

CANADIAN

November/December 2012

Meat Business

The Beef, Pork & Poultry Industry Magazine

Moving Tributes at Hall of Fame Ceremony

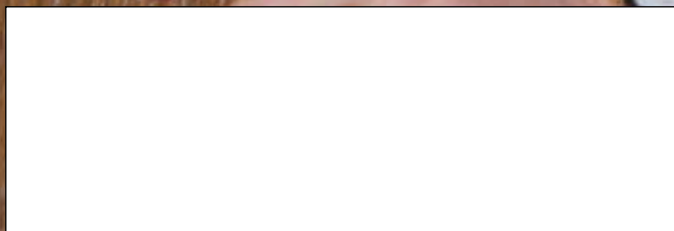
JBS USA Eyes XL Foods Take-Over

Government Passes Safe Food for Canadians Act

Ensuring the success of an important facility

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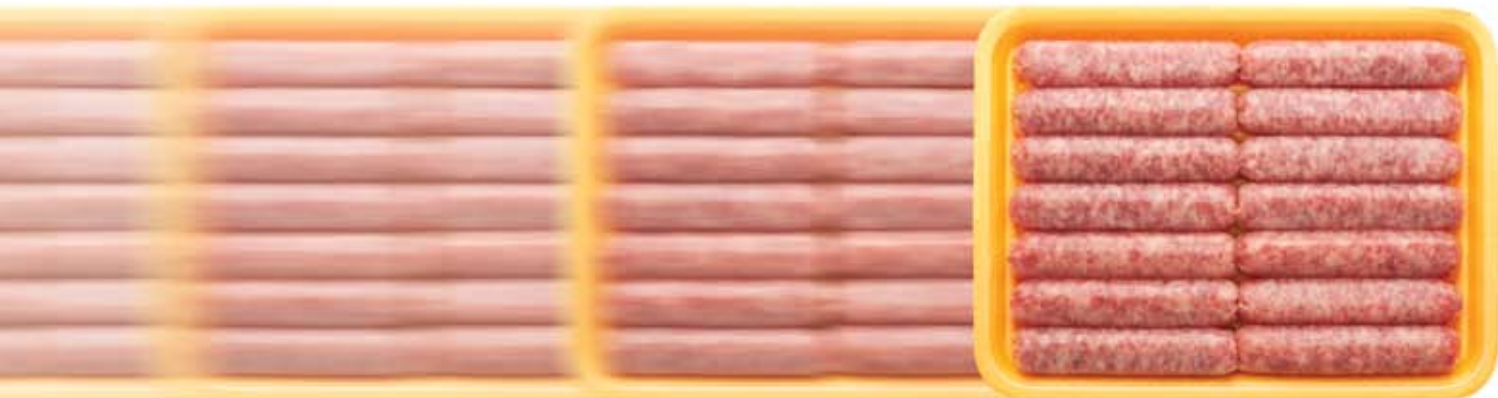


21

In this issue

November/December 2012

- 5 Guest Editorial
by Martin Unrau
- 6 Emotional Ceremony: Meat Industry Hall of Fame 2012
- 8 JBS Moves In
by Alan MacKenzie
- 11 Better Protection: Government passes Safe Food for Canadians Act
- 12 University of Guelph Announces First Food Laureate
- 14 Adding Value with The Mad Butcher
by Andrew Beattie
- 16 Cross Country News
- 18 Assembly Line
- 20 A Natural and Complementary Fit
by Ehsan Sairally
- 21 Ontario's Finest Burgers
- 22 Keeping Contaminants Out of the Processing Plant
by Ed Sullivan
- 24 Industry Roundup
- 26 Hot-Fill, Cook-Seal Pasteurization
by Ed Sullivan
- 29 Safe Livestock Transport
- 30 Events Calendar
- 34 Meat Industry Business Watch
by Mandy D'Autremont



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Cover photo: Meat Industry Hall of Fame



Ensuring the success of an important facility

THE RECENT DECISION by JBS USA to manage the operations of the XL Foods facility at Brooks, Alta., with the option to buy, is a good business decision that reflects confidence in the Canadian cattle and beef industry. This is an important facility for Canadian cattle producers representing nearly half of the beef harvesting capacity in Western Canada. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) welcomes JBS and intends to continue to work closely with them to assure the success of the facility.

Operations seem to be running relatively smoothly at Brooks, following a number of weeks of harvesting and processing experience in collaboration with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), along with JBS's employee training in food safety protocols. Actual throughput is aligned with the current export abilities of the plant. Until the facility is re-approved to export to the U.S., the number of cattle moving through will be limited by the amount of meat that can be shipped to customers. The CCA is hopeful that such re-approval will be achieved soon.

As operations return to normal at the facility, it will be important to ensure that we learn from the recall. Unfortunately some individuals, groups and political parties have used the incident as a platform to advance pre-existing agendas of one sort or another. To build support for questionable positions, some of these commentators have exaggerated risk to consumers and in doing so, have risked creating unjustified negative impressions in the marketplace that CCA and industry partners, have been working to mitigate.

The importance of food safety to the Canadian beef sector cannot be overstated. As a sector we constantly place the safety of our customers as our most important priority. Through the use of objective microbiological data the industry can point to a trend which reflects significant improvement over the last decade. However, public perception and reality are not always aligned; often the source of disconnect is the misinformation promoted by critics with an agenda, and the media.

Indeed, critics have alleged that Canada's food safety system is somehow inferior to other countries, while, in fact, it compares favourably to other developed countries including the U.S. and the European Union. Suggesting otherwise sends an inaccurate signal that somehow imported foods are safer than Canadian food, when the reality is that all food for sale in Canada must be in compliance with rigorous standards regardless of where it is produced. In fact, we believe that the strong CFIA response at Brooks is indicative of the strength of the Canadian system.

If critics truly shared our concern of assuring consumers' safety, their focus would have been on educating consumers that proper cooking temperatures and safe food handling are effective methods of eradicating E. coli. Industry subsequently learned that mechanically tenderized beef cooking temperatures are under review (*Editor's note: see pg. 24*). The CCA is supporting this review and will monitor it closely as is an area where clarification will be an important follow-up action.

The CCA will encourage a comprehensive and objective review of the recall incident. We recently submitted detailed comments on the scope and content of the review to be undertaken by the Expert Advisory Panel of the CFIA at the invitation of the chair of the Ministerial Advisory Board to the CFIA.

We will also continue to play an active role with other industry and public stakeholders aimed at determining whether other policy responses to the XL event are appropriate. In the meantime, we are pleased to have JBS in Canada as a new partner and will work closely with them to produce safe, high quality Canadian beef for consumers in Canada and around the world. **M**

Martin Unrau is the president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association.



Temple Grandin embracing one of her earliest mentors and member of the Meat Industry Hall of Fame Class of 2012, Bill Fielding.



AAMP executive director (retired) and member of the Meat Industry Hall of Fame Class of 2012 Steven Krut with his wife.



Dr. Dave Theno, Senior V.P. (retired) of Jack in the Box accepting his induction into the Meat Industry Hall of Fame Class of 2012.

Photos: Meat Industry Hall of Fame

Emotional Ceremony

Moving tributes to former Allen Brothers president Bobby Hatoff add tears to Meat Industry Hall of Fame's induction of the Class of 2012.

EMOTIONS RAN HIGH at the Meat Industry Hall of Fame's induction ceremony in San Antonio, Texas this year, as former Allen Brothers president Bobby Hatoff, who died suddenly in early October, was among the honorees.

Hatoff was a leader in the consolidation of the National Meat Association (NMA) and the North American Meat Processors Association (NAMP) that created the North American Meat Association (NAMA). Starting in the early 1980s, he led Allen Brothers, which originated in Chicago's historic Union Stockyards 112 years ago and has become a leading supplier of USDA prime beef to the top steakhouses and restaurants in the United States.

Today his son Todd is the company's president and CEO.

Hatoff's untimely death evoked some moving tributes at the ceremony.

"He was too good for this world," said Dr. James Marsden, regent's distinguished professor of Meat Science at Kansas State University, in a reference to the famous observation about Vincent Van Gogh.

"His generosity touched all those who knew him," added Rosemary Mucklow, NAMA executive director emeritus, and a senior trustee and charter member of the hall.

"He would have been very proud to be standing here



Keynote Speaker Dr. Temple Grandin with Todd Hatoff of Allen Bros.



"Butch" Pfaelzer of the Bruss Co. accepting his induction into the Meat Industry Hall of Fame Class of 2012.

accepting this award – I know that,” Todd Hatoff told the audience, noting that his death prompted his father’s friend and former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley to break down in tears.

The ceremony, which was held Oct. 28 in conjunction with NAMA’s Outlook Conference, followed a provocative keynote address by animal handling expert Temple Grandin, who challenged industry members to deal with the aspects of livestock production troubling to the public.

The other distinguished members of the Class of 2012 are:

- Bill Fielding, CEO of HeartBrand Beef and former executive of several leading meat companies, including Cargill, Inc., ConAgra Fresh Meat Companies, and Farmland Industries;
- Ellard Pfaelzer, Sr., founder of Pfaelzer Bros. (posthumous recognition);
- Ellard “Butch” Pfaelzer, Jr., CEO (Retired), of the Bruss Co.;
- Fred Usinger, president of Usinger’s Famous Sausage (posthumous recognition);
- Dave Theno, Ph.D., senior vice-president (retired) of Jack in the Box, and CEO of Gray Dog Partners, Inc.;

Association of Meat Processors;

- Herb Lotman, founder of Keystone Foods (retired); and
- Marvin J. Walter, founder of Dayton Road Development Corporation (posthumous recognition).

Hall president Chuck Jolley announced nominations for the Class of 2013 will be open in January. The induction ceremony will take place in conjunction with the Food Processing Suppliers Association Process Expo in Chicago next November.

Formed in 2008, The Meat Industry Hall of Fame is a repository of meat, poultry and livestock history and a celebration of the industry leaders whose business excellence, scientific prowess and community service have enhanced the legacy of North America’s leading food-industry sector. To date, the hall has inducted 61 distinguished leaders of the industry, drawing from animal agriculture, meat and poultry processing, industry supplier, academia and retail segments. ^M

- staff

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 “He would have been very proud to be standing here accepting this award – I know that.”
 – Todd Hatoff on his father, Bobby Hatoff

- Dave Wood, CEO of Harris Ranch;
- Jim Hodges, executive vice-president of the American Meat Institute, president of the American Meat Institute Foundation;
- Mohammad Koohmaraie, Ph.D., CEO of the meat division of IEH Laboratories and Consulting Group;
- Steve Krut, CEO (Retired), American

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JBS Moves In

The world's largest animal protein company enters Canada with take-over of XL Foods following massive beef recall.

By Alan MacKenzie

THE SLAUGHTER AND processing facility at the centre of the largest beef recall in Canadian history is now under management of the largest animal protein company in the world.

JBS USA, a wholly owned subsidiary of JBS SA, a company that is 30 per cent owned by the Brazil government, reopened the XL Foods Lakeside beef plant in Brooks, Alta. on Monday, Oct. 29. The facility had been shut down since Sept. 27 due to an outbreak of E. coli 0157:H7. JBS USA intends to purchase the facility and XL Foods' other assets for US \$100 million, half in cash and half in company shares.

The management agreement was announced Oct. 17, amid the massive recall of approximately 2,000 meat products across Canada that were traced back to the facility. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 18 illnesses across four provinces have been linked to the recall.

At an Oct. 25 press conference, JBS USA president Bill Rupp told reporters in Brooks that the company wasn't planning on purchasing XL Foods and entering Canada prior to the recall.

"We weren't waiting around for something to happen to get out there and acquire this plant. Literally the call came three weekends ago and we jumped on a plane and met with XL," he said.

XL processed between 30 and 40 per cent of Canada's cattle prior to the recall, according to the Canadian Cattlemen's Association.

Under the agreement, JBS has the option to purchase the Brooks facility, which has a capacity to process 4,000 head of cattle per day, as well as XL's Calgary facility, which has the capacity to process 1,000 head a day; Lakeside Feedyards, with a one-time capacity to feed 70,000 head of cattle; 6,600 acres of farmland adjacent to the feedlot in Brooks; and beef packing plants in Omaha, Nebraska and Nampa, Idaho, with a combined capacity to process 2,200 head of cattle per day.

Within about a month of opening, the plant is running at 75 to 80 per cent of total capacity, and should be at full capacity in "the coming weeks," according to media spokesperson Jerry O'Callaghan. He estimates that 85 to 90 per cent of the plant's employees have returned to work.

"We have been incredibly pleased with the results of our food safety and employee safety training processes and most importantly, getting people back to work. Every

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employee was provided an opportunity to return to work once the plant was re-opened," he said. "Given the unfortunate closure of the plant, several employees sought and apparently obtained alternative employment."

O'Callaghan added that relations with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), which now has 46 inspectors assigned to the facility, have been largely productive so far.

"We continue to work with CFIA to ensure the plant regains access to foreign markets as soon as possible," he said. "We have found CFIA to be tough, but fair. Fortunately, both JBS and CFIA share the same priority – to safeguard consumers through the provision of wholesome, quality Canadian beef – and this mutual priority has governed our relations to date."

Beef produced at the Brooks facility is now labelled JBS Canada, but the signage outside still says XL Foods Lakeside, and will until the acquisition is complete. Under no scenario will JBS USA assume any of XL Foods' debt or liabilities, the company said. XL Foods is continuing to manage its other Canadian and U.S. operations during the option period.

Rupp stated the company intends to complete the acquisition "sooner rather than later" but that the immediate concern is getting the facility up and running at full capacity again.

JBS implemented the food safety process it uses in its U.S. plants in the Brooks facility. The process, Rupp said, includes third-party auditing and creating a "learning environment" for employees. Called the S.A.F.E. (Slaughter Actions for Excellence) Program, the process includes kill floor standard operating procedures audited by video monitoring, carcass contamination audits, and

carcass spacing in the cooler.

"In many respects I think our process goes above and beyond what typically the government would look at to ensure food safety," Rupp stated. "We believe food safety is our responsibility, not the government's responsibility. Certainly the government has a role in the facility, but we don't rely on the government to ensure that we're providing food safe product."

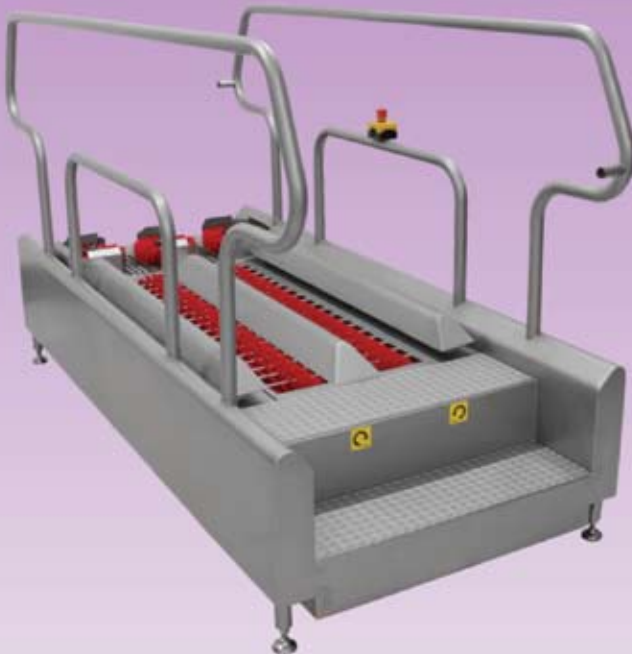


"As a Canadian citizen, I would have preferred to see a Canadian company come in, but at this point that's my only concern."

– Doug Sawyer, Alberta Beef Producers

According to the company's website JBS started as a small operation in Brazil in 1953. In the 1980s the company began significant expansions in Brazil and reached a level of 5,800 head per day by 2002. In 2007 the company entered the U.S. market by acquiring the Swift Foods Company, changing its name to JBS USA. Today its U.S. beef division includes eight bovine slaughterhouses, one lamb slaughterhouse, one processed meat facility, one tannery, 10 leased distribution centers and 12 feedlots,

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In 2008 JBS USA entered Australia with the purchase of Tasman Group, and it is now the largest beef processing and export company in Australia with business relations with over 30 countries.

Canada Beef Inc. and the Canadian Cattlemen's Association welcomed JBS into Canada, but not everyone is thrilled to have an international player buy out such a large part of Canada's beef production industry.

According to the National Farmers Union (NFU), once the acquisition is complete two foreign entities – JBS and Cargill – will own well over 80 per cent of Canada's beef processing.

"JBS already controls more than a third of the U.S. beef market – and would have controlled more if the threat of an antitrust lawsuit had not stopped its plans to

buy out National Beef Packing in 2009," NFU president Terry Boehm said in a recent statement. "JBS has been consolidating its operations into fewer and larger plants in every country where it operates. It has bought up and then closed down feedlots and packing plants which pushes cattle prices down and increases the company's global profits."

"Letting this company take over such a large proportion of Canada's beef processing industry, hot on the heels of allowing our largest grain company, Viterra, to be sold to the Swiss company Glencore, begs the question



"We continue to work with CFIA to ensure the plant regains access to foreign markets as soon as possible."


– Jerry O'Callaghan



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of whether the government of Canada has any interest at all in retaining Canadian control of our food supply," he added.

But Doug Sawyer, chair of the Alberta Beef Producers, said JBS's take-over could have a positive influence on Canada's cattle industry.

"I think for a big multinational company like that to have faith in our industry here is a big confidence booster for all of us," Sawyer said. "As a Canadian citizen, I would have preferred to see a Canadian company come in, but at this point that's my only concern."

Sawyer said that during the recall he was very concerned the plant would shut down permanently. Because of shrinking cow numbers, he noted, the industry was already in need of a morale boost before the shut-down of the facility.

"We've been at risk, in my view, of losing a lot of our infrastructure over this sagging cow herd," he said.

Sawyer added that JBS's international marketing experience could be a great benefit to adding value to Canadian animals worldwide. **M**



Better Protection

Government unanimously passes Safe Food for Canadians Act.

HOUSE OF COMMONS on Nov. 20, in a unanimous vote, passed the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*. The passage of the legislation follows the largest beef recall in Canadian history, but is actually the result of years of extensive consultations, building on recommendations from the Weatherill Report, which followed 2008 listeriosis outbreak at an Ontario Maple Leaf Foods plant that led to the deaths of 23 Canadians.

“Canadian families will be better protected by the passage of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*,” Ritz stated prior to the vote. “The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will have stronger modernized tools to better protect Canadians and enhance industry compliance.”

The act was tabled in the Senate last June. The CFIA said the act will improve food oversight by:

- instituting a more consistent inspection regime across all food commodities;
- implementing tougher penalties for activities that put the health and safety of Canadians at risk;
- giving inspectors an enhanced ability to compel food producers to provide information in a timely manner and standardized format;
- giving the CFIA the authority to require traceability systems for food producers and processors by way of regulation;
- providing better control over imports and exports; and
- strengthening food traceability throughout the value chain.

Together, these measures will help find products faster in recall situations so they can be removed from the shelves quicker and in a more comprehensive way, the CFIA said.

The legislation will also implement tougher fines for activities that put the health and safety of Canadians at risk. Previously, anyone convicted of a serious offence could have been fined up to a maximum of \$250,000.

Under the legislation, penalties could be as high as \$5,000,000, or in the case of the most serious offences, even higher at the court's discretion. New penalties are also being added for recklessly endangering the lives of Canadians through tampering, deceptive practices or hoaxes.

The *Safe Food for Canadians Act* consolidates several pieces of legislation—the *Canadian Agricultural Products Act*, the *Fish Inspection Act*, the *Meat Inspection*

Act, and the food provisions of the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*—which were created at various times over the past decades. According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the industry will now benefit from greater consistency in rules and regulations, which, in turn, will provide consumers with a safer food supply.

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Photo: University of Guelph



Anita Stewart, first Food Laureate.

University of Guelph Announces First Food Laureate

Anita Stewart appointed to role at 'Canada's food university.'

THE UNIVERSITY OF Guelph recently appointed Food Day Canada founder Anita Stewart as its first food laureate. In this two-year position, Stewart will serve as the university's honorary food ambassador, providing advocacy and leadership and promoting initiatives.

The university said it believes this is the first such position in the world.

"This historic appointment is a significant step towards strengthening U of G's reputation as 'Canada's food university,'" University of Guelph president Alastair Summerlee said in a release.

"We are known internationally as the place for food research, teaching and technology, but our contributions to the culinary life of Canada need to be more widely touted. Having a food laureate will allow the university to engage people across the country and strengthen our profile and support," Summerlee added.

Stewart founded Cuisine Canada to promote the growth and study of Canadian food culture. She was the first Canadian to earn a master of arts in gastronomy. She has authored or co-authored 14 books and appears

regularly on CBC Radio. Besides consulting on Ontario's culinary tourism strategy, she has worked frequently with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Canadian Tourism Commission and Ontario Ministry of Tourism.

Stewart created Food Day Canada, a national event that evolved from her World's Longest Barbecue in 2003 intended to support Canadian farmers after that year's BSE crisis.

In 2012, she was appointed to the Order of Canada.

"My goal is to continue to explore how U of G has set our national and international tables with both talent and ingredients. And while I'm at it, I intend to recognize some very real culinary heroes whom all of Canada can celebrate," stated Stewart.

As food laureate, Stewart will promote the university's culinary contributions to Canada by refining the food inventory, developing public awareness campaigns, organizing events and strengthening connections between producers and consumers. [M](#)

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Adding Value with The Mad Butcher

Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop transitioning from processor to value-added retailer.

By Andrew Beattie

WHEN JOHN MCNAUGHTON purchased the Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop in 1995, it was mere months from closing its doors.

Customers for the once robust custom slaughter business were still trickling in, but it was barely enough to keep four employees on full time. McNaughton decided it was time for the butcher to become a processor.

By 2000, the Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop was the main supplier for many locally owned restaurants in Lethbridge and, thanks to a Gold Seal in food safety, a preferred vendor for seniors housing complexes and school lunch programs. A successful wholesale business established the Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop once again as a healthy local business and a steady employer.

In partnership with the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA), the Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop is undergoing another transition from meat and seafood wholesaler to value-added distributor and retailer. The decision to change wasn't made lightly.

"Change is a reality for any business. At one time, custom butchering was a majority of this business. For the past five years, most of our business has been processing for restaurants and other large outlets, as well as a growing number of customers who come directly for cuts they can't get other places," McNaughton said. "We haven't lost that custom butchering element, but we are finding new ways to give customers what they want."

A new opportunity arose when the owner of The Mad Butcher, a successful butcher shop in Innisfail, Alta. was looking to sell his business. McNaughton saw the established The Mad Butcher brand, the retail cases and the equipment as the lever the Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop needed to expand its direct-to-customer offerings.

"The timing was excellent. We have a solid base of customers who come here for meat, from high-quality steak cuts to a specific type of cut like tenderized pork cutlets, but we weren't the destination for customers who wanted a restaurant quality entrée without the preparation. The Mad Butcher adds a wide range of top-quality value-added products such as kebobs, marinated steaks and sausages that will cater to these customers," he said.

In order to increase the retail product offerings, however, McNaughton's team first had to increase the shelf space and upgrade the processing environment capabilities. The Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop more than doubled the retail space in the shop front and increased the automation in the processing area in the back. Even with automation, the shop has steadily increased its staff to keep up with both the processing and retail side. Today, Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop has



Photos: Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency

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17 full-time and part-time staff, including drivers, butchers and support workers.

Supporting the local economy and the local producers is important to McNaughton.

“Whether you buy from us wholesale or retail, you are getting Southern Alberta pork, Coaldale beef, lamb from just outside of town and chicken from the Sunrise Poultry plant next door.



“People want to buy local and we want to sell local. We know the meat we sell. It is high-quality, wholesome meat that is Alberta-raised and processed right here.”

— John McNaughton, Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop

People want to buy local and we want to sell local. We know the meat we sell,” he said. “It is high-quality, wholesome meat that is Alberta-raised and processed right here.”

McNaughton’s commitment to local product is one of the main drivers behind the expansion into retail markets.

“A lot of the high-quality value-added products like marinated meat are coming into Alberta from elsewhere. However, we have some of the best product in the world at our fingertips – all


we need is a little more processing. We are working with local producers to develop more value-added foods that will compete with the non-local products that fill most grocery store shelves.”

In order to expand the market share for local products, the Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop is using part of its ALMA grant to ratchet up marketing efforts. The official launch of The Mad Butcher brand happened in November and McNaughton is already thinking of the future.

“We already have trucks running to Calgary, Medicine Hat, Banff and the rest of Southern Alberta,” he said. “They carry our wholesale meat for independent restaurants and other buyers, but they are going to also carry The Mad Butcher products. We will always have our main processing here, but there may be opportunities for retail shelf space or whole store fronts that will operate as satellite stores. To be a successful brand, we have to get out in front of the customer. That means online, in-print and on the shelves.”

More Alberta meat going into value-added products is part of what made this project so appealing to Gordon Cove, ALMA’s CEO.

“The Lethbridge Meats and Sea Foods Shop is doing something right,” Cove said. “They are a successful wholesaler and well positioned to be a successful retailer. From an industry perspective, we are always happy to see domestic success in taking high-quality Alberta meat and turning it into value-added products. This increases the demand for Alberta meat domestically and encourages more entrepreneurs on both the production and the value-added side.”

“Having more innovation and value-added processing in our meat industry improves our competitiveness domestically and abroad,” he added. 

Andrew Beattie is a communications officer with the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency.

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ALBERTA

CFIA closes Capital Packers over listeria concerns

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) on Nov. 22 suspended the licence of Capital Packers' plant in Edmonton after issuing a recall notice for products that may be contaminated with listeria monocytogenes. No positive samples were found in food products, the agency said, noting it is taking a precautionary action following an environmental finding.

The CFIA is conducting a food safety investigation to determine if products shipped from the plant pose potential risks to consumers, and will immediately alert the public if unsafe food could be in the marketplace.

Capital Packers Inc. will not be able to resume operations until they have fully implemented the necessary corrective actions and the CFIA is fully confident in the plant's capacity to effectively manage food safety risks, the CFIA said.

The following Capital brand and Compliments brand Ham Sausages were recalled: Capital Ham Sausage (300 g) and Compliments Ham Sausage (375 g). These products may have been distributed nationally.

There have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of these products, the agency noted.

In a statement, the company said the recall is not directly related to the suspension, noting listeria was found on an employee sleeve working on a packaging equipment line.

Capital Packers is an 82-year-old family owned meat processing company which employs approximately 100 workers, according to its website. The company produces both ready-to-eat and non-ready-to-eat meats. There are two CFIA inspectors that oversee operations at the establishment, the CFIA said.

Since April 1, 2012, the CFIA issued 11 corrective action requests to Capital Packers, five of which are still open. The company also had its licence temporarily suspended in September 2011 for issues related to ventilation and condensation.

AFAC launches farm animal care leadership initiative

The Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) on Nov. 14 announced its Information Leadership Initiative, a program designed to help Alberta livestock producers manage information and keep up to date on the bottom line in farm animal care today. This includes information on the latest thinking, ideas, developments, best practices, trends and issues, to support the role of producers as front-line managers and decision makers.

AFAC is working with Calgary-based communications company Meristem to design and deliver the project components. The initiative is sponsored by the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA).

The initiative includes a number of components. Among the highlights:

- NewStream Farm Animal Care – A cutting edge digital news source capturing latest developments, progress and ideas in farm animal care. Includes short items as well as links to longer feature articles that showcase innovative thinking, case studies, best practices and success opportunities.
- VeriCare Special Reports – Specially designed to provide technically competent, expert-driven coverage of important issues in farm animal care.
- CareScape Initiative – Using social media to support

awareness of farm animal care progress and issues.

- Livestock Care Conference knowledge transfer – A customized effort to deliver information from this leading conference on farm animal care, which is hosted annually by AFAC and features top speakers from both within Canada and internationally.

An initial phase was delivered out of the 2012 Livestock Care Conference, hosted by AFAC, and a number of the additional components are rolling out shortly.

ONTARIO

New food processing institute opens in Cambridge

The Institute of Food Processing Technology (IFPT) celebrated its grand opening at the Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning in Cambridge, Ont. on Nov. 15. The first-of-its-kind institute, created through a partnership between the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors (AOFPP) and Conestoga, will focus on developing a skilled workforce, tailored to the needs of Ontario's food manufacturing sector.

The opening of IFPT comes at a crucial time for Ontario's food and beverage manufacturing industry, AOFPP noted. A recent study released by the AOFPP from consulting firm MNP LLP predicted that the sector will face serious long-term skilled workforce shortages by 2026.

"We are very pleased to work with our government and industry partners to address the labour market needs of Canada's food processing sector," stated Conestoga president John Tibbits. "The advanced education and training programs that will be delivered through IFPT will provide many opportunities for students seeking successful careers as well as addressing the needs of one of Canada's largest and most important industries."

The institute will be named the Craig Richardson Institute of Food Processing Technology in recognition of contributions made by AOFPP president Craig Richardson.

A strong advocate of the endless possibilities of solid partnerships, Richardson was a major driving force in making the IFPT a reality, the release noted.

"The IFPT is a perfect example of government, academia and industry working together to eliminate obstacles that impede the success of the Canadian economy," noted Richardson. "Together we've created Canada's first and only skilled trades training facility dedicated to the vital food manufacturing sector."

Cargill to outsource its transportation needs at its Guelph facility

Starting in February 2013, Cargill will outsource its transportation needs at its beef processing facility in Guelph to a third party provider.

"Continuing to operate our own transportation business was making it difficult for us to serve our customers as efficiently as we should. It's not part of our core business, which involves producing safe, nutritious, affordable beef products for Canadian consumers and international customers," Cargill Meat Solutions' general manager Matt Gibney stated in a Nov. 21 release.

The move will impact approximately 50 union and salaried employees.

Cargill said it has identified a carrier for its future transportation needs.

The company's beef processing facility in High River, Alta. will remain unaffected by the change, the release said.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Sunnymel poultry plant to opens

Olymel and Groupe Westco officially opened the Sunnymel poultry slaughter and cutting facility in Clair, N.B. on Nov. 30. Approximately 250 people will be involved in operating the processing plant, the companies said.

In March 2008, pork and poultry leader Olymel and New Brunswick poultry company Westco announced their Sunnymel partnership. The \$50 million facility will have a slaughter capacity of 450,000 chickens once optimal production speed is reached, the companies said.

More than 250,000 chickens from Westco, which have been shipped to Quebec for slaughtering since September 2009, will now remain in the province and form a large part of Sunnymel's supply chain, with the remainder coming from other producers in New Brunswick and the Maritimes, a release from the companies said.

"For more than four years, despite many obstacles, we never stopped believing in our dream, and now that dream is becoming a reality," Westco president Thomas Soucy stated. "It is also proof of our know-how and the strengthening of a

healthy poultry industry for New Brunswick and the Maritimes. Our alliance with processor and distributor Olymel will allow New Brunswick chicken farmers to market their products and enjoy a direct line to consumers. I wish all our employees a warm welcome and a long journey of success with Sunnymel."

Olymel Canada has over 10,000 employees at facilities in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. The company exports nearly half its production, mainly to the United States, Japan and Australia.

NOVA SCOTIA

Eden Valley Poultry opens processing plant in Berwick

Eden Valley Poultry on Oct. 5 opened its new \$40 million poultry processing facility in Berwick, N.S. The plant, a 50/50 joint venture between Maple Lodge Holding Corporation and Nova Scotia and PEI poultry farmers through their holding company, United Poultry Producers Inc., was first announced in April 2011.

Eden Valley Poultry will process approximately 40 million kilograms of chicken and turkey annually representing more than seventy per cent of the total production in Nova Scotia and P.E.I., the company said. The plant will employ over 180 production and administration staff.

The company noted that Nova Scotia has been without a poultry processing plant since 2007, when Maple Leaf Foods closed a facility in Canard.

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In operation, the product will flow between the one-inch diameter tube magnets that are spaced on standard two-inch tube centers and held rigidly in place.

These all-stainless steel units are installed by simply placing the grate in the hopper with the ends of the magnetic tubes or tie bars resting against the sides.

The grates are available in Ceramic, Rare Earth and Xtreme Rare Earth magnet strengths, enabling professionals in diverse industries to choose the ideal level of protection for their specific application. Ceramic powered separators are suitable for removing medium to large tramp metal such as bolts, nuts and hand tools. Rare Earth powered separators are designed to remove small ferrous contaminants such as pins, staples and clips. Separators powered by Xtreme Rare Earth magnet material are best at removing weakly magnetic fine ferrous contamination.

These powerful magnets feature a neat, uniform glass bead surface finish. Xtreme Rare Earth ProGrade Square, Rectangular and Round Grate models feature sanitary construction. Rare Earth and Xtreme Rare Earth designs are suitable for temperatures up to 150 F.

eriez.com

New scanning technology offers option in safe food processing battle

A new technology being introduced into the Canadian food processing industry may offer help in the battle to provide less cross contamination of harmful bacteria. Called Bactiscan, it is a portable light source that can be used to scan food processing equipment surfaces and show instantly areas where cleaning was not effective. Once unclean locations are identified, thorough analysis and control procedures can be implemented and the areas cleaned properly.

“The technology uses light in various wavebands which cause unclean surfaces to fluoresce somewhat,” Easytesters spokesperson Bob Holland said in a release. “Viewed in a near dark environment, it’s like the unclean area glows. It’s very easy to see where the cleaning has not been effective. Digital photographs can be used to document and compare the unclean surface before proper treatment and after.”

The technology has been supported by two independent studies in the U.K. Recently, the University of Alberta’s Agri-Food Discovery Place (AFDP) in Edmonton has also been contracted to examine the technology. The AFDP project will examine specific known substances on stainless steel surfaces to see how they appear under the Bactiscan light bands.

The project is taking place within the Meat Safety and Processing Research Unit (MSPRU) of AFDP. The MSPRU is designated a “containment level 2” meat processing pilot plant that provides industry, academia and government with the ability to carry out industry driven applied food safety and quality research. Containment level 2 status allows MSPRU to work with pathogens such as E. coli, salmonella and listeria.

The Bactiscan technology is easy to adopt by industry, said Holland. There is minimal specific training required to operate the system. It can either be leased on an annual basis, or inspection services contracted by the hour. A similar product, Bactiscope, used to scan the insides of pipes up to 20 meters, is also being marketed by Easytesters.

Easytesters is an international technology company with several food processing equipment testing products on the market. The Canadian operations are headquartered in Calgary, Alta.

easytesters.ca

Cryopak releases new PenPak

Cryopak, a leader in temperature controlled package design and manufacturing, has released its new personnel carrier, the PenPak.

“Cryopak’s new PenPak is designed to help end users transport temperature controlled items for personal use, maintaining refrigeration for up to a few hours. This allows them to bring medication home from a pharmacy or keep a self-injectable prescription handy while away from home while maintaining drug efficacy,” said technical services manager Anthony Alleva.

The standard design has a simple snap closure mechanism, and comes with foam inserts for universal cushioning of the product. The carrier can be custom molded to fit specific payload requirements. The refrigerant cavity can be filled with any of Cryopak’s standard phase change materials to maintain temperatures ranging from -20 degrees C to +27 degrees C.

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

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A Natural and Complementary Fit

With a shared focus on a natural approach to food production, the concepts of halal and organic actually complement each other.

By Ehsan Sairally

WE ARE WITNESSING dramatic changes and adjustments throughout the food industry. An important question that comes to mind is: What are the driving forces that are pushing for the changes in our food delivery system?

There are several factors that are indeed shaping the new wave of consumer demand. Firstly, the economic landscape is changing. Secondly, the link between food and health issue is becoming a primary concern to consumers. Thirdly, demographic changes are playing a dominant factor in responding to consumer food preferences.

Halal foods are not just a niche market for traditional halal consumers. They represent opportunities to tap into the mainstream or crossover market. Simply put, halal foods are natural foods produced in a natural way.

As organic food is gaining momentum, the availability of halal food is also growing worldwide. The two actually complement each other, since they both focus on a natural approach to food production. First of all, the term halal needs to be explained in order to demystify the concept of what is halal food are all about. "Halal" is an Arabic word from the meaning allowed and permissible. The opposite word is "haram", meaning prohibited to consume. The basic ingredient foods that are prohibited are as follows:

- alcohol/drugs/intoxicants;
- blood (flowing or congealed);
- carnivorous animals or birds of prey;
- dead animals (birds that died);
- swine and its by-products;
- animals slaughtered as sacrifice.

Actually halal is very straight forward concept to understand and implement into mainstream food production systems without compromising any regulatory procedures.

Halal is 1,400 years old, and the concept is very much applicable in today's high tech food production system. Hence, anything that is not haram, but healthy and wholesome, is in fact halal compliant.

Mainstream, consumers in general are on the lookout for natural, healthy, nutritious foods that are beneficial

to all, young and old. Organic and natural food are very much in compliance with halal food production guidelines and safety protocols.

What are the halal opportunities? There are two answers to this. First, there are the traditional halal consumers, i.e. the dedicated niche market. Second, there is the mainstream market which represents major crossover opportunities. Halal food consumers are of diverse background from all the continents.

Information halal demographics in Canada and worldwide:

- there are 1.6 billion halal consumers worldwide;
- in North America there are close to 9 million;
- Canada is approaching the 1 million mark for halal consumers;




As organic food is gaining momentum, the availability of halal food is also growing worldwide.

- 10 per cent of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is made up of halal consumers
- Major Canadian metropolitan halal markets: Toronto (GTA), Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Halifax.

Halal and organic food sectors have similar natural approaches to food production. Hence the opportunities that co-exist between halal and organic are tremendous. Each has its own traditional markets but between the two there are also major crossover opportunities into mainstream markets. The key to success is certification. Organic production may already be halal compliant but just need to be certified. The opposite also applies.

The benefits of halal and organic approaches:

- consumer confidence;
- informed customers;
- value added products;
- growing community worldwide;
- expand market base;
- applicable concept; and
- existing customers.

The key for a successful halal program is information and certification. This is how Halal Product Development Services (HPDS) sees it. HPDS is a 100 per cent Canadian company that can serve all your Halal Certification needs. 

Ehsan Sairally is the president of Halal Product Development Services (HPDS). For more information, contact Mr. Sairally at (416) 568-1885, or visit www.halalproductservices.com.



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The Best of Ontario

Ontario's Finest Burgers revealed at OIMP's Meating Place conference.

THE ONTARIO INDEPENDENT Meat Processors Association (OIMP) recently announced the winners of this year's Ontario Finest Meat Competition – Search for the Ultimate Burger.

OIMP members were invited to submit their best burgers for a chance to win in either the fresh or frozen category for each protein then against the other proteins for the "ultimate" title. The first of its kind for the OIMP, the burger competition saw 47 burger entries from 12 members with the winners announced at an awards gala as part of OIMP's annual conference, called the Meating Place, on Nov. 3.

"This competition is about showcasing the best meat and poultry Ontario has to offer and supports our Ontario producers and processors," OIMP executive director Laurie Nicol said.

Judging was based on taste and texture, plus yield for the frozen burgers, and consumer appeal for the fresh burgers. Ontario's finest burgers are as follows:


Fresh category:

- 2012 Ontario Finest Pork Burger – Chi Chi Chipotle Burger Florence Meats
- 2012 Ontario Finest Beef Burger – Back Country Bourbon Burger Vik's Country Meats
- 2012 Ontario's Ultimate Burger – Fresh – Back Country Bourbon Beef Burger Vik's Country Meats, Grimsby

Frozen category:

- 2012 Ontario Finest Pork Burger – Metzger's Zesty Pork Burger Metzger Meat Products
- 2012 Ontario Finest Beef Burger – Metzger's Prime Beef Burger Metzger Meat Products
- 2012 Ontario Finest Lamb Burger – Italian Stallion Lamb Burger Florence Meats
- 2012 Ontario Finest Turkey Burger – Hayter's Farm Garlic Turkey Burger Hayter's Farm
- 2012 Ontario Finest Chicken Burger – Roasted Red Pepper and Garlic with Feta Peter's Food Shop
- 2012 Ontario's Ultimate Burger – Frozen – Italian Stallion Lamb Burger Florence Meats, Oakville

Supporters of the competition include Ontario Cattlemen's Association, Ontario Veal Association, Turkey Farmers of Ontario, and Foodland Ontario.

OIMP is the representative voice of the independent meat and poultry processor in Ontario, working closely with agricultural and commodity organizations and various levels of government for over 30 years. The association's membership includes meat and poultry processors, retailers and wholesalers; industry suppliers, and not-for-profit organizations that support OIMP's objectives. 

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What is needed is a fail-safe system that provides assurance that containers are fully sanitized on all sides before they enter high risk or high-care areas of food processing plants.

Keeping Contaminants Out of the Processing Plant

Do you know where your containers have been?

By Ed Sullivan

THE USE OF container sanitizing equipment ensures that pathogens and other contaminants won't get into the processing plant, where it can taint finished food products, tarnish brand names and even instigate recalls and litigation.

No food processor would knowingly permit pathogens or other contaminants to enter the processing plant. Yet, when they allow packages containing outsourced food ingredients to be received and go into the plant without being sanitized, they take a risk that amounts to the same thing.

The end result could be finished food products that were exposed to pathogens or other contaminants, potentially causing consumers harm, product recalls and ensuing consequences such as tainted brand names, and even costly litigation.

"The packaging that contain ingredients for foods such as ready meals might have been exposed to any number of unwanted substances," says Mark Corser, CEO of CM Process Solutions, a California-based international supplier of hygiene equipment including washing and sanitizing equipment for the food processing and other industries. "This is particularly the case among U.S. manufacturers of ready meals and fresh foods such as sandwiches and salads, or heat-and-eat items such as fresh (unfrozen) pizza."

The problem that Corser sees is that when ingredients such

as cheese, dough, shrimp or other outsourced ingredients are shipped with their outer packaging, whether buckets, bags or cans, that packaging is exposed to dirt, chemicals, and other contaminants that are present in delivery trucks or other forms of transportation.

Corser adds that this potential problem exists throughout the U.S., where the sanitizing of containers coming into food processing plants is not a common procedure. This is ironic, he says, because most plants employ sophisticated washing and sanitizing equipment to ensure that pathogens and other contaminants do not travel via containers from the back of the plant to the food preparation areas.

For example, many North American plants have sophisticated, automated washing systems that clean the buckets, trays and other vessels that are used to convey foods throughout the cooking and/or finishing processes. However, when it comes to containers that are delivered to the processor's plant, a thorough sanitizing operation is often missing.

"This is strangely a North American problem," says Corser. "I say that because in the U.S. many food processors are using highly advanced technologies throughout their plants, but when it comes to sanitizing containers as they come to the plant, that is often overlooked."

Farzad Shahsavarani, vice-president of operations for Fresh Food Solutions at Flying Food Group (FFG), agrees.

"There is not always a clear understanding when we are talking about the areas of low risk and high-risk or high-care areas in the food processing plant," he says. "Keeping foods free of contaminants requires a lot more than just walls and doors and traffic flow. Some processors don't realize that contaminated containers entering the plant are exposing their products to environmental impurities and possible pathogens."

FFG serves over 300,000 fresh, quality meals and snacks daily to customers in the airline catering, grocery, food service and specialty markets. Customers include over 70 premier airlines – primarily international carriers – and leading food retailers, including Starbucks.

Shahsavarani says that in Europe, sanitizing of food containers arriving from outside sources is routine.

"The food processing industry there is largely self-policing about this," he says. "However, in the U.S., that is not a routine practice. But in the future, it is very likely that higher global safety standards like Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) will come into play. This would include sanitation of food packaging."

Shahsavarani adds that what is needed is a fail-safe system that provides assurance that containers are fully sanitized on all sides before they enter high-risk or high-care areas of the processing plants. Typically, he thinks this would be an automated system, such as a conveyor belt and spray tunnel that sanitizes packages of all types with a uniform concentration of sanitizing solution as they travel from low-risk to high-risk or high-care areas.

Automated sanitizing

The type of sanitizing equipment to which Shahsavarani refers is often known as a "barrier tunnel" or "sanitizing tunnel" in Europe. The tunnel is a conveyor belt-driven system that sprays a mixture of

water and a sanitizing agent to disinfect the containers before they are sent into the food processing plant and opened. Sanitizing sprays are normally composed of a mixture of water and ½-1 per cent detergent formula. Although most detergents kill bacteria and other biologicals on contact, a formula is available to protect containers that are likely to be stored for hours or even days.


A variety of sanitizing tunnel sizes and configurations are available, including design-built customized models. A good example of a typical system is the Econosan distributed by CM Process Solutions.

The Econosan conveys the container through a tunnel where a solution of sanitizing detergent is misted onto the items from top, bottom and sides. The speed of transit through the tunnel can be set and easily adjusted to operate at between three and twelve feet per minute, according to the user's requirements.

The water used in the process is recycled, and detergent is continually topped off after the water is recycled.

"The system is economical and easy to use," says Corser. "Although the Econosan is an entry-level system, it is a heavy-duty performer and requires very little maintenance or other service."

Corser explains that price is sometimes a consideration with food processors, although American companies have a tendency to invest capital where reasonable returns are expected.

"Although this kind of equipment doesn't contribute directly to profits, it certainly qualifies as a good insurance policy against potential recalls for any container-borne pathogens or other contaminants from getting into finished food products. Also, the equipment will last for 20 years, so if you amortize the cost over that period, it will hardly be noticeable." 

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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Maple Leaf buys Puratone for \$42M

On Nov. 1, Maple Leaf Foods announced it entered into a “definitive agreement” to acquire the Puratone Corporation, a leading Manitoba hog production company, for approximately \$42 million including livestock, facilities and interests in some joint ventures.

With this acquisition, Maple Leaf will have approximately 30 per cent of its hog supply in Brandon and produce approximately 1.2 million hogs annually.

“This acquisition will ensure a consistent supply of hogs to our processing facility in Brandon, which is an integral supplier to our value added prepared meats and pork business,” Maple Leaf president and CEO Michael H. McCain said in a release. “We look forward to welcoming Puratone employees to Maple Leaf and benefiting from their experience and strong commitment to best practices.”

Puratone operates about 50 barns in Manitoba in proximity to Maple Leaf’s Brandon plant and produces approximately 500,000 hogs annually. The company also operates three feed mills that provide a dedicated high quality supply to support their hog production operations.

“The agreement reached with Maple Leaf represents a tremendously positive outcome and we are very pleased with the stability it provides our stakeholders, particularly our employees,” stated Puratone president Ray Hildebrand.

Maple Leaf said it will integrate both operations and that no immediate changes are anticipated.

“This investment reflects our ongoing commitment to securing a strong future for our value added pork operations

in Manitoba, which are a vital part of the province’s economy,” McCain stated. “We will continue to manage our operations with a strong commitment to best practices and environmental sustainability.”

The transaction is expected to close by Dec. 1, subject to court and regulatory approvals.

Health Canada reviewing process of mechanically tenderizing beef

Health Canada recently announced it started a scientific review of the safe handling and cooking of beef products that are mechanically tenderized.

Mechanically tenderizing meat is a very common practice and has been used by suppliers, restaurants and retailers for many years to improve the tenderness and flavour of cooked beef, the agency noted.

However, when steaks and beef cuts are mechanically tenderized, the agency said, there is a potential for bacteria to spread from the surface into the centre of the meat. As a result, there may be an increased chance that bacteria like E. coli O157:H7 are not fully eliminated when these beef products are cooked “rare.”

The review will look at the likelihood that the tenderizing process can spread bacteria, along with additional steps and best practices that can be applied by industry to prevent the spread of bacteria.

The review will also evaluate the effectiveness of measures a consumer can take, including whether an internal temperature lower than 71 degrees Celsius (160 degrees Fahrenheit) would be as effective at reducing the risk from these products.

Health Canada also said it is actively working with retailers and the food industry to support its efforts to identify mechanically tenderized beef for consumers through labels, signage or other means. The industry expects to start putting these measures in place over the next two to three weeks. In the meantime, should consumers be uncertain if a product has been mechanically tenderized, they are encouraged to ask the food seller or food service provider.

Traceability systems needed to increase trust in food safety

A new report from the Conference Board of Canada says that without a robust food traceability system, public safety and trust in our food supply are at risk.

The report, titled *Forging Stronger Links: Traceability and the Canadian Food Supply Chain*, analyzes food traceability system issues and identifies potential ways to improve traceability performance in Canada.

The publication recommends that every firm in the food supply chain needs to be able to accurately trace its products or ingredients one step forward and one step back in the supply chain.

“Food traceability is a vital part of the food risk management system: it underpins Canadians’ trust in food safety, quality, and healthiness,” principal research associate Alison Howard said in a release. “The ability to trace a product’s journey from point of sale back to its origin is a vital part of today’s food risk management system.”

The report says that to be fully effective traceability systems must all link together so that the entire food supply chain is covered. It says the one-step-forward and one-step-back approach to traceability can be universally implemented, but, at the same time, lessens the financial burden borne by companies.

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Some of the actions the report highlights that governments, industry, and others could take to strengthen traceability's role in the food supply chain include:

- mandate minimum traceability requirements so that suppliers can trace their products and ingredients one step forward and one step back;
- make traceability systems universal and comprehensive;
- develop traceability systems to be compatible, so that information about food products can be communicated quickly and easily throughout the supply chain and with government authorities in the event of a safety problem;
- make premises identification mandatory for poultry and livestock producers;
- require detailed information to handle emergencies quickly;
- help to fund firm's start-up costs and encourage flexible, cost-effective systems;
- promote the benefits of participation in traceability systems to all players in the food supply chain; and
- use continuous evaluation to improve system performance.

The report is one of 20 being prepared by the Conference Board's Centre for Food in Canada. The principal goal of the centre is to engage stakeholders from business, government, academia, associations, and communities in creating a Canadian Food Strategy – one that will meet the country's need for a coordinated, long-term strategy on healthy and safe food, consumer security, industry viability, and sustainability.

To view the report, visit www.conferenceboard.ca.

Government makes changes on regulating food additives

Minister of Health Leona Aglukkaq in November announced changes to Health Canada's 50-year-old rules for regulating food additives, allowing the agency to speed up authorizations.

"Canada's system for regulating food additives was set-up over 50 years ago," Aglukkaq said in a release. "What worked in the 1950s and '60s simply can't keep up with the needs and expectations of Canadians today."

According to the release, it previously took 12 to 18 months for a new additive that could reduce the risk of a potential serious food-borne illness outbreak to clear the regulatory approval process and become legal.

Health Canada said the new system will allow the agency to act faster to authorize food additives that have health and safety benefits, or to respond to health and safety concerns about an existing additive. The new process is several steps shorter and the steps are significantly faster because the regulations no longer need to be changed every time a new food additive is approved.

The agency noted the new system will not change "the thorough safety assessment that is conducted by Health Canada scientists for all food additives."

Health Canada will maintain publicly available lists of approved additives on its

website. Any listed additives are considered legal for use in Canada, and any limits on its use will be clearly spelled out. Please visit the Health Canada website for the additive lists.

In a fact sheet, the agency noted the following as an example of how the new system could improve food safety:

C. maltaromaticum is a food additive used in certain processed meat and poultry products to help control the growth of harmful bacteria such as listeria monocytogenes. Health Canada determined that this additive could be safely used in December 2007, but it took another 36 months for the required regulatory changes and approvals to enable industry to market this product.

Food industry CFOs most pessimistic about Canada's economy in 2013

According to a new survey, Canadian food, beverage and agribusiness CFOs are slightly more pessimistic about their view of the Canadian economy than their counterparts in other industries.

Overall, CFOs are positive on the state of the national economy and their own industries, despite views of the global economy being less optimistic, according to GE Capital's Canadian Mid-Market CFO Survey, which was released Nov. 20. The industries surveyed included energy; food, beverage and agribusiness; metals and mining; retail; and transportation. The retail sector was deemed most positive, while metals and mining was the least positive.

Food and beverage CFOs are the most likely to expect a decline in growth and profits, the report said. Overall the CFOs noted European fiscal conditions, the U.S. economy and oil prices as their main concerns.

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Hot-Fill, Cook-Seal Pasteurization

A growing trend among processors of ready meal trays and pouches involves hot-filling and pasteurizing in the package to extend shelf life and reduce thermal processing time.

By Ed Sullivan

THE INCREASING USE of pasteurization is improving the safety of many ready-to-eat food (RTE) products. This includes the adoption of a variety of pasteurization technologies and methods, both pre- and post-packaging.

Although pasteurization is widely considered a highly effective means of removing pathogens, food processors should recognize that introducing any new step to their processes, including new pasteurization techniques, could significantly alter process efficiency.

Unless the pasteurization process is fully integrated into the production stream – from in-feed to discharge – it can adversely affect other process outcomes, including eating quality, taste, appearance and shelf life.

Yet, in efforts to follow Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) guidelines or enhance their own food safety protocols, some RTE producers are installing

pasteurizing equipment and procedures that are not integrated with their overall processes, or use pasteurization technologies that can adversely affect the quality of their finished products.

Hot-fill vs. chill and reheat

Traditionally, RTE foods are pre-cooked and then chilled. In the case of dinners like lasagna, this includes each item in the meal – the meat, sauce, pasta, and cheese. Each one of those items is prepared separately, chilled, and then assembled into meals.

If extended shelf life is desired, the RTE manufacturer will process the product through an autoclave or some other type of post-packaging pasteurization system.

“If you have already cooked the product and then chill and assemble it, most post-packaging pasteurizing systems involve reheating the product and then chilling it again,” explains Adam Cowherd, sales



manager of food processing equipment manufacturer Unitherm Food Systems. “So, essentially, you’re cooking it twice and chilling it twice. By subjecting the product to additional thermal energy, you may increase nutritional loss, and compromise finished eating quality.”

Today, suppliers of dinners like lasagna or mac-n-cheese are pasteurizing in the tray to achieve better shelf life and finished product appearance. By pasteurizing in the tray, the customer is able to market a “top-baked” product. These products have a greater perceived value to the consumer because, after being re-heated in a microwave, they



“By hot filling, the time required to pasteurize is reduced significantly.”

– Adam Cowherd, Unitherm Food Systems

appear and taste like a truly oven-baked product. This is achieved through the hot-fill, cook-seal pasteurization process. In short, the photograph on the package is representative of the finish product coming out of the microwave.

Cowherd explains that for those reasons many RTE processors are looking at pasteurization systems that do not cook and chill twice, but rather hot-fill, cook once and seal, and then chill once. This concept applies to food items in trays or pouches such as ready meals, eggs, soups, and sauces.

“By hot filling, the time required to pasteurize is reduced significantly,” he says. “Two or three minutes would suffice. Because the product is already hot, only the very minimal loss of heat during the hot-fill process needs to be recovered for pasteurization. You simply bring the temperature back up and hold for one to three minutes. From

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that point, it can be chilled.”

One of the key benefits of the hot-fill approach is the reduction of pasteurization time. Pasteurization equipment is sized largely by the amount of time required to pasteurize the product. The strategy of the hot-fill and seal approach is to reduce pasteurization time and the footprint of the equipment.

Water-based hot-fill solutions

One of the largest egg product suppliers in the world was looking for an optimum process for pasteurizing liquid eggs packaged in pouches for food services. Consumers included restaurants, hotels and institutions such as schools.

The pasteurization process would require heating and chilling the liquid eggs successfully, and also ensuring that the mechanical handling of the product maintains the integrity of the pouch and would protect the eating quality of the eggs when served.

The solution, developed by Unitherm, was to hot-fill the liquid eggs into a pouch, then to transfer the pouches to a hot water bath where they are pasteurized while cooked, and then transferred inline to a water chill system.

“The chilling required a combination of drenching and water bath, because the eggs float in the pouch,” explains Cowherd. “The end result is a product that is extremely shelf-stable. The final product, sold to food services is re-heated by microwave or in a boiling pot of water. The bag is then opened and scrambled into the serving pan. The same process will work for sauces, soups, and other pouched meals.”

Air-based hot-fill solutions

A different approach was needed for a high-volume processor of baby food in trays. The challenge in this case was to pasteurize hot-filled trays with no water or humidity in the process.

Unitherm developed a unique “spiral” pasteurization system capable of advanced data tracking software to guarantee pasteurization in real time. Because there were multiple safety measures in place, including multiple checkpoints, the pasteurization solution required continuous monitoring of air temperatures and residence time. A data tracking system was also required to monitor

any variance in temperature, which could result in a failure to pasteurize the products. Volume requirements required continuous production for approximately 10 hours a day, six days a week.

The complexity of the project was heightened by a critical headspace requirement for the packaging. There could be no deformation of the trays during the pasteurization process.

“This was a somewhat unique pasteurizing approach that was developed specifically for the processor,” says Cowherd. “Water and steam, as heat transfer mediums, are considered to be more efficient and stable than air. In the case of this particular baby food item, the product



“This was a somewhat unique pasteurizing approach that was developed specifically for the processor.”

– Adam Cowherd, Unitherm Food Systems

restricted the thermal energy medium to only the use of dry heat. Also, the processor required a very fine margin of tolerance and air temperature fluctuation, which was critical for the validation of their protocol. So, the heat transfer mechanism within the spiral oven and temperature monitoring and tracking system had to prove the equipment could meet the pasteurization requirement on a constant basis, which it did.”

Most hot-fill cook-seal applications are product specific and are designed around very strict protocols within the FSIS or CFIA guidelines. Unitherm Food Systems specializes in a number of different thermal processes for efficient heat transfer and lethality for the extension of product shelf life and optimization of product quality. **M**

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.



Safe Livestock Transport

‘Livestock ER’ trailers set for the Alberta roadways.

ALBERTA FARM ANIMAL CARE (AFAC) recently unveiled a fleet of state-of-the-art livestock emergency handling equipment trailers, as well as a new training course under development to support qualified workers operating and using these “livestock ER” trailers.

Both developments stemmed from discussions initiated by the Alberta Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Steering Committee, which was inspired by similar livestock handling trailers developed in Red Deer County and Ponoka, Alta.

A sub-committee including representatives from the Alberta Equestrian Federation, the Alberta Beef Producers, Livestock Identification Services, RCMP, Alberta Farm Animal Care (AFAC) and Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development created the initial project plan. Funding support was provided through the federal/provincial/territorial Growing Forward initiative.

“Transport is a critical component of livestock production and these new trailers and the accompanying training program will help ensure safe and humane handling of livestock when issues or emergency situations arise,” stated Member of Parliament Blaine Calkins.

“The health and welfare of animals is always one of our top priorities,” added Verlyn Olson, Minister of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. “These new resources will strengthen

our capacity to respond to accidents or challenges involving livestock and will support the safety and well-being of both people and animals on our farms and roadways.”

Several counties / municipalities and one non-profit organization were chosen as trailer sites, based on animal movement volumes and strategic coordination plans. These include MD of Willowcreek – Claresholm; Cypress County – Medicine Hat; Westlock County – Westlock; Vermilion River County – Vermilion; and the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), which will deploy an Alberta-wide roaming unit.

The Livestock Handling Equipment Trailer Training Course will be delivered by Lakeland College.

“As livestock producers, we know that livestock care doesn’t end when animals leave the farm,” said Hehli. “Safe transport is a top priority and an area where we have long worked with the transportation industry, those involved in emergency response, and different levels of government, to continually improve approaches and resources. This type of teamwork is absolutely essential to livestock care progress. This is a very hands-on project that will benefit the entire livestock industry in Alberta.”

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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.



Photo: NAMA

Industry conferences to be co-located during 2013 Process Expo

The North American Meat Association (NAMA) announced it will co-locate its fall conference next year with the Meat Import Council of America's (MICA) conference at the Food Processing Suppliers Association (FPSA)'s Process Expo in Chicago, Illinois, from Nov. 3 to 6, 2013.

NAMA and FPSA signed an agreement to support each other's events, and FPSA will have a presence at the NAMA MeatExop'13 in Las Vegas, Feb. 10 to 13, 2013.

As the recognized leader in meat industry food safety education, NAMA will assist in developing the meat education programming at PROCESS EXPO in a dedicated theater on the show floor at McCormick Place. NAMA's Outlook Conference general sessions and forums will take place in the theater.

Other NAMA events will take place at The Drake Hotel, which FPSA has designated the meat industry headquarters hotel. MICA will hold its annual conference concurrently at the hotel.

NAMA is one of the larger associations in the global meat trade, with about 700 member companies in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and other countries. NAMA provides its members regulatory guidance, workplace issues support, legislative analysis, media assistance, and great educational opportunities.

"We are extremely excited about working with NAMA and bringing the Outlook Conference to Process Expo," FPSA president and CEO David Seckman said in a release. "The hundreds of equipment manufacturers and service providers for the meat industry on our show floor are an excellent complement to the world class educational program of NAMA's Outlook Conference. By bringing these two important events together, we are confident that attendees to both will benefit greatly."

Process Expo is a biennial trade show event, highlighting manufacturing solutions for the global food and beverage industry. It attracts more than 500 companies that exhibit their processing and packaging equipment and services to over 12,000 professional attendees from companies across the entire spectrum of the horizontal food and beverage industry.

For more information, visit www.myprocessexpo.com.

IPPE will host half-day conference on poultry care and handling

As part of the 2013 International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE) education schedule, the American Meat Institute (AMI) and the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPEA) will host a new conference for poultry processors titled Animal Care and Handling – Focus on Poultry on Monday, Jan. 28.

Taught by leading experts on poultry care and handling, the program will provide poultry processors with in-depth instruction on topics such as stunning systems for chickens and turkeys; factors affecting chicken and turkey quality; an overview of animal care guidelines; and broiler, layer and turkey handling and transport quality assurance.

The 2013 IPPE, one of the world's largest poultry, feed, and meat industry events, will be held January 29 to 31, 2013 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

To register and view the conference agenda, visit www.ipe13.org or www.ime13.org.

Details on Banff Pork Seminar announced

Organizers of the 2013 Banff Pork Seminar announced "The Challenge of Change" as the theme for the upcoming event being held Jan. 15 to 17.

Against a backdrop of major pork industry pressures and changes, the seminar will feature a streamlined format designed to improve the experience of attending presentations, bring in more industry participation and improve networking opportunities.

"The biggest change the industry faces this year is the massive increase in feed costs," seminar program director Dr. Ruurd Zijlstra, of the University of Alberta, said in a release. "The other major one is pig prices. The first speakers at the Wednesday plenary session are two large successful companies who will speak on these factors in the context of how they measure success in their operations."

For more information, or to register for the event, visit www.banffpork.ca.

Upcoming Events

January 2013

27 – 28
BC Foodservice Expo
Vancouver Convention
Centre
Vancouver, B.C.
crfa.ca

29 – 31
International Production &
Processing Expo
Georgia World Congress
Center
Atlanta, Georgia
ime13.org

February 2013

10 – 13
MeatExpo '13
The Mirage Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada
meatxpo.org

March 2013

3 – 5
CRFA Show
Direct Energy Centre,
Exhibition Place
Toronto, Ont.
crfa.ca

May 2013

4 – 9
IFFA
Frankfurt, Germany
iffa.com

14 – 16
PackEx Toronto
Toronto Congress Centre
Toronto, Ont.
canontradeshows.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. If you know of events not listed please email Debra directly at zeprep@rogers.com.



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Growing Small Business = A Growing Economy

The federal budget must address the priorities and concerns of entrepreneurs.

By Mandy D'Autremont

IT'S THAT TIME of year again – the federal government is soliciting feedback for the 2013 budget. The small business sector employs nearly half of the Canadian workforce; it is the backbone of Canada's economy and the very heartbeat of our communities. Given the importance of small business, the federal budget must address the priorities and concerns of entrepreneurs, like you.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) believes governments' role is to create the conditions for small businesses to grow into medium and large businesses, and encourage more Canadians to take the leap into becoming entrepreneurs. As part of the federal government's pre-budget consultation, CFIB presented its members' views, Growing SMEs = Growing Economy, to the Standing Committee on Finance. Focussing on three key small business priorities – taxes, red tape, and government debt/deficit in the 2013 budget is necessary for sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth.

Tax Cuts: While the general corporate tax rate has been coming down, more attention needs to be given to the small business tax rate. Reducing the small business rate over time would help restore the value of this important tax measure for small business.

The most important retirement tool for small business owners is the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption. Simplifying and expanding this tax exemption and indexing it to inflation would help the train of business owners retiring in the next 10 years. As it stands now, some small business owners report it's cheaper and easier for them to sell their business to a foreign interest than to a member of their own family – a problem government policy can fix.

CFIB is strongly advocating against payroll tax increases, including CPP premiums and EI rates, which act as a tax on jobs and disincentives to growth. With EI rates are set to increase again in 2013, CFIB will be pushing for the extension and expansion of the EI hiring credit, which will help offset EI costs for companies who want to grow their business.

Reducing red tape: With a cost to Canadian businesses of approximately \$30 billion a year, reducing red tape is a low cost way for the federal government to stimulate growth and productivity. I'm sure every entrepreneur would prefer fewer forms and fewer outdated/redundant requirements that take time away from running their business. CFIB is pleased to see the government's recent red tape announcement to measure the overall burden of red tape, set service standards, and implement a system of ongoing oversight and accountability. Now the hard work begins of implementing these changes, so we plan to closely




monitor the government's next steps on this front.

CFIB is also closely monitoring Bill S-11, *The Safe Food for Canadians Act* which will modernize and consolidate food safety legislation with the goal to strengthen oversight of the Canadian food system. We hope the Bill provides an opportunity for the government to address red tape for the Ag sector by creating fewer inconsistencies and fairer legislation that ensures accountability of producers, the CFIA and its inspectors, while enhancing the food safety system and ensuring safe food for all Canadians.

Government Debt/Deficit: Entrepreneurs understand the importance of paying down debt; consequently we've seen this issue become more important as the federal debt continued

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growing over the last few years. While Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's recent economic update outlines that revenues will be lower than expected and will consequently delay eliminating the federal deficit, CFIB urges the federal government to remain focused on eliminating the federal deficit by 2015/2016 as originally promised. To do so, we believe the government must avoid large-scale stimulus spending initiatives and focus on low cost ways of stimulating the economy, such as reducing red tape.

While these priorities may seem obvious to entrepreneurs like you, the key is to get this important message delivered to decision makers. Over the coming weeks, CFIB will ensure the federal government hears the small business perspective and hopefully we'll see a federal budget inclusive of measures that allow businesses to grow and expand. Time will tell if the federal government was listening to Canada's job creators. 



Mandy D'Autremont is a policy analyst, agri-business with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. She can be reached at mssask@cfib.ca. Established in 1971, CFIB is Canada's largest association of small- and medium-sized businesses.

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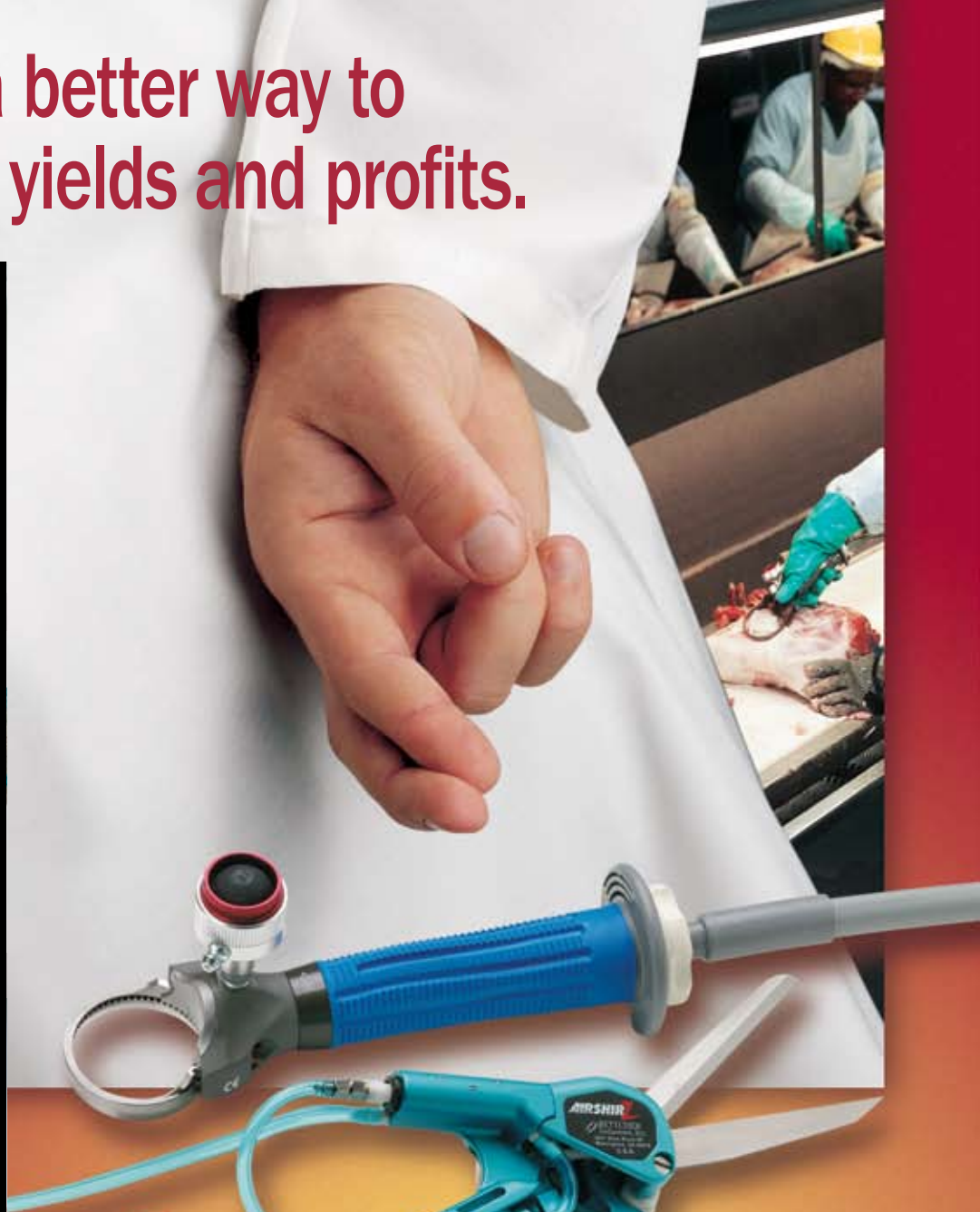
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