

# western grocer

*Serving the Grocery Industry Since 1916*



49th Parallel  
GROCERY

**MORE THAN  
A BUZZWORD  
THE GROCERY  
WORLD IS TAKING  
SUSTAINABILITY  
SERIOUSLY**



*(L-R) Harmina Richmond, owner;  
Wayne Richmond, owner; Kathy  
Richmond, executive assistant;  
Peter Richmond, president & CFO*

Vancouver Island's 49th-Parallel-Grocery

**Independent and Proudly  
Community-Based**

**+ BBQ SEASON • COLD BEVERAGES • ICE CREAM & FROZEN NOVELTIES**



THAI KITCHEN

# 4 WAYS TO USE COCONUT MILK

1

SPLASH IN SMOOTHIES, HOT CHOCOLATE, COFFEE



2

STIR IN WAFFLE MIX, PANCAKE BATTER, OATMEAL



3

FLAVOUR UP SOUPS, RICE, STIR-FRIES, CURRIES



4

MIX IN CAKES, PUDDING, BANANA BREAD



- 2 INGREDIENTS: COCONUT MILK & WATER
- RE-SEALABLE CARTON
- NO ARTIFICIAL COLOURS, FLAVOURS, OR PRESERVATIVES
- NON-GMO VERIFIED
- GLUTEN FREE
- VEGAN
- RECYCLABLE PACKAGING

NEW



McCORMICK CANADA, LONDON, CANADA  
\*Reg. TM/MD McCormick & Co., Inc. © Reg. TM/MD Simply Asia LLC  
Web: mccormick.ca/asia/ Simply/Coconut milk/asiainfo/asiainfo.html

# DOES YOUR BEEF PROGRAM MAKE THE GRADE?

Canadians are looking for the good stuff.



## Grade Expectations

When your customers bite into a juicy steak or roast, they want to enjoy high-quality beef produced in Canada. The Canadian beef grading system helps ensure the beef offered will meet expectations every time. Here's how to choose a beef program with the right combination of quality and value your customers are looking for.

## Promotion and Marketing Support

To learn more about the Canadian beef grading system and for more information about the programs and services available from the Canada Beef team to promote and expand your Canadian beef category contact: Rod Koning, Executive Director, Channel Marketing rkoning@canadabeef.ca.



### CANADA AA GRADE

A good value choice offering lower levels of marbling and typically fewer calories than Canada AAA and Prime Grades. Canada AA beef can be tender and flavourful and performs well with all popular cooking methods.



### CANADA AAA GRADE

A great choice for high-quality beef. Canada AAA offers higher levels of marbling than Canada AA and is well suited for all popular cooking methods. Canada AAA will become a delicious family favourite when grilled, broiled, simmered or roasted to perfection.



### CANADA AAA GRADE (TOP TIER)

Canadian beef brands that include only the most marbled (Top Tier) beef within the Canada AAA grade are an excellent choice for steakhouse-quality beef. These brands offer beef with the very best marbling, flavour and juiciness within the AAA grade.



### CANADA PRIME GRADE

An extraordinary choice for exclusive steakhouses, hotels and serious home chefs. Canada Prime is selected for maximum marbling, flavour and juiciness and only available in limited supply.

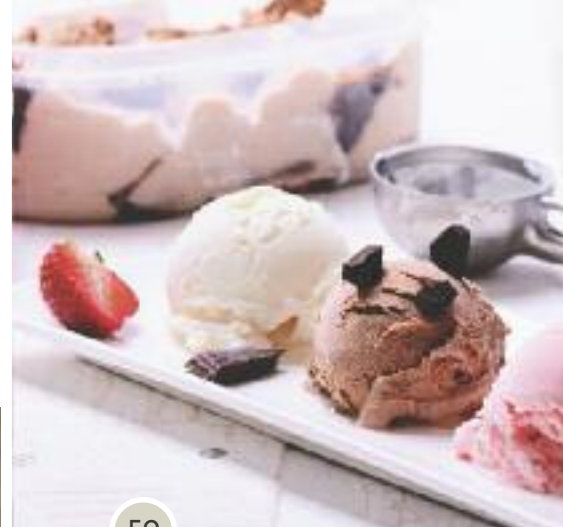
Canada and the U.S. use the same marbling thresholds to define high-quality beef grades. The above illustrations are reduced reproductions of the Official USDA Marbling Photographs prepared for the U.S. Department of Agriculture by and available from the American Meat Science Association.

canadabeef.ca | cdnbeefperforms.ca



## In this Issue

- 11 Grocery & Specialty Food West 2021 Goes Virtual!
- 24 More Than a Buzzword  
*The grocery world is taking sustainability seriously.*
- 37 Keeping Up With The Joneses  
*Jones Food Store Equipment celebrates 50 years of sterling service to the grocery sector.*
- 45 A Taste of Europe  
*European foods have been getting a boost during the pandemic.*
- 50 Sizzling Summer  
*Time to heat up the grill.*
- 55 Home Advantage  
*Saskatchewan retail grocery wins big with demand for local product.*
- 59 Canadians Seek Cold Sweet Stress Relief  
*COVID-weary consumers choose premium ice cream, diverse flavours and non-dairy treats.*
- 66 Health and Home  
*The cold beverage category is being driven by enhanced wellness.*
- 73 Big Data or Big Flop?



## Departments

- 6 Market Update
- 22 Category Management
- 75 In the Bag
- 78 Retail Collaboration

## publisher's perspective

### The Sustainability Challenge



The drive towards sustainability in the food chain, whether it be more sustainable agricultural practices or reducing waste and eliminating harmful materials from packaging, are now taking a front seat in the food industry.

A recent survey found that 83 per cent of Canadians want to reduce packaging on groceries. Seventy-eight per cent want zero-waste packaging on grocery products. The survey also revealed that sustainability impacts brand choice — 65 per cent of those surveyed try to choose brands that come in sustainable packaging options (recyclable, reusable, compostable).

Many retailers and manufacturers, in response, are signing on with Loop, the state-of-the-art reuse shopping platform and home delivery system, designed to eliminate waste by offering consumers their favourite household products in reusable, refillable, zero-waste packaging formats. Following successful launches in France, the United States, and the UK, Loop entered the Canadian market on February 1, 2021 in the Greater Toronto Area. In the same survey cited above, it was found that 34 per cent of Canadians who have their groceries delivered are willing to pay more for sustainable options like Loop.

Already Loblaw is running a program with Loop in Ontario, while companies like Kraft Heinz — who has stated the intent to make 100 per cent of its packaging recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2025. And Organic Meadow — offering the system's first (and only) dairy beverage — Organic Kefir — packaged in its iconic 946 ml reusable and refillable zero-waste glass bottle—are partnering with the service as part of their commitment to sustainability leadership.

In another example, more than 20 Canadian retail and consumer packaged goods companies, representing a substantial proportion of the nation's plastic packaging, are among the first to support new global "Golden Design Rules" to improve plastics recycling and reduce landfill and pollution. The rules acknowledge the importance of plastic packaging for food quality and safety, while encouraging companies industrywide to make packaging decisions that better support recycling systems. In addition to keeping plastic out of landfill and nature, designing packaging to be more recyclable is an important first step in converting a take-make-waste linear economy into a circular economy where the ingredients of plastic packaging are captured and reused.

In this issue, we look at some of the country's leaders in sustainability and what they are doing to improve the planet.

Frank Yeo, Publisher & Editor

## On Our Cover

### 12 Independent and Proudly Community-Based

*Vancouver Island's 49th Parallel Grocery has a long-standing family history of putting customers and community first.*

Cover Photography: Kurt Knock Photography

	<p><b>Robin Bradley</b> Associate Publisher &amp; National Account Manager rbradley@mercurypublications.ca</p>		<p><b>Melanie Houssin</b> Western Account Manager mhoussin@mercurypublications.ca</p>
--	--	--	---



Publisher & Editor, Frank Yeo; Associate Publisher & National Account Manager, Robin Bradley; Western Account Manager, Melanie Houssin; Editor/Editorial Production Coordinator: Nicole Sherwood; Advertising Production Manager, Marsha Coombe; Creative Manager, Sarra Burton; Circulation Department e-mail: circulation@mercury.mb.ca; Advertising Consultants: David Bastable, Sheilah Davila, Loren Fox, Elaine Dufault, Edna Saito. Publisher: Western Grocer Magazine is published bi-monthly by Mercury Publications Limited Head Office: 1313 Border Street, Unit 16, Winnipeg, MB R2H 0X4 Tel: (204) 954-2085 Fax: (204) 954-2057 www.mercury.mb.ca • e-mail: mp@mercury.mb.ca Associated Publications: C-Store Canada Magazine, Western Hotelier, Western Restaurant News, Health & Wellness Retailer, Western Food Processor and Bar & Beverage Business. Circulation: Western Grocer Magazine serves the grocery and allied non-food industries. Readership includes distributors, brokers, manufacturers, wholesalers, independent grocers, food processors, bakeries, supermarkets, convenience stores, principal food service outlets, food researchers and consultants, government, voluntary groups and co-ops in the four Western Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia,

Northern Canada and the Northwest Ontario area. Subscription Rates: \$45.00 for one year, \$63.00 for two years, \$93.00 for three years; \$5.00 for single copy, plus 7% GST. Canadian rates only. Advertising: Deadline is 25th of the first month. Editorial: The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without written consent of publisher. Photo credits not given unless requested in writing along with photo submission.

Publication Mail Agreement No: 40062509. ISSN# 0705-906X. Return Undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept. at 1313 Border Street, Unit 16, Winnipeg MB R3H 0X4 e-mail: circulation@mercury.mb.ca Printed in Canada



## Award-Winning Boosh Food Expands to Larger, Multipurpose HQ

Boosh Food Inc. recently leased a multipurpose 8,500 sq ft headquarters located in Cloverdale, BC. Upon completion of the tenant improvements, the facility will include a commercial grade test kitchen for new product development, a professional studio for filming cooking segments with guest chefs, extensive warehousing for their products and traditional offices and meeting rooms.



Found by a seasoned entrepreneur Connie Marples in 2017, Boosh Food began distributing their family oriented, plant-based comfort food in early 2018. By the end of 2020, Boosh was being distributed to major retail outlets and independent grocery stores throughout Canada.

Current Boosh Food products feature six different 100 per cent plant-based, heat and eat family-oriented entrees and meals. Boosh Food offers Single-Serve Bowls or sharable Entrées for two, including Coconut Curry Cauli Bowl, Veggie Bolognese Bowl (with Beyond Meat™), Mac & Cheese & Peas Bowl, Mexican Fiesta Bowl, Rustic Veg Pot Pie Entrée, and Hearty Shepherd's Pie Entrée.

## Zoglos Makes Debut with Tony Morello as CEO

Zoglos Incredible Food Corp. has recently been formed as a stand-alone corporation with big plans for the North American marketplace and the newly formed corporation will be managed in Canada on a global scale.



Tony Morello



Jim Delsnyder

To accomplish this Zoglos Incredible Food Corp. is extremely excited to announce that Tony Morello has been nominated to be the CEO of the company along with Jim Delsnyder who will be the COO of the newly formed company.

Zoglo's has been a leading company offering kosher, plant-based products for over 25 years and is now ready to enter the mainstream market. It has a product selection of over 14 plant-based protein offerings including plant-based meat, appetizers, and veggie products made with concentrated, non-GMO, plant-based proteins that are rich in vitamins C, A, iron, calcium, potassium and folic acid. Its products are high in fibre, omega 3 fatty acids and antioxidants.

## A Heartfelt Salute to Pat Joyal from Your Independent Grocer North Road, Coquitlam

Patricia Joyal, also known as "Pat", celebrated her 89th birthday on February 26th, 2021. Pat has been an employee at Your Independent Grocer North Road in Coquitlam for over 19 years and continues to work during the pandemic. Close associate Vanessa Ceolin, cashier, says "She is an asset to the front-end team at YIG and loved by all employees and customers. Pat is often seen with the longest line at the store, as customers love talking to her. Don't let her age fool you, Pat is one of the fastest cashiers, and has memorized over



Patricia 'Pat' Joyal

one-hundred produce codes. Pat is not only a fantastic cashier, but great mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She is more than an employee, but a life-long friend to all at the store."

Joe Marino, store manager, says "Pat is a one-of-a-kind employee; I've never worked with someone so loved by her fellow employees and customers. Customers will purposely let other shoppers pass in front of them so they can go through her till. Pat is an avid Blue Jays fan who never misses a game on TV. She is an amazing presence in our store, and we are so grateful to have her!"

To show their appreciation, the store created an employee of the month award and named it "The Patricia Joyal Award".



## Save-On-Foods Brings Fresh Innovations to Brand New Grocery Store in Chilliwack

Save-On-Foods, Western Canada's largest grocery retailer, has opened its new Cottonwood location at 45585 Luckakuck Way. The company's newest store, located in the Cottonwood Centre mall, is the fourth store in the city of Chilliwack.

The 38,000 square-foot store will offer customers and Chilliwack residents a traditional grocery shopping experience as well as a wide variety of Save-On-Foods' freshest innovations, including:

- A fresh and fantastic meat and seafood department stocked with Western Canadian AAA beef, a large selection of fresh sausages, kabobs, marinated chicken breasts and Ocean Wise seafood.
- A new bakery stocked with baked in-store treats, a custom cake program and freshly baked breads made with Western Canadian wheat.
- A large selection of Save-On-Foods Kitchen grab 'n go items including signature sandwiches, homestyle fried chicken, a taqueria Mexican grill, fresh daily made poke bowls and in-store rolled sushi.

"I have been working at Save-On-Foods stores in the Fraser Valley region for 20 years and I am so passionate about this community and serving our customers," said Store Manager Dawn Haig. "My team has been working hard over the last few months to get ready and we cannot wait to welcome the community to their brand-new store!"

With 182 stores, Langley, B.C.-based Save-On-Foods continues its steady path of growth having opened 38 new stores in the last five years.

## The Very Good Food Company Completes Acquisition of The Cultured Nut

The Very Good Food Company Inc. has completed the acquisition of The Cultured Nut Inc., a highly popular artisan vegan cheese producer on the West Coast.

Cultured Nut is a plant-based cheese company with multiple innovative products in the market including block-style cheeses, cream cheese, and a plant-based butter, along with numerous products in development. VERY intends to rebrand Cultured Nut's product line under a new brand called The Very Good Cheese Company which is expected to launch in Q2 2021 through VERY's eCommerce and wholesale distribution networks.

The dairy alternatives market, including the plant-based and vegan sector, is expected to grow at a CAGR of 11.2 per cent from 2020 to 2027 to reach US\$44.9 billion by 2027. With the entire plant-based food industry growing at a rapid pace, the acquisition of the Cultured Nut is very timely and is an excellent complement to the company's existing product categories.

Mitchell Scott, CEO, commented, "The acquisition of Cultured Nut allows VERY to efficiently enter into the dairy alternatives space. This is a significant milestone in the realization of our long-term strategy of owning several brands under the banner of the Very Good Food Company in all major food categories providing consumers fun, innovative and healthier plant-based alternatives to everyday animal-based products."



## The Benefits of Canadian Sea Cucumber in a Modern Supplement Format

For more than 1,000 years, sea cucumber has been a delicacy in China, believed to aid vitality and reduce joint pain among other things.

In China, sea cucumber is mostly farmed, whereas in Canada it is harvested wild from the ocean floor off Nova Scotia's Cape Breton. Canadian sea cucumber has a smooth body, compared to its Chinese counterpart that has a covering of spikes. Exports of sea cucumber from Canada to China have dramatically increased in the past decade.



Lincoln Ellsworth, general manager, Atlantic Sea Cucumber

Research is ongoing at many universities globally to investigate sea cucumber's efficacy across a spectrum of various conditions including heart disease, hypertension, inflammation, and cancer. There is a more than decade-long survey by the National Cancer Institute that reveals marine animals such as C-Frondosa have anti-tumor properties.

C. Frondosa has also been recognized for its high antioxidant capacity. A good source of minerals and protein for immune building and function, it is also a good source of omegas, polysaccharides and saponins, which attracted the attention of AKSO Biotech, Inc. of Halifax, NS.

"Sea Cucumber is very laborious to prepare, it can take days," says Lincoln Ellsworth, general manager of Atlantic Sea Cucumber, of Hackett's Cove, NS. "Although sea cucumber is consumed around the world for its traditional health benefits, a capsule form is the only practical way of getting the benefits of sea cucumber on a daily basis. Our proprietary cook process locks in maximum nutrition, which makes us the supplier of choice for AKSO."

## DOVRE IMPORT & EXPORT IS NOW DOVRE SPECIALTY FOODS

Dovre Import & Export has rebranded as Dovre Specialty Foods. Dovre represent a wide variety of premium brands from across multiple categories. While the company continues to import specialty products from across the globe, their focus has shifted to include many innovative, natural and local brands.

This name change is part of a strategy targeted to emphasize the strength of the company's capabilities, continued growth, and commitment to helping brand partners identify their position within the marketplace. After some in-depth research, market analysis, and discussions with suppliers and customers, it was felt the rebranding would allow them to remain true to their roots while enabling them to expand services.

"We are choosing to make 2021 a year to be remembered," said Armin Melville, president of Dovre Specialty Foods, "for showing promise of a better and brighter future. Our new, more succinct logo and name are brighter, more fresh, and symbolic of growth and environmental awareness, taking us well into the future."



## Retail Prices Signal More Beef

The shift from food service to retail in Canada surpassed \$20 billion in 2020. What does this change in consumer behaviour mean for beef markets now?



In 2020, food service sales were down \$20.3 billion from 2019. Special service, catering to large gatherings, bore \$3 billion of the loss. Retail outlets took over, increasing sales by \$26.1 billion. Retail sales were up on average nine per cent throughout 2020, a steady trend that is reliable in the first quarter of 2021.



Beef demand at retail is supporting strong pricing, stable between \$20.04/kg and \$20.31/kg since August through January. Averaging \$20.37/kg in 2020, the retail beef price was up six per cent from the three-year average and up two per cent from the recent high in 2016. In January 2021, the retail price of beef was \$20.31/kg, up four per cent from January 2020 and five per cent from the five-year average. Rib cuts have been coveted in North America, with prime rib roasts at \$37.66/kg this January, up nine per cent (\$3.10/kg) from January 2020. January 2021 prices for ground beef and boneless blade roast were steady with January 2020. These products provide versatility for meals at home with both higher demand and North American supply stabilizing prices.

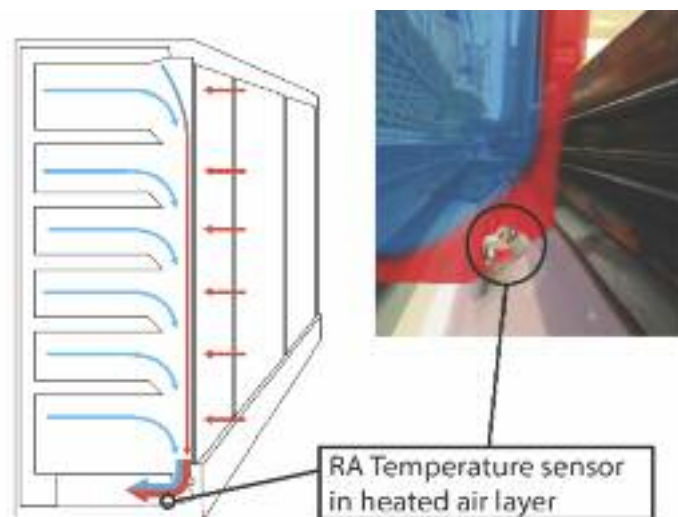
Beef supply is stable to ample with domestic production 13.6 per cent higher year to date because of larger carcass weights. Winter weight gain lifted carcass weights up 22 pounds for fed cattle and up three pounds for lean cattle year to date. Slaughter is up 11 per cent year to date at a steady pace.

## FLOW WATER INC. ANNOUNCES NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Flow Water Inc. has appointed Maurizio Patarnello as CEO. Patarnello will play a key role in scaling Flow to meet its goal of becoming one of North America's premier sustainable mineral spring water and wellness beverage companies. Patarnello joins Flow after an impressive 27+ year career working for Nestlé, and during his tenure he assumed various positions of increasing responsibility around the world, including throughout western and eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In 2017 he was appointed CEO and Chairman of Nestlé Waters, a role that he occupied through the end of 2019. He has dedicated most of his career to the bottled water business, in which he significantly contributed to Nestlé Waters' growth of iconic multibillion dollar brands such as Nestlé Pure Life, Perrier, San Pellegrino, Acqua Panna and Poland Spring. He is also a pioneer in the global consumer health movement from carbonated soft drinks to bottled water.



Maurizio Patarnello



## Accidental Discovery Could Save Supermarkets Huge Amounts of Electricity

Researchers from Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden, discovered by accident that modern store refrigerators are consuming far more energy than necessary – simply because the thermometers within them are wrongly placed. But they also figured out how to solve the problem. And because supermarket refrigeration accounts for around 1.5 per cent of Sweden's total electricity usage, with the figures in Germany and the United Kingdom being similar, the potential efficiency savings are therefore extremely significant.

Tommie Månsson recently completed his doctoral project looking at how supermarkets could function as virtual batteries in smart electrical grid systems. But during his experiments, he realised something peculiar. He saw that the thermometers which regulate the temperature of supermarket refrigerators were systematically incorrectly placed, resulting in excess cooling. "When stores switched from open refrigerated cabinets to closed ones with a door, they failed to reposition the thermometer that measures the recirculating air. Since the thermometer is placed close to the door, the air seems warmer than it actually is, leading the refrigerator to lower the temperature more than necessary. As a result the fridge uses more energy than is actually needed, and runs more unevenly," Månsson explains.

When the researchers experimented with moving the thermometers to a more suitable position within the refrigerators, thus showing a more accurate temperature, they noticed that the refrigerators consumed on average about five per cent less energy. The potential improvements could affect over 3000 supermarkets in Sweden alone.

"We then saw several climate-positive effects. The temperature of the air entering the refrigerator when the doors were opened had less impact, and it became easier to maintain an even temperature – which is more energy efficient. In addition, when the refrigerators were not inadvertently cooling the indoor temperature of the store as much as before, the overall heating needs of the supermarket were reduced," says Månsson.



Tommie Månsson

## Jim Pattison Group Food Businesses Join Forces Under the Pattison Food Group

Save-On-Foods, Buy-Low Foods and Quality Foods will report to the newly formed Pattison Food Group, along with specialty operations and wholesale divisions including PriceSmart Foods, Urban Fare, Bulkley Valley Wholesale, Everything Wine, Pure Integrative Pharmacy, Nature's Fare Markets, Meinhardt Fine Foods, Nesters Market, Choices Markets, Associated Grocers, Van-Whole Produce and Imperial Distributors Canada Inc.

This new structure provides a strategic format for capturing synergies without affecting the value that each unique retail and wholesale operation delivers to its customers today. This new structure will allow The Pattison Food Group businesses to increase efficiencies with lower operating and product costs to better serve the needs of their diverse customer base across Western Canada.

This structure will allow the businesses to build momentum, leverage each other's strengths, and enhance efficiencies across their respective organizations and will ultimately provide opportunities for growth and job security for more than 30,000 team members.

Noel Hayward, president of Quality Foods said, "Our relationship with the Jim Pattison Group started in 2012 and it has given us the confidence and the ability to grow our business on Vancouver Island, and created opportunities for our employees to learn and develop their skills. Through 2020, we especially saw the importance of good communication and access to best available information, technology and people. Our team is proud of our unique culture, the freedom to make decisions locally and the accountability that goes along with it, but we are also looking forward to realizing growth opportunities and achieving economies of scale as part of The Pattison Food Group."

Dan Bregg, president of Buy-Low Foods/Associated Grocers said, "As the Home of the Independent for almost 95 years, Associated Grocers, Buy-Low Foods and our associated group of conventional and specialty retail stores have been driven by one purpose: to provide a sustainable foundation for healthy communities. Our goal is to add value to the lives of our loyal customers, our team members, and the 2,000 independent grocers, restaurants, food relief agencies, and local specialty shops we service every day – from B.C. to Quebec. We are proud of the unique support and services we provide to those businesses today and we are very excited about the additional benefits we can offer with the combined power of our collective group."

The Pattison Food Group will be led by Darrell Jones, president of Save-On-Foods, and each of The Pattison Food Group businesses will continue to operate with their own president and management teams.

## Post Consumer Brands Named Official Cereal of the NBA in Canada



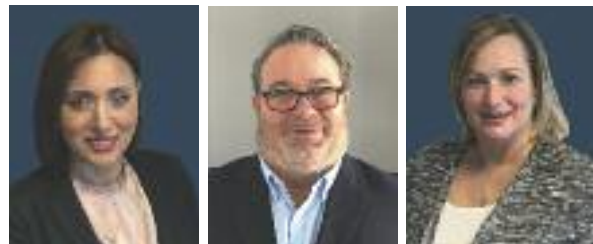
The National Basketball Association (NBA) and Post Foods Canada have announced a multiyear partnership that makes Post Foods Canada the Official Cereal of the NBA in Canada.

Post Foods Canada's cereal boxes featuring the NBA league logo will be available in thousands of grocery and retail stores nationwide, marking the largest co-branded retail promotion ever by the NBA in Canada and the league's first partnership in this category in Canada.

The multiyear partnership, which includes iconic Post Food Canada's cereals: Shreddies, Honey Bunches of Oats, Honeycomb and more, will launch with an exciting national promotion, giving fans in Canada the opportunity to win a unique NBA experience this season.

## Lagoon Seafood Announces New Appointments

Lagoon Seafood, a leader in the distribution, import, export, processing and curing of fresh and frozen fish, has announced the appointment of three new sales representatives to support the rising tide in demand for seafood among Quebec consumers – a trend that extends to the whole nation. Erick Charpentier, account manager of foodservice for Eastern



Carine Hage

Erick Charpentier

Nadia Lalonde

Quebec, joined the company in September 2020. Sales representatives Carine Hage and Nadia Lalonde joined the company in January 2021 after an extensive recruitment process.

“We are delighted to welcome Carine, Erick and Nadia to our team,” says Sam Cheaib, president and CEO of Lagoon Seafood. “As an essential service, the grocery and foodservice sectors have demonstrated incredible dedication, innovation and resilience during this past year. We are doing everything we can to make sure that consumers continue to have access the best possible products from the sea and that includes finding skilled team members.”



## Organic Meadow Partners with Global Reusable Platform Leader, Loop

Loop is a state-of-the-art reuse shopping platform and home delivery system, designed to eliminate waste by offering consumers their favourite household products in reusable, refillable, zero-waste packaging formats. Following successful launches in France, the United States and the U.K, Loop entered the Canadian market on February 1, 2021 in the Greater Toronto Area.

As the exclusive dairy beverage partner for Loop in Canada, Organic Meadow continues its commitment to sustainability leadership, by offering the system’s first (and only) dairy beverage – Organic Kefir – packaged in its iconic 946ml reusable and refillable zero-waste glass bottle.

“Loop has done a wonderful job at advancing the zero-waste movement globally”, says Nancy Korva, senior vice-president, Organic Meadow. “As Canada’s original organic dairy, Organic Meadow’s history is rooted in sustainability, which is why we’re naturally excited to partner with Loop in our united efforts to create a more circular future.”



## GROCERY & SPECIALTY FOOD WEST 2021 GOES VIRTUAL!

*The grocery industry’s annual Western Canadian trade show and conference is going virtual with Grocery & Specialty Food West’s GSF LIVE RETAILER CONNECT on May 11 & 12, 2021.*

The event is your virtual gateway onto Western Canada’s Grocery Shelves! This must-attend, exclusive B2B virtual trade show and conference is designed to get business done virtually through GSF’s exclusive RETAILER CONNECT 1-to-1 matchmaking A.I. powered meeting program designed to connect people based on their business interests.

The virtual platform will bring together customers and sector stakeholders from all around the globe and provide face-to-face meetings, networking, and relationship-building using ground-breaking technology provided by EnsembleIQ’s leading, best-in-class virtual platform.

### FAST & EASY ACCESS WITH ONE CLICK

Using a one-click, one-stop virtual showroom concept allows for easy and efficient pre-scheduled dedicated meetings, education, sampling, and networking. This premium experience is affordable and accessible from any home or office desktop, laptop or tablet. There is no travel, or hotel fees for your teams, no stress, no borders to cross, and no lost time away from the office. Retailers will enjoy free access to the trade show, while rates for exhibitors’ virtual showrooms reflect the accessible, and value-added philosophy of the event.

Exhibitors will be able to work with their account manager to effortlessly design their immersive and engaging showroom, all powered by proven technology. Truly reflecting the event’s theme, “Grocery Redefined” both local and international exhibitors will be able to engage with retailers

with a simple click, while engaging in video chats as well as live text chats in 100 languages! No downloads of apps or additional software necessary.

### ENGAGE & CONNECT

This pioneering event will provide even more engagement opportunities complete with keynotes, workshops, product discovery and more. The showrooms can be accessed easily with one click and feature exhibitors’ curated products and services, where sales can directly take place. Sampling and digital show bags will also be made available. At GSF LIVE retailers and buyers from around the world will access videos, download sales sheets and product information from their laptop or tablet, check out hundreds of innovations in the New Product Showcase digital displays, and video / text chat with vendors live, in a multitude of languages. When not exploring the showrooms, online visitors can attend invaluable keynotes and presentations from leading experts on sector issues in the virtual auditorium and breakout rooms, both live and on-demand.

**GSF LIVE RETAILER CONNECT** is a two-day event supported by a unique 28-day follow-up showcase after the live event; all exhibitor virtual showrooms will remain open and active for 28 days after the event and will be available online 24 hours per day. During that period, delegates to the event can access materials and exhibitors can continue to receive visitors and meetings across the entire period. With commitments already from leading retailers and suppliers to bringing their buying and decision-makers to the event, GSF LIVE RETAILER CONNECT is the grocery’s must-attend virtual event. Go to: GSFSHOW.COM. To participate, contact Rolster Taylor, Rtaylor@cfg.ca; More information, events@cfg.ca

**ABOUT GSF LIVE RETAILER CONNECT: GSF LIVE RETAILER CONNECT** is the premier grocery exhibition and conference at the forefront of innovation, showcasing cutting edge products and services. The conference provides exceptional opportunities for networking and foresight into current and upcoming industry trends. ●

Nancy Kwon, nkwon@cfg.ca, T: 416-219-0952

**Plant-based comfort food**

Plant-based • Heat & Eat • Non-GMO • Gluten Free

**boosh™**

Contact your local UNFI representative | Canada East Broker > hollym@brandseedmarketing.ca | Canada West Broker > kerryo@brandseedmarketing.ca | @booshfood | booshfood.com

**DIG IN!**

With Western Canada’s most comprehensive selection of certified organic and fair trade fresh produce, Discovery Organics can help retailers increase sales in the industry’s strongest growth areas – organic and fair trade.

Discovery Organics has been awarded 2016 Trader of the Year and 2016 Fair trade All-Star for its commitment to growers and their communities. Ask us about the benefits of selling Fair trade organic produce to your customers.

**DISCOVERY ORGANICS**

info@discoveryorganics.ca  
www.discoveryorganics.ca

Logos: UNFI, PACS, Fair Trade, For Life

## ON OUR COVER

By Ronda Payne

Vancouver Island's **49th Parallel Grocery** has a long-standing family history of putting customers and community first

Most people get to a point where they chafe under the watchful eye of a parent. Peter Richmond is one of the few who thrives in these conditions and has been working for his parents since returning to the family business in 1996. To be fair, his dad Wayne Richmond, co-owner of Vancouver Island's 49th Parallel Grocery with wife Harmina, isn't even remotely a micro-manager.

"Though owner does trump president sometimes," Peter Richmond says with a laugh.

In this scenario, father is happy to let son do his thing in the role of president and CFO. Wayne simply likes to keep his eyes on the financials and know basic details about what's going on.

"As any owner would," Richmond says. "He's very active in what's happening and what's going on. Certainly, there's daily communication. He likes to check the numbers every day. He knows them even better than I do sometimes, I think."

That's saying something, given that Richmond is a CPA.

It's this kind of family involvement that has made 49th Parallel the organization it is today. One that is seen as customer-centric and community involved. These foundations aren't accidental. The small grocery chain's basis was created purposefully by Richmond's parents as they sought to bring fair prices, quality selection and reliable service to smaller Vancouver Island communities.

### The Beginnings of 49th Parallel Grocery

"My parents bought the business in 1977," says Richmond. "The 49th Parallel Grocery had been in business since 1951. My Mom and Dad have been active since day one. We're a customer-focused company and that's important. We're in touch with our communities."



(L-R) Kathy Richmond, executive assistant; Wayne Richmond, owner; Harmina Richmond, owner; Peter Richmond, president & CFO

photo courtesy Kurt Knock Photography

# Independent and Proudly Community-Based

Frans and Lempi Paivarinta started things off in Ladysmith in 1951, then sold the business to Alex and Jo Campbell in 1973, a few years before the Richmonds bought the store. Wayne and Alex were friends from working together for Shop Easy and a deal was struck that moved the Richmonds into their own operation and Alex went on to found Thrifty Foods.

"I think when he started in '77 he had four employees and Mom and Dad and us kids," Richmond says. "We've been very fortunate to grow with the community. Now we have about 380 employees and we're getting ready to open our fifth location."



The Ladysmith location still sits on its original site.

The Ladysmith store still sits on the original site at Symonds Street and First Avenue, having had its share of renovations and rebuilds. In December it will celebrate 70 years of business as 49th Parallel Grocery. The most recent expansion, in 2010, saw the addition of departments customers expect in a local grocery: a floral shop, deli, bakery and café.



The Duncan location opened in 2008.

"It's amazing how many people he knew in the business," Richmond says of his dad. "The times have changed a little bit. I love listening to my dad's stories. How personal it was. You had more visits from company reps and suppliers, even before COVID. We do miss that a lot. You just don't see the suppliers like we used to."

**"WE'VE BEEN VERY FORTUNATE TO GROW WITH THE COMMUNITY. NOW WE HAVE ABOUT 380 EMPLOYEES AND WE'RE GETTING READY TO OPEN OUR FIFTH LOCATION."**

The grocery industry has seen its fair share of changes over the years and with it, 49th Parallel Grocery has seen some changes too.

### Growth and Change

The 49th weathered the challenging late '70s and early '80s when interest rates hit all-time highs of more than 20 per cent and people were losing their shoes and shirts in addition to their homes and businesses. There were bright spots after these tough times. What began as one store grew to a second in Chemainus in

1979, which Richmond's aunt Nelly and uncle Ron took on.

"Through the '80s they added more locations, some of which aren't in the fold anymore," he says. "He definitely didn't stand still. He could certainly tell you some interesting stories from the '80s."



The Cedar location opened in 1997.

Then, the late '80s finally saw a new 17,000 square foot Ladysmith store replace the old original which had been bursting at the seams for quite some time.

"We went through several expansions," Richmond explains.

"I came back to the family business in 1996 and at that time, my dad had scaled back to the one Ladysmith store. The one in Chemainus

was being operated by my aunt and uncle, but he was building one in Cedar, so going from one to two and needed help. The business was growing, so I came back."

The Cedar location opened in 1997 and has had a few renovations and upgrades since, with the most recent in 2019. The Chemainus store rejoined Wayne and Harmina's stores when it was purchased back in 2006 from Richmond's aunt and uncle who have recently retired from the business.

### Modern Additions that Plan for the Future

In 2007, an interesting, yet very clever purchase occurred. That of a print shop. Known as 49th Parallel Printers, this is a full-service Xerox-equipped print shop for the mid-island region that has full-colour, digital capabilities.

"We're our biggest customer," Richmond jokes. "We print all of our own signs."

In 2008, a new store in Duncan was opened when Bruce's Grocery (which had been in business for more than 75 years) was purchased.

Chemainus got a brand new 49th Parallel Grocery store in 2013. This 22,000 square foot beauty eventually replaced the old existing store and brought a new level of full-service, modern convenience to the community including a scratch bakery.

It wasn't long before another need was recognized. Things were going well with the four stores: the flagship Ladysmith location with head office and floral shop called Blooms at the 49th, Cedar, Duncan and the new Chemainus store. But Duncan was growing and there was definitely an opportunity to do more for this thriving community.



The Chemainus location opened in 1979.



**49th Parallel GROCERY**  
Serving Vancouver Island Communities Since 1979

Congratulations on your new store, the 49th at Berkle's Corner in Duncan, BC.

**Colnuck**  
ECODURABLE PRODUCTS

1.866.594.2247 | www.colnuck.com

**Island gold**

Dwyna Vandriess  
Egg Producer  
NANAIMO, BC

Island Eggs, located in the beautiful Cowichan Valley, has been providing customers on Vancouver Island with locally sourced fresh eggs since 1951.

Visit us at [islandeggs.com](http://islandeggs.com)

**Congratulations to 49th Parallel on the opening of their new Duncan store!**

**Happy 44th Anniversary!**

**49th Parallel GROCERY**

**AW-5600FXII**  
Trayless produce and cheese wrapping

**SM-60005SR with stand**  
DIGI CONTACTLESS self-weighing with e-Sense BYOC (Bring Your Own Container) advanced applications

**DIGI CANADA Inc.**

[www.digisystem.com](http://www.digisystem.com) | [sales@ca.digi-group.com](mailto:sales@ca.digi-group.com)





## A Second Duncan Store Now Open

“It’s been in the works for a long time,” says Richmond of the new 25,000 square foot store in Duncan that will be the second to support the community.

This fifth location opened in March and it certainly didn’t go according to plan with the COVID-19 pandemic bringing unexpected challenges to the process.

“We weren’t expecting to be opening with COVID-19 protocols in place,” he says. “It has been interesting in our business. At the end of the day, our stores aren’t huge. We’ve had to be creative while adding queuing lines and social distancing in our stores. We have all that planned in the new store too.”



after COVID protocols became a standard in the grocery industry, putting a greater demand on square footage.

“We’ve got a grocery delivery and staging area and customer pick-up area for online orders,” he says.

In addition to the grocery delivery area, the new Duncan store also offers a scratch bakery like the Chemainus location.

“This steps up our bakery offering quite a bit,” he notes. “And we expanded our take-home meal options. We’re actually going to be making fresh pasta in store. We’re expanding our pizza program. A lot of very exciting things.”

There will also be an expanded produce area, a full-service butcher shop that will produce hamburger and sausages daily.

With all of these features, there should be a great load of activity around the opening, but again, COVID seems to be the damper on the party as it has been for many organizations over the last year. There will be no grand opening and no big push to drive people to the store.

**THE STORE WILL BRING SEVERAL NEW THINGS INTO THE FOLD, BUT ONE THING WILL ABSOLUTELY NEVER CHANGE: THE DEDICATION TO CUSTOMER SERVICE.**

“We’re struggling a little bit with not being able to create any excitement,” Richmond says. “We’ll be focusing on our local area neighbourhood. Getting to meet our new neighbours and hopefully they’ll like what they see.”

Because 49th Parallel Grocery is smaller and nimbler than regional or national counterparts, it’s going to be easy for Richmond and his team to adapt to the needs of the community and bring in the products they want.



Mayor Al Seibring was the first sale at the new North Cowichan location.

Obviously, when the new store’s plans were being developed there wasn’t any awareness of COVID restrictions let alone the need for physical distancing. While grocery delivery was in the cards, the accommodation for this was expanded

**Jones**  
FOOD STORE EQUIPMENT *Ltd.*

**Congratulations to 49th Parallel on your new Duncan location!**  
*Wishing you continued success from the team at Jones!*

Burnaby location 2896 Norland Avenue, Burnaby, BC 800-294-6321  
Parksville location #9-1009 Ailsbrook Road, Parksville, BC 855-585-8707 [www.jonesfood.com](http://www.jonesfood.com)

**85<sup>th</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY

ORIGINAL **BOTHWELL**  
CHEESE

BETTER WITH BOTHWELL

**FRESH CHEESE CURDS**  
NOW AVAILABLE AT  
49<sup>th</sup> PARALLEL GROCERY  
BULK DELI & CAFE

**CONGRATULATIONS 49<sup>th</sup> PARALLEL GROCERY ON YOUR NEW STORE IN NORTH COWICHAN!**



49th Parallel Grocery's dedication to customer service will never change.

"We'll be ready to adjust products," he says. "As a small company... we can respond quickly and adjust."

The store will bring several new things into the fold, but one thing will absolutely never change: the dedication to customer service. This means features seen in some larger chain stores won't be found in the new Duncan location or any other 49th Parallel Grocery for that matter.

"We will not have self-checkouts in this store," Richmond says. "We won't have them in any of our stores. Our focus is on our customer and serving our customer. It comes back to our overall

vision statement. We talk about wanting to play a big part in the daily lives of our communities. To us, this means finding everything from finding top quality best products, offering a competitive price and providing the best possible service in a friendly shopping environment."

Now, with a team of about 380, Richmond knows family members like his sister Kathy, who is the organization's executive assistant, as well as her husband Mark and Peter's wife Lesley within the head office are constantly striving to fulfill Wayne and Harmina's vision of a true community grocer. When asked about community

involvement, Richmond points to his parents' early days in Ladysmith.

"My mom and dad, they jumped in. They got involved," he says.

There was a big community event not long after they took over the store in 1977. As Richmond explains, the event's organizer needed pop and other supplies but didn't know how much.



# Congratulations

## 49th Parallel Grocery

on your anniversary and business expansion...

## Keep Growing!



From your friends at Kraft Heinz Canada

# Kraft Heinz



“Dad said, ‘Awe, come on over at nine, get the key and get what you need. Write it down, we’ll hook up tomorrow to sort it out’, that’s the way it was. He gave him the keys to the store,” he says. “Giving back has always been part of my mom and dad’s mantra for sure. Just being involved and in tune with the community and what’s happening. Contributions to schools. Local kids programs, food banks and other non-profit organizations is a daily event. Recently, the 49th contributed \$5,000 to the Tour de rock bringing

**“OUR TEAM MEMBERS HAVE DONE AMAZING THINGS THIS YEAR IN TERMS OF STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE, BEING AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE, AS WE’VE BEEN CALLED.”**

donations to this cause to over \$200,000.” The store managers are still “slugging stock and talking to customers” in Richmond’s words. They don’t spend their days locked away from the day-to-day operations. “Our team members have done

amazing things this year in terms of stepping up to the plate, being an essential service, as we’ve been called,” he says. “Everyone has worked extra hard. We would not be where we are today without a great team.”

The team members at 49th Parallel grocery are empowered to do right by the customer.

“It’s impossible to outline everything in black and white,” he says. “We tell our team that it’s their job to send the customer home with a smile and we’ll figure it out afterwards if there’s an issue.”

That approach is in line with the



The new North Cowichan location is 25,000 square feet.

general vibe of smaller, independent grocers on Vancouver Island.

“Grocery is quite different on the island,” he notes. “There are more independents over here than a lot of places across the country. People are shopping more local. They’re a good group too. It’s an exciting business. Things are changing all the time. I like being in connection with people and the community.”

Certainly, things are different for 49th Parallel grocery than had been expected with the new Duncan store opening, but it seems that rolling with the punches is just part of the legacy Wayne and Harmina created. With the ink still wet on the new Duncan store’s signs, there’s nothing planned in terms of new locations, but clearly, the Richmond family doesn’t sit still for long. ●

Congratulations to 49th Parallel our valued customer since 1998.

The J.S. Software team wishes you great success at your new store in Duncan, BC.

**SOFTWARE**  
PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

www.js-software.com 866-828-4300

**western grocer**

Congratulations 49th Parallel Grocery on your Continued Success!

Proud to be Serving the Grocery Industry for 100 Years!

www.westerngrocer.com

**PSC Natural Foods**  
we deliver the goodness

Congratulations 49th Parallel Grocery for providing quality groceries and employment to our island community. More than 40 years and growing strong!

A True Local company, we are proud to partner with you to provide the best Natural and Organic products to Island consumers.

All the best to your exciting new store opening in Duncan.

Your friends at PSC Natural Foods

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP AND CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW STORE OPENING!

Congratulations to the 49th Parallel Grocery Group on your new Duncan store!

“Everything for the food store except the food”

www.raimac.com • 1.877.477.7701 • sales@raimac.com

## CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

By Sue Nicholls

Shopper demands are getting bigger and louder. They are looking for a unified experience across touch-points and will search elsewhere if they can't find a particular product at one retailer. They demand easy returns and exchanges, want convenience, demand personalization and localization and engaging experiences, and they expect free and fast delivery with consistent accuracy.

How much do you think these changes in shopper demands affect the supply chain (or have you really thought about this before)? The answer is SIGNIFICANTLY (and you should think about it!) This article is intended to help you understand the biggest ways that the changing shopper is affecting supply chain and ultimately retailer priorities as it relates to inventory, forecasting and fulfillment.

### INVENTORY:

Inventory is a company asset that can tie up cash flow and is recorded on a company's balance sheet. The better you can manage and track the movement of your goods, the more control you will have over your inventory. Real-time visibility is a key component of any sophisticated inventory management process and would have been useful for retailers and suppliers during the pandemic in 2020 – but for many it wasn't available.

Real-time inventory is when a system can track product movement “in the moment” with precise information on units available and where they are – in the store, in the DC, or in transit.



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

# UPHEAVAL IN THE PRODUCT SUPPLY CHAIN (and what you need to know)

The goal with supply chain visibility is to track the goods from when they're brought in as raw materials to when delivered to the end customer or retailer.

Supply chain visibility requires transparency on the part of supply chain partners. That is, suppliers and retailers must be willing to share timely and accurate data with partner companies. Collaboration between partners with better visibility allows for:

1. **Partners to be forewarned of unplanned situations.**
2. **A time lag that can be used to redirect shipments, find alternative sources of supply, release inventories, alert customers, and more.**
3. **More forewarning to respond to reduce capacity and inventories carried in warehouses and DCs, thereby reducing inventory costs.**

The shopper also wants to see real-time inventory with visibility into what retailers have available in stock as part of their buying process; they want to know what is available NOW and where it is available. Since buy online pickup in store (BOPIS) and curbside has surged during the pandemic, real-time inventory manage-

ment throughout the supply chain has never been more important.

### FORECASTING:

Improved forecasting is another priority for both retailers and suppliers. Forecasting drives product supply and needs to be accurate –and it's becoming much more difficult to rely on historical forecasting approaches as the shopper becomes more complex. There are more factors that affect sales forecasting, and more data points to be considered in forecasting that go beyond Excel spreadsheets.

Traditional forecasting models, where only historical data is considered, are getting outdated because of the increased amount of data generated from businesses and external sources, particularly the data in the online space.

With the implementation of machine learning into businesses' supply chain management, companies can improve the accuracy of forecast results and optimize their replenishment plans.

Machine learning allows you to anticipate customer response to external and internal factors that affect sales for more accurate forecasting.

Remember that this increase in accuracy reduces inventory, improves efficiencies in the product supply chain and puts more money in the company's pockets.

### FULFILLMENT:

Fulfillment options have increased in types and in complexity due to changing shopper needs.

Although BOPIS fulfillment is a convenient mode of selling for shoppers, there are some common challenges that retailers must overcome in order to ensure seamless pick-up services and a happy customer experience including:

- **Real-time inventory.**
- **Automated and data-driven ways to replenish stocks for their stores, especially when offering a BOPIS (buy online, pick up in-store) service.**
- **Order fulfillment from DCs or store shelves, wherever is faster, giving retailers access to a larger inventory. By combining and optimizing the two systems, retailers can have better insight into what's available in real-time.**

Now let's talk about how shoppers receive their delivery orders. The shopper doesn't care where it's coming from or how it gets to them. But if they want it shipped (and it's coming from either the store or the DC), it affects the DC and how orders are taken in the first place. It also affects the bottom-line cost, as there's a sunken delivery cost that has to be paid.

Retailers are trying different ways to fulfill eCommerce orders, including local/micro-fulfillment centres and larger robotically enabled warehouses. Walmart is scaling its local fulfillment centre model to dozens of locations through a 20,000-square-foot facility that Walmart built onto the back of its store. Automated systems are being put in place to pick and pack orders as much as 10 times faster than humans can, but not without human interaction. The system does not fully eliminate the need for human hands and decisions but streamlines the picking and packing process for standardized items like frozen foods, dry and canned goods and household essentials. Other retailers (like Sobeys) are investing in robotically enabled warehouses for centralized warehousing (versus a local approach that requires humans). There's not a one-size fits all approach to automation, as many elements need to be considered.

As the shopper changes and impacts real-time inventory, forecasting accuracy and replenishment, there are a broad range of technologies and solutions evolving to include things like AI, machine learning, blockchain and new data and technology to help us make better decisions and recommendations. It is important now more than ever before that we understand the business from a bigger picture, omni-channel perspective and anticipate how these new technology and data investments will impact our organizations, the work that we do and how we do it. ●



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

**Specialty eggs are trending in BC**

Do your customers know the difference between free run, free range, organic and conventional eggs? The cartons don't always tell your customers what they want to know. BC egg can help by providing educational materials — custom designed shelf labels, shelf talkers, bag stuffers, flyer ads and infographics for digital signage or for your website. All materials can be customized with your branding and can feature a local farmer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Amanda Brittain  
amandab@bcegg.com  
604 854 4498

**BC egg**

**E-NEWS**

KEEP UP ON THE **LATEST WESTERN NEWS** FOR THE **GROCERY INDUSTRY**

Subscribe today to Western Grocer **NEW WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER** free of charge!

**grocer westerngrocer**

Just a simple click away, go to: [www.westerngrocer.com](http://www.westerngrocer.com)



By Carolyn Camilleri

# More Than a Buzzword

The grocery world is taking sustainability seriously

photo courtesy shutterstock.com

The sustainability movement has been building momentum in all aspects of grocery retailing, from producers and manufacturers to in-store practices and consumer behaviour and expectations.

Back in 2019, PWC's Consumer Insights Report stated that, "Sustainability is no longer a 'nice to have' for organizations to be seen as socially responsible, but a 'must have' if retailers want to meet consumers' demands. According to the report, consumers look for — and will pay more for — products that are organic and sustainably produced and packaged, use eco-friendly packaging,

and are ethically produced.

The trends have continued to grow. Zero-waste grocery stores, where refillable products and bulk foods are available, are catching on with savvy consumers. Plastic-free, and bring-your-own-container stores are popping up across the country.

And it is no longer small shops taking big steps.

On February 1st, Loblaw, announced its partnership with the global reuse platform Loop, an innovative waste management company addressing the issue of waste at its source by providing consumers a circular reuse platform while encouraging

manufacturers to take responsibility for their packaging.

The same day, Galen Weston, executive chairman, Loblaw Companies Limited, published a blog post titled "We have a plastic problem and Loblaw is part of it." In it, he references the new Golden Design Rules for packaging and the launch of the Canadian Plastics Pact (CPP), of which Loblaw is a founding member.

Some of the biggest manufacturers and suppliers in the grocery world have joined CPP, including some you will read about here, to collaborate, innovate, and build on

significant work already underway to reduce plastic waste. Because, as Weston acknowledges, there is a plastic problem and grocery retail is part of it. Stats published by CPP indicate approximately 47 per cent of plastic waste in Canada is due to plastic packaging, with 32 per cent of that packaging being recycled. Currently in Canada, approximately nine per cent of all plastic is recycled, which means the other 90 per cent winds up in landfills or the environment.

These are big steps, and bold plans are being made towards sustainability. Producers and manufacturers are also making big strides. ●

## Nature's Fare



Commits to Environmental Responsibility

### HOW ONE GROCER IS TACKLING THE SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE



#### An Interview with Stephanie Thatcher, director of marketing, Nature's Fare Markets

##### How important is practising sustainability to your company?

Sustainability is a core value at Nature's Fare Markets, in fact we were the first retailer in Canada to be certified as a B Corporation. We believe that our actions as a business play a key role in fostering healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities. This means that we weigh business decisions against the impacts on our people, our customers and the environment and challenge each other to find ways to further reduce our environmental footprint.

##### Specifically, what do you do at the store level to operate in a more sustainable fashion?

We have eliminated plastic bags from our stores and offer backyard compostable bags in our produce department and at check-out.

We encourage the use of reusable grocery bags and donate five cents to the Nature Conservancy of Canada every time a customer uses one.

We only carry certified organic produce, supporting local farmers first, who improve soil quality and minimize impact on local ecosystems.

Our fresh food Bistro has converted as much as its packaging as possible from plastic to compostable — smoothie cups, straws, soup containers, cutlery and more.

We actively compost at all seven of our retail stores and invite our customers to bring back their compostable packaging to our stores for disposal.

In addition, all retail locations have been retro-fitted with LED lighting and we use enviro-wrap pallet jackets for our warehouse to reduce plastic shrink-wrap and waste to our stores in the Okanagan Valley.

When we purchase rewards for our team members, we work with companies that share our values like Ten tree, Patagonia and MiiR.

##### Would you include reducing food waste as part of the drive towards a more sustainable society?

##### Do you partner with food banks?

In an effort to reduce food waste we currently donate food scraps to local farmers to use for feed and compost. We also support our local community food banks through cash donations and donation bins in-store.

##### Can sustainability also be good for the bottom line?

We absolutely believe this to be true! Customers make a choice with their dollars every day and we believe that they will choose companies with whom they share values with.



# Getting the Message Out About Reducing Impact on the Planet

**KRAFT HEINZ CANADA IS COMMITTED TO CREATING A HEALTHIER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT**

**K**raft Heinz has been at family tables for over 150 years. In Canada, it is the country’s largest food and beverage company.

“At Kraft Heinz Canada, consumers are at the centre of everything we do, and consumers are telling us they want more sustainable choices when it comes to the food they purchase,” says Nicole Fischer, head of sustainability.

She explains, “At Kraft Heinz, we believe global companies and brands have the power and scale to help shape the world for good — especially during times of significant change. We are a global business, yes, but we are also global citizens. We all share the same planet, and so we must help create a healthier and more sustainable environment for all of us. And how we bring this to life as a company is as important as what we do.”

That’s where their new approach to environmental, social, and governance (ESG), found in their 2020 ESG Report “Growing Sustainably,” comes in. These efforts line up under three broad pillars: environmental stewardship, responsible sourcing, and healthy living and community support.



Nicole Fischer, head of sustainability, Kraft Heinz Canada

“Our ESG strategy reflects one of our company values: We Do the Right Thing. That means we will always strive to do the right thing in all aspects of our business, including with our customers, partners, suppliers, stakeholders, consumers, and communities,” she says.

Consider packaging.

“We know packaging waste can have a significant detrimental impact on the environment and is an industry-wide challenge we must all do our part to address,” says Fischer. “Globally, we have committed to making 100 per cent of our packaging recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2025.”

In 2020, Kraft Heinz Canada made great strides towards that goal with the launch of 100 per cent compostable pods across its entire coffee portfolio.

“By making the switch from traditional, single-use plastic pods to compostable pods, we can help reduce plastics in landfills annually by a height equivalent to more than 4,000 CN Towers,” she says.



It’s something they are keen to tell consumers about.

“From our consumer research, we have learned that sustainability means different things to different people, so we have a responsibility to help educate Canadians about what makes our products sustainable in a simple, relevant, and compelling way,” says Fischer.

With the launch of Maxwell House and Nabob 100 per cent compostable coffee pods, the main message was the benefit of “zero waste” to the consumer — clear communication to give Canadians an easy way to make sustainable choices.

Then, on February 1st, Kraft Heinz Canada announced that its iconic Heinz Ketchup glass bottle, which has always been recyclable, can now be reusable through a partnership with LOOP, a state-of-the-art circular reuse platform.

“This initiative makes it easy for Canadians to choose more sustainable options that are safe, sanitary, and impactful,” says Fischer.

Kraft Heinz Canada is also proud to be a founding signatory to the Canada Plastics Pact and is looking forward working collaboratively towards a common vision of a circular economy for plastics.

From a community perspective, in May 2020, Kraft Heinz Canada launched Project Pantry in response to the global pandemic. This five-year, \$20-million food donation initiative in partnership with Food Banks Canada includes Kraft Heinz Pantry Day, where consumers can “buy one/give one” on select Kraft Heinz products on October 16th, World Food Day, to help reduce food insecurity across Canada. ●



## Zero Waste\*. Zero Effort. 100% Compostable†.



Introducing Maxwell House and Nabob 100% compostable coffee pods. The same consistently good coffee you love, now in a plant-based pod that leaves zero waste. The pod continues to work hard for the planet long after you've finished your cup of coffee.



Maxwell House and Nabob 100% compostable pods are proudly made locally in Ontario, Canada



# A Catalyst for Corporate Good

## KEURIG DR PEPPER HAS A BOLD SUSTAINABILITY VISION

**K**eurig Dr Pepper (KDP) is the union of two iconic companies that have a fresh approach to the beverage industry.

“As we formed Keurig Dr Pepper, our organization became a greater force for making a positive impact worldwide,” says Cynthia Shanks, director of communications and sustainability. “KDP’s bold sustainability vision comes with a commitment to source its ingredients responsibly, reduce its environmental footprint, promote the health and well-being of families, and give back to our local and global communities.”

Sustainability is a core value embraced by all their employees and leadership and embedded in everything they do. They are committed to acting responsibly and being a good corporate citizen.

“We believe our greatest opportunities for impact are in our supply chain, the environment, and the people and communities we touch,” she says. “We are mobilizing people and resources inside and outside our company to be a catalyst for good. Through transparency, partnership, innovation and investment, we will continue to tackle important issues and contribute to a better world.”

With their “Drink Well. Do Good.” corporate responsibility platform launched in 2018, they have established multi-year goals and initiatives.



Cynthia Shanks, director of communications and sustainability, Keurig Dr Pepper Canada.

KDP is also channelling energy and resources into opportunities such as ensuring packaging is recycled and repurposed to remain in use and out of the environment; innovating packaging designs and processes to reduce total material usage and incorporate materials accepted for recycling and valued as recycled content; and investing in partnerships that amplify individual actions, including being a signatory of the Canada Plastic Pact, and a founding member of the Circular Plastic Taskforce, an industry coalition

designed to increase and improve the recovery and recycling of valuable plastics in Canada.

Over the past year, the group activated multiple plans and projects to reduce virgin plastic footprint, emissions and energy use several of which spread across Canada.

“This year we will be launching our first beverage bottles



made with 100 per cent PET and expanding our use of post consumer recycled plastic (PCR) in our coffee maker portfolio,” she says. “Our goal is to use at least 30 per cent of PCR across all of our packaging by 2025.”

In 2020, KDP also started manufacturing their first Keurig coffee makers made in part from post-consumer recycled plastic, sourced in Montréal. Following the launch of the Keurig® K-Mini® and K-Mini Plus® brewers containing 20 per cent and 30 per cent of PCR plastic respectively, KDP will be expanding in 2021 the numbers of brewers made with PCR and ramping up the percentage of recycled material used in up to 50 per cent in some cases.

With their newly set science-based target, Keurig Dr Pepper is also on a path to considerably reduce their GHG emissions here and everywhere the company operates.

As one of the largest global purchasers of coffee, the organization embraces its ability and responsibility to support farmers throughout their supply chain. Last year, for the tenth consecutive year, KDP was named the largest buyer of Fairtrade coffee in the world.

“Starting by ensuring 100 per cent of our coffee production is ethically and responsibly sourced, we are continually transforming our business practices to put people’s care at the centre of our actions,” she says. “KDP will keep working to support the entire coffee ecosystem and the connections that coffee allows us to make around the world.” ●

To learn more about Keurig Dr Pepper’s corporate responsibility platform and projects towards a circular economy for plastics in Canada on [KeurigDrPepper.ca](http://KeurigDrPepper.ca).

# FITS ANYWHERE. INCLUDING IN YOUR ECO-RESPONSIBLE LIFESTYLE.

Introducing the Keurig® K-Mini Plus® black coffee maker made with at least 50% recycled plastic. Switch on sustainable brewing.

Visit [keurig.ca](http://keurig.ca) for more information.



**KEURIG**  
Brew the love.®



# Meatless Consumption Target

## MEATLESS FARM IS MAKING THE TRANSITION TO PLANT-BASED EASY AND DELICIOUS

**M**eatless Farm was founded in 2016 by Morten Toft Bech, to help people reduce meat consumption and make the transition to plant-based an easy, joyful experience by creating the taste, texture, and nutritional value of meat using the power of plants.

“Meatless Farm, a U.K.-based company, was born with the core mission of global meat reduction,” says Darcy Peters, vice-president of sales, Meatless Farm Canada.

In Canada, Meatless Farm has four core items available to retailers, including the Meatless Farm burger, ground, breakfast sausage, and breakfast sausage patties. Meatless Farm’s products are 100 per cent plant-based, gluten-free, high in protein, and made using the highest-quality, non-GMO ingredients available. All products also have fewer calories, fat, and saturated fat than their meat counterparts.



Darcy Peters,  
vice-president of sales,  
Meatless Farm Canada

“We’re excited that we have several new items planned to release in 2021, which will expand our product reach to consumers looking for plant-based pea protein products outside of the core four,” says Peters.

Sustainability is embedded in everything Meatless Farm does.

“Morten Toft Bech founded the company with health, the environment, and animal welfare top-of-mind”, says Peters. “As a company, we are committed to educating consumers on the real health and environmental benefits of eating plant-based, while providing them with a product that is as sustainable as it is delicious and nutritious.”

To support this mission, the company launched a “Meatless Consumption Target” to raise awareness of the environmental benefits of switching to a plant-based or flexitarian lifestyle. Swapping out one beef-focused meal to plant-based once per week would cut Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions by 30 million tonnes — the equivalent to taking six million cars off the road and a reduction of 10 million hectares in Canada’s agricultural land use.



“We recognize that making a full transition to a plant-based diet is difficult and often unsustainable,” says Peters. “Making a difference only takes swapping one meal to plant-based each week.”

The “Meatless Consumption Calculator” shows consumers the environmental benefits of swapping a meal to plant based. For example, if one family swapped out ground beef in spaghetti Bolognese for Meatless Farm ground each week for one year, they could reduce land use by 31 tennis courts, save 11,705 miles driving, and slash water usage by 1,550 showers.

“When working with our retailers, our message stays the same — a little goes a long way,” says Peters.

Meatless Farm recently announced the launch of their texturized vegetable protein facility in Calgary. Lovingly Made Ingredients, the dedicated plant protein ingredients subsidiary operating out of the facility, will provide the large majority of textured plant protein for all Meatless Farm products around the world and has the capacity of producing up to 14,500 tonnes of plant protein ingredients by 2023.

“This plant demonstrates Meatless Farm’s commitment to sustainable and greener manufacturing and improving access to sustainable living for all,” says Peters.

Meatless Farm is also looking for opportunities to further improve sustainability standards by using a renewable energy provider and engaging with local farmers. ●



# BETTER FOR YOU AND THE PLANET MAKE IT MEATLESS

Swapping red meat for plant-based meat just once a week would cut Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions by a staggering 30 million tons. That’s equivalent to taking 6 million cars off the road.

- RICH IN PEA PROTEIN • PLANT-BASED • 0G OF CHOLESTEROL •
- JUICY AND DELICIOUS •



## MEATLESS FARM

LOVINGLY MADE FROM PLANTS





# Made in Canada

## SPROUD HAS A SHARED PASSION FOR PLANT-BASED ALTERNATIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Nutritious, healthy, and delicious, Sproud is an entirely new kind of plant-based milk alternative developed in Sweden and made from a protein base very familiar to Canadians: peas. In fact, it was a shared passion for the humble pea that brought Sproud’s forward-thinking founders together in 2018.

Recognizing the rising demand for healthy, great-tasting, sustainable products, this group of entrepreneurs, with decades of experience working in innovative, environmentally friendly food and drink sectors, wanted to make a difference — they wanted to create something that was good for both people and the planet. Maria Tegman, Sproud’s founder and CEO, says they “needed to nail the taste and really make a fantastic product.”

And they did.

Sproud has created a suite of four nutritious milk alternatives: original, unsweetened, chocolate, and barista. They are nut, soy, gluten and dairy free and non-GMO and boast the taste, consistency, and nutritional value of traditional dairy. Sproud also contains five times the protein of almond milk and three times the protein of oat milk,

making it an attractive alternative to other dairy alternatives. Plus, it has an impressive shelf life, able to maintain product integrity for 365 days.

“We have the same neutral taste, creaminess, and added vitamins as cow’s milk — you can replace your cow milk with this one,” says Tegman. “But also, if you compare to other plant-based milk, it’s much lower in sugar and it’s higher in protein.”



Maria Tegman, founder and CEO, Sproud

That low sugar content has earned Sproud boasting rights as the first plant-based milk in the world to receive Sugarwise Certification. Sugarwise is the only international certification body for sugar-related claims and is recognized as a trusted authority independently verified in alignment with World Health Organization guidelines. This sought-after industry accreditation has been granted for all Sproud products.

In addition to being the leading alternative to the alternatives, Sproud is at the forefront of sustainability and carbon footprint reduction. All products come in



eco-friendly packaging and do not require refrigeration during the journey from production to store shelves. This intentionally cuts Sproud’s carbon footprint down by a third compared to milk products requiring refrigeration.

And while Sproud was designed in Sweden, Sproud products for Canada are made in Canada.

“The first production runs were made with European peas, but as soon as possible, we will switch over to Canadian peas,” says Tegman. “And hopefully, since [Canada is] also ahead in organic crops, we can probably get it certified organic as well.”

Sproud has been actively working with its main pea protein supplier to achieve the specifications required to produce Sproud milk using Canadian-grown peas at a new facility in Canada. These efforts are expected to lead to 100 per cent Canadian production in 2021 for products distributed in Canadian markets. Sproud’s focus on locally sourced ingredients and local production speak further to the brand’s dedication to integrating sustainability into every aspect of its operations.

“Sproud is all about bringing people together around a shared passion for plant-based alternatives and sustainability,” says Tegman. “Our goal is to create an authentic connection with Canadians who value transparency and authenticity by providing quality products that not only taste incredible but do better for the environment.” ●

# Sproud. It’s like milk but powered by peas.

Born In Sweden.  
Raised In Canada.



## Bringing taste and sustainability together.

Whether it’s Sproud Unsweetened for breakfast, creamy Barista for coffee or Chocolate for a warming treat, Sproud has one mission: to be the best tasting non-dairy milk, with the lowest carbon footprint possible.



# Sproud™

- VEGAN FRIENDLY
- SHELF STABLE
- DAIRY, SOY & GLUTEN FREE

Be Sproud! Find out more about us & our products at [besproud.com](https://besproud.com)



# Sustainable, Regenerative Ranching

## NOBLE PREMIUM BISON IS COMMITTED TO THEIR ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Noble Premium Bison are grown and raised by Canadian producers on over 9,000 acres of native grasslands in Western Canada.

“We have two ranches in Saskatchewan and one in Manitoba that are owned and managed by our producer-partner Doug Griller, a third-generation rancher,” says Kelly Long, co-owner of Noble Premium Bison and an award-winning agricultural entrepreneur. “When required, we also work with select producers in Western Canada that manage and govern their operations under the same guidelines and attention to environmental practices as Noble.”

At wholesale, Noble offers dozens of premium cuts of meat, generated from industry-standard specs set by the North American Meat Producers. From tomahawk to T-bone, ribeye to striploin, Noble’s bison cuts are hand-carved to the same high standard each and every time. At retail, Noble offers consumers bison steaks for grilling and marinating, bison steak cubes for kabobs and slow cooking, and lean and extra lean ground bison that can be used in any recipe that calls for ground beef.



Kelly Long, co-owner, Noble Premium Bison

When you buy Noble Premium Bison, you’re buying Canadian and supporting sustainable agriculture. The bison are raised as nature intended on Canadian grasslands using restorative grazing practices to ensure the sustainability of the animals and the land they live on. Bison are raised on larger pastures, maintaining a habitat natural to the species and other flora and fauna. Good grazing practices enhance soil fertility naturally, creating more high quality forage to help sequester carbon underground.

The regenerative ranching movement is growing, along with consumer demand for products that are raised sustainably without harm to the environment.

“Through our ranching practices, we work to improve the soil and overall health of the land our bison graze on,” says Long.

Ranching in these conscientious ways regenerates the land and can have a positive impact on climate change.



“Canada’s prairie grasslands are among the most endangered ecosystems in the world,” says Long. “Raising bison in their natural habitat will help to preserve this precious resource for generations to come.”

In fact, Ducks Unlimited Canada and ranchers worked together to conserve native prairie grassland and bring bison back at the Shell Buffalo Hills Conservation Ranch.

Other ways Noble engages sustainable practices is with the new packaging in use since December 2020. MULITVAC thermo packaging machines are state-of-the-art technology developed in Germany and are ground-breaking in terms of their design, efficiency, and effectiveness. The new packaging encloses bison products like a second skin: tightly yet free of tension and without affecting the natural shape of the product. The MULITVAC equipment also uses a recyclable plastic bottom tray. Longer term, Noble plans to upgrade the plastic tray to a fully biodegradable tray material once rigorous material testing is complete.

“There is no immediate timeline on this but knowing these biodegradable products are already in use in Europe and starting to gain a foothold with larger manufacturers in North America, the future of sustainable packaging is encouraging,” says Long.

“At Noble, we believe the future is sustainable ranching, and at the heart of our brand is a commitment to our animals and the environment,” she says. ●

# NOBLE™

— PREMIUM BISON —

Want to make your meat sales sizzle?  
**PUT BISON ON THE SHELF**

Sales of bison meat at retail in Canada **GREW 197% IN 2020\***

\*According to Nielsen

**TOP CONSUMER TRENDS**

Eating Healthier  
Cooking at Home  
Buying Sustainable Products

**Get the Noble Premium Bison Advantage**

How healthy is your meat shelf? For more information on the Noble Premium Bison Advantage, our products and our brand, contact Kelly Long at [sales@noblepremiumbison.ca](mailto:sales@noblepremiumbison.ca) or 1 825 509 1436

#eatbettereatbison [f](#) [i](#) [t](#) [v](#) [i](#) [n](#)





# Keeping Chicken Sustainable and Canadian

## CHICKEN FARMERS OF CANADA KNOWS THAT SUSTAINABILITY IS IMPORTANT TO CONSUMERS

Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) is the national association that represents Canada's 2,800 chicken farmers.

"We have a mandatory Raised by a Canadian Farmer Animal Care program and Raised by a Canadian Farmer On-farm Food Safety program put in place to ensure the birds are healthy and comfortable," says Lisa Bishop-Spencer, director of brand communications. "One hundred per cent of chicken farmers are certified on these two programs, and the farmers are audited regularly, ensuring accountability from every farm."

The programs are third-party audited, offering credibility and consistency. Through these programs and other initiatives, CFC works closely with government partners and industry stakeholders to keep the industry innovative and responsive.

"Chicken Farmers of Canada has a long history of being proactive and implementing farm programs for food safety, animal care, and responsible antibiotic use," says Bishop-Spencer. "With the growth of the industry, we have contributed to the economy and helped support rural communities."



Lisa Bishop-Spencer, director of brand communications, Chicken Farmers of Canada

CFC's key values of sustainability are protecting bird health and welfare, producing safe chicken for Canadians, preserving the health of the land and of our farms, and providing value to Canada and affordable food to Canadians through supply management.

"We recognize that sustainability is important to Canadian consumers," says Bishop-Spencer. "They are interested in understanding where their food comes from and that the work behind producing it is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable."

Practices have evolved significantly over the years. Highlights of sustainability include implementing a comprehensive antimicrobial-use strategy to protect bird health and welfare that involves surveillance, education, research, and reduction. To ensure the production of safe chickens for Canadians, the industry has also established an effective, responsive traceability system.

Changes to environmental impact are impressive. Each kg of



chicken produced now requires 37 per cent less greenhouse gas (GHG) than 40 years ago. While water has been reduced by 45 per cent per kg of chicken. Currently, 62 per cent of the sector's total energy use comes from renewable sources. Per kilogram of protein, the carbon footprint of Canadian chicken is lower than that of other livestock commodities produced in North America based on FAO's assessment of global livestock emissions.

And the work continues.

"From the life cycle assessment (LCA) conducted in 2018, we learned aspects of our industry that are most efficient, areas where we can improve efficiencies, reduce environmental impacts, or improve social interactions," says Bishop-Spencer. "We have been working on promoting positive outcomes from the LCA results while working on areas that need to be improved."

"The health of our birds and the health of our farms are connected — healthy farms mean not only ensuring safe practices but also protecting the natural environment and encouraging new entrants to the industry," she says. "The majority of Canadian chicken farmers have made or are planning on making improvements to their operation regarding environmental issues."

CFC is a founding member of the Canadian Poultry Research Council, which has invested over \$8.5 million in research, matched by government and other agencies to over \$40 million. Last year, CFC joined a coalition of partners in the Canadian agri-food sector to develop the National Index on Agri-Food Performance, aimed at developing performance and progress indicators to ensure Canada's position as a trusted leader in the worldwide food industry.

"Supply management is the foundation that makes the Canadian chicken value chain sustainable and makes everything we do possible — from implementing and enforcing programs on farms to funding innovation and research and contributing to the Canadian economy," says Bishop-Spencer.

Supply management allows for a healthy, sustainable value chain. ●

Randi Jones, co-owner, and Jim Marsen, co-owner



# KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

JONES FOOD STORE EQUIPMENT CELEBRATES

When Burnaby, B.C.-based Jones Food Store Equipment Ltd. (JFSE) co-founder Barrie Jones retired in 2007, he told his daughter Randi, "I want nothing more than to see our company hit 50 years."

His enthusiasm was understandable. The genealogy of JFSE began with Barrie's father, Buzz Jones, who enjoyed a long relationship with Hussmann Corporation before selling his company, W.T. Rainford, in 1968. One of Buzz's contacts, Harry Nemetz, owned the case refurbishing business Domino Refrigeration, and in 1971 he offered Barrie and his cousin, Harold Jones, the chance to assume ownership, including location and equipment. "Dad and Harold had worked at W.T. Rainford and been bitten by the industry bug, and with the contacts Nemetz and Buzz had established over the years, Jones Food hit the ground running," says Co-Owner, Randi Jones.

With a great deal of focus on customer service and out-of-the-box thinking, Barrie and Harold built a company that today still emulates their vision of providing outstanding service in the consulting, design, supplying, installing, and servicing of refrigeration equipment in the supermarket sector.



OF STERLING SERVICE TO THE GROCERY SECTOR



*"Husmann has been a proud, long-time partner of Jones Food Store Equipment. Jones' commitment to their customers and excellent service, have played a key role in the success of Husmann in Western Canada. Please join us in congratulating Jones on 50 years of serving the food retailing industry."*

*-Tim Figge, CEO, Husmann Corporation*

Randi says, "We've always aimed to be a one-stop shop for our customers. Jones has been a distributor of Husmann equipment for 50 years and we have partnered with other reputable manufacturers and suppliers to complement the quality of our Husmann products. Simply put, we can source, supply and install most equipment that's non structural in a supermarket." As such, JFSE's work on behalf of supermarkets, liquor stores, production facilities and more has helped these companies expand, making it a silent



Back row (L-R) Paul Formosa, service manager, Allan Spence office manager, Andrew Gammel installation manager and design manager, Kevin Thomas, shop foreman - refurbishing department, Anthony Tecklenburg, island service manager - Parksville, Brian Pescitelli, CFO. Front row (L-R) Jim Marsen, co-owner, Randi Jones, co-owner

but significant contributor to the health of B.C.'s grocery sector.

Stories of JFSE helping grocery clients are plentiful, and Co-Owner Jim Marsen points out that they're the outcome of Barrie and Harold's belief in building trust and providing value. "They knew

that if you take care of your customers, the customers will bring you along with them and spread the good word, and today that is very much woven into our DNA," he says. "At heart, we're a group of people with real world experience, knowledge and a knack for zeroing in on

## Congratulations



**On Your 50 Year Anniversary.**

**Here's to The Next 50 Years!**

from your friends at

**Celco Inc.**  
FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT  
[www.celco.ca](http://www.celco.ca)



On behalf of the Team At Pan-Ostons  
**Congratulations on your 50th Celebration.**  
Well done!



It takes dedication, sacrifice, and passion to achieve 50-years in business. Congratulations on your tremendous milestone. Thank you for everything you do.

Cold storage made easy.



TRUE SOLUTIONS FOR RETAIL APPLICATIONS.



TRUE REFRIGERATION - INTERNATIONAL 2001 East Terra Lane, O'Fallon, MO 63366-4434 USA | Canada toll free: 1.800.860.8783 | U.S. phone: 1.636.240.2400  
[trueintl@truemfg.com](mailto:trueintl@truemfg.com) | [truemfg.com](http://truemfg.com)



Randi, who with Marsen has been a JFSE co-owner since 2006 and whose speciality is sales, recalls, “A colleague once referred to dad as ‘a gentle warrior’ because he would attend chaotic meetings, listen to everyone argue about what they wanted, and then dad would calmly propose solutions for all. That’s the degree of excellence we constantly strive to emulate.”

Embracing technological advances — sometimes before they become the norm — is another reason for JFSE’s ongoing success. “Our design department used to contain drafting tables, rulers, and plenty of sharp pencils, and we had to be



problems and providing great solutions to the retailers. We are always adding to this with the new solutions we gain from partnerships such as with Hussmann.”

Although Barrie didn’t live to celebrate the company’s 50th anniversary, his spirit is very much alive as Randi, her brother Darin, Marsen, and close to 100 employees prepare to commemorate the milestone.

scrupulous because if we drew something with a pencil that wasn’t sharp, a wall could be out by several inches!” says Randi. “Today we benefit from the latest design and sales software.” This includes a quoting program which has evolved immensely from the original quote to go system introduced by Hussmann in 1992, and which has spurred growth “because it allows Hussmann to give us incredible in-depth product information at our fingertips, which in turn enables us to provide clients a huge range of options very, very quickly,” according to Randi.

Randi, Darin, and Marsen are unabashedly enthusiastic about maintaining the standards set by Barrie and Harold, although they admit they had little inkling of their destiny as kids. “As a youth I wanted to be a professional hockey player or a pilot, but dad offered me a summer job and pushed me in the right direction,” says Darin, 54. “I got exposed to our refurbishment business, then I helped with minor installations, then delved into sales, autoCAD drawings — you name it.”

Darin says of the transition from the second generation of Joneses to the third, “When dad asked Randi and I what we

the years, especially during downturns. They generated loyalty, and pretty soon I couldn’t imagine not working here.”

Marsen adds, “I had an office next to Barrie and he would wander in to share anecdotes, discuss things that worked and didn’t work, and so on. He was a great teacher, but I don’t think I ever got an answer directly from him. He just pushed me in the right direction to find it for myself. I always thought I would be a field tech, but Barrie saw so much more in me, and he changed the trajectory of my career.”

Just as Barrie and Harold shared a remarkable synergy, today Randi and Marsen benefit from strengths of their management team, technicians and sales people in the field. “As a company, customer service is key,” says Randi. “We have sales people with the ability to understand what the customers wants, backed by a design and installation department who thrive on designing refrigeration systems that perform and a service department that makes sure the equipment continues to run for many years. Our employees are as dedicated to

**Russell** 50th Anniversary Jones Food Store Equipment

Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Jones Food Store Equipment  
from your partners at Independent Supply & Russell Refrigeration

**EcoNet™ Enabled Unit Coolers**

**EFFICIENT & INTELLIGENT CONTROL**  
Smart temperature control for walk-in coolers & freezers  
<https://russell.hpg.com/product/russell-econet-enabled-unit-coolers/>

**EcoNet® Enabled Unit Coolers** are electronically controlled evaporators designed for energy efficiency and easier installation. Developed in conjunction with Rheem Manufacturing specifically for commercial refrigeration applications, it builds on the success, reliability and efficiency of Rheem’s EcoNet technology.

- Saves energy by reducing fan speed to 50% during off cycle
- Maximizes energy efficiency with less compressor runtime
- Eliminates icing issues and unnecessary defrosts
- Improves product quality by reducing temperature fluctuation
- Can be used with a condensing unit with single & multiple evaporators as a group
- Available factory-installed on several Russell Unit Cooler models

**Optional EcoNet® Command Center**

- Intuitive graphical touchscreen interface controls up to 32 devices
- Provides continuous communication between system components
- Remote mount display allows for EcoNet Enabled Unit Coolers to be programmed, monitored, and troubleshot outside of the space being cooled



The Design Department (L-R) Ema Prozbik, refrigeration designer, Andrew Gammel, installation manager and design manager; Evan Phillips, CAD Designer

thought of taking the reins, we were excited but also aware that the quickly evolving technology of refrigeration was going to be tough to keep up with. So we were glad when Jim who had experience in the technical side of the business accepted the partnership with us.”

Marsen, 59, joined JFSE in 1990 as a newly minted tradesman “Because I had just married and needed six weeks’ worth of employment to qualify for a mortgage. Barrie and Harold were straight up guys, and they made jobs for many people over

**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS**

**Congratulations Jones Food Store Equipment Ltd.**

Congratulations Jones Food Store Equipment Ltd. for 50 years of exceptional dedication delivering quality, reliability, and superior service to the supermarket industry.

Thank you for allowing Hussmann to partner with you through the years, and for your continued trust as we support your future success.

**HUSSMANN**  
www.hussmann.com

ISC BURNABY: 2808 Ingleton Avenue, Burnaby, BC  
24H Phone: 604.290.4472 • TF: 1.877.778.1818

ISC EDMONTON: 7011 Roper Rd NW, Edmonton, AB  
24H Phone: 780.451.4744 • TF: 1.877.565.9575

**INDEPENDENT SUPPLY COMPANY**  
A DIVISION OF JALCO CORPORATION

the customer's success as they are to our success. This balance ensures we deliver what we have promised and hold ourselves accountable for the results."

Account manager Robin Knowler, who joined the company 37 years ago upon leaving school, agrees — and he credits Barrie and Harold for helping to develop the skills he uses today. "In addition to

Andrew Gammel, JFSE's installation and design manager, joined in 2005 as a second year refrigeration apprentice, "Cecil Jones, one of our original mechanics, took me under his wing," he says. "He was a real mentor to me." Today he is proud to continue the tradition of pushing the boundaries of commercial refrigeration. "One of the things we do best is retrofit older



their commitment to provide quality equipment and service at a fair price, Barrie and Harold loved visiting clients in person and building relationships," he says. "I took that to heart when I entered sales."

Knowler adds, "They also had a great level of trust for their staff. Once I became proficient in sales they left me alone, because they knew I would drive the bus in the right direction." Indeed, trust is one reason why some staff members have passed the 35 year mark with JFSE, others with over 20 years under their belt, and many more with over 10 years at the company.

stores by installing new energy-efficient refrigeration systems and rerouting waste heat to create hot water or HVAC heating," he says. "These strategies have many benefits. For example, the compressors for an older store in Port Alberni filled an entire upstairs room, and when we upgraded to two protocol units in a back hallway and new condensers on the roof, they were able to reclaim that room — in addition to achieving significant energy savings."

JFSE's design team (which supplies the refrigeration drawings, including equipment layout and electrical, plumbing,



and refrigeration data) along with the installation team prefer to be involved in new building projects early in the design stage. "That's especially helpful for mixed use developments in which retail is at ground level and you have multi-stories of apartments above," says Gammel. "Otherwise it can be a challenge to place refrigeration equipment, and circumstances might dictate that we even have to supply our own cooling towers."

However, the more things evolve at JFSE, the more they will stay the same. "The one thing that will never change is our honesty and clear communication," says Darin, who stepped back from co-ownership a few years ago but is still actively involved in sales. "This is what drove the company's early success, and it's more important today than ever."

Marsen agrees. "We will continue to nurture a new generation of employees with the same dedications to continue to innovate, fulfil our customers' expectations

and to provide solutions that enable our customers to succeed."

As the April date to commemorate JFSE's 50th anniversary draws nearer, Marsen concedes that the actual celebration "Will be subdued due to COVID. However, our sense of gratitude to our customers for bringing us to this point is enormous and undiminished, and we're very much looking forward to the next half century of business."

"As Randi has said recently, I think 50 years is time to celebrate." ●

While JSFE has been extremely busy throughout the pandemic and all signs indicate that work will continue to be voluminous moving forward, nobody in the company takes business for granted, and the drive to self-improve is constant. "We have a variety of customers with different budgets or who are looking to make a change but don't know how to with the least interruption to their business," says Randi. "We've been able to offer many options, including refurbished equipment and refresh programs that update existing equipment, improve energy efficiency, and help clients achieve a greener footprint."

Ideas to round out the company's services are always embraced, such as an equipment preventative maintenance programs that prolong the life of the equipment and in turn saves clients money. "About seven years ago we expanded to Vancouver Island by opening up a service division in Parksville and partnering with John Clarke Refrigeration & Food Store Equipment Ltd. in Victoria in 2011," says Randi.

Gammel notes that as the controls for refrigeration and other grocery equipment are becoming increasingly complex, "We've been recruiting refrigeration apprentices who already have a background in electrical. This brings another level of proficiency to our clients, and our goal is to find more young talent that our experienced installation team can train and expand on their already established electrical skills."



**It has been an honour to  
work alongside Jones  
supplying the grocery industry  
in Western Canada.**

**FRANESSE • DP**

1-877-336-9191 www.franesse.ca

**Project Logistics Group**

Project Management & Logistics

A division of Traffic Tech specializing in construction management logistics

Brendan Cox  
Director, Project Logistics Group  
Phone: 1-416-559-8489  
Email: bdcoc@traffictech.com  
www.traffictech.com

Proud Partner of Jones Food Store Equipment

**western grocer**

*Congratulations  
Jones Food Store  
Equipment Ltd  
on your Continued Success!*

Proud to be Serving the Grocery Industry for 100 Years!

www.westerngrocer.com

would like to thank our suppliers and retail partners for your continued support.



***The Secret  
to Our Success is  
Your Success!***

**DELIVERING REFRIGERATION AND MERCHANDISING SOLUTIONS  
TO OUR CLIENTS IN WESTERN CANADA SINCE 1971.**

**Burnaby location**

2896 Norland Avenue, Burnaby, BC  
800-294-6321

**Parksville Location**

#9-1009 Allsbrook Road, Parksville, BC  
855-585-8707

**Your Hussmann refrigeration installation, service,  
and after market parts supplier.**

**[www.jonesfood.com](http://www.jonesfood.com)**

**EUROPEAN FOODS**

By Nicole Sherwood



# A Taste of Europe

## European Foods

have been getting a boost during the pandemic

Despite today's interest in buying local, Canadian consumers have had a long and enduring relationship with European foods. With more brands entering the market Canadians can have a taste of Europe without ever leaving their city.

According to statistics compiled by World Integrated Trade Solutions in 2018 the amount of food products imported reached \$3,660,472.77 (US\$ Thousand) from Europe and Central Asia. This totalled an Import Product Share of 5.5 per cent. Some of the top importers from the EU included France (\$812,856.15), Italy (\$742,973.53) and the United Kingdom (\$359,731.15).

## What's Trending

These figures have been getting a big boost with consumers gravitating towards comfort foods during the pandemic...and products from Europe fit the bill.

"Due to the pandemic we continue to see consumers gravitate towards at-home cooking. This shift has led to purchase trends of larger pack sizes and long shelf-life foods," says Armin Melville, president, Dovre Specialty Foods. "Items such as shelf stable olives, antipasti and sardines satisfy health-conscious consumers as well as meet the growing concern around sustainability, biodiversity and fair-to-farmer relationships."

# STAYING TRUE TO FOOD

**Valoroso Foods** has been keeping ahead of food trends for 25 years

The decision to open Valoroso Foods came about after the Valorosos went shopping one day. Joe Valoroso Sr. came home empty handed but with a very clear idea.

In Italy they had owned and operated a few supermarkets where they gained experience and knowledge in the Italian food industry. Accustomed to the true Italian ingredients and flavours the family made it their mission to share their passion and love for good food with their community.

Valoroso Foods opened its first 4,000 square foot showcase and flagship store in 1996 when the Valoroso family relocated back to Canada after living in Italy for some time.

As the wholesale and importing business grew and the demand for authentic Italian and European foods increased they purchased a 37,000 square foot warehouse in Kelowna in 2000. A second 1,000 square foot retail location was opened in West Kelowna in 2011. In 2013 they also established a wholesale division in Vancouver with a 17,000 square foot warehouse, sales office and another showroom store.

All the main staples of Italian cuisine can be found at the three locations. Spanish, Portuguese and other European products are also on hand.

The love for whole, healthy, sustainable food products that make up the basis of Italian and European cooking drives the Valoroso Foods product selection.

"Many factors influence the choice of foods to carry but first of all comes quality. Quality is of the utmost importance in determining any listings with Valoroso Foods," says President Joe Valoroso Sr.

Other factors include customer demand, originality, authenticity and the artisan nature of the producer.

Product sourcing usually occurs directly in person and onsite at producers' facilities or during international food trade shows.

Manufacturers interested in listing with Valoroso Foods send samples for taste and quality testing and new items are often market tested.



"In the last 25 years many long lasting business relationships and friendships have formed between Valoroso Foods and its suppliers that continue to provide quality and artisan products to Canadian food lovers," says Anna Valoroso, import and sales coordinator.

One of their secrets of success is keeping ahead of food trends and at times setting trends. This includes offering only products that represent the essence of Italian and European culinary cultures and values, and acting as a gateway to the access of genuine food ingredients.

"In the last few years there has been a gradual increase in prepared foods sector which has especially spiked in this last year. With current restrictions many customers don't want to sacrifice their favourite foods by not being able to eat in-house so prepared takeaway dishes have become quite popular," notes General Manager, Angela Valoroso.

They have also witnessed a surge in fresh cheese sales all year round in contrast with higher sales in the warmer months only.

There has also been an increased interest in learning how to make mainstay staples such as breads, pizza doughs and pastas from scratch. Imported flour sales have skyrocketed. Consumers are also looking to making their favourite restaurant dishes such as risotto and carbonara at home.

When merchandising trending imported products many factors come into play.

Having abundant displays of trending featured/seasonal/main staple products works quite well. End caps stocked with one feature product or baskets full of fresh items help create a sense of familiarity and overflowing fullness with the consumer. Pair this type of display with a convenient price point and success is guaranteed.

Recipe and serving suggestion cards next to product displays also helps customers navigate their food choices.

Another effective merchandising strategy is cross referencing displays based on meal creations or seasonal dishes.

"This is always very successful in riding the trends and proves to be an enticing inspiration to consumers in need of ideas to build a dish," says Sales Manager, Joe Valoroso Jr. ●

"Expansion in the meal maker segment is in solid growth as it provides consumer needs for in-home preparation. We've also witnessed an increase in premium brands in line with growing UK market consumption preference for quality brands for indulgence especially with it pertains to the confectionery segment," says Brittany Picard, marketing manager, Morgan-Williams International.

Other trends include flavour experimentation with healthy ingredients, and consumers becoming more knowledgeable of high-quality products.

## Merchandising is key

Vince Martelli, president, Martelli Foods Inc. recommends using shelf signage to identify the authentic characteristics of European products. These could include IGP (Indication of Geographic Protection) and DOP (Denominazione d' Origine Protetta or Protected Designation of Origin). These show the quality or reputation of the food is linked to the place or region where it is produced, processed, or prepared.

C.B. Powell's Limited's Business Manager, Chuck Corrigan recommends integrating brands/items with mass appeal into the mainstream retail sets. Like Martelli, he suggests flagging products as 'Euro Sourced'. Retailers could also identify niche appeal items as European Favourites in a separate Euro Set.

European items can be marketed together as a theme or separately by category, season or holiday to garner attention no matter what promotion is being offered.



photo courtesy: shutterstock.com

## "CONSUMER TRUST FOR PRODUCT AVAILABILITY AND BREADTH OF ASSORTMENT IS AN IMPORTANT DRIVER IN ENSURING REPEAT BUSINESS."

"Many of our European brands create natural cross-merchandising opportunities with cheese, charcuterie, spreads, and pastas. Positioning in both the appropriate grocery aisle as well as secondary displays in the deli department can help to increase visibility and sales," explains Melville.

"It's important to create a destination within your retail space to attract consumer footprint and familiarity with your imported assortment," shares Picard. "Consumer trust for product availability and breadth of assortment is an important driver in ensuring repeat business. Focusing on the best-selling domestic

**MORGAN WILLIAMS INTERNATIONAL INC.**

Canada's leading supplier of ethnic specialty grocery brands to National and Independent Retailers

- Our Iconic Brands -

- Baxters
- Brands
- TUMMOKI
- HERWARDS
- ROBINSONS
- Continues
- DeRuitter
- Mollette
- HONIG
- SARSON'S

Supporting our retail partners with...

- National Sales Coverage
- Category Management Services
- National DSD and Warehouse Distribution Capability

Discover More  
Tel: 1 (905) 896-0226 | Email: [order@morganwilliams.ca](mailto:order@morganwilliams.ca)  
[www.morganwilliams.ca](http://www.morganwilliams.ca)

**Flexible packaging, rigid containers featuring labelling capabilities, paper products, and folding cartons**

- we've got the packaging you need.

1-888-269-7314  
CALGARY, AB  
[www.OLAFPACKAGING.com](http://www.OLAFPACKAGING.com)

OLA



## PRODUCT SHOWCASE

### A DIVERSE PRODUCT MIX

Dovre's Divina olive and antipasti line-up includes some of their most popular European offerings consisting of high-quality ingredients and a diverse product mix. They can be found in ready to merchandise, shelf-stable pouches and deli cups focusing on classic consumer favourites — such as pitted Kalamata olives and roasted red tomatoes.



### TEA TIME

Typhoo brand Orange Pekoe teas have been a truly great British tea since 1903 and is well sought after by loyal users. Typhoo Decaf Black provides a true full tea taste as each Typhoo Decaf tea bag contains the same amount of tea as a bag of Typhoo Tea.



### AUTHENTIC SAN MARZANO

San Marzano Tomatoes have a sweet flavour with less acidity than regular plum tomatoes. They are grown under very specific rules and only authentic San Marzano tomatoes receive the official DOP designation. Martelli DOP San Marzano are what real tomatoes should taste like.



### CLASSIC FAVOURITES

*Tunnock is a much-loved family run company who produce delicious and unique biscuits.*

Including classics such as Caramel Wafer and Teacake these classic British favourites are ideal for satisfying your sweet tooth cravings.



**“POSITIONING IN BOTH THE APPROPRIATE GROCERY AISLE AS WELL AS SECONDARY DISPLAYS IN THE DELI DEPARTMENT CAN HELP TO INCREASE VISIBILITY AND SALE.”**

market brands which are widely recognized is key. Developing a retail mix which reflects iconic high-demand brands while continuing to introduce new innovative products helps to generate more excitement for this category with existing consumers.”●

## PRODUCT TRENDS

# North America's Packaged Water Industry is Being Shaped by Premium Brands, says GlobalData



Holly Inglis, beverages analyst at GlobalData comments, “Nestle’s sale highlights a shift in focus for the company, which will enable development of its premium water lines such as Perrier, Acqua Panna and San Pellegrino. A development of this nature will likely evoke similar change in other leading packaged water brands in the long term.”

Additionally, Cove, a California-based company, launched its first water bottle made from biodegradable material at the end of 2019. Due to its unique and sustainable packaging development, coupled with ‘purified water’ tags, this brand connotes a premium label.

Inglis continues, “Packaged water’s unique ‘health-halo’ positioning has emphasised its success in the North American market in recent years. As a natural hydrator, with digestive health capabilities, growth during the COVID-19 pandemic has also been paramount. GlobalData’s research indicates that 41 per cent\*2 of US consumers have been purchasing slightly more, significantly more, or stockpiling packaged water since the pandemic began.”

In other global regions, brands have come under large scrutiny over the impact of packaged water production on the environment. Therefore, manufacturer positioning in terms of environmental sustainability and social consciousness will play a huge part in success. For example, leading premium water brand, Fiji, in North America, has combined sustainability with premium water sources and filtration systems.

Producers around the globe have started to innovate production lines that capitalize on premium tags as price consciousness remains a vital driver of purchase for many consumers, particularly those in North America. In the packaged water industry, premium priced packaged water reported a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) development of 13.2 per cent\* between 2015 and 2019, according to GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company. Manufacturers can capitalize on this growth with innovative new products that promote a different mineral content, from unique water sources, to premiumize their products.

**“Packaged water’s unique ‘health-halo’ positioning has emphasised its success in the North American market in recent years”**

Brands are beginning to develop new strategies to capitalize on the growth of premium priced packaged water in order to maintain success. For example, Nestle recently announced that it would be selling some of its less successful packaged water brands such as Pure Life, Poland Spring, Ice Mountain and Deer Park, with the total acquisition expected to cost \$4.3bn.

Inglis adds: “GlobalData’s survey found that 46 per cent\*3 of consumers in North America find bottled water very appealing, with a further 32 per cent highlighting it is somewhat appealing. An impressive future is thus expected for packaged water in the long term; however, the focus will remain on how producers are able to maintain social, environmental and sustainable consciousness, while presenting a low price to consumers. Marketing techniques and an emphasis on utilizing premium ingredients will likely target further growth.” ●

## GREAT BRITISH TEA SINCE 1903



- Eye Catching **NEW** Nostalgic Graphics On Pack
- Same Great Black (Orange Pekoe) Tea

Trusted Premium Quality & Taste



For more information please contact: Chuck Corrigan: Business Manager at CB Powell: ccorrigan@cbpowell.com

\* GlobalData's Soft Drinks Market Analyser: Brand Volume and Value \*2 GlobalData's COVID-19 Recovery Consumer Survey Results Week 10: US \*3 GlobalData's 2019 Q4 Consumer Survey Results: North America

# Sizzling Summer



TIME TO HEAT UP THE GRILL

Canadians love barbecue season. The long winters entice us to declare Victoria Day weekend as the official start of summer. Which products are must haves on the shopping lists of Canadians? What should grocers be thinking of stocking their shelves with, in terms of barbecue sauces, condiments, and other barbecue favourites?

A recent 2017 survey, published by Statistica, outlined the flavour preferences Canadian consumers reached for in barbecue sauces. Thirty-seven per cent said they enjoyed sauces that combined both sweet and sour. Of those surveyed, 23 per cent said they looked for barbecue sauces that were not too sweet, while 12 per cent said they searched for exotic or tropical ingredients. Thirty-six per cent revealed they enjoyed a kick of heat.

“Spicy is the new umami. Consumers continue to look for new dimensions of heat. Heat plus tang or sweet on pepper,” says Neysa Davies, senior marketing insights manager at Tree of Life.

She points to Stubb’s Bar-B-Que Sauces, with an authentic taste of Texas barbecue flavour. Stubb’s Original Bar-B-Q Sauce is the base for the spicy variety, simply named Stubb’s Spicy Bar-B-Q Sauce. The spicy variety has habaneros, cayenne, and black pepper, available through Tree of Life.

Trending nutritional lifestyles are directing consumers to cleaner ingredient decks and reducing sugar as much as possible,” adds Davies. “New innovations look to reduce sugar levels, without compromising flavour, through the use of alternative sweeteners like dates, monk fruit and stevia.”

“Better-for-you options, such as clean and simple ingredients, low and/or no added sugar, organic and locally made are trending,” says Stephanie Goyette, category business director of Burgers, Fries, Salads, Chicken, Dips, International and Away-From-Home, at Kraft Heinz Canada. “While core staples remain the majority of sales, we are seeing continued flavour exploration trends expansion.”

## CONDIMENTS AND OTHER SAUCES

“Similar to barbecue sauces, we are seeing a continued trend towards clean and simple ingredients, low and/or no added sugar, organic and following diet trends such as KETO,” says Goyette. Then she adds, “There is increased emphasis on locally made, such as Made in Canada, or Aliments du Quebec Certification, as well as continued flavour exploration trends.”

Mintel’s Condiments and Seasonings interactive databook Canada report, April 2018, noted a trend in bold flavours and internationally inspired sauces as the fastest growing segment.

In keeping with bold flavour combinations Kraft Heinz is launching a unique line-up of new sauces. In the past, the company has had great success with their Mashup sauces, such as Mayo-chup and Mayo-racha. In fact, Mayo-chup ranked as the top flavoured mayonnaise sku on the Nielsen Market Track 2020.

“We decided to take it to the next level by scouring the web for the next big condiment mashup,” says Goyette. “We started taking online posts from Canadians and surprising them by turning these ideas into official Heinz sauces.”

The new products include Wasabioli, a combination of wasabi and aioli, to add heat to burgers. Hot sauce and ranch dressing together have become Hanch for foods like pizza on the grill. Tarchup, a blend of tartar sauce and ketchup are ideal for grilled fish with potatoes or french fries.

Davies from Tree of Life adds that grocers should also stock up on multipurpose items. "Mrs Renfro's Peach Salsa is valuably convenient. This particular flavour doubles as a salsa and a barbecue or roast marinade."



Zoglo's Incredible Food Company offers crowd pleasers such as Meatless Royal Burger, Meatless Chicken Burgers, Grains & Vegetables Vegburger and Meatless Franks.

### THE PLANT-BASED BARBECUE

Since being acquired just over a year ago, the new Bolthouse Farms has been dedicated to creating more plant-based foods. "The new Bolthouse Farms was born out of a vision and passion for guiding a new way for people to eat and live healthier lifestyles," says Bolthouse Farms CEO Jeff Dunn. "We are constantly looking for ways to innovate and bring plant-based



## PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Sauce it up with these new and notable products



**Bolthouse Farms Protein Keto Refrigerated Dressings** are a plant-based line that consists of two oat-based and two veggie blends varieties.



**Mrs. Renfro's Peach Salsa** doubles as a salsa and a barbecue or roast marinade.



**Kraft Heinz** is launching a unique lineup of sauces which include Wasabioli, Hanch and Tarchup.



**Stubb's Bar-B-Que Sauces** have an authentic taste of Texas barbecue flavour.

products to the marketplace that not only taste great but also deliver on functionality and great value."

Enter Bolthouse Farms Protein Keto Refrigerated Dressings. The plant-based dressing line consists of two oat-based and two veggie-blend varieties, which rely on a combination of vegetables, herbs, spices, seeds, and whole oat flour. The new line is available in four flavours: Garden Ranch, Habanero Blue, Carrot Miso and Green Goddess. These plant-based refrigerated dressings are made with natural, simple ingredients and are all vegan/dairy free, gluten free, non-GMO and contain no artificial colours, flavours, preservatives, sweeteners, or gums. Make quick, easy, and healthy salads this barbecue season.

Next, it is time to think about meat for the grill? Or maybe some meat free options this barbecue season.

For over 25 years Zoglo's Incredible Food Company, in Concord, Ontario has been a leading company offering kosher, plant-based products. The product line contains over a dozen plant-based protein offerings including meat, appetizers, and veggie products.

"Plant-based foods are becoming less about the vegans and vegetarians and more about flexitarians. People simply want to add a couple meatless days in their diets each week, but are not

# Kraft Heinz has you covered this BBQ season with the brands Canadians know and love.

Celebrate summer with our show stopping BBQ POS for Spring and Summer! Depend on Kraft Heinz to bring excitement in-store and build cornerstone summer displays.

Contact your Kraft Heinz Sales Representative for more information



## Get Sizzlin'





Meatless Farm provides plant-based for the barbecue that's sure to please the palate.

ready to give up meat altogether,” says Tony Morello, CEO at Zoglo’s Incredible Food Company.

Morello points out some of the company’s meat free options for barbecues. “Crowd pleasers like our Meatless Royal Burger, Meatless Chicken Burgers, and our Grains & Vegetables Vegburger. For kids, their favorite is our Meatless Franks, our hot dogs.”

Then, there are products from Meatless Farm. The company began in 2016 and are based in the United Kingdom. “We recently launched our dedicated plant protein ingredients subsidiary, Lovingly Made Ingredients, operating out of a flagship facility in Calgary, which will provide TPP (that’s textured plant protein) for the majority of Meatless Farm products around the world,” says Darcy Peters, vice-president of sales, Meatless Farm Canada

Consumers are not just purchasing to please their palates. They are also buying products that align with their values. “At

Meatless Farm, we have done significant research and found that swapping to a plant-based meal even once per week has exponential environmental and health benefits, which is also catching on among consumers.”

The company recently launched two new products: breakfast sausages and breakfast patties. “Whether enjoying breakfast at home on the barbecue or camping with family and friends, we’re confident Canadians will really enjoy this new, tasty brunch item,” says Peters.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MERCHANDISING

Creative barbecue displays are one of the most effective ways to add convenience and increase sales.

“Creative merchandising displays always sell product and it is a great way to add to the store atmosphere and overall shopping experience. These are more important than ever in this day of e-commerce” says Peters. “Excite your customers. Give them tips on food prep, on how to cook outdoors and turn their barbecue into their kitchen cooktop.”

COVID-19 has changed the shopping experience even further, Goyette points out. “Shopping the at-store shelf isn’t the same with social distancing measures, so having displays of products outside of their typical grocery aisle helps drive increased basket sales and impulse purchases.”

Davies says grocers should think about creating displays that offer customers convenience. “Merchandise with the purpose of showcasing a complete meal and make it simple for shoppers.”

Barbecue season is just around the corner. Stocking up on products consumers crave is the first step to a profitable summer. ●

# Home Advantage

After a year of uncertainty and upheaval due to the fallout from COVID-19, the retail food sector in Saskatchewan appears to have weathered the storm quite well. With fewer options available through restaurants and a general wariness around keeping a safe distance from one another, more people are opting to prepare meals at home — and this has resulted in boom times for grocery stores.

“In terms of sales, grocery retail recorded sales of \$3 billion in 2020 and \$2.8 billion in 2019,” say Jeremy Harrison, Saskatchewan’s Minister of Trade and Export Development.

“That’s a 7.8 per cent increase year over year.”



Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Trade and Export Development

Among those who have noted the marked drop in the food service sector are businesses like Star Egg. The Saskatoon-based company specializes in the grading, distribution, and marketing of eggs from Saskatchewan egg producers to Western Canada. After COVID-19 brought the hospitality industry to a screeching halt, CEO Shawn Harman says they too saw increased demand from the retail sector — especially early on.

“We supply most of the larger retailers in the province, and during the initial lockdown, it was more like a 20 to 40 per cent increase in retail sales,” he says. At the same time, that shift towards more retail wasn’t something

Harman and his colleagues were entirely prepared for. “We had to make some adjustments,” he says. “We weren’t set up to supply the retail side as far as packaging goes, so there were some shortages. We had to create some new retail packs that utilized an overwrap or flow-wrap packaging which was more easily available.”

Even for those whose business is primarily focused on supplying retail vendors, this past year has proved challenging.

Harvest Meats, which produces processed meat products in Yorkton, saw demand increase almost overnight. Vice-President and General Manager Geoff Propp says as their own supply chain was disrupted following COVID-19 outbreaks at out-of-province plants, getting Harvest Meats’ products to market was a challenge.

SASKATCHEWAN  
RETAIL GROCERY  
WINS BIG WITH  
DEMAND FOR  
LOCAL PRODUCT



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

1921 100 YEARS 2021

RELIABLE FOOD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

**BIRO**

SINCE 1921

www.birosaw.com

Thank you for your business!



Star Egg specializes in grading, distribution and marketing of eggs from Saskatchewan egg producers.

(Inset) Shawn Harman, CEO, Star Egg



“There was a rush of demand which was very difficult to manage,” Propp says. “We were rationing product. Capacity, in any industry — you just can’t turn that on overnight. It requires investment, time, and planning. We rely 100 per cent on outside raw materials for our production. There were several high-

profile closures in Canada and the U.S. — that has all impacted where we source materials from. Our vendors certainly worked with us as best they could, and things have returned to a normal demand-pattern over the last six months.”

In addition to increased demand,

concerns around keeping their employees safe — and maintaining morale — were top-of-mind for Propp and his company. “First and foremost, we wanted to create a safe space for staff to feel comfortable — that they could come to work and not worry about their health,” Propp says. “We

put up plexiglass everywhere. We went to a mask policy three months before the provincial government did, and that was hard for people to adjust to. Then there was the reduced camaraderie at work — you’re working in isolation, taking coffee

## GENERATIONAL HEALTH

### OLD FASHION FOODS KEEPS IT IN THE FAMILY

By Wanda Schmöckel

If you’re ever in Regina, Saskatchewan you’ll find that most roads lead to Old Fashion Foods.

With five locations throughout the city, it’s by-far the largest retail supplier of specialty foods and supplements for health-conscious shoppers in the region. A long-time fixture on Regina’s retail landscape, it’s a go-to for healthy snack foods; bulk flours, spices, and loose-leaf teas; cooking oils; dairy alternatives; vitamins and supplements; natural cosmetics; and household supplies. And yet, as for many businesses of all kinds, the past year has been a time of uncertainty.

Last March, when lockdowns were starting to roll out across the country in response to the spread of COVID-19, General Manager Shandee Waldbauer and her staff noted a definite rush in panic bulk buying. “At the beginning, there were a lot of unknowns. I think we learned early on to not have expectations and just take it a day at a time,” Waldbauer says. One year later, as everyone has become more accustomed to the new normal they are seeing an influx in customers taking more interest in their overall health.

At the same time, with so many shoppers staying close to home, she notes there has been increased demand for their online ordering and delivery service, and Waldbauer and staff are taking this opportunity to improve options for online shopping through their website. To accommodate those who continue to shop in-store, it’s been a case of maintaining standard protocols for physical distancing and sanitization to help keep both staff and customers safe — all while trying to provide a friendly and pleasant shopping experience. “It’s an ever-changing situation,” she says. “We’re trying to make the store as safe and comfortable for as many people as possible.”

The business certainly has decades of experience to draw upon. The roots of Old Fashion Foods reach back to 1962 when Ron Schroeder, Waldbauer’s grandfather, founded Best-O-Milk, a door-to-door milk delivery service that operated

throughout the city. After Schroeder partnered up with the local franchise of Dad’s Cookies, he eventually began offering other groceries as part of their delivery service. A bricks-and-mortar retail location opened as Old Fashion Foods in 1965 after Schroeder’s grocery offerings continued to expand. Since then, it has remained very much a family affair. Schroeder’s daughter Kari Waldbauer joined her dad in the early ‘90s, with granddaughter Shandee taking on the role of general manager in 2016 — marking three generations of family helping the business. Though long retired and now in his late 80s, Schroeder still takes a keen interest in the general goings-on. “He still shops here regularly,” Waldbauer laughs.

Old Fashion Foods has expanded to its current five locations in the city, along with two satellite shops in Weyburn and Fort Qu’Appelle, and an overall staff of 35. It’s a remarkable foothold in a city with a population of just over 250,000 people. Waldbauer says the decision to expand was driven by an interest in making their products easy to access for all their customers, regardless of where they live, and describes it as an extension of their approach to service. Knowing what products to stock requires input from all of the stores’ locations.

Waldbauer credits Old Fashion Foods’ longstanding success to being attuned to customer needs and, ultimately, building lasting relationships with the community. She notes that some of Old Fashion Foods’ staff have been with the company for more than 20 years. “Our customers have gotten to know and trust those employees,” she says. “I think that’s what separates us from others. Our people are dedicated to help every single individual who comes through the door with any and all of the concerns that they have. As a consumer myself, I don’t know a lot of other businesses like this around the city — just a handful — and every time you walk into one, it’s just another level of care.”



HARMAN FREE RUN  
18 PACK EGGS

Available Across Saskatchewan ...  
Produced by Local Farmers

More people are cracking  
open Harman Free Run  
eggs every day.



GTIN:



0 63982 88778 2



CONTACT US  
TODAY

(306) 244-4041

(306) 664-6619

info@staregg.ca

staregg.ca

@StarEggSk

Star Egg Company

breaks in smaller groups. We rely on our staff and try to create a family atmosphere here. Now, a year later, we're really adjusted to what has become our new normal. I couldn't be prouder of our staff for coming through the other side."

As the pandemic highlighted the potential precarity of our food supply chain, consumers have become increasingly aware of the benefits of purchasing products that are sourced and processed closer to home. According to data from the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity, Canadians' concerns about the country's food supply chain have increased by 10 per cent in 2020 over the previous year, with 31 per cent citing locally grown or raised food as a key component of sustainability.

Bryan Kosteroski, the Saskatchewan Agriculture Council's Executive Director



Bryan Kosteroski, executive director, Saskatchewan Agriculture Council



sees this as a growing trend. "I've seen an expansion of local products of different categories within stores, including private-label brands," he says. "We're seeing a lot more work done by Canadian retail to reach out to producers in Canada, and finding potential partnerships.

Federated Co-Op in Saskatoon

Canadian consumers are buying into that because they want Canadian product, and they want local product."

Another area of retail growth is being driven by the popularity of products that appeal to the health and environmentally-conscious consumer: plant-based foods,

**"WE'RE SEEING A LOT MORE WORK DONE BY CANADIAN RETAIL TO REACH OUT TO PRODUCERS IN CANADA, AND FINDING POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS."**



Harvest Meats produces processed meat products in Yorkton.

and the adaptation of local ingredients to produce so-called "clean label" products; those that provide a nutritional table free of additives and preservatives. Kosteroski says the combination of healthier options in addition to selling local stories is one that Saskatchewan consumers are happy to eat up.

"It's about creating stories along the chain — right from the farm, to the store, to the fork," Kosteroski says. "Who's growing that carrot? Who's growing that specialized wheat for flour? There's a lot of great stories out there. And there's going to be a lot more." ●



HISTORY, HERITAGE, AND PASSION... that's our story.  
Our products are hand-crafted from generations of family recipes using premium ingredients and natural hardwood smoke.  
We've been doing it this way for over 90 years.  
HARVEST MEATS... made with pride in Yorkton, SK.  
Harvest  
Quality Meats. Quality Ingredients. Proudly Canadian.  
Harvestmeats.ca  
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter icons

## ICE CREAM & FROZEN NOVELTIES

By Kathy Kerr

### COVID-weary consumers choose premium ice cream, diverse flavours and non-dairy treats

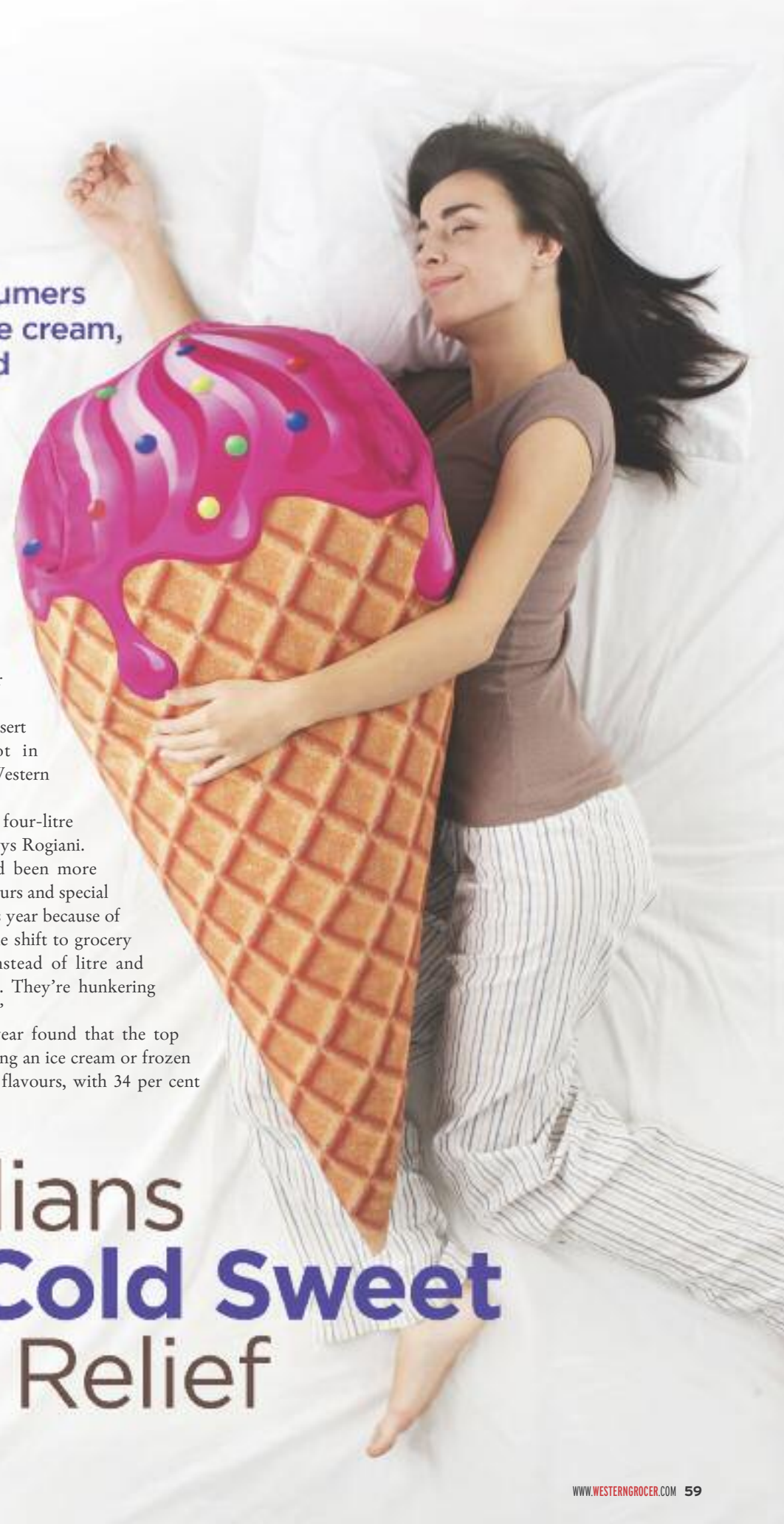
Months of pandemic and economic stress has driven Canadians to seek comfort food and ice cream and frozen dessert manufacturers are reaping the rewards.

Market research firm Mintel found just over half of more than 1,800 consumers surveyed in spring 2020 agreed that ice cream is ideal for dealing with stress.

Mike Rogiani, president of frozen dessert distributor The Ice Cream Depot in Edmonton, has seen that play out in Western Canadian sales.

"For Chapman's Ice Cream their four-litre (container) sales have hit the roof," says Rogiani. "Before the pandemic ice cream had been more impulse sales and more scooping parlours and special events. We didn't have any of that this year because of COVID. What really took off was the shift to grocery sales, large format, bulk buying. Instead of litre and 500 ml they're buying the four litre. They're hunkering down at home, eating it on the couch."

A Mintel survey in June of last year found that the top consideration for Canadians in choosing an ice cream or frozen product was premium ingredients or flavours, with 34 per cent looking for high quality products.



# Canadians Seek Cold Sweet Stress Relief

photo courtesy shutterstock.com

## PRODUCT SHOWCASE

### Here's the scoop on new and notable products

#### SINGLE-SERVE PACKS HIT THE SPOT

Coconut Bliss introduces Cups of Joy – a four pack of individual servings keying into COVID-driven trends of portion control, safe interaction and shareability, says Canadian Sales Manager Darren Munro. Plus, there's the nostalgia factor, harking back to old-time treats at pools and schools. Cups of Joy come in vanilla and chocolate.



#### A FLAVOUR THAT GOES WITH EVERYTHING

Betterwith Ice Cream is big on its Cream flavour. With only four ingredients, Cream pairs with any dessert or flavour, says Founder Lori Joyce. "When I am demoing it, I sell it as frozen whipping cream. There is nobody who doesn't want to try frozen whipping cream."



#### WHO DOESN'T LOVE SHARKS?

Foothills Creamery expects Shark Attack to win over adults and kids this summer. The blue raspberry and grey vanilla ice cream has a raspberry ribbon. The sharks-hunting-raspberries packaging is fun for kids and the vanilla base will appeal to all ages, says Marketing Manager Scott Wegener.



#### BANANA LENDS A TROPICAL TOUCH

Neale's Sweet N' Nice added Banana Chocolate to its lineup before Christmas and it's gaining traction, says CEO Andrew McBarnett. "It's kid friendly with the chocolate and a hint of fun... with the banana puree." Plus, the flavours stay true to the brand's Caribbean roots.



#### BRING EUROPEAN LUXURY HOME

The Ice Cream Depot is now distributing premium brand Grycan Ice Cream from Poland. Ice Cream Depot President Mike Rogiani says the product, well known in Europe but new to Western Canada, is amazing. "The flavours just pop. The packages are dynamite."



#### FLAVOURS THE EASTER BUNNY WOULD LOVE

Righteous Gelato adds two flavours this spring. Carrot Cake and Cream Cheese has a cream cheese base and bits of gluten-free carrot cake. Chocolate Easter Egg is milk chocolate with bits of easter egg. A small run last year of Easter Egg was a fan favourite, says Product Development Lead Marilyn Way.



Lori Joyce, founder of Betterwith Ice Cream, is appealing to that premium audience by emphasizing the quality and purity of the ingredients in her brand, which, though still small, gained sales traction during COVID. Her flavours have clean labels, sometimes containing as few as four ingredients.

"With COVID — people were buying Betterwith because Haagen-Dazs was sold out. The ice cream category was surging with stress eating," she says. "These are people who read labels. They actually discovered that Betterwith had less sugar than Haagen Dazs."



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

**According to Nielsen data the top-selling flavours are the classic flavours like vanilla and chocolate.**

Her company catch-phrase now is 'full of flavour, not sugar'.

Betterwith has six flavours and Joyce says she based that on the Nielsen data showing the top selling flavours are the classic flavours like vanilla and chocolate. Her top seller is strawberry.

"It tastes tart and fresh and not overly sweet."

Foothills Creamery in Calgary has also targeted those classic flavours for its grocery offerings, even though it stocks 70 flavours for its scoop-shop inventory.

Scott Wegener, marketing manager at Foothills, says big Foothills grocery sellers include vanilla and All Canadian Moose, a mix of vanilla, chocolate marble and peanut butter cups. By contrast the top flavour sold by the scoop is bubble gum. People look for share-ability in the

# Small Batch. Barrel Churned. Proudly Canadian.



## Butter and ice cream made the old-fashioned way!



Discover the full selection of our retail flavours: Old-Fashioned Vanilla, Old-Fashioned Chocolate, All Canadian Moose, Mint Chocolate Chip, Espresso Fudge, Maple Nut, Shark Attack, and Toasted Coconut (Lactose Free).

product they take home from the store, says Wegener.

Foothills benefits from its local Western Canadian appeal, says Wegener. The 50-year-old company began making ice cream in 1986 with the buttermilk coming from its butter production.

“We have a new tagline we’re going to be using — small batch, barrel churned, proudly Canadian,” he says.

There is also a trend however to more international brands and flavours, according to Mintel. The firm’s survey showed 31 per cent of Canadians are seeking internationally inspired ingredients and flavours in their ice cream and frozen treats.

Rogiani says he sees surging interest in a couple of international brands his firm handles. Kulfi, a brand from India, is doing well, as is Grycan, a premium ice cream from Poland.

Toronto-based Neale’s Sweet N’ Nice focuses on flavours from the Caribbean. The company was founded by descendants of Charles A. Neale, who started his ice cream business in Trinidad and Tobago in the 1940s. The current company came out of a big family reunion, says President Andrew McBarnett.



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

While the firm was launched in small Caribbean stores, it now is stocked by major grocers across Canada. The firm’s flavours include rum raisin, guava passionfruit and mango.

“People enjoy the taste of the Caribbean and they’re familiar with it,” says McBarnett.

Mintel research shows that there are several health-related factors that influence ice cream and frozen dessert purchasers. Superfood ingredients, added protein, fibre and probiotics all received preference mentions in the survey.

Rogiani says Udderly Ridiculous, a goat milk ice cream Ice Cream Depot

carries, has done well, partly because it is more easily digestible for some consumers. The product is also higher in protein and several nutrients than cow’s milk ice cream, he says.

Cheryl Haskett, CEO of Udderly Ridiculous, says the product is a new category.

“There is a move towards incorporating plant-based foods, however so many ice cream lovers crave real ice cream, not made with oils, that tastes good and

**Canadians are seeking internationally inspired ingredients and flavours in their ice cream and frozen treats.**



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

lime sorbet is dairy free. Two other big sellers, dark chocolate caramel sea salt and bourbon vanilla bean are dairy based.

Righteous Gelato is adventurous with its flavour offerings, producing products that may be familiar but which incorporate a twist.

“Our blueberry yuzu kombucha flavour that launched last year combines the familiar blueberry flavour with something a little bit more mysterious that draws in people to ...try something

new,” says product development lead Marilyn Way.

Those interesting flavour combinations are likely to appeal to a younger demographic, according to Mintel.

The firm’s survey found that 32 per cent of 18-to-34-year-olds are interested in unique textures and 23 per cent are looking for contrasting flavours. The 55-and-up group was much lower at 15 and 16 per cent respectively.

Righteous Gelato also taps into a

Canada's favorite certified vegan and organic frozen dessert has a brand-new look.

Single-serve plant-based frozen dessert in multi-pack cups. The perfect category innovation to gain new customer trial and meet the trend for individual servings and portion control.

On shelf now at Save On Foods!

Available from Horizon, PSC, Transcold, UNFI

**RIGHTEOUS**  
SMALL BATCH GELATO

One tiny spoonful at a time

At Righteous, our mission is simple: to enrich people’s lives one tiny spoonful at a time. That starts with our gelato, but doesn’t end there.

Reach out to sales@righteousgelato.com for our full seasonal calendar.

Don't miss out on our limited edition flavours!

Available in the following natural Caribbean flavours:

- Mango
- Coconut
- Rum & Raisin
- Pineapple Coconut
- Guava Passionfruit
- Banana Chocolate

Currently sold in Western Canada at Federated Co-op and Fresho stores. Visit [sweetniece.ca](http://sweetniece.ca) to learn more.

doesn’t cause pain and digestion issues. This is where we bridge the gap between those worlds.”

The plant-based trend in all foods is undeniable, and Mintel found 51 per cent of consumers are “open to eating ice cream made with dairy alternatives.” That openness to plant-based rises to 61 per cent in the 18 to 34 age bracket.

Righteous Gelato touches both bases with three product categories: milk-based gelato, plant-based gelato and fruit sorbetto. The firm’s signature raspberry-



**New Super Warehouse**  
#400, 3615-11 St. Nisku, AB

**NEW**  
**Udderly Ridiculous** exclusively through the Ice Cream Depot

Gourmet Goat Milk Ice Cream  
Easily digestible for dairy sensitivities  
[www.udderlyridiculous.ca](http://www.udderlyridiculous.ca)

**ICE CREAM DEPOT**  
GIVING YOU SMILE

Phone: 780-463-2423 Toll Free: 1-877-595-5655  
orderdesk@theicecreamdepot.ca  
[theicecreamdepot.ca](http://theicecreamdepot.ca)

Your full service DSD supplier  
Cold storage rates, frozen distribution available

**WHAT MAKES YOUR STORE SO SPECIAL?**

HAS YOUR GROCERY STORE RECENTLY:

- OPENED?
- DONE RENOVATIONS?
- HAD A CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT?
- EXPANDED?
- CELEBRATED AN ANNIVERSARY?
- REBRANDED?

**LET US TELL THE WEST WHY YOUR STORE IS SO SPECIAL!**

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

general trend in younger demographics to conscious consumption related to social and environmental sustainability. The firm has a B Company certification, a designation prized by consumers who want ethically produced products.

“The theme of transparency is apparent all throughout the business from the production facility behind glass windows to the transparency we share with our team members to the transparency of our jars,” says Way. “We chose the transparent tubs with screw top lids which are perfect for reusing and up cycling.”

Coconut Bliss is also proud of its sustainability record. “The certified organic and certified vegan frozen dessert comes in

*The plant-based trend in all foods is undeniable, and Mintel found 51 per cent of consumers are “open to eating ice cream made with dairy alternatives.”*



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

tubs with no plastic,” says Darren Munro, Coconut Bliss’s Canadian sales manager. “Even the tub liner is made from sugar cane resin.”

The company is based in Eugene, Oregon but 20 per cent of its sales are in Canada.

The products are made with a coconut base, but it isn’t a niche vegan product.

“The appeal is it’s the only vegan ice cream that ice cream lovers enjoy. It delivers on creaminess and texture.”

The firm has redesigned its packaging and has added single-serving cups to its lineup. That packaging appealed to grocery buyers, who because of COVID, are seeking food items which can be shared without handling, says Munro.

He predicts that trend will continue past the pandemic as consumers remain wary of contamination. ●

**MELONA**<sup>®</sup>  
Creamy & Fruity Frozen Dessert Bars

*Creamy & Fruity*

**TCD TransCold**  
DISTRIBUTION LTD  
Direct Store Deliveries

Toll Free : 1-877-519-0600  
Website : [www.transcold.com](http://www.transcold.com)  
E-mail : [orderdesk@transcold.com](mailto:orderdesk@transcold.com)

More people are consuming beverages at home. Single-serve cold beverages that once catered to an on-the-go culture have taken a back seat to larger formats and multipacks to ensure less trips to the store. While beverage brands that offer up wellness options — a pandemic has a way of focusing consumers on health — are being placed in shopping carts over others.

Overall, beverage sales at North American grocery during COVID-19 boomed, states Duane Stanford, editor and publisher of Beverage Digest, adding categories such as carbonated soft drinks, sports drinks, and bottled water notched retail growth rates that hadn't been posted in years. "Demand has been so great; grocery shelves still look far different than they did more than a year ago."

He points again to carbonated drinks, which flew off the shelves so customers could wash down their home-cooked meals and take-out. The category having the biggest moment is flavoured sparkling water, which has seen a 22 per cent increase year-over-year (YOY), according to SPINS, a wellness-focused data company.

bubly sparkling water, one of the fastest-growing brands in the category, not only launched new flavours — peach and pineapple — which had consumers scouring the shelves but will soon have even more high energy fans with the announcement of bubly bounce, sparkling water with caffeine. Available in five combo flavours, a 12 ounce can contains 35 mg of caffeine, while a 16 ounce serves up 47 mg of caffeine. Zach Harris, vice-president, water portfolio at PepsiCo Beverages North America, stated in a press release the line addresses consumers desire for not only hydration and flavour, but also sparkling waters with added benefits.

Raffael Kapusty, vice-president of sales and insights for the Naturo Group, which offers the brand Trace Water, adds flat bottled water, which has seen a 14 per cent increase YOY, is also trending towards added benefits, such as being infused with fruits, veggies & herbs, as well as vitamins and minerals. Trace Water, sourced directly from the company's aquifer in B.C., features Fulvic and humic minerals, which support gut health, immunity, and cognitive performance.

The enhanced flavour water segment, which has seen a five per cent increase in sales over last year, is addressing Canadian's health concerns by enhancing products with vitamins, probiotics & electrolytes, says Karen Daneliuk, brand marketing manager at Keurig Dr Pepper Canada. The company will soon be rolling out Bai, a lineup of authentic true-to-fruit, low-calorie, low-sugar enhanced beverages infused with antioxidants like vitamin C or E.

Even with innovation in the bottled water category actual at home water consumption has increased. According to Ipsos tap water consumption jumped by 5.4 per cent over 2019.

This trend has boosted sales across Kraft Heinz Canada's portfolio of liquid enhancers.

"Shifting health priorities also calls for more functional benefits to beverages. This has been particularly favourable for our flavour water enhancers like MiO Vitamins which is zero calorie, zero sugar, and offers B Vitamins or our powder drinks like Tang, which has 100 per cent of one's daily value of Vitamin C per serving," says Michelle Ye, associate category business manager, cold beverages for the company, adding with increased consumption, larger canister formats have been more popular.

# Health and Home

By Carly Peters

The **Cold Beverage Category**  
is Being Driven by Enhanced Wellness



## PRODUCT SHOWCASE & MERCHANDISING TIPS

### GOOD FACE

Oasis Juice's Health Break line-up is not only adding new flavours — Orange-Pineapple-Passionfruit-Coconut, and Strawberry-Raspberry — to their nutrient-enriched juice blends, but also functional benefits, such as skin-and-joint supporting collagen in the Grapefruit-Hibiscus-Blackberry option.



### BOX IT UP

Lassonde's Simple Drop is the first global water brand with a paper straw. The unique 200ml tetra pack offers an alternative to small plastic water bottles and juice for lunchboxes. The company has also released a larger, one litre format for in-home consumption.



### FIND IT WHERE?

With so many players in the water category retailers need to more effectively communicate the points of differentiation amongst brands across water segments, says Raffael Kapusty of Naturo Group. He suggests cross-promoting functional or enhanced bottled water out of section to complement other categories such as the natural aisle or vitamin and supplements.



### POP THE ALTERNATIVE

As kombucha has been making more inroads into traditional grocery, its often being placed in the produce or the natural food aisle, but Zoey Shama of Tonica adds grocers can also gain great turns placing it with pop, and beverage grab 'n go coolers by the cash.



### PUT IT TOGETHER

Visibility is key to success when it comes to new product innovations. Danielle Pearson of a2 Milk suggests premium products be merchandised in a brand block whenever possible to ensure new products don't get lost in the large layouts that are typically found in the dairy department.



### POWERFUL PLANTS

Knowing that Canadian consumers are actively looking for new ways to consume plant-based proteins while also minimizing their sugar intake, Silk recently launched a new line of protein beverages that blends together pea protein, almond, and cashews. With eight grams of plant-based protein per serving, which is equal to dairy, the two varieties — Original Unsweetened and Vanilla Unsweetened — are high in calcium and contain 0 grams of sugar.



### HEALTHY BUBBLES

Once for hippies and health food stores, kombucha has become more mainstream. Zoey Shama, founder and president of Tonica Kombucha, the first kombucha brand in Canada, says since she started the company 15 years ago other manufacturers have taken the traditional brew and added a bit of carbonation to create low-sugar alternatives to soda with probiotic benefits.

However, the biggest change in the category has been format. During the last 12 months of COVID-19, the company saw an unprecedented explosion of their litre format. "There is no question that with less trips to the grocer, and less space



photo courtesy: shutterstock.com

*Beverage brands that offer up wellness options — a pandemic has a way of focusing consumers on health — are being placed in shopping carts over others.*

in fridges, consumers are looking to stock up on volume of kombucha."

She also adds more canned varieties are being placed on shelf as an alternative to glass since they are easy to stack and stock up on in the fridge, less likely to break, and can be a 'greener' option if made from recycled aluminum. Tonica is working on their own canned line, set to launch this summer.

naturally essenced



sparkling water

Introducing...



arriving in stores Spring 2021

**0-CALORIE 0-SWEETENER 0-SODIUM = INNOCENT!**

LaCroixWater.com



©2021 LACROIX BEVERAGES, INC. • ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

photo courtesy shutterstock.com



Alternative options to traditional milk don't always mean moo-ving away from dairy.



### MAKE IT LIKE MILK

The dairy alternative category (including beverages and yogurt-style products) is currently valued at \$450 million in Canada and with one-quarter of Canadians currently considered flexitarian. In terms of sub-categories that are seeing greatest growth within the dairy alternative category, oat beverages are the star of the moment, says Danone Canada's Geneviève Bolduc, marketing director of the company's plant-based category of products.

"With a creamy texture, neutral taste and sustainable attributes associated with oat farming, Canadian consumers are gravitating towards this choice," she says, adding Silk re-branded its refrigerated oat milk beverages (previously branded under the Oat Yeah beverages line) to live under the same visual identity as the other skus in its refrigerated beverage portfolio.

Silk's latest addition to its oat line-up, prepared in Canada with Canadian grown oats, includes a sku offering 0 grams of sugar per serving which provides consumers with choice, noting that other brands of unsweetened oat beverages often have higher sugar content.

Alternative options to traditional milk don't always mean moo-ving away from dairy. Many Canadians assume they are lactose intolerant because of discomfort after drinking dairy, however, indigestion may instead be associated with an A1 protein intolerance, says Danielle Pearson, president, Agrifoods Nutritional Division/a2 Milk Canada. "a2 Milk is 100 per cent Canadian milk, sourced from Western Canadian dairy farms, that comes from cows that naturally produce only the A2 protein and no A1," she explains, adding while the fluid dairy category is seeing growth, premium milks, such as a2 Milk, lactose-free and ultra-fine filtered offerings, are the driving force behind it.

Even though the pandemic has re-shaped what consumers want from the cold beverage category, it has ensured they are still drinking. ●



Antioxidant infusion with authentic true-to-fruit flavours.

- 10** Calories per Serving
- 1** Gram of Sugar
- Antioxidant Infused\***



PRODUCT OF CANADA



## BY CANADIANS, FOR CANADIANS

### INTRODUCING NEW BEEMAID PREMIUM CLOVER HONEY

The nectar from red and white clover gives this 100% Canadian honey a delicate, sweet taste, while the smooth screw-off lid and high-quality jar design allow the consumer to easily measure out the perfect amount of premium honey.



**Proudly Owned by  
Canadian Beekeepers**

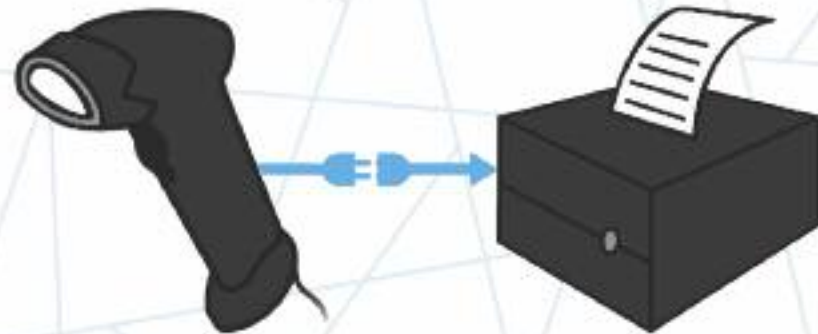
[DrinkBaiCanada.com](http://DrinkBaiCanada.com)

\* Infused with antioxidant vitamin C or E. Trademark used under license by Canada Dry Mott's Inc.

## Transforming receipt printers into IoT DATA devices

SYNQ's patented hardware allows you to use receipt printers at POS to enable real-time actionable incentives for your customers including customized surveys and coupons. Have many different POS devices across your chain? These devices allow you to create one stream of data from legacy devices in order to ingest in a single platform and language.

- Easy Plug-and-Play Installation - In-line device, keep existing printers!
- Customize Receipts for Customers - Based on purchased items or AI
- Digitize the Receipt - Device Agnostic Solution to digital storage
- Maintain PCI Compliance
- Ingest/ Convert Data



## We no longer have to line up for fast food, so why still at the deli counter?

Order Up software allows the customer to order products from a touch screen or their own device at full-service locations such as deli and HMR. No more standing in line, reduce your labour spend, increase basket with suggested selling, and stop losing sales due to line up abandonment!

Leverage that experience for special orders such as birthday cakes, floral arrangements, and party platters!



# BIG DATA OR BIG FLOP?

There is nothing new in an industry which generates thousands upon thousands of data points daily, to attempt to gain insight into everything from inventory optimization to transport and logistics management. Grocers have been doing that for years.

So, what is all the talk about “Big Data” and how it has the potential to revolutionize businesses?

In its broadest sense, big data is “extremely large data sets that may be analyzed computationally to

reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially relating to human behaviour and interactions.” But the real question is how to meaningfully analyze and integrate all your data to drive customer satisfaction, loyalty, and ultimately in-store sales.

When discussing the role of big data in the grocery industry, many refer to UK-based Tesco. With 3,500 stores in the UK alone, and each store stocking an average of 40,000 products, tracking them all just once involves the creation of over 100 million data points. The



Nolan Wheeler, SYNQ

company is now deploying analytics technology where the data is stored, rather than moving the data in batches for external analytics. It is in the process of moving from a “data warehousing” to a “data lake model” which will be a centralised, cloud-based repository for all its

data, codified in a way to make it accessible and usable by any arm of the company whenever needed.

Tesco sees cutting-edge, real-time analytics and the use of most up-to-date data as the answer to the challenges it now faces with evolving customer behaviour and new competition.

But to do this properly, a store’s technological infrastructure and loyalty programs are critical, and sorely lacking in Canada’s retail landscape.

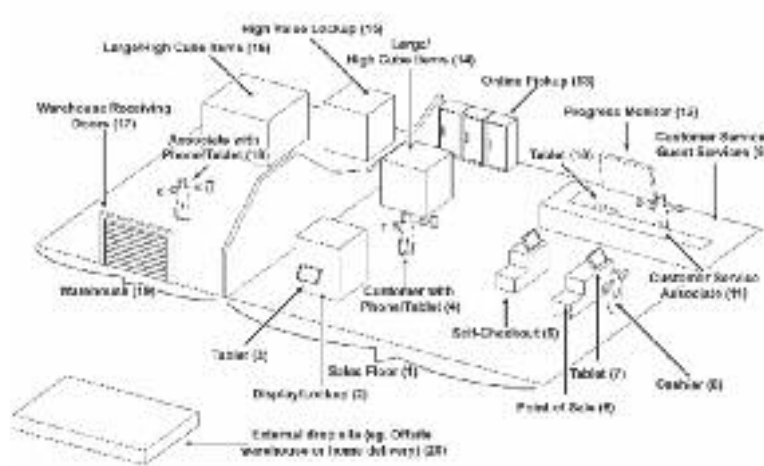
This is why Nolan Wheeler of SYNQ, a Canadian company specializing in store technology, says “There is no Big Data...and there will never be Big Data. If Big data does exist in grocery, it’s primitive data masquerading as such.”

While Wheeler says the basic data is there, there are privacy implications in its use and the fragmented, often antiquated, POS hardware exacerbates the challenges. Indeed, most data is not “actionable”.

What does that mean?

To be actionable, the data must be received and analysed in real time. There has been forecasting for example that with advanced store infrastructure a customer’s cell phone signal can be picked up and the store will be able to send them personalized messages/promotions while in store.

“Brick and mortar retailers are at a massive disadvantage inherent to the current models,” says Wheeler. Basically, retailers only know so much from their current data



it or anonymizing it. An example of such is our patented receipt capture device we at SYNQ call The Wedge. Plug this device in-line into any receipt printer and you've wedged in a digital platform whereby you not only digitize the analog receipt (think PCI compliance, etc.) but you can on-the-fly create real-time customized and actionable incentives specific to that customer/transaction as a digital or analog OUTPUT (think about customized receipts with incentives vs. what you bought...or what you missed). Capturing data from a printer is a scalable, agnostic way to go, in a retail landscape that has a plurality of types and versions of POS hardware and software."

Wheeler says the company navigates what to do with that data in the context of being constrained by all those listing fees, IT limitations, privacy implications, changing e-com landscape, poor operationally designed stores, distribution challenges, labour optimizations...and find unique ways to modernize with the least amount of complexity.

"At SYNQ, our customers can shop the deli counter from their phone, order a cake by texting a word, and do a customer survey on a device during the transaction when it actually matters...and we can act on the bad experience and promote the good."

So for now, utilizing big data has its limitations but clearly there are ways retailers can still gain value from their data sets until such a time as in-store technology evolves further. ●

sets. And what they do know is humstrung by established practices such as generating revenue from listing fees which tend to dictate product placement and assortment. Loyalty programs, while helpful, have one stunning flaw — time of occurrence. "When does the retailer know that the loyal/new customer is shopping in their store... when it's TOO LATE, when the entire shopping experience is over!"

SYNQ's solution is to use clever in-line devices to anonymize data or mitigate the challenges of all that old, fragmented hardware.

"We build technologies that take analog or privacy sensitive data and make it available by either digitizing

**DIGI** FASTER • SMARTER • GREENER

## Bring Your Own Container



sales@ca.digi-group.com

www.digisystem.com

DIGI CANADA Inc.

## in the bag

WHAT'S NEW & IMPROVED IN THE GROCERY AISLE

### Ice Cream Is Betterwith More Flavour, Not Sugar

Thanks to customer feedback, Betterwith founder Lori Joyce made a surprising discovery after listening to what her customers were saying: Betterwith Ice Cream contains on average 19-50 per cent less sugar than other premium ice cream brands on the market. But while it contains less sugar, the brand hasn't compromised on flavour. With this new discovery in mind, Joyce rebranded



her packaging and redesigned her website, betterwith.com, shifting the focus of her message to educating the consumer on what is (and is not) found inside her ice cream, compared to the "frozen treats" found in the freezer aisle.

"Innovation may be trending in the food industry today, but sometimes it's best not to mess with a good thing. Betterwith ice cream is made the Old-World way; full-fat cream, simple ingredients, and an expert process. Real ice cream — like Grandma used to make — should not change. That is our product, and promise."

For more information: [Betterwith.com](http://Betterwith.com)

### Bee Maid Introduces Premium Clover

Bee Maid Honey Limited, a proudly Canadian cooperative owned by over 300 beekeepers has been feeding Canadians since 1954. Building on the successful launch of their BeeMaid Raw Honey (a 2020 top 10 selling honey sku in Canada according to Nielsen) they are introducing a new member of their family — Premium Clover. Their beekeepers' Premium Clover Honey comes primarily from the nectar of white and red clover. Packaged in an attractive jar allowing for easy measurement, it is an exquisite choice for home cooks wanting a delicate Canadian Honey. The perfect companion to sauces, dressings, baking and even drizzling on a warm biscuit from the oven. BeeMaid's Premium line-up is strategically poised to reinvigorate the honey category and drive incremental sales.



### The Brand That Puts More Quality Tea in the Tea Bag!



Typhoo tea has introduced new eye-catching nostalgic graphics on its packaging. What hasn't changed is the same great black (Orange Pekoe) tea. Also available in a Decaf that really tastes like tea.

For more information: contact Chuck Corrigan: Business manager at CB Powell: [ccorrigan@cbpowell.com](mailto:ccorrigan@cbpowell.com)

### New Cornbites

New from H.B. Kaysons Ltd., Cornbites are soft and crunchy on the bite. Available in 50g and 218g packages in three flavours: Original Salt, Mesquite BBQ, and Spicy Cheddar.



For more information: [hbkanada@yahoo.com](mailto:hbkanada@yahoo.com)

### Canadian Beverage Company Viveau Announces First Three Sparkling Mineral Water Flavours

Canadian beverage company VIVEAU has launched three flavours into the Canadian market including: Wild Blueberry, Ripe Cherry and Crisp Apple Cider. VIVEAU beverages are a blend of 50 per cent cold-pressed Canadian fruit and 50 per cent lightly sparkled mineral water from Spa Springs in Nova Scotia.

The Canadian-owned and grown beverage is flavoured exclusively by fresh, Canadian fruits, and does not contain any added sugars, flavours, colours or preservatives. Fruits found in VIVEAU beverages are picked at peak ripeness, making the drinks rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals. The mineral water loaded with calcium, manganese, magnesium and bicarbonate is bottled directly from a natural spring in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley.



VIVEAU founders Ted Grant and Hanspeter Stutz saw an opportunity to be first to market with a flavoured sparkling water that contained only real Canadian ingredients with no added sweeteners or preservatives. It is the first sparkling beverage in North America to earn Clean Label Project Certification.

For more information: <https://www.drinkviveau.com/>

### Sabra Canada Introduces New Plant-Based Protein SKU and Convenience Sizing

Sabra Canada, best known for its fresh-topped hummus and dips in mass and discount grocers across Canada, continues to innovate with bold, bright flavours and new sizing to meet consumers' current needs.

The iconic Everything Bagel flavour is revisited in a delicious and nutritious meal or snack with a seasoning made of sesame, poppy seeds, onion, and garlic. In addition to this new flavour, Sabra is now selling its popular Classic and Roasted Red Pepper skus in family-friendly club size 850g containers — meaning fewer trips to the grocery store to restock!

The brand's popular Sabra Single Serves offer convenience in a pre-portioned Hummus & Pretzel combo — perfected for at-home studying and work break snacking. Available in Classic, Roasted Red Pepper and Roasted Garlic.



### Furlani's Food Corporation Unveils New Products

Furlani's Food Corporation, Canada's garlic bread category leader, continues to showcase innovation under its iconic brand, Furlani, by offering an exciting new assortment of soft dinner rolls, hand-tied knots and biscuits. These mouth-watering products expand the Furlani offering beyond garlic Texas toast and garlic bread, as well as beyond garlic flavour. Made with simple, wholesome ingredients, such as real



butter, buttermilk, garlic, aged cheddar cheese and specially selected seasoning blends, they serve society's desire for healthy living (including plant-based diets), and convenient meal solutions. They are also free from artificial flavours and colours. A really great feature is that they come in oven-ready bakeable bags, take just 10 minutes to prepare, and have an incredible aroma that delights your senses.

For more information: [www.furlanis.com](http://www.furlanis.com)

### Introducing new Pringles Wendy's Baconator Flavour

This limited-time edition Pringles Wendy's Baconator Flavour Chips layer all the tastes of the famous Wendy's Baconator into a totally munchable, mind-blowing snack. A must-try for any snack lover or burger connoisseur, the masters of flavour at Pringles have teamed up with Wendy's to create an insanely accurate and delicious one-bite Baconator taste experience! "Wendy's is known for serving up great tasting, high quality food every day, all over the world. So, in true Pringles fashion, we wanted to capture the fresh beef, cheese and bacon flavours of a Wendy's Baconator, all in one chip," says Christine Jakovcic, vice-president marketing & nutrition, Kellogg Canada Inc. "This was an extremely ambitious endeavour, especially when you consider the bar was set high after a successful U.S. launch last summer. And I'm thrilled to report, the Pringles flavour team did it again by bringing this exclusive taste experience to Canada!"



For more information: [www.pringles.com](http://www.pringles.com)

### Neale's Hits the Spot

Neale's Sweet 'N Nice Ice Cream is a family-owned Canadian company with all-natural Caribbean flavours – Mango, Coconut, Rum & Raisin, Pineapple Coconut, Guava Passionfruit and Banana Chocolate.



For more information: [sweetnnice.ca](http://sweetnnice.ca)

### Cargill Launches The Chomperly, a New Line of Butcher-Quality Dog Treats

Cargill has introduced The Chomperly, a new brand of butcher-quality dog treats. Developed to address the latest consumer trends, The Chomperly dog treats are all natural, single-ingredient and both sourced and produced in North America.

With a broad portfolio of high-quality treats, The Chomperly offers products for multiple usage occasions and purposes, including long-lasting entertainment, rewards and training. The Chomperly bones, ribs, windpipes and jerkies provide a variety of options that meet the main motivations of treat purchasers – functional, entertainment, training and bonding!



The launch of The Chomperly coincides with rising demand for pet treats in Canada, as pet owners seek solutions to keep their pets occupied while working from home. Nearly half of Canadian dog and cat owners reported last summer that they are spending more on pet products than they used to, and another third report no change in spending levels<sup>2</sup>.

For more information: [www.TheChomperly.com](http://www.TheChomperly.com)

### MadeGood Enters Savoury Market with Debut of Star Puffed Crackers

MadeGood Foods is expanding into the savoury snack category with the introduction of a new product line – Star Puffed Crackers. Gluten-free, dairy-free, and organic, they contain nutrients from six different fruits and vegetables. The new crackers are available in three delicious flavours: Sea Salt, Cheddar, and Pizza.

"Entering the savoury snack category has always been top of mind at our company. With such a crowded aisle, we've taken our time to develop a product line that delivers against the wants of customers, which is why we're incredibly excited to bring the Star Puffed Crackers to the market," said Nima Fotovat, President of MadeGood Foods. "Our team has been hard at work to ensure these new products stay true to our values of gluten-free, dairy-free, organic, non-GMO snacks you and your family can feel good about. They're perfect for at-home snacking, school lunches, or on-the-go."

Vegan and gluten-free, Star Puffed Crackers contains nutrients from six different fruit and vegetable sources: spinach, broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, beets, and shiitake mushrooms.



**Crunchy on Every Bite!**

Available in 50g and 218g packages in 3 Flavours: *Original Salt, Mesquite BBQ, and Spicy Cheddar*

Contact Jeetu Patel at 604-594-9800 or 778-855-1905  
[hbkcanada@yahoo.com](mailto:hbkcanada@yahoo.com)

Manufacturers of:   

WHAT MAKES YOUR STORE SO SPECIAL?

**western grocer**

HAS YOUR GROCERY STORE RECENTLY:

- OPENED?
- DONE RENOVATIONS?
- HAD A CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT?
- EXPANDED?
- CELEBRATED AN ANNIVERSARY?
- REBRANDED?

**Stong's Steps Up Its Game**

Back to School Cds Soups Cheeses

LET US TELL THE WEST WHY YOUR STORE IS SO SPECIAL!

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

### .....advertisers index.....

BC Egg Marketing Brand .....23	Johnston Wholesale ..... 20
Bee Maid Honey Ltd ..... 70	Jones Food Equipment .. 17, 39, 44
Biro Manufacturing Company .54	JS Software ..... 21
Boosh Food .....10	Keurig Canada .....29, 71
Bothwell Cheese .....17	Kraft Canada ..... 19, 27, 53
C.B Powell ..... 48	Lacroix Sparkling Water ..... 69
Canada Beef .....3	Meatless Farm .....31
Celco Inc .....38	Morgan Williams International Inc .....47
Chicken Farmers of Canada .0BC	Neales Sweet N Nice .....63
Coconut Bliss .....63	Noble Premium Bison .....35
ColdStar Solutions Inc .....21	Olaf Packaging Group Inc .....47
Colnuck Ltd .....15	Pan-Oston .....38
Digi Canada .....14, 74	PSC Natural Foods .....21
Discovery Organics .....10	Raimac .....21
Farm Credit Canada .....9	Refrigerative Supply Ltd .....43
Focus West Management .....18	Righteous Gelato .....62
Foothills Creamery .....61	Star Egg Company Ltd .....57
Franses DP .....43	Sproud .....33
Fresh Point .....21	Synq .....72
Guru Lucky Snacks .....77	The Ice Cream Depot Ltd .....64
Harvest Meats .....58	Traffic Tech .....42
Hussmann Canada Inc .....40	TransCold Distribution Ltd ...65
Independent Supply Company .41	Tree of Life Canada .....1FC, 52
Island Eggs .....15	Victoria Box & Paper Ltd .....18
Island Farmhouse Poultry ....IBC	

# The Problem with Local Shoppers Love Local but It Is Not Easy Being Small

Over the past few years it has been great to see the level of support being placed on local products by more and more retailers across the country. Walk into any grocery store and you will see an ever-increasing array of products from small, local vendors on the shelves and endcaps. In particular the programs being run by Sobeys, Save On Foods and Calgary Co-op are great examples of large organizations supporting small businesses and giving these small brands a tremendous opportunity to grow their businesses.

Local is also very present in store design in Canada with many new stores having visual cues that take us back to the farmer's market, with the convenience of a well-lit store with a nicely paved parking lot, conveniently located close to our homes. The best of both worlds.

As a small local producer, owners are great at knowing the local consumer and being nimble in their operations. This is the prime advantage local brands have over brands being managed from Toronto, New York or London.

However, as I walk grocery stores I see a lot of challenges for local brands that may unfortunately lead to significant problems for these brands in the future.

One key challenge is in the area of packaging development. Selling your brand in a local farmer's market stall or from your own restaurant often means that the packaging is just a vessel for your customers to transport their favorite product to their home. But when placed in a grocery store environment among hundreds or thousands of items vying for eyeballs many local brands do not have packaging that stands out. Local brands need to have access to

best-in-class designers to help them stand out, while still reflecting the core values/uniqueness of the brand and not becoming too "corporate".

Beyond packaging, building overall brand awareness is very difficult for local producers, especially outside their immediate home market. Budgets are tight and many brands can only afford the working capital to increase production in order to meet that initial PO. It is nearly impossible for these brands to afford the tools that big brands use such as flyer space and elaborate displays to drive awareness. Developing a shopper marketing plan for the brand once it hits the shelves is a critical, but often over-looked step in the brand plan and P&L. Without a plan to drive off-take in those early days of a listing the brand is only destined for a quick delisting.

The account management process can also be very challenging for local brands. Getting the initial conversation with a buyer is a huge barrier and finally getting that initial listing can almost seem like the holy grail. However, the hard part of managing the business day-to-day is just beginning. Building the skills and eventually the team to manage the retailer relationship can be a big leap for someone who is just really passionate about building the best gluten free pizza.

Another important element of success for any size brand is the ability to monitor the execution in-store. Tracking distribution, on-shelf availability, promotion execution and pricing are the pulse checks that small brands need; but without a sales force and access to POS data, small brands are really operating blind beyond the stores that they themselves regularly shop.

Local brands need a unique and scalable approach to account management and retail coverage that is different than the traditional model. We are fortunate in Western Canada to have a lot of great account management talent and there are some great new tools out there that could be bundled to create a sales support model designed to drive local brands. Who will take on this challenge?

While there is some great work being done to overcome the hurdles small brands face, notably by organizations like the District Ventures incubator in Calgary,



much more can be done.

Maybe it is time for a program for local brands that is similar to the Canadian Television Fund. This is the fund that fosters Canadian television content and is funded by broadcasters as a percentage of revenue. It has been responsible for hits such as Schitt's Creek, Letterkenny and Orphan Black. Without its support much of the Canadian content we enjoy would not make it onto the screen.

Imagine the Canadian Producers Fund, a small percentage driven program, paid by all brands, with additional contributions from government. Creating a sustainable development fund to help fuel local brands will allow more brands to become significant players not just locally, but nationally or even internationally.

Funds could be used to address many of the challenges highlighted above including packaging development, supply chain, advertising / promotion and account management as the brand scales its growth. In the end, I am confident this would mean that more local brands could develop to a bigger platform and Canada would have more successful local-turned-big brands like BC's Kicking Horse Coffee and Nature's Path, and Alberta's Little Potato Company.

If we want to have strong local producers with a roadmap to success we need to do more to support these brands from the beginning starting with their first listing and then help them scale in a sustainable and profitable way. Brands, retailers and governments all have a role to play and there is no better time to act than now as we recover from a very difficult year. ●



Jeff Doucette is the founder of "Field Agent Canada" a smartphone driven audit service that is revolutionizing how retail audits and mystery shops are completed in Canada. He can be reached at [jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com](mailto:jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com)

TASTE LOCAL, TASTE FRESH



Brian and Bev Whitta  
Vancouver Island

## 100% ISLAND-RAISED CHICKEN

Island Farmhouse Poultry is proud to provide the only island-raised, island-processed chicken to Vancouver & the Gulf Islands. We rely on fourteen dedicated farming families, like Brian and Bev Whitta, to raise the highest-quality, farm fresh island chicken.

FARMHOUSEPOULTRY.CA





The

# CHICKEN

**YOU EAT** NOW HAS A

↓ **37% LOWER**

• CARBON FOOTPRINT •

**THAN IT DID IN 1976**

.....

[letstalkchicken.ca](http://letstalkchicken.ca)