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July/August 2013

Meat Business

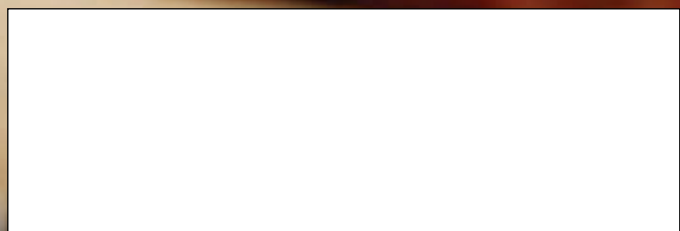
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Canada needs new international trade agreements

CANADA'S MEAT PROCESSING industry is big business, with total annual sales from the sector valued at over \$24 billion. Collectively we employ almost 70,000 Canadians and we are major exporters – exporting some \$4.5 billion of meat to over 145 different countries around the world.

Canada's meat processors add value to the live animals born and raised on Canadian farms, providing a critical market outlet and supporting the viability of almost 100,000 livestock farmers. In addition, our valued suppliers also employ thousands of Canadians working to produce equipment, packaging, ingredients and provide services like microbiology testing and engineering design.

International trade is crucial to Canada's meat industry because we produce much more meat than our 35 million citizens can consume. With the world's population growing from its current 7.1 billion to an estimated 9 billion people by the year 2050, foreign customers will require significantly more food imports – including meat.

Canada's meat exports have grown significantly in the past years. Exports of pork have increased from 200,000 tonnes in 1990 to over 1,189,000 tonnes, valued at \$3.2 billion in 2012. Exports of beef have risen from 100,000 tonnes in 1990 to almost 271,000 tonnes, valued at \$1.2 billion, in 2012. Exports of horsemeat in 2012 reached almost 18,000 tonnes valued at \$90 million.

Increased export sales enhance financial returns for farmers, improve financial margins for processors, increase jobs for workers and enhance economic activity for all Canadians. Similarly, all Canadians suffer the negative consequences of lost or missed export opportunities.

Canadian meat processors want an ambitious trade deal at the World Trade Organization that would significantly reduce import tariffs, eliminate export subsidies and greatly reduce domestic support that distorts pricing and international markets. Unfortunately, that deal is not likely to happen anytime soon. That's why Canada needs to pursue other bilateral and regional trade agreements.

Let's face it. With our huge land base, water and agricultural knowhow we have a competitive advantage. And we are already free traders. Canada has zero duties on imports of pork from every country around the world with no quantitative restrictions. Although we have a 26.5 per cent duty on imported beef, we do have a large duty free import tariff rate quota of 76,500 tonnes for beef. In addition to Canada's duty free tariff rate quota, beef from countries that we have a free trade agreement with, such as the United States and Mexico, is duty free in unlimited quantities.

That's why a lot of work has gone on over the past few years to try to reach an ambitious outcome in a Canada EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Canada and Europe have a long history of economic cooperation. Composed of 28 member states with a total population of over 500 million and a GDP of nearly \$16.6 trillion in 2012, the EU is the world's largest single common market, foreign investor and trader.

And Europeans eat a lot of meat – over 20 million tonnes of pork and over 400,000 tonnes of beef every year.

We can't stand back and let our competitors get preferential access to key markets. Let's get on with it and sign a deal with Europe. Then we can focus our efforts on getting access to Japan's 127 million consumers who are prepared to pay a premium for safe, high quality Canadian meat through a Canada Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. **M**

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



Waterloo's Accelerator Centre will help commercialize Canadian-made technologies for the food sector.

Technology Meets Food in Waterloo

New program designed to bring homegrown innovation to Canada's food processing sector.

By Alan MacKenzie

A NEW PROGRAM based out of Waterloo, Ont. is aiming to make the region – and eventually Canada – a hotbed of food processing innovation.

The program, called Canada's Technology for Food (CTFF), brings together the city's world-renowned technology sector and its strong food processing industry, which includes approximately 24 companies, making up nearly half of the food processors in the greater Golden Horseshoe area of southern Ontario. According to City of Waterloo CAO Tim Anderson, southwestern Ontario is the largest food manufacturing region in Canada and third largest in North America.

"Technology is really the focus of the City of Waterloo," Waterloo CAO Tim Anderson said. "But food processing is a stable backdrop of our portfolio of businesses here. We've got some fairly significant players, like the Brick Brewery, Piller's Meats, DC Foods and Elmira Poultry."

The innovation program is the first of its kind focussed on the food and beverage processing industry in Canada.

The project is a collaboration between the City of Waterloo – which was named the world's top intelligent community in 2007 by the New York-based Intelligent Community

Foundation – and the Waterloo Accelerator Centre, an award-winning incubation and commercialization facility. Located within Waterloo's David Johnston Research + Technology Park, the centre assists entrepreneurs and early stage companies in commercializing their technologies through a program that lasts up to three years. Assistance and support is given coaching and mentoring, education, connections to capital, networking, R&D support and more.

"We are extremely excited to play a leadership role in this important partnership," Tim Ellis, the centre's CEO stated. "Every day within our facility we are inspired by the creative thinking of entrepreneurs and start-ups who apply out of the box thinking, fearlessness and creativity to solve economic and business challenges. Canada's Technology for Food brings an industry with significant economic impact in Ontario and a new sphere of opportunities into the mix. I'm really looking forward to fostering some new innovative companies who I know will bring exciting new answers to the challenges facing our food and beverage processing industry today."

The project also brings together the region's fabricators, academic institutions, and food processors, including Piller's

Meats and Contesoga Meat Packers.

CTFF calls for food processing businesses to identify challenges that can be solved by technology “that can save a minimum of \$1 million,” CTFF chair Ted McKechnie said. Each project will have a financial target of \$200,000 – one third of which will come from the company and the rest from CTFF. Companies that take part will have working prototypes developed by the program in their facilities.



“The goal in the next year to 18 months is to identify about 10... challenges and get us through phase one of the ultimate vision, which is to broaden out across Canada.”

– Ted McKechnie, CTFF

“We’ll work with industry partners to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. Then we’ll match that industry partner with a consortium of solution providers to build an answer to that challenge. When the solution has potential to benefit the rest of the industry, we’ll work with the Accelerator Centre to commercialize the technology and grow the business.”

McKechnie stated.

“The goal in the next year to 18 months is to identify about 10 of those challenges and get us through phase one of the ultimate vision, which is to broaden out across Canada,” he added.


Many food processors in Canada deal with European companies for technology solutions, which is something Anderson said he’d like to see change.

“It’s out of need, not a lack of interest,” he said. “These companies would like to do more business locally, and we’d like to encourage that.”

McKechnie estimates that 90 per cent of technology used in the food processing sector comes from Europe.

“As an example, Piller’s buys most of its equipment from Europe, mostly Germany,” he said. “The government there is highly subsidized and they’re very good at it. What we’re trying to do is take back a part of that for the Canadian food processing business, and also to make this a national and worldwide initiative where we can be selling equipment to everyone else in the world for food processing.”

He noted that examples of the kind of technology that could be developed include machines that accurately remove fat from protein, that can wrap and stuff fresh meats or other products, such as cabbage rolls, all while keeping a hand-made appearance.

“We have been actively seeking an opportunity to support the advancement of this industry for some time,” Anderson added. “CTFF is the solution we’ve been seeking. It can be a catalyst for real change in the food and beverage processing industry here in Waterloo, across Ontario and Canada, and in time, globally.” 

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Versatile Ingredient

New business driven by mustard substitute for sodium phosphate or soy protein isolate.

By Heather Angus-Lee

WHEN NANCY POST, technical director at G.S. Dunn, does a presentation – whether in a boardroom in Japan, Iran, Colombia or Columbus, Ohio – she knows she’s done her job right if someone in the room says “I didn’t know mustard could do that!” It’s a watershed moment every time, says Post, who oversees R&D, quality management and technical services at the world’s largest dry mustard miller.

Mustard is a highly versatile food ingredient that is increasingly being used for different properties – as an emulsifier (stabilizer in processed foods), binder, and for health properties including natural preservative and antioxidant. Its source as a protein is leading to new business for G.S. Dunn, which sells mustard bran, flour and other forms of mustard seed to food manufacturers in 52 countries on six continents.

In a visit to G.S. Dunn customers in South America earlier this year, Post and her colleague, Luis Rivas, vice-president of sales and marketing, stopped by the Columbian chicken processor that is beta-testing the use of mustard powder to substitute more expensive, proteins in their products.

“Yield is king when it comes to chicken processing,” notes

Rivas, who’s in discussions about the protein substitution with another customer, in Asia, that does chicken processing for McDonald’s.

A recent study by the Food Development Corporation (FDC) investigated the functional benefit of replacing sodium phosphate, or soy protein isolate, with mustard. Whole ground mustard and deactivated mustard were tested in two different processing scenarios – vacuum tumbling and injection. Boneless, skinless, 4 oz. chicken breast fillets were sized to specific standards for weight and dimensions to ensure consistency of experiment and results.

Chicken was tumbled/vacuum marinated or injected separately, yields were determined by weight, cooked, frozen and reconstituted to ensure a full cycle to include



“We saw an incredible three-fold increase in solid leads with potential customers over last year.”

– Nancy Post, G.S. Dunn

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all commercial handling parameters. Tests were also conducted at various stages and included shelf life, sensory, yields, re-thermalization tests, SPC (micro indicators), lipid oxidation, colour, moisture, pH and protein analysis. Shelf life was extended without changing colour, surface sheen, or functional benefits; it yielded “the same mouth feel but cheaper,” as Rivas puts it. Yield savings were \$15 million – based on three per cent, two shifts multiplied by five work days at a medium size plant with about \$300,000 lbs. of throughput or tonnage/shift, and approximate cost of \$3.25/lb.

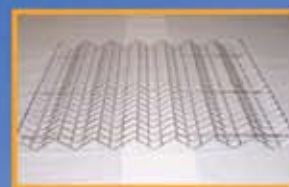
Reaction to the mustard substitution test results was “incredible” at the International Poultry Exhibition (IPPE) in Atlanta, Georgia earlier this year, says Post. “We saw an incredible three-fold increase in solid leads with potential customers over last year.”

Whether they’re processing big brand or private label products, mustard as a protein substitution is particularly appealing to food processors in emerging markets such as China and India because of the relatively lower production costs. One of G.S. Dunn’s customers in Shanghai is testing the mustard protein on hamburger and sausage processing. 

Heather Angus-Lee, a former business journalist, now writes for JustFoodERP. She can be reached at heather.angus-lee@justfooderp.com.

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Enzyme Cocktail Saves Chicken Feed & More

Better feed efficiency also means fewer environmental concerns from chicken litter.

By Robert Burns

DR. JASON LEE compares the enzyme additives he's testing in chicken broiler feed to the probiotics now commonly added to human food, such as yogurt.

Like probiotics, the enzymes he's testing improve digestibility of the food the chicken eats, acting within the gut, said Lee, who is a poultry scientist with Texas A&M AgriLife Research at College Station.

"And like probiotics, the enzymes naturally occur in nature," he said.

The analogy is imperfect, he said, as the probiotics added to yogurt and other foods to aid digestion are live bacteria, while enzymes are not alive at all, but merely simple proteins.

Improving digestibility of poultry rations is important for commercial producers for two reasons, Lee said.

The first reason is improved digestibility means improved feed efficiency – less feed is required for each pound of weight gain.

Digestibility of soybean meal by poultry is already high, 80 to 85 per cent, according to Lee.

"But we want to make that much higher," he said.

According to the National Chicken Council, in 2010, U.S. companies produced nearly nine billion chickens for meat consumption, most of which were broilers, with a small percentage from breeding stock and spent hen egg-layer flocks. This equates to more than five billion pounds of meat, most of which was consumed domestically.

"The poultry industry is very competitive," he said. "With feeds sources such as soybean meal and corn going up every year, only a small percentage of increase in efficiency can mean big savings to the industry."

The second reason why improving feed efficiency is important is environmental, Lee said.

Nine billion birds produce large amounts of manure, which when mixed with spilled feed, feathers and bedding material, is called "chicken litter."

Chicken litter is primarily used as fertilizer, but because nitrogen is less concentrated than chemical fertilizers, transportation costs usually limit its use to nearby farms. And the nitrogen in chicken litter can be lost quickly, according to Lee.

Nitrate runoff is usually not a problem with chicken litter fertilizer as it is with manure from other confined animal operations. But phosphorus can be, he said.

"Phosphorus is an essential nutrient required for proper bone development and for efficient poultry production," Lee said. "The failure to meet a bird's requirement of phosphorus can lead to many bird-health problems, including reduced bird performance, increased leg disorders and increased bird mortality."



In Dr. Jason Lee's study on the effects of feed with various combinations of enzyme additives and available phosphorus, 500 male chicks were individually weighed at seven and 14 days. Lee also analyzed the chicken litter the chicks produced for residual phosphorus.

Photo: Robert Burns, Texas A&M AgriLife Research

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To avoid these bird health problems, companies used to include a “safety margin” of phosphorus when formulating feeds, Lee said. The over-supplemented could lead to the excess ending up in the chicken litter used as fertilizer. Crops can only use so much phosphorus in a given time, and this excess ending up in the water table through run-off.

Environmental concerns, as well as rising costs of inorganic phosphate sources has motivated producers “to consider alternative strategies to reduce the total phosphorous concentrations in broiler diets,” Lee said.



“The failure to meet a bird’s requirement of phosphorus can lead to many bird-health problems...”

– Dr. Jason Lee

The main strategy utilized to decrease the levels of phosphorus required in broiler diets is the use of enzymes that utilize the phosphorus in plant sources, such as corn and soybean, according to Lee.

A form of phosphorus called phytate can account for as much as 70 per cent of the total phosphorus found in plants, he said. However, poultry do not have the ability to digest phytate. But ruminant animals such as beef cattle have bacteria in their rumens that naturally produce an enzyme called phytase that

allows them to convert the phytate into organic phosphorus.

Phytase can be relatively cheaply and easily produced and added to poultry feed, but that solves only one aspect of the problem.


“Another anti-nutritive factor found in cereal grains used in broiler diets include the presence of non-starch polysaccharides – NSP, which are fibrous material found in plant cell walls,” Lee said. “Chickens lack the digestive capacity of ruminant animals and the presence of NSP in the diet increases intestinal viscosity resulting in decreased digestibility of the diet.”

Fortunately, according to Lee, another enzyme, carbohydrase, can help increase digestibility of high fiber broiler diets. Both enzymes need be added at low rates, typically from 0.25 to 1 pound per ton of feed.

But a question remained: Which strains of the two enzymes were best combinations for chicken health and feed conversion efficiency?

To determine this, Lee has been conducting studies comparing how multiple levels of phytase affects the bio-availability of phytate with and without non-starch polysaccharides. The feed tested was a combination of corn and soybean meal with added vitamins and micronutrients – a standard poultry ration.

The relationship between the effects of the two enzymes turned out to be more complicated than expected. Non-starch polysaccharides increased the bioavailability of phosphorus but at only one of the three levels of phytase concentrations tested.

The results of his study will give commercial poultry producers information they need to fine-tune feed mixture to reduce phosphorus runoff from chicken litter without endangering flock health, Lee said. 

Robert Burns is an extension communications specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Research.

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It is Just a Matter of Respect

The negative effects of noise on chickens.

By Ronnie P. Cons

CHICKENS, LIKE ALL vertebrates, are governed by a circadian rhythm that is governed by the natural light/dark cycle of day and night. As such, chickens mostly rest and are inactive at night, especially when it is dark. Most of their feeding and activity is during the daylight hours, even though they also rest during the day.

Studies show that, just as in humans, major abrupt changes to the day/night cycle of chickens, such as waking up them at night with loud noises, will lead to stressed and anxious animals.

In addition, studies have shown that loud noises like those found

near airports, railway tracks or loud hydraulic or pneumatic equipment and machinery, lead to lower egg production, stunted growth, higher blood pressure, stress and fatigue in chickens. A study – titled Stress in Broiler Chickens Due to Acute Noise Exposure – from the Department of Veterinary Public Health and Toxicology at the University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Brno, Czech Republic shows that loud noise simulating ventilation fans and operational machines found at slaughterhouses led to increased plasma corticosteroids, cholesterol and total protein. This

study recommends the control of noise pollution near the chickens and chicks.

Other studies show that noise levels pass the 85 dB level leads to a decreased feed intake of between 15 to 25 per cent. Of course lower feed intake stunts chicken growth – something the poultry farmer or processor does not want.

But all is not lost. Below are some tips and advice to reduce the noise level to an acceptable and healthier

+
We need to respect the fact that chickens are living beings that need many of the same things that we need...

level, leading to happier and healthier chickens – both psychologically and physically.

- 1) First identify the sources of noise pollution equipment. Use a sound measuring tool if necessary.
- 2) Erect sound barrier secondary glazing in windows.
- 3) Establish your chicken farm in a quiet area – away from airports and industrial areas and rail yards.
- 4) Maintain your ventilation fans and feeding machines, making sure they are not producing excess noise.

- 5) Try to buy machines that produce the least noise possible.
- 6) Avoid repairs and renovations with noisy equipment, especially during the rest and sleep hours of the chickens.
- 7) Muffle noisy equipment.
- 8) Investigate “active noise control” – a noise cancelation anti-noise system that produces sound waves of the same amplitude as the noise pollution but in opposite polarity causing a cancelling of the noise pollution.
- 9) Train employees to respect the sleep hours of the chickens – they should not be screaming out to each other, joking, etc. around sleeping chickens.

We simply see that it’s about common sense and respect. We need to respect the fact that chickens are living beings that need many of the same things that we need including a good night’s sleep and some peace and quiet during the day. We just have to sensitize ourselves by imagining how we feel when we are woken up by rude people while we are asleep. We feel grouchy the next day and are less productive in the office. If we internalize this reality, we will treat the chickens with more respect which not only is the proper thing to do, but also good business sense.

The results will be healthier, bigger chickens. Thus everybody gains by respecting the chickens’ needs not to be exposed to high levels of noise pollution – the poultry farmer, the processor and the chickens. **M**

Ronnie P. Cons is the executive vice-president of C&C Packing Inc., a leading Canadian meat and poultry distributor. He can be reached at 514-461-5202 or rcons@ccpacking.com.

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COOL Going to Court

U.S. and Canadian groups launch legal challenge against labelling rule.

EIGHT ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING the U.S. and Canadian meat and livestock industries filed a legal action July 9 to block implementation of the mandatory country-of-origin labelling (COOL) rule finalized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in May 2013.

The suit is filed against the May 2013 rule, which was proposed after the World Trade Organization (WTO) panel ruled in response to a complaint by Canada and Mexico that the existing COOL requirements violated the United States' WTO obligations. The overall COOL statute is not being challenged at this time, noted American Meat Institute (AMI) senior vice-president of regulatory affairs Mark Dopp.

The groups said the new rule violates the U.S. Constitution because of "compelled speech" in the form of costly and detailed labels on meat products that do not directly advance a government interest. Under the constitution, commercial speech may be compelled only where it serves a substantial government interest. The groups said the COOL labels offer no food safety or public health benefit, yet impose costs the government modestly estimates at \$192 million, so the government cannot require them.

The organizations – AMI, the American Association of Meat Processors, Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA), Canadian Pork Council (CPC), National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Pork Producers Council, North American Meat Association, and Southwest Meat Association – also noted the rule imposes vast burdens on the industry with little to no countervailing benefit.

"All livestock and meat processed at federally inspected establishments in the United States and sold in interstate commerce are subject to the same health and safety requirements, as prescribed by the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act," the complaint states. "Those products are also graded for quality according to a system administered by AMS (Agricultural Marketing Service) without variation based on where an animal was born or raised. In short, beef is beef, whether the steer or heifer was born in Montana, Manitoba, or Mazatlan. The same goes for hogs, chickens, and other livestock."

The organizations' complaint also claims the new rule violates the U.S. Agriculture Marketing Act because it exceeds the authority granted to USDA in the 2008 Farm Bill. While Congress mandated COOL, the statute does not permit labels that detail where animals were born, raised and slaughtered – yet that is what USDA will now require.

"Sorting and tracking livestock and labeling meat by the various 'routes' that livestock may take on the way to market is needlessly complex with no measurable benefits," Dopp stated in a release. "Shoes, for example, may say 'Made in the USA.' They do not say 'Leather

from cattle born in Canada, harvested in the USA, tanned in South Korea and processed in the USA', yet that is the sort of labeling that we are now being forced to apply."

The groups also said the COOL rule will fundamentally alter the meat industry and pick winners and losers in the marketplace with no benefit to anyone-and at great harm to many meat companies, especially those located along U.S.-Mexico or U.S.-Canada borders whose companies depend upon a steady supply of livestock that may have been born in another country.

"The U.S. Congress missed an opportunity to implement a legislative change to COOL in the farm bill deliberations," CPC chair Jean-Guy Vincent said in a separate release. "CPC has partnered with its U.S. counterparts in this legal challenge to quickly resolve this dispute as legislative options for the U.S. to come into compliance with its WTO obligations become fewer."



"In short, beef is beef, whether the steer or heifer was born in Montana, Manitoba, or Mazatlan."

– complaint against COOL rule

"I am encouraged by the response and support we receive from the U.S. meat industry," Vincent added. "Our American counterparts are clearly concerned that COOL will have a serious economic impact on their industry, leading to plant closures and lost jobs as well as reduced international cost competitiveness of the entire North American meat industry. This will likely lead to increased prices for consumers."

The CPC commissioned an analysis that shows the impact of COOL on the Canadian hog sector from lost exports alone is \$500 million annually. Since the implementation of mandatory COOL in 2008, there has been a decrease in exports to the U.S. of Canadian live swine of 41 per cent and 46 per cent for beef cattle. Total estimated damages due to price declines, lost sales and added costs to the Canadian livestock sector have exceeded \$1 billion per year, CPC said.

The lawsuit follows a move in June by the Canadian government that saw the release of a list of U.S. commodities that could be targeted for retaliation in relation to the COOL dispute. [M](#)

-staff



Boyle to Retire

AMI president to step down at end of 2013.

THE AMERICAN MEAT Institute (AMI) announced July 19 that president and CEO J. Patrick Boyle will step down at the end of this year after 24 years of service to the meat and poultry industry.

Boyle, the longest serving president in AMI's 107-year history, joined the organization in 1990 after serving as administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Before that, he worked as an attorney at several food trade associations and as agricultural legislative assistant to former U.S. Senator Pete Wilson.

"It has been an honour and a privilege to lead this great industry for more than two decades," he stated. "With the organization in a sound position to meet the challenges of the future and given the many accomplishments of the last two decades, this year seemed like an appropriate time for me to move onto another phase of my professional life."

During Boyle's tenure, AMI formally petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to require nutrition labels on meat and poultry products and to proclaim a regulation requiring that meat and poultry plants implement HACCP-based food safety controls. The USDA subsequently issued final regulations on both proposals.

"Under Patrick's twenty-four years of leadership, AMI has been an influential voice for the meat and poultry industry

successfully addressing numerous public policy challenges," said AMI chairman Nick Merigglioli.

AMI noted that Boyle joined association prior to some of the industry's most notable recent challenges, such as the emergence of E. coli O157:H7 and listeria monocytogenes as major food safety concerns. During his tenure, the AMI Foundation's research and education programs have made substantial contributions towards the substantial food safety progress that is evidenced by the declining levels of bacteria on many meat and poultry products, the group said.

During the 1990s, Boyle and his team also were the early adopters of the animal welfare approach of animal welfare expert Temple Grandin, professor of animal science at Colorado State University. AMI first partnered with Grandin in 1991 on its Recommended Animal Handling Guidelines for the Meat Industry and later on an animal welfare audit program that has become the global standard around the world and is a condition of doing business with many leading foodservice and retail customers.

Also under his leadership, the AMI board voted to make key issues non-competitive, including food safety, animal welfare, worker safety and the environment. Boyle will continue to serve in his role as president and CEO until the end of 2013. **M**

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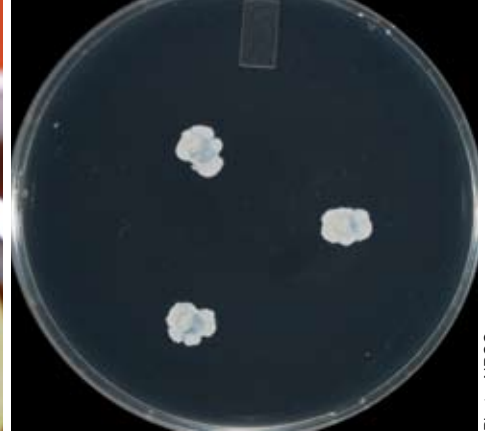


Photo: NRCC

Protecting Consumers from Listeria

\$1.4M genome project announced to combat serious foodborne illness.

ON JUNE 27, Genome Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and Alberta Innovates Bio Solutions announced a \$1.4 million project designed to help protect consumers from listeriosis, the serious foodborne illness at the centre of a massive deli meat recall in 2008 that was linked to the deaths of 23 Canadians.

The project, led by Dr. Linda Chui of the University of Alberta, will sequence and map the genomes of many listeria strains to identify those strains that are likely to be most harmful to human health as well as those most likely to survive in food processing facilities. This research will lead to faster and more cost-effective ways to screen food for the listeria bacteria.

Through this project, a database of listeria genome sequences will be developed and genetic markers identified. These

markers will be used to rapidly spot harmful listeria strains in foods and food processing facilities.

“Genomics research such as this is equipping us with new, effective ways to combat threats to food safety. The impact this research will have on averting potential outbreaks and the consequences for Canadian families and industry is tremendous,” Pierre Meulien, president and CEO of Genome Canada, stated in a release.



“The impact this research will have on averting potential outbreaks and the consequences for Canadian families and industry is tremendous.”

– Pierre Meulien, Genome Canada

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“Ensuring the safety of food products is critical to public health and the competitiveness of our agri-food and agriculture industries,” added Dr. Stan Blade, CEO of Alberta Innovates Bio Solutions. “New listeria detection tests that produce results quickly will allow food producers and regulators to act swiftly and provides assurance of an even higher level of food safety for Canadians.”

The 18-month research project is supported through an investment of \$250,000 each from Genome Canada (via Genome Alberta) and the CFIA, and \$100,000 from Alberta Innovates Bio Solutions. This investment is also being leveraged through co-funding from federal, provincial, academic and industry partners, including Maple Leaf Foods, the company at the centre of the 2008 outbreak.

“The strength of our project is in the world-class expertise of the research team and the support of many distinguished organizations from across Canada,” stated Dr. Chui. “The different researchers on the team bring leading-edge expertise in many areas including food sample preparation, assays development, state-of-the art capacity in bioinformatics and genomics, pathogen detection and outbreak response.”

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The POPLOK uses well known branded components including OMRON PLC and Colour Touch Screen, SMC valves and or cylinders and wired in compliance with UL standards meeting OSHA requirements as well

eaglepm.com

Avery Weigh-Tronix announces new stainless steel floor scale



Avery Weigh-Tronix introduces its latest floor scale, the Stainless Steel ProDec. Available in a combination of sizes and capacities, the fully stainless steel floor scale is ideal for environments that require strict sanitation.

The new platform scale, based on the company's industry-recognized ProDec model, was designed with the food and chemical industry in mind. To accommodate diverse applications, the scale is available in standard sizes ranging from 36"x36" to 84"x60" and capacities from 2,000lb to a more heavy-duty 10,000lb.

The entirely stainless steel scale uses hermetically sealed, stainless steel Avery Weigh-Tronix Weigh Bars, which have a high-end load rating—making it ideal for the most demanding weighing applications. The NTEP-approved floor scale provides high accuracy and repeatability under continuous heavy industrial usage, while the hermetic sealing process prevents the ingress of moisture, food and other kinds of foreign matter.

The stainless steel ProDec now includes side access to the stainless junction box, which further reduces the chance of food, debris and other matter from being trapped in the creases of the junction box compartment.

These free-standing platform scales feature adjustable leveling feet, allowing them to be height adjusted as required for more accurate and leveled weighing to suit various applications and environments. With a low platform height and optional ramps, the scales can be fitted to any side for fast and easy loading, while the tread deck plate provides higher traction and reduces the risk of accidents.

averyweigh-tronix.com

Harmonized 3-nozzle linking powers fully automated production

Handtmann's new fully automated revolving 3-nozzle PVLH 246 and PVLS 143 AL systems offer approximately 1.7 second automatic casing changes with gentler portioning, less rework and the industry's most efficient linking and hanging performance.

Many of the minor hygienic and ergonomic issues that are problematic with other multi-horn systems have been resolved, making a big difference in total performance. These new Handtmann AL systems now automatically wipe sausage meat from each nozzle so it cannot fall on the slug in the filling position. They spool slugs immediately before the change to reduce troublesome humidity absorption and each nozzle is positioned at the loading stage for "no leaning" operator access. Operator flexibility also helps optimize change times. Nozzles can be returned to the filling position and restart occurs with a simple hand movement that eliminates any swivelling procedure.

The redesigned automatic casing loading system gives processors the flexibility to manually load natural casings when needed and automatically load collagen and artificial casings. Handtmann's new advanced nozzle-centering function stabilizes the horn and more precisely guides the casing to make larger nozzles possible and recalibrate virtually error-free spooling as the new industry norm.

Highly dynamic Handtmann linking now also automatically adapts to each product for more consistent quality, more attractive ends, and fewer casing bursts no matter the casing type.

handtmann.ca

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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.

Process Expo doubles international exhibitors

The Food Processing Suppliers Association (FPSA) announced recently that Process Expo 2013 has doubled exhibit sales to foreign-based exhibitors over the previous show in 2011.

FPSA attributes this growth of international exhibitors to the collaborative work of FPSA and its partner Messe Dusseldorf, which assists in the promotion of Process Expo in international markets.

"Process Expo has experienced tremendous growth over the past three show cycles and international suppliers to the food and beverage industry have taken notice," David Seckman, president and CEO of FPSA, stated in a release. "As we continue to build the show's reputation as the nation's top trade show dedicated to the food and beverage industry, foreign equipment manufacturers and service providers increasingly see Process Expo as the perfect launching pad to break into the North American industry or expand their business within it."

"Among our worldwide constituents, there is a strong sense that Process Expo is building up to be the food and beverage industry's premier event in the United States and clearly, international suppliers want to be a part of that," added Bernd Jablonowski of Messe Dusseldorf.

Companies interested in exhibiting in Process Expo 2013 should contact Grace Cular Yee, FPSA director of sales at gyc@fpsa.org.

A complete list of exhibitors and the updated floor plan for PROCESS EXPO 2013 can be found at www.myprocessexpo.com.

Exhibitor support grows for small business program at Pack Expo

With over 130 exhibitors already signed up, the SMB FastTrack program at Pack Expo Las Vegas 2013 continues to gain support and grow. The new program was designed by Pack Expo owner and producer PMMI, the Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies, to help small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) find and implement innovative technologies. To do that, SMB FastTrack provides pre-show planning tools and on-site services to connect participating attendees with advanced packaging and processing technologies quickly and conveniently.

"Part of PMMI's mission is to connect suppliers and their customers on the packaging and processing supply chain," Charles D. Yuska, president and CEO of PMMI, stated in a release. "The SMB FastTrack program takes that commitment to a new level by giving the exhibitors

and attendees of Pack Expo new ways to find each other and come up with innovative technology solutions."

SMB FastTrack exhibitors, which offer special financing, discounts or additional services to SMBs, will be listed in the SMB FastTrack Sourcing Index, a special planning tool participants will receive prior to the show. As exhibitors continue to join the SMB FastTrack program, attendees can use the advanced exhibitor search function at www.packexpo.com to stay up-to-date on participating exhibitors. On-site, the dedicated SMB FastTrack Networking center on the show floor gives participating attendees and exhibitors a special venue for networking.

To learn more about the SMB FastTrack program, including qualification requirements, visit www.packexpo.com/fasttrack.

Pack Expo takes place Sept. 23 to 25 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Event details can be found at www.packexpo.com.

NAMA to host meat pavilion at grocers show next year

The North American Meat Association (NAMA) recently announced it will host its first NAMA Meat Pavilion at the National Grocers Association (NGA) Show in 2014.

The pavilion will be part of NGA's greatly expanded expo floor showcasing innovations and products for grocers. The NAMA Meat Pavilion will be more than 2,400 square feet and will represent some of the association's meat supplier companies.

The event will be held Feb. 9 to 12 at the Mirage Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

"NAMA members are excited to once again have a large presence at NGA's show. We received great feedback on how valuable it was to have our industry's product displayed at NGA during the co-location with MEATXPO'13," NAMA CEO Barry Carpenter stated. "The NAMA Meat Pavilion will continue to strengthen that tradition of co-location, and will also heighten awareness about our industry in NGA's great community of independent grocers."

"We are thrilled to have NAMA back on the show floor in 2014," added Peter J. Larkin, president and CEO of NGA. "We look forward to continuing our great relationship with their association and showcasing the products they have to offer to our retail members."

Complete details can be found online at www.theNGAshow.com.

Upcoming Events

September 2013

18 – 19
 Beef Safety Conference
 Four Points by Sheraton
 Chicago O'Hare
 Chicago, Illinois
 meatassociation.com

October 2013

14 – 17
 Process Expo
 McCormick Place
 Chicago, Illinois
 myprocessexpo.com

25 – 26
 Ontario Independent Meat
 Processors 2013 Meat Expo
 International Centre
 Mississauga, Ont.
 oimp.ca

November 2013

2 – 6
 NAMA Outlook Conference
 Chicago, Illinois
 meatassociation.com

January 2014

21 – 23
 Banff Pork Seminar
 Banff, Alta.
 banffpork.ca

March 2014

2 – 4
 CRFA Show
 Direct Energy Centre
 Toronto, Ont.
 crfa.ca



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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Ammonia, often stored in tanks such as these, is one of the areas of focus by federal government regulators seeking to limit uncontrolled releases beyond the plant perimeter, and risk to employees inside or near the plant.

Better Ways to Handle Ammonia

Regulatory and public concerns drive focus.

By James Hartshorn

AMMONIA, A VITAL part of many meat processors' operations, is one of several hazardous substances receiving increased scrutiny from regulators, as well as concern by the general public.

Consider a case discussed in a recent newsletter from the U.S. law firm McAfee & Taft:

A California meat processor who had two reportable ammonia releases from its refrigeration system in 2009 is not only paying \$850,000 in civil monetary penalties, it has also entered a consent decree with the EPA and Department of Justice requiring it to undergo a \$6 million conversion of its ammonia refrigeration system to an ammonia-glycol refrigerant system, among other things.

In Canada, the incident that triggered tighter federal government scrutiny of hazardous substances seems to have been the August 2008 explosion at the Sunrise Propane plant in Toronto, for which the company was in June 2013 found guilty of breaching numerous environmental and worker safety regulations.

The concerns are twofold: potential risk to the general public if hazardous or toxic substances are released in an uncontrolled manner beyond the plant perimeter, and risk to employees

inside or near the plant. Federal government inspectors who find evidence of unsafe storage and handling, or inadequate emergency preparedness and planning, have the authority to order changes and in extreme cases, immediate operational shutdowns.

This can have a harmful effect on public perception of the company and its products, a degraded brand, and loss of market share that can be difficult to recover. Several well-publicized incidents in the meat industry involving listeria and other pathogens show the potentially devastating impact that can come from a loss of public confidence in a company's products.

On the other hand, companies that take a pro-active approach to ammonia management have a better chance of meeting inspections without serious problems – and can also build good relations with employees who see that their safety is being safeguarded, as well as the community surrounding the plant.

Regulations not widely understood

Experience working with members of the food industry has found that there is widespread uncertainty about regulations for handling ammonia.

In Canada, environmental and safety matters are legislated

by each of the federal, provincial / territorial and local levels of government. The federal government typically legislates trans-boundary aspects, that cross provincial or national geopolitical boundaries (such as interprovincial transportation of waste), activities that are undertaken on property under federal jurisdiction (for example, on federal Crown land or within a federal government department), and issues that are otherwise unregulated (or perceived to be insufficiently regulated) by the provinces and territories.

This is the case with ammonia, a toxic substance that was, until the early 2000s, not explicitly regulated by the lower levels of government in Canada. As a result, the federal government introduced a series of requirements that apply to any industrial



Experience working with members of the food industry has found that there is widespread uncertainty about regulations for handling ammonia.

facility that handles or stores large quantities of a number of listed hazardous substances.

In general, the regulations (see www.ec.gc.ca/ee-ue) are focused on requiring companies to identify risks, find ways to reduce or eliminate them, and develop ways to respond effectively and quickly if an incident occurs. The guidance documents accompanying the regulations provide more detailed information on how to make this happen.

Because it is possible to plan for emergencies only if their general character is predicted, the regulations require companies to identify a range of emergency scenarios, including the potential worst-case, and plan according to the identified more likely, or credible, worst-case scenarios.

This is a requirement that is poorly understood, and not usually followed. An effective emergency response plan really does rely on a good understanding of the nature and scale of the risk. Complete risk identification and assessment, which should include a rigorous evaluation of potential failure modes, is typically not well done. This is an area that is the focus of inspection and enforcement by the regulator, Environment Canada.


Once the potential "failure modes" are understood as much as possible, the focus shifts to a quantitative risk assessment in which the likelihood of the incident is determined, and the potential consequences if that incident took place.

Depending on the resources available within the organization, external consultants can provide valuable expertise in this process. Consultants focusing on risk

analysis have the advantage of understanding the legislation and regulators' expectations, the most effective mechanisms to undertake the detailed risk assessment, and being able to apply what they have learned on similar projects elsewhere. On the other hand, operational staff have the intimate knowledge of the way the plant works, and the existing engineering and procedural operational controls that are in place to manage the risk. So, the best option is to judiciously balance the work done by external consultants, and that done by in-house employees.

Our experience shows that the best, most workable plans – and those most likely to be accepted by regulators – come from bringing together representatives from operations, as well as from maintenance, who can each provide their perspective and knowledge. It is good to have a facilitator able to move along the discussion and ask the right questions, a role often well filled by an external consultant. This meeting can brainstorm the possible scenarios for what can go wrong, the likelihood of those incidents, their consequences – and then develop plans for preventing the scenarios from coming true, or at least reducing their likelihood.

External consultants can play a valuable role through their specialized knowledge of modeling. Modelling can determine, for example, if a vulnerable receptor such as a local daycare or school is at risk from an unplanned ammonia release, given prevailing winds and other conditions.

Comprehensive and transparent risk assessment and planning can also go a long way towards building and maintaining positive relations and trust with stakeholders including employees and the surrounding community. 

James Hartshorn (M.Sc., MBA, EP(CEA)) is a principal in the performance & assurance practice of Golder Associates Ltd., based in Mississauga Ont. He can be reached at 905-567-4444 or james_hartshorn@golder.com.

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Maple Leaf to sell turkey operations

Maple Leaf Foods will sell its turkey growing operations, the company announced.

The company said July 22 that it entered into definitive agreements to sell its commercial turkey farms to Ernald Enterprises Ltd. and its breeder farms and hatchery operation to Cuddy Farms Ltd., both by the end of the month.

Maple Leaf's turkey growing operations employ more than 100 people in southern Ontario. They include a hatchery and six breeder farms that supply turkey eggs and day-old turkeys to domestic and international markets, and six commercial farms that supply market-ready live birds to Maple Leaf's turkey processing facility in Thamesford, Ont.

The terms of the transaction include a long-term supply of live birds to Maple Leaf from Ernald Enterprises. The vast majority of employees will transition to Ernald Enterprises and Cuddy Farms once the transactions close, Maple Leaf said.

"Divesting our turkey growing operations will allow us to focus on, and direct capital to, growth and innovation in our valued added turkey processing business," Maple Leaf president and CEO Michael McCain said in a release. "The transaction ensures a long-term supply of high quality turkeys at competitive prices. I'd like to thank our people who work in these operations for their dedication to our business. They are joining two organizations who are leaders in Canada's turkey growing industry."

Cuddy Farms is a leading producer and distributor of commercial turkey eggs and poults in Canada. The company distributes products nationally and to more than 20 countries including Germany, Mexico, Russia, Italy, Turkey, Poland, Austria, Holland, Hungary and the Baltic States.

Ernald Enterprises owns 1,200 acres of agricultural land and operates five commercial turkey and chicken growing operations in southern Ontario. They are a current supplier to Maple Leaf Foods' turkey processing operations.

Sobeys to purchase Canada Safeway for \$5.8B

Empire Company Ltd. and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Sobeys Inc., announced June 12 that Sobeys will acquire "substantially all" of the assets of Canada Safeway Ltd. for \$5.8 billion.

"This is a significant and historic event for Sobeys, which

has been proudly serving Canadian food shoppers for 106 years. The acquisition of Canada Safeway represents an excellent strategic fit, strengthening our presence in Western Canada with the addition of great employees, excellent stores and exceptional real estate," Empire president and CEO Paul D. Sobeys stated in a release.

Sobeys will acquire 213 full service grocery stores under the Safeway banner in Western Canada, 199 in-store pharmacies, 62 co-located fuel stations, 10 liquor stores, four primary distribution centres and related wholesale business, and 12 manufacturing facilities.

The acquisition positions Sobeys as a leading grocer in Western Canada and the number one grocer in the Alberta market. It also solidifies Sobeys' number two position nationally.

Closing of the transaction is subject to customary conditions, including receipt of relevant regulatory approvals and is expected to occur in the fall of 2013.

Based out of Nova Scotia, Sobeys owns or franchises more than 1,300 stores in all 10 provinces under retail banners that include Sobeys, IGA, Foodland, FreshCo, and Thrifty Foods.

It is still unknown whether the acquired stores will continue to operate under the Safeway name.

PHAC reports antibiotic resistance in retail chicken study

According to a recent study by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), a percentage of campylobacter isolated from retail chicken in two provinces was found to be resistant to ciprofloxacin, an antimicrobial drug considered critically important to fighting bacterial infections.

Campylobacteriosis is a common cause of bacterial infections in Canada, the report said, noting that its incidence rate in 2005 was 30.9 cases per 100,000 population.

Between 2003 and 2010 (the start dates varied by province), the Canadian Integrated Program for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance (CIPRAS) sampled retail chicken meat samples in seven provinces – British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. CIPRAS found an increased prevalence of ciprofloxacin resistance in British Columbia – between four per cent and 17 per cent – and Saskatchewan – between six per cent and 11 per cent.

By comparison, in 2009-2010, the overall prevalence of ciprofloxacin-resistant campylobacter from retail chicken collected in the other provinces remained significantly lower.

The increased trend in British Columbia seems more abrupt, especially from 2008 to 2009, compared to Saskatchewan, where it has been more gradual.

Retail food samples best reflect the level of consumer exposure to drug-resistant foodborne bacteria, PHAC noted.

Several factors contributing to the emergence of ciprofloxacin resistance have been hypothesized and include antimicrobial drug use in broiler breeder and broiler chickens and importation of poultry products, the report said.

Data for antimicrobial drug use in the poultry industry is not currently available in Canada, the report noted.



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Surveillance data from the United States, however, showed the persistence of ciprofloxacin resistance, despite a 2005 ban on fluoroquinolone use in chickens. Ciprofloxacin resistance also persisted in broilers raised in Denmark after fluoroquinolone use decreased in 2006. Current use of ciprofloxacin in U.S. poultry is unknown, but in Denmark, use in few broiler breeders has been reported.

The role of importation of poultry products as a potential source of resistant strains requires further investigation, the report said.

The broiler industry is collaborating with CIPARS to create a farm surveillance program, which would capture data on antimicrobial drug use and resistance, PHAC said.

Industry welcomes returning ministers

Prime Minister Stephen Harper reappointed Gerry Ritz and Ed Fast to their respective roles of Agriculture Minister and International Trade Minister in his recent cabinet ministry shuffle.

Canada's meat industry associations, including the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and Canadian Meat Council (CMC), congratulated the ministers, who have worked closely with the groups on important trade issues, such as U.S. country of origin labelling (COOL), the completion of a Canada-EU Economic and Trade Agreement and creating new access to Japan and Korea.

"Taking into account the direct relevance of their portfolios to the health of our industry, we are particularly grateful for the return of the Honourable Gerry Ritz as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and of the Honourable Ed Fast as Minister of International Trade," CMC executive director Jim Laws, Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council president and CEO Robin Horel and Further Poultry Processors Association of Canada general manager Robert DeValk stated in a release July 15.

"In addition, we welcome warmly the appointments of the Honourable Rona Ambrose as Minister of Health, of the Honourable Jason Kenney as Minister of Employment and Social Development, and of the Honourable Maxime Bernier as Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture). The portfolio of each minister is important to our industry and we look forward to the continuation of a productive dialogue that is of benefit to Canadian farmers, processors and consumers," added Laws, Horel and DeValk.

The CCA, in a separate release, also congratulated new Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq and Minister of Health Rona Ambrose. The group said it is looking forward to continued collaboration on issues including the Species at Risk Act and a National Conservation Plan with Aglukkaq, and working with Ambrose to achieve the approval of beef irradiation technology to further enhance food safety for consumers and to support Health Canada's work in evaluating approvals of new veterinary medications.

Maple Leaf Foods reports weak Q2

Maple Leaf Foods reported a disappointing second quarter due to poor hog production returns and other market challenges. Net earnings for the second quarter of 2013 were flat, compared to \$26 million during the same period last year.

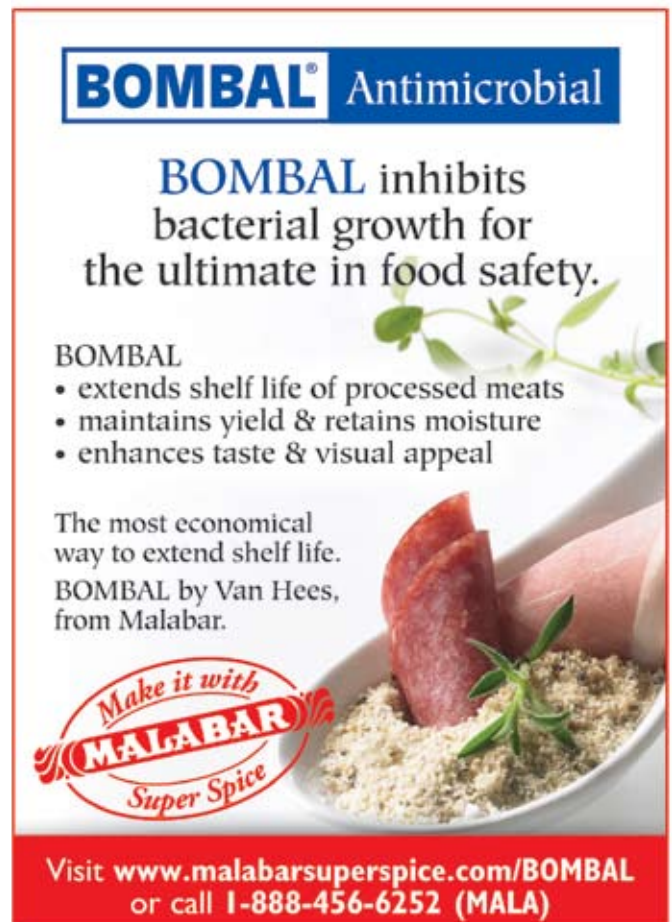
For the first six months, net loss was \$14.7 million compared to net earnings of \$20.2 million last year.

"Market conditions which affected first quarter results continued into the second quarter, although there was material improvement in important areas," Maple Leaf president and CEO Michael McCain said in a release. "Hog production returns, global pork markets and volatile raw material markets all contributed to a material year-over-year earnings decline. This was compounded by the costs of transition and start-ups in our new prepared meat manufacturing and distribution network. These factors more than offset strong growth in prepared meats volumes from earlier in the year and solid improvement in the bakery segment, which we expect will accelerate."

"Market conditions are expected to improve and our commercial fundamentals are good. Overall, we are satisfied with our strategic progress, although we are now at the peak of change and expect earnings volatility through this transition," he added.

The company's sales of \$1,214.2 million for the second quarter declined 3.7 per cent from last year, or 2.2 per cent after adjusting for the impacts of divestitures and foreign exchange. For the first six months sales decreased 3.9 per cent from the prior year to \$2,327.1 million, or 2.3 per cent after adjusting for divestitures and foreign exchange.

Sales in the company's protein division – which includes meat products and agribusiness – declined 4.5 per cent to \$816.7 million from \$855.5 million last year. For the first six months, sales decreased 5.2 per cent to \$1,561.1 million.



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New Generation of Progress

GHG management tool developed by AAFC leading to advances in managing emissions.

CANADIAN FARMERS ARE seeing some significant new advances in understanding, measuring and managing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These will help anchor environmentally sustainable industry practices and generate more efficient and effective production options.

Scientists on the frontlines of this new research say the factors driving these developments are the same ones behind a lot of the progress in sustainable farming systems today. Food marketing is a leading one as brands want to include information on carbon footprint. Demands for sustainable farming systems are another force.

Around the world, the search is on for the most effective ways to measure GHG emissions driven by new interest and capabilities in farm systems modelling. Canada's efforts are centered around a GHG modelling program called Holos.

Holos is simple but sophisticated, a state-of-the-art tool usable by everyone from producers to researchers to industry decision-makers, said Dr. Roland Kroebel, an agro-systems modeller at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Lethbridge, Alta.

"The goal is also to be able to give farmers the best available Canadian data to calculate carbon footprints to choose strategies to improve that footprint," said Dr. Kroebel. "Farmers want to be able to demonstrate they have a sustainable production system. In the longer run we would like to incorporate environmental impact estimates by looking beyond nitrogen surpluses to also include phosphorus, water quality and biodiversity issues."

One source of new data for the Holos tool and related discussions comes from significant progress on the livestock front. Livestock production, particularly with ruminants, is identified as a GHG contributor and there is pressure to find ways to reduce the livestock GHG footprint. Now Canada has taken a major step forward to meet this challenge with a broad science effort that includes a life cycle assessment of GHG emissions from dairy and beef production.

Conducted by AAFC using Holos, these studies take a

comprehensive account of GHG emissions throughout the whole life of cattle. The result is some of the most sophisticated analysis of its kind completed to date anywhere.

"These life cycle assessments provide us with a baseline model of GHG emissions from beef and dairy farms in Canada, along with a greater in-depth perspective on the




"It will help us develop strategies that can help minimize emissions while protecting the high production levels required to meet the demands of feeding a growing world."

— Dr. Karen Beauchemin, lead researcher

efficiency and environmental impact of production as it relates to those emissions," said Dr. Karen Beauchemin of AAFC Lethbridge, a lead researcher in the effort.

"This gives us a clear idea of where we are today. It will help us develop strategies that can help minimize emissions while protecting the high production levels required to meet the demands of feeding a growing world."

A series of articles highlighting the science and progress related to Holos, GHGs and farming is now available in a Special Science Report featured on the Meristem Land and Science website, www.meristem.com. The site delivers regular coverage of new innovations and developments that are driving progress in sustainability. 

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ALBERTA

Cargill donates to High River flood relief efforts

Following the recent floods in the area, Cargill announced a donation of \$250,000 toward relief efforts aimed at helping victims in High River, Alta., and surrounding communities. Additional funding will be available through corporate matching and employee contributions to relief organizations, the company said.

Some of the company's 2,000 employees at its High River beef processing plant were directly impacted by floodwaters. Although Cargill's facility was not directly impacted by the floodwaters, operations there were restricted until the fresh water supply – a key requirement for beef production – was restored.

"We did whatever we could to help those in need, including providing fresh meat, refrigerated trailers for storage, collecting clothing, providing shelter and assisting utilities companies and government agencies in their relief efforts. Our initial priority was focused on the safety and welfare of our employees and their families, and now we are focused on restoring our ability to produce meat as quickly as practical, which will also get our employees back to work serving and supporting our customers," Scott Entz, Cargill's beef plant general manager, said in a release.

Cargill's High River facility, combined with Cargill's Guelph Ont. plant, which processes 1,500 head of cattle per day, make up 55 per cent of the beef processing market in Canada, according to the company's website.

MANITOBA

HyLife Foods teams with refrigeration company to increase exports

As part of an agreement with Manitoba-based pork producer HyLife Foods, Quebec-based refrigeration company Congébec announced a \$6 million expansion of its 312,000-square foot Winnipeg warehouse to help increase exports of Canadian pork.

Congébec's Winnipeg refrigeration facilities are part of a larger \$52 million transaction carried out in February with Westco MultiTemp. That acquisition made Congébec the second largest player in its industry in Canada.

"This agreement reflects a true partnership for growth with our customers and will allow HyLife Foods to increase its pork production," Congébec president Laurier Pedneault stated. "With the expansion of our frozen storage area, HyLife expects to produce 6,200 pigs per day in September."

"Our refrigeration system will have the capacity to freeze eight additional containers of fresh pork every day, representing 400,000 pounds of meat. We will now be equipped to perform at least six trichinella treatments, allowing for export to Russia and Eastern Europe. In total, our Winnipeg facilities will ship 15 containers of pork daily around the globe," he added.

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ONTARIO

Maple Leaf to update Schneiders 401 sign

Maple Leaf Foods will renovate an iconic Schneiders sign along Ontario, 401 Highway, near Highway 6. The sign, constructed in 1961, is known for the Schneiders "Dutch Girl" image and large wooden letters that were physically changed to deliver different commercial messages.

The company did not say specifically that it would keep the Dutch Girl image, which was added to the sign in 1971, but did say "it will display a new look and feel while keeping the heritage of the Schneiders brand that Canadians love."

Maple Leaf Foods bought Schneiders in 2003.

The company said the new sign will be energy efficient and will have interactive features. Also, its time and temperature indicators will operate more reliably.

The company noted that to locals in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, and to pilots flying into Toronto Pearson International Airport, the sign is affectionately known as the "Wiener Beacon."

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

P.E.I. launches premium beef brand

A new certified beef brand for Prince Edward Island was recently launched to increase sales of the province's beef and return premium prices to cattle producers.

"We are very excited to promote this new premium certified beef brand and continue to build our reputation as a producer of high-quality products," PEI Culinary Alliance chef Austin Clement said in a July 9 release. "This brand of certified premium Prince Edward Island beef is as natural a product as you will find."

The new certified brand is a joint initiative of the PEI Culinary Alliance, the PEI Cattle Producers, the Atlantic Beef Products Plant, and the departments of Agriculture and Forestry and Innovation and Advanced Learning.

"Our investment in the development of a premium certified beef brand reflects a strong commitment to create a more profitable beef industry and return higher prices to producers, while supporting rural communities across the province," added Agriculture and Forestry Minister George Webster.

Prince Edward Island Certified Beef will provide a premium to farmers, reflecting the extra care and attention that goes into raising each animal. Achieving the right to sell the exclusive brand requires cattle

producers to meet strict standards that must be certified by the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the PEI Culinary Alliance noted.

"We strive to ensure top quality with each animal we produce. A combination of top-quality feed and small family farms contributes to a wonderful product. I challenge you to find more flavourful beef than Prince Edward Island Certified Beef anywhere," stated cattle producer Darlene Sanford.

The Culinary Alliance is working with Pearse Dolan of Dolan Foods to distribute the brand to high-end restaurants and specialty meat shops in central and western Canada.

"Prince Edward Island beef is an outstanding product that my customers rave about. There is great demand in the marketplace for a purely Prince Edward Island product," Dolan said. "I am proud to bring this product to top restaurants and specialty shops in Canada."

Toronto chef Mark McEwan noted that has long been a proponent of Island beef and offers it in his restaurants.

"I love the story of the Island, you can't find a more pristine environment to grow a potato or raise a steer. The Island is an isolated wonder of nature. Prince Edward Island Certified Beef is a great representation of what a Canadian product should be and it has been so well received," he said.

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Beef Up New Markets

Canadian cattle producers need to shift focus to markets with growing populations and economies.

IN THE FACE of rising feed costs and flat demand in developed markets such as the U.S., Canadian beef producers need to focus on exports to emerging economies to maintain growth, according to BMO Economics.

“Canada’s beef industry will struggle to expand production and sales if it focuses exclusively on traditional markets, such as North America, for its products,” said Aaron Goertzen, an economist with BMO, stated. “It will become increasingly important for the Canadian beef industry to go where the growth is, and that growth, as we’ve seen, is taking place in emerging market economies.”

Goertzen said emerging markets like India and Brazil, with rapidly growing populations and faster economic growth, have steadily increased their beef consumption – a pace that the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization expects will be sustained over the next decade.

Total domestic consumption of beef and veal in India was over 2 million metric tonnes last year – an increase of 73 per cent since 2000, he noted. In Brazil, consumption was nearly 8 million metric tonnes – up 29 per cent. In contrast, Canadians consumed just over 1 million metric tonnes last year.

“It is true that increasing overseas exports is not a

straight-forward undertaking, and that it will depend on domestic and foreign regulatory factors that are outside of the industry’s direct control,” said Goertzen. “However, experience in other countries suggests that it can be done. With countries like Australia and New Zealand exporting beef heavily, it’s also difficult to argue that Canada’s relative isolation – excluding our large neighbour to the south – is a limiting factor.”

Mike Darling, vice-president of the southern Alberta commercial district for BMO Bank of Montreal, added that the agriculture and the livestock sector are key economic drivers in Canada.

“A recent BMO survey found that Canadians love homegrown beef, with more than half frequently purchasing locally produced beef,” he stated. “That being said, while this demand remains crucial, we encourage farmers to remain competitive beyond our borders by increasing productivity and focusing on efficiency through innovation and scale.”

Goertzen emphasized that only the most efficient producers, within Canada and globally, will be able to generate profits reliably in this challenging environment. M

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 - + Dr. Harshavardhan Thippareddi, University of Nebraska
 - + Dr. Ken Petersen and Dr. Mohammad Koochmaraie, IEH Laboratories and Consulting Group
 - + Dr. Kerri Harris, International HACCP Alliance
 - + Dr. Guy Loneragan, Texas Tech University
- *pending final travel approval

FEATURED TOPICS:

- + Pathogenic *E. coli*: Industry Achievements and Challenges
- + Update on Testing for the "Big 6" non-O157 STECs
- + FSIS Test Methods and Sampling Procedures
- + The Big Picture in STEC Research
- + FSIS Policy Update
- + Industry Reactions and Lessons Learned on Non-O157 STECs
- + HACCP Reassessments for STEC
- + Top Tips for Further Processors in 2013
- + Control of *Salmonella* in Beef Processing
- + Lotting, Traceback, and Recall Prevention
- + Validation of Beef Safety Systems

This year, the beef industry faces a new challenge: the addition of six strains of shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC) to the list of organisms considered to be an adulterant in raw, non-intact beef products by USDA/FSIS.

With the implementation of the FSIS testing programs for the organisms on June 4, 2012, the industry is learning more each day about how these organisms, in addition to *E. coli* O157:H7, are controlled by current beef safety systems.

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Optimism at the Farmgate Steady

Hiring plans in 2013 at an all-time high.

By Marilyn Braun-Pollon

THERE ARE MANY factors that impact business optimism and it's often hard to point to one specific factor influencing it more than another. It gets even harder to determine what fuels optimism at the farm gate as we know the weather, global market issues and government policy can all impact how full or empty a producer's glass can be at any given time.

One thing we know for sure is that a healthy agriculture sector is vitally important to the success of communities across Canada. From the local car dealership, to the restaurant or hotel owner, a strong agriculture sector means economic growth and job creation.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) has been measuring small business owners' optimism for years by asking its members about their expected business performance. In 2012, CFIB started releasing national and provincial findings in our Monthly Business Barometer (MBB) and agri-business findings in our Monthly Agriculture Business Barometer (MABB). Measured on a scale between zero 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. Optimism levels between 65 and 70 are usually seen when the economy is growing at its potential.

CFIB's recent barometer shows agri-business confidence in June at 55.9, which is behind the national Business Barometer Index of 59.4 (optimism for small and medium-sized business owners across all sectors). Nationally, small business confidence fell sharply in June, and is now at its lowest point since 2009.

The agri-business index of 55.9 is down from this year's peak of 62.0 in February, reflecting the seasonal trend for agricultural optimism. But unlike the national index, agricultural optimism remains well above levels seen in 2009.

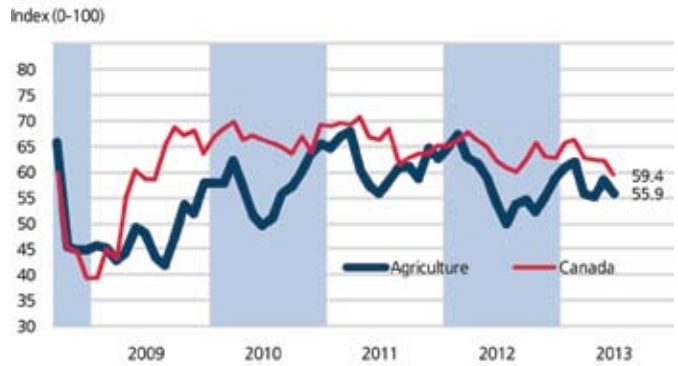
A bright spot in agriculture is the general state of business health, with 51 per cent of Canadian agri-business owners rating it as good, well above the national MBB average of 40 per cent, and better than any other sector in Canada. Since 2009, agri-business owners rating of their business's health has improved – up 20 points from February 2009 when only 31 per cent rated their business as good.

In line with improved business health, agri-businesses' hiring plans reached an all time high in 2013, with 26 per cent of agri-business owners in May reporting plans to increase their full-time employment in the next three to four months.

Despite improved business health and hiring plans, agri-business owners face significant cost constraints, and limitations on their sales and production growth, which point to factors dampening the agricultural optimism this year.

The top cost pressures for agri-business owners are: fuel/energy, input costs, and taxes/regulations. The top operating challenges are: foreign competition, insufficient domestic demand, and the shortage of skilled labour.

Agri-business Confidence June 2013



Given the shortage of labour, CFIB is disappointed with the recent decision by the federal government to restrict many aspects of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. It is pretty evident small business owners are being punished because big business abused the system. While pleased the Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program and other primary agricultural occupations will be largely unaffected by the reforms, we still have concerns with the National Commodities List for Agricultural workers, which does not cover sectors also facing acute labour shortages, such as grain farming, meat processing.

CFIB recently surveyed its 7,200 farm members on how government policy could help make the farm sector more competitive and found the top three priorities included: focusing on regulatory reform and reducing red tape, reducing the total tax



A bright spot in agriculture is the general state of business health, with 51 per cent of Canadian agri-business owners rating it as good...

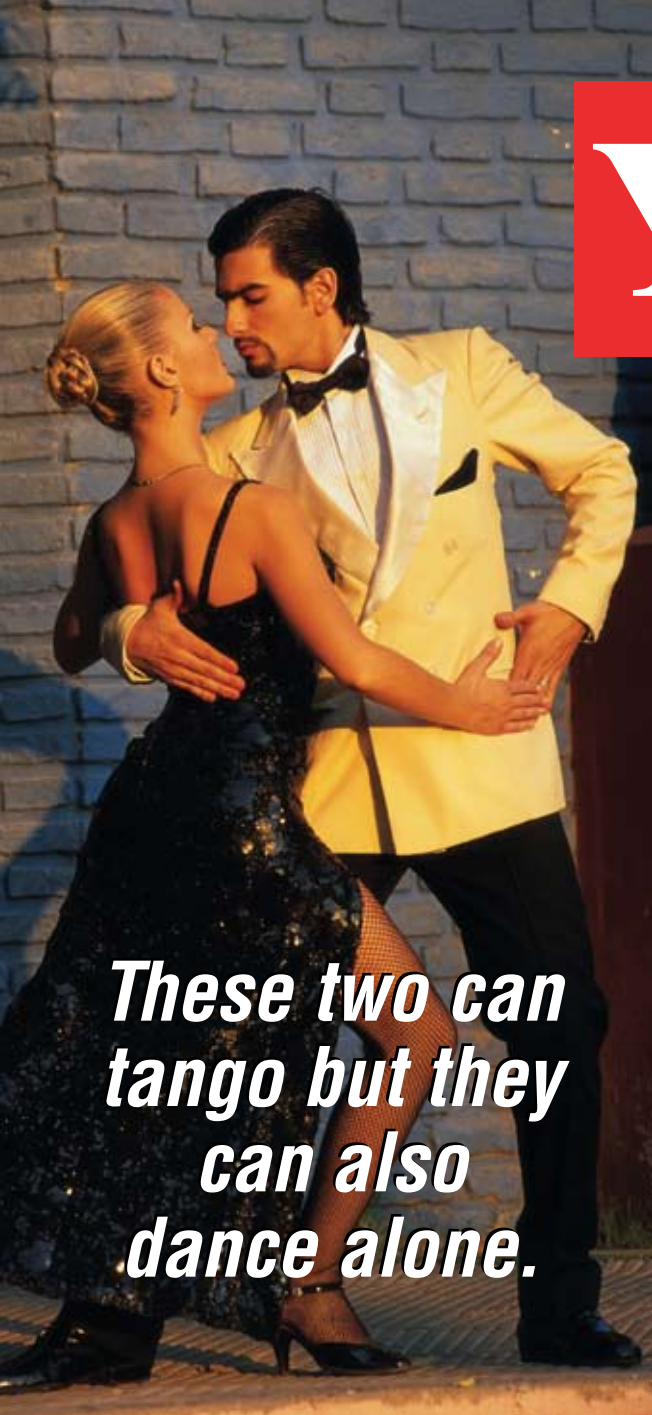
burden, and improving market access for Canadian agricultural products. While we recognize governments cannot solve many of the global market issues facing farmers, they can certainly take steps to improve the tax and regulatory environment in which agri-business owners operate.

The recent annual meeting of the federal, provincial and territorial agriculture ministers showed some promising signs. A strong commitment was made to stand up for Canadian cattle/hog producers against the harmful U.S. country of origin labelling, as well as looking at ways to improve the regulatory environment for the Ag sector.

We all know farmers are resilient, however governments at all levels must ensure their policies fuel, not dampen optimism in the agriculture sector. Next time you hear about a policy that is bad for farmers or small business, pay attention – it will have an effect on your business and the entire Canadian economy. [M](#)



Marilyn Braun-Pollon is vice-president, prairie and agri-business with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), Canada's largest association of small- and medium-sized businesses. She can be reached at mssask@cfib.ca.



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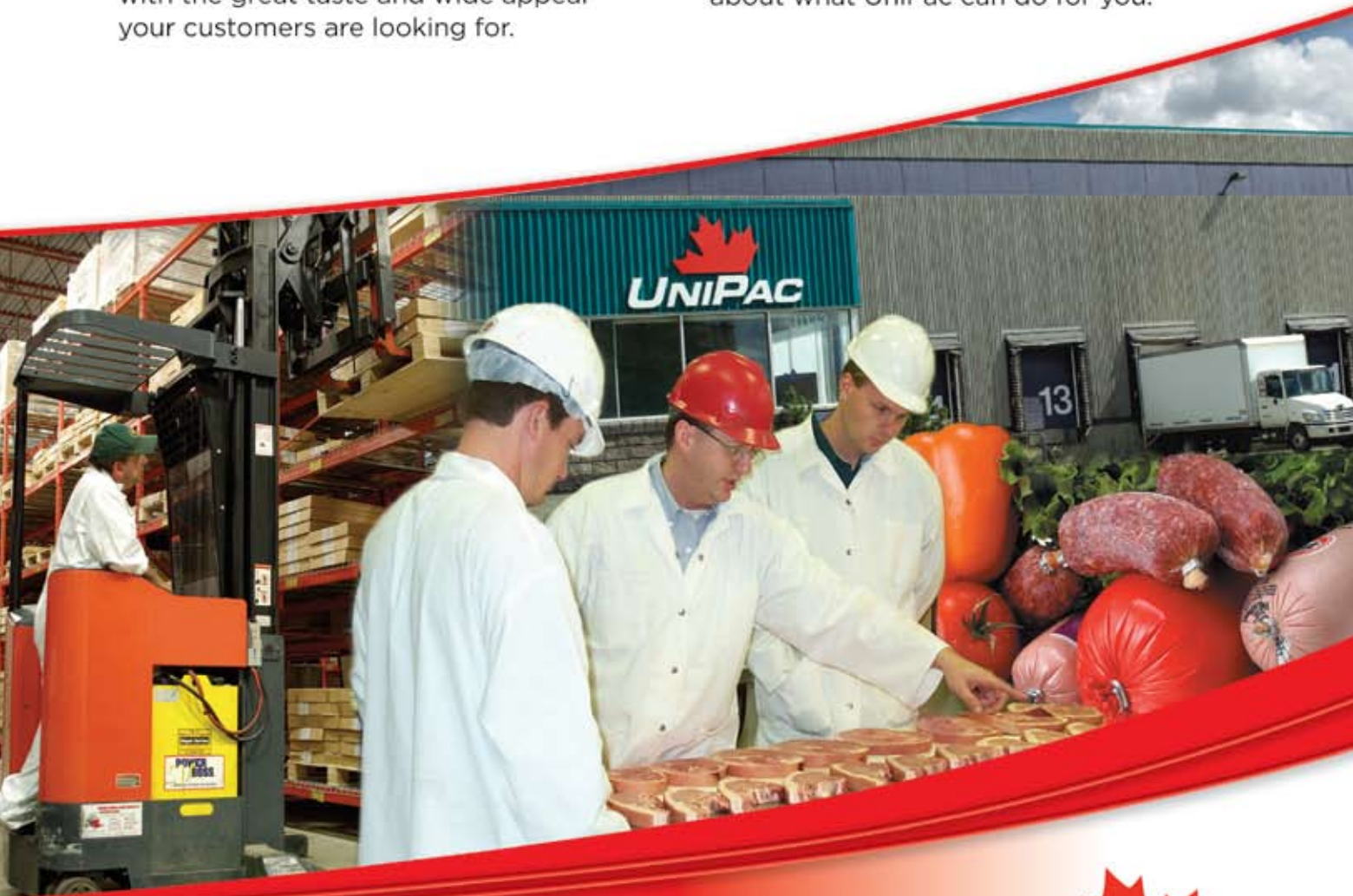
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