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*Hong Nguyen, general manager,
Edmonton North Location*

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Luck, Work, Perseverance

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in the specialty food market*

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publisher's perspective

Food Waste has Solutions



Food waste is one of the most serious problems faced by advanced societies. The facts are astounding: 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted annually worldwide, approximately one-third of the food produced for human consumption. In developed countries, like Canada, more than 40 per cent of food losses occur at retail and consumer levels which translates, in our case, into more than \$31 billion.

This is why the recent launch of Loop by Terracycle is so important and why, here in Canada, the country's largest grocery retailer — Loblaw — has got on board. Beginning in early 2020, Toronto pilot participants will be able to receive select products from President's Choice and other leading national brands in reusable containers, delivered right to their doors.

Loop was announced at the World Economic Forum in January 2019 by TerraCycle and its founding brands, like Western Canada's Nature's Path. The Loop model is made possible through the commitment of its founding brand partners to develop a more circular supply chain from packaging design to manufacturing through to consumer use. Nature's Path estimates that 100 reuses of one reusable jar of its granola will save over nine pounds of waste generated from 100 boxes of granola.

Loop is the first-ever global platform to partner with brands and retailers to offer consumers a way to go from disposability to durability with their purchases. It enables consumers to responsibly consume a variety of commonly used products in customized, brand-specific durable packaging that is delivered in a specially designed reusable shipping tote. When finished with the product, the packaging is collected, cleaned, refilled and reused — creating a revolutionary circular shopping system.

One of the potential drawbacks to the success of the Loop program is that it will likely require the consumer to pay a fee, something they are loathe to do. A study released by Dalhousie University showed that while 93.1 per cent of Canadians want the problem with plastic packaging to be resolved, only 23.2 per cent of them would accept paying a fee to a food company for reusable packaging. Perhaps that is why Loblaw decided on a pilot at first instead of a fully committed nationwide initiative.

It is clear we will be seeing a lot more of these type of initiatives in the years to come. Indeed, many jurisdictions have already made a commitment to eliminating single-use plastics. So let's cheer them on...because food waste is a problem that must be solved!

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NOW Health Group Announces Peter Wardell to Lead Puresource, the Company's Canadian Division



Peter Wardell

NOW Health Group, a leading independent and family-owned manufacturer, distributor and retailer of natural products in North America, welcomes Peter Wardell as Country Leader of Puresource, the company's Canadian distribution and manufacturing division. He replaces Mark Chilvers, who retired after many successful years of service with the company.

Wardell brings nearly two decades of experience in both for-profit and non-profit organizations, most recently with Health First Network in Ontario. He has an undergraduate degree with a dual major in Business Management and Marketing from Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario and a B.B.A. in Business Management and Marketing from Northwood University in West Palm Beach, Florida.

"With unique business acumen and strategic competencies, coupled with a zest for entrepreneurial drive, Peter has the strong ability and desire to think differently, and make vision reality," said Jim Emme, NOW Health Group CEO. "His commitment to the healthy lifestyle industry is a great fit for our organization, and we're very pleased to welcome him to the NOW team."

Ocean Brands Secures Rigorous B Corp Certification

Ocean Brands, a leading supplier of canned seafood, under the Gold Seal and Ocean's brands, has officially become a Certified B Corporation. Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and accountability to balance profit and purpose. B-Corps are accelerating a global cultural shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

As a B Corp, Ocean Brands measures and manages the impact of its business on its workers, community and the



environment, with as much rigor as it manages and monitors its profits. Ocean Brands now joins the rapidly growing movement of more than 2800 Certified B Corporations from 150 industries, across 60 countries. These companies share a unifying purpose to use business as a force for good.

"Working at Ocean Brands is about building something bigger than ourselves," said Ocean Brands President, Ian Ricketts. "Business will only be successful long-term when we build value for consumers that also helps solve the biggest social and environmental issues of our day. Canadians can be assured when they purchase Gold Seal and Ocean's branded seafood, they are supporting a company that is making positive change for the environment and its employees."

Happy Planet and Farafena Announce Partnership

Vancouver-based companies, Happy Planet and Farafena have joined forces to bring ethically-sourced superfoods to consumers across Canada. In a new initiative led by Happy Planet aimed at supporting communities around the planet through ethical sourcing, Farafena's sustainably farmed Baobab and Moringa powder harvested by women smallholder farmers in Mali and Malawi are being blended into Happy Planet's smoothies.

Farafena's Founder, Oumar Barou Togola says of the partnership, "Our community development missions and values addressing healthier and equitable food options to the world, align perfectly with Happy Planet's vision for creating a happier planet through feel-good food and ethical sourcing. It was a natural partnership and we are excited to continue to expand the reach of our products through different channels."

Happy Planet has launched, "The Happy Effect" promotion giving one consumer and guest a chance to win a trip for two to Mali, Africa, to experience the Baobab harvesting celebrations in January 2020. The Baobab harvest celebrations are a culmination of a year of hard work during which the female farmers celebrate the fruits of their labour. As one of the most nutrient-dense fruits in the world, Baobab is a prehistoric species that has adapted over time to survive the dry and arid African savannah.



Second Annual Share It Forward Event Benefits Western Canadian Food Banks

After the success of the inaugural Share It Forward event last summer, Save-On-Foods is at it again. The seven-day event saw 50 per cent of the net proceeds of every Western Family product sold at Save-On-Foods, PriceSmart Foods and Urban Fare stores, up to \$300,000, donated directly to support local food banks in Western Canada. Share It Forward ran Thursday, June 13th to Wednesday, June 19th, 2019.

"This marks our second year running this initiative and with a longer event period, and an even bigger commitment, Save-On-Foods together with our Western Family partners, looks forward to giving back to our local community food banks once again," said Save-On-Foods President Darrell Jones.

For more than 100 years, Save-On-Foods has been a passionate supporter of children and families in Western Canada. Annual donations of food and consumer goods worth more than \$3 million are distributed to local food banks, along with hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash raised through community and store fundraisers. The company's goal with the second Share It Forward event is to raise up to an additional \$300,000 for local food banks, keeping these donations in the same communities where they were raised.



(L-R) Dylan Beechey, co-founder & director of operations and Oumar Barou Togola, founder, executive chairman, Farafena

IDDBA Grows the Future with a Successful Show

IDDBA 19 WAS HELD JUNE 2-4 AT THE ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER, ORLANDO, FL.

With a record-breaking attendance consisting of companies, qualified buyers, merchandisers, executives, manufacturers, brokers, distributors, and other industry professionals who gathered to connect and learn. The event offered an abundance of educational experiences from actionable merchandising ideas and new products to presentations from influencers and experts, with more opportunities to grow your business than ever before.

The speaker lineup included influencers, leaders, and entrepreneurs who provided attendees with a powerful learning experience and offered them key business takeaways, consisting of Rick Findlay, Kevin Ryan, Christina Tosi, Seth Godin, Dave Donnan, Terry Soto, Mike Eardley, Laila Ali, Michael J. Fox, Barb Stuckey, and Rob Lowe.

The 2019 Chairman's Award recognizes a lifetime of service and contribution to the industry and honours those who have led with vision and dedication. Rick Findlay proudly presented the award to Rick Goodman, chief marketing officer/executive vice-president of Eddy Packing, for the



invaluable work and commitment he has put in towards the industry. The New Product Showcase was a destination for attendees looking for unique and innovative trends all in one place. Exhibitors had the opportunity to personally merchandise in this special display. Attendees got an all-encompassing look at the newest cutting-edge products, packaging, and services.

Another exciting learning opportunity was Expert Neighborhood where attendees had one-on-one consultations with experts from various industries. Questions about leadership, new retail, regulations, and marketing were answered through these appointments. Experts included CEOs, entrepreneurs, authors, and specialists who have the experience and knowledge of navigating through business challenges. What's in Store Live presented fresh examples of how businesses can engage and appeal to customers through merchandising ideas, concepts, and demonstrations. Trends and research were depicted through displays using real products from our sponsors. Leading up to the show, teams of dedicated volunteers donated months of their time and talent to create the amazing merchandising concepts displayed throughout What's in Store Live. From pairing ideas to customized meal kit options, these concepts helped attendees experience out-of-the-box approaches and learn new ways they can engage shoppers.

Next year's event is in Indianapolis, IN, May 31-June 2, for IDDBA 20.

TransCold Appoints Felicella as Director of Sales

Marco Felicella, formerly Unilever Customer Team Leader, has been appointed as Director of Sales in Canada for TransCold Distribution Ltd.

As director, Felicella is responsible for providing strategic sales leadership and direction to grow revenue and market share in Canada. He will drive efforts to secure new business, meet and exceed sales targets and lead the execution of vendor programs and campaigns.



Marco Felicella



Correction Notice:

In the last issue of Western Grocer magazine Lowe Mechanical Services was incorrectly referred to as Lowe Canada. Our sincere apologies for this error.

events calendar

September 12-15, 2019

CHFA East

Metro Toronto Convention Centre,
South Building, Toronto, ON

For more info: <https://chfa.ca>

October 22-23, 2019

Grocery Innovations Canada

Toronto Congress Centre, Toronto, ON

For more info:

<https://groceryinnovations.cfg.ca>

February 20-23, 2020

CHFA West

Vancouver Convention Centre,
West Building, Vancouver, BC

For more info: <https://chfa.ca>

April 15-17, 2020

SIAL Canada

Palais de Congr s, Montreal, QC

For more info: <https://sialcanada.com>

April 27-28, 2020

Grocery & Specialty Food West

Vancouver Convention Centre,
East Building, Vancouver, BC

For more info: <https://gsfshow.com>

May 31-June 2, 2020

IDDBA 20

TBD

Indianapolis, IN, USA

For more info: www.iddba.org

April 26-27, 2020

Bakery Showcase 2020

Toronto Congress Centre
Toronto, ON

For more info: <https://baking.ca>

Mondelez International Delivers Strong Progress Against Its Sustainable and Mindful Snacking Goals

Mondelez International has published its 2018 Impact Progress Report, announcing significant progress against its 2020 Impact Goals. The report highlights how the world's leading snacking company met a major well-being target, achieving 15 per cent of net revenue from portion control snacks, two years ahead of expectations. The significant progress Mondelez International continues to deliver against its Impact goals demonstrates the company's mission to lead the future of snacking by creating snacks the right way for both people and planet.



The report also describes advancements against Mondelez International's 2020 sustainable agriculture and environmental footprint goals to combat deforestation while protecting land rights and human rights and scale these efforts in areas where they can have the greatest positive impact.

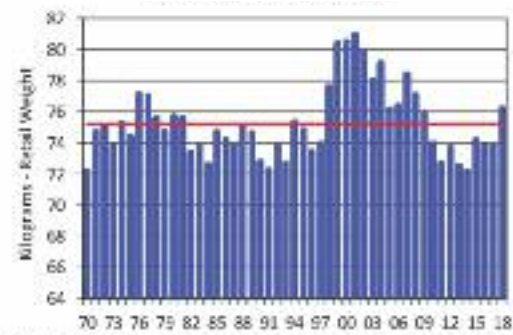
The company is also sourcing 43 per cent of cocoa for chocolate brands through its signature cocoa sustainability program, Cocoa Life, in 2018 - including all of Cadbury Dairy Milk in Canada. In addition, the company has continued to play a significant role in creating a sustainable palm oil supply chain by accelerating action against plantation companies contributing to deforestation.



Canadian Meat Consumption Up in 2018 With Larger Supplies

Statistics Canada has published 2018 consumption data showing per capita beef consumption up one per cent at 18 kg (retail weight) and up four per cent from the low of 17.29 kg in 2015. Per capita pork consumption was up 4.2 per cent at 16.5 kg (retail weight) and poultry was up 4.1 per cent at 42 kg.

Canadian Per Capita Total Meat Consumption



With gains across the board in every meat category, total per capita meat consumption was up 3.3 per cent to 76 kg, exceeding the long-term average of 75 kg. This is largest year-over-year increase since 1999, and the largest per capita meat consumption since 2008.

On a value basis, beef continues to account for the largest share of meat expenditures. However, that share was down from 44 per cent in 2017 to 42 per cent in 2018, while poultry was up from 32.5 per cent to 33 per cent and pork up from 23 per cent to 25 per cent. The decline in beef expenditures was driven by lower deflated retail beef prices.



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Luck, Work, Perseverance

How One Family Found Success in the Specialty Food Market

Lucky Supermarket headquartered in Edmonton, Alberta, is a Canadian independent grocery store specializing in products from all over Asia such as Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Korea, Japan, and China. The family-owned and operated business was started by Ba Nguyen, his wife Diep and late father Cau almost 38 years ago. Today, they have seven store locations in total, across three provinces — in Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia and 700 employees combined.

Ba Nguyen and his wife along with their seven children and members of his extended family fled Vietnam in 1979 by boat during the Communist takeover. They spent whatever they had so that they could passage out of Vietnam. They ended up in Malaysia but lost their son who was two at the time during the voyage to get there. They stayed in the refugee camps for one year where the conditions were very tough as there was not much to

eat or even water to drink. After a year, they received sponsorship from Canada. Once in Canada they settled in Edmonton.

Ba worked long hours as a janitor to support the family while Diep cut mushrooms for packaging. Cau and his wife Ngan took care of their grandchildren while Ba and Diep were at work. After a lot of hard work and





long hours Ba, Diep and Cau had some savings and were able to get a loan to open up their first business. The first store opened in 1982. It was 500 square feet and it was the first Vietnamese grocery store in Edmonton. Shortly afterwards

the store expanded to 1,000 square feet. Ba, Diep and Cau worked endlessly at the store and Ba and Diep's children would come help after school. To this day it still remains a family business. The seven store locations are all managed by

Ba and Diep's six children.

The company mandate is to provide their customers with the best shopping experience possible through quality products, everyday low prices and exceptional customer service.

What are the key factors to Lucky Supermarket's success? What is the company's business plan? How do they continue to grow? First, let's look at the marketplace.

According to a 2016 Statistic's Canada report one half of the foreign-born residents who live in Canada were born in Asia. Between 2001-2005, 60 per cent of immigrants were from Asia and from 2006-2011 the figure fell slightly to 56.9 per cent. To break it down further, between 2006-2011, out of all the immigrants that arrived in Canada, 13 per cent were from the Philippines and 10.5 per cent were from China.

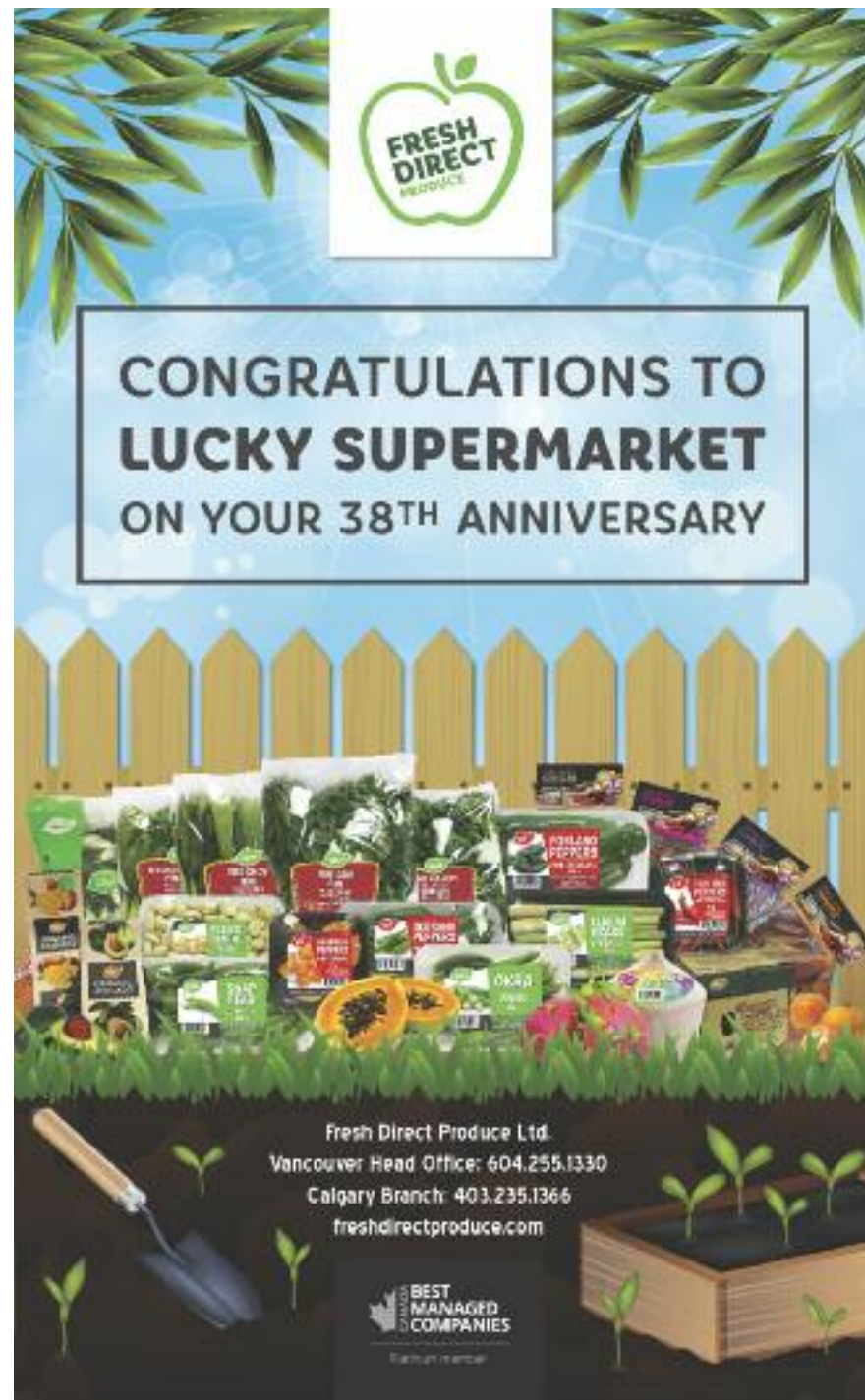
These consumers are looking to recreate the flavours they remember once enjoying



Hong Nguyen, general manager, Edmonton North Location

in their homeland. Ba and Diep's youngest daughter Hong Nguyen is the general manager of the Edmonton North location. "The Asian customers know their brands. They want the brands that they recognize from home," says Hong. Lucky Supermarket, Edmonton North with 52,000 square feet of store space and 145 employees "When they recognize the brand they are familiar with, they will buy it," she continues, "Developing and sustaining a memorable brand is a valuable asset when it comes to attracting and retaining customers."

"Being away from Vietnam was hard on my family. They really craved their homeland food," says Hong. "We were the first Vietnamese grocer in Edmonton, and we were an instant success!"



“My dad still checks on the Edmonton stores on a daily basis ensuring operations are running smoothly. He checks to make sure all the shelves are stocked and remembers all of the skus,” Hong says citing that her parents are still actively involved in the business. “My mom likes to visit the produce department and make sure everything is packaged properly.” But today, the Nguyen children have become a crucial part in running the day-to-day operations, as the company had grown and expanded.



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Lucky Supermarket has a total of seven stores all run and operated by the Nguyen children in Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba. The stores range from 25,000 to 52,000 square feet of space. In Alberta they have two Edmonton and two Calgary locations. The Sunridge Calgary location is the newest store in Alberta that recently opened last year and is the largest Asian supermarket in the city. The Surrey store is the first British Columbia location and recently opened last year. In Manitoba there are two locations in Winnipeg.

“Our target market has changed over the years,” says Hong, “We have more diverse ethnicities of customers other than Asian. They want ethnic food from their countries,” Hong says, “Having the selection and variety for our customers is the key.”



Each store has a different merchandise strategy. For example, the Edmonton North store carries 60 per cent Asian products, 15 per cent Western and 25 per cent other ethnic products. Both the Asian products and the other ethnic products fall in-line with the community and neighbourhood each individual store is located in.

The Asian food category is very broad and selected accordingly. The Lucky 97 Supermarket in downtown Edmonton is mostly home to customers born in China and Vietnam. This is the very first location and is still called by its original name, Lucky 97 Supermarket. The Edmonton North store caters to a more Filipino population.



Similarly, for other ethnic products the Edmonton North store caters to mostly customers born in the Mediterranean, while the Lucky 97 Supermarket caters to customers from African countries.

All shoppers are looking for convenience and eating fresh. What makes Lucky Supermarket stand out from the other grocery stores is the fresh produce flown in weekly from different countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, India, Dominican Republic and Hawaii. The selections of fruits, vegetables and herbs is extensive and unique. Rambutan, mangosteen, jackfruit, okra, malongai, curry leaf, banana blossom to name a few can be found at all the stores.

Canadians are long familiar with Chinese food, but now with such a wide variety of Asian restaurants to eat at the palate is broadening.

“Today, people are more open to try different types of foods,” observes Hong. “Where Generation X will try to recreate their favourite foods from restaurants, millennials want quick and easy prepared food and convenience of eating out.”

“We try to cater to our customers by bringing more easy and convenient food options such as pre-cut vegetables and meal kits,” Hong says.

So, what are some of the top selling items? “Fast food pho noodles, oranges and exotic fruits, fresh meat and wide varieties of frozen seafood from overseas,” says Lisa Chuong, manager



of the Edmonton North store. Lisa started with the company in 1994, as a cashier.

Kiet Ly, manager of the Forest Lawn Calgary and the Sunridge Calgary location has worked with the company for the past 11 years and was promoted to manager last year. He points to some additional top sellers. “Rice and noodles. Those are the



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two extremely important items that cannot be missed in the Asian family meal. All the Asian fresh fruits such as rambutan, fresh durian, and mangoes. These are fruits that our valued customers are waiting for daily. And our really competitive prices on yellow bananas and oranges have made these the most popular fruits in our stores.”

Hong says another key factor in the Lucky Supermarket business success is price. “Now with seven stores we bring in more volume of these products. Containers or truck loads. This is how we keep our prices competitive.”

Lucky Supermarket gears their advertising toward their markets demographically. The Baby Boomer

generation still like their weekly in-store flyers, although Hong sees traditional advertising changing.

For Generation X and millennials, the weekly flyer is posted on the company website. As for social media Lucky Supermarkets uses Facebook and Instagram to capture food shots and events.

In-store events are done twice a year. Every store has a big anniversary event, followed by a customer appreciation event six months later. “We have a good sale with hot sale items. We have lucky draws with gift cards or Ipads or even televisions as prizes,” Hong says.

As for in-store promotions Hong points to product giveaways, so customers can try the product and cook with it at home before buying. This is especially helpful in new stores or regions such as Surrey, British Columbia.

While Lucky Supermarket helped to guide their customers in Alberta toward brands, customers outside of the province have already been exposed to other brands, by shopping at other stores in their province. So the company can do two things: convert the customer to one of their existing brands or bring in the brands

the customer wants.

And giving back to the community is something the store takes part in all years long with donations, prizes and even sponsorships for various local charities and events.

And then there is staff engagement, which is vital for any company to avoid staff turnover. Ly sums it up nicely, “As employees we are valued by Lucky Supermarket. Keeping staff happy means they will enjoy their work.”

Pay for employees is competitive with other grocery stores. Full-time workers receive a health benefits package. All employees receive a 10 per cent off discount.

Hong says flexibility in work hours is what employees value



most. “We try to be fair. Employees are not just scheduled just on day shifts or evening shifts. There is a rotating schedule to ensure work-life balance. And if someone wants to book a weekend off, they can, because we have enough employees.”

Hong says another reason Lucky Supermarket needs to remain flexible is that many of the workers may have two even three jobs that they work, in order to keep up in today’s economy.

Every year the company hosts a Christmas party. And unlike many retailers who wait until January for this party, to get through busy December, Lucky Supermarket hosts their Christmas party in the first week of December to put everyone in the spirit. Parties are held regionally, so employees can meet and interact with fellow workers from other local stores.

“Our company is proud to have many employees, especially in the Edmonton area, where it all began, celebrating 10 or even 20-year work anniversaries with us,” says Hong.





operating system to help improve efficiencies, thus ensuring more consistency and sustainability, within the business as a whole,” Hong says.

“We are beginning to create systems and processes for the entire business that will essentially allow our father to retire peacefully, knowing that his reputation and business legacy are in good hands. “



And there are additional pluses. “When our staff are happy it shows. They treat our customers well,” says Hong, knowing the full value of her statement. “All a customer has to experience is one bad day of service! If this happens, the customer has the choice to shop somewhere else.”

And good customer service helps to build relationships and trust. “We often have customers come in with recipes and we help them look for the products. And we even give them instruction of how to

cook,” says Chuong.

What does the future look like for Lucky Supermarket? Over the next five years they would like to focus on their current stores, streamlining procedures, while continuing to add new and exciting products from abroad to their shelves.

There will also be a transition. “We would like to shift away from separate operating stores to a more centralized

From a 500 square foot shop introducing Asian foods to an inter-provincial grocery store chain, Lucky Supermarket have proven that luck is possible through hard work and perseverance. ●

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BACK TO SCHOOL

By Western Grocer Staff

Back to School

Lets Customers Reset
Their Food Choices and Gives
Grocers the Opportunity to Play
a Part in Their Fresh Start

New Beginnings

Let's face it: parents have one of the most difficult jobs in the world and often struggle to find the right balance between giving their kids the foods they want and ensuring that what's in their lunch box meets the criteria for healthy food.

And no matter the food category — from protein to fruit and everything in between — the movement away from sugar heavy, allergen loaded, and empty calorie foods has become the expectation. It's a difficult balance too for retailers to provide what consumers want and need while also ensuring diversity but, it's essential to get it right. What happens the week before, and week of, back-to-school often sets the tone for what student taste buds and purchaser habits will be like for the remainder of the year. Retailers need to ensure their product mixes align with shopper insights including today's concern with allergies or dietary needs. Dairy, wheat, nuts, food colour are still a problem for many children. Almost 500,000 Canadian children under the age of 18 have food allergies. Categories such as juice, bread, granola bars are being substituted for options such as water, whole grain wraps and nuts/seeds that contain nutritional benefits. These choices, along with products with simpler ingredients, continue to grow.

Parents can turn to Canada's new Food Guide to help them make the right decisions. But while the new Guide appears to emphasize plant-based proteins, it is incorrect to think that animal proteins are being discouraged. Far from it. Beef, for example, is one of nature's most dense sources of protein and a champion for energy and cognitive development in children. Joyce Parslow, executive director of marketing and consumer relations for Canada Beef, is providing inspiration for families at the store level. "Meal-kitting is ever popular now — so presenting

photo courtesy shutterstock.com

www.westerngrocer.com 21

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beef as a meal idea in-store offers folks not only the meal inspiration, but with the convenience of one-stop shopping at the meat counter,” she says, pointing to displays that have a recipe card series throughout the store with all the ingredients in one place. “You could have seasonings or marinades made up in-store to add another element of convenience for families.”

When it comes to great beef options for busy families, Parslow suggests grocers promo ground beef, which can be cooked in bulk and ready to add to rice, pasta sauces, and soups, as well as tender lean oven roasts like striploin and tenderloin which are easy to cut and require virtually no trimming before slicing for lunches. Leftover steak or roast beef is a terrific salad topper too – add to a Greek, Caesar, or Cobb salad or paired with a grain and/or lentil salad for a way to make salads protein-rich. With the rise in popularity of Mason



Canada Beef has recipes for mason jar stacked salads for consumers to use as inspiration.

jar stacked salads, Canada Beef has produced a recipe series for grocery stores (materials can be co-branded) to give shoppers some trendy and tasty inspiration.

Back to school marks significant opportunities for retailers to win consumers over as their lives get back to a routine after the disruption of summer holidays and the kids being off. It means restocking the pantry — and it goes beyond just kids’ lunches — it’s about getting all the essentials back in the house and this creates a huge opportunity for retailers to get consumers to try new products, as well as become long-term customers.

“When I was in retail we use to say that there were two times per year where you could influence change in consumer behaviour and that was in September (back to school) and in January (the other back to school),” states Anthony Morello of Aurora Importing.

One way to do this, he says, is to display, display, display. “This is not a time for clean floor policies. This is a time to merchandise with creativity, demo like crazy, and educate consumers on the what and why to your hero products,” explains Morello. “Attractive displays that are well priced will create massive impulse sales opportunities and perhaps even influence a consumer to switch grocery stores. This is a time to really go after new customers.”

He points to their Locker Wafer school bus display, which promotes the premium Italian cookies in a way that will drive those sought-after impulse sales during the back to school season, and beyond.

With customers seeing September as a reset button, merchandising new ideas and products can help grocers take advantage



Aurora Importing advises to merchandise with creativity with displays and demos.

of consumers’ need for fresh starts.

Back to school needs brain power, and nothing provides growing minds with the Omega 3-6 balance it needs more than hemp. This plant-based protein comes in many forms making it easy for families to integrate into their back to school routine.

“One of the easiest ways is in smoothies. You can use a flavoured or natural hemp protein and or/hemp seeds (natural or flavoured). Kids love them and it adds so much value to their health,” says Bryan Carson of Naturally Splendid Enterprises Ltd. Adding their Natera Hemp Hearts can also be sprinkled on cereals, soups or on top of sushi or salad.

Targeting Gen Z

Gen Z, the generation born in the late 1990s and onwards, is heading back to campus this fall, and according to Jessica Garisto, marketing coordinator for SodaStream, they put sustainability high on their list of concerns, and many are leading the charge against disposable straws, bags, utensils, and water bottles. Add to that the desire to drink more water versus juice or sugary pop, and SodaStream is a dorm dream.

SodaStream is the largest sparkling water brand in Canada with a 35 per cent share of the total sparkling water category in Canada, in tonnage. In fact, SodaStream litres grew +43 per cent in 2018 while the packaged sparkling water category increased by less than half that rate (according to Nielsen, Nat’l ex Nfld, p52wks to Dec 2018 vs. SodaStream combined Canadian national retailer POS data, 2018).

The beauty of the brand is the ability to create the flavours and formats consumers want, when they want. Currently, organic and better-for-you options are topping the water bottle list. As a result, SodaStream recently launched Soda Press, an organic line of flavours and Soda Press Kombucha, a make-at-home Kombucha that does not require any refrigeration.

They also launched new Peach & Grapefruit Fruit Drop varieties into the fast-growing flavoured water segment. These flavours are all-natural and contain zero calories, each bottle making 20 litres of refreshing, tinted, unsweetened sparkling water.

Merchandising and promoting SodaStream sparkling water makers as an essential part of dorm life and back to school routines will help create relevancy with these demanding consumers while building transaction dollars.



Available in 6 Flavours

- ✓ Red Velvet
- ✓ Vanilla Chai Cheesecake
- ✓ Chocolate Maple Hazelnut
- ✓ Supergreens with Moringa
- ✓ Tropical Mango
- ✓ Blueberry Lemon



Made in Canada

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- ✓ No Added Sugar
- ✓ Gluten Free
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Naturally Splendid also offers up a convenient, and tasty, hemp-based bar options. Currently, their Key to Life Bar taking the market by storm — it was nominated Product of the Year by the BC Food Processors Association — thanks to it being full of hemp goodness, being keto and paleo friendly, dairy free, non-GMO, and only having one gram of sugar.

For smaller fingers, bites fit the bill. As a co-packer Naturally Splendid has already created a name for itself. “Being healthy doesn’t have to be hard. Most people just need to know how to do that and with what.”

For that reason, Carson encourages retailers to learn about Naturally Splendid’s products, demo, and offer bulk back to school deals. “People want to eat healthy; they sometimes just need the retailers to educate them on how to do that easily. We have had great success in bringing dieticians and nutritionists in to do workshops for customers.

The Key to Life Bar from Naturaly Splendid is keto and paleo friendly, dairy free, non-GMO and has only one gram of sugar.



Community, connection, and value-added; you can’t go wrong.”

Other areas of growth include sushi, bento boxes, rice bowls, salad bowls and pho in lunch choices along with hot trends like hummus packs, fruit sauce pouches, meat and cheese packs, healthy chips (kale, coconut) seaweed snacks and kombucha. There is a decline in soft drinks and milk as they are replaced with water, sparkling water, sparkling tea and almond milk, generally in reusable containers.

Merchandising that anticipates needs helps parents deal with their ongoing challenges of allergies, diversity and healthier options and will go a long way to establish behaviours for the coming year of school lunch and snacking purchases. By becoming a helpful resource in the snack and lunch space, retailers make themselves a partner in family shopping.

Back to school is a time for fresh starts — from new binders, books, and pencils, to renewed takes on break-fasts, lunches, and after-school



snacks. Whether kids are in pre-k or heading off to college, what’s not new is families wanting no fuss, fresh, and wholesome options front and centre in stores so they can quickly check things off their list before the hectic fall schedule ensues. ●

Aurora Importing and Faema Canada kick off Italian Heritage Month

While live musicians entertained, dozens of people, glasses of wine or beer in hand, chatted and browsed, sampling a delectable array of Italian dishes. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, like a celebration with friends and family — and in so many ways, that’s exactly what it was at Pranzo Canadese.

On May 30th, Aurora Importing and Faema Canada kicked off Italian Heritage Month at Faema Canada’s dazzling showroom, culinary academy, and head office in Toronto.

“It’s about celebrating all things Italian that we have here in Canada and, for Italians, food, family, friends, and the festa [party] are the threads that weave our culture,” says Anthony Morello, president of Aurora Importing. “It is about coming together as a family regardless of ethnicity, religious beliefs, or any other social borders that exist today to enjoy the simplicity, authenticity, versatility, and taste of the foods we import and we sell.”

In the open kitchen, chefs prepared and served Manoucher bread, baked up crispy, then sliced open and stuffed with fresh and preserved vegetables, while another chef dished up beautifully saucy polenta right from the board. The antipasto table was a breathtaking bounty of colour and textures, with heaping bowls of Aurora’s premium pantry products, such as artichoke hearts, asparagus pesto, capers, roasted red peppers, antipasto Calabrese, hot pickled mushrooms, and more.



Pranzo Canadese



accompaniment to antipasto; Pressels, a tasty, baked snack in three flavours (sea salt, sriracha, and “everything”); and Ponti balsamic vinegar, balsamic glaze, and apple cider vinegar, to name a few.

Allysa Manalaysay, Aurora’s marketing coordinator, says, “We want to show how well Italian ingredients fit into modern cooking and trends, especially healthy trends.” One of her personal favourites is the ideal example: tangy, tasty Muffaletta Spread mixed into quinoa.

She also points to the versatility of these products and how easily they fit throughout the store, from summer barbecue displays in the meat department to the deli and bakery. You can see it in their newest recipe booklet, Discover Italian BBQ Recipes: Stuffed BBQ Burgers, Sicilian Farfalle Salad, Riso Ensalata with Lemon, and others.

By the end of the five-hour event, more than 400 people had come to share the warmth and spirit of Italian food and culture.

“People from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds, from all over Canada and all age groups and everyone had one thing in common — have fun and let these great simple foods and fantastic tastes do the talking,” says Morello. “It was awesome and once again proved that great food has no borders.” ●



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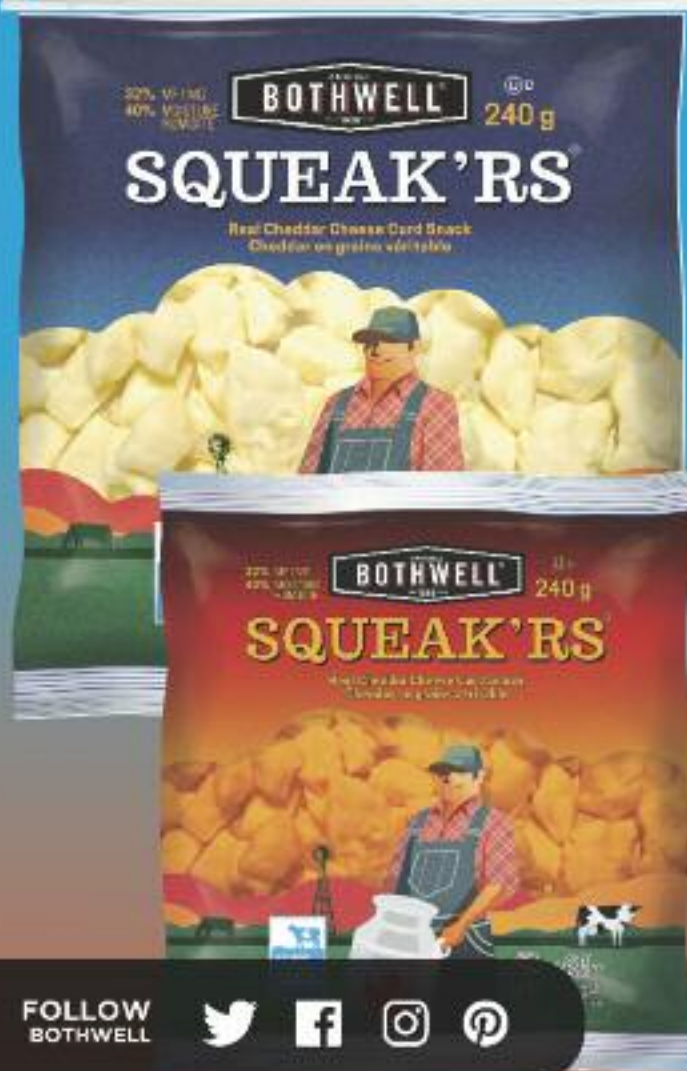


NEW LOOK SAME GREAT SQUEAK'RS

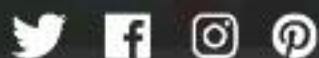
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CHEESE

By Ronda Payne



A New World of Cheese

*Cheese offerings
will soon be
expanding, but
many will be
looking for the
blue cow for
guarantees of
Canadian milk.*

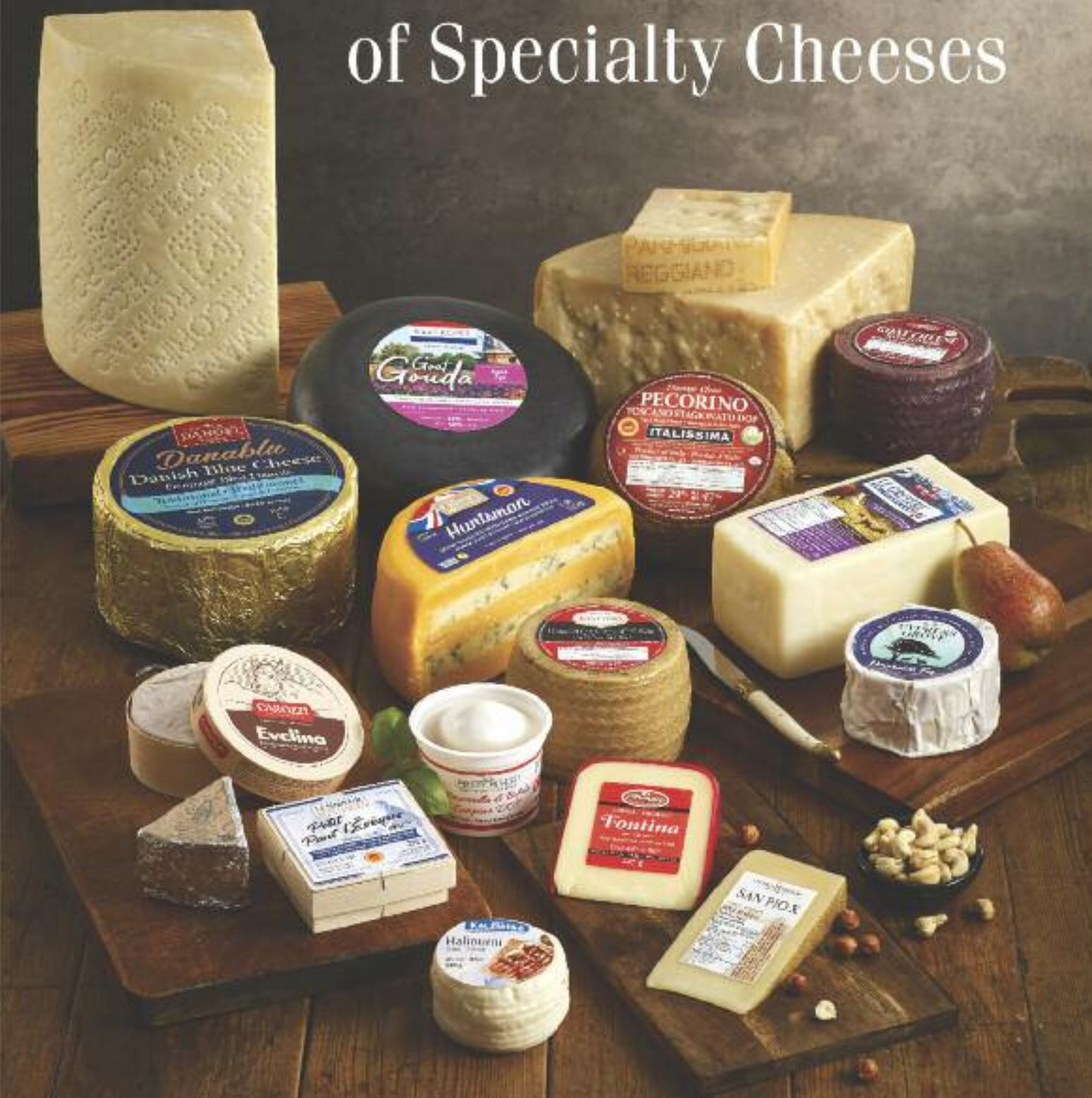
Canadian consumers may say they look for domestically produced cheese, but with more new options coming into the country, can Canadian products maintain their position? Will consumers continue to favour Canadian products?

Canada has long been known as a producer of top-quality cheeses with a burgeoning artisanal sector that is winning awards all over the world. Domestic cheese production has increased to 510,250,000 kg in 2018. Together, cheddar and mozzarella cheese accounted for 62.6 per cent of Canada's cheese production. Canada's production of specialty cheese has also increased by over 4.1 per cent. Quebec leads the way, accounting for 43 per cent of total production, followed by Ontario which produces 39.5 per cent of the fine cheeses in Canada.

Despite this rosy picture, dairy producers in Canada face numerous headwinds in the form of three major trade agreements that threaten to reduce share of the domestic market: first, with CETA (Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement) Europe got 16,000 tonnes of quota for high quality cheeses and 1,700 for industrial cheese, allowing Europe to export almost 18,000 tonnes of cheese to Canada; then came the CUSMA to replace NAFTA where the

continued on page 30

The Finest Selection of Specialty Cheeses



Bosa Foods takes great pride in bringing home the finest cheeses from around the world. We select suppliers with the highest standards in producing quality products made with traditional, fresh, and natural ingredients.



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Canadian government has agreed to give the U.S. a 3.6 per cent greater access to Canadian dairy markets, which is much less than what the U.S. wanted, which was the eventual end of Canada's supply management. Now producers are grappling with the new Comprehensive Progressive, Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). In CPTPP, Canada has given 3.25 per cent more quota for dairy, equating to about 15,000 tonnes of cheese, and 50,000 tonnes of milk. With other access already given up, this means Canada has given just under 10 percent of Canadian consumption to other countries.

The upside is that the Canadian consumer will have greater selection than ever before, and more competition will enter the market perhaps placing some downward pressure on prices. But while the implementation of these deals has made Canada the only G7 nation with free trade access to North America (under NAFTA and in the future the CUSMA), Europe (under CETA) and the Asia-

Pacific region (under the CPTPP), it has led to much consternation. The main concern for Canadian producers under CPTTP is Australia, a formidable player in the international cheese market. The access quantity for the CPTPP cheeses of all types, however, will be phased in over nineteen years.

How can Canadian producers maintain their market share?

According to Lynne Roy with Bothwell Cheese, there has been a shift in advertising from Canadian dairy brands to educate consumers on looking for the blue cow logo on products to determine where the milk used in production came from.

"Bothwell Cheese has been making similar adjustments to our product packaging and we are focused on finding new ways to share our story with our consumers," she says.

This includes the package upgrade Bothwell has made to the 240-gram bags

of SqueakK's that now include imagery inspired by Canadian dairy farmers. These will be available across Canada by August, with some markets already seeing the new packaging.

As with any industry, cheese processors are experiencing changing consumer desires for new and different products. Cheese is a big deal to Canadian consumers looking for domestically produced products. Western Canada has 29 licensed cheese processing plants (14 per cent of all Canadian cheese processors) according to Dan Wong, president of the Western Dairy Council, the trade association for dairy processors in Western Canada. Wong notes, cheese processing for Western Canada amounts to over 100,000 tonnes per year, about 20 per cent of total Canadian cheese production. Most cheese-making outside of Ontario and Quebec is in Western Canada.

"In light of the market access provisions in recent trade agreements like CETA and CPTPP, we can expect to see



Bothwell Cheese has upgraded their SqueakK's packaging.

significantly more imported cheese in the Canadian marketplace in the coming years," Wong says.

All concerns of regulatory changes aside, Western Canadian cheese processors aren't allowing others to steer the course of their futures. Innovative companies are continuing to take their cues from consumers in order to create new products and continue to appeal.

One innovative processor is Enercheez from Mountain Munchies — a zero preservatives, high protein and zero carbs cheese that can go anywhere without the

need for refrigeration according to Bruce Burgener, founder of Mountain Munchies. A patented process safely removes the water very quickly at low temperatures to deliver a crunchy cheese product without additives.

It wasn't easy for Burgener. He had to prove to both provincial (BC) and federal governments that the process to create Enercheez was safe because the technology to create the product was new.

"My products didn't exist before using the technology," he says. "Once I completed the necessary requirements and the evidence, I was then able to sell to the public."

He has seen certain cheese products position themselves as healthy, easy, on-the-go snacks recently, even though this wasn't the case for many years.

"They are great as soup enhancers, salad boosters and of course the natural cheesey that is just that, cheese," says Burgener. "We are proudly a BuyBC product and use BC cheese from a



MORE SELECTION THAN EVER

A Conversation with Bruno Bendet Jr. of Bosa Foods

How has CETA changed the landscape for Canadian retailers?

Its is a significant time for both retailers and consumers. With the CETA agreement and the increased allocation of European Union cheeses both retails and consumers now have access to a much larger selection of imported European cheeses. This is a particularly interesting opportunity for a cheese retailers to have access to both increased selections as well as new brands to help retailers differentiate themselves in the marketplace. In the past, due to the limited amounts for imports, traditional importers stayed with well established products. As Canadian consumers we now have easier access to a larger more diverse selection of products.

Has Bosa increased the number and variety of cheeses it imports?

Absolutely, prior to the CETA changes we focused our cheese importation around the traditional Italian cheeses like Parmigiano Reggiano, Grana Padano, Pecorino Romano, Asiago, Montasio, and Gorgonzola in limited skus and offerings. As a result of the CETA agreement we significantly increased our product offering to an extensive selection of Italian cheeses from all regions, DOP designations, and various brands. For just Italian cheeses we've increased our product sku selection to over 200 unique products that we are now able to offer retailers. We now have a weekly air shipment program for perishable Italian cheeses which include Mozzarella di Bufala, Burrata, Mascapone to name a few as well as a full air program of French and Spanish cheese. Included in these programs are various selections of Cow, Sheep and Goat Cheeses.

However, the most significate change for Bosa Foods in the past year is our entrance into the importation and distribution of a family of cheeses and brands from all of Europe. CETA now has given us the opportunity to offer a turnkey solution to our valued customers of the finest selection of cheeses sourced from all reaches of the European continent. We now proudly offer products from Spain, Greece, France, Germany, Portugal, Denmark, Netherlands, Great Britain and Ireland to name a few.

One of the unique features that Bosa Foods can offer retailers is our extensive relationships in Europe that spans over 60 years. For example, we maintained a 50-year

relationship with our first cheese supplier of Parmigiano Reggiano, ensuring the best possible quality and aging of the king of cheeses! Our purchasing team travels through Europe on a regular basis visiting our valued suppliers, searching for new exciting cheese suppliers and products and experimenting with new exciting techniques and packaging to differentiate the product offering in the marketplace.

How should retailers change up their cheese sections to accommodate more European product?

The most significant change that retailers now can offer is selection. Firstly, by way of new brands in the market which will give them the opportunity to differ from other historical brands that have been in the market. Consumers are curious and retailers can now offer something fresh and different. Secondly, selection of imported cheese products has also created something new and fresh for retailers to new curious shoppers who have traveled the world and are eager to try that memorable cheese they experienced on a trip to France or Italy but couldn't find in Canada.

Because there are so many wonderful cheeses both imported and domestic, the consumer now has increased opportunities to experiment with an Imported Mascapone as well as their tried and true Canadian option, or the opportunity to try not only an Italian Asiago from the Veneto region but variations of aging from two, six, 12, and 18 months. Or a unique San Pio X con Vino Bianco which will put a memorable twist to a cheese plate. How about a hand made Truffle Burrata that is flown in every Monday to go with your heirloom tomatoes this summer or a Danish Fontina with the traditional red wax which creates a visual feature in a deli case?

How is the Canadian consumer responding?

It's a win for the consumer, they now have access to a much larger selection of specialty cheeses which is in demand. It is much like the growth we saw with our specialty food grocery products. Consumers are well travelled and are interested in foods from around the world and are willing to experiment.

Another example is the overwhelming interest and response we have had to our new line of Kalimera Greek cheeses which include an assortment of Greek fetas including a traditional Wooden Barrel aged product and a Greek Halloumi in a fixed weight 280g packaging.

With our growing selection of imported cheeses, Bosa Foods is well positioned to provide retailers and ultimately consumers the unique products that they are in search of.



30-year family-owned cheesery. This is the new way to eat cheese and it showed when we were nominated and a finalist for Small Business of British Columbia's most Innovative Company 2019."

Other innovations in the market are coming from producers like Kraft Heinz Canada where Senior Manager, Brand Build and Innovation, Heena Verma points out how the market is changing. "Consumers are demanding more choice when it comes to dairy-free and vegan options for cheese," she says. "Producers large and small are listening to this feedback and responding with innovative product offerings."

Kraft Heinz has a new look for one of their classic offerings: Philadelphia Cream Cheese, which also now has no artificial flavours or colours.

"This aligns with consumers' desires for fresher, less processed products and the simple design provides strong at-shelf shopper navigation and conversion, while also bringing a more modern and

frosting to help bakers save time, but without sacrificing on quality. It's made from real milk and cream and doesn't have any artificial colours or flavours. The most common place to market the frosting is right next to the standard cream cheese products in the cheese aisle.

Finally, Kraft has also introduced a melting cheese slice product that has more real cheese.

"Kraft Extra Cheddar slices have the ooey, gooey melt consumers love about processed cheese slices but with the higher cheese content versus processed cheese slices and with the texture of natural slices," says Verma. "Made with no artificial colours or flavours, Quebec's beloved cheese slices brands are now widely available in Western Canada too."

Burgener has looked at hundreds of grocery stores and has seen a lack of the healthy snack emphasis in deli areas.

"I hope in the near future, we will have healthy food options for kids and adults in venues not typically known for having such options," he says.

He also sees the market for dairy-free and vegan-friendly 'cheese' products growing.

"The future is bright and I'm excited to see what's next," he says. "Being lactose sensitive myself might have something to do with it."

While cheese is marketed in both deli sections and in traditional dairy aisles, retailers can capitalize on educating customers on the relevance of the blue



Enercheez from Mountain Munchies can go anywhere without refrigeration.

cow logo and the fact that it means the dairy products are made from 100 per cent Canadian milk.

Obviously, at certain times of year, when customers are focused on entertaining or creating recipes with specific requirements, their needs will expand to include cheese made both from Canadian milk as well as that from outside of Canada. Providing a greater realm of choice at these times is important. The imported cheese section will always be an aspect of a well-stocked deli cheese section, but it can ebb and flow with the change in seasons to meet customer preferences. ●



Kraft Heinz's Philadelphia Cream Cheese and Kraft Extra Cheddar slices have no artificial flavours or colours.

contemporary look and feel to the Philadelphia brand," she says.

Additionally, the company recently introduced a Philadelphia cream cheese



Gill's Trading Post Turns 50!

It has been quite the year for the Gill family. They operate Gill's Trading Post, a leading general store located right on the main road in the heart of small town Sioux Narrows, Ontario. The store has been operated by the Gill family for over three generations, epitomising the independent grocer and the struggles they encounter in serving their community.

Today, the store is run by Tony and Terry, brothers who grew up in the business following in the footsteps of their parents, Stewart and Yvonne, and their grandfather Arnold "Tuff" Gill who purchased the store in December 1968. The Sioux Narrows store was one of two originally operated by the family, its counterpart in Morson, Ontario, run by Stewart and Yvonne. Gill's Trading Post was run by Tony and Terry's aunt and uncle before the brothers took it over in 2008.

The brothers immediately set out to modernize the operation by employing a more advanced POS system to properly manage inventory and gain better insight into product assortment. They added a tackle shop and a larger variety of general merchandise to cater to the large number of residents and tourists who flock annually to the region for some of the best fishing in North America.

"We spent a lot of time fine tuning our inventory," Tony reveals, "to match the market demand and this has really paid off for us. We have close to thirty



Terry (left) and Tony Gill of Gill's Trading Post.

thousand different items and over 100 different suppliers. It's a lot to keep track of!"

The store is a largely seasonal business — the months of June through September account for roughly 50 per cent of yearly sales. Food sales account for approximately 40% of that overall business: this includes grocery & dry goods as well as a deli and bakery, where fresh food is prepared every day. Gas accounts for one-third of sales. Rounding out the sales are bait, tackle, toys and giftware.

Just like any family business, the Gills have faced their

The store has been operated by the Gill family for over three generations, epitomising the independent grocer

fair share of obstacles. "2008 was a tough year," Tony admits. "We had quite a large fuel distribution business that we had to sell due to the financial crisis. We then closed the Morson store to focus our efforts in Sioux Narrows as the Trading Post had a larger customer base."

The Gills have carried on at the Trading Post, led by the brothers Tony and Terry, marking the third generation running the show. Today, the top-notch general store continues to thrive with patrons coming from just down the road — or from all the way across the world.

And after 50 great years, there is a whole lot to celebrate! ●



Gill's Trading Post, a leading general store located right on the main road in the heart of small town Sioux Narrows, Ontario.

PLANT-BASED PROTEIN SMOOTHIE

10g OF PLANT PROTEIN PER 250mL

- VEGAN
- GLUTEN FREE
- DAIRY FREE
- GREAT FRUIT TASTE
- NO SUGAR ADDED

The Canadian Food Guide recommends consuming plant-based more often.¹

1. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-new-food-guide-shifts-toward-plant-based-foods/>

Standout products offer busy consumers more convenient ways to enjoy new tastes and healthier options at home.

CANADA'S #1 PIZZA CRUST!

HAND STRETCHED | STONE BAKED | PLANT BASED | VEGAN
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Winners for 26th Anniversary Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards Announced

Twenty-four companies took home the coveted Canadian Prix New Product Award for products they introduced into the Canadian market in 2018. Both established and new retailers, suppliers, smaller boutique and family-owned businesses from across Canada were amongst the winners.

Retail Council of Canada (RCC)'s Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards is a rigorous, annual competition of the best new grocery products. Becoming a Canadian Grand Prix winner is often a game changer because of the direct and extensive exposure to key retailers, buyers and new consumers these products receive.

Four recipients also received Special Awards. Oggi Foods Inc. won the All-Canadian trophy for their Cauliflower Pizza Crust, Walmart Canada won Overall Consumer Value for Easy-Blends Fruit & Vegetable Mix, Gay Lea Foods Co-Operative Limited won for Innovation and Originality award for Nordica Smooth Dips and The Spice Tailor Limited was recognized for Innovative Packaging for The Spice Tailor Daal.

"We're seeing tremendous innovation in products that allow Canadians to easily recreate a wide range of restaurant-quality taste at home," said Diane J. Brisebois, president and CEO of Retail Council of Canada. "The trend towards a more multiculturally inspired assortment of food products and a cleaner and healthier ingredient list is evident."

Chef and Chief Jury Chair Marcus Von Albrecht oversaw the judging panel. From 114 products that scored at least 70 per cent on quality and innovation, only 40 products received the prestigious recognition as Canadian Grand Prix New Product Award winners.


Multiple-category winners included: Metro Inc, Walmart Canada, Federated Cooperatives Limited, Canadian Tire Corporation Ltd and Sobeys Inc.


Also honoured at the Gala were Donald and David Sobey and the Sobey Family who received RCC's 2019 Canadian Grand Prix Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of their tremendous contributions to the grocery industry in Canada.


LIST OF 26TH ANNIVERSARY CANADIAN GRAND PRIX NEW PRODUCT AWARD WINNERS BY CATEGORY:


NATIONAL BRANDS


FOOD


- 


Baking Needs & Dried Bakery
Duncan Hines Perfect Size for 1
Conagra Brands
- 

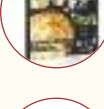
Beverages
Apple & Eve Vegan Protein
Smoothie
A. Lassonde Inc.
- 


Condiments & Sauces
Adams Dark Roast
Smucker Foods of Canada Corp.
- 

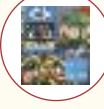
**Confectionery & Shelf
Stable Desserts**
Grab & GCollection
Chocolat Lamontagne, inc
- 


**Dairy (Milk, Yogurt, Cheese
& Spreadables)**
Nordica Smooth Dips
Gay Lea Foods Co-Operative
Limited
- 


Deli Meats and Cheeses
Organic Sliced Chicken and
Turkey Deli
Yorkshire Valley Farms
- 

**Frozen or Refrigerated
Prepared Foods & Entrees**
Cauliflower Pizza Crust
Oggi Foods Inc.
- 

**Fruits, Vegetables and Produce
(Fresh, Refrigerated Or Frozen)**
Riced Cauliflower
Bonduelle
- 


**Meat, Egg & Seafood Fresh
(Refrigerated or Frozen)**
Sous Chef Kits
Cedar Bay Grilling Company
- 


**Shelf Stable Prepared Foods
& Entrees**
The Spice Tailor Daal
The Spice Tailor Limited
- 


Snack (Savoury)
SanissimChia & Flax
BimbCanada
- 


Snack (Sweet)
Kashi JOI - Nut Bars and
Energy Nut Bars
Kashi Company


NON-FOOD


- 


General Merchandise
Papyrus - Gemmed Thank you
Carlton Cards
- 

Hair Care
Live Clean Mineral Clay Rebal-
ancing Shampo& Conditioner
Hain Celestial Canada, ULC
- 

Health Care - Oral Hygiene
GUM Activital Sonic Deep Clean
Sunstar Americas Inc (Canada)
- 

**Health Care - OTC (Over the
Counter)**
Biosync 24h Continuous Release
Namëna Biosciences
- 

Household Products
SodaStream Black Fizzi One
Touch Sparkling Water Maker
SodaStream
- 

Paper, Plastic & Foil
Alcan Non-Stick
Reynolds Consumer Products
Canada Inc.
- 

Pet Needs
Beyond Natural Pet Food
Nestlé Purina PetCare

PRIVATE LABEL

FOOD

- Bakery Fresh (par- baked)**
Irresistibles Tree-Shaped Log
MetrInc.
- Beverages**
Irresistibles Carbonated Spring Water
MetrInc.
- Condiments & Sauces**
Sensations by Compliments Spirited
Mickie BBQ Sauce
Sobeys Inc.
- Confectionery & Shelf Stable Desserts**
Our Finest Fudge Selection
Walmart Canada
- Dairy (Milk, Yogurt, Cheese & Spreadables)**
Great Value Greek Yogurt Dips
Walmart Canada
- Desserts (fresh, refrigerated or frozen)**
Irresistibles Ice Cream Bars
MetrInc.

Frozen or Refrigerated Prepared
Foods & Entrees

Co-op Gold Potstickers
Federated Co-operatives Limited

Fruit, Vegetable & Produce (Fresh,
Refrigerated or Frozen)

Great Value Easy-Blends Fruit & Vegetable Mix
Walmart Canada

Meat, Egg & Seafood (Fresh,
Refrigerated or Frozen)

Co-op Gold PURE Fillets
Federated Co-operatives Limited

Snack (Savoury)

Sensations by Compliments Extra Crunchy
Kettle-Cooked PotatChips
Sobeys Inc.

Snack (Sweet)

Irresistibles Naturalia Granola Cereals
MetrInc.

NON -FOOD

Baby Care

Personnelle Teething
MetrInc.

General Merchandise

NOMA Advanced Constant-Lit Cluster Lights
(Light Show)
Canadian Tire Corporation Ltd.

Health Care - OTC (Over the Counter)

Personnelle Microfilter Nasal Wash System
MetrInc.

Household Products

PADERNDutch Ovens, 6.2L
Canadian Tire Corporation Ltd.

Personal Care

Co-op Gold PURE
Federated Co-operatives Limited

Pet Needs

Pure Balance Freeze Dried Treats for Dogs
Walmart Canada

SPECIAL AWARDS

ALL CANADIAN

Cauliflower Pizza Crust
Oggi Foods Inc.

OVERALL CONSUMER VALUE

Easy-Blends Fruit & Vegetable Mix
Walmart Canada

INNOVATION AND ORIGINALITY

Nordica Smooth Dips
Gay Lea Foods Co-Operative Limited

INNOVATIVE PACKAGING

The Spice Tailor Daal
The Spice Tailor Limited

CONFECTIONERY

By Frank Yeo

In 2018, the Canada Confectionery market was valued at \$5,197 CAD million, registering at a CAGR of 2.36 per cent. The Chocolate category accounted for the largest market share, while registering an average CAGR of 2.71 per cent since 2010. Mints is the most preferred segment in the Sugar Confectionery category, followed by the Pastilles, Gums, Jellies and Chews segment.

The Chocolate category has been registering a steady growth of 2.71 per cent in CAGR since 2010, which is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Among the distribution channels, the Super-markets and Hypermarkets channel is preferred the most by most people in Canada. Bubble gum suffered the most among all categories in gum. In addition to the aforementioned lack of innovation and rising competing products, bubble gum is increasingly associated with less favourable social images such as being less fashionable. While there has been stagnation in sugar confectionery, mints including power and standard mints, are showing healthy growth, due to the conversion of many previous gum users to mints.



TOP CONFECTIONERY TRENDS

Cadbury Adams Canada, owned by Mondelez International Inc, remained the largest player in sugar confectionery in 2018. The company has witnessed share gains since 2014, largely owing to its strong presence in growth areas including mints and medicated confectionery. Nestlé Canada, Hershey Canada And Cadbury Adams Canada remain the top three players.

1 Gum Remains Highly Consolidated

In the mature and declining landscape of gum, Mars Wrigley Confectionery Canada and Cadbury Adams Canada maintained their combined dominance. One of the major events in 2018 was the full integration of Mars Chocolate and Wrigley Canada with the establishment of Mars Wrigley Confectionery Canada, which is expected to give the company a boost in efficiency and speed to market, according to industry sources.

2 Niche Brands Experience Growth

Despite the dominance of the two leading players in gum, some brands managed to gain some significance, expanding distribution channels and shelf presence. Pur, for example, has been experiencing rapid expansion in distribution and growth in sales in Canada. Smaller segments managed to gain growth with more natural offerings gaining traction. While consolidation is ongoing and the commoditisation trend continues to expand in categories such as boiled sweets and lollipops, smaller players are carving out niche segments where they can establish differentiation.

3 Rising Health Consciousness Restricts Growth

Increasing consciousness over health and wellness has been the key factor leading to the stagnation of sugar confectionery in the past decade.

4 Use of Natural Sweeteners is Increasing

Although artificial sweeteners such as aspartame and sucralose have received approval and endorsement over safety and certain efficacy in reducing calorie consumption, the perception of these sugar substitutes among Canadians is not particularly positive and controversy around them continues. Across many markets in food and beverages, artificial ingredients have been facing ever-mounting negative receptions, as witnessed in breakfast cereals, ready meals, sugar confectionery, soup, juice and carbonates.

5 Premium and Ultra-Premium Segments Gain Traction

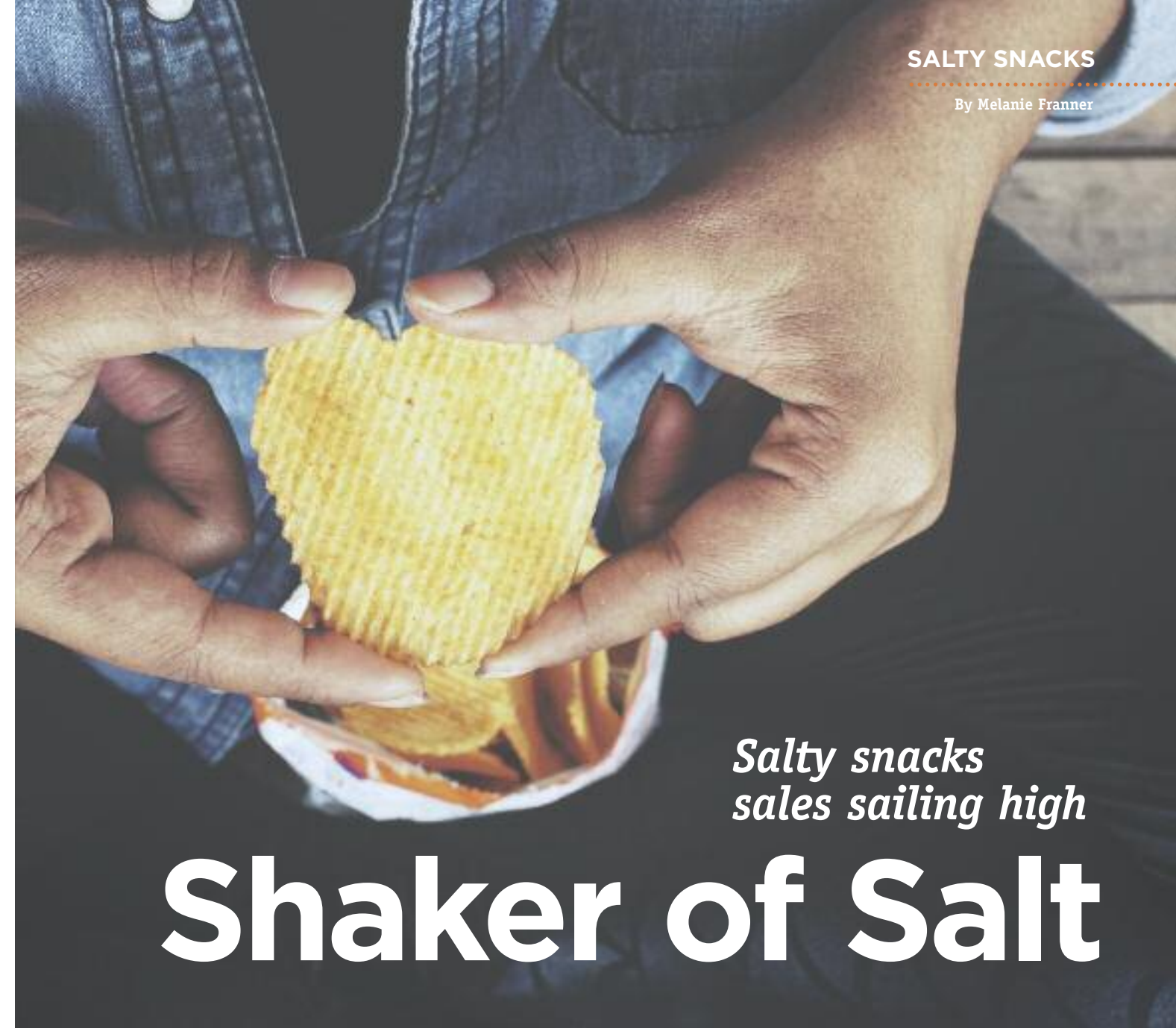
As consumers continue to crave indulgence, they are increasingly gravitating towards higher quality, more premium offerings in chocolate confectionery. High-end brands including Brookside enjoy consistent, robust growth due to positioning and innovation, including Brookside 73% Dark Chocolate launched in early 2018.

6 Healthy Snacking Gives Rise to Smaller Formats

Bite-size chocolate, promoted as “minis”, “bites”, “buttons”, or “pieces”, is increasingly popular among Canadian consumers, which is evident in the stronger growth of chocolate pouches and bags. ●

SALTY SNACKS

By Melanie Franner



Salty snacks sales sailing high

Shaker of Salt

The Canadian average per capita consumption of snacks is 8.4kg, according to a Statista report on Snack Foods in Canada. The category’s revenue in 2019 is expected to reach CAD\$4,704,053.5 million. This is expected to grow by 2.6 per cent CAGR through to 2023.

Potato chips remains the big winner in the category, accounting for CAD\$1,567.2 million in revenue in 2019. This compares with nuts and seeds at CAD\$1,739,835,180 billion and tortilla chips, flips & pretzels at CAD\$942,104,800 million.

Accent on Health

Many snack food suppliers, like Fontaine Santé, see some of the category’s growth coming from outside of the traditional “salty snacks” category. According to Mahdi Hachana, category manager, opportunities lay in

the low sodium, low fat, low calorie and high protein areas. “With all food trends, non-GMO and clean decks are definitely key,” he says.

The company offers a range of foods that fit this bill, including its hummus 1 stop-shop snacking solution and 24-pack available in four varieties. Also on offer is the mini- and classic-sized guacamole (vegan, no preservatives, kosher, all natural, and gluten free).

Soon to be introduced are some exciting new salsas (think avocado verde, sweet onion and mango peach as examples) and original and blue corn tortilla chips.

Still in the healthy snack category is the Blue Diamond brand of snack almonds, available in a wide variety of pack sizes and flavours. C.B. Powell Limited’s offering includes the popular Blue Diamond single-serve 43 g pouch packs in four tasty flavour options: Smokehouse, Wasabi, Sriracha and Blueberry.



photo courtesy shutterstock.com



Fontaine Sante offers 1 stop-shop snacking solutions and mini and classic sized guacamole. They will also be offering original and blue corn tortilla chips.

"Prominent displays, adjacent to the main check-out areas, is one way to best merchandise the category, as is prominent availability in the snack section," according to the company's Business Manager Chuck Corrigan.

Power Up

Jeetu Patel, sales & marketing manager, H.B. Kaysons Ltd., Gurulucky Snacks & Sweets Ltd., cites current trends in the snacks category as being an infusion of flavours, and new-age snacks that use different combinations like lentils and beans. "Plant-based protein is used in seasoning to increase the value in snacks protein," he says.

The company's snacks have always been high in protein, using chickpea-based noodles, and blends of peas, chickpeas and lentils. The company's snacks are jam-packed with protein, high in fibre and seasoned with chili and herbs.

A new snack line called Toobs was launched in July of this year. It is made out of wheat and available with three seasonings: turmeric and lemon, hot & spicy and salted.

According to Patel, grocers can best merchandise by



Toobs from GuruLucky Snacks & Sweets is made out of wheat and available in turmeric and lemon, hot & spicy and salted.

grouping Indian and other snacks into one snacking area to increase consumer access to different ethnic products and flavours.

Protein is also high on the list for Todd's Better Snacks.

"We're seeing salty snacks that are fit for active lifestyles and conscious eaters," explains Sara Alexander, marketing director, Todd's Better Snacks. "It's important to realize that trends aren't moving away from salt but involve making salty



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snacks worth eating nutritionally and allowing people to skip the guilt."

Todd's Protein Crisps delivers on this. The product is described as one-of-a-kind snack puffs made from egg whites and prairie lentils. They are gluten and peanut free, keto and paleo friendly and naturally low in carbs. Each serving contains two whole egg whites. The Canadian-made Protein Crisps are available in 33g individual snack packs in four flavours: Sour Cream & Onion; BBQ, White Cheddar; and Salt & Vinegar.

According to Alexander, the best way to merchandise snack foods is to provide great shelf presence. "Bright, colourful, shelf-ready displays that really show consumers a glimpse of what they're about to experience is key," she says, adding that the Canadian component is also noteworthy. "Canadian snacks deserve a special pride of place too. Local Canadian food is very much worth celebrating."



Ridgies Salt & Pepper Wings and the iconic Rip-L will help Old Dutch Foods celebrate its 65th anniversary.

Tried and True

Although many of today's consumers are looking for healthy alternatives when it comes to their snacking pleasure, some can't resist the old favourites. There is no question that potato chips remain a mainstay in the category.

Old Dutch Foods, for example, has opted to celebrate its 65th anniversary this year with the introduction of Celebration Flavours across a few of its brands. There is the Old Dutch Potato Chip brand and Iconic Rip-L cut in Parmesan Black Pepper, a new Maple Black Garlic infusion for Dutch Crunch Kettle Chips, Salt & Pepper Wings for



photo courtesy shutterstock.com



Blue Diamond's almonds are available in a variety of sizes and flavours.

the company's Ridgies brand and a Sour Cream and Chili offering for Arriba Tortilla Chips.

New flavours in the pipeline include an Arriba Spice Ranch and Ridgies Maple Bar-B-Q.

Old Dutch has rounded out its celebratory offerings with special tower merchandisers that help merchandise the offers and stimulate multiple purchases.

Another new offering in the potato chip segment is from Future Enterprises Pte. Ltd., a member of Food Empire Holdings, Singapore. Ajay Handa, Country Head for Canada says Future Enterprises is offering a high quality value-priced proposition under the brand name of Kracks Potato Chip. Kracks Potato Chips is marketed to all consumers and taste profiles. Kracks capitalizes on the growing trend of Halal certification and is the only canister chip in the category that is Halal certified.

The company's marketing plan includes in-store promos, flyer deals, hot features, demos, social media support and sponsorship of high profile events.

For One and All

Snacks remain the mainstay "indulgence" for many Canadian consumers. The type and flavour may change over time but the need to snack will last forever. ●

Kracks Potato Chips from Future Enterprises is the only canister chip that is Halal certified.



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For more information, contact Ajay Handa (Country Head, Canada) at (403) 389-1724 or ajayhanda@foodempire.com. Visit www.kracks.com/canada

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FOOD & INGREDIENTS

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OILS

By Robin Brunet

NICHE MEETS WEST

Alternative as well as staple products dominate the oil category in Canada

Whether it's for cooking or salads, and whether it comes in bottles or sprays, the oils category is massive and a lucrative domain for large manufacturers as well as niche players alike.

There's almost no downside to the category in 2019 – that is, unless perhaps you're a small manufacturer dedicated solely to the production of coconut oil. "Coconut used to be the sales star in Canada, then last year it followed the path of the once-popular grapeseed oil and experienced a massive drop in interest," says Wajih Rekik, CEO of CHO America. "The big thing now is avocado oil, due to health claims."

Rekik goes on to note that in terms of volume, vegetable oil is by far the biggest selling type of oil in Canada, while olive oil is the number one seller in terms of dollar value.

But such is the popularity of the category overall that manufacturers like Richardson International Limited offer blends that satisfy a wide range of consumers. "Coconut oil still has a market as many people enjoy how it enhances the flavour of food, which is why we offer it as one of four Canola Harvest blends, along with Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Avocado, and Sunflower oil," says Jodie Ponton, manager, marketing.

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While olive oil is on trend, Rekik notes that misconceptions abound about its use. “The worst one is that you can’t use extra virgin for cooking because its healthy elements turn unhealthy with the heat — which is absolute rubbish,” he says. “Myths like that are one reason why, despite the oil’s popularity in Canada, we only consume about 1.2 litres per person yearly, compared to 12 litres in Italy and up to 18 litres in other European countries.”



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

Matthieu Kohlmeyer, president and CEO of La Tourangelle, is pleased with the popularity of both avocado and olive oils, because they are driving much of the growth in specialty oils, and we have superb offerings in both segments.

He adds, “Specialty oils are growing, especially in specialty gourmet channels. We’re seeing growth and momentum picking up two to four per cent. In fact, within specialty channels, La Tourangelle is outpacing competition and growing four times faster than the category.”

When asked what retailers can do to make the most of the category, Anthony Morello, president of Aurora Importing, replies, “Education is the single most important piece of the puzzle, as far as I am concerned. Most consumers are really thirsty for knowledge, looking primarily for health and usage attributes when it comes to the niche oils like avocado, coconut, nut oils, sunflower, grapeseed, and so on. I think this needs to happen at shelf or point of purchase, and it really is something that a retailer could step up and own.”

Natasha Decarie, marketing insights & communications for Tree of Life, believes retailers developing their oil aisles should be aware that it’s expected that purchases of alternative oils will continue to increase as more consumers recognize their flavour and nutritional value. Consumers are more aware that the type of fat is what really matters for long term health.

Decarie says some alternative oils that are capturing the public’s interest include flaxseed and walnut oils (both excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids), and pumpkin seed oil, which she describes as “one of the healthiest sources of omega-6 fatty acids, heart health, prostate and urinary health, as well as menopause support.”

Unsurprisingly, oil manufacturers and importers are keeping a close eye on emerging trends, and on that score Morello notes that oil sprays, such as our Alessia line of premium oil sprays, is a segment that is rapidly growing around the world, and they’re great for the grill and allow for controlled usage when frying or even making a salad/garnishing.

Even though trends come and go, there’s something inviting about the oil category that encourages shoppers to try new products regardless of price point and stock their kitchens with

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Product Showcase

Communication is Key

Basso Galloncino Extra Virgin Olive Oil from Aurora Importing is a mix of Italian, Spanish, and Greek extra virgin olive oils, ideal for meal preparation or enjoyed with salads. Anthony Morello, president of Aurora Importing says retailers should focus on various forms of shelf communication to draw attention to Galloncino, as well as explain its “health and usage attributes.”



Mid-Price Merch Tactics

Canola with Avocado Oil from Richardson International Limited is ideal for grilling, marinades and salads, and it falls comfortably in the category’s mid price point range. “We would suggest that cross-merchandising in the meat, produce, and other departments would be the best way to demonstrate its versatility — and affordability,” says Jodie Ponton, manager, marketing, Richardson International Limited.



Display Away

The White Truffle infused oil from La Tourangelle features complex notes of woods, earth and fruit that are characteristic of the Italian White Alba Truffle. Matthieu Kohlmeyer, president and CEO of La Tourangelle notes that, “Merchandising displays have been extremely effective tactic that drive lifts in store sales. We also have shop-able shippers to help drive secondary locations.”



Oil 101

CHO America’s Origin 846 unfiltered olive oil, which is great for everyday cooking, baking, or dipping, uses a unique decanting process to retain its beneficial polyphenol and other antioxidant elements. “We work with retailers to ensure their aisles contain education materials,” says Wajih Rekik, CEO of CHO America. “Product demos have also proven to be effective in some stores.”



Hype the Brand

Borges Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil is made from 100 percent organically grown olives from Tunisia. Natasha Decarie, marketing insights & communications for Tree of Life recommends grouping with other Borges oils because the brand is considered a preferred choice for many consumers; end caps for this particular product are an effective way to highlight that it is a new offering.



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

an array of niche and alternative oils as well as mid- to low-cost staple items. Therefore, the message to retailers is simple: don’t be afraid to augment the familiar canola and olive oil brands with products that may seem exotic and even a little daring: chances are they will be swept off the shelves. ●

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Digital Gifting

Future of Rewards and incentive programs

About three years ago, I received a cold call, from an intern, who was working for a local tech company, called Guusto. In a nutshell, Guusto is a digital gift-giving platform (web, mobile & offline solutions). It sends or schedules one-to-one of personalized gift cards via email, text or printout.

So what's the big deal?

In a culture of strengthening relationships, such as attracting clients, rewarding employees, thanking colleagues and congratulating friends, giving physical gifts can be time consuming and expensive. Guusto facilitates this culture on a digital platform, which can be managed from desktop or app. Guusto's catalogue hosts over 60,000+ merchants in both Canada and U.S. (at time of this column). And... if sender chooses to send as an open gift, the receiver can choose which merchant to redeem with. On the backend, because these transactions are electronic, Guusto's platform allows the sender to manage distribution, budgets, redemption stats and incentive programs. Because it is digital, Guusto allows senders to roll out gift programs, nationally, in minutes. AND... It's all free for the sender and receiver! (Guusto funds their service by charging three-to-ten per cent from merchant.)



Joe Facciolo, co-founder, Guusto

For this column, I was fortunate to have arranged a quick Q&A with Joe Facciolo:

KEN: Thank you for taking some time to chat with me today. For our readers, tell us about your company in three sentences.

JOE: Guusto is a simple, effective & free platform (web, mobile, and offline) that has helped thousands of companies run impactful real-time recognition and modern milestone programs. Every dollar spent on a reward will make it to your people, and with a massive reward catalogue that includes 60,000+ merchant locations, employees love it. Companies can get started building a culture of recognition in less than an afternoon.

KEN: Who is Guusto?

JOE: I'm Joe Facciolo, co-founder & chief growth officer. I'm an entrepreneur with over

12 years experience in the technology, marketing and tourism industries. I believe in building companies on a foundation of mutually beneficial partnerships that provide outstanding value for customers while benefiting our communities. I've been inspired to help companies of all sizes and budgets create great workplace environment for their people. My partner is Skai Dalziel, co-founder & COO. He is passionate about developing disruptive technology with great business models. He has a successful track record of launching and growing start-ups. He is driven to create simple but powerful software.

KEN: How does Guusto work?

JOE: Guusto is a platform that simplifies rewards and recognition, while getting people motivated to perform their best. It can be as lightweight or robust as you need it to be. The basics include sending an extremely flexible reward to recognize milestones or special occasions. Our 'Team's' functionality allows companies to run programs at scale by allocating budgets to managers or running company-wide peer-peer and nomination programs. (Ken note: Guusto's Team functionality is what initially attracted me, because it would allow marketers to manage and run their SPIF programs digitally).

KEN: What would be the typical user of Guusto's service?

JOE: A typical user of Guusto might be HR executives or management of medium to large size corporations. Sales directors or managers, that manage marketing budgets and SPIF programs. We even have a few individual and small business owners, who use the service just because it's convenient, fast and free.

KEN: Is Guusto a viable replacement for the traditional gift card?

JOE: Absolutely. Traditional gift cards are typically locked to one location and physical gift cards often get lost. Guusto gives the gift recipient the ability to choose their desired merchant from a massive list of partners (60,000+, 100 countries). Since the gift is stored in the cloud, it's always there when you need it and never gets lost.



KEN: Who would you say are your closest competitors within North America?

JOE: Achievers, OC Tanner, GiftCertificates.com

KEN: Why Guusto?

JOE: Guusto gives employees the flexibility to choose rewards that they actually value, with no markups. Using our platform, companies can send or schedule one to 1000 rewards in seconds, align and track recognition to core values or key behaviors, empower managers with real-time recognition budgets, and create company-wide culture of recognition through non-monetary shout-outs and our Nomination Box.

KEN: How do you think chains in grocery, drug, and gas and convenience channels can take advantage of Guusto?

JOE: In these channels of business, where employees are not all under one roof, typically find it challenging to align their people and create a company-wide culture of recognition. Guusto empowers them with the necessary tools to accomplish this. A public and real-time dashboard gives visibility into the program across the organization. Our platform allows business owners to create a consistent program that aligns with values or behaviors, while empowering leaders across the organization to recognize people for great work and inspire great performance. With detailed tracking and reports, business owners will gain insights into areas they are performing well and areas they need to improve.

According to a new survey by Persistence Market Research, PMR predicts that the international market for gift cards is likely to grow to \$506 billion by 2025 with a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of six per cent from \$318 billion in 2017 (1). Guusto makes this culture easier, more convenient and faster to reward those who deserve your recognition. Guusto's platform allows companies to better manage marketing and incentive budgets. At time of column, Guusto has an average user rating of four out of five star on both Google Android and Apple platforms.

You can find out more about Guusto at <https://www.guusto.com/>

(1)<https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2018/08/16/1553010/0/en/Gift-Card-Market-Poised-to-Expand-at-10-79-CAGR-during-2016-2024-Persistence-Market-Research.html>

Ken is a partner and EVP of New Age Marketing & Brand Management Inc., a National brokerage company specializing in sales & brand management of CPG brands and products in all channels and markets in Canada. His opinions expressed in this column are solely his own and do not necessarily represent those of this publication. Ken can be contacted via email (kenkwong@outlook.com), Twitter (@kenkwong), Facebook (@kenkwong808), or LinkedIn (@kenkwong).

Perpetual Change, Perpetual Profits

Alberta Food Industry Continues Growth

Change, as they say, is the only constant and that has certainly been true for the Alberta food industry: retail and processing industries are overcoming challenges and reshaping how they do business.

The food industry in Alberta, encompassing both retail and food processing is a vast business. There are now over 2, 236 retail stores, with sales of \$12.6 billion dollars per year, making up 13.7 per cent of all Canadian sales. Alberta's food and beverage manufacturing sales now exceed \$14.4 billion, continuing on a growth trajectory that has seen rates exceed 8.4 per cent and making up to 12.8 per cent of the Canadian sales. It's the second largest manufacturing industry in Alberta (20.3 per cent of total manufacturing sales), after petroleum and coal product manufacturing (22.4 per cent).



Lindsay Sutton, market development specialist, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

On the retail front, expansion continues with new stores opening across the province, including Blush Lane's partnership with SPUD, Urban Fare, Save On Foods, Korean supermarket H Mart, Loblaws, and Planet Organic.

Behaviours of consumers are changing as consumers continue to be interested in how and where their food was produced.

"Consumers are looking to engage meaningfully with food makers," says Lindsay Sutton, market development specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. "In changing how, when and where they buy their food, consumers are looking for something new at a faster rate than before."



Medicine Hat, Save-On Foods is located in a 38,000 square foot facility.

Growing Again

Save On Foods Continues Alberta Expansion

Recognizing the potential of the retail grocery market, Save On Foods opened its newest Alberta location in Medicine Hat on May 17, 2019, just in time for the May long weekend.

"The opening was great timing for customers," notes Jeff Woods, store manager Medicine Hat, Save On Foods. "We have had a very warm reception in town. I had a lot of opportunities to meet people before we opened; people were excited."

Located in a high traffic part of town just off of the TransCanada Highway, access is easy. The carefully crafted layout is intentionally inviting with a Save On Foods Kitchen department with prepared and ready to eat meals complete with a seating area.

This 38,000 square foot facility includes pharmacy, bakery, produce, floral, deli, seafood/meat, and grocery with bulk and natural foods. Uniquely, the natural foods section is a dedicated aisle, including cooler and freezer sections. Online shopping is also available.

"Our online shopping and in person shopping intermingle," says Woods. "Both present opportunities for our staff to meet customers and build relationships."

Woods notes that the in-store experience gives customers the confidence in products and staff to make ordering online more comfortable. He sees the Alberta food sector is very competitive.

"It is definitely competitive," Woods says. "But it will grow for retailers who are progressive. Talking with customers is key to growing. The customer base is very diverse and that gets missed sometimes."

This location has some unique features that weave the store into the fabric of the community. A zero food waste program prioritizes supporting the local food bank, but also local farmers. Perishable food that is not fit for human consumption is picked up by local farmers for use.

"We meet both when they come to pick up," observes Woods. "It gives us a chance to get to know them and build relationships." Further, they are focused on showcasing products from local producers and processors to bring in local products.

"We are a Canadian company," says Woods. "We look to support local and be part of the community on many levels."



Jeff Woods, store manager, Medicine Hat, Save-On Foods



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Retailers and processors face some challenges. Consolidation creates competitive challenges, while waste reduction and convenience top consumer wish lists.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry reports six major retailers control 90 per cent of selling food in Canada. This causes some additional grief for food processors in Alberta.

"Consolidation in Western Canada has been difficult," says Jerry Bigam, past president of Alberta Food Processors Association. "Smaller companies have a harder time getting opportunity. The

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increased nutrition profile for products.”

Flexibility and product traceability with a more curated shopping experience will appeal to consumers.

Despite economic challenges within the province in the past few years, grocery retailers still have opportunities. Although growth may be slow, it is still positive. Retailers who remain focused on customer needs will remain profitable. ●



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

increase of private labels has meant lost opportunity for consumers to have local producers' products.”

Sobey's introduced its Local Program about two years ago which has put more than 400 Alberta products on shelves in the past 18 months. Processors need more programs like this to ensure local products get to market.

International trade agreements hold promise for processors, but could take years to materialize. Plant-based protein continues to be a driver.

“Plant-based is not just a meat replacement,” notes Bigam. “It offers an

Flexibility and product traceability with a more curated shopping experience will appeal to consumers.





Sobey's introduced its local program two years ago.



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Sue Nicholls is the founder of "Category Management Knowledge Group", an online, accredited category management training company.

There's so much talk about retail in e-Commerce, with underwhelming growth in more traditional channels and grocery, but significant growth in specific categories that continue to get eroded in brick & mortar. It's added a complexity to our business that didn't used to be there, changing the shopper path to purchase (which is now becoming more of a shopper journey than a linear path) that primarily resides online for some Shoppers as they educate and make purchase decisions.

Even if your business is not engaged in the e-Commerce space (yet), it's important to understand it and keep yourself educated on what's going on there. In this article, I'm focusing specifically on data and analytics associated with e-Commerce, and how to apply some basic category management principles in this space.

What Needs to be Adapted in the e-Commerce Space?

- Businesses must have a data-driven culture that can respond to fast-moving market trends
- Need to adapt brick & mortar strategies to the e-Commerce channel
- It's an opportunity to partner with retailers in a new and different way - they are looking for experts in omni-channel as their business evolves

What are the Key Data Sources in e-Commerce Analytics?

There are some key data sources available in e-Commerce that give great insights into this expanding retail channel including (but not limited to):

- 1 SYNDICATED POS DATA:**
3rd party providers like Nielsen have limited retailers sharing their e-Commerce POS data – they offer integrated data in one place for online and offline sales and share data.
- 2 PANEL DATA:**
3rd party data that includes e-Commerce and alternate channels with demographics, leakage, shopper behavior. While this may not be available in Canada yet, hopefully it will expand across the border through new data providers as it gives great perspective that is missing in more traditional panel data.
- 3 SHOPPER RESEARCH:**
Shopper insights and research data is expanding all of the time, either through 3rd party data sources and/or retailers and suppliers commissioning their own online studies. There are even some syndicated shopper data sources evolving.
- 4 INDUSTRY REPORTS:**
There are some incredible and FREE industry reports / whitepapers available on e-Commerce that give lots of great insights and data points that may be valuable to you.
- 5 Keyword and Search Optimization, Web Scraping Data, Social Media Data, Web Audits, Shop-a-Longs, etc.**

As with most new data sources, these sources may have limitations to include:

- 1 Blindspots** (ie. you can't drill deep enough or to the level of granularity you may be used to in more traditional data sets).

- 2** Integration limitations with brick & mortar data so it's difficult to come up with a "total retail" set of results.
- 3** Data quality issues, and/or
- 4** Difficulty in drawing insights or completing any type of post analysis on.

You can expect these issues to be alleviated/improved as data and technology providers in this space continue to evolve.

What Different Perspectives Are Required in e-Commerce CatMan?

There are three different perspectives that you need to understand in e-Commerce category management versus traditional category management. These perspectives include:

- 1 PAGE PERSPECTIVE**
 - Is it in stock?
 - Are the product attributes correct?
 - Is the product image correct?
 - Is the product optimized for search?
 - How many reviews should it have?
 - How is the product priced?
- 2 COMPETITIVE PERSPECTIVE**
 - What is competition doing?
 - How does pricing compare?
- 3 CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE**
 - How does competitive assortment compare?
 - What's trending? What are consumers searching for?
 - What's the social sentiment on categories & products?

What Are Relevant KPI's in e-Commerce?

Retailers need measurable and relevant KPI's to measure online performance, including KPI's like market share, product

views, and conversion rates. These KPI's need to evolve as your data does, so that they are measured based on actual transaction data (and not just survey-based models or projections from panel data).

Following are some of the questions that need to be addressed in your KPI's:

- 1 ARE WE WINNING ON TOTAL PERFORMANCE?**
- 2 ARE WE GROWING SALES AND PROFIT IN ALL CHANNELS (INCLUDING ECOMMERCE)?**
- 3 ARE WE WINNING ONLINE?**
 - Are we growing sales and profit?
 - Are we growing market share?
 - What are our conversion rates?
 - How are our competitors performing?
 - Who are we losing business (leaking) to?
- 4 WHAT'S DRIVING RESULTS?**
 - Do we have the right assortment?
 - Are we competitively priced?
 - Are we winning on promotion?
 - Are our brands in the right place along the path to purchase?
 - What are consumers saying?

In net, standard metrics such as category growth, brand growth, retailer growth, and dollar/unit share need to be tracked for e-Commerce sales. In addition, make sure you are able to get product view share and conversion rates, which are sometimes easier to obtain for online sales than in offline channels.●

Sue Nicholls is the founder of "Category Management Knowledge Group", an online, accredited category management training company.

She can be reached at sue@cmkg.org.

The King of POS

Western Grocer Interviews Tim Shein, President King Business Services Corp.

Western Grocer Magazine recently had the opportunity to sit down with Tim Shein, president of King Business Services Corp., one of the leading POS companies in Western Canada, to discuss how a well managed POS system can mean the difference between profits and failure.

King Business Services has a wide range of experience covering point of sale, digital signage, security cameras, network security, mobile reporting, e-commerce integration and systems for augmenting online presence, data back-up, in-store marketing, labour saving sensor program for HACCP logs and more.

"What King Corp has done differently," says Shein "is to always be on the lookout for the solution that would work best for our customers, moving towards futureproofing our client's business."

One of the first connections that Shein draws is between POS and the ability to give the consumer the best possible experience, perhaps the most crucial part of the puzzle these days with on-going challenges from the online world.

"The grocery store life is a hard one but what keeps everyone going is the service to the customers," says Shein. "To some it's a job, to others giving back to the community or appealing to the needs and wants of their clientele. Serving the consumer right will allow them to increase profitability making it all worthwhile. If you remember the saying: "You build it they will come": stores build a following and are relevant to your customers then there is a reason to come in the door."

The consumer, he says, wants speed, selection, service and price. "It is suggested that retailers need to focus on the omni-channel (Brick & Mortar and online e-com) and delivering a frictionless experience. In order to make the grocery retailer more effective, efficient and relevant to the consumer the store needs to work closely with a POS provider to get all the technology

working for you! The results deliver a better customer experience through better knowledge of the customers buying habits, making your staff more efficient allowing more touch points for the customers when needed, just to name a few. Let the Data work for you!"

And this, says Shein, is what a modern POS system tailored to the unique needs of grocery stores can do.

"Grocery stores are unique amongst the retail landscape because there can be up to tens of thousands of products that have very specific needs: Expiry dates, low margins Traffic Builders, high margins, unique to a marketplace and some slow sell cycle or a fad cycle. Capturing and managing that data puts the decision-making tool in the hands of the store manager with the goal to make life somewhat easier for promotions, shelf labels, staffing and training and merchandising, to just name a very few."

For Shein, the most relevant role of the POS system is "endless data capture and making informed decisions with that data!" And then a system which can integrate the data in meaningful ways given the many challenges faced especially by traditional brick and mortar retail.

"With the difficulty and challenges faced everyday – staffing, loyalty, price pressure, rent/leasing costs, taxes,

single use plastic ban on the way to name a few – the question is how to survive and succeed and grow. You can achieve that through technology and your point of sale provider."

Given the complexity in the retail environment, POS technology has had to not only evolve but 'Engage' in the new landscape of in-store and online experience. "Today's POS solutions are not just the old replacement for the cash register, they have morphed into much more."

Shein likens the POS system to the backbone or skeletal structure that enables the retailer to 'Engage' and be relevant to new and existing customers.

THE POINT OF SALE SYSTEM SHOULD BE ROBUST ENOUGH AND VERSATILE TO:

- Collect data from your customers email, cell numbers and postal code input to help the store management market to those consumers and then appeal to their needs and wants. Stay connected through social media program or hardcopy campaign.
- Manage Loyalty Programs
- Digital signage and Menu Board program - promote high margin products or tell your story and even interact with them.
- Self-Checkout Kiosks - making certain your POS can manage that fast-growing segment (it is not just for the big guys anymore).
- e-commerce - online store persona.
- Mobile Computer technology - allow your staff and management to place orders, do inventory, test counts and labels right from a mobile scanner computer.
- Electronic Shelf Labels - to reduce the labour costs of changing prices and label and potential errors.
- Additional services in store such as; café, buffet, cooking class or test kitchen as examples.
- The click & collect shopping - where the shopper orders items online and comes and picks the product up from store or a climate control locker.

"It is often observed that most retailers use only 10 per cent – 20 per cent of the horsepower of their POS system capability! Why is that? Likely it is due to the managing of time and resources to take full advantage of functionality of the POS System. The future looks endless, however, when it comes to the POS systems, integrating more of its features and capabilities to facilitate a stronger positive end customer shopping experience is one of the most valuable tools retailers have at their fingertips." ●

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BAKING INGREDIENTS

By Anne-Marie Hardie



Better than Grandmother's Kitchen

Canadians are gravitating towards baking to create products that respond to their values

Whether it's the desire to explore their creativity or simply the drive to know what's in their food, more Canadians are returning to their kitchens. The continued expansion of baking shows both on Netflix, and the Food Network has helped to urge Canadians to explore their baking skills. While at the same time, Canadians have become extremely ingredient conscious leaning towards certifications and natural products. Baking offers these concerned consumers an ability to control their ingredients while still being able to enjoy their favourite treats.

The legalization of cannabis in Canada is potentially cultivating a new wave of bakers. Currently, a 7.2-billion-dollar market, the Canadian market remains a fairly complex ecosystem. "Six out of 10 Canadians prefer cannabis edibles," says Tricia Ryan, vice-president, marketing, CannTX. "The future in cannabis growth may be food and beverages infused with cannabis as a functional ingredient." Edible products are not anticipated to be on the market before 2020 and potentially even later. This product gap may result in Canadians seeking out baking ingredients to create their products at home.

When it comes to sweeteners, Mintel's Sweetener and Attitudes Toward Sugar 2016 report states that taste remains the key driver, at 71 per cent. However, well over half of Canadian consumers, 58 per cent, are actively seeking natural products. This preference has resulted in the use of honey becoming on par with that of white sugar; in fact, 59 per cent of female consumers between 18-44 are opting for this natural sweetener. "Many consumers like honey because it's derived from nature and you need less of it to get the same amount of sweetening," says Shannon Bowden, senior brand and communications

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Camino notes that consumers want to know whether their chocolate or chocolate products are ethically sourced.

by enabling them to offer “healthier for you” sweeteners. One product that is presenting new possibilities for grocery retailers and good processors alike is Nucane. This non-GMO antioxidant rich raw sugar offers consumers a milled product that responds to their need of a better for you sugar. “With Nucane Raw consumers can use approximately 20 per cent less product and achieve the same level of sweetness as traditional sugars,” says Tricia Ryan, founder, The Marketing Chefs. The innovative technology maintains the naturally occurring polyphenols and micronutrients in sugar cane while slowing the metabolism of sugar in the bloodstream.

“In Canada, Bob’s Red Mill’s top baking ingredients are our gluten-free and paleo-friendly flours, like almond, brown rice, coconut, and tapioca flours, as well as our Gluten Free 1-to-1 Baking Flour and Gluten Free All-Purpose Baking Flour,” says Jan Chernus, vice-president of International Business Development, Bob’s Red Mill. The flour segment continues to expand, with



Nucane Raw provides the same level of sweetness with approximately 20 per cent less product than traditional sugars.

Bob’s Red Mill’s flours provide paleo friendly options such as almond, organic coconut and tapioca.

Bob’s Red Mill offers gluten free options with the Gluten Free 1to1 Baking flour and Gluten Free All Purpose Flour.



the introduction of new grain-free flours like cassava, and paleo friendly staples including almond, coconut, tapioca, and arrowroot starch.

When it comes to eggs, states Amanda Brittain, director of communications and marketing, BC Egg, organics continue to be the top demand, followed by vitamin-enriched products. “People feel more confident and comfortable with organic



BC Egg notes that retailers should highlight if their eggs come from their province or Canada.

ingredients, particularly in situations when baking for others,” says Brittain. The other factor that Canadians are increasingly concerned about is where the ingredient is sourced from. “The buy local trend is still very hot, people do want to buy eggs that come from their province, or at minimum, they want to know that they are from Canada,” says Brittain. “Stores would benefit by highlighting at least Canadian eggs, but in particular, spotlighting any eggs that

are grown in the province.”

Getting to know the farmer is important not only for locally sourced ingredients, like egg and dairy but also for products that are grown abroad, like cacao. Halon-Wilde shares that Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about whether their chocolate or chocolate products have been ethically sourced. “Grocery stores can help increase their

“Grocery stores can help increase their sales by showcasing the stories of the farmers, whether this is in-store or in the store flyer as a featured product.”

sales by showcasing the stories of the farmers, whether this is in-store or in the store flyer as a featured product,” he says.

When considering merchandizing, retailers would benefit by creating outside

of category displays, including recipe centric displays, value-driven (organic, gluten free, paleo), and where all ingredients are showcased in one area. “We’ve found that retailers can increase sales by merchandizing all of our products in one space. Even our loyal customers don’t realize how many different items we carry across so many categories,” says Chernus. “It’s a great way to bring shoppers from the perimeter into the centre store, which is why we call it a “destination set.”

Canadians are thoroughly researching all the products that they integrate into their lives. There is increased recognition of the value of indulgence, however, they want to ensure that these options respond to their dietary needs. Grocery retailers

can maximize on this opportunity through expanded product lines, featured recipes and becoming a go-to resource for shoppers who are seeking to bake their own treats. ●



Beemaid notes that honey has natural humectant properties that help baked goods stay fresh longer.

manager, Beemaid. One of the added advantages of using honey in baked goods, advises Bowden, is that its natural humectant properties help them stay fresh longer. Grocery retailers can help expand this market through line expansion,

honey-centric recipes, and education.

When it comes to baking, Canadians are seeking ingredients that respond to their health concerns. This includes looking for natural sweetening alternatives. “The Canadian consumer is a conscious one, reading ingredient labels and ensuring what they are purchasing, and consuming is right for themselves, their families and local economy,” says Tom Halon-Wilde, officer, Camino. These consumers want to know what is in their food, and baking their treats is the ideal way to do this. Product innovation is aiding grocery retailers in responding to these needs

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New from the Mayborn Group

The Mayborn Group has introduced the new “360 Cup”. Featuring only one part, this is the easiest cup to clean and comes with a travel lid. Consumers can drink from anywhere around the edge and it is completely spill proof. The company has also introduced Advanced Anti-Colic, the only Baby Bottle with a heat-sensing stem, letting Mom know if it's too hot for the baby! Another innovation is the No Knock, a cup that won't knock over and lifts up easily which Toddler proofs mealtimes. Additionally, the new Breast-Like Pacifier flexes like mom with soft silicone, and air vents which provide less irritation and rashes.

For more information: rwiley@mayborngroup.com

New Look for Squeak'rs

Bothwell's family-favourite Cheddar cheese curd snack now comes in NEW, eye-catching printed bags.

- Farm-to-table design stands out on shelves.
- Same traditional Cheddar curd recipe.
- Made with 100 per cent Canadian milk.

For product information visit bothwellcheese.com or email our team at sales@bothwellcheese.com.

Tea-Riffic Changes Are Underway at Four O'Clock!

Four O'Clock is taking a new approach, reflecting its daily commitment to the community and the planet, while continuing to offer consumers an unparalleled taste experience. Driven to craft products that are always innovative and on trend, the tea crafters at Four O'Clock are raising their cups in celebration of their new brand image. And with the introduction of three new creations, Four O'Clock is once again raising the bar, to the delight of taste buds everywhere.

ESPRESSO CHAI: Combining coffee Indian black tea, espresso and spices come together in a latte that would make even the most experienced baristas envious.

SENCHA MATCHA: With its deep emerald colour and delicate herba-ceous hints, this organic tea balances taste, beauty and health.

ROOIBOS SPICY ORANGE: Combining rooibos with natural vanilla, orange, clove and cinnamon flavour notes. A tribute to the African continent in your cup.

Tree of Life Expands Offerings

Dumet's Organic Olive selection includes Kalamata and Amphis olives, which are handpicked in Greece to ensure their premium quality standard. As a benchmark in the world of table olives, Dumet focuses on authentic quality and variety, and upholds their premium standards from growing to certification. They are packaged in resealable standup pouches to ensure Dumet's delicious olives are also a safe, practical choice. Dumet Organic Olives are certified organic, gluten free, cholesterol free, and suitable for vegans.

Natura (Borges) Extra Virgin Olive Oil is a natural product with enhancing properties and health benefits. Originating in Spain with over 100 years of experience, Borges famously produces some of the finest olive oils in the world. Their Extra Virgin Olive Oil is produced using organic farming methods, with the aim of obtaining premium quality foods and being environmentally friendly. It is certified organic, kosher, and halal. It is also GMO-free, gluten-free, and low in saturated fat.

Fresh Is Best Salsa & Co Launches New Lineup

Fresh Is Best Tri Chips and Dips launched in early 2019 with features such as fresh ingredients, kosher, no preservatives, gluten free, vegan and low sodium. Made in Kamloops BC., the product is available in 2.2L x 2 Salsa FRESCA, 2.2L x2 Smokey Black Bean Dip, 2lbx3 Tortilla Chips available in Tri flavour and Stoneground Yellow Corn.

www.freshisbest.ca

Aurora Latest Introductions

Panetti Crisps
Aurora Panetti Crisps are the perfect treat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Aurora Panetti Crisps are made from fresh baguettes, low in sodium, and perfect when paired with Aurora Antipasto!

Ponti Vinegars
Ponti takes the best raw materials and creates high quality products that have attracted consumers for over 150 years. Through five family generations, Ponti continues to stay true to their values by combining natural ingredi-ents with state-of-the-art technology.

Earth's Own Redefines the Canadian Coffee Scene with New Oat Barista Plant-Based Beverage

Earth's Own continues to pursue its plant-based mission by unveiling Oat Barista, its newest oat beverage product created with coffee drinkers in mind and developed in partnership with expert baristas. The latest game-changing beverage by the brand that digs plants, Oat Barista is delicious, creamy and nutritious on its own. Not only that, but its high-performance micro-foam is great for those laying down some latte art, making it the ideal companion for professional coffee slingers and at home aficionados. Earth's Own Oat Barista's frothy-friendly goodness is now available at cafes and major retailers across Canada.

Earth's Own Oat barista are available for purchase in 946 mL cartons in retailers across Canada. Each serving size (one cup) has seven grams of fat, .5 grams of saturated fat, and three grams of protein. Oat Barista is enriched with vitamins including Vitamin A (10 per cent), Calcium (30 per cent), Vitamin D (45 per cent), and Vitamin B12 (50 per cent).

Earth's Own's range of plant-based beverages are vegan friendly and Non-GMO Project Verified. Unlike other oat brands that use canola or rape-seed oil to thicken their products, Earth's Own oat beverages are all made with sunflower oil to provide a creamy texture and mouthfeel. The range includes oat, almond, cashew and soy beverages in 1.75-1.89L and 946 mL sizes. In addition to launching Oat Barista, the expanded beverage lineup now also includes Chocolate Oat in 1.75 L and 250 mL, and Unsweetened Original and Vanilla in new 250 mL single-serve size.

Naturally Splendid Launches Natera Sport Bite

Naturally Splendid has launched the new Natera Sport Bite. Specially formulated by Dr Stuart Love who shares his time between his private practice and touring with the PGA tour as a health care practitioner. With four flavours to choose from and paleo friendly, vegan, 100 per cent natural and 100 per cent Canadian, the product is allergen-free and a healthy source of protein. The Natera Sport Bites have hit the ground running.

For more information: www.naturallysplendid.com

Greenleaf Foods Expands Plant-Based Brands

Greenleaf Foods, Maple Leaf Foods' plant-based foods subsidiary, has just announced the widescale distribution of its plant-based pro-tein brands Lightlife Foods and Field Roast Grain Meat Co to 330 Wal-mart stores across Canada.

Recent Nielsen data shows the meat and dairy alternatives category was one of the fastest growing FMCG categories in 2018, fuelled by an increase in consump-tion, not just by vegetar-ians and vegans, but other individuals and households who are choosing to reduce their meat and dairy intake or increase plant-based foods consumption.

Greenleaf Foods is committed to shaping the future of plant-based foods, and through this expansion in distribution will make these alter-natives more accessible than ever to families across Canada.

Some of the products that will be available in Walmart stores nationwide include Lightlife's Smart Bacon, Smart Tenders Chick'n, Smart Dogs, Gimme Lean Sausage and Smoky Tempeh Strips. Meanwhile, Field Roast is introducing Smoked Apple Sage Sausage, Italian Sausage, Mexican Chipotle Sausage, FieldBurger, Chao Creamy Original, Chao Garden Herb and Chao Tomato Cayenne.

Enercheez - A New Cheese Experience

The premium crunchy Enercheez is the NEW way to eat cheese that requires zero refrigeration! Enercheez is delicately made from cheese from a small family-owned cheese company nes-tled in the British Colombian mountains. 100 per cent just cheese with nothing but the best ALL-NATURAL ingredients! Enercheez contains no additives and no preservatives. This mouth-watering cheese snack is a convenient source of energy, protein and calcium that you can easily take along for any occasion. Enhance your salads, boost your soups or just eat it as the ultimate cheesy! The product is Keto friendly, zero carbs, no preservatives or addi-tives, no artificial flavours and gluten free.

For more information: www.Enercheez.com

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Plant-Based Foods Category Is On Fire!

How do you best help Canadians explore these new products to drive sales?

Over the 20+ years that I have been working in the CPG industry there are very few new product launches that have captivated the minds of consumers like the introduction of the Beyond Meat Burger. The biggest innovations of my time, including the triple launch of Swiffer, Febreze and Dryel in 1999 and the launch of Coke Zero in 2005 cannot hold a flame to the hype around the launch of this plant-based burger.

The Beyond Meat brand, with less than \$100 million (USD) in annual sales, has taken the foodservice, retail and meat industries by storm; and at the time of writing this article the company's IPO is the darling of Wall Street.

While Beyond Meat is taking up the spotlight, the real dynamic of the whole plant-based protein market is an exciting opportunity and one that you will need to know a few basic facts in order to capitalize on the growth whether you are a retailer stocking these products or a brand launching new skus into the category.

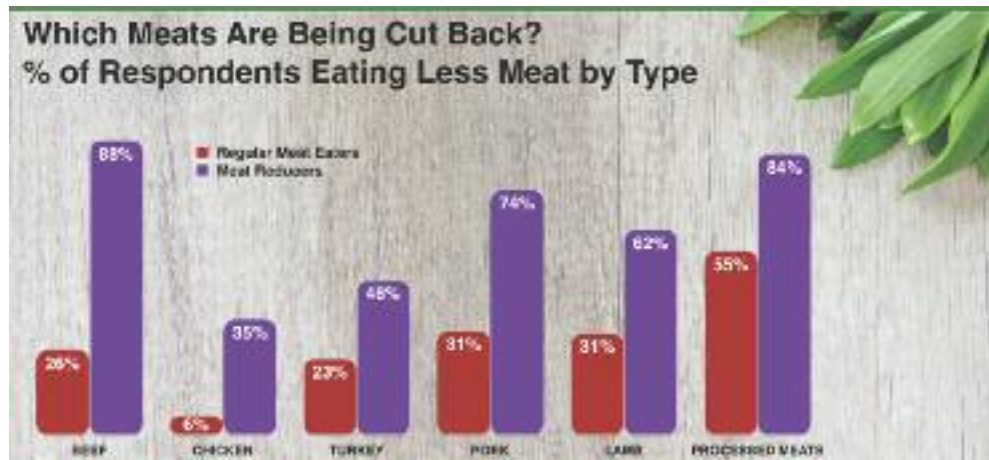
In the past, plant-based proteins from brands like Yves Veggie Cuisine or Tofurky were squarely targeted to vegan/vegetarian consumers who have eliminated animal-based proteins from their diets. The market has remained small mainly because just six per cent of Canadians fall into this camp.

The new plant-based proteins have a different target in their sights. A much bigger market for these products is the 26 per cent of Canadians who are meat reducers. They have not eliminated meat from their diet, but they are cutting back on meat consumption primarily for health reasons; but also because of compassion for animals and the environment as well as the increasing costs of meat products.

Meat reducers were the primary focus of a study recently conducted by Field Agent called: "Understanding The Plant Based Protein Shopper in Canada: Going Beyond The Hype."

On average, meat reducers have cut back their meat consumption by a little over a third and they are cutting back specifically on beef and processed meats. They are replacing meat products with a range of items including: raw/cooked vegetables, beans, seafood, lentils, tofu and legumes.

Packaged products such as Beyond Meat, Yves and Gardein only cover about nine per cent of the needs of meat reducers, high-



lighting an opportunity for brands providing convenient and great tasting products to boost their sales among this cohort.

With a flood of new innovation and funding, we will see an enormous number of new brands and products available in the Canadian market in the coming months – but what will the keys to success be?

Based on our research we feel that the following will be the key success factors for retailers and brands to win in this category:

Better Merchandising and Assortment – in the Canadian market, plant-based proteins are mainly refrigerated items compared to a primarily frozen market in the United States. Our market will likely look more like the UK than the U.S. and the UK grocers have dedicated a lot of space to the category and have also improved merchandising to better help shoppers find the right product for them. Most Canadian stores carry plant-based protein items in the produce section near tofu, but is this the right area to host this category as it grows?

Get The Product In The Shoppers Mouths – the legacy products in this category do not excite the consumer, with very average ratings for taste, quality, ease of use and value. For the most part, the new wave of plant-based protein products taste great and simulate meat much more closely than has ever been done before. The success of Beyond Meat's launch in Canada can be directly tied to the launch at A&W, which sold out of their first 90,000 patties almost immediately after launch. This drove tremendous paid-

trial for the product and as satisfied consumers took to social media raving about the product the demand grew. While the other products launching soon will not be able to take advantage of an A&W style launch, it will be important to employ demos in-store so that shoppers can try the product risk free and in a controlled environment where it is cooked to perfection.

Focus on the meat reducer but don't forget the Vegan/Vegetarian – the two groups of shoppers looking for plant-based proteins are very different. Brands must decide which group they are chasing and develop shopper marketing strategies that appeal to that group. It would not surprise me to see manufacturers in this space launch more than one brand so that they can tailor the message for one brand to the loyal and higher volume vegan/vegetarian, while the other brand speaks to the meat reducers which are a bigger group but are likely to have a lower per capita consumption, at least in the beginning.

While many Canadian retailers are starting to realize that all the cannabis hype in 2018 did not really net out to big sales for them in the category, the plant-based protein market is different. This is a category where the players that move first and offer great tasting products from compelling brands will capture market share and loyalty. Will you be one of them? ●



The full results of Field Agent's study into the Canadian plant-based foods category can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2txcs6s>

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