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The foundation of Freson Bros.' success.

Cover Photography: Ian Grant



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publisher's perspective



Has Our Relationship to Food Changed Forever?

There is no question the pandemic has initiated a re-shift with the consumer. Nourish Food Marketing just published its annual report on food trends which found many existing trends accelerated during the pandemic, and several new ones emerged.

One of the most significant of the trends for grocery retail has been the re-discovery of family mealtime. Up to 85 per cent of consumers plan to eat family meals more often or the same amount once things return to the "new normal." Indeed, 77 per cent of Canadians agree or strongly agree that food and eating have become important ways to stay entertained during the pandemic.

And it is not all prepared at home meals either. Meal kits have enjoyed a big boost, but cost remains a principal barrier to entry. Food prices are forecasted to rise above the rate of inflation with 3.5-5 per cent increase predicted so will those meal kits or delivery options still be as attractive?

We all know that online shopping has risen during the pandemic dramatically. Fifty-two per cent of Canadian households now shop for their groceries online, which is a 17 per cent growth in online grocery shopping from 2019 to 2020. Only 59 per cent of Canadians claim they will continue to shop online for groceries. That is because 84 per cent enjoy the experience of shopping for groceries in-person more than online so some expect some of those online gains to roll back.

The Nourish Food Marketing report suggests we may see a hybrid model emerge. Consumers may order those bulky necessities like toilet paper and paper towels online while going in-person to shop for fresh and new. We may see more subscription models for staples with products shipping direct from the manufacturer rather than going into the grocery distribution system.

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Husmann and Takeoff Technologies Announce Strategic Alliance



Takeoff Technologies and Husmann Corporation, a Panasonic company, have launched a strategic alliance aimed to improve food retailer flexibility to grow with changing shopper needs. Under the alliance, Takeoff will become Husmann's strategic ally for automated grocery fulfillment solutions in North America. Husmann will provide Takeoff refrigeration solutions and expertise to develop food retailer-focused solutions.

"It's exciting to see two of the industry's leading companies collaborating to bring game-changing concepts and technologies into the food retailing marketplace," said Tim Figge, CEO of Husmann.

"Husmann is an established leader in refrigeration. They are true experts in their field," said José V. Aguerrevere, co-founder and CEO of Takeoff. "Any eGrocery solution relies on safe product temperature control to ensure food integrity of refrigerated and frozen items. This alliance represents an incredible opportunity to strengthen our solution."

Takeoff coined the term micro-fulfillment in 2016 and is the current leader in the micro-fulfillment space. Micro-Fulfillment Centers (MFCs) are miniature, automated warehouses that utilize robots and software to fulfil online orders. MFCs are small enough to fit inside the back of existing grocery stores or operate as stand-alone facilities. MFCs combine proximity to the end-shopper with the automation capabilities of a large warehouse – two major competitive advantages for grocery retailers looking to go online.

"Working with innovative companies such as Takeoff, has always been part of how Husmann delivers the most customer-focused solutions in the food retailing industry," said Figge. "Takeoff's micro-fulfillment solutions are emerging as a key component in the quickly evolving eGrocery space. We look at this alliance as a way for retailers to leverage the market leading technologies of two great companies; ultimately driving improved e-commerce business models for retailers and shoppers."

Save-On-Foods Open Two Stores in Two Weeks in Winnipeg

Save-On-Foods has officially opened its doors to two new stores in Winnipeg.

The company opened its first three stores in Winnipeg in November 2016, bringing Winnipeggers its unique brand of service, lowest price guarantee, and the most innovative grocery offering in North America. With the addition of Save-On-Foods Pembina Crossing and Save-On-Foods Kildonan, customers at any of the five Save-On-Foods stores in Winnipeg can expect a unique offering suited to the community.

Customers at the two new locations can expect a full traditional grocery offering as well as a wide variety of Save-On-Foods' freshest innovations, including:

- Save-On-Foods Smokehouse products, expertly and locally prepared using only the freshest ingredients.
- A fabulous floral department including cut flowers, fresh European hand-tied bouquets, a variety of fruit baskets and gourmet gift baskets.
- A large selection of Save-On-Foods Kitchen grab 'n' go items, including signature sandwiches, hand-rolled sushi, take and bake pizza and ready-to-eat chicken wings.

Home of the Million Dollar Score and Win and Million Dollar Touchdown to Win promotions, Save-On-Foods recently awarded Winnipegger Marcella Chartrand \$100,000 last month when Winnipeg Jet Andrew Copp scored four goals in one game. With Million Dollar Score and Win and Million Dollar Touchdown to Win, customers who shop at Save-On-Foods and scan their More Rewards card are automatically entered to win great prizes during the NHL and CFL seasons.



Pembina Crossing - Cal Siemens, regional director (left), Alex Speckman, store manager

"I know I speak for my entire team when I say we can't wait to open our doors and welcome our new neighbours to this amazing new store," said Save-On-Foods Pembina Crossing Store Manager Alex Speckman. "We are excited to share this fantastic shopping experience with them and strengthen our relationships with our customers and community."

"We've been hard at work to get this store up and running, and my team is thrilled that our grand opening is finally here," said Save-On-Foods Kildonan Place Store Manager Nick Taylor. "We have a lot to offer and can't wait to share it with our customers and community."



Kildonan - Randy Nerling, regional director (left), Nick Taylor, store manager (centre), Carl Ryan, general manager (right)

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GBS Foodservice Equipment Inc. Now Distributes AccuTemp



GBS Foodservice Equipment Inc. has announced an exclusive distribution agreement for the Canadian market with AccuTemp. The agreement, which has recently been approved by both GBS and AccuTemp is the start of a successful joint venture that will provide Canadian retail grocery and foodservice professionals with access to the world's global leader in steam technology. AccuTemp is the gold standard for innovative cooking solutions. Offering unmatched efficiency, undeniable quality, and unbeatable service. Headquartered out of New Haven Indiana, AccuTemp specializes in the development, production and distribution of state-of-the-art steamers, griddles, tilt-skillets, and kettles. The addition of AccuTemp to GBS Foodservice Equipment's "family

of brands" will ensure that Canadian restaurateurs, grocers, educational and healthcare institutions, caterers, and other industry professionals have access to the highest quality product with the best aftersales support and service. Every AccuTemp product that is sold comes with the industry's only Lifetime Service & Support Guarantee.



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Kraft Heinz Canada Announces New Chief Category and Brand Officer



KraftHeinz

Kraft Heinz has named Kelly Fleming chief category and brand officer for Kraft Heinz Canada.

Fleming brings more than a decade of industry and leadership experience to the Kraft Heinz Canada team. From visionary strategy to driving business growth, she builds high-performing, agile teams and an inclusive culture.

"We are excited to welcome Kelly to the Canadian leadership team," says Bruno Keller, president, Kraft Heinz Canada. "With a focus on continuous improvement, Kelly brings a proven record of delivering growth across our beloved brands and she empowers her teams to deliver outstanding results."

In her previous role, Fleming was Head of Grocery at Kraft Heinz Canada, where she delivered significant market share growth and launched key innovations such as Kraft Hazelnut Spread and CRAVE Frozen Meals.

Since joining Kraft Heinz Canada in 2010, she has held several progressive roles working on some of Kraft Heinz's most successful and iconic brands such as Heinz Ketchup, Philadelphia Cream Cheese, and Kraft Dinner.

Emkao Foods, Canada's First Sustainable, Fairtrade, Single Source Chocolate Manufacturer, Opens in BC

Set in Mission, BC, newly launched EMKAO Foods has opened its factory and started production of Canada's only single source, traceable, sustainable, chocolate products made from organic cacao beans.

The newly built 3,000 square foot factory produces single source, traceable cocoa nibs, cocoa paste used to make chocolate bars, cocoa butter for white or milk chocolate, cocoa powder for ice cream and dark vegan chocolate chips for wholesale distribution.

One of only two cocoa producers in Canada, EMKAO is invested not only in offering a high-quality product, but also transforming what it means to produce chocolate at every stage of the supply chain. EMKAO accomplishes this using a direct trade model and commitment to be the most sustainable and ethical chocolate maker in Canada.

Founded by a young Canadian/Cameroonian entrepreneur and chocolatier, Ayissi Nyemba, comes from generations of cacao farmers in a country where cacao production and export contribute significantly to the national economy and in poverty alleviation. From her experience growing up on her parents' cacao farm, as a child Ayissi made it her lifelong vision to help and support the struggling cacao farmers in Cameroon.

"Moving to Canada as a young student and launching EMKAO has been a momentous journey and learning experience. It couldn't have happened without the incredible support of my family and the business and food community in BC," says Ayissi Nyemba. "It has been a true honour to work with some of Vancouver's top chocolatiers and businesses who have embraced EMKAO with an equal amount of excitement and passion."



Cody Kester

Boosh Food Appointments

Ali Samei joins Boosh Food, Inc. as vice president of operations. Samei brings over 25 years of experience with food processing and food industry operations in plant-based products, beverage, dairy, cereals, and snack categories most recently with Left Coast Naturals. He holds a bachelor's degree in food technology and an MBA in managerial leadership.

Boosh Food, Inc. also welcomes a new Western Sales Manager, Cody Kester. Most recently, working with Sysco Foodservice where he spent seven years in sales. Kester brings experience in management and business-to-business sales to his new Boosh Food role.



Ali Samei

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After conducting a thorough and independent analysis, Great Place To Work Institute Canada re-certified Righteous Gelato in 2020, benchmarking them against global standards as a place where

employees trust the people they work for and take pride in what they do. Today Righteous has been ranked No.32 on the 2021 list of Best Workplaces in Canada. These companies have the highest levels of trust and most inclusive cultures in the country. Innovation in company culture begins in hiring practices and translates into everything Righteous does. "Our vision has always been to create a space where people are excited to come to work every day and being certified as a Great Place To Work means we are doing just that." said James Boettcher, chief idea officer, custodian of culture, and CEO. "Our No.1 priority is our people, meaning that while we do make the No.1 gelato in Canada, we know that our people allow us to do that, and not the other way around."



Costco Wholesale Business Centre Opens in West Edmonton



Costco Wholesale has opened its fourth Canadian Business Centre, located at 10310 - 186 Street NW in Edmonton. The 127,000-square-foot facility has created 140 local jobs and unprecedented convenience for local businesses. This new business centre is the fourth of its kind in Canada and follows the success of the business centres launched in Scarborough, Ontario in March 2017, Saint-Hubert, Quebec in September 2020, and most recently Ottawa, Ontario. It is part of a Costco national expansion plan, with additional Costco Business Centre locations planned to open across Canada. The new Edmonton Costco Business Centre offers more than 3,200 high-quality items, targeted at restaurants, convenience/grocery stores and offices – from bulk food items to commercial kitchen wares and cleaning supplies, to office furniture, coffee needs and everything in between.

Meatless Farm Launches New Range of Plant-Based Products at Metro in Ontario

Meatless Farm has partnered with Metro to offer their full range of meat-free products to consumers across Ontario. Meatless Farm's core retail products, including meat-free burgers, ground, breakfast sausage and breakfast patties are now available in 130 locations across the province.

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. Since first launching in the United Kingdom in 2018, the brand's internal team of chefs, nutritionists and food scientists have worked to develop a high-quality range of plant-based meat alternatives full of taste and texture. The burgers and breakfast products launching in Canada are made using a next-generation soy-free, completely pea-based recipe free from all major allergens. All products have fewer calories, fat and saturated fat than their meat counterparts.



"At Meatless Farm, we are committed to making it as easy as possible for consumers to swap out meat for healthy, plant-based alternatives, without requiring them to compromise on taste or texture," said Darcy Peters, vice-president of sales, Meatless Farm Canada.

This launch reflects changing consumption habits among Canadians. In research conducted in early 2020 with online Canadian members of the Angus Reid Forum, Meatless Farm found that one-third (33 per cent) of respondents made a resolution to reduce meat consumption within the year. Additionally, the survey found that 77 per cent of Canadians understood the damaging environmental impact of eating meat, yet only 38 per cent decreased meat consumption to reduce their carbon footprint.

Launching this diverse product offering provides consumers with the flexibility and choice to make this change.

Del Monte Fresh Produce Expands Organic Fresh-Cut Fruit Production

Del Monte Fresh Produce N.A., Inc., has expanded its organic fresh-cut fruit production in North America, specifically in the United States and Canada. This expansion will allow Fresh Del Monte to continue growing its fresh-cut fruit and organic fresh-cut fruit businesses nationally, while diversifying its variety of produce skus. The expansion to organic fresh-cut fruit production comes as a result of popular trends and rising demand for organic products. Fresh Del Monte strives to grow its business and elevate its existing operations to unprecedented new heights. Continuing to meet consumers' desires and needs, the brand ensures its organic produce has consistent quality, freshness, and reliability in its raw product. The Organic Fresh-Cut Fruit expansion will allow for added retail convenience, as fruit will be cut to order prior to distribution. Since fruits cannot be cut in-store, this process eliminates a hassle for retail stores and will help continue to incrementally grow retail sales. Produce is cut-to-order at each facility for direct, next day deliveries and pickups.

For more information: www.delmontefresh.com

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Walmart eCommerce Sales to Grow by 21% in 2021

A massive boom in click-and-collect trends is expected to accelerate Walmart's pandemic-driven momentum through 2021.

According to the research data analyzed and published by ComprarAcciones.com, Walmart's online sales will grow by 21.2 per cent to \$64.62 billion in 2021. Its share of US online sales will rise from 6.7 per cent in 2020 to 7.1 per cent in 2021.

Based on the latest NRF ranking, Walmart is the world's biggest retailer, followed closely by Amazon. Its total sales for 2020 – both online and offline – amounted to \$559 billion, more than \$200 billion ahead of Amazon's figure.

Click-and-Collect purchases will grow by 15 per cent to \$83 Billion in 2021.

Walmart's U.S. online sales for 2021 will almost double eBay's estimated \$38.67 billion. They will also be higher than the combined total of \$60.59 billion that Best Buy, Target and The Home Depot will generate.

However, the big box retailer will be far behind the top US online marketplace, Amazon. Amazon's sales are projected to reach \$367.19 billion, nearly six times the Walmart total. Its share of U.S. online sales will increase from 39.8 per cent to 40.4 per cent. Third-party vendors on the platform will grow sales by 16.5 per cent to \$220.39 billion. That will be 60 per cent of total sales.

New Canadian Study Finds Canadians Can Reduce Household Food Waste by a Third with Just One 'Use-Up Day' Per Week

As part of its global mission to reduce food waste, Hellmann's commissioned one of the largest and longest behavioural change studies on household food waste to-date to understand the interventions needed to effectively reduce food waste in the home. This Canadian study, conducted in partnership with Toronto-based behavioural science experts BEworks, featured over 1,000 Canadian families and revealed that by simply using a few easy-to-remember tools and methods, such as a 'Use-Up Day' and flexible recipes, participants changed their way of thinking about their left-behind food and reduced their reported food waste by an average of 33 per cent.



New study from Hellmann's finds that by simply adopting just one 'Use-Up Day' per week – making a meal using ingredients already in the home – Canadians can reduce their food waste by a third.

Globally, one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted and 900 million tonnes of food is thrown away every year, with 60 per cent of food waste occurring in the home. Canada is one of the worst offenders with almost two-thirds of the food thrown away still being edible, costing Canadian households 1,100 dollars every year. If all households with children across Canada adopted the approach from this study, the amount of food waste saved would be an estimated 250 million kg2 per year.



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- Sunflora President of Franchise Systems, Jay Bengue



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By Deb Draper

Freson Bros., Canada's largest family-owned grocery chain with locations in small rural communities all across northern Alberta, has opened its 15th store in southwest Edmonton, bringing its authentic, hometown feel to the big city.

"The store in Edmonton is the culmination of everything we've learned over the last 65 years," says Mike Lovsin, chairman of Freson Bros. "When he was 21 years old, our dad, Frank Lovsin, started the company with a partner in 1955 in a very small meat shop in Hinton. As the pulp mill and the town itself was being built, Dad would disconnect his diesel generator, step outside and a cat would hook up to the skids the shop building was sitting on and tow him down to the end of the road. He did that for about a year and half until he cobbled together enough money to buy a very small lot for the shop's permanent location. In 1962 he relocated to Peace River, opened another store, and that's where the genesis of our company began in its truest form."

Over the course of the next 59 years, Freson Bros. grew out of these early rural roots into the

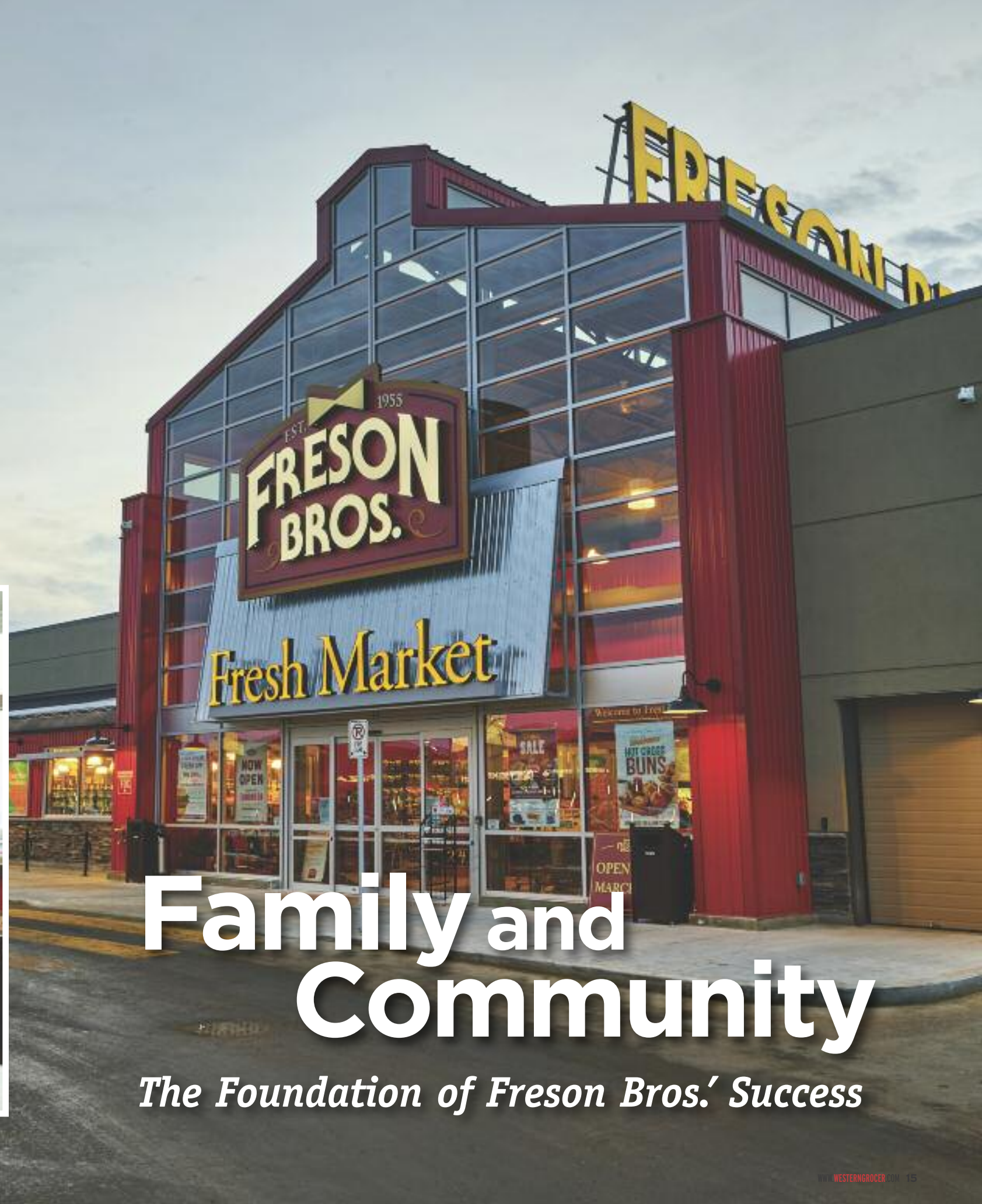
welcoming metropolitan marketplace of Edmonton, Alberta in March 2021.

Located in the Rabbit Hill Crossing shopping centre at 5139 Mullen Road, the new 42,000-square-foot store in Edmonton is basically the same size as all the other Freson Bros. locations and with the signature Fresh Market concept. "At Freson Bros. it's more than shopping; we're a unique Alberta food experience," says Lovsin. "Through our stores, we work to fulfil our commitment to family and community."

When the store opened this spring, Lovsin explained that it represents the next generation of Freson Bros. while maintaining the core beliefs of his family: the value and importance of good food, the strength of human connection, and confidence in their employees.



(Left to right) Doug Lovsin, Agnes Lovsin, Ken Lovsin, Frank Lovsin, Mike Lovsin, Paula Slobodian



Family and Community

The Foundation of Freson Bros.' Success



The Experience of Freson Bros.

Each location is tailored to suit the needs of the people it serves, but every Freson Bros. store, whether it's in Fox Creek or Drumheller or Edmonton features The Butcher Shop, selling only Alberta protein—beef, pork, chicken and turkey. True to its beginnings as a trusted local butcher, Freson Bros. offers custom orders, 30-lb. combination Freezer Packs, Premium Cuts and

Ivan's Sausage, developed by Ivan Fano, the butcher from the Hanna, Alberta store and now produced by in-store sausage-makers. Banj's Smokehouse products are made from scratch, smoked in-store with real hardwood.

In every store there's the Fresh Baking station where everything is produced by the Mother Dough Bread Company. "We have the best grain in the world, and we buy our flour only from local farmers we know," says Freson Bros. President, Doug Lovsin. The company expanded this belief in its local growers into a full commitment to the craft of baking from scratch, removing all chemicals, bases and mixes through the exclusive use of sourdough. For thousands of years, this satisfying bread has been made from only three ingredients: flour, water, and salt. After much experimentation and development, in 2015, Charlie was born – the sourdough starter that is in every yeast product in every Freson Bros. store, providing authentic home-baked taste in loaves of French bread, pizza crust, and even in the delicious cinnamon buns available at the Edmonton location. There are only three sourdough bread producers in Canada, and Freson Bros. is proud to be one of them.

At each store's Market Garden, farm-fresh Alberta products are offered whenever possible, much of them coming from the Lethbridge-Medicine Hat area. Further reflecting the store's respect for all its farmers and producers, fresh produce is presented and kept at its best. Root vegetables such as onions, yams, garlic, etc. are found in the special climate-controlled Root Cellar with lower temperatures, low light and steady humidity providing traditional and effective cold storage. On the company website, videos feature local farmers, their products and home-cooking

recipes to make the most of what Alberta has to offer.

As in the Fort Saskatchewan location, customers in the Edmonton store can experience custom-designed, homemade pizza at Father Dough Pizza. Using fresh ingredients on top of the simple but delicious sourdough crust, in-store chefs cook made-to-order pizzas in a firestone oven while their customers watch.

Every day, in every store, in-house chefs prepare delicious hot, home-style comfort food meals from scratch for the Hot Kitchen. The artisan soup program features home-made soups filling old-fashioned, sustainable glass jars with refundable deposit. The Kitchen Creamery stocks specialty cheeses — many made right in Alberta including house-made cheeses like mozzarella and ricotta.

And there's more: flowers, old-fashioned sweets, Healthy Choices with its range of chemical-free eating alternatives and specific dietary options. Freson Bros. isn't only serving its communities, it is the community.

When Kent Lovsin, Freson Bros Director of IT talks about how the store has kept its commitment to its early beginnings, he expresses it from his experience as a pro hockey player with Team Canada. "We're part of a team, and your family is your team." All three Lovsin brothers believe that family team extends to the people of the communities in which we all live.

During COVID, Freson Bros. stores are offering the "Golden Hour" for the elderly and immune-compromised from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. across all locations. The Frank and Agnes Lovsin Legacy Fund is a million-dollar trust fund set up to foster community building projects in the Peace area of Alberta.

Mike Lovsin says, "We're small town guys; we all grew up in Peace River so we know in a small town you have to look after yourselves, the local hockey team, the ball team, the cub scouts, girl guides. Nobody else will look after you unless you look after yourself. We're really pleased to participate with youth sports — that's a big focus for us."

His brother Doug adds, "Our community is extremely important. We have a tremendous amount of respect for all the farmers, all of the producers. Community is the backbone of

Congratulations to Freson Bros. on your new store!

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Synergy Projects Ltd.

Congratulations to Freson Bros. Fresh Market on their new location in Southwest Edmonton, the first in the market!

Synergy Projects is proud to have been the Construction Manager, working with the Freson Bros. team to bring their new location to life. Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting local, Alberta-based suppliers and businesses.

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We are thrilled to congratulate **Freson Bros.** on the new Rabbit Hill store opening.



Freson Bros. We're about family, our community and our heritage. Look after each other, look after those you work with, look after family, look after your community and you'll be fine.'

"It is the Little Things That Count" is more than a clever slogan at Freson Bros. stores. Walking into one of these both modern and old-fashioned market stores is a sensory experience of what good food is all about and a reminder of what is really important in life. ●

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TELL ME SOMETHING GOOD



Western Canadian producers are filling stomachs, helping the environment, and supporting their communities

By Carly Peters

In times of turmoil and trouble, iconic children's show host, Mr. Rogers, urged his young viewers to, "Look for the helpers. You'll always find people helping." The past year has put a spotlight on those in the grocery industry who rose to meet unprecedented challenges, but this is nothing new. Western Canadian food and beverage producers, along with retailers, have long been choosing to be the helpers in places where they were needed most.

The grocery industry has often played a unique role in the fight against hunger and ensuring food security for thousands of Western Canadians. According to non-profit Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC), before the pandemic, an estimated 4.5 million Canadians experienced food insecurity, while the Grocery Foundation cites that, before COVID-19, one in five Canadian children went to school hungry.

One of the foundation's key initiatives is Toonie's for Tummies, where shoppers simply donate \$2 at participating grocery retailers, with 100 per cent of the funds going directly to school breakfast programs. From 2017-2020, Western Canadian retailers helped fund more than 740,000 breakfasts across Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. The 2021 campaign, dubbed #ToonieChallenge2X, is more vital than ever, as twice as many children may be at risk of food insecurity due to the pandemic.

The Grocery Foundation also helps school nutrition programs, whose dollars are stretched even further. With the cooperation of many Canadian retailers and manufacturers, the School Breakfast Program helps student nutrition programs purchase healthy food at reduced costs. To date, this collaboration has achieved \$5 million in savings to student nutrition programs, which represents an additional 2.5 million healthy meals provided to kids across Canada.

Passing along savings is only one way grocery is helping to stave off hunger. The Retail Food Program, part of Food Bank Canada's National Food Sharing System, has been pairing participating locations of national retailers with local community food banks across the country to provide safe, quality fresh, frozen, non-perishable foods, and consumer goods. In a typical year, the program provides local food banks with over 13 million pounds of food.

The program not only helps to ensure that food banks across Canada receive a regular, ongoing supply of essential items, but also helps reduce the cost of food waste experienced by retailers.

This is just one segment of grocery's larger movement to bettering their communities through sustainability. From reducing plastic and one-time use packaging, to fair trade and eco-conscious offerings, grocery is working alongside the purpose driven consumer.

Indeed, grocery retailers have long held a strong

commitment to community. Horacio Barbeito, president and CEO, Walmart Canada says "We have a responsibility to give back. Our recent 'Fight Hunger. Spark Change.' campaign raised a record 13 million meals for Canadians in need through Food Banks Canada. The campaign was one of our strongest ever, thanks to the generosity of customers and suppliers and the efforts of our associates".

Similarly, Save-On Foods was Calgary-based 'I Can for Kids' first partner, and for the past five years helped them grow an idea into a thriving organization that feeds thousands of kids in Calgary every summer. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, one in five school-aged kids in Canada relied on school-based nutrition programs. Subsequent school closures left many Canadian kids unsure about where their next meal would come from. Since April, that statistic has grown to one in three. So earlier this year Save-On-Foods donated \$500,000 to help feed hungry kids in Western Canada, and invited customers to match that amount through donations at the till and online. Save-On reached their \$1-million fundraising goal!

The commitment to giving back to the community is also firmly engrained among those supplying to the grocery sector.

"Righteous Gelato reinvests one per cent of its revenue into national and local organizations each year," says Jennifer Taylor, director of marketing. "In our constant and unwavering pursuit for greatness, we are committed to enriching people's lives, one tiny spoonful at a time."

Ayissi Nyemba, Founder and CEO of Emkao Foods says Emkao "supports farmers in Cameroon by improving food and income security for the small holder farmers." This extends to "creating jobs, giving access to drinkable water and growing trees."

Elke Waterhouse of The Lump O' Coal Corp. says, "The Lump O' Coal company brings employment and fulfillment to the lives of adults with developmental disabilities through work opportunities and training at selected facilities in the Edmonton area."

Cathline James, CEO and founder of Wise Bites lives by the motto "giving is not just about making a donation, it is about making a difference." The company delivers food to three detox centres and eight low barrier supportive housing buildings in Vancouver, as well as donating continually to Richmond Food Bank for the past eight years.

Carlo Facchin, chief executive officer, Prairie Harvest Canada Ltd. has aligned their company with the values of giving back by donating their Organic Ketchup to the food banks in B.C. and Alberta. And it was substantial! A total of 1,650 cases were donated equalling 19,800 bottles or 33,000 lbs of ketchup.

This ideal of "we" over "me" is at the core of many food and beverage companies; in what follows are just a few of those helpers who are giving back to their communities, their employees, and the planet. ●



Healthy Meals, Good Hearts

BOOSH FOOD FOCUSES ON LOCAL HUNGER

“For it is in giving that we receive,” quotes Connie Marples, founder and president of Boosh Food.

After her own battle with Celiac disease, Marples developed the line of plant-based, fresh-frozen meals to ensure others would have access to gluten-free options that were easy to make and tasted great. Since launching the heat and serve entrees in 2019, the company has branched out from their base in B.C., supplying 300 retailers across Canada. With a new kitchen and warehouse in Cloverdale, Boosh is expanding their offerings with a refrigerated line to give consumers convenience and versatility.



“We want to always be available to lend a hand to our neighbours.”



Even as a relatively young company, Marples says they’ve always believed it was crucial to use their business to fight hunger in their community. Equally as important, was having the ability to offer plant-based, gluten-free comfort food to help serve people with dietary concerns, something that’s not often considered when donating meals.



“All of us at Boosh feel that it’s important to continue to focus our support and donations on local hunger relief organizations. We want to always be available to lend a hand to our neighbours,” she says.

In the last two months, the Boosh team has donated almost 2,200 meals to the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, and Mamas for Mamas, Surrey Chapter, along with supporting Options Community Services, and The Mustard Seed in Esquimalt, B.C.

Marples states through this work the team is getting so much more in return. “My husband and I dropped cases of Boosh Bowls at St Paul’s Hospital at the start of the pandemic to the ICU staff. At such a time of uncertainty for all it was overwhelming to see the appreciation and gratitude coming from those doing so much to keep us all safe,” she says, adding her team have had similar experiences delivering food to front line workers and charities which has inspired them to look for more opportunities to share what they have with the community. ●

Plant-based comfort food



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



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We’re on a mission to make plant-based food more convenient, more accessible and more delicious.

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Food Fight

FOR KELLOGG CANADA GIVING BACK IS A COMPANY CULTURE

As a global food company, Kellogg is passionate about doing their part to make sure there is enough food for everyone. This dates back to Founder, W.K. Kellogg, who was an early conservationist, and leading philanthropist who focused his efforts on the health and welfare of children. He would be happy to know that, today, through the Kellogg's Better Days global purpose platform, the company he built is committed to creating better days for three billion people by the end of 2030.

A key driver of this is bringing attention to the very real and crushing problem of food insecurity. Since 2015, Kellogg Canada has donated more than \$4 million dollars and 50 million servings to food banks and breakfast clubs across Canada. Staying with W.K.'s vision and legacy of giving back, the company has had a 13+-year relationship with Food Banks Canada, including becoming the founding partner of the After the Bell program, an initiative that provides children who are experiencing hunger during the summer months (when the programs they've come to rely on during the school year close for the holidays) with access to much needed nutritious food. Through their 10+-year partnership with Breakfast Club of Canada they've also provided financial and in-kind food donations to help support more than 257,743 children in almost 2,000 breakfast clubs across Canada.



of volunteer service the company provides a \$100 donation (up to a maximum of \$500/year) to the organization. The new Volunteer with Me initiative gives company management the opportunity to lead by example by participating in volunteer efforts alongside team members in the community. The company is also continuously finding ways for team members to volunteer their time through local food drives, food sort challenges, packing events and more. The company very much led by example during the pandemic. At a time when the need had never been greater, Kellogg turned up its charitable giving efforts to support their longstanding hunger partners. As one of the first to commit food and funds to both Food Banks Canada and Breakfast Club of Canada, the company continued to support third party charitable efforts, including Walmart Canada's Fight Hunger Spark Change, and the Grocery Foundation's Toonies for Tummies campaign. They also introduced the Kellogg's Free Box and Give Back on-pack promotion whereby for every purchase of two boxes of participating Kellogg's cereals and snacks, consumers received a free box for themselves and Kellogg donated \$1 (up to a maximum of \$100,000) to its hunger partners.

In March 2021, the company launched their first-ever social-led donation matching campaign in recognition of National Cereal Day. For every \$1 donated to Food Banks Canada between March 4-7, Kellogg matched the donation dollar-for-dollar up to a total donation of \$100,000. Funds raised supported Food Banks Canada's \$150 million-dollar COVID-19 Response Fund and affiliate food banks, helping improve access to food for those in need, including a specific focus on Northern and Indigenous communities.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Kellogg has donated more than \$18 million to fund global COVID-19 food relief efforts, including more than \$1 million in food and funds in Canada alone.

W.K. Kellogg would be proud. ●



This includes the Kellogg Canada Adopt-A-School Employee Volunteer Initiative where Kellogg's team members (prior to the pandemic) volunteer their time in the breakfast club three days a week at a school in close proximity to the company's head office.

Giving back is something that runs deep and through the entire company culture. Kellogg Canada team members have the opportunity to take two days of paid volunteer leave each year to give back to the community, and for every 10 hours



Kellogg's Better Days

Creating Better Days for 3 billion people by the end of 2030



At Kellogg, we have a legacy of giving that dates back to our founder, W.K. Kellogg, who was an early conservationist, a leading philanthropist and the original wellbeing visionary.

More than 100 years later, we continue to do our part to help create Better Days for the communities in which we live, work and play.

For more information, please visit www.kelloggs.ca

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A Single Purpose

SODASTREAM ADDS SPARKLE TO DAILY LIFE

SodaStream has been giving Canadians a lot of gas, and that's a good thing for the environment. The make-at-home carbonated water company has seen strong double-digit growth for the past five years, making SodaStream the number one sparkling water brand and the number one sku in small appliances in Canada.

As the company has grown, SodaStream has continued to expand their sustainability commitment to build stronger communities for the future by eliminating single-use plastic waste. One reusable SodaStream bottle replaces the need for thousands of single-use plastic bottles.

"When consumers make sparkling beverages at home, they're not only saving on trips outside and associated transportation pollution, but cutting down on packaging waste as well," explains Rena Nickerson, general manager for SodaStream Canada, adding that 96.8 per cent of SodaStream Canada cylinders are sold without corrugate boxes.

In 2020, SodaStream sponsored the Great Gulp campaign, their first collaborative project with EcoSchools Canada, to raise awareness in schools, offices, and homes of the importance of drinking water and reducing single-use plastic waste. An estimated 30,000 students, families and community members participated in the Great Gulp challenge across the country.



Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers' reliance on single-use plastics has increased, including an explosion in production of PPE and masks, as well as plastic bags and containers used for take-out. When you combine this with lowered costs of producing plastic due to oil prices, the past year was a perfect storm for global backsliding on plastics, says Nickerson.



This has only strengthened SodaStream's resolve.

In April 2020, the company announced they will be switching all their plastic flavours packaging to metal bottles, which should avoid nearly another 200 million single-use plastic bottles globally over the next five years. One bottle of bubly drops makes up to 12 litres of sparkling beverage. This announcement was supported by the release of the emotional short film, One Home, One Planet. More than 30 million people were reached with its message to stay at home and take better care both of each other and our planet.

For Earth Day 2021, the company has even bigger news. Due to the growing use of SodaStream at home, they can now forecast an avoidance of nearly 78 billion single-use plastic bottles around the world by 2025 (Up 11 billion from their 2025 projection in 2020).

"Since the start of the pandemic, the demand for home hydration systems has only grown. As consumers look to create moments of joy, making their own custom carbonated beverages at home with SodaStream has become a simple and healthy way to add some sparkle to their daily routines," says Nickerson, adding they've had some high-profile help to encourage customers — from campaigns featuring rapper Snoop Dog to Canada's Drag Race winner/queen, Priyanka. "We're excited to continue to develop and share fun, creative partnerships and campaigns (like the launch of bubly drops for SodaStream) that will inspire consumers to make carbonated beverages at home, as the more households that have a SodaStream means less single use plastic waste and a healthier planet for us all." ●

sodastream®, meet bubly drops™

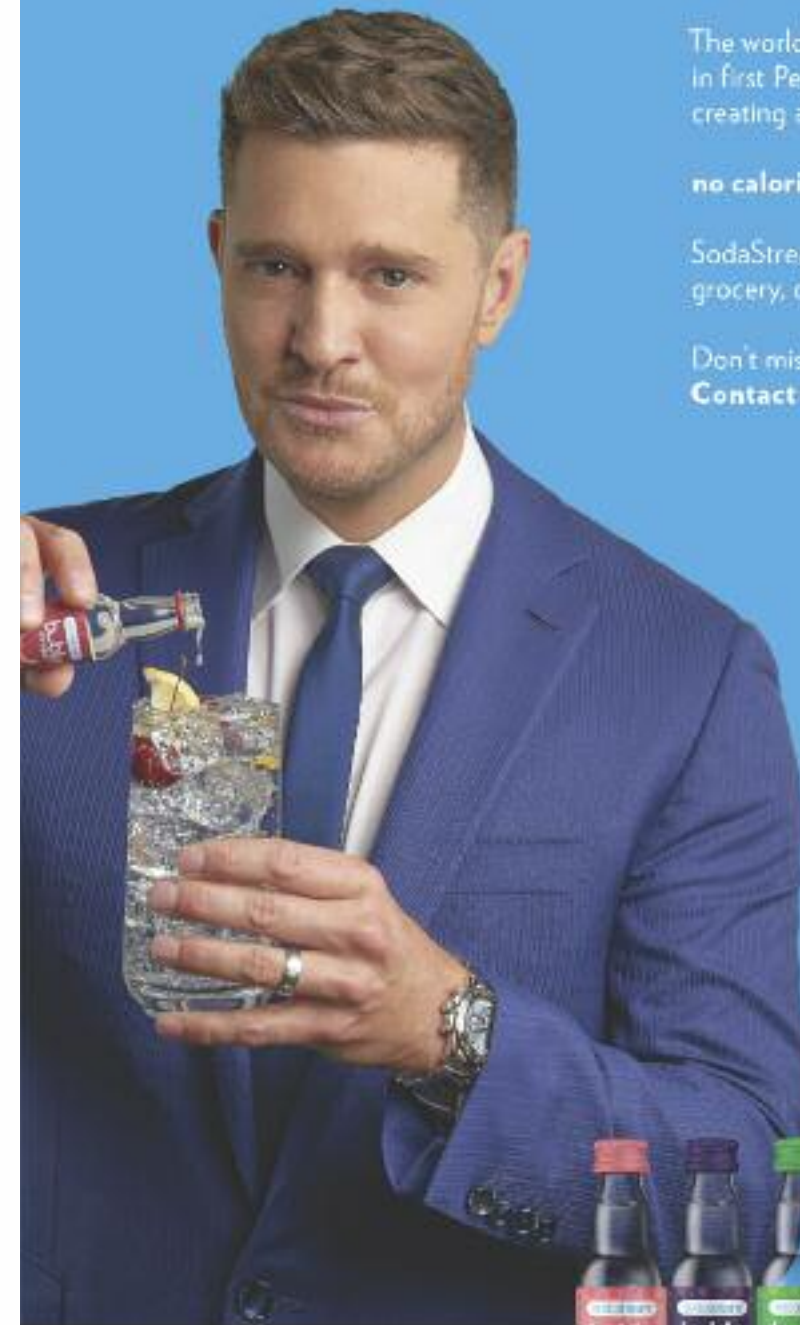
SODASTREAM LAUNCHES NEW bubly drops™

The world's leading sparkling water brand unites with bubly™ in first PepsiCo branded SodaStream product in North America, creating another sustainable way to enjoy bubly flavours.

no calories. no sweeteners. all smiles.™

SodaStream and bubly drops are now available at leading grocery, drug and mass retailers.

Don't miss out on this opportunity. Contact Revolution@Sodastream.ca today.



each bottle makes about 12L



* When made according to preparation instructions



Fill Up Your Cup

LEVEL GROUND TRADING IS A CHAMPION OF FAIR TRADE



Biira grows organic coffee at her farm 1,200 metres above sea level in Western Uganda, while Don Israel tends to organic mangos on his land in Vereda Guacana, Colombia. What's happening in B.C. will have an effect on both of them. Victoria-based Level Ground Trading (Level Ground) started in 1997 buying coffee from Colombia and roasting it at night in a borrowed downtown space. These first Colombian coffee purchases supported a non-profit, Famicafé, and funded education scholarships for the coffee farmers' children.

Since then, Level Ground has directly connected their green coffee purchases from small-scale coffee farmers with desired social impact outcomes in the community, such as access to education for farmers' children and funding for health care. In Colombia this has resulted in annual scholarships for hundreds of children to attend school, while in Tanzania it has funded hospital access for hundreds of families.

As Level Ground grew, so did the Fair Trade movement. This helped the company not only showcase great coffee, but champion paying fair, and often higher, prices to the farmers who grow this premium grade specialty coffee. It

also drove a desire to open more markets for small-scale farmers prompting Level Ground to expand to tea, dried fruit, and cane sugar.

"We've seen the impact our trade relationships provide," explains Stacey Toews, co-founder and communications catalyst for Level Ground, pointing to benefits such as more money in farmers' pockets than conventionally traded coffee, initiatives promoting women's rights and leadership in cooperatives, and deployment of agronomists to improve volume and quality of coffee harvest for the farms. "Our Fair Trade difference in 2021 will mean an additional \$250,000 funding to small-scale farming cooperatives to improve their community."

Back in B.C., the company is equally committed to their local community — from sponsorships of little league baseball, donations of Organic/Fair Trade coffees for virtual silent auctions and fundraisers that promote initiatives such as mental health education to the SPCA.

When COVID-19 hit home, they turned their attention to supporting food banks in Victoria, Vancouver, and the GTA through their Buy One Give One campaign, which resulted in thousands of packages of coffee being donated.

They've also taken this time to focus more attention on two of their core values — Always Improve and Uplift Everyone — by re-vamping their website, levelground.com. "We've been able to better inform our customers about the impact of our ongoing Fair Trade initiatives," states Toews. "We're excited to combine the deep knowledge of direct trade, relationships with impressive farmer co-ops, and the expertise of our quality team to elevate coffee for everyone." ●



PROUDLY ROASTED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

SIGNATURE ROAST 2 LB COFFEE

Level Ground was founded in 1997 with a focus on Fair Trade and a passion for specialty coffee. We combine a deep knowledge of direct trade relationships with our quality team's expertise to craft exceptional coffee for you.

- ✓ Organic.
- ✓ Fair Trade.
- ✓ Delicious.



Also available to enjoy in a variety of 300g packages!



For orders & more information contact us at orders@levelground.com or 1.888.565.6633

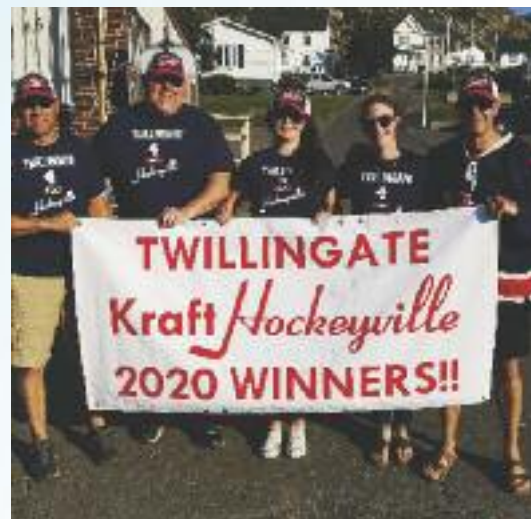


A Place at the Table

KRAFT HEINZ CANADA SPARKS HAPPINESS

Companies like Kraft Heinz Canada exist to help feed people, but they also have the ability to bring joy.

“That’s why we come to work each day. We call it our North Star, which is, ‘We will spark happiness at every Canadian table,’” says Nicole Fischer, head of sustainability for Kraft Heinz Canada. “This could be a dinner table, a local hockey rink, a community centre, a school trip or anywhere, anytime Canadians get together. This spirit applies to our business, and to our efforts to give back to the community.”



As the country’s largest food and beverage producer, the company has the power and scale to help shape the world for good. That is where their new approach to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) comes in. At Kraft Heinz, these efforts line up under three broad pillars: environmental stewardship, responsible sourcing, and healthy living & community support.

One of the key areas of focus for Kraft Heinz under community support is the reduction of food insecurity in Canada. “No one should ever have to wonder where their next meal is coming from,” says Bruno Keller, president of Kraft Heinz Canada.

The global pandemic has seen millions of Canadians unfortunately asking themselves that question. In response, Kraft Heinz Canada established a new five-year, \$20-million food donation commitment to Food Banks Canada through a new initiative — Kraft Heinz Pantry Day.



Kraft Heinz Pantry Day occurred on World Food Day, October 16, where Canadians joined the fight against food insecurity by purchasing a participating Kraft Heinz product — ranging from Kraft Peanut Butter, Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Kraft Dinner, Maxwell House Coffee and Heinz Ketchup — at their local grocery store, which was then matched with a product donation to Food Banks Canada. The scope and donation effort of Kraft Heinz Pantry Day made it the largest one-day donation matching event in Food Banks Canada’s history.

“Pantry Day will help bring meals to the tables of the 4.4 million Canadians affected by food insecurity across the country,” explains Matt Bruce, senior brand manager, community programming and corporate partnerships at Kraft Heinz Canada.

While these initiatives focus on the big picture, the company also likes to take philanthropy to the local level. For over 15 years, Kraft Hockeyville has been one of the company’s key community programs. Along with its partners the National Hockey League and the National Hockey League Players’ Association, Kraft Heinz Canada has awarded over \$4.1 million to 89 communities, helping to restore and upgrade arenas from coast to coast, while also bringing 13 NHL pre-season games to communities across eight different provinces. Hockey in Canadian communities? That certainly sparks joy. ●



YOU BUY ONE. WE GIVE ONE.

Purchase a participating Kraft Heinz product on October 16 and we will match it with a donation to Food Banks Canada.



Speak to your Kraft Heinz Sales Representative for more details on how to participate





Time to Take Care

FREYBE VALUES MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is good for business. According to Canada's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) when effectively prioritizing and addressing mental health in the workplace the potential bottom-line impacts include higher performance, lower absenteeism, and reduced disability costs. But really, it also just makes people feel good.

After attending a workplace wellness conference in 2018, Karen Hunt, director of people, culture and office services at Freybe, knew she wanted to do just that. As the company culture was evolving, mental health was a perfect fit under



their value of caring. Along with doing their own research and resource sourcing, the company decided to choose a comprehensive program offered by the Canadian Mental Health Association, called Not Myself Today (NMT). This workplace mental health initiative helps companies build greater awareness, reduce stigma, and foster safe and supportive cultures through attention-getting material ("Their mood buttons are still a hit three years later," laughs Hunt), turnkey activities, tools, and 24/7 accessible resources.

Since the launch of NMT in 2019, Freybe has been able to find other CMHA information and initiatives, as well as doing additional reading and sharing of information sourced through a variety of other outlets.

"We have moved from 'here is the program you can access to support your mental health,' to understanding that mental and physical health are interconnected and keeping both supported is essential," she says. "Ultimately, our goal is to not have a one size fits all program, but rather to provide as



many options as possible for them to access."

This education and understanding around mental health has ultimately led to a reduction in the stigma around mental illness and asking for help. This has been more important than ever over the past year, says Hunt.

"When the pandemic hit, we had a team who could discuss the value of mental health and know they needed to be proactive in protecting it and know they were encouraged to reach out if they needed support," she says, adding Freybe is continuing to expand pandemic-related mental health initiatives to include a buddy program to help with isolation and loneliness, as well as keeping the team connected in their community by giving back through volunteering.

"If you talk to anyone on our team regardless of role in our organization, they would all tell you the value of having conversations around mental health. We talk about it every day and they all feel empowered to look after each other and make decisions that improve the quality of life at our organization," says Hunt. "Your mental health can't be turned on and off and our employees all feel like Freybe can be a place where these conversations can be had without judgement. Freybe's commitment to the mental health of our employees is so much more than meeting the demands of running a business. Our business wouldn't be what it is without our team, that's why having these open conversations is important. These things affect us all." ●



Mindful Moments

Wellness has never been more important and this is especially the case with the new generation of snacks hitting the market. Indulgence still plays a critical role with snacks, with consumers appreciating both salty and sweet treats. However, consumers are now looking for more. They are actively seeking out products that provide them with value, including looking for snacks that they can feel good about consuming.

"People are making careful choices, they are not just going to buy the cheapest thing anymore, they want food that offers them value," says Sara Alexander, vice-president marketing, Evova Foods.

According to Joel Gregoire, associate director food and drink, Mintel, consumers are choosing brands that they feel connected with, food that is focused on well-being, and seeking products that align with their values. Sixty-four per cent of Canadians are actively seeking ways to reduce stress with 63 per cent agreeing that comfort foods can be in fact healthy.

Canadian Consumers Seek out Snacks that Respond to their Values and Overall Well Being



“Consumers are always looking for a good experience, but now they also want to do good including supporting brands that are local and/or Canadian.”

“There are a number of things that have maybe become more important in the last year,” says Alexander. “Consumers are always looking for a good experience, but now they also want to do good including supporting brands that are local and/or Canadian.” These consumers want to feel that they are making a difference with the choices that they are making.

Products that are organic, Canadian-made, and have clean ingredients, shares Jana Zalibak, founder, Nomz, responds

to the current needs of Canadians. These consumers are actively seeking out products that balance health with indulgence, refusing to compromise flavour for nutrition.

“They are looking for fibre and clean ingredients, they want to make sure that they’re healthy and have a strong immune system,” says Julie Therrien, sales director, Western Canada and Export, Group Leclerc. This includes consumers looking for products that are minimally processed and with zero artificial ingredients. “The

no-bake claim is really resonating with consumers, if it’s not processed they feel it’s healthier.”

“Functional foods are no longer just about the physical well-being but mental well-being, with consumers looking for food that offers comfort, boosts immunity, while also including ingredients that promote relaxation, like chamomile, l-theanine, and lavender,” says Gregoire. Fifty-one per cent of Canadians report eating snacks when they are stressed. Brands are beginning to identify this wellness need including highlighting concepts like mindfulness, hydration, and holistic wellness directly in their branding.

When it comes to snack choices, they are looking for products that they can feel good about eating. “What we used to call functionality, now I would just put down as nutrition,” says Alexander. “But they don’t want to sacrifice experience for the nutrition.”

When it comes to flavours, spices like turmeric, and coconut continue to be trend setters, however, consumers still love the traditional. “Strawberry, raspberry, chocolate, and banana continue to be the main flavours that consumers look for,” says Therrien.

Snacking continues to be a part of the Canadian lifestyle, however, today’s consumers are looking for a broader selection including brands that offer nutritional, economical and emotional values. These mindful shoppers recognize the impact of their purchases, both on their own wellbeing and the well-being of others. Grocers can respond to these needs by stocking and identifying the products that connect to these values including indulgence, locally made, and functional attributes. ●

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Value Driven Snacking

GET CRUNCHIN

Savoury customers will get a satisfying crunch when they take a bite of Todd’s Protein crisps. Made with Canadian egg white protein and prairie lentils, this protein-packed crisp is certain to become a customer favourite. Available in four flavours.



GRAB AND GO

Packed with eight grams of protein, Prairie Hills EggBar is the perfect mini meal. Made with Canadian eggs, cheese, roasted peppers, and sauteed onions, this savory snack is ready in less than two minutes.



FOCUSED ON FRUIT

Take your fruit on the go with GO Pure Fruit and Oat bars. Fruit and oats come together to create a tasty soft bar that has zero artificial flavours or colours.



FOR THE LOVE OF OATS

For the Love of Oats Made with 100 per cent Canadian oats, each GO Pure no bake Oat Bars contains between 12 to 14 grams of fibre, offering your customers a delicious snack that they can feel good about eating.



CRAVING COCONUT

Almonds, cocoa, and coconut come together to create a perfectly balanced snack: Nomz Coconut Bites. Each bite is handcrafted and coated in freshly shredded coconut.



PISTACHIO POWER

Whether they spread it or spoon it, customers will love the smooth and creamy texture of Nomz Pistachio butter. Packed with protein, this spreadable pairs well with fresh fruit, crackers, or on its own.



photo courtesy shutterstock.com



DIGITAL MARKETING AND E-COMMERCE INSIGHTS

COVID-19: E-COMMERCE'S TIPPING POINT?

In early 2000, my brother referred me to a book by Malcolm Gladwell, "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference". This book opened my mind about how one might be able to rationalize the changes to practically any situation. To better understand this concept, Oxford Online defines "Tipping Point" as, "the point at which a series of small changes or incidents becomes significant enough to cause a larger, more important change."

In this column, I would like to explore how COVID-19 may have been the tipping point for e-commerce. To help frame the context, let's take a brief look back at the timeline of COVID-19 in Canada¹. In early 2020, on March 11, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a world-

wide pandemic. By March 16, Canada begins to close its borders and implement social distancing policies. By March 21, all gatherings were prohibited. On March 23, Ontario and Quebec close all non-essential businesses. And by March 25, most of Canada was under some form of lock-down order.

In a matter of two weeks, Canadians' way of life changed in a way no one had ever anticipated. All these drastic measures, intended to help slow the spread of COVID-19, brought about changes to in-store operations, closure of some businesses, and limitations to how consumers shopped due to physical distancing mandates. Because of these measures, Canadian consumer behaviour shifted towards

online shopping. Traditionally, these types of consumer behavioural shifts take decades to achieve. The impact of such drastic changes, in such a short time, has affected all aspects of the supply chain, from demand planning and logistics to finance and technologies. These changes were best summed up in a recent edition of the McKinsey Quarterly, with the title, "The Quickening: if you're feeling whiplash, it might be the ten years forward we just jumped in 90 days' time"². This article, quotes Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella on a recent quarterly earnings call, "We've seen two years' worth of digital transformation in two months."

According to Statistics Canada³, total retail sales fell 17.9 per cent between Feb to May 2020. During this same time period, e-commerce sales almost doubled by +99.3 per cent. Mandated conditions on business operations and non-essential business closures saw a shift towards e-commerce, as an alternative. Traditional retailers who did not have an online strategy or presence in place saw an immediate loss of revenue, and some have had to shutter their doors, after a year of dismal to little sales. While those who had some form of e-commerce presence, and especially those who already evolved to offering home deliveries as an option, saw their online business demand exponentially grow since March 2020.

On a recent BNN Bloomberg⁴ online interview with the former eBay CEO Devin Wenig, he discusses the future of e-commerce in the face of COVID-19. He shares that e-commerce has been around for a little over 20 years. And until recently, e-commerce only accounted for around 14 per cent (globally) and 11 per cent (US) of overall retail sales. He predicts that by Q2-2021, e-commerce in the US should surpass +20 per cent of overall sales. And as an additional note, he says that the grocery channel will see the biggest gain, where pre-COVID, it only accounted for six per cent.

Major retailers have been preparing (quietly) for e-commerce and home delivery for the last decade and a half. In 2004, Longo's acquired the online grocery retailer Grocery Gateway. In 2011, Walmart acquired Kosmix and created @WalmartLabs, the technology arm responsible for innovation development of the future of retail. In 2016, Overwaitea Food Group announced their e-commerce solution development by MyWebGrocer (acquired by Mi9 Retail Solutions in 2018). In 2018, SPUD launches FoodX Urban Delivery as a white label e-grocery fulfillment and delivery service. In 2019, Loblaw's launched "Online Marketplace" in an effort to diversify their offerings, and provide an alternative platform for third party sellers, with an aim to compete with Amazon. In June 2020, Empire Company Limited (Sobeys) launched Voilà as the brand for its online grocery home delivery service for Toronto, Ottawa and major cities in Quebec.

It wouldn't be complete to discuss e-commerce without mentioning Instacart. The "personal shopper" platform that allows customers to order from participating retailers. Founded in 2012 (by an engineering graduate of the University of Waterloo), Instacart expanded into Canada in

2017 by partnering with Loblaw's, and in a matter of 12 months, signed on Walmart Canada, Costco, Staples Canada and M&M food Markets.

Let's not forget the elephant of the e-commerce bunch, Amazon. In 2020, Amazon Canada sold nearly US\$7.3B worth of products.⁵ Amazon's overall global sales nears US\$390B in 2020⁶. The global revenue of Amazon in 2020 exceeded the sum of the revenue for the next 25 ranked e-commerce companies, by well over 30 per cent.

As the vaccination programs make its way through the population, we begin to hear Canadians mention an economic recovery is finally on the horizon. But given this drastic shift in consumer behaviour, how will the "economic recovery" look like in the coming months and years? According to Geoffrey Moore's famous 1991 marketing book "Crossing the Chasm"⁷, he describes the diffusion of innovations into society and how a 'chasm' exists between those consumers who embrace and take risks with new innovations ('Innovators' and 'Early Adopters') and the Majority who are more cautious and pragmatic. Moore estimates that around 2.5 per cent of the market are innovators and 13.5 per cent are Early Adopters, so for a product or service to 'cross the chasm' it has to have market penetration and acceptance beyond 16 per cent. If former eBay CEO Devin Wenig's predictions is true, and e-commerce surpasses +20 per cent of overall sales by end of Q2-2021, then we are currently at the tipping point for e-commerce and can expect it to be a permanent and significant part of the horizon in this "economic recovery".

Honorable mention: Shopify. It's proprietary e-commerce platform for online stores and retail POS systems has virtually allowed anyone and especially SMBs to create their own B2C e-commerce presence online. This global platform is relatively user friendly and intuitive. The services and add-ons allow you to customize your store the way you want with relatively reasonable costs. In 2020, Shopify saw an explosive growth of 86 per cent over 2019 and total revenue was just shy of US\$3B⁸. And best of all, it's Canadian! ●

Ken is currently Executive in Residence with Orionis Trading Company Ltd (OTC), a full-service hybrid distribution agency, specialized digital marketing and e-commerce distribution services, as well as warehouse fulfillment for specialty and HABA categories. His opinions expressed in this column are solely his own and do not necessarily represent those of this publication.

Ken can be contacted via email (kenkwong@outlook.com), Twitter (@kenkwong), Facebook (@kenkwong808), or LinkedIn (@kenkwong).



1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_in_Canada
 2 <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/four-insights/five-fifty-the-quickening>
 3 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00064-eng.htm>
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 7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossing_the_Chasm
 8 <https://news.shopify.com/shopify-announces-fourth-quarter-and-full-year-2020-financial-results#>



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FERMENTED FOODS

By Karen Barr

*Aiding Digestion
and Immune Functions*

Nutritional Trends

FERMENTED PRODUCTS HAVE GAINED POPULARITY AMONG CANADIAN CONSUMERS.

Why? The simple answer is health benefits. Fermentation occurs in foods when bacteria and yeast break down sugars. This process does two things. It preserves the food, and when eaten, it increases the probiotics found in the gut.

According to Harvard Health Publishing, through Harvard Medical School, an estimated 100 trillion microorganisms, which represent more than 500 different species inhabit the normal healthy human digestive tract. These gut dwelling bacteria keep harmful pathogens in balance. This leads to healthy digestion, aiding in the absorption of nutrients, as well as immune functions.

According to the The Hartman Group, Health and Wellness Report, June 2015; CHFA November 2015, "Where Canadians Got It Right", Consumer Survey, 39 per cent of those surveyed were looking to add probiotics to their diet. Of this group, 44 per cent preferred them to be in foods where they occur naturally. Sixty-nine per cent understood the link between the use of probiotics and improved immunity, and 97 per cent understood the balance between good bacteria and bad bacteria.

Canadians can get their probiotics starting at the breakfast table, with yogurts such as Activia, by Danone. All yogurts are made with *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*, but most yogurts do not contain probiotics. According to the company website *Bifidobacterium (animalis) lactis* is an exclusive strain of bifidobacteria specially selected by Danone Vitapole (Daniel Carasso Research Centre) and known in Canada under the name BL Regularis. With more than one billion B.L. Regularis, of probiotics per portion, look for Activia Plain, Activia Shot or Activia Lactose Free.

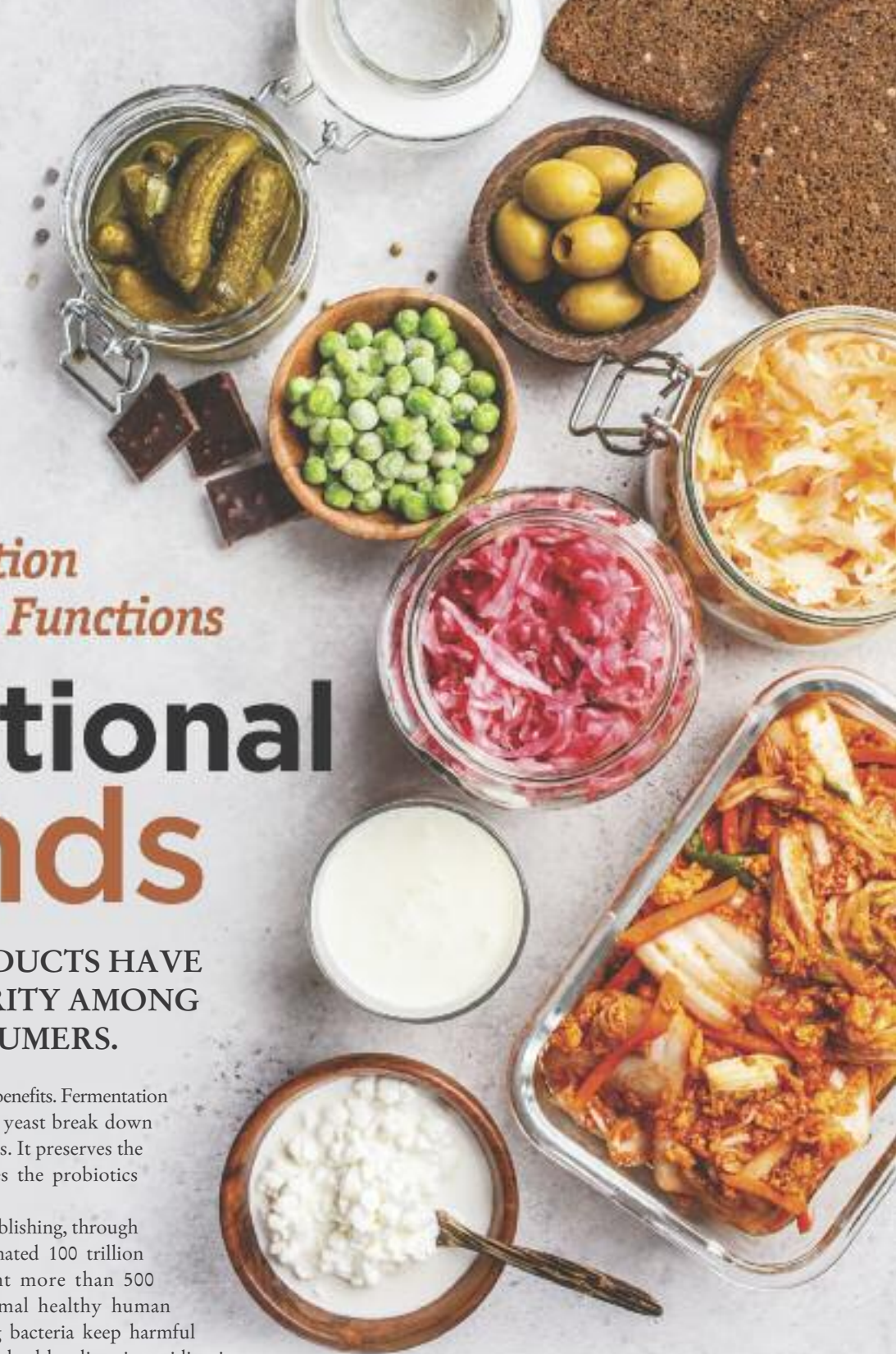


photo courtesy shutterstock.com

Anuj Raina, assistant marketing manager, for Stonemill, at Bimbo Canada says, “Stonemill Bakehouse bakes bread that is naturally fermented for up to 12 hours, creating a more flavourful, wholesome slice of bread. This contains no artificial preservatives, flavours, colours and is non-GMO.” The company’s hearth-style Authentic Sour Dough Rye, is made from Canadian rye. The ever-popular whole grain variety has the addition of ground brown flax seeds, wheat bran, malted barley flour, millet seeds and golden flax seeds.



GT Living Foods’ Synergy Kombucha is authentic raw kombucha, fully fermented for 30 days in small batches.

Total Soy L52wks Nov 28, 2020.

“We are seeing foods like kombucha, kimchi and sauerkraut still being key to the fermented segment. Functional foods and ingredients have come a long way, and more so with a health focus during COVID. Consumers are looking for foods that offer immune-boosting properties without breaking the bank,” Cunningham observes.

“The health benefits of fermented foods are endless,” says GT Dave, founder, and CEO of GT’s Living Foods. “We aim to spread a message of health and wellness, through fermented foods — specifically, kombucha. Like many fermented foods, authentically crafted raw kombucha contains many of the nutrients that are absent in modern-day diets.” GT’s



Synergy Kombucha is authentic raw kombucha, fully fermented for 30 days in small batches, with heirloom living cultures.

True Büch is a kombucha company that first opened in 2014. The company’s goal is to brew great tasting kombucha by using only the best quality organic and local ingredients. “Ginger is our number one seller,” says Conrad Ferrel, founder, and CEO. “The fresh pressed organic ginger adds a delicious flavour profile and gives that extra anti-inflammatory benefit, through ginger’s shoal, gingerol and pardol properties.”

“Our most popular food in terms of sales is our Organic Kim-Chi,” says Caroline Pilon, co-founder at Green Tables Foods, a family-owned business. Since 2005, they have been making nutritious, lacto-fermented vegetable foods, with certified organic, farm-direct ingredients, one small batch at a time.

Green Tables Foods carries a variety of sauerkrauts such as: Organic Sauerkraut with Pink Salt, Organic Beet & Caraway Sauerkraut, and Organic Turmeric Sauerkraut. They also stock a selection of beets, carrots, mustards, veggie, and cucumber pickles.

“We don’t make any health claims, however, research has shown that 80 per cent of the human immune system is located in the gut,” says Pilon. “Fermented, unpasteurized foods such as sauerkraut, kim-chi, and brined dill pickles are sources of the bacteria our bodies require to function optimally.”

Canadians continue to place health at the forefront of their grocery lists. Savvy grocers can stock their grocery stores shelves and refrigerators, with fermented foods and stay on trend with the newest healthy products. ●



Green Table Foods carries a variety of sauerkrauts.

Mike Cunningham, team lead, marketing insight at Tree of Life points to soy sauce, which has become a staple in everyone’s kitchen. “Kikkoman soy sauce has followed the traditional Japanese fermentation process for over 300 years. The sauce is brewed for several months with zero additives. This not only allows for a rich umami flavour but creates a vastly different soy sauce experience in colour, aroma and taste.” This category grew 27 per cent in the latest 52 weeks cycle, whereas the Kikkoman brand grew 36 per cent according to AC Nielsen National GDM,



Kikkoman soy sauces follows the traditional Japanese fermentation process for over 300 years.



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COMPANY PROFILE

By Robin Brunet

75 ANNIVERSARY YEARS

Innovators United!

B.C.’s Sun-Rype joins with Quebec’s Lassonde to build on 75 years of product excellence

SunRype: as a word, it automatically evokes freshness, goodness, health, and makes taste buds tingle with anticipation. As a company, Sun-Rype Products is one of Western Canada’s most remarkable success stories, originating out of the fresh fruit business in B.C.’s Okanagan Valley to become a household staple for its apple juice (the number one seller in the west), the best-selling Fruit to Go and FruitSource fruit snacks, and many other nutritious, delicious products.

Now, as it celebrates its 75th anniversary as a North American leader of healthy, convenient, and innovative food and beverage products, Sun-Rype is embarking on a bold new business

trajectory. As part of Quebec-based Lassonde Industries Inc., it has joined forces with another powerhouse brand to extend its presence across Canada and the United States.

Sun-Rype President and CEO Lesli Bradley is excited by the opportunities lying ahead. “SunRype and Lassonde represent a fantastic partnership that brings together the strengths of two great companies into a truly national Canadian company,” she says.

Looking ahead to the second half of this year and into 2022, Bradley adds, “We have a strong innovation pipeline with exciting new products and enhancements to existing popular products.”



This is in addition to a host of recently released new products. For those seeking to moderate their glucose and caloric intake, SunRype's 60 per cent Less Sugar Juices offer the taste of SunRype with 60 per cent less sugar, only 40 calories per 200mL, and no artificial sweeteners. In a similar vein, SunRype Slim is a delicious assortment of juice beverages with only 10 calories.



Sun-Rype has been using simple, wholesome ingredients since its inception.

In the snack category, SunRype has released two new flavours in its Good Bites bite-sized snacks made with simple, wholesome ingredients. The Chocolate Chip and Chocolate Macaroon varieties

are now augmented by Coconut Classic and Coconut Lemon.

When Bradley speaks of her company being innovative, it is an acknowledgement that true innovation entails a certain degree

of risk as well as considerable time and effort. SunRype was one of the first snack brands in Canada to re-launch its entire snack portfolio to be gluten free, nut free, and vegan: a big commitment in terms of sourcing complexity and costs. "Our approach to innovation is that we always start with the consumer and ask 'what do they want more of today?'" she says,



CONGRATULATIONS SUNRYPE ON YOUR
75TH ANNIVERSARY!



One of the company's innovations was the 900 mL cartons.

adding that, "The key to doing it well is making sure our products taste great."

Another innovation is the company's introduction of its popular 900mL cartons that are easy to hold, easy to open, re-sealable, and easy to store: this required a major investment in production equipment. "The installation of the equipment was extensive, including a processing system, a filler, three capping machines, a new palletizer, and of course the conveyors to fit it all together," says Bradley. "This took place within a

packaging room once thought to already be full; our engineering and operations teams worked together to make it happen." However, despite Sun-Rype's growth and its ambitions with Lassonde, the company stays true to a remarkably basic product development philosophy. "We believe that what's not in our products is sometimes just as important as what is," explains Bradley. "We try to use simple, wholesome ingredients that consumers know and understand." And in that regard, Sun-Rype is unchanged from its inception in 1946. Back

then, it all began when the cooperative B.C. Fruit Processors Ltd. was formed to buy a pair of struggling juice plants in Kelowna that were turning cull apples into 100 per cent apple juice and apple sauce. The juice and sauce proved to be a hit locally, so in 1959 B.C. Fruit Processors rebranded as Sun-Rype Products Ltd. and promptly launched its now-famous Blue Label Apple Juice. "Canned apple juice was not well known at the time, however the concept quickly became a staple in homes across Western Canada," says Bradley.

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Bradley credits her company's first general manager, William Vance, for being "pivotal in creating B.C. Fruit Processors and also launching the SunRype brand." Blue Label's success was facilitated by a joint venture in 1963 with the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association, which distributed juice on established milk routes.

It was in 1979 when Sun-Rype converted from cans to the Tetra Brik container. The new 250 millilitre and one-litre packs is the first to be offered in Canada. Bradley calls the packaging "a bold move, well ahead of the rest of the juice industry. There were a lot of questions as to whether



consumers would be willing to make the switch from can openers to scissors. But the western marketplace shifted from buying juice in cans to aseptic cartons."

In 1993, Sun-Rype acquired a dried fruit and granola bar manufacturer, Okanagan Dried Fruits. In a document



A standing ovation for SunRype from JJ Bean.



developed during this time titled Vision 2000, Sun-Rype stated that its mission was to become a leading international food and beverage company by the new millennium. To help achieve this goal, its research and development spending was increased ten-fold. It also expanded its marketing eastward and began exporting products to the U.S., the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

With the installation of a new management team in 1998 came a back to basics approach to developing the SunRype portfolio. The granola bar business was put aside in favour of

refocusing on the fruit snacks business, and new technology that radically reduced fruit drying time enabled the company to mass produce its fruit snacks — and the Fruit to Go fruit leathers took the market by storm in March of 1997, followed by Energy to Go fruit bars (later renamed FruitSource) in 1999. Both products were leveraged to penetrate central and eastern Canada.

In 2001, Sun-Rype upgraded its beverage processing and packaging facilities and enhanced its snack offerings



Congratulations to SunRype on 75 years!


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Reducing Friction in Grocery



When shoppers visit a big box retailer, at many turns, customers will find barriers to purchase such as a locked showcase (to mitigate theft) or big bulky items that one cannot physically put in a standard 'cart'.

When customers visit a grocery store, most are at ease selecting a box of cereal or tin of soup. However, what about the proverbial 'showcase' that inhibits a customer to a deli item, bouquet of flowers, or a birthday cake with our loved-one's name?

Strategically, these areas are the experiential 'touchpoints' that accompany best in class customer service. Despite best efforts, we all must think critically as leaders and recognize this is not always the optimal experience at the best of times during busy periods, bringing further "friction" such as increased queuing or delays.

Continuing that critical thought, we no longer stand in line to order our favourite fast-food item as we can now leverage food delivery platforms more than ever. Why are we not evolving that similar experience into grocery?

AmazonGo has opted to execute in a completely other direction. Many might say too far, and the methodology of an AmazonGo is likely not something that the large format grocer can ascertain when we look at the technology spend per square foot.

Perhaps furthest at-most, would be the predominantly "digital customer", curating their groceries without ever stepping foot into our stores, or perhaps even our parking lots.

The customer experience must evolve. It appears more and more that it is "retail" versus "online" when really, just as the online players enter the physical retail space, the physical retail store must evolve and bring the experience of online, into physical stores.

A critical measure is to remove or minimize friction; despite whether one believes a full-service meat case is friction — as for many, it is. Does this mean we convert stores into full serve buffets? Of course not, however it does beg the question: can I order a three-bone prime rib off a tablet or my personal device while I am in-store or do I need to wait in line?

That experience above revolves around a term coined "BISPUN". We all know "BOPIS" (buy online pickup in store), the online retail lifeline to consumer pickup without delivery; but BISPUN?

BISPUN, on the other hand, is the critical next generation of consumerism whereby we "buy in-store, pickup NOW".

When we leverage technology in these spaces, we benefit from what the "online guys" do best; obtain data and leverage historical data points to suggest

to the consumer additional affinity purchases that pair well with those primary selections.

Above all, technology can be best leveraged to increase engagement, reduce risk, and shrink, while allowing consumers to buy what they WANT vs. buy what you HAVE. Remember, this is a key differentiator with online success.

The years of "stack it high and let it fly" may well be in the rear-view mirror. The concept of "increased dwell time in-store yields increased basket", may also require reconsideration as today's consumers shift toward safety, efficiency and 'frictionless shopping' which after the COVID-era might well be the greatest lessons we all learn. ●



Nolan Wheeler, CEO SYNQ

sport organizations. It has also been a national supplier to the JDRF annual walks across the country providing product as well as cash and employee pledge programs contributing over \$2 Million in support. "Also, as a special part of our 75th anniversary we've partnered with Food Banks Canada to provide product and funds in support of the After the Bell program. Food Bank Canada's After the Bell helps bridge the hunger gap in the summer by delivering critical food packs to children across Canada," says Bradley.

Sun-Rype Products Ltd. was acquired by Lassonde just prior to its 75th anniversary, a true merger of two iconic Canadian companies that will enable Sun-Rype to achieve new milestones as it continues to satisfy consumers' evolving tastes.

Bradley concludes, "We're a strong team working together, passionate about our brand and committed to delivering our promise of quality and taste in everything we do. The team philosophy is what has fuelled the success of Lassonde for so many years, and that's why the merging of these two organizations will bring about great opportunities for growth in the years ahead." ●

whose apple processing equipment is augmented by six beverage packaging lines and a can line, plus three food production lines. "This is our original 1946 plant, but it's about 13 times larger," says Bradley.

Access to an abundant supply of fresh fruit is essential to Sun-Rype's growth, and this in turn has led to acquisitions, case in point: the purchase of two processing facilities in the Yakima Valley of Washington State, a region Bradley describes as "really an extension of the apple orchards of the Okanagan Valley. This has allowed us to increase production of some of our own juice concentrates and source close to home." Procurement of all available process grade apples in the Okanagan region continues through agreements with local fruit producers, and food safety is ensured through Sun-Rype's HACCP and SQF programs.

It follows that a company dedicated to helping consumers live healthier lives would also be heavily involved in charities and causes. SunRype is an active contributor to many local groups, including the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank, Kelowna Gospel Mission, the United Way, YMCA, BC Cancer Society, and youth



by launching SunRype Fruit & Veggie bars, later followed by Fruit & Veggie juices (which Bradley points out took some time to catch on but is now a staple in many households). New product development continued in 2002 with the introduction of Sun-Rype's first entry in the 'functional' beverage market, Calcium Enriched Orange Juice.

Today, Sun-Rype and its 270 dedicated employees operate out of a 143,000 square foot Kelowna manufacturing facility,





Taste Sensations

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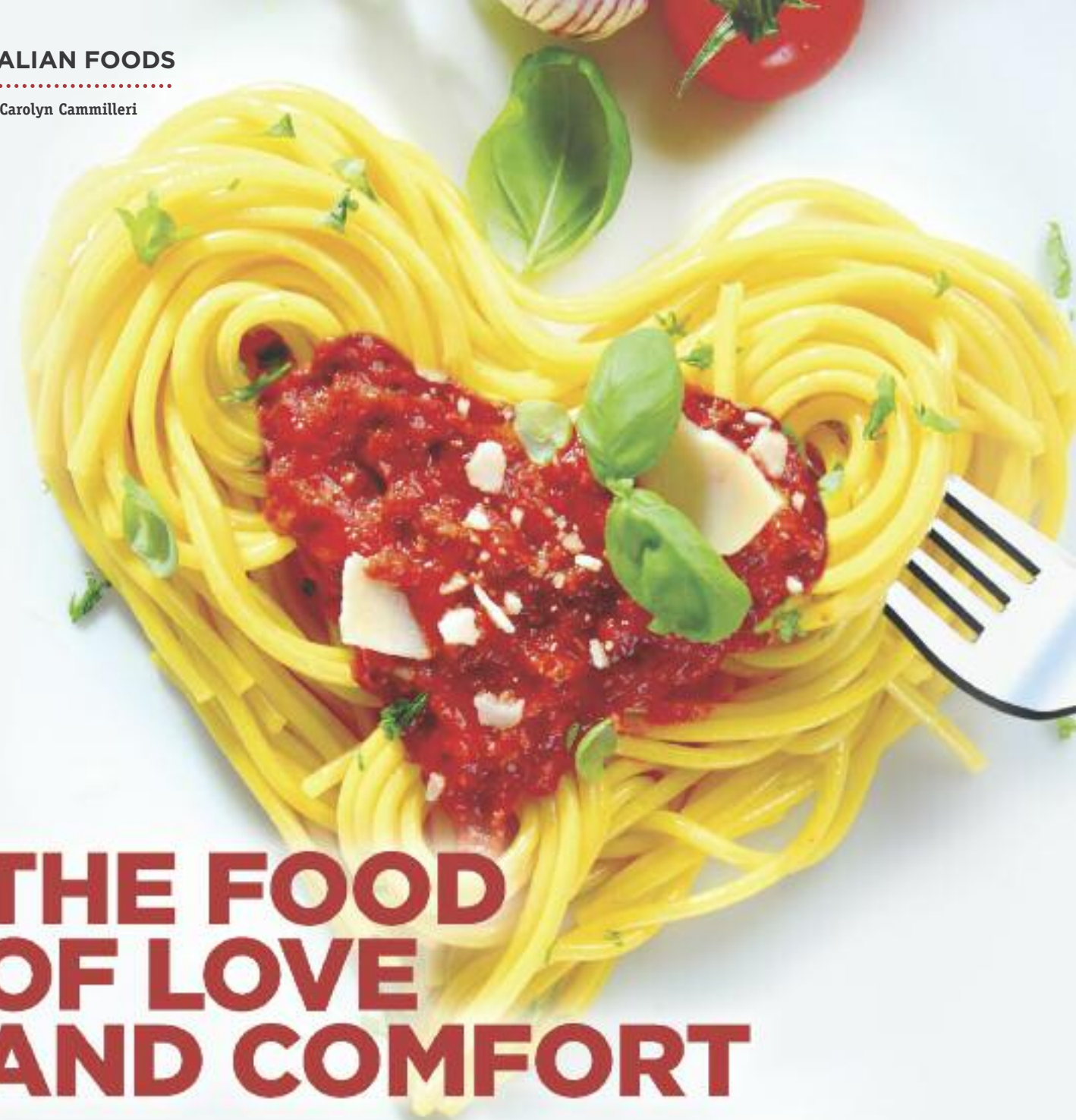
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ITALIAN FOODS

By Carolyn Cammilleri



THE FOOD OF LOVE AND COMFORT

Italian cuisine is a favourite anytime for so many reasons, but it has been especially popular throughout the pandemic.

Whether dining out, ordering in, or cooking at home, Canadians love Italian food. In the Upside 2019 Food Trends Study, 71 per cent of Canadians surveyed ranked Italian food as their second favourite food after "Canadian."¹

Consider how much Italian food comes into Canada: between 2010 and 2020, Italian food imports grew by 213 per cent.² In the first quarter of 2020 alone, total Italian food exports to Canada increased by 7.8 per cent. Pasta increased by 23 per cent, with olive oil up 7.6 per cent and charcuterie

up 43.5 per cent. This is in part due to the CETA agreement, which reduced duties by 99 per cent, but Italy was Canada's only partner to grow — and there are no signs of stopping. According to an Italian Trade Agency survey to measure the impact of COVID-19 on Italian agri-business prospects, 82 per cent of Canadian importers and distributors indicated that they want to maintain relations with Italian companies.³

That's good news, because sales of Italian food products are booming, with exciting new products being added all the time.

STORE PROFILE

A Bit of Europe in Winnipeg

Inspiration from Carla and Marco De Luca

As with other grocery stores in Western Canada, the pandemic has meant a shift in consumer shopping behaviour at De Luca's specialty food stores in Winnipeg. At the height of the pandemic, people started to buy more dry goods that could be stored for longer periods of time, including pasta and pasta sauces. Carla and Marco De Luca noted that their customers were purchasing less of the traditional cuts of pasta — spaghetti, fettuccine, penne — and moving towards more specialty cuts, such as pappardelle, orecchiette, casarecce.



"Being at home for long periods of time and having the same pasta gets boring," they say. "Along with the increase of pasta sales, there was also an increase in our line of prepared pasta sauces and ingredients for making pasta sauce at home — San Marzano tomatoes, pestos. A new love of cooking was born during the pandemic."

At De Luca's, they strive to source high-quality unique products. In pre-pandemic times, they would travel to trade shows around the world and sample products from multiple vendors. This is no longer possible.

"We are blessed that De Luca's reputation brings a variety of producers to us. With being in business for over 50 years, we have built strong relationships with producers and suppliers, so when we had to pivot in our own buying, we had great suppliers and producers to lean on for guidance."

Social media has played a huge part in keeping De Luca's customers informed about new products.

"We are communicating with our customers daily on Instagram, Facebook, and through our online newsletters. The personalization of grocery shopping has also created relationships with our customers through curbside pickup and delivery that we started offering. We have gotten to know our customers well, and they have leaned into the relationship and allowed us to suggest products for them on their orders."

And their customers love De Luca's variety and quality.

"We try to create a little bit of Europe in Winnipeg, an experience that is memorable when they shop," say Carla and Marco De Luca. "De Luca's is known for carrying only the best the world has to offer paired up with the genuine and personal experiences that they have with our staff while shopping."

When people in Winnipeg don't know what to cook for dinner, a visit to De Luca's provides ample inspiration and all the ingredients.

EVERYONE IS EATING ITALIAN

Sales are booming, and it's not just pasta. "Our sales, especially last year during this time, really picked up," says John Porco, chief operation officer for Unico Inc./Primo Foods. "It's more stabilized now, but for the first few months, it was chaos. It was hectic. The demand on the products was incredible."

Italian food is very broad-based, something Porco explains in describing his company's Italian grocery product segment, which includes everything from beans, tomatoes, and olive oil to vinegars, pickled vegetables, and specialty products like their new Muffuletta. While many Unico/Primo products are imported from Europe, some notable exceptions are produced right here in Canada.

"Our tomatoes are grown in Leamington, Ontario, the tomato capital of Canada," says Porco, adding that tomatoes are a bit like grapes from different wine regions. "Our tomatoes are produced here in Canada. They're different than the Italian tomatoes, but they're excellent. All our machinery is all Italian. What we produce is similar to the Italian products, but it's got a bit of a different characteristic but still fantastic products."

Another example is chickpeas, which Porco says weren't produced in Canada until about 1995. "We went to Western Canadian farm associations and brought them examples of the chickpeas and they started to produce them. So now we buy all our chickpeas exclusively from Canada."

Chickpeas, as well as red kidney, cannellini, and black beans, are all processed in Canada, and they are big sellers.

"The beans are going like crazy," says Porco. "Everyone's eating beans because they're so healthy."

"We do produce pasta here, but we also understand and acknowledge the quality of certain products from Europe," says Porco. "We're a big Canadian company, but we're also a major importer of products from Europe and Italy."

While demand has leveled for some products, for others, it hasn't slowed down at all.

"We saw pasta increase in sales and beans increase in sales tremendously, but we have a pizza sauce — we have it in a can, we have it different sizes, we also have a squeezable — and since the pandemic, it hasn't really slowed down," says Porco.

continued on page 54

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For over 3 generations, the Rana Family has produced and brought the finest pasta first to Europe, then to the USA and now to Canada. For us, great flavour comes from great, authentic ingredients. That's why we don't use preservatives, artificial flavours, artificial colours, GMO ingredients, nor powdered eggs. Our commitment to high quality is a difference you can taste and share with those you love.



In 2012 Giovanni Rana launched in the USA. Since then, Rana grew the category by 39% in that last 9 years and is now the market leader with 46% share. Our investments in premium quality, innovation, distinctive packaging, advertising & promotion have driven the category growth and we can do the same in Canada.

Giovanni Rana is proud to share his brand with Canada, and to have been recognized with the Canadian Grand Prix Award!

Buon Appetito!

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

THE PERFECT DEMO PRODUCT

ACK Gluten Free Cauliflower Gnocchi from Bosa Foods is a new fresh product for either the deli or grocery departments. It's gluten free and ideal for an in-store demo. For an easily prepared dish with a two-minute cook time, complement Cauliflower Gnocchi with a heated Italissima Butternut Squash Pasta Sauce, and offer it in a single-serve sealed demo container. A perfect product for a COVID-friendly demo.



TASTE THE DIFFERENCE

Inspired by Italy, proudly made in Canada, Italpasta Artisan pasta is extruded through traditional bronze dies to create a delicious pasta with a rougher texture that holds more sauce for a fuller flavour with every bite. Mutti Finely Chopped Tomatoes (Polpa) are made from 100 per cent Italian tomatoes picked at perfect ripeness and packed within hours of harvesting using Mutti's patented cold-processing technique to retain all the freshness of just-harvested tomatoes.



FRESH AND DELICIOUS

Fresh and delicious Giovanni Rana's fresh Mushroom Ravioli uses only the best Portobello mushrooms, with rich flavour and a delicious bite, cooked according to Italian tradition, sautéed in big pans with simple ingredients, then wrapped with creamy cheeses in thin pasta. Rana's fresh pasta has no preservatives, artificial flavours, powdered eggs, gums, hydrogenated fats, or GMO ingredients. Serve tossed in melted butter or extra virgin olive oil and top with freshly grated cheese or with Rana's alfredo or marinara sauce.



HOME COOKING ESSENTIALS

EMMA branded products from Jan K. Overweel (JKO) are a line of top-quality imported and locally produced essentials for any home kitchen. JKO has been supplying major grocery retailers and foodservice establishments for years with cheeses, imported Italian extra virgin olive oils and canned tomatoes, and now with Sicilian sea salts. Jan K. Overweel is honoured to make consumers' home cooking experiences simple and delicious!



A FLAVOUR BOOST FOR ANY MEAL

Unico's Muffuletta Olive Salad is an authentic Italian-inspired topping that adds incredible flavour to sandwiches, pasta, pizza, and more. A savoury spread of olives, pickled vegetables, and spices, Unico Muffuletta is a delicious addition to any meal or used as a tapenade on charcuterie board. Once people try it, they can't get enough of it.



"That product has just gone through the roof. People are making pizzas."

Laura Dal Bo, director of marketing, communications, and import brands at Italpasta, says that with the pizza sauce category growing by 25 per cent in Canada, Mutti also introduced a second pizza sauce.

"Mutti Pizza Classica joins their Pizza Sauce with Spices to offer consumers more choice from Italy's No.1 brand of tomatoes," says Dal Bo. "The neutral seasoning allows consumers to use the sauce as it is or add the last touch of crushed garlic, chili, or herbs to their taste. Perfect for the family where everyone wants their own spice in the pizza sauce."

Over the last year, people are making their own pizzas and so much more: fresh pasta sales have also increased.

"As the pandemic continues to force people into their homes, we have seen growth rates explode in the fresh pasta and sauce category," says Mark McLaughlin, president of Rana Meal Solutions Canada. "People are looking for easy-to-prepare family meals that are both affordable and provide a balanced meal which can easily be achieved with a few simple healthy ingredients."

The fact that people are cooking at home now more than ever is the biggest change in consumer behaviour to come out of COVID-19.

"Pasta is the perfect food for at-home chefs, especially those with little-to-no experience in the kitchen," says Angelo Boras, vice-president of sales at Italpasta. "Not only is cooking pasta easy, using our Italpasta brand pasta makes it virtually fool proof because of the thick wall of our pasta."

A pantry staple in many Canadian households, pasta is also a cost effective and nutritious way to feed a family.

"And you don't have to spend extra to buy pasta from Italy to get the same delicious flavour and texture," says Dal Bo. "Italpasta is made in Canada using 100 per cent Canadian wheat, which is known worldwide as the best wheat on the market."

Of course, cooking at home means stocking up.

"The pandemic confined a lot of consumers to cooking and eating in their own homes, and they therefore had to fill their own pantries with durable, long shelf-life products such as canned goods and dried pastas," says Patrick Pelliccione, president of Jan K. Overweel (JKO).



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

"Consumers naturally gravitated towards Italian food products in particular because Italian cuisine is relatively simple in terms of preparation, and it's versatile, inexpensive, and comforting."

Early on in the pandemic, JKO sought to help manage the shortages in shelf-stable items like flour by bringing in imported milled flour from Italy. They also introduced fine and coarse sea salts from the Mediterranean under the EMMA brand.

"More recently, we've added Nonno Nanni, the well-known Italian fresh cheese

brand, to our Fresh Cheese Fly-In program as a way to give consumers access to a unique range of Italian products in a time where leisure travel is not quite possible yet," says Pelliccione.

COMFORT AND QUALITY

Another reason Italian cuisine has been booming during the pandemic is that it is an easy comfort food.

"Regardless of their level of experience, home cooks have turned to comfort food to provide some relief from stress related to the uncertainty surrounding COVID," says Dal Bo.

An Angus Reid survey conducted on behalf of Italy's Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium found that 46 per cent of those surveyed chose spaghetti and meatballs as a favourite comfort food. Respondents were also asked which foods they most associate with Italy: pasta came in at 54 per cent, while pizza and Parmigiano Reggiano were tied in second. Interestingly, Canada leads the world in its passion for Parmigiano Reggiano, with exports up 153.9 per cent during the first half of 2020.⁴

Dal Bo also points out that consumers are missing restaurants with the experience

limited to take-out service. Wanting to replicate that special meal, consumers are searching for a little indulgence, making economical meals feel more special with the addition of indulgent ingredients — like a premium tomato.

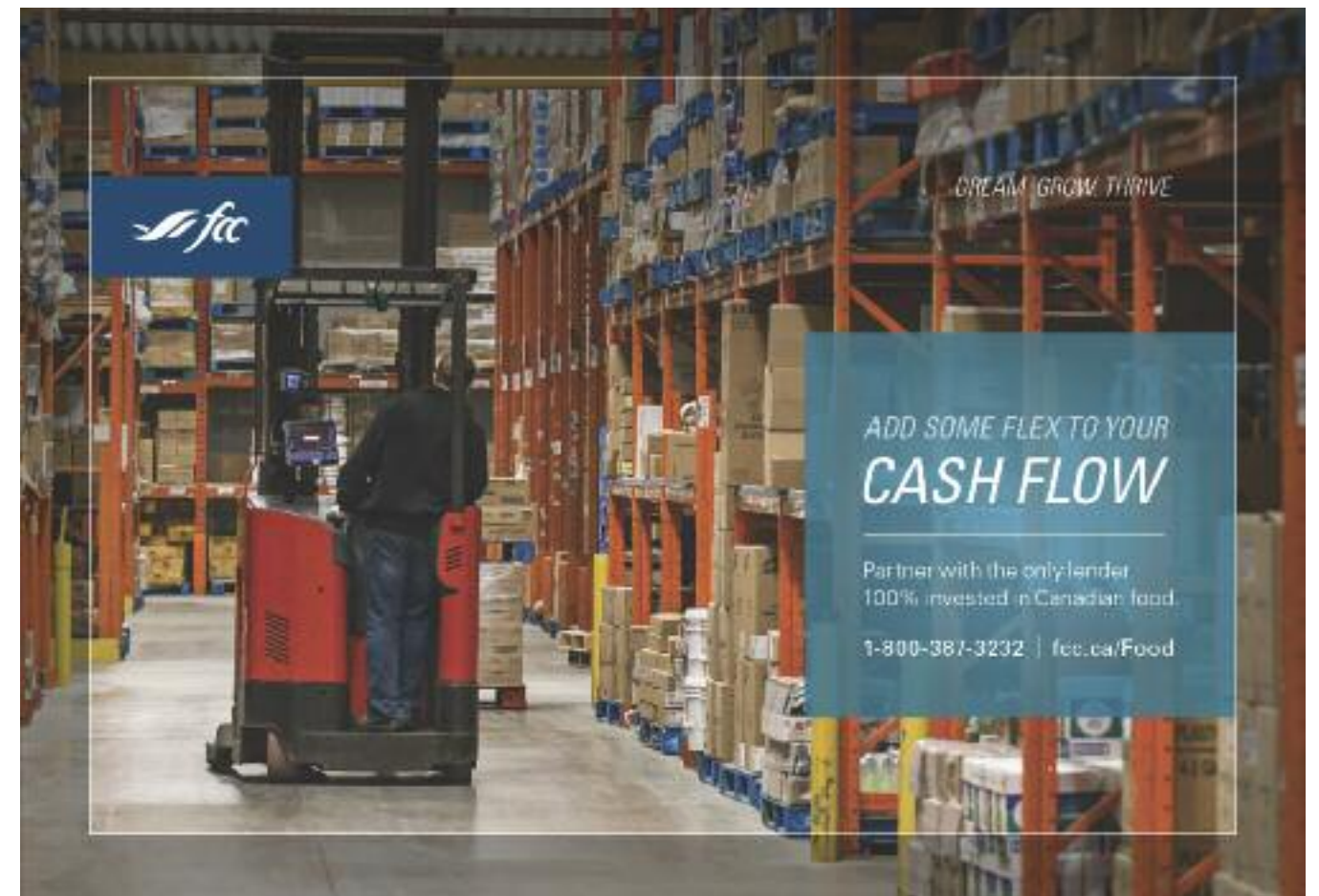
"We have seen sustained year-over-year growth with our Mutti brand," adds Boras. "Mutti is an affordable luxury. As Italy's No.1 brand of tomatoes, you can really taste the difference in their tomatoes. Making your own sauce with Mutti and serving it with Italpasta is a recipe for success."

Bosa Foods' pasta and sauce categories have also seen significant growth, specifically with consumer desire for high quality, value-oriented products.

"We currently have two very strong Italian product lines, Italissima and Preferisco, that offer extensive selections of flavours and recipes," says Bruno Benedet, president, Bosa Foods. "Both Italissima and Preferisco are made from 100 per cent Italian ingredients with authentic regional tastes."

Bosa Foods has seen the same patterns for quality Italian pastas.

"Certainly the pandemic has forced consumers to eat at home more than they



traditionally have,” says Benedet. “Italian cuisine generally has always been appealing to a broad consumer as it is a fundamental part of the Mediterranean Diet. Italian foods and cuisine offer an endless selection of healthy cooking options and a high level of food quality. The pandemic has allowed consumers to enjoy high-quality meals at home, and it has allowed easy enjoyable preparation of meals and a renewed interest in home cooking. Certainly for some, new shopping and home dining patterns have changed. These changes will likely evolve to more home

entertaining and dining post-pandemic, and Italian foods certainly will be a desirable category for this.”

Over the past 12 months, Bosa Foods launched a full range of products across categories, including an Italian Cauliflower Gnocchi, Italian Butternut Squash Pasta Sauce, and the Melegatti brand of confectionery products.

“The expansion of our Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese offering has been extensive, with the addition of the Italian ‘King of Cheeses’ Parmigiano Reggiano Biodiversity range of products,” says Benedet.

BOOSTING SALES

Pelliccione says consumers are always looking for sources of inspiration on what and how to cook at home.

“Displaying products alongside support materials such as recipe cards, inspiration posters with information, and prep tips will help spark some creativity and know-how in the kitchen,” says Pelliccione.

McLaughlin says merchandising fresh pasta and sauce with fresh mushrooms, veggies, or imported Italian cheeses can help create a full-meal solution consumers can easily understand and prepare at home.

“Retailers should continue to focus on providing full-meal solution ideas cross-promoted together that provide inspiration for shoppers who are looking for new ideas after a full year of shut-downs,” says McLaughlin. “Retailers should be focused on offering premium and imported offerings in numerous Italian categories to offer shoppers the opportunity to experience a restaurant-quality meal that they can make at home for their families.”

Italian foods are easy and exciting to merchandise, says Bendet, and suggests cross merchandising grocery with the deli, produce, seafood and meat departments.

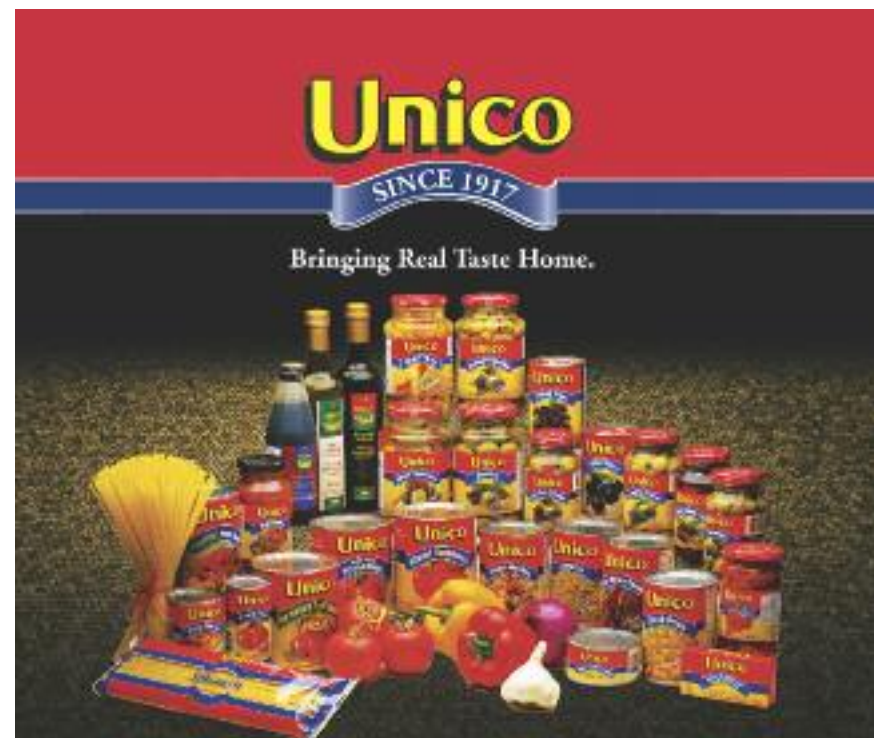
“As a cornerstone of the Mediterranean Diet, so many Italian products cross the various departments of most grocery stores,” says Bendet.

While Italian foods are such an integral part of the today’s grocery stores, consumer education on quality, regions, applications, and the limitless tastes Italy has to offer is required: “Promote ‘Authentic Italian’ and sample, sample,” says Benedet.

Italpasta’s Dal Bo encourages off-shelf displays: “We have found that when retailers in the West add off-shelf displays, store sales increase by 105 per cent over sales at stores without off-shelf displays.”

And really, when it comes to Italian foods, the love is already there — just a little nudge is needed. ●

1 Everyone loves Italian Food. Dig Insights. <https://www.diginsights.com/blog/everyone-loves-italian-food/>
 2 Italy Country of Honor at SIAL Canada 2019. <https://news.italianfood.net/2019/05/10/italy-country-of-honor-at-sial-canada-2019/>
 3 Canada, made in Italy focuses on affordable premium. <https://news.italianfood.net/2020/06/05/canada-made-in-italy-focuses-on-affordable-premium/>
 4 COVID Comfort Foods: Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium surveys Canadians on their favourite comfort foods, Jon Manchester, Nov 13, 2020. <https://www.castanet.net/news/Canada/316244/Parmigiano-Reggiano-Consortium-surveys-Canadians-on-their-favourite-comfort-foods>



Finalists for 28th Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards Announced

2020 new product trends reflect Canadians’ continued interest in plant-based food products and an increase of in-home cooking. New specialty award will recognize excellence in ethnic products.

Retail Council of Canada (RCC) is excited to reveal the finalists for the 28th Annual Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards.

The 28th Annual Canadian Grand Prix finalists represent the 124 most impressive new food and consumer packaged goods products launched into the Canadian market in 2020.

Submissions came from established companies as well as new suppliers, smaller boutiques, and family-owned retailers from across Canada.

“Canadians spent more time at home in 2020 than ever in recent memory,” said Diane J. Brisebois, president and CEO, Retail Council of Canada. “Canadians are craving products to prepare at home that satisfy their needs for flavour adventures. They are looking for new taste experiences from dishes made with high quality ingredients and that can appeal to various taste preferences.”

“I am fascinated each year with how the finalist products reflect the changing interests of Canadians,” said Marcus A. von Albrecht, chef and jury chair who has overseen the Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards judging for 22 years. “The plant-based category continues to grow. We are also seeing incredible development in superior quality vegan cheese products and decadence in Italian meat trays, dairy cheeses, and desserts. Packaging is also evolving with simpler design and clear covers, reflecting consumers’ growing desire to visually see food products before buying them.”

This year’s jury of 33 food and grocery industry experts evaluated products based on innovation, taste, texture, consumer value, and packaging. The rigorous evaluation process requires that to become a finalist, a product needs to receive an overall score of at least 70 per cent. Jurors review food and non-food products in the four categories of innovation and originality, product characteristics, presentation and packaging, and overall consumer value. Finalists can use the prestigious Canadian Grand Prix New Product

Award finalist seal on their products. Finalists also receive extensive exposure in a variety of digital and printed publications, distributed to Canadians across the country.

This year, Retail Council of Canada, in consultation with the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce, created a new specialty award to recognize excellence in ethnic products in recognition of Canadians’ appetite for a more diverse palette of products and emerging brands. The Excellence in Ethnic Products Award will be presented to a product that impresses the jury, aligns to consumers’ needs and demonstrates ethnic origins of the ingredients or method of manufacturing.

The winners of the 28th Annual Canadian Grand Prix will be announced June 3, 2021 in a virtual gala event. ●





PROUD TO BE A 2020 GRAND PRIX FINALIST

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- EASY LUNCH
- DELICIOUS SIDE



As consumers opt for less meat and more veg without compromising on flavour, we answer with Patak's delicious veggie curries!

Why Patak's?

Patak's is the #1 Indian Brand in Canada with the widest range of Indian products

Why Patak's Veggie Curries?

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- Most popular Flavours in the category!

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It's a Big Opportunity In-store!

- Indian category is on trend and growing +10%
- Tapping into trend of increased eating at home, providing families with an easy meal solution to help with cooking fatigue
- Supported in-store with inspiring displays

Nielsen Indian Sauces and Pastes Category, National GB+MM, L52 wks ending March 26th 2021; NI Indian Category, T1 US Mkt, L52 wks to March 28th, 2021.

The Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards™

Food Finalists

Recognizing food, non-food and private label categories, 124 finalists in all from dairy to personal care.



28TH ANNUAL RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA
CANADIAN GRAND PRIX
NEW PRODUCT AWARDS

CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS



Patak's Veggie Curries
AB World Foods



Fleischmann's Bread Booster
ACH FOOD COMPANIES, INC



Boursin Fig & Balsamic
Bel Cheese Canada Inc.



Beyond Sausage Mild Italian
Beyond Meat



Go Pure Fruit & Oat Bars
Biscuits Leclerc Ltd.



Oroweat Organic 22 Grains & Seeds Bread
Bimbo Canada



Stonemill Honest Wellness Plant-Based Protein Bread
Bimbo Canada



Donair Dippers™
Bonte Foods Limited



Arctic Gardens' Pesticide Residue Tested frozen vegetables
Bonduelle Canada



Bonduelle Mini Cans
Bonduelle Canada



EGGBites! Mini Crustless Quiche
Burnbrae Farms Ltd.



Cavendish Farms All-Day Breakfast Hash Brown Waffles
Cavendish Farms



Dr Oetker Momenti
Dr. Oetker Canada Ltd



Dr Oetker Pizzaiolo Kit
Dr Oetker Canada



Real Sips
Everreal



Ocean Mama Japanese Style Noodles
Frobisher International Enterprise Ltd



L'Ancêtre Organic Cheese & Beer Fondue
Fromagerie L'Ancêtre



Patience Fruit & Co Organic Dried Cranberries, no added sugar
Fruit d'Or



Gay Lea Garlic Parsley Butter
Gay Lea Foods Co-Operative Ltd.



Gay Lea Specialty Butters
Gay Lea Foods Co-Operative Ltd.



Sensible Portions™ Garden Veggie Straws Screamin' Hot™
Hain-Celestial Canada, ULC.



Hardbite Potato Chips Explorer Pack
Hardbite

The Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards™

Food Finalists

CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS



HERSHEY'S Ice Cream Flavoured Single Bars
Hershey Canada Inc.



Cheez It Baked Snack Crackers
Kellogg Canada



CRAVE Melts
Kraft Heinz



HEINZ BY NATURE
Kraft Heinz



Heinz Mayoracha Sauce
Kraft Heinz Canada



Kraft Hazelnut Spread with Cocoa
Kraft Heinz Canada



Kraft Peanut Butter Extra Roasted
Kraft Heinz Canada



Maxwell House Compostable Coffee Pods
Kraft Heinz Canada



Balderson Naturel Cheese Slices
Lactalis Canada



Vegan Organic Butter
Maison Le Grand



Plant-based Chick'n Burger
Nabati Foods Inc.



Neal Bros. Lager 0.45% Non-Alcoholic Beer
Neal Brothers Inc.



Baci Bites
Oggi Foods Inc.



Dolce Vita
Oggi Foods Inc.



CHIC CHOC Crunchy Bites
PRANA Biovegan Inc.



Armstrong Cheese Slices
Saputo Dairy Products Canada G.P.



Armstrong Mexican Fiesta Marble Jalapeño Cheddar Cheese Block
Saputo Dairy Products Canada G.P.



Cathedral City Mature Cheddar
Saputo Dairy Products Canada G.P.



Saputo Feta Shredded Cheese
Saputo Dairy Products Canada G.P.



Saputo Halloumi Style Grilling Burger
Saputo Dairy Products Canada G.P.



St-Hubert Meatless Pot Pies
St-Hubert



Robin Hood® Organic All Purpose Flour
The J.M. Smucker Co.



Chunkies Energy Bites
THEOBROMA Chocolat



Three Farmers Roasted Chickpeas
Three Farmers Foods Inc.



Hellmann's® Salad Dressings
Unilever Canada



OGGI FOODS.COM



DOLCEVITADESSERTS.COM

The Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards™

Food Finalists

CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS



Knorr Concentrated Bouillon
Unilever Canada Inc.



Becel Plant-based bricks
Upfield Canada Inc.



Violife Vegan Cheese Alternative
Upfield Canada Inc.



Violife Vegan Cheese Alternative Slices
Upfield Canada Inc.



SOUP'S ON Plant-Based Soups
VICTORY'S KITCHEN LTD.

Non-Food Finalists

CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS



Papyrus - Hello Kitty Patch
Carlton Cards



Papyrus - Sequin Pineapple
Carlton Cards



Papyrus - Thank You Wreath
Carlton Cards



Live Clean® Body Lotion
Hain-Celestial Canada, ULC.



Purina® Pro Plan® LiveClear™
Nestle Purina Pro Plan



Nutrameltz Orally Dissolving Supplements
Nutrameltz Inc.



Alcan Made with 100% Recycled Aluminum Bakeware
Reynolds Consumer Products Canada Inc.



Hefty ECOSAVE 100% Compostable & Recyclable Tableware
Reynolds Consumer Products Canada Inc.



Reynolds Kitchens Unbleached Compostable Parchment Paper
Reynolds Consumer Products Canada Inc.



Schmidt's Aluminum Free Natural Deodorant for Women and Men, Lavender + Sage
Unilever Canada

Private Label Finalists

FOOD AND NON-FOOD PRODUCTS

FOOD PRODUCTS

Calgary Co-op Association Ltd

Cal & Gary's Free From Trail mix
Cal & Gary's Grass Fed beef Meatballs
Cal & Gary's Meatless Burgers
Cal & Gary's Organic Fair Trade Coffee

Federated Co-operatives Limited

Co-op Gold Croissant Loaf
Co-op Gold PURE Cheese
Co-op Gold PURE Loose-Leaf Tea
Co-op Gold PURE Pasta

Longo Brothers Fruit Markets Inc.

Longo's Antipasto Party Tray
Longo's Chickpea Veggie Burgers
Longo's Pistachio Ice Cream

Metro Inc.

Discovered by Irresistibles charcuterie products
Irresistibles Bang Bang Shrimps
Irresistibles Frozen bowls
Irresistibles Mini Tuxedo with a Cherry Twist
Irresistibles Nordic Mix
Irresistibles Old-fashioned chips
Irresistibles Peach & Vanilla Ice Cream with Ontario Peach Pieces
Life Smart Naturalia Grapefruit & Pink Pepper Dressing
Life Smart Organic Kombucha
Life Smart Plant-Based Caesar Dressing
Première Moisson Organic Sprouted Grain Baguette
Selection Premium Dark Chocolate Sea Salt Peanut Butter Cups
Selection Premium Fruit Jelly Box

Rexall Pharmacy Group LTD.

Be Better Dark Chocolate Covered Blueberries
Nosh & Co. Mango Bites

Save-On-Foods Limited Partnership

Western Family Black Bean Chipotle Veggie Burger
Western Family Peanut Butter with Chia
Western Family Salt & Black Pepper Cauliflower Bites
Western Family Ultimate Cheesecake Collection

Sobeys Inc.

Compliments Fruit-Flavoured Drink with Coconut Water
Compliments Mini Cornbread
Compliments Naturally Simple Pacific White Shrimp, Cooked
Compliments Naturally Simple Pork Sausages
Compliments Organic 100% Compostable Coffee Pods
Eight Treasures Shrimp Head-on, Shell-on, Raw
Panache Pepper Jelly Topper & Spread
Compliments Plant-Based Almond Dip
Panache Dressing
Panache Granola
Panache Soda
Sensations by Compliments Spicy Mexican Street-Style Corn Soup

Walmart Canada

Delicious Kitchen Original Coconut Milk Beverage
Great Value All Dressed Scorchin' Hot Crunchies
Great Value Breakfast Bowl
Great Value Brown Sugar BBQ Dry Rub
Chicken Wings

Great Value Ready-to-Go Beans
Our Finest Polynesian-Style Pineapple BBQ Sauce
Our Finest Pumpkin Cream Bar Cake

NON-FOOD PRODUCTS

Canadian Tire Corporation

Paderno Highland Fully Forged 14-Piece Knife Block Set

Federated Co-operatives Limited

Co-op Gold PURE Concentrated Pods

Metro Inc.

Personnelle Baby Baby Wipes
Personnelle Bamboo Charcoal Toothbrushes
Personnelle Cleansing Wipes for Beard and Moustache
Personnelle Eco Ultrathin Organic Pads with Wings
Selection Eco Compostable Tablewear Party Pack

Rexall Pharmacy Group LTD.

Be Better Dry Brush
Be Better Vegan Protein Powder
Rexall Baby Wipes

Walmart Canada

Equate Personal Wipes
Great Value Eco Compostable Wooden Cutlery
Special Kitty Flushable Clumping Cat Litter

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 CANADIAN GRAND PRIX NEW PRODUCT AWARDS
 FINALIST

ABOUT RETAIL COUNCIL OF CANADA

Retail is Canada's largest private sector employer. Retail Council of Canada (RCC) members represent more than two thirds of retail sales in the country. RCC is a not-for-profit, industry-funded association that represents small, medium and large retail businesses in every community across the country. As the Voice of Retail™ in Canada, we proudly represent more than 45,000 storefronts in all retail formats, including department, grocery, specialty, discount, independent retailers and online merchants.

www.RetailCouncil.org

RCC grocery members represent more than 95 per cent of the market in Canada. They provide essential services and are an important source of employment in large and small communities across the country. They have strong private label programs and sell products in every food category.

Contact: Branka Stavric, Senior Director Marketing and Communications — bstavric@retailcouncil.org

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LOCAL FOOD APPRECIATION STAYS STRONG

If BC grocers learned anything in the past year-plus (and there was definitely a lot of on-the-fly learning), it's that no matter how important local food systems may seem, a pandemic will transform that awareness and desire into a mainstream essential issue. Food industry challenges have varied from fluctuating staffing levels and learning new protocols to closures of food-production businesses and shifts away from long-standing sales channels in order to survive.

According to Statista, there were 1,665 grocery stores in BC in 2019 with the majority falling in the five to 99 employees category based on government of Canada information. Statista further reports that Canadian grocery store sales in 2020 were the highest of all time with monthly sales near, or exceeding, nine billion dollars. New banners like FreshCo have joined the fray in BC, along with other stores like PlantX which is opening in Squamish. Consumers are open to these types of specialty grocers alongside the traditional players.

As an essential service, grocery stores were constantly busy in the past year and saw increased demands for delivery, pick-up and other physically-distanced services. While there continue to be trials in the industry, there are also rewards. Something Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister, Lana Popham comments on.

The pandemic's first anniversary is in the rear-view and BC consumers remain committed to locally-sourced food.

“We’ve seen a lot of successes. Many silver linings,” she says. “There’s a lot of consumer-driven growth in our BC products. A lot of consumers are shifting their focus onto BC-made good products.”

This shift falls in line with the province’s Buy BC program, which Popham says has seen a “fast-forward” in its plans.

“We’ve partnered with BC retailers,” she says. “They’re using Buy BC in their in-store. We also do advertising. It’s a very wide-ranging marketing program.”

Because the Buy BC logo is well recognized, she feels it gives consumers a



Candice Appleby, executive director, Small Scale Food Processor Association



(Above) Food and Fisheries Minister Lana Popham

We’ve also got fishers that are using it with their products as well,” she says. “It’s important to have it from the farm to the retail store.”

James Donaldson, CEO of BC Food and Beverage agrees that consumers are more aware than ever about the fragility of BC’s food supply.

“I think the biggest thing happening as we come out of the pandemic is the realization of how vulnerable the food supply chain is; farming, manufacturing, distribution and retail,” he says. “Dis-



James Donaldson, CEO, BC Food and Beverage

sense of connection and consistency. It makes it easier for them to find and choose BC products.

“It’s not just fruits and vegetables.

MANY SMALLER FOOD PRODUCERS WILL HAVE A BOOST IN BUSINESS GROWTH WITH THE CREATION OF 11 FOOD HUBS THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE.



The Chalo FreshCo Strawberry Hill in Surrey, BC.

BECAUSE THE BUY BC LOGO IS WELL RECOGNIZED, SHE FEELS IT GIVES CONSUMERS A SENSE OF CONNECTION AND CONSISTENCY. IT MAKES IT EASIER FOR THEM TO FIND AND CHOOSE BC PRODUCTS.

ruptions impacted pricing, availability, distribution and sustainability.”

It’s a common theme, with Candice Appleby, executive director with the Small Scale Food Processor Association echoing Donaldson’s comments.

“I think that the COVID-19 pandemic has provided the window for the general public to see the fragility of some of the supply chains that we have,” she says. “That then brings an opportunity because customers are wanting to support local.

We also need an awareness that the food system is not simple at all.”

Donaldson notes that small businesses with specialized products have struggled and are still sometimes challenged to attract retailer attention. Many of these operations have adapted to the changing times and have found an ally in ecommerce solutions. This may impact retailer ability to source unique BC products.

“I think there’s a renewed recognition of the need for players in the supply chain to work more collaboratively to reduce risk — not just in terms of dealing with the pandemic, but in the regular course of business over the long-term,” he says. “Consumers still want the same level of differentiated products and better healthy options and working collaboratively will provide benefits to large companies and small.”

Many smaller food producers will have a boost in business growth with the



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BC egg

creation of 11 food hubs (two already open) throughout the province. These shared spaces provide BC food entrepreneurs with the space and equipment they need to accelerate their businesses.

“There’s huge demand for local BC products,” Popham says. “We’re creating space for food entrepreneurs to create products. If you look at food security alone, they really address that issue, but they also address economic development in smaller communities.”

Appleby feels that independent grocers are key to the success of these smaller



AS CONSUMERS PUSH FOR MORE LOCALLY-SOURCED OPTIONS, GROCERY RETAILERS CAN CONTRIBUTE BY MAINTAINING IMPORTANT SUPPLIER CONNECTIONS AND WORKING TOGETHER.

food processors which can be a point of differentiation for grocers.

“Some of the medium-sized groceries... a number of them, still have a pathway to bring small-scale producers into their stores in a manageable way,” she says. “It’s definitely beneficial to everyone.”

Without the typical trade shows and events, it can be difficult for retailers to

meet suppliers. Donaldson suggests virtual events to keep connected. Plus, virtual events make it far easier to deal with BC’s diverse and expansive geography.

“It’s very easy to lose connection in a virtual world,” he says. “Nothing can replace live interaction and hopefully we’ll be back to that soon,



but in the meantime, there are a lot of different forums for virtually networking that can be leveraged, but it takes both manufacturers and retailers to make it valuable for everyone.”

Consumers are expecting BC grocers to carry more local products according to Appleby.

The Buy BC program is well recognized and gives consumers a sense of connection and consistency.

“Customers are asking them questions as to whether they are supporting BC-based companies,” she says. “Consumer demand is driving things.”

As consumers push for more locally-sourced options, grocery retailers can



Wise Bites has a dedicated facility in Richmond, BC.

contribute by maintaining important supplier connections and working together. Forming relationships with BC’s food producers and talking up BC products can be a point of differentiation that drives customer loyalty and increases sales. ●

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/459530/number-of-grocery-stores-by-region-canada/>

https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/app/cis/businesses-entreprises/4451j?sessionid=00013N_PyFvaTAC_74wtshOILVi-2523J?wbdisable=true

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/461774/monthly-retail-sales-of-grocery-stores-canada/>

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CUTTING REFRIGERATION COSTS

Maximizing profit through lowered energy costs

Supermarkets and grocery stores are among some of the most energy-intensive commercial buildings. Their high energy consumption is largely attributed to refrigeration, heating, and cooling equipment.

In order for grocers to maintain a competitive edge when it comes to energy costs and refrigeration, they should consider a strategic plan to managing the energy in your store that starts with energy benchmarking.

Energy benchmarking is a key best practice and the foundation for an effective energy management and decision-making plan. It's often an overlooked tool, yet once incorporated into an energy savings plan, it provides data that you can use to identify poorly performing buildings, invest strategically in energy efficient upgrades and track the effectiveness of the improvements undertaken.

Understanding where total spend occurs in the categories of refrigeration, system performance and retailer performance

is a very important benchmark.

StoreConnect, a cloud-based, data analytics platform offered by Hussmann, allows comparatives between retailer's stores, fleets and geographies to find, model, and sustain optimal energy operation for commercial refrigeration systems all the way down to the compressor level.

Hussmann has a long history of innovation — continually updating current product offerings and developing new solutions to help reduce environmental impact and satisfy regulatory requirements.

StoreConnect's data analytics platform enables retailers and contractors to act on intelligent and predictive-based notifications to reduce the cost to service and own refrigeration equipment. StoreConnect employs secure, real-time, predictive algorithms to provide advanced repair recommendations, automated PM reporting, condition-based maintenance and definitive store health reports.

Even a 10 per cent reduction in energy costs can translate into increased profits by approximately 10 per cent.

The energy feature of StoreConnect monitors the real time, overall state of a system's energy usage and compares the energy usage to other similar-sized systems using normalized baseline standards created from our data sets. Changes are made to the refrigeration systems, new baselines and models are set, and the automated tracking of real time energy compared to the original baseline is implemented. The key is real time measurements and ongoing suggested improvements based upon data models for right sized and well operating systems across the country.

Emerson has recently announced the introduction of its Copeland variable speed reciprocating hermetic compressors for commercial refrigeration applications. The new models are specifically engineered to save energy and provide performance improvements in a variety of demanding commercial refrigeration applications.

"The wide availability of operating ranges, combined with the breadth of the low-profile Copeland variable speed reciprocating hermetic compressor line, gives system design engineers options to select compressors that deliver optimum energy efficiency for equipment of varying types and sizes," says Derek Langenkamp, hermetic reciprocating product manager for Emerson's cold chain business.

Original equipment manufacturers in the commercial

The Copeland variable speed hermetic compressors from Emerson are specifically engineered to save energy.



refrigeration space have faced increasingly stringent energy requirements.

Medium- and low-temperature stand-alone coolers and freezers, commonly used in supermarkets and small-format food retailers, have been key targets of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) energy-efficiency standards.

Refrigeration systems like these typically account for around 50 per cent of a supermarket's energy costs. This can translate into up to \$150,000 per year in energy costs for refrigeration in a large supermarket. To put this into context, energy costs are equivalent to roughly one per cent of supermarket sales.

These costs are extremely significant, considering that the average net profit margin for a supermarket is only around one per cent.

With that being said, it's easy to see why it's so important to keep track of and take actions to reduce your energy consumption. Even a 10-per cent reduction in energy costs can translate into increased profits by approximately 10 per cent. ●

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CO₂ refrigerant

Purity
CO₂

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For more information visit us at www.hussmann.com, contact a sales rep at 519.653.9980 or email insidesales@hussmann.com.

Surprise!

Food prices are on their way up

Prices will go up by as much as five per cent this year, or almost \$700 more for groceries for the year for an average Canadian family



What was purely an academic supposition a few months ago is now actually happening. Along with higher interest rates, inflation is likely to become one of this year's biggest business stories. And food prices won't be immune.

Many agricultural commodity prices have skyrocketed over last year. Corn is up 84 per cent, soybeans are up 72 per cent, sugar is up 59 per cent, wheat is up 19 per cent and coffee is up 13 per cent.

And nothing suggests prices will drop anytime soon.

Once grains are affected, livestock sectors producing well-loved products like chicken, pork and beef will likely be impacted as well.

China is buying everything. And with the world economy out of sync, Asia's influence has grown significantly in recent months. China's economy grew by more than 18 per cent last quarter, while the U.S. is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. This global economic unevenness will probably be felt for a while.

Meanwhile, investors are looking for higher yields for their portfolios, which makes commodities more attractive if one doesn't have the stomach for investing in cryptocurrencies like bitcoin.

Some may experience déjà vu. Analysts suggest we may be experiencing an agricultural commodity supercycle like we witnessed in 2008, but without oil being involved. Last time, a barrel of oil was worth more than US\$140. The food-for-fuel debate was at its height.

A commodity supercycle is a sustained spell of abnormally strong demand growth for commodities. That makes it more difficult for businesses to cope with. In some periods in 2007 and 2008, food inflation in Canada reached seven to eight per cent.

Those are massive numbers, considering that the inflation rate since then has largely been a non-story. But supply chains have been under tremendous pressure since the start of the pandemic and economic pressures from Asia are making market conditions much tighter.

Many food manufacturers have already signalled that processing costs have gone up. They've been warning the markets for weeks.

What may happen to retail prices is always challenging to predict.

Just last week, food retail giant Metro stated that it doesn't expect food prices to increase by more than 2.5 per cent by the end of the year. But given the current macroeconomic environment, that's highly unlikely. Prices will go up by as much as five per cent this year, as predicted by Canada's Food Price Report many months ago. This represents almost \$700 more for groceries for the year for an average Canadian family.

Some grocers say prices should remain stable for a while since they don't want to spook consumers and generate more food inflation anxiety. But that's just food price politics and the blame game is well underway. Nobody wants to be blamed for higher food prices at the grocery store.

But what's happening is beyond any company's reach in the food business. The supercycle boogie man is now among us.

The Canadian dollar has been surprisingly strong against the American greenback over the last several months. This kept the price of many imported foods, like produce, at low levels during the winter months. As our own agriculture kicks in and we see more locally-grown produce returning to the grocery shelves, Canadians should see prices stabilize over the spring and summer.

But growing everything locally won't fix the problem. Everyone around the world is affected by this.

Things may get particularly complicated at the meat counter, with chicken and pork prices going up. And beef price hikes could happen as early as this fall.

COVID-19 didn't help but it's not the only factor contributing to what resembles supercycle conditions. Every decade or so, we go through something like this, so carbon tax opponents should also not jump to conclusions.

The problem is that Canadians must also cope with another economic double-whammy: higher housing costs and a weaker job market.

The good news is that our inflation rate will go up, which is exactly what we need to see interest rates go up. That's the main reason real estate prices are out of reach for a greater number of people. Higher interest rates will calm things down for a while.

This may not be the kind of supercycle we've experienced before but it certainly will make things complicated for the rest of the year. ●

Wild Tea Kombucha Enters the Alcohol Segment with Hard Kombucha Cider

Wild Tea Kombucha has expanded into the alcohol segment with their brand new Hard Kombucha Cider, a first for them with a whole new range of alcoholic kombuchas. The new Hard Kombucha Ciders are dry and tart in flavour profile that are easily drinkable and have a unique flavour profile not currently found on the market. Naturally fermented, these Hard Kombucha's have no added spirits, and no sulphites, as well as being gluten-free.

Wild Tea kombucha has been brewing kombucha commercially since 2015 in Calgary, and their two lines of non-alcoholic kombucha are widely distributed through Canada. Since the inception of Wild Tea Kombucha, it's been Co-Founders Emily Baadsvik and Brigitte Freel's dream to brew an alcoholic kombucha. The female founders were inspired by some of the brands creating the product already in Southern California.

"We tested the market at a variety of events including Rocky Mountain Wine and Food Festival as well as The Mashing in Calgary. The response was overwhelming, and it was amazing to get the



feedback from the community," says Co-Founder and CEO Emily Baadsvik. "We were pleasantly surprised that all sorts of palates from the hardcore beer purists to non-beer drinkers, to wine drinkers all enjoyed the taste profile of this better-for-you alcoholic option."

"We're also so lucky to have so many friends and mentors in the industry that have helped and guided us along the way, it was truly a labour of love and we're so proud of how far we've come!" says Brigitte Freel Co-Founder and COO. WTK initially launched two flavours: Blueberry Hibiscus and Ginger Lime, and a year later has launched a new flavour, Mango Passionfruit. They've also made some important changes to the labelling, including nutritional call outs, nutritional label, and list of ingredients which although not required for alcoholic products, consumers in this segment have told us this is something they're looking for. WTK has also reduced the alcohol level from six per cent to five per cent due to customer feedback.

For more information: beth@wildteakombucha.com

Flow Wins Canada's Clean50 Award

Flow Water Inc. was awarded a Canada's Clean50 Award. "Canada's Clean50 Awards are announced annually by Delta Management Group and the Clean50 organization to recognize those 50 individuals or small teams, from 16 different categories, who have done the most to advance the cause of sustainability and clean capitalism in Canada over the past two years," said Gavin Pitchford, Delta Management Group CEO. Sustainability has always been part of Flow's corporate DNA, from its mostly renewable plant-based packaging to carbon neutral operations and having positive social impacts.

"When I started Flow, I wanted to respect the beauty of our incredible natural spring by putting its water in the most sustainable format available. I set out to evolve a pack that goes beyond wasteful plastic bottles. We now have an advanced, mostly renewable plant-based pack that's 100 per cent recyclable and BPA free, and contributes to the circular economy. Flow also has a 360° sustainability program across five key pillars to actively address and mitigate our impacts. We've worked hard over the last five years to bring our 18 million and growing loyal customers products that are better for them and the planet. To be recognized for those efforts with a Clean50 Award is incredibly gratifying, and evidence we are part of a growing community focused on more mindful consumption," says Nicholas Reichenbach, Flow's founder and executive chairman.

Flow is among the fastest-growing premium spring water and wellness beverage brands in North America. It also has one of the highest "net promoter score" of any premium water company, which is the measure of how often customers would recommend the brand to others.

The Very Good Food Company Announces Products to be Relunched under its New Brand The Very Good Cheese Co.



The Very Good Food Company Inc. has unveiled its new product line of plant-based cheeses to be relunched under its new brand The Very Good Cheese Co. These cheeses follow the Company's completed acquisition of The Cultured Nut Inc., a popular artisan vegan cheese producer known for its block-style cheeses.

These new SKUs will initially consist of:

BOLD CHEDDAH, white cheddar style: Just slip into yer jammies and give the old Mac 'n' Cheese a whole lotta attitude with a sharper sauce.

CHEDDAH, medium cheddar style: Bring on the ultimate 'meltdown' – use for your favourite cheese sauce and drift on down that dreamy, creamy river.

DILL'ISH, garlic and dill-Havarti style: Generic streaming service 'n' Dill – Use as a creamy spread while streaming your current guilty pleasure.

GOUD AF*, smoky gouda style (*and fermented, of course): Smoke 'em if you got 'em – liven up anything grilled or baked with this smoky addition.

PEPPER JACK, Monterey jack style: Enjoy on a fancy cracker and let the neighbors hear your reaction to the heat.

The Very Good Cheese Co. and its lineup of five new SKUs mark a key milestone in VERY GOOD's growth strategy focused on building an expansive plant-based product portfolio through a combination of organic development and strategic acquisitions.

For more information: gary@evolotuspr.com



Introducing Prairie Harvest's Organic Ketchup

Prairie Harvest, home of Canada's award-winning pastas, has added Organic Ketchup to their line-up. Made from fresh ripe organic tomatoes, the ketchup is non-GMO, gluten free, kosher, and only four per cent DV sugar. People buy for the organics; they keep buying if the flavour makes food shine. That is especially true of everyday ketchup, a market growing in sales and profits. The perfect addition to the barbecue aisle.



For more information: www.prairieharvestpasta.com

Jarritos Launches New Flavours



After several years with a consolidated lineup of 10 fruitastic options, Jarritos is launching two new flavours for the Canadian market: Watermelon and Hibiscus! Both new additions are arriving this summer. Watermelon, the iconic fruit flavour of summer, now in a bottle, will keep your customers refreshed, cool and smiling any time of the year. Flowers are nice, but a refreshingly sweet soda made with Hibiscus flowers and 100 per cent real sugar is nicer. It is like Valentine's Day, every day.

For more information: santiago.behar@novamex.com

Enjoying 100 Per Cent Pure Canadian Honey Just Got Easier

Bee Maid Honey Limited, owned by over 300 beekeepers, has been providing Canadians with their quality honey since 1954. Typically, honey is not seen as a portable sweetener, so Bee Maid introduced Li'l Honeys several years ago and they quickly became a staple for takeout coffee and tea in leading coffee shops and convenience stores. Consumers have been asking for a retail option and Bee Maid is answering the call with the launch of Li'l Honeys in convenient 32 pack boxes. Perfect for the sweetener section, new Li'l Honeys are attractively packaged with a see-through panel and a clear photo depicting usage. Ideal for the consumer wanting to take 100 per cent Canadian BeeMaid Honey on the go to the office, gym – basically anywhere! The easy to squeeze seven gram packets make sure not a single drop of the liquid gold is wasted.



For more information: www.beemaid.com

Flourish Pancakes Launches Highly Anticipated Plant-Based Mixes

Flourish Pancakes has added two new plant-based mixes to its growing product line. The additions come in response to popular demand from customers who have requested a plant-based pancake mix alternative which does not lack in flavour.

Made with just four healthy ingredients, the new pancake mixes come in Original and Chocolate Chip flavours, boast 11g of plant-powered protein and are free from the top eight allergens, including gluten, eggs, dairy, and tree nuts. Packed with nutrition, protein and fibre, they are certified vegan, low in sugar and contain no GMOs, artificial colours or flavours. Committed to providing ultra-healthy and eco-conscious breakfast options for everyone, the star ingredient of the new mix, Fava Flour, is made from a nutritious, nitrogen-fixing crop that promotes sustainable farming – making the mix not only good for you, but good for the environment, too.



For more information: www.flourishpancakes.com

Lou's Kitchen Creates a New Destination at the Grocery Store with "Halfway Homemade"

Lou's Kitchen has introduced a new Bistro line that allows busy parents and young cooks to prepare high quality meals in minutes – just heat, eat and chill. The new Bistro kits combine Lou's restaurant quality meats with the fixings or a side so you can make a meal that feels and tastes homemade but takes a fraction of the time. Because there's more to life than cooking!

"We've all got enough going on these days trying to manage changes to work and schooling, often balancing both at home," said Dan Davies, president and CEO, Lou's Kitchen. "We also want to be smart about how we grocery shop and the time we spend planning and preparing meals. Lou's can help the busiest parents and young cooks deliver a delicious homemade meal to your table in just minutes because we do the cooking. You'll feel good about what you're eating and have more time for the people you're with and enjoy life beyond cooking."

Lou's Kitchen new Bistro Shredded Beef and Shredded Pork help elevate Taco Tuesdays. The meat is slow cooked, shredded (vs ground) and pulled, and comes with peppers, onions, corn and salsa. All you need is the shells. And the cerveza.

Lou's new Bistro BBQ chicken, marinated in Lou's own barbecue sauce is super tender and juicy, and comes with a side of sous vide sweet potatoes.

"If you want to give yourself back some time, but still enjoy a (halfway!) homemade meal that is quick, easy and delicious, then Lou's Kitchen is the perfect answer," Davies added.



Susgrainable Launches Retail Ready Baking Lineup

Susgrainable is launching their first line of retail ready baking mixes alongside their signature Upcycled Barley Flour in three initial sku's: Chocolate Chip Cookie Mix, Pancake & Waffle Mix and the Upcycled Barley Flour. A fourth sku is scheduled to launch in the fall of 2021.



"This is a very exciting time for Susgrainable. The new packaging will allow us to partner with established retailers throughout BC while also finally being able to meet demand and requests for our products that have come in from across Canada," says Marc Wandler, Susgrainable co-founder and CEO.

Not only does the new packaging allow for easier and more convenient distribution; it will also help better communicate the very important mission the company is trying to tackle. "Food waste is finally becoming a big topic of conversation and we were lucky enough to have discovered the opportunity and come up with a scalable and delicious solution to the problem prior to it becoming mainstream news," exclaims Wandler.

For more information, visit www.susgrainable.ca

Kove Introduces the World's Most Sustainably Produced Snacks Made from Seaweed

Cascadia Seaweed is launching its new Kove line of seaweed-based products with a brand reveal and giveaway during their inaugural Seaweed Days festival.

Seaweed is a regenerative powerhouse for the planet; beyond capturing carbon and producing oxygen, it is incredibly healthy for humans to eat. Register to be one of the first to try Kove's new seaweed-based food products, plus get the chance to win a coveted West-Coast Getaway for Two to Moutcha Bay Resort.

"We can't wait to welcome you to the Kove for this exclusive preview when we'll reveal our new line of seaweed products, unveil our logo and creative, and share our sustainability story," said Desirée Dupuis, vice-president sales & marketing, Cascadia Seaweed.



"Seaweed and algae produce up to 80 per cent of the world's oxygen supply. Grown using only sea and sunlight, Kove is a sustainable and delicious way to snack." Regenerative ocean farming is growing crops that breathe life back into the ocean. That's why seaweed is the future. The earth's atmosphere is being filled with carbon, and as the carbon rises, so does the temperature. Seaweed removes megatons of carbon each year.

Flora Plant-Based Bricks Launch in Canada

Upfield, the global leader in plant-based nutrition with market leading spreads and vegan cheeses under the Becel and Violife brands in Canada, has introduced Flora Plant-Based Bricks. Flora Plant-Based Bricks are a vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, and non-GMO plant-based butter alternative; and a tasty way to eat plant-based while being a more environmentally responsible choice for consumers looking to reduce their imprint on the planet. The new Flora Plant-Based Bricks are a culinary-inspired premium product with a rich heritage of global chef experience, made with sustainably sourced plant oils, and come wrapped in plastic-free, paper packaging.

Flora Plant-Based Bricks are made without artificial flavours or preservatives, from a blend of plant-based oils, including 100 per cent physically sustainable palm and palm kernel oils, and a non-GMO sunflower oil. Flora Plant-Based Bricks can be swapped 1-for-1 for dairy butter in any recipe and are also kosher and halal-certified.



Introducing KD Flavour Boost



Canada's No.1 Mac & Cheese brand is bringing a bold new twist to the same cheesy taste consumers know and love from KD. New add-in KD Flavour Boost packets add an exciting taste experience. Available in five limited-edition flavours: Buffalo Wings, Jalapeño, Poutine, Butter Chicken and Cotton Candy. This will drive a premium basket add-on by offering bold and buzzworthy flavours that resonate with millennials & Gen-Z.

Kraft Introduces PurGrains

Kraft has introduced a plant-based line of single serve dishes powered by ancient grains and bold global flavours. Ready to serve in 90 seconds, the line is made with whole grains, and is non-GMO certified rich in essential nutrients like fibre and iron. There are no artificial colours, flavours, or preservatives. Powered by ancient grains and globally inspired flavours, this new line bridges the gap between wellness and enjoyment. Crafted with real and simple ingredients like quinoa, barley, and whole grain rice, it is currently available in three flavours: Thai Style Garlic Chili, Aztec Chipotle, and Santorini Lemon Dill. Korean BBQ will be available this fall.



Heinz Introduces CROWDSAUCED



Consumers are seeking flavoured inspiration to add sizzle to their favourite meals. So, Heinz is leveraging on trend flavours as shared by Canadians to bring exciting and disruptive news to the category by launching three outstanding mashups combinations: Tarchup: perfect combo for fish and chips and seafood; Wasabioli: perfect combo for sandwiches and burgers; and Hanch: perfect combo for wings and pizza. The fastest growing segments in sauces are comprised of bold-flavoured and internationally inspired sauces.

New Kraft Hazelnut Line Extensions



Kraft is bringing new textures and less sugar options to the Hazelnut Spreads category with two new line extensions: Crunchy and 45% Less Sugar. Kraft Hazelnut Spread Crunchy is filled with real hazelnut bits inside, adding the extra crunch that consumers crave. With sugar as the principal barrier for consumers buying Hazelnut spread, their new product offers the same delicious taste, with 45 per cent less sugar than Original Kraft Hazelnut Spread. Made with no palm oil and low in saturated fat, both are prepared in Canada.

Becel Launches its New Becel with Oat Beverage

Tapping into growing consumer demand for tasty foods made from plants, Upfield brand Becel has introduced Becel with Oat Beverage, a vegan, dairy-free, and gluten-free margarine made from a blend of plant-based oils and a new hero ingredient, oat beverage, also known as oat milk. Becel with Oat Beverage is the newest addition to Canada's popular line of Becel spreads, which also includes Becel Plant-Based Bricks. "Becel aims to satisfy the appetites of Canadians whose food interests are ever changing," said Mandy Au, Brand Lead Becel, Upfield North America. "With plant-based eating on the rise, oat milk has emerged as one of the fastest growing non-dairy beverage choices in Canada. That's why we are thrilled to bring consumers Becel with Oat Beverage which complements the buttery taste of Becel with the rich creaminess of oat beverage, or oat milk, for a delicious, dairy-free plant-based margarine to spread, cook, and bake with." New Becel with Oat Beverage is a good source of Omega-3, has no artificial flavours, colours or preservatives, and is low in saturated fat. One serving has 80 per cent less saturated fat than a serving of dairy butter and can be swapped 1:1 in any recipe. It's also kosher, halal and Certified Plant Based through a partnership with the Plant-Based Foods of Canada.



For more information visit, www.Becel.ca.

New SnackConscious Bites

SnackConscious Bites are functional, high-protein and fibre, low-sugar snacks available in three nostalgic flavours: Peanut Butter & Jam, Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip and Chocolate Brownie. With snacking on the rise, it is important to think critically about the effects of ingredients in our food. SnackConscious uses a unique adaptogenic blend of Cordyceps, Reishi, Lion's Mane and Maca to promote sustained energy and focus (a departure from the snacks full of refined sugar that many of us have been reaching for).

All three of SnackConscious Bites flavours boast clean ingredients and include the following (per 45g serving): 9g of plant-based protein, 10g of fibre, <4g of naturally-occurring sugars, 1B probiotics; Relies on adaptogens for sustained energy and focus (Cordyceps, Reishi, Lion's Mane and Maca); Gluten-free, vegan and free of refined sugars.



2021 International Year of Fruits and Vegetables declared by United Nations

Today, light on one of the European products, the French shallot

With 2021 declared the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables by the United Nations, The European Union and INTERFEL, the organization representing French fruit and vegetable producers are raising awareness here in Canada of the unique attributes of their products.

For those in the produce industry, it is well known the shallots from France are a must have in the produce aisles. While there are a lot of fruits and vegetables produced in Europe and more particularly in France including apple, pear, kiwi, or apricot, it is the French shallot that has made a real impact here in Canada and it is available all year long.



© Philippe DUFOUR/Interfel

In Europe, French shallots stand out. They are still produced in the traditional way. They are planted and picked by hand, then dried in the sun to give them their characteristic appearance and to help with preservation. They have long been a staple in northern France but now are produced extensively in the Brittany and Loire Valley regions. The production in Europe is 50,000 tonnes, of which over 49,000 tonnes is produced in France, making it the leading European producer of shallots, followed by Bulgaria and Ireland.

Shallots offer great variety with two families — grey or pink or Jersey shallots — that can be further divided by their appearance, fragrance, and flavour. This makes French shallots incredibly versatile. It's no surprise that French shallots are a staple in kitchens across Europe. They are excellent as part of a base for sauces, in simmered dishes, or raw and sliced over a salad.

Enjoy it is from Europe!
French shallots with any meal! ●



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In Europe, French shallots stand out. They are still produced in the traditional way. They are planted and picked by hand, then dried in the sun to give them their characteristic appearance and to help with preservation.

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for the
SUMMER!

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GOOD,
eh?

