumes involved.

To accomplish these goals, the major food processors of the world utilize high end, high throughput slicers that can slice up to four meat or cheese loaves simultaneously at the rate of thousands of slices per minute, stacked, shingled or bunched

and ready for final packaging.

Sophisticated controls carefully monitor the rate at which the product is advanced to the blade, thereby controlling the thickness of each slice. At the same time, the product is weighed after it is stacked or shingled and information relayed to the control system so minute adjustments can be made.

However, most high throughput slicers are designed around a single drive mechanism that feeds all the lanes of product simultaneously at the same speed. The slicer adjusts by calculating the ideal portion weight using the average weights of all the portions.

Although this may be sufficient for a molded or formed product that has little variation from product to product, it doesn't accommodate logs that are not perfectly formed or that are irregularly shaped, such as oval or D-shaped logs – or, even more critically – whole muscle products and irregular cheeses such as Swiss.

The solution, in these cases, involves the use of multiple independent drives. The principle of operation is the same, except that the product in each lane is advanced independently to the blade, ensuring the most precise slicing of portions no matter the shape of product. The result is a significant reduction in giveaway and increase in yield, not to mention more consistent package weights.

“Slicing equipment with multiple independent drives is a game changer for many food processors in terms of lower cost of ownership, increased productivity, and much lower product giveaway,” says Ryan Whisenant, vice president of operations at Greenwood, South Carolina-based Carolina Pride Foods.



“Having multiple independent drives in a single slicing machine is like having two, three, or even four slicers in one piece of equipment.”

Carolina Pride is a leading pork producer in the Southeast U.S., manufacturing smoked sausages, hot dogs, cocktail wieners, luncheon meat, ham, bacon and pork sausage. A vertically integrated plant, they handle everything from slaughter all the way through finished packaging.

To handle this work, Carolina Pride owns and operates three Cashin brand bacon slicers, along with a slicer for its bologna products.

Whisenant recently replaced a bologna slicer at Carolina Pride with



“Slicing equipment with multiple independent drives is a game changer for many food processors...”

— Ryan Whisenant,  
Carolina Pride Foods

a Formax multiple independent drive slicer that is capable of high-speed slicing (average speed is 900 slices per minute) with multi-loaf slicing capabilities as well as independent weighing and classifying to ensure that each package is precisely on-weight.

Formax slicers are available through Provisur, a company that offers many well established food processing equipment brands for everything from slicing to grinding, mixing, separating, and forming. Although Formax slicers have long been a respected brand with equipment installed 30 years ago still in use today, the company recently completed a major redesign and upgrade of the slicer line in 2009.

The latest generation of Formax slicer, the PowerMax3000 and PowerMax4000, has up to four multiple independent drives, an optional 3D imaging system to control the drives based on exact shape of the product being sliced, and

independent weighing of portions from each drive. An upgraded control system and hygienic design are part of the package.

“The engineering behind the Formax slicing line and the multiple independent drives is extraordinary,” says Whisenant. “The software enables us to control the exact weight of each group of sliced meat exactly and gets it sliced to consistently exact thicknesses regardless of any variations in the product.”


According to Whisenant, Carolina Pride’s bologna giveaway has decreased significantly. “Giveaway has virtually disappeared,” he explains.

Another proponent of multiple independent drives is Seltzer’s Smokehouse Meats in Palmyra, Pennsylvania. Seltzer’s is a producer of several varieties of bologna, including Lebanon, sweet Lebanon and double-smoked in a variety of packaging weights and thicknesses. The company sells approximately 200,000 kilos per week of the Seltzers Bomberger brand Lebanon and Sweet Bologna in retail stores nationwide.

Seltzer’s reports that the automated weighing and slice controls of its Formax slicing system have simultaneously improved the product volume and giveaway management of its sliced bologna.

“This machine will do about 1,500 slices per minute, slicing two bologna loafs simultaneously. The system weighs each stack of product (for packaging), and dynamically makes adjustments to maintain the specified weight. It also maintains both the number and the thickness of slices,” says Jack McCaffrey, plant engineer at Seltzer’s Smokehouse Meats.

Because the drives are independent, the equipment can do more than make minute adjustments for similarly sized product, it can also be set to accommodate different thicknesses and packaging sizes simultaneously.

“This saves us setup time,” McCaffery explains. “For example, if we are running 454 gram packaging and an order comes in for 227 gram packaging, we can switch one drive to fill the larger size and continue running the standard size on the other drive.” 

*Ed Sullivan is a Hermosa Beach, California-based writer. He has researched and written about high technologies, health care, finance and real estate for over 25 years.*

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**ALBERTA**

**Smashburger to open first Canadian restaurant in Calgary**

Popular American burger chain Smashburger is planning a major international expansion this year, with its first Canadian location expected to open in Calgary soon.

In April the chain announced it opened its first international location in Kuwait and that Canadian and Latin American locations would follow later in the year.

According to a report in the *Calgary Herald*, the first location will be in northeast Calgary. An opening date for Calgary's location has not been released, but that 10 to 15 more Alberta locations will follow over time.

Based in Denver, Colorado, Smashburger opened its first restaurant in 2007 and now has 150 locations in the United States. The chain is known for including on its menu a unique burger for every local market that highlights the distinctive flavors of that region.

**MANITOBA**

**Food Development Centre undergoes \$7M expansion**

The newly expanded Food Development Centre (FDC) in Portage la Prairie now has additional specialized equipment, can accommodate more clients and is able to provide

a broader range of advisory services to established and newly emerging food companies, the federal and Manitoba governments announced May 25.

The FDC is committed to the diversification and development of Manitoba's agri-food industry, working with new, small and large food processors, adding value to Manitoba-grown ingredients to move products from the idea stage to the consumer market.

The \$7.74-million expansion added almost 18,000 square feet to the FDC facility. The space now includes additional processing suites that allow the FDC to assist small to medium-sized enterprises, helping them implement new technologies and promoting the growth of Manitoba's value-added, agri-food processing abilities.

"Through this expansion, FDC clients will have access to more food and business specialists, and up-to-date technology that can assist with the development of new food and beverage products with improved health qualities," Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger said in a release. "The centre's success with clients on the local, national and international level has raised awareness of the excellence found in Manitoba made food products and our skills in developing and commercializing food, and incubating food businesses."

Offering assistance in product research and development, and consultation in business structuring and marketing, the specialists with Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives who work at the Food Development Centre help entrepreneurs keep their products in tune with ever-changing consumer demands.

**ONTARIO**

**Government investment to help frozen foods processor reach new markets**

Eat-In Foods Inc., a Mississauga-based frozen foods producer, on May 25 received an investment of nearly \$200,000 from the federal government toward the purchase and installation of new equipment for its manufacturing facility.

"This new equipment will allow Eat-In Foods to broaden its market access and reduce its costs while creating jobs for Canadians and increasing demand for the high-quality food grown by our farmers," Minister of State Bal Gosal said in a release on behalf of Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz.

Eat-In Foods Inc. specializes in producing ethnic ready-to-eat frozen entrees. The investment will be used to purchase equipment that will help the company increase its production capacity to meet growing demands in domestic and export markets, particularly in the U.S.

The increase in sales and production will also support the creation of new jobs, the release said. Canadian farmers will directly benefit as a result of an increased demand by Eat-In Foods for commodities such as chicken, cheese, tomatoes, and wheat.

"The investment in our manufacturing which was made possible through the API program has positioned us for success in a competitive marketplace and has augmented our ability to attract exciting new customers," stated Hemant Tallur, president of Eat-In Foods. "We are on track to meet, and very likely exceed, the revenue targets we have set for our business."

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**QUEBEC**

**Olymel to temporarily relocate employees following fire**

Employees of an Olymel bacon processing plant in Princeville, Que. will be temporarily relocated following a fire that destroyed the facility on May 6, the company announced.

The company is offering the 180 employees of the Princeville plant to be temporarily relocated to other company-owned facilities in the area, including its facilities in Drummondville (bacon plant) Trois-Rivières (processing), Vallée-Jonction (hog slaughtering, cutting and deboning), Ste-Rosalie (cutting and processing) and St-Hyacinthe (pork ham deboning), all on a voluntary basis.

While some of the facilities were spared by the disaster, the extent of the damage is such that a resumption of operations in the short-term is not feasible, the company stated in a release.

The cause of the fire is not yet known. Olymel management said it is too early to make a decision as to whether to rebuild the Princeville facility.

The company noted that, given the size of investment required to rebuild the bacon processing plant in Princeville, it must first conduct an in-depth analysis of market conditions in this sector. According to the Olymel CEO Réjean Nadeau, the bacon market has recently been under considerable pressure, with intense competition in Canada and on foreign markets.

“Lower production costs in the United States have enabled U.S. manufacturers to offer fierce competition for domestic products both in Canada and south of the border,” Nadeau said in the release.

“The parity of the Canadian dollar with the U.S. currency also has an impact on our exports,” he added. “In this context, our analysis should enable us to evaluate the possibility of combining the bacon production which was previously done at Princeville with other operations. It must also consider the possibility of changing the mix of operations at the plant before making a final decision on the fate of our Princeville facility. The situation requires a solid long-term business plan, and we will do everything that needs to be done in the coming weeks.”

Olymel’s sales stood at more than \$2 billion this year, with a slaughtering and processing capacity of 160,000 hogs and 1.7 million birds a week. The company markets its products mainly under the Olymel, Lafleur and Flamingo brands.

**NOVA SCOTIA**

**Province invests \$1M in poultry plant**

According to local media reports, the Nova Scotia government is investing \$1 million to help an area poultry processor increase productivity.

*The Chronicle Herald* on May 23 reported that Eden Valley Poultry Inc. will use the money to buy cutting-edge poultry processing equipment as part of its \$40-million plan to renovate a Berwick facility that closed last year.

When complete, the new plant will employ up to 200 people and have the capacity to process 40 million kilograms of poultry annually, the report said.

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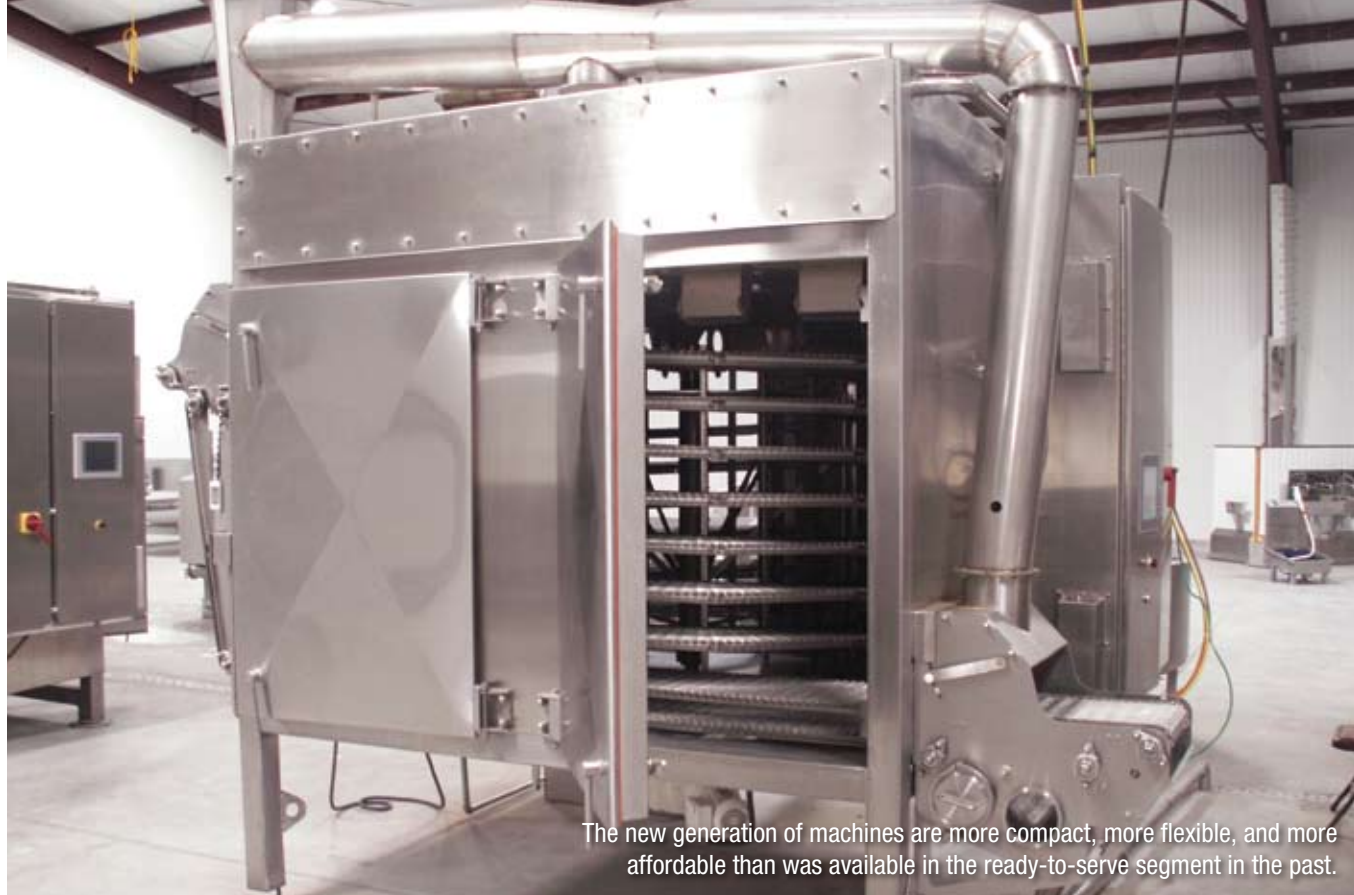


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# Ethnic Food Processors Meet Skyrocketing Demand

Affordable cooking equipment, such as continuous spiral ovens and mini flame grills, provide a cost effective bridge for producers of ethnic ready-meals.

*By Ed Sullivan*

**POPULATION MIGRATION AROUND** the globe, the interest in diverse “foodie” TV and Internet programs, and the trend toward higher quality, healthy packaged foods have all contributed to amazing growth in ready-to-eat ethnic foods today.

Whether it is fresh salsa, hummus, gyro meat, Chinese stir fry or tofu, many ready-to-eat ethnic foods that were once considered specialty items found in the ethnic food aisle of a grocery store are now mainstream offerings. The growth and interest in these types of foods, in fact, has been so phenomenal in the last decade that many of these products no longer seem “ethnic” at all.

Furthermore, this trend shows no signs of slowing any time soon. According to consumer market research firm Mintel, the sales of ethnic foods will grow by another 20 per cent in the next couple of years, with diversity increasing substantially from earlier in the decade when Mexican/Hispanic were dominant with over 60 per cent share of the ethnic food sales.

More recently, Asian and Indian foods grew by 11 and 35 per cent, respectively. Other foods of ethnic origin, such as hummus

and tofu, have grown by hundreds of per cent in popularity around the globe.

To meet the dramatically increasing demand, many smaller, specialty food processors are increasing the variety and type of ready-made ethnic and global fare offerings. Hummus, for example, is now offered in organic and non-organic varieties such as artichoke, eggplant, garlic, roasted red pepper and even chocolate.

Yet, the challenge to smaller food processors is how to expand production to meet the explosive demand for these products. Where modest food processing equipment was adequate even five years ago, many now must find cost effective equipment that can serve as a bridge to meet higher volume requirements while also retaining the authenticity and quality of the dishes they produce.

## Handling warp-speed growth

The food processing equipment issue was familiar to Jack Aronson, CEO of Ferndale, Michigan-based Garden Fresh

Gourmet brand foods, producer of a broad line of handcrafted, all-natural salsa, guacamole, tortilla chips, hummus and other ethnic foods.

Starting out as a husband and wife team that began making a fresh blend of artichoke salsa on a small table in the back of their restaurant, Aronson's company has grown from \$4 million in sales in 2004 to over \$100 million this year.

"We're experiencing a lot of growth in ethnic foods," Aronson explains. "So there is an inherent need for those products to be fresh and natural, and to use authentic ingredients. That's one of the reasons why ethnic foods like salsa, guacamole and hummus are healthy."

His passion for creating authentic traditional foods led Aronson to questions about what kind of food processing equipment would enable Garden Fresh to meet skyrocketing demands while still retaining the traditional appearance, taste and texture of the foods that were previously handcrafted in a small kitchen.

In addition to increases in the varieties and volumes of salsas, the company wanted to keep up with the booming popularity of hummus throughout much of the world, because much of Garden Fresh's growth was due to the rapid growth of that product.

At the same time, Garden Fresh was looking to expand its product line to include Lebanese kofta (an Indian dish of seasoned minced meat), cubano peppers, and possibly other ethnic dishes, so flexibility of equipment was also important.

"With an eye to the present and future, we looked at a lot of different types of equipment," Aronson says. "Then a business associate mentioned that Unitherm Food Systems makes cutting-edge line of cooking and chilling equipment that might be ideal for our company."

The line includes equipment that is compact yet surprisingly productive and affordable, such as mini flame grills and

continuous mini spiral ovens and chillers.

Another important thing was Unitherm had Garden Fresh ship its original product to the factory kitchen where they tested the products using different types of cooking and chilling equipment, Aronson says.

"They recommended specific systems as well as parameters such as cook times and temperatures," he says.

Aronson says the equipment he bought brought him up to speed in product volume while also enabling him to retain the



"The North American market for these ethnic foods is so strong that I believe it is going to be similar to that of England, where there has been a high demand for years."

— Mansur Kaiser, Exotic Foodline L.L.C.

quality that is essential to Garden Fresh foods. It also allows him the flexibility to handle his growing assortment of products.

"When I do things on a large scale, for example, such as eggplant for my hummus, it goes through the fire-roaster in about 45 seconds," explains Aronson. "If it is a thick product, like carrots, it also has to be cooked on the inside. So, we put the

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carrots through our fire roaster to get the caramelization that enhances appearance, and then we bake them in the spiral oven, which finishes the cooking process.”

Garden Fresh also uses the new fire roaster to cook peppers that are used in several dishes, including salsas.

“We used to roast peppers on a gas grill, which was a very painstaking method,” Aronson says. “But when we got a large account, it was obvious that we needed a new approach. Now, using a spiral oven, I can now do 1,000 lbs. of vegetables on the spiral oven in the time it took me to do 20 lbs. on a gas oven.”

Unitherm’s flame griller and mini flame griller systems function as standalone cookers or as searing ovens that may be used directly in-line with a continuous oven. Adjustable flame burners allow for the enhancement of flavor, colour, and yield.

The spiral ovens, available in full-size, mini and micro sizes, are recommended for steaming, roasting, broiling and baking, as well as and post pasteurization, and can be coupled with a chiller and loading systems to suit processing needs.

Aronson adds that one of the other benefits of the spiral oven is its compact size, which translates to high volume output in a relatively small space. Because the oven spirals in a vertical direction, the footprint can be as small as 7 ft. x 7 ft. x 5.5 ft.

### Spiraling kabob sales

When Exotic Foodline L.L.C. of Richardson, Texas began operations in 2002, the market for its frozen Middle Eastern, Indian and Pakistani dishes was less than CEO Mansur Kaiser had anticipated.

“It took five or six years before the market for these foods began picking up rapidly, and supermarkets were getting interested in our line,” Kaiser explains. “Now, the North American market for these ethnic foods is so strong that I believe it is going to be similar to that of England, where there has been a high demand for years.”

Kaiser adds that with strong sales in the U.S. now, he looks forward to exporting his line into Canada and the Middle East soon, where his type of ethnic dishes promise to be popular.

Kaiser says Exotic Foodline is also expanding its selection of frozen foods. “Our biggest sellers are the grilled barbecue items, particularly kabobs (marketed under the brand name Colonel Kababz). But we also now offer a selection of snack items such as Tandoori chicken wings and samosas, plus several new entrees such as chicken tikka masala and biryani,” explains Kaiser.

Kaiser feels that now that frozen Indian, Pakistani and Middle Eastern foods have caught on, he needs to address the requirements for mass production, which far exceed the capacity of the existing grilling system that he customized in-house.

“We are now looking at Unitherm cooking systems equipment to help us produce the higher volumes of foods that we need in the future,” says Kaiser.

Kaiser adds that one of the unique attractions of Unitherm equipment is the availability of compact cooking systems that have powerful features, yet small footprints. In addition to saving on space, some systems can also keep capital investments lower.

“If I need from 300-500 pounds per hour of production, I don’t want to have to buy equipment that handles 5,000 pounds per hour,” Kaiser explains. “That would be much more expensive and take up too much space.”

“Also, we offer many barbecue items that can’t be prepared on just any type of equipment. So we tested our product on a Unitherm spiral oven and it came out just like it does on the open fire grill. It was very good quality. So that kind of cooking system could be a good bridge for us to produce higher volumes efficiently,” adds Kaiser.


### Economical expansion

The explosive growth of ethnic and global foods has also created a need for Panache! Creative Cuisine to meet high volume opportunities without requiring major capital outlays.

“We are launching a new line of ‘Street Foodz’ that will span our six core categories (sandwiches, salads, entrees, snacks and sides, breakfast and desserts) with ethnic flavor profiles,” explains Jonathan Stack, president of Baltimore, Maryland-based Panache! Creative Cuisine. “We plan to incorporate Indian, Asian, Mediterranean, European, Cuban, Latin American and other styles of foods into that line, which will require considerably higher volumes.”

Stack says that his company has been growing at a double-digit rate for the past five or six years, partly due to the success of Panache’s kosher operation, Bubbie’s Gourmet. The outlook for continued success with other ethnic-based fares is so bright that the company is planning to open additional operations in the south, Midwest and the west coast.

“We’ve been studying this growth opportunity for several years,” Stack says. “Unitherm has given us valuable help in understanding our choices of affordable equipment that can allow us to produce ready foods in much higher volumes and still retain or even enhance our quality standards. Also, they have some very innovative designs and that allows us to incorporate more equipment in a limited space along with the ability to process different types of food using the same equipment.”

The type of equipment Panache! is considering includes spiral ovens and chillers, as well as flame tunnels, mini flame grills and rice and pasta cookers. These systems provide Panache! with the capability of producing ethnic and world foods that include traditional ingredients and global taste profiles while also featuring authentic textures, markings, colour and highlights. 

*Ed Sullivan is a Hermosa Beach, California-based writer. He has researched and written about high technologies, health care, finance and real estate for over 25 years.*

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# Growing Forward 2 Must Foster Ag Competitiveness

## Are agriculture ministers up to the task?

By Mandy D'Autremont

WHAT ARE THE main barriers holding back your business's competitiveness, productivity and expansion? I'm sure there are a number of issues that come to mind and many of them probably relate to government policies like red tape, taxation and the shortage of qualified labour. You are not alone – agri-business owners across Canada are operating in a landscape where they are directly affected by federal and provincial government policies.

Federal and provincial governments are currently working to finalize Growing Forward 2, the next agriculture policy agreement, which will come into effect on April 1, 2013. In a time when governments are looking for ways to strengthen the Canadian economy creating policies that foster agriculture competitiveness have never been more timely.

The first Growing Forward policy framework, which was introduced in 2008, aimed to enhance the long-term competitiveness of the agriculture sector. Unfortunately, this initiative did not cultivate the new landscape that was



It is clear that Growing Forward 2, needs to be much more effective at improving the landscape for Canadian agri-business owners.

envisioned. A recent Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) survey reveals only 28 per cent of agri-businesses believe the initiative was effective.


It is clear that Growing Forward 2, needs to be much more effective at improving the landscape for Canadian agri-business owners. While we realize there is little the federal and provincial governments can do to solve many of the global market issues facing farmers, it can certainly take steps to improve the regulatory and tax environment in which agri-businesses operate. In order to really make effective changes this time around governments need to listen to producers and develop a solid plan addressing the agriculture sector's competitive challenges. One of the areas producers would like to see addressed is reducing red tape – CFIB's Future of Agriculture survey reveals 72 per cent of Canadian producers believe regulatory reform should be a high priority for government action.



Let's be clear – food safety is a goal all farmers share and a certain amount of regulation is important to protect human health and the environment. However, CFIB farm members believe over-regulation and red tape stifles innovation. Farmers list an alphabet soup of regulations and agencies they have to deal with, including land use restrictions and by-laws, product labelling; traceability and age verification requirements; Canada Revenue Agency; Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA); Canada Border Services Agency; and Statistics Canada.

CFIB's work on the red tape file has resulted in the federal government taking its first step in better managing red tape by announcing the implementation of the 'one-for-one' rule as of April 1, 2012. This rule will require the removal of at least one regulation each time a new one is introduced. We are also pleased CFIA recently launched a Statement of Rights and Service which outlines producers' rights to transparency, fair treatment, and quality service without jeopardizing food safety. Another sign of progress was the announcement of CFIA's Complaints and Appeals Office. While progress has been made, more work is needed. We certainly hope governments continue taking steps to reduce regulatory barriers that hold back competition and deter entry for new entrepreneurs.

CFIB will be submitting a report to the federal and provincial agriculture ministers in the coming weeks to help inform their decisions for Growing Forward 2. CFIB's report will highlight our agri-business members' key priorities, including a focus on regulatory reform, reducing the overall tax burden, increasing market access for Canadian agriculture products, focussing on research, development and innovation, and designing more responsive business risk management programs.

Growing Forward 2 is an opportunity for governments to cultivate a healthy business environment that fosters entrepreneurship, growth, diversification, and continued production of high-quality, homegrown food for consumers. CFIB hopes Growing Forward 2 results in farmer-friendly policies that finally deliver bottom line results to Canadian agri-business owners. Time will tell if agriculture ministers are up to the task. 



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Established in 1971, CFIB is Canada's largest association of small- and medium-sized businesses. CFIB takes direction from more than 109,000 members (including 7,200 agri-business owners) in every sector nationwide, giving independent business a strong and influential voice at all levels of government and helping to grow the economy.

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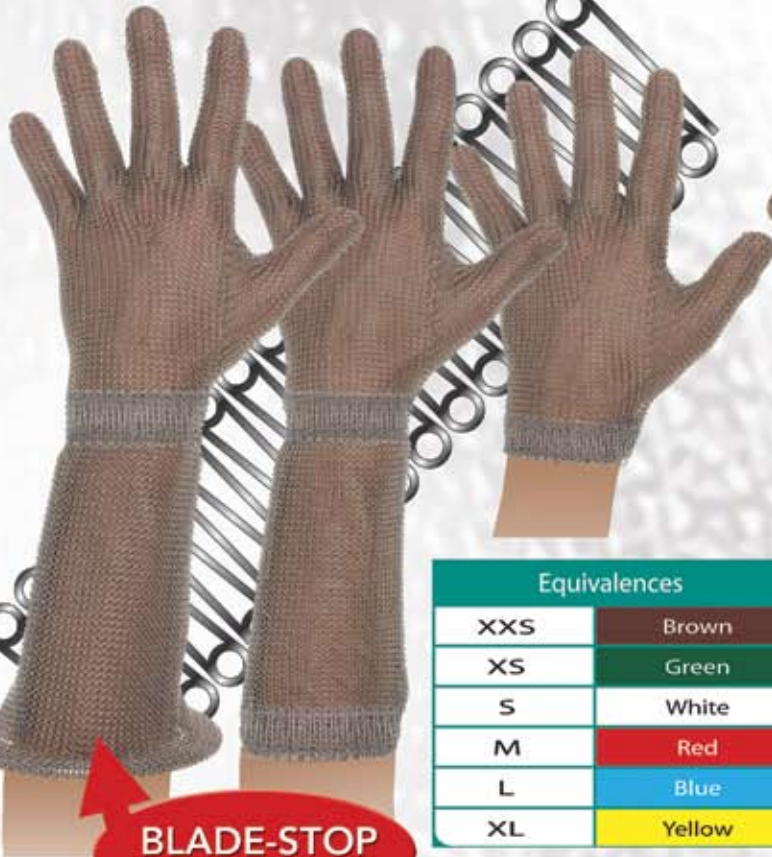
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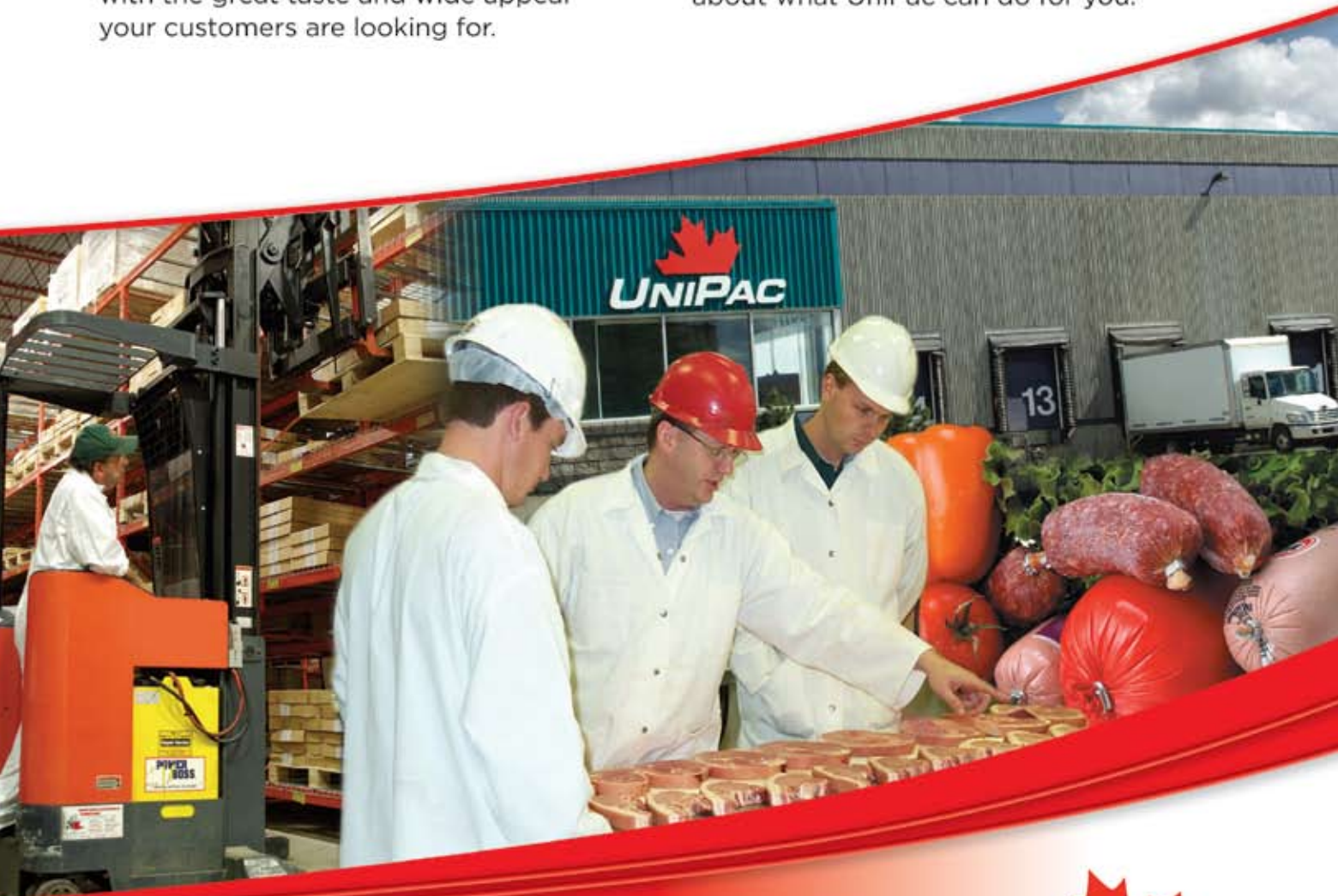
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