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Kraft Heinz GOOD TO THE LAST DROP

In this Issue

- 18 **Easy Grilling**
Give customers options this barbecue season – from alternative meats to twists on toppings.
- 27 **HEALTH & WELLNESS UPDATE**
Four Themes Shaping Natural, Organic & Wellness
- 73 **Innovation at SIAL**
A Q&A with Isabelle, Marquis, Innovation Expert
- 75 **Saskatchewan Responds to Changing Consumer Demands and Supply Chain Challenges**
- 78 **Taking Action**
Retailers and manufacturers are tackling sustainability.
- 89 **Chilled to Perfection**
Catching up on cold beverages.
- 95 **Cool Down**
Quality plus affordability drive the popularity of ice cream and frozen novelties.
- 101 **The Kitchen's Cultural Foundation**
Canadians expanding their horizons by embracing European food options.



18



27



89

Departments

- 6 MARKET UPDATE
- 13 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
- 35 CATEGORY MANAGEMENT
- 86 RETAIL COLLABORATION
- 104 IN THE BAG



101



37

On Our Cover

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

37 Growing From the Heart of the Community

Calgary Co-op is moving forward into the future on the foundations of the past.

Photo courtesy of Gilmour Photography



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publisher's perspective



Two Shows, One Great Opportunity

This April 21st-24th the Canadian Health Food Association will hold CHFA Now, in person for the first time in two years, while the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers will be holding in-person Grocery and Specialty Foods West April 25th and 26th, both at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

With two back-to-back shows, this is a great opportunity for the food industry in Western Canada to finally get back together to find out about new products and services and exchange ideas. Both shows have strong conference programs dealing with topics ranging from the regulatory environment around natural health products to dealing with supply chain disruptions and labour shortages.

In the case of CHFA Now, the event is divided into a prior two-day conference followed by two days of trade show. Grocery and Specialty Food West, on the other hand, combines both conference and trade show over a two-day period.

Both attract a large number of attendees so be sure to pre-register to avoid line-ups. Downtown Vancouver can also be quite congested, so it is best to take a taxi or walk from your hotel if you are visiting the city.

Don't miss this opportunity to get back in person to learn and discover new things!

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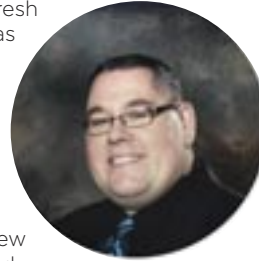


Lawrence Ashmead has Joined **Discovery Organics** as Senior Sales Manager, Calgary

Ashmead brings over 23 years of experience in the fresh produce industry to Discovery Organics in his new role as senior sales manager.

Discovery Organics is Western Canada's go-to for certified organic and certified Fair Trade fresh fruits and vegetables. Ashmead will bring his many skills, wisdom and service-oriented values into the Discovery group helping foster new relationships with retailers as well as strengthen existing relationships across Western Canada.

Discovery Organics Calgary recently moved into a new 25,000 sq ft facility in South East Calgary that is dedicated to wholesaling certified organic fresh fruits and vegetables. The new location at 4216 54 Ave SE, Calgary has multiple temperatures zones and banana ripening rooms to accommodate cold chain requirements for all certified organic produce items.



Lawrence Ashmead

Kruger Big Assist Awards \$200,000 to Deserving Canadian Minor Hockey Associations

The future of Canada's favourite sport, the game of hockey, is in scoring position thanks to a BIG assist from Kruger Products - Canada's leading paper manufacturer of Cashmere, Purex, Scotties and SpongeTowels. The company is donating \$150,000 to help keep kids on the ice and play the game they love by assisting 15 minor hockey associations across the country with \$10,000 Kruger Big Assist grants to subsidize player registration fees for those in need.



Now in its second year, the program is adding "The Second Assist". Recognizing the need for and importance of inclusivity and diversity in hockey, Kruger Products is contributing an additional \$50,000 grant entirely dedicated to building a more equitable and inclusive future for kids in the game of hockey. This brings the Kruger Big Assist funding up to \$200,000 to help establish a future where everyone feels welcome and supported on the ice.

"All sports, particularly hockey in Canada, play an integral role in the development of children both physically and mentally, and we are proud to assist current and potential hockey families across the country participate in the game we love," says Susan Irving, CMO Kruger Products and a hockey mom of two.

Now in its second year, the Kruger Big Assist program has already helped hundreds of families in need of an assist get their kids into hockey by making it more affordable.

Jamieson Celebrates 100th Birthday by Launching 100 Days of Wellness

Jamieson is celebrating their 100th anniversary this year by launching 100 Days of Wellness: a platform offering free fitness classes, wellness talks, nutrition workshops, and weekly prizes from March 12 to June 25, 2022. The classes will be hosted by health experts and fitness professionals from different provinces, bringing together Canadians from across the country on this completely free platform.

"100 Days of Wellness is our way of saying thank you to the millions of Canadians who have helped us reach this incredible milestone," said Corrine Chan, campaign manager at Jamieson. "We want to make this platform free to use and accessible for all fitness levels so that everyone can participate. With a diverse range of experts, trainers, and classes to choose from, there is truly something for each person to enjoy."

Every week, Jamieson will release three new health and wellness activities. Attend and complete at least one class per week to be entered to win one of 30 weekly prizes. This includes a limited-edition tote bag and travel bag filled with custom items, such as a portable speaker, portable charger, instant camera, and the Jamieson Essentials Line.

After the class goes live, it will be hosted on the 100 Days of Wellness website, where anyone can access and watch it on-demand for the duration of the campaign.

Attend and complete a minimum of 10 classes over the 100 Day campaign to be entered to win one of the grand prizes. This includes a \$1,000 travel voucher, wireless headphones, or a smart watch. These winners will be announced on Saturday, July 2, 2022.



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FLOW ALKALINE SPRING WATER JOINS THE CLIMATE PLEDGE

Flow Beverage Corp. has joined The Climate Pledge, a community of more than 300 like-minded companies committed to achieving net-zero carbon by 2040 or sooner.

Signatories of The Climate Pledge commit to three main areas of action: regular reporting on greenhouse gas emissions; carbon elimination in line with the Paris Agreement; and neutralizing remaining emissions with credible carbon offsets.

Maurizio Patarnello, Flow's CEO said, "Climate change demands urgent and universal action. Flow is proud to sign The Climate Pledge and we stand with Amazon and the other signatories in a commitment to net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 at the latest. Flow's operations are already carbon neutral, but we are committed to going even further and becoming the first carbon negative spring water brand by 2025. Joining The Climate Pledge is an important step for Flow on our roadmap of sustainability actions leading into Earth Month and beyond."

In 2019, Amazon and Global Optimism co-founded The Climate Pledge, a commitment to reach the Paris Agreement 10 years early and be net-zero carbon by 2040. Now, more than 300 organizations have signed The Climate Pledge, sending an important signal that there will be rapid growth in demand for products and services that help reduce carbon emissions.



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For more information, contact **Ajay Handa**, Business Head (US, Canada & Latin America).

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Mondelez International Appoints Karla Schlieper to Lead Canada Business

Mondelez International has appointed Karla Schlieper as president, Mondelez Canada, succeeding Martin Parent.

Schlieper comes to this leadership role in Canada following her success leading the Mondelez business in Latin America's Southern Cone region (Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay). In that position, which she has held since May 2019, Schlieper led a substantial turnaround of the business, against a challenging backdrop of the pandemic and in a volatile economy and demanding business climate.



Karla Schlieper

Schlieper joined Mondelez International in 2013, bringing with her strong experience in the consumer-packaged goods industry, including senior strategy roles with Unilever and J&F Group in both Latin America and Europe. Within Mondelez, she has advanced through a number of different roles, including director, powdered beverages, Brazil; category director, biscuits, Brazil; equity director for Latin America Biscuits; and vice-president, biscuits for Latin America. In her role as vice-president, biscuits, she helped drive strong category growth while building a high-performing leadership team. Schlieper played an important role in the implementation of a new operating model in Latin America, establishing new ways of working and integrating and enhancing key business processes.

"We are excited to welcome Karla to the North America region, and to our Canadian business, as we focus on driving our growth ambition and snacking leadership in Canada," said Glen Walter, executive vice-president and president, North America for Mondelez International. "Her passion for developing people, paired with strong end-to-end business acumen, positions her well to lead the Canada business in its next phase, and in achieving its growth targets."

"We also want to thank Martin Parent for his leadership of the Canadian business over these past few years, including his role in advancing our snacking ambition and prioritizing the health and safety of our people and business during a very challenging time," added Walter.

Over recent years, the Mondelez Canada business has established a strong snacking vision and focused on being a preferred partner to customers. In addition, the organization has made meaningful strides in advancing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and was recognized as a top employer and Great Place to Work for 2021.



Evive Nutrition Earns Top Spot across North America in Frozen Fruit and Smoothie Sales

With health and wellness a key consideration for consumers today, frozen fruit has grown in popularity as an easy way to get a hearty blast of antioxidants and nutrients. Evive Nutrition, the blenderless smoothie company swiftly transforming the nutrition landscape, is leading the charge, contributing \$12 million in sales to the frozen fruit category in 2021, in addition to their natural & DTC channel business — more than any other national brand on the market.

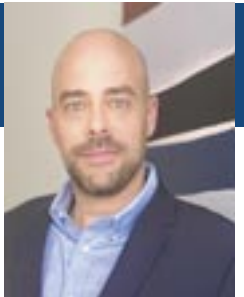
In a recent Nielsen report, the Canadian-born Evive emerged as the number one smoothie brand and number one frozen fruit brand in North America, dominating six out of eight skus in frozen fruit. Evive is also the top contributor to category growth, helping frozen food sales skyrocket 77 per cent year-over-year.

Over the past six years, Evive has evolved into one of North America's top nutrition brands, selling a staggering 10 million of its innovative blenderless smoothies. The family-owned company produces budget-friendly, timesaving and satisfyingly delicious smoothies, soups and bowls, which are packed with whole fruits and veggies, superfoods and plant-based protein. Evive's products are stocked in high-traffic grocery chains like Whole Foods, Loblaws, Sobeys and IGA, as well as grocers across the US and Canada.

"We are so humbled and grateful to consumers for choosing Evive as their preferred frozen fruit and smoothie product," said Claudia Poulin, co-founder. "It has been an incredible journey, from launching the company in 2016 to working towards expansion into Europe and Australia. Ultimately, we created our blenderless smoothies for people who are too busy to prep and cook healthy meals every day. It's incredibly gratifying to know that we are helping people achieve a healthier lifestyle."

For more information:
evivenutrition.com

VINCENT NADEAU HAS BEEN NAMED VICE-PRESIDENT SALES FOR KRAFT HEINZ IN CANADA



Vincent Nadeau

With more than two decades of experience leading sales organizations for consumer-packaged goods companies, Nadeau brings a new level of expertise to the Kraft Heinz Canada business. Enabled by the skills and experiences he has developed as a strategic leader, Nadeau has worked with all customers in the Canadian market and top power brands. He is uniquely positioned to connect Kraft Heinz's growth ambition to customer strategies and needs. Most recently Nadeau served as head of a strategic HUB centrally responsible for Sales Planning, Revenue Growth Management, Customer Strategy and ecommerce for Mondelez International after successful stints at PepsiCo and research marketing firm Guilbault & Associates.

Nadeau will report directly to Adam Butler, president of Kraft Heinz Canada and North America Coffee and serve as a member of the Kraft Heinz Canada Leadership Team

New Survey Shows Growing Interest in Flexitarian Diet

A new survey by Maru/Blue has found that 34 per cent of Canadians incorporate plant-based alternatives (dairy-free milk, yogurt, cheese or meat alternatives) in their diet.

These numbers support the new "flexitarian diet" trend that incorporates both plant-based and animal-derived food products.

According to the study, which was commissioned by Danone Canada, the top reason Canadians integrate plant-based alternatives into their diet are:

- To vary their diet and try new types of foods (50 per cent)
- They believe plant-based alternatives, like dairy-free milk and cheese or meat substitutes are good for their health (40 per cent)
- They believe incorporating plant-based alternatives in their diet is more environmentally friendly (30 per cent)

Other survey findings include:
The most popular plant-based alternatives are:

1. Dairy-free milk alternatives (57 per cent)
2. Plant-based meat alternatives (54 per cent)
3. Dairy-free coffee creamer alternatives (42 per cent)

Among those who haven't integrated plant-based alternatives in their diet, reasons include:

- They prefer natural food, rather than processed food alternatives (51 per cent)
- They believe these products are not as healthy as food from animal sources (e.g. meat, fish, dairy, eggs, or other) (20 per cent)
- They are afraid of missing important nutrients like protein, calcium, vitamin D, iron or B12 (15 per cent)
- They don't know what to buy or how to incorporate them in their diet (12 per cent)

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Coca-Cola Shines in Fourth Quarter by Meeting Changing Consumer Demands, says GlobalData

Following the fourth quarter and final year announcement results from Coca-Cola, Thomas Evans, beverage analyst at GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, offers his view: "Coca-Cola's ability to adapt to evolving health and digital trends has placed it in a frontrunner position. The company continues to be a flag bearer in the industry following its robust Q4 2021 results despite the economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The company's low-sugar formulations have been a key growth area this quarter, catering to the 45 per cent of people globally who, according to GlobalData, find low-sugar claims extremely appealing. The BodyArmor brand, which was acquired by Coca-Cola in November 2021, has paved the way for competitor brands, forcing innovation with low calorie and natural formulations. Additionally, Coca-Cola's digital marketing efforts in the fourth quarter aided its growth. As of December 2021, GlobalData found that 24 per cent of the global population are still spending more time socializing virtually with friends and family. To target this community, Coca-Cola leveraged popular social media platforms, which helped the company recognise the importance of social platforms in building brand engagement. Its debut TikTok challenge for the 'Real Magic' campaign helped it to break into the lucrative gaming community. Despite the positive results, Coca-Cola's growth has been hindered as the industry is feeling the pinch from growing Omicron concerns. However, Cola-Cola's investments in both natural formulations and digital marketing shows that the company is in a strong position to withstand any new challenges over the forecast period."



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Weston Family Foundation Launches \$33-Million Innovation Challenge to Support Canada's Food System

The Weston Family Foundation has launched its \$33-million Homegrown Innovation Challenge to spark creative solutions and encourage new ideas to boost the sustainable production of fruits and vegetables in Canada.

The Challenge centres around a competition to generate solutions that will enable domestic food producers to grow berries out of season, sustainably, competitively, and at scale. Funding will be awarded in stages over six years to eligible teams developing tools and technologies that solve the interconnected challenges of growing produce out of season in Canada.

"There is a golden opportunity to boost innovation in the food sector by nurturing bold, game-changing solutions for agricultural producers," says Emma Adamo, chair, Weston Family Foundation. "By catalyzing these solutions for berries, we anticipate the creation of systems relevant to a broad array of fruit and vegetable crops, helping to position Canada as a leader in this sector."

Like many countries, Canada is heavily reliant on imported fresh fruits and vegetables; we bring in nearly 80 per cent of our fresh produce, predominantly from climate-vulnerable areas. This situation creates the potential for food shortages due to food-systems disruptions such as border closings, droughts, flooding, or future pandemics.

To gauge the level of public awareness of these issues, the Weston Family Foundation recently surveyed more than 1,500 Canadians via Leger. The study found that 65 per cent of Canadians underestimate the proportion of fruits and vegetables imported from foreign countries. At the same time, 73 per cent of Canadians indicated that not relying on imported fruits and vegetables is an important measure to guard against future disruptions. So, while consumers recognize the situation, they are unclear about its severity.

This reality presents a unique opportunity to spread awareness of a critical issue and create a homegrown solution to a global problem. Thanks to its socio-economic profile and extreme seasons — made even more extreme through the effects of climate change — Canada is an ideal testbed for innovative agricultural ideas.

The ultimate winner of the Challenge could be awarded as much as \$8 million, with substantial funding also available to eligible teams that progress through different stages as they develop, scale, and ready their innovations for market.



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Joseph Kim Named New CEO of Galleria Supermarket and Korea Food Trading

To meet the demands of the changing times, Jeffrey Min, chairman of Galleria Supermarket and Korea Food Trading has announced he is stepping down from his role as CEO. Vice-President, Joseph Kim, will be taking over as CEO starting January 1st 2022. Min will continue to support the business during the transition.

As the companies transition to a business management expertise system, Min said Kim is someone who possesses a young spirit, passion and business expertise. Some of the responsibilities that Kim will oversee in the role will be respect among employees, a customer-centred system, a dynamic next-generation digital system, and a creative future for the company.

Kim joined Galleria and Korea Food Trading in 2005 and until September of 2021 has been excelling as the head of the business planning and management office as well as the head of wholesale operations at Korea Food Trading. Kim is determined to provide the best products and customer service in his new role.



Joseph Kim

For more information contact:

Don Seo, Sales Manager, dhseo@koreafood.ca, 647-882-5023

About Galleria Supermarket and Korea Food Trading

Galleria Supermarket is Canada's leading Korean specialty grocery chain. Established in 2003 and now has five locations and an expansive e-commerce grocery presence. Korea Food Trading is the specialty foodservice and wholesaling arm of Galleria — and is focused on introducing a variety of Korean goods and products to the Canadian grocery sector.

The MARPHYL Marine Phytoplankton Company Inc Partners with iLevel Management Inc

The MARPHYL Marine Phytoplankton Company Inc. has announced their partnership with iLevel Management, Inc. to act as sales broker to natural health food stores,



mass retail, food service and drug stores in Canada for MARPHYL organic liquid soil enhancer / fertilizer / plant food.

Since launching the brand in May 2017, the organic liquid soil enhancer quickly became a best seller online in Canada and abroad. The company is looking forward to joining forces with iLevel Management to increase market share in the retail sectors, from small independent stores to mass retail.



THE NGA SHOW CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL EVENT IN LAS VEGAS

The NGA Show has now concluded with a nearly 20 per cent increase in attendance. The in-person show brought together independent retailers, wholesalers, food retail industry executives, food/CPG manufacturers and service providers from all over the United States for the three-day event, Feb. 27-March 1. The 39th edition of the annual trade show and conference is produced by the National Grocers Association and Clarion Events.

"What an exciting three days! We thank our exhibitors, sponsors, speakers, attendees, media partners, supporting organizations and partners who helped to make the 2022 NGA Show a huge success. We've already received such positive feedback on the content in the education sessions, the top-level thought leaders from across the industry who shared insightful ideas, and the opportunity to source new products all delivered solutions and ideas on how grocers can grow their business and better serve their communities," said Cruz Alvarado, event director of The NGA Show for Clarion Events.

"The NGA Show, co-located with the IGA Rally and Indoor Ag-Con, delivered a trifecta of education, best practices and actionable insights designed to help independent grocery operators propel their businesses into a future of growth and continued opportunity," said Greg Ferrara, NGA president and CEO. "With strong retailer and wholesaler attendance, we intend to build upon the momentum of a successful show and the occasion of NGA's 40th anniversary this year as we work toward an even more exciting conference back here in Las Vegas in 2023."



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SHOW INCLUDED:

- The exhibit hall, featuring more than 200 exhibitors, where retailers and wholesalers discovered products and services covering the entire spectrum from store design to innovative food products, and everything in between. This year's expo floor also featured the World of Latino Cuisine pavilion, which ran a full schedule of culinary demonstrations presented by world-renowned chefs. Retailers were given a front-row seat to the latest products and information on how to successfully sell to Hispanic customers, 60 million consumers and growing.
- The opening keynote address was presented by former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who discussed the country's economic and political landscape, and its potential impact on independent community grocery operators.
- Attendees mixed and mingled at several networking events including the kickoff Opening Reception, the Best Bagger Championship and After Party, Creative Choice Awards breakfast and the Closing Celebration.

The education program expanded to offer 50-plus sessions with more than 100 subject matter experts who spoke on a variety of relevant topics including store design, international commerce, omnichannel, artificial intelligence, inflation, data analytics, workforce development, e-commerce, demand forecasting, category trends, Hispanic marketing, food safety, succession planning, front-end technology, labour costs, digital communications, green energy and ransomware.

The 2023 NGA Show will take place Feb. 26-28, 2023, at the Caesars Forum Convention Center in Las Vegas.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

April 5-7, 2022
CPMA Convention + Trade Show

Palais des Congrès
Montreal, Quebec
convention.cpma.ca

April 10-11, 2022
Bakery Showcase 2022

Toronto Congress Centre
Toronto, Ontario
<https://baking.ca>

April 20-22, 2022
SIAL Canada

Palais des Congrès
Montreal, Quebec
<https://sialcanada.com>

April 21-24, 2022
CHFA West

Vancouver, BC
<https://chfa.ca>

April 25-26, 2022
Grocery & Specialty Food West 2022

Vancouver, BC
<https://gsfshow.com>

May 23-26, 2022
Sweets and Snacks Expo

McCormick Place
Chicago, Illinois, USA
<https://sweetsandsnacks.com>

June 5-7, 2022
IDDBA

Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Georgia, USA
<https://www.iddba.org>

The Egg Case Can Be Complicated... Let Us Simplify It

BC Egg offers a number of marketing pieces to help you increase egg sales. These pieces include print-ready shelf labels, shelf talkers, flyers, recipes, bag stuffers as well as digital assets for electronic signage.

All of these pieces can be downloaded from our new Retailer webpage bcegg.com/retail-tool-kit/. More assets will be added as they become available. All pieces can be customized with specific farmers or your own branding.



For information on customization, please contact

Amanda Brittain, Director Communications and Marketing
amandab@bcegg.com • 604 854 4498



SEAFOOD EXCELLENCE AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The 2022 Seafood Excellence Awards winners were announced at Seafood Expo North America/ Seafood Processing North America, which took place March 13-15 in Boston. DOM International Limited won the "Best New Retail" award for its product, DOM Reserve Salmon Poke and Bakkafrost won the "Best New Foodservice" award for its Native Hebridean Smoked Scottish Salmon.

Winners were selected from a group of finalists during a live judging by a panel of seafood buyers and industry experts from the retail and foodservice industries. This year's panel included judges from BJ's, Albertsons, and Levy Restaurants.

Finalists were previously selected through a screening of products participating in the Seafood Expo North America New Product Showcase. The New Product Showcase features seafood products, condiments and culinary dishes launched in the past year by exhibiting companies.

The Seafood Excellence Awards recognize the product leaders in the North American seafood market. The new products are judged based on several criteria, including uniqueness and appropriateness to the market, taste profile, market potential, convenience, nutritional value and originality.

Sabroso Foods Is Now Delivering to Ontario Customers, Grocery Retailers and Foodservice

Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, Sabroso Foods continues to strengthen its presence in cities across Canada. Sabroso products are now available for delivery to customers in Ontario. Sabroso Foods is currently established in Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, with regular deliveries through its online store and retailer partners. During the fall and winter of 2021, Sabroso delivered to customers in Toronto and London, Ontario, on a seasonal basis as part of their expansion strategy to reach customers in the East. Seasonal deliveries occurred on Black Friday of 2021 and Valentine's Day of 2022.



Thanks to the great response and acceptance in this new market, Sabroso is now ready for a broader expansion. Starting March 2022, Sabroso is delivering online orders to customers in more than 20 cities in Ontario on a regular basis. These cities include Toronto & GTA, Brampton, Burlington, Cambridge, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Milton, Mississauga, Oshawa, Vaughan, Waterloo, and more. This expansion is possible due to the strategic collaboration between Sabroso Foods and Lola's Food Inc., Canada's largest Venezuelan food factory from Mississauga, ON. They are joining forces in distributing and delivering Sabroso's products in Ontario. "We are excited and eager to continue growing. The support we received in Toronto and London indicates that we are on the right track," said Patricia Salazar, Sabroso's CEO & founder.

SIAL Canada International Food Show

WILL BE BACK AT MONTREAL'S PALAIS DES CONGRÈS FOR ITS 100 PER CENT IN-PERSON 19TH EDITION!

After more than 20 months of the pandemic, SIAL Canada is pleased to be back in person and return to its status as Canada's only international agri-food tradeshow.

For three days, the 2022 edition of SIAL Canada will have all eyes on Montreal with more than 800 exhibitors from all over Canada and the world, in 200,000 ft² of exhibition space, ready to meet the more than 20,000 decision-makers there from all over North America!

A tradeshow that's constantly adapting. This year, the equipment section of SET Canada will make way for two new sectors that are growing and are aligned with industry demand: SIAL GROCERANT – a sector that's exclusive to North America and is dedicated to transforming and fusing the worlds of retail and foodservice (and vice versa), and SIAL PACKAGING – a space aimed at responding to developments within the packaging sector and in related logistics.



AN EVENT FEATURING HIGH-LEVEL CONTENT!

The program of 30 or so conferences this year includes: the food of the future, new food trends and innovations, globalization, the challenges of supply and demand management, geographical indications, culinary tourism, and much more...

The startup village: A Canadian exclusive

The start-up village is the only one of its kind in Canada and was launched in 2019 during SIAL Toronto, bringing together more than 20 burgeoning food businesses. These companies will try to promote their products and services during a pitch competition, to earn awards through their innovations in technology, sustainable development, and nutrition, among others.

The international cheese competition is back in 2022!

Building on its success in 2019 in Toronto, which featured 229 cheeses from 9 countries, SIAL Canada welcomes everyone in April 2022 for the second edition of the international cheese competition.

A booming beverage sector

A first this year is the launching of a microbrewery village showcasing Quebec and Canadian craft-beer know-how! Inspire Drink, a hosted event dedicated to drinks of all types and to mixology, will be back.

The importance of the local market

The local market is more important than ever, with over 400 Canadian companies being represented. With pavilions from every Canadian province, SIAL Canada has become the only platform for everything Canada has to offer.

SIAL Canada: A platform for relaunching foodservice

On the floor, thousands of new products and pieces of equipment grounded in the latest trends will be presented! La Cuisine by SIAL will meet the needs of restaurateurs and retailers through two days of programming grounded in the theme of "Sous-Vide Food Service."

SoSIAL commitment

SIAL Canada's SoSIAL program will continue to commit itself to social causes by, among other things, taking part in recovering food on behalf of charities that redistribute it to those in need. In addition, for each entrance ticket that is purchased, SIAL Canada will provide \$5 to Moisson Montréal.

International opportunities

SIAL Canada is a world of products to discover! Canada's shifting demographics, coupled with growing consumer demand for ethnic and specialty products, explains why so many countries will be showcasing their products from overseas. ●

About SIAL Canada: SIAL Canada is an integral part of the SIAL network, the leading global network of shows dedicated to the food industry, with seven shows (SIAL Paris, SIAL Canada Montreal, SIAL Canada Toronto, SIAL China, SIAL Middle East, SIAL InterFOOD Jakarta, and SIAL India). Established in 2001, SIAL Canada is the fruit of three shareholders: the Association des détaillants en alimentation du Québec, the Agri-Food Export Group Quebec-Canada, and Comexposium, in addition to benefiting from support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec; the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Visit <https://sialcanada.com/> for more information on the upcoming show.

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Providing packaging solutions since 1985



By Tom Shurrie

CFIG Continues to be the Voice of the Independents

The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG) has been the unique voice for independents since 1962 and in 2022 the association celebrates its 60th anniversary.

Here are key highlights of what CFIG has accomplished for its members.

CFIG led the fight over the years in maintaining pressure on government to bring forward reductions in interchange fees. The credit card companies, banks and payment processors, the three hands in your wallet, continue to levy fees higher than some other jurisdictions. Our efforts resulted in Visa lowering their grocery rates to 1.23 per cent and MasterCard to 1.22 per cent for independent grocers. In September 2018, Ottawa announced further reductions. An additional drop in the overall rate to 1.4 per cent — along with cuts to premium card rates, was implemented in September 2020. During the pandemic, with the migration away from cash — CFIG pressed for further reductions so that our members could have rates similar to those enjoyed by big business.

In the April, 2021 budget, the Government of Canada pledged to do just that. Promising to see rates paid by small and medium size businesses brought to a level similar to what large corporate entities pay, a consultation process is now underway. Those fee reductions will result in savings of thousands of dollars per store and millions of dollars across the country for our members in the years ahead. A great return on your membership dues! And if the promise to reduce rates for independent grocers to a level similar to big business is realized, that will



Tom Shurrie
President and CEO

be an achievement that will help to level the playing field in a critical area of your business — permanently.

Retail and supplier consolidation have in some cases distorted fair competitive practices in the food industry. CFIG has long advocated the creation of a Grocery Code of Conduct in Canada. The process to develop a Code is currently underway. While the discussions are confidential, CFIG members receive up to date information on these deliberations and will be among the first in industry to see the proposed Code, in late spring, 2022.

The Small Business Matters Coalition, led by CFIG, pushed for a small business tax reduction and further support for business investment. CFIG was invited to



CFIG FCEI 1962-2022

join the Prime Minister when the Federal government lowered the small business tax rate to nine per cent (now the lowest in the G7) effective in January 2019. As well, the government brought forward the ACCI which allows businesses to write off investments in the first year of purchase, as opposed to a multi-year write-off.

When new labelling requirements were imposed on the food industry, CFIG won an exemption that means all products produced in-store or in a commissary for sale in a one-store operation, were exempted from nutritional and allergen labelling requirements, saving single grocers thousands of dollars annually. In January 2019, when the Safe Food for Canadians Act was proclaimed, CFIG's efforts ensured that this exemption was maintained, saving independents \$60,000 per store, per year.

During times of a crisis or emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or devastating floods in BC, CFIG is there to provide our members with important information and updates. As well, we ensure that governments and industry partners, are aware of any issues or questions being raised by our members so that we can get the answers you need, in your time of need.

As the Ontario government moves towards opening up the sale of beer and wine into all grocery stores in the province, CFIG is fighting to ensure fairness in the new framework. A system that in our view needs minimum pricing, increased margins and more flexibility for cross-merchandising. Other measures that CFIG has already won include lower AGCO inspection fees (slashed for independents from \$7,000 to \$1,000) and exemption from providing a letter of credit. The discounted AGCO fees will save our members \$6,000 per store, paying their CFIG membership many times over. ●

To become a member of CFIG contact: membership@cfg.ca

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EASY GRILLING

GIVE CUSTOMERS OPTIONS THIS BARBECUE SEASON

- FROM ALTERNATIVE MEATS TO TWISTS ON TOPPINGS

By Carly Peters

Now more than ever Western Canadians are relishing (burger pun intended) the summer barbecue season. Since the pandemic kept more people cooking at home, or entertaining in small groups, investments backyard grilling set-ups have increased. NDP Group states 14 million grills and smokers have been sold between April 2020 and February 2021, amounting to a 39 per cent increase in dollar sales during the pandemic. This means consumers will continue to put more burgers, plant-based options, and those tempting toppings in to their grocery baskets this summer.

The first thing that often comes to mind when firing up a grill, is a nice cut of beef. However, over the last year, as demand for Canadian beef increased internationally, and its availability became less here at home, prices have continued to rise. As such, consumers are looking to spend a little less this summer, but still want something that's going to give good grill.

Rod Koning, executive director, channel marketing for Canada Beef, suggests grocers not only merchandise traditional summer grilling cuts, but also boost value offerings from the hip and shoulder cuts, thin cuts, and medallions that are either marinated or cross-merchandised with marinade solutions that help stretch the food dollar but still make tender and flavourful grilling steaks.

photo courtesy shutterstock.com



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

He adds while bone-in-rib steak, French-cut style, certainly steals the show in meat service cases, brisket is gaining interest for the many consumers who are trying their hand at home smoking. “Backyard smokers and smoker boxes for the grill that use wood chips provide a great flavour base to [customers] favourite beef cuts.” When it comes to flavours good ol’ Montreal steak spice is still as popular as ever, he says, however, international cuisines, especially with spicing from the Middle East, are certainly having an influence.



Rod Koning, executive director, channel marketing, Canada Beef

Cross-promoting spice blends at the meat counter, which are now more readily available in mainstream grocery stores, makes it easy to experiment for the barbecue enthusiasts. Koning also suggests offering up herb bundles, such as rosemary, for customers to use as brushes for basting as a great way to add flavour to any barbecue dish.

GRILL THE GARDEN

On other side of the spectrum, plant-based options for the grill are swiftly becoming a summer staple. For example, the global plant-based burger patties market is expected to grow by \$ 1.48B during 2021-2025, according to Reportlinker, a marketing research firm. More than ever there’s also additional options for meat alternatives that cook up close to the real thing, while offering variety in flavours and often a lower price point.

Cross-promoting spice blends at the meat counter, which are now more readily available in mainstream grocery stores, makes it easy to experiment for the barbecue enthusiasts.



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

Tony Morello, chief executive officer for Zoglo’s Incredible Food Corp. says burgers continue to trend — the company offers up three varieties including the Incredible Burger, three-mushroom blend and a grain-based option — but consumers are looking for more to toss on the grill. The company has added a meatball option perfect for kabobs paired with pepper

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PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Here are some items that are sure to make any barbecue a hit.

Taking a Dip

Any piece of barbecue pairs well with a fresh plate of veggies and dip.

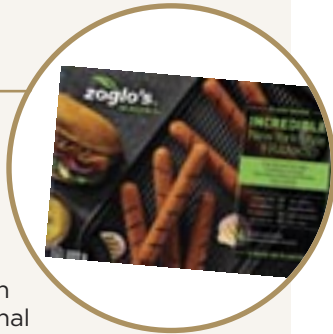
This season, Canada's favourite refrigerated dressings brand, Renee's, will be launching a lineup of fresh and delicious, gourmet produce dips, available in six flavours including Ranch, Dill, Spinach, French Onion, Garlic & Chive and Sweet Chili heat.



Fresh Franks

Hot dogs are a mainstay at any barbecue, but they don't always have to be beef (or pork).

Zoglo's Incredible Food's New York Style Franks are a plant-based option that grills the same way as a traditional wiener and pairs perfectly with your favourite hot dog toppings.



Mix it Up

As more people are turning to meat alternatives it is great to have a plant-based option available.

Even confirmed meat eaters, will enjoy the BABz burger. Because the BABz burger is dry mix, in-store butcher shops/meat counters can make a BadBABz Burger by combining 1/2 dry mix and 1/2 ground meat for a unique "transitional" burger.



Amp Up the Flavour

Hanch will be returning to the stores to help amp up the flavour of consumers' barbecues.

Hanch is a combination of hot sauce and ranch from Kraft Heinz that taste buds are sure to enjoy.

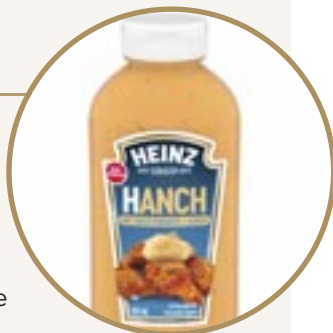


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Grocers should count on more than just the die-hard plant-based eaters to choose the plant-based option for barbecues.

and onion, along with hot dog-alternatives that will hold up to any traditional wiener.

"In many cases you wouldn't know it wasn't meat unless someone told you. These new generation of plant-based meat alternative products really deliver," he states, adding retailers need to make it an easy choice for consumers by merchandising plant-based options along with traditional products. "Showcase new options to the consumer and many will likely buy what they know and pick up a plant-based alternative to try. Once they try some of the great products that are in the market many consumers will continue to buy plant-based on occasion or perhaps even convert all together."

Myrna Selzler, creator and co-owner of BABz, a line of clean, nutrient-dense, plant-based flatbread and meat-alternative dry mix products, agrees, stating grocers should count on more than just the die-hard plant-based eaters to choose the plant-based option for barbecues.

"As people begin to congregate into the backyards of friends and family, post-pandemic, hosts and hostesses 'with the mostest' are going to want to have plant-based options for more than just the vegan and vegetarian guests," she says, pointing out because BABz burgerz are so dense both nutritionally and physically, many people can't tell the difference, particularly when loaded with condiments.

She says because the product is a dry mix, it's also a great option for camping (which goes hand in hand with barbecue season) so consumers don't have to worry about meat spoiling. Really showcasing what plant-based options can offer — from in-store vegan burger cook offs to making patties with different local beers — can create excitement this barbecue season.



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TOP IT ALL OFF

While the trifecta of barbecue toppings — ketchup, mustard, and relish — still reign summertime supreme, people are also looking for add-ons that will give a twist to their traditional burger.

“Experimentation in new burger flavours is driving new occasions and the fastest growing alternative toppings include avocado, eggs, hot sauce and aioli,” says Stephanie Goyette, head of Taste Elevation for Kraft Heinz Canada, pointing to the returning HEINZ sauce combinations “Wasabioli” (combination of Wasabi and Garlic Aioli) and “Hanch” (combination of Hot Sauce and Ranch) that will be returning to stores to help consumers amp up the flavour at their barbecues.



Stephanie Goyette, head of taste elevation, Kraft Heinz Canada

Goyette adds sauces don't always have to go on top. Grocers can merchandise sauces and add-ins, such as mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, breadcrumbs, and Worcestershire sauce, as flavour boosters consumers can mix in with their chosen patty meats - be it beef, chicken, or a combo of both.

“Consumers love to customize their barbecues meals, and often that means they are looking for versatility in their barbecues products,” says Goyette,



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

adding seasonal barbecue displays are a great opportunity for retailers to trigger that purchase occasion through a display that showcases a wide range of barbecue meals, sides, dressings, and sauces. “Showing the versatility of the barbecue occasion through appetite appealing images of mouthwatering meals will be sure to drive inspiration and grow baskets.”

Smoked brisket or plant-based burgers, this barbecue season can be a hot one for consumers by offering up ample options for the grill. ●

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health
and wellness
update

By Aaron Skelton

FOUR THEMES SHAPING NATURAL, ORGANIC & WELLNESS

Being the association that represents all things natural, organic and wellness, we're lucky to get to bear witness to many different facets of the industry - from great new brands to consumer insights, to what's happening at retail, we're uniquely positioned to be the eyes and the ears of this industry and what is happening next.

As we head out of another challenging period, many of us have a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper appreciation of what truly matters to us — for our mind, body, and planet. We are more open to new

possibilities and excited to explore new experiences. We know what we want and are not afraid to chase after it.

This April, we are heading back to Vancouver for our first live event in two years, CHFA NOW. One of the highlights for our team at the show is always trend hunting and searching out the greatest new products.

What do we think is going to win big? These are the themes we're excited to see come to life on the show floor through innovative products, packaging, and communications.

health and wellness update

FOUR THEMES SHAPING NATURAL, ORGANIC AND WELLNESS

1

SUSTAINABILITY

For those in the West, 2021 was an acute reminder that the climate is changing — we need to act, and we need to act now. Across Canada, the sentiment is the same, with the majority of Canadians agreeing that “climate change feels increasingly relevant to their day to day lives.”¹

Consumers are becoming more aware of the impact that their dietary choices have on the planet — in fact, 78 per cent of Canadian’s report that they are “willing to try foods that benefit the environment.”¹ In the coming years, expect to see a growing segment of consumers looking to make purchase decisions that align with their beliefs on the world. Brands that show their commitment to improving how food is grown, produced, packaged, and sold are poised to win big.

Despite increasing consumers savviness, the environmental impacts of packaging, supply chains and manufacturing are large and often complex. Mintel reports that carbon-neutral claims rank low as a purchase driver for sustainable products.¹ Claims that are simple to understand and explain the impact of carbon footprint, fair trade, or highlight the ethical treatment of workers and animals will deliver greater brand trust. Consumers will want details on the efforts, so be prepared to back them up honestly and transparently with real facts and figures. Expect products that accelerate regenerative change (aka climate positive) to be increasingly sought after by sustainably-minded shoppers.



2

MINDFUL JOY

After cycles of lockdowns and the monotony of pandemic life, we’re all eager to experience something new. But in many ways, the past few years have shaped us — we’re not just craving hedonistic pleasure for the sake of it but rather looking to find joy and playfulness in everyday activities. Expect consumers to look for quality over quantity — brands should think like Mari Kondo — asking themselves honestly, does this “spark joy”?

So, where is the joy to be found? According to Mintel, joy will be found in products that have big flavours, great aromas, intriguing colours and unexpected textures.² This is not the time to be boring — it’s the time to delight the senses and create memorable moments.

Surprise and delight consumers by creating unexpected flavour combinations or letting them explore a current favourite in a new format. As our nation becomes more multi-cultural, flavours that reflect our diverse makeup and tap into cultural backgrounds will win the hearts of many. Nostalgia also brings a sense of happiness and playfulness. Look for products that remind us of being a kid while meeting our more adult-minded health goals.



3

THE NEW SELF-CARE

Where FOMO (fear of missing out) once dominated in our lives, now FOFO (fear of finding out) has taken hold. Collectively the state of the world has left us feeling more stressed out, burnt out and sleepless than ever before.

This new self-care isn’t about living that Instagram perfect day full of all things #selfcare. It’s about finding the moments that have a real impact on your state of personal well-being and mental outlook.

For brands looking to tap into this trend, it doesn’t necessarily need to be ingredient-driven. Look at the language used in your claims and descriptors and aim to choose more inclusive words — what is “normal” anyway? Are there areas where you can inject a dose of positivity or camaraderie to help consumers feel more connected? And as more people use technology to monitor their health (both mind and body), expect to see more brands bridging the physical and the digital, creating communities and spaces where people feel welcomed, safe, and supported as they work towards their well-being goals.³

Other trends to watch in this space include better-for-you comfort foods, connecting people with nature, and functional ingredients that help promote quality sleep or a deeper sense of relaxation.



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health and wellness update

4 LESS IS MORE

Frugal is the new black and it's something to be celebrated. Yes, inflationary pressures may have us reconsidering purchases, but this trend is also born from our increasing desire to be more conscious of what we consume.

Don't mistake frugality for an inexpensive price tag. Consumers are looking for efficacy and efficiency in the products they choose. They want results and are willing to pay for them if the value is there.

Look out for more hybrid products (one product that does the work of two) that allow people to streamline their life. DIY and bespoke products will also be something to watch for as people look to tailor the products they use to their specific needs and wellness goals.

Our world has shifted at an incredible pace these past two years — how consumers think, their values and the products they seek are no exception. After being away from our community for so long, we're excited to get back to our live events this April. We're looking forward to all the incredible innovation that the natural, organic and wellness industry has created. We hope you can join us as we break down more trends and industry insights through our conference programming and trend hunting from the show floor. ●



Aaron Skelton is the President and Chief Executive Officer at the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA).



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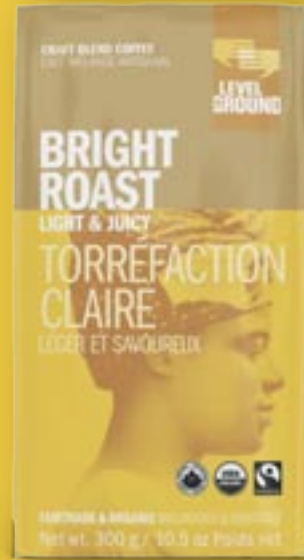
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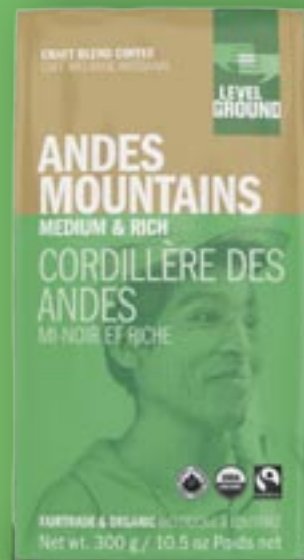
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WHICH ONES WILL YOU CHOOSE?



Boosh Acquires Beanfields

Boosh Plant-Based Brands Inc. has acquired substantially all the assets of Beanfields Inc. The acquisition reflects the Company's strategy taking hold, providing value creation and an instantly accretive opportunity for shareholders, bringing a leading brand into the Boosh portfolio. This transaction catapults Boosh into being one of the largest emerging markets plant-based food companies in the world.

Beanfields produces and sells a healthy, gluten-free, non-GMO, vegan, top eight allergen-free flavoured bean-based chip. The portfolio includes a broad offering of nine flavours, including Black Bean, Sour Cream and Onion, Firey Hot and Nacho flavours. They have capitalized on the industry trends of 'Better for You' in the salty snack category.

Beanfields received the 2019 "Rising Star Award" from NOSH (Natural, Organic, Sustainable and Healthy) organization. In June 2021, it introduced its Rings line, which became one of its fastest-selling products. This past December, NOSH recognized Rings as a Best New Product for 2021. Beanfields has authorizations currently in over 7,000 outlets throughout North America.

Jim Pakulis, chief executive officer for Boosh, commented, "The Beanfields Team did an incredible job building Beanfields into a top-five brand in the category. They led the category with innovation and built a truly differentiated brand. Now with Boosh's resources, infrastructure, and capabilities, we expect to help Beanfields grow to its next level."

"It's truly an amazing opportunity to have one of the fastest-growing plant-based snack chips and onion rings in both Canada and the US," states Connie Marples, founder, and president of Boosh. "Beanfields' packing design, as well as their product lines, are directly in line with our style and philosophy. Like Boosh, Beanfields provides fun, healthy, plant-based options for families to enjoy".

"Operationally, we have all hands on deck during the transition period and will begin to reach out to the existing client base next week," states TJ Walsh, head of North American sales. "In the meantime, we urge all Super Bowl fans to fill up with Beanfields chips and onion rings before sitting down and enjoying any number of Boosh's entrees, pates, and cheeses."



Colnuck is Ready for CHFA 2022

Currently, when there is a considerable need to reduce single-use plastic consumption in Canada, Colnuck is more than ready to participate in CHFA Vancouver 2022.

Colnuck Ltd is a leading supplier of a large variety of custom-made reusable bags and other innovative items made from different environmentally friendly materials such as non-woven polypropylene, woven polypropylene, PET, polyester, jute, and certified organic cotton.

Year after year, they have participated in trade shows and conferences. As a result, they have accumulated over 18 years of trajectory in the industry. Thanks to their customers' preference due to the excellent service, innovation and quality that characterizes them. Colnuck presence in these events allows them to create a one-on-one interaction in a business environment that has given them the opportunity to establish long-term relationships.

Due to recent events, many trade shows and conferences migrated to online platforms, which represented a substantial challenge for many businesses. Colnuck and its team behind the scenes achieved an extraordinary transition to virtual booths. However, their desire to connect again in person has always remained.

This year, besides participating as one of the exhibitors, they are also coming back as Platinum Sponsors of CHFA Vancouver 2022. They firmly believe that each other's support can lead to tremendous results. For Colnuck, CHFA has become an ally in Canada's sustainability, natural and organic industry.



Nutricare USA LLC Partners with iLevel Management Inc

Nutricare USA LLC has partnered with iLevel Management, Inc. to act as sales broker to natural health food stores, mass retail, foodservice and drug stores in Canada for Nutricare's innovative brand; PATCH Bamboo Bandages.

PATCH is trailblazing the global first aid category as the world's first natural, sustainable bandage that solves a consumer problem for 25%+ of the population who have an allergy or sensitivity to traditional adhesive wound care products. PATCH products are all natural, ecofriendly, and sourced from soft-breathable bamboo fibre, making for an eco-friendly alternative that is effective and suitable for all skin types.

Since launching the brand in North America at Natural Products Expo West 2019, brand gained placement into thousands of retail doors across the US & Canada. PATCH continues to win numerous consumer & industry awards including B Corp Best for the World 2019, the NEXTY Consumer Choice Award for Best New Personal Care Product at the virtual Natural Products Expo West 2020 Show and most recently Best for the World™ B Corps of 2021 as the top 5% B Corps out of 4,000 worldwide in the impact area of environment.

"We are thrilled to enter a new partnership with the iLevel Team, and look forward to the growth and impact that we will achieve together as we continue the Nutricare/PATCH Bamboo Bandages Journey in the great country of Canada", says Hammad Atassi, president - North America, Nutricare.



Tips for Great Data Visualization



Presentation skills are so critical in today's world, especially as we shift towards more virtual-based presentations. So whether you're presenting internally or externally, we cannot undervalue the importance of using data visualization to really make our presentations come alive.

I'll give you new ways to think about data visualization, including three great tips to help you hone your skills and ensure your presentations are compelling and effective!

ELEMENTS OF YOUR VISUAL DATA PRESENTATION

Good data visualization needs two elements in order to be effective. First, is the design. This means knowing whether to choose a chart, an infographic, a map, a table, bullet points, or smart art. The design aspect also includes colours use, visual appeal, font

choice, text size, and the design layout of your data.

The second element is contextual awareness. Contextual awareness relates to the purpose of your visuals, what you're trying to communicate, and who your audience is. You want each slide and visual to provide relevant information for a specific audience and support your goal and presentation objective. So even if a graphic, table, or chart looks good, if it doesn't serve a direct purpose, take it out of your presentation.

THREE WAYS TO IMPROVE DATA VISUALIZATION

Focus on Colour

Different colours represent different emotions to us from optimism, confidence, strength and friendliness, to defiance, fear, anxiety and boredom. Using the wrong colour in your slides can really make or break your presentation.

For instance, red typically depicts negative urgency and passion; green is positive, money, environmental; yellow, optimism, happiness and energy; orange, energy, creative and adventure, and blue is cool and water.

Granted, I realize many are stuck with certain colours because of their corporate logo colour. Your company colours will likely drive a large portion of your colour scheme. So if you have a red logo, then red needs to be integrated into your slides despite any negative connotation we typically associate with it. But when you can, stick to colour archetypes and norms associated with picking a certain colour. For example, you wouldn't usually use green to demonstrate a negative statistic.

Ways to Use Colour Effectively

Colour gradients are great to show progressions. If you have a visual you'd like to represent low to high, you can use a light blue all the way up to the darkest blue to show the progression.

To highlight important data, use bright and distinctive colours to complement or contrast against more muted colours. This way, the bright colours will pop, helping your audience focus on the most important data. For less important or contextual data to be included but not to stand out, gray is a great choice.

IMPROVE CLARITY

Reduce Cognitive Load

To improve clarity in your presentation, the first step is to reduce cognitive load. This means to eliminate the information and visuals that overload your brain. So when you're creating graphs, clear the clutter. Don't add in extra axis labels or axis lines. Don't overwhelm your audience with colours or use coloured text. Keep your visuals simple and straightforward.

Remove Redundancy

For instance, a lot of the time I'll see that the main title at the top of the slide is the same as the title in a chart below. If it's the same, get rid of the one in the chart. You don't need it; you're already saying what it is up at the top.

Spacing Visual Elements

Be conscious of how you group elements together. Place related items and information next to each other or create a uniform connectedness, such as using the same colour, so the audience knows there is a relationship between certain elements. You don't want the audience scrambling and searching the screen to find what you're talking about; make it as easy as possible to follow your presentation.

Along with grouping related items, also anticipate interpretation and proper order of data, from smallest to largest or largest to smallest. Don't put information in a weird order that isn't intuitive. You want to help the audience as much as possible. This means clearly highlighting the important stuff with bolded text, colour, upper case text, or deliberate font size.

Also consider adding in icons or pictures. Not only do they help to break up large chunks of text and data

to give the eye a reprieve, but icons and pictures can quickly convey concepts and ideas without words. The Noun Project is a free resource that provides amazing icons for just about everything.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT VISUALS

Between the myriad different charts, graphs, and tables to choose from, deciding on the right visual can be overwhelming. But first and foremost, you want to match the visual to your purpose. For instance, a pie chart may not always be the best way to represent your data. (Pie charts are the most overused chart in business.) So if you're comparing data from one year to another, a column or bar chart may be the best choice rather than a pie chart. Make sure you're strategic in picking your visual to best convey your data.

Guide the Eye with Animation

I use animation all the time. It allows me to control what I'm presenting as I'm presenting it, instead of everything shown at once as a static image on the slide. Not only are static slides more boring, but they make it harder for me to guide where my audiences' eye should be. Animation creates a flow and pace to the presentation, making it easier for the audience to follow the story as well as have more time to process information one piece at a time.

Keep it Simple

Remember to keep it simple. Overly complicated slides or intricately detailed graphs can leave the audience confused or feeling foolish that they're not understanding your presentation. And most won't speak up or ask questions because they don't want to be the dumb one in the room.

Know your audience. A super complex slide may only work if you're dealing with data scientists who you can assume will understand specific numbers or terms. Find a balance as you don't want to go too simplistic either. Create space and time to explain certain terms, formulas, or numbers so your audience will be able to follow your presentation and understand your insights.

Be sure to pause and check in with your audience to make sure they're understanding and following you. Because if you start losing the audience because they don't understand some of the data that you're presenting, then they might say no to a really good idea.

MASTERING DATA VISUALIZATION

Data visualization is an integral part of presentation skills where you must master a lot of different components. You need to be strong at PowerPoint. You need to understand how to create great stories. You need to know how to tailor visual data to match your purpose and your audience. But once you begin to master these skills, your presentations will come alive, opening new opportunities for your business and your clients. ●



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



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GROWING FROM THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY



Ken Keelor,
CEO, Calgary Co-op



CALGARY CO-OP IS MOVING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE PAST

By Deb Draper

Calgary Co-op is one of the largest retail co-operatives in North America with locations in Calgary, Airdrie, Cochrane, High River, Okotoks, and Strathmore including food centres, pharmacies, gas stations, car washes, commercial card locks, Home Health Care centres, Wine Spirits Beer locations, Cannabis, Community Natural Foods, and Beacon

Pharmacies — close to 100 locations in total.

With over 440,000 members, 3,850 employees, assets of \$627 million and annual sales of \$1.2 billion, Calgary Co-op has been recognized as one of Alberta's Top 75 Employers for several years in a row and is committed to delivering an exceptional customer experience through inspired team members.



CO-OP

BEST LESS
OUR BEST DEALS FOR YOU!

The story of this amazing success is one of vision, action, and commitment to serving the needs of members and community.

In the 1940s, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) opened a small co-operative grocery store in downtown Calgary, selling it in 1951 to the Alberta Co-operative Wholesale Association (ACWA).

The story of this amazing success is one of vision, action, and commitment to serving the needs of members and community.



Five years later 1,000 member-owners founded the Calgary Co-operative Association, purchased the former ACWA store for \$58,000 and began selling farm-to-table food supplied by local farmers and ranchers.

Fifty years later, Gordon Barker, one of the original founding members and the first board chair explained, "Calgary Co-op was formed by ordinary people who wanted a business they could rely on when others failed to provide them with the services they needed."

By 1958 the new association had acquired the property next door to build its first service station, and two years later opened a second store to better serve its 3,350 membership. And it kept growing from there.

"Today we are the fifth-largest land owner and property tax payer in Calgary," said Ken Keelor, CEO of Calgary Co-op. "We own most of our holdings and have about 200 tenants that love to be on our site and avail of good traffic. A lot of those tenants are small operators, and as a locally owned cooperative we believe this is important."

It all begins and ends with the members who own Calgary Co-op. A one dollar membership fee buys a share in the co-operative and eligibility to participate in the 'one member-one

vote' democratic process to vote for an eligible member-owner to join the board and actively participate in meetings of member-owners.

The board operates independently from management, while ensuring the two leadership groups function in alignment with Calgary Co-op's long-term strategy of serving the needs of its members through exceptional customer experiences, products and services while retaining financial sustainability in Calgary's competitive food retailing marketplace.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW AND IN THE FUTURE?

"This is my eighth year as CEO," Keelor said. "And I've really enjoyed being at the heart of building a strategy for Calgary Co-op that we just refreshed with a five-year plan for 2021-2025. Five specific priorities include 24 initiatives spanning everything from pharmacy to real estate to member experience. We constantly share strategic updates with our teams so they know where we're at because their input is crucial. They feed the strategy while the board provides member oversight."

First priority, Keelor explained, is differentiating

"Last year was our 65th anniversary, and we opened our first new food store in five years," Keelor said. "And we are working on several more significant projects."

As well, we are focused on a growing commitment to our community and to the health and wellness of Calgarians through our natural foods business, home health care and pharmacies. We want to attract younger members, and some of the work we're doing is to encourage that demographic. They are very interested in whole health, and Natural Choice in our foods stores is becoming more important. We provide service and caring and knowledge as our team members are willing to stand in the aisle and talk to them about a product and help them make their choice, and this in turn creates trust with our customers."

Another area of focus is petroleum. Calgary Co-op currently offers 37 fuel stations, 27 car washes and four commercial card locks located in and around the Calgary area, and is looking at evolving retail gasoline operations with new initiatives such as electronic vehicles and alternative energy

Service, caring, and excellence: these are the core values of Calgary Co-op.



food products from everything else out there. That means improving product assortment, launching and building private brands, and communicating through flyers and digital channels. Calgary Co-op will continue to focus on sourcing local food and suppliers, cementing its position as being distinctly Calgarian through unique assortments and brands, customized by neighbourhoods and cultural influences.

Real estate presence will continue to grow as Calgary Co-op plans new stores, new tenant buildings and renovations to existing locations.

sources, ensuring the co-op will be in position to meet the changing needs of its members.

Finally, Keelor noted that Calgary Co-op will continue to work towards building close relationships with members, community and suppliers — vital to growth and customer confidence.

Service, caring, and excellence: these are the core values of Calgary Co-op. Placed under an umbrella of financial sustainability, this little co-op that could — and did — will continue to grow and contribute to a better quality of life for all its members.

Calgary Co-op currently offers 37 fuel stations, 27 car washes and four commercial card locks.

CO-OP



The Sage Hill location was completed in November 2021, and is only 30,000 square feet.

NEW STORES, NEW LOOK, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Calgary Co-op is investing in new and refreshed retail operations as well as various residential and office project sites as part of its ongoing growth strategy. These investments bring new, in-demand services to communities, work for local consulting firms and contractors, and more jobs in the stores.

Calgary Co-op is investing in new refreshed retail operations as well as various residential and office project sites as part of its ongoing growth strategy.

The first new store in the past five years to be added to Calgary Co-op real estate holdings is in the Sage Hill Quarter in Northwest Calgary, completed in November 2021 in time for the Co-op's 65th anniversary. The Sage Hill store is part of a new development featuring open landscaped public spaces, a water feature,

outdoor seating, and a mix of retail and residential facilities. Along with the food store, a Co-op Wine Spirits Beer store and a gas bar also opened to serve the community.

"Some things are unique to this store," Keelor said. "For example, it's only 30,000 square feet, much smaller than our typical stores. Yet we've set it up to provide the same level of products and services that our customers have come to

expect in a bigger store. It's loaded with 2,400 local products including Calgary Co-op's private-label brands: Cal & Gary's/Cal & Gary's Organics, Founders & Farmers and Only Alberta meats and features a full-service bakery, deli, meat, pharmacy, floral, health and beauty, and a Natural Choice department."

The new streamlined design is bright and sleek with lit shelving in various areas of the

HAPPY 65 YEARS

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CO-OP

The Auburn Bay location opened in 2016.



store and new vibrant colours throughout to make an overall dynamic shopping experience. "This colour palette was first introduced when we opened the Auburn Bay store in 2016 as part of our long-term strategy to appeal to younger customers," Keelor adds.

The new streamlined design is bright and sleek with lit shelving in various areas of the store.

"The smaller footprint uses less energy, has smart building automation, and we've put in many environmental sustainability measures throughout, including LED lighting that uses 80 per cent less energy than traditional lighting. We upgraded the refrigeration systems for more energy efficiency, and repurposed equipment from other locations rather than buying new that would need to be shipped from across the globe. The store has our first electric vehicle charging station that can charge two vehicles at the same time."

Offering even more to the community, the Sage Hill location includes a number of community gathering spaces, as well as an indoor community room that is available free of charge for community groups, and as Keelor noted, the store brought 96 new jobs to the community.

NEW STORE COMING TO SOUTHWEST CALGARY

Phase one of the huge redevelopment project in Calgary's southwest community of Oakridge began in spring 2021. The completed urban village will include a new 56,000 square-foot food store, a two-storey retail and office building, as well as three residential buildings containing a total of 270 units.

"Oakridge is an older site in a very important location," Keelor said. "We are working within a staged approach in order to minimize disruption to the community, so the work will go to 2026. We've just completed our new professional building and right now are moving

The Oakridge location will be 56,000 square feet and will be completed in 2026.



Congratulations to CALGARY CO-OP on its 65th Anniversary



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Crowfoot Wines & Spirits Tasting Centre.

in our tenants, dismantling the old mall, and building the food store. When it's finished, there will be a brand new Co-op food store, gas bar, a Co-op Wine Spirits Beer store, Co-op Cannabis store, mixed-use retail, and residential spaces. As well, we will be creating sustainable green initiatives and modernizing the infrastructure for the community."

As in Sage Hill, the new store will be smaller than what is currently in place, but with a more modern, efficient layout offering all the usual Co-op products. Plans are in place for environmentally

sustainable mechanical and electrical systems, even a green rooftop space.

"We want this new urban village at our Oakridge location to be a hub where residents can live, work, play, and shop," Keelor said. "The world is moving towards this; people don't want to drive all over the city anymore."

MAKING OLD INTO NEW

In other areas of the city, Calgary Co-op is making extensive renovations to several locations.

"We are continuously transforming our business to deliver a positive shopping experience to our members," said Jeff Ambrose, senior vice-president of operations and merchandising. "Last year we completely renovated our Dalhousie Food Centre with new décor, environmental upgrades, and enhanced services."



"We are continuously transforming our business to deliver a positive shopping experience to our members."



The Dalhousie Food Centre was completely renovated last year.



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Happy Anniversary!



CO-OP

The expanded Health and Beauty Centre and Natural Choice areas have bright lit shelving and new items.



Some of those changes include a beautiful new produce area with larger, brightly lit produce tables and Calgary Co-op's modern colour palette. Customers can now shop at the huge cheese island with over 150 varieties of local and international cheese, the new seafood and full-serve meat counter and a Bento area along with a 16-foot deli counter.

These renovations, new stores, and expanded community hubs are all part of Calgary Co-op's five-year plan to grow and better serve its members.

The expanded Health and Beauty Centre along with bright lit shelving and new items in the Natural Choice area follows through on the décor and design elements that are part of the new and renovated stores. In addition, all lighting throughout the store has been converted to LED,

while more energy efficient coolers with glass doors went into the dairy and meat departments.

"We were able to keep the store open to our customers during the renovations, which was important to us and to them," Ambrose said. "We communicated regularly with our members throughout the process using email to let them know our timelines, when and if there would be any impacts to their shopping experience. Once the renovations were complete, we emailed our Dalhousie members a special offer to draw them back into the finished store.

We're very proud of how fresh and vibrant the Dalhousie Food Centre looks today, and know our members appreciate all the additional products, services, and enhancements we've made for them."

Keelor noted that Calgary Co-op also recently finished some minor renovations at the Brentwood location, and is working towards a future complete redevelopment of that site. "Plus, right now we are in the midst of renovating our Midtown downtown store — our biggest store in terms of business. We are refreshing and optimizing the shopping experience,

and putting in our very first Cal & Gary's Bistro in that location. We'll have an oven and will be making breakfast and lunch for our customers with items leaning towards our Cal & Gary's brand."

These renovations, new stores, and expanded community hubs are all part of Calgary Co-op's five-year plan to grow and better serve its members.

UNIQUE AND TRUSTED PRODUCTS FOR CALGARY CO-OP MEMBERS

In 2020, Calgary Co-op switched its food distribution from Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) to Save-On-Foods and created two new private brands — Cal & Gary's and Founders & Farmers.

Keelor explained that the change in Calgary Co-op's food business was needed to ensure long term financial sustainability for the member-owned co-operative, and that private brands make a retailer's identity in the marketplace.

"In moving from FCL we took back the creation of our own flyer, took the creation of our own private brands in hand, and drove local products from about 600 at the time to 2,400 local items currently, supporting more than 120 local producers," Keelor said. "We created



Cal & Gary's, Founders & Farmers, and Cal & Gary's Organics. These brands are all about quality and value, curated especially for Calgarians to reflect the truly unique nature of Calgary and surrounding communities and to represent the Calgary Co-op roots in terms of value and quality.

While we were developing these brands, we listened to what our

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Cal & Gary's brand was specifically designed to deliver more locally-sourced products and global cuisine geared towards the tastes of Calgarians.

members said they wanted: a unique assortment curated for their taste, as local as we can make them, organic, global influence, quality, and value," Keelor said." We didn't have a private brand team, so we hired as many local people as we could to develop the brands."



CAL & GARY'S FOR CALGARIANS

This brand was specifically designed to deliver more locally-sourced products and global cuisine geared towards the tastes of Calgarians, while also reflecting pride in community with a little smile. Cal & Gary's name itself is a play on its home town and as Keelor has noted, there's no fear of it being copied. Shoppers get a chuckle out of the Calgaryisms on the labels, such as the Prime Rib Burger with its tag line "Ready to grill hail, snow or shine", an insider joke about Calgary's ever-changing weather. "We have used as many local suppliers as we could," Keelor said. "That's part of the Calgary Co-op identity. We have just under 1,000 items now, in all categories including fresh meat, which is all sourced locally."

FOUNDERS & FARMERS STARTED IT ALL

The second brand launched by Calgary Co-op has a bit more of an artisan feel than the deliberately curated Cal & Gary's products. Instead, Founders & Farmers delivers the best prices, with quality equal to national brands in the generic categories customers look to buy. It's the value brand.

Keelor said, "Founders & Farmers brand goes back to our heritage of ranchers and local farmers who first started Calgary Co-op 65 years ago, continuing the tradition of providing quality goods and finding a better way to serve their friends and family. It's the baseline product that is equivalent to national brands."

ALBERTA ONLY MEAT

In 2018 Calgary Co-op introduced its private brand Alberta Only Meat featuring beef, chicken, pork, and lamb products from Alberta producers and only available at Calgary Co-op, and continues to actively source as much food as possible from Calgary, across Alberta, and throughout Western Canada. "As a cooperative we are very committed not only to our



financial sustainability but also to the economy of Calgary," Keelor said. "We estimate there are about 1,000 supplier personnel that we hire or provide wages for through buying from about 120 local suppliers and we are adding new products weekly.

CO-OP



The Home Health Care Centres offer customers health care products including equipment, furniture and services.

With these suppliers, we are contributing to the local economy and at the same time cutting out transportation across the country, reducing costs and carbon emission. And now with the ongoing supply chain issues, the pandemic, and the weather, we have used this time frame to develop further relationships and maintain strategic partnerships with our suppliers. We are working to cut out the red tape, eliminate the

is always open to them. Being small enough, Calgary Co-op can quickly get them onto the shelf; it's a great spot to get a foothold before they scale up."

Keelor tells the story about one of Calgary Co-op's local producers, Paradise Hill Farm outside Nanton, Alberta and famous for its market fresh tomatoes. "Some years ago, they had a big fire, and in the spring our produce people went out and helped them replant their crop. Our team members love to go out and do this with them. And of course we buy pretty much all of the crop. It's a beautiful product in our stores, and our customers love it."

The 2020 Calgary Co-op Annual Report states that it has seen strong benefits in having more control over merchandised products and an enhanced commitment to buying local. The organization, the members and the entire community benefit, and that is what Calgary Co-op is all about.

The growth of Whole Health is one of the areas of focus that Calgary Co-op has identified as a priority.

need to deal with border crossings and shipment issues, and are able to give our members what we call 'The Best from the West'.

We had a conference with our local producers and farmers a couple of years ago and have another coming up soon. We are keen on supporting these small suppliers, and our door

WHOLE HEALTH EVERY DAY FOR EVERYONE

Calgary Co-op is focused on helping its members and customers live their best lives whether through pharmacies, food stores or home health care locations.

The growth of Whole Health is one of the areas of focus that Calgary Co-op has identified as a priority. This means going beyond just food, looking for ways to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle. As Keelor said, "For us, whole health is in the reinvigoration of our pharmacies, more choice in natural and organic food products, and our Home Health Care Centres, another of our lines of business."



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NATURAL CHOICE MADE EASY

Already having achieved a solid foundation and reputation for health and wellness in the local community established by its pharmacies, Calgary Co-op has been adding another layer of wellness options for its members as it opens 'Natural Choice' sections in most of its stores.

Not only do they carry everything a natural health store does, but each location has its own Natural Choice Advisor, who can provide expert advice to customers.

These advisors are highly trained experts on vitamins, minerals and supplements, able to provide information and advice on a wide selection of over 4000 Natural Choice health and wellness products.

In 2019 Calgary Co-op brought on board Community Natural Foods (CNF) as an independent wholly-owned subsidiary.

Committed to expanding in this direction, in 2019, Calgary Co-op brought on board Community Natural Foods (CNF) as an independent wholly-owned subsidiary. Since its first store opened in 1977, CNF flourished in its focus on providing organic foods, natural nutritional supplements and sustainable lifestyle products. Knowledgeable staff, free expert talks, and the highest standard of fair trade, local and organic products are its



Community Natural Foods is an independent wholly-owned subsidiary that Calgary Co-op brought on board in 2019.

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hallmark. Keeping the same staff and management structure, the same commitment to local and organic products, the three CNF stores fit perfectly into Calgary Co-op's mission.

As the market and demand for local, healthy and convenient products continues to grow, Calgary Co-op is also focused on sourcing products from local producers and farmers, and can only benefit from the strong relationships CNF has built with its vendors over the years.

"We refreshed the décor and the complete look of the downtown store," said Keelor. "That included expanding the produce section, redoing

As the market and demand for local, healthy and convenient products continue to grow, Calgary Co-op is also focused on sourcing products from local producers and farmers.

the kitchen area, making Health and Beauty more prominent, and completely redoing the online experience. In the upcoming months and years, we will be updating the other two locations and even building a new store as we look to expand the banner.

These days people are certainly taking stock of what's important: local, cooking at home, the focus on health and wellness. We believe we're perfectly positioned to operate Community Natural Foods in partnership with our pharmacy, whole foods, organics and home health care divisions."



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IT ALL STARTED WITH THE PHARMACY

The first Calgary Co-op pharmacy opened at the Brentwood Centre in 1965, and today every one of the 24 food stores includes a full-service, progressive pharmacy offering a broad range of health and wellness services all in one place.

“We have a huge pharmacy business that is growing dramatically because of trust and our commitment to the health of our community,” Keelor said. “When we did our long term strategy work almost seven years ago, we developed a totally new store design, one that is meant to be brighter, more colourful and appealing to youthful people. That concept included the pharmacies, bringing in new software, and working online to make sure they were moving

blood pressure, diabetes health services, migraines and depression.

Prescribing pharmacists can assess, prescribe, and inject adult vaccinations based on guidelines and medication requirements — including all travel vaccinations, shingles, Pneumovax-23, and Prevnar. Flu shots, COVID-19 vaccinations and rapid antigen testing are all available at any of the 24 pharmacies.

Going even further as part of its mandate to serve the community, Calgary Co-op provides free prescription delivery within the city limits of Calgary, Strathmore, Airdrie and High River; delivery for a fee is available outside these areas. And now contactless curbside pick-up is available for prescriptions and all products, also at no charge.

Looking to support healthcare professionals, Calgary Co-op launched its Pharmacy Specialty HUB to help reduce clinic workload by coordinating care between the patient, healthcare professionals,

insurance providers, and patient support programs. This means timely initiation of biologic/specialty medications by working collaboratively with insurers and patient support programs to ensure coverage is obtained as quickly as possible as well as providing ongoing follow-up so there is no interruption of therapy. Further, the Calgary Co-op pharmacist will provide onboarding training for a patient starting new drugs, including injection training and disease/medication education while continuing to communicate to all members of the health care team.

Today everyone of the 24 food stores includes a full-service progressive pharmacy offering a broad range of health and wellness services.

with the times - initiatives like our Virtual Care Platform, a web portal for online appointment booking, prescription refills, patient profile viewing, refills using text, and more. All these services are provided in every Calgary Co-op pharmacy.”

Sometimes members need advice or clarification on health issues, and to accommodate that Calgary-Co-op pharmacies offer online appointment booking to meet with a pharmacist virtually or on the phone. This includes getting advice on managing allergies and anaphylaxis, asthma,

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REACHING EVEN FURTHER INTO THE COMMUNITY

Continuing to expand its focus on health and wellness, Calgary Co-op recently purchased two new pharmacies that serve another branch of the community.

Ambrose explained, "Calgary Co-op recently acquired two Beacon Pharmacies located at the Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre and the Mustard Seed Wellness. Both these pharmacies will operate as wholly owned subsidiaries, meaning they will continue to be branded as Beacon Pharmacies and the team members and current services will stay intact.

We are committed to bringing our level of excellence and service in health and wellness to as many communities as we can and look forward to meeting our customers' needs at these two locations in a geographic area we have not been able to reach before. These



BRINGING HEALTH AND WELLNESS INTO THE HOME

Another division of Calgary Co-op's commitment to healthy living is found in its three Home Health Care stores with a fourth planned to open this spring.

"Calgary Co-op's commitment to health and wellness is reflected in the products and services we provide at our three Home Health Care locations in Calgary. Our 75 health care specialists work with our customers to ensure they get exactly what they need to

support their health and wellness. Our products and services are designed to help customers be their best. We keep our customers on the move with mobility equipment, safe and comfortable in their homes by providing specialized furniture and safety products and support their needs as their partners in

"Our 75 health care specialists work with customers to ensure they get exactly what they need to support their health and wellness."

pharmacies support a unique demographic that include many of our city's vulnerable populations and provide specialized services specific to their clientele's needs. Over the next several months, our pharmacy team will work alongside the team members at these pharmacies so they can learn from each other."



CONGRATULATIONS CALGARY CO-OP ON 65 GREAT YEARS!

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Co-op's overall strategy to better serve its membership, connect with its community and stay strong financially. That means the growth of pharmacy, natural foods and wellness products, and home health care to the benefit of the co-op, its members and the community.

THE MANY REWARDS OF BEING A MEMBER

Calgary Co-op has flourished in a highly competitive market and a great deal of that success comes from its focus on the needs of members and partnership with the community.

"We have 440,000 members and are daily growing," Keelor said. "We work to offer initiatives to make membership appealing to both new and current members. One key benefit is once a year patronage returns in cash and shares. For 2021, members earned almost \$22 million — two per cent of total retail purchases and four cents/litre on fuel. And that's during a pandemic."

Another benefit comes from being part of something bigger and having a say in the organization. Every member can attend the Annual Meeting, run for a position on the Board of Directors, and vote in director elections.

When it comes to shopping, members can receive personalized Me-wards offers for the food centres, gas station and convenience stores, and Wine Spirits Beer locations. "Launched a few years ago, the Me-wards program consists of digital offers that members can load up weekly in a 'wallet' that seamlessly attaches to their membership number to use when they shop," Keelor said. "We're very proud of this program as it offers unique savings. We also offer team member Me-wards to help them save some money with their shopping."

Calgary Co-op members enjoy discounted tickets for various local attractions such as Calaway Park, hockey games, movies, and ski hills and lower rates with local partners in insurance, parking, and travel businesses.

accessibility. We carry Western Canada's largest sports medicine selection to help our customers stay on top of their game, and we're here for our customers through those moments in life when they could use some additional support such as maternity health and wellness and mastectomy care."

It starts with a free in-home consultation from a home safety expert to determine what is needed. After the equipment is purchased, staff will show customers how to use it, take care of it, and access financing if required through the Health Smart Program. They are experienced and able to advise on such programs and

Calgary Co-op members receive equity and cash back on the full price of purchase through their membership benefits.

organizations as Alberta Aids to Daily Living, Veteran's Affairs, the Worker's Compensation Board, and many more.

Home access is another important consideration, and Calgary Co-op's Home Health stores can deliver and properly install ramps, stair lifts, even elevators if that's what's needed. They carry a selection of mobility equipment, manual and power wheelchairs, and the fitting needed for the best outcome.

In addition to these extensive product offerings and superior customer service, Calgary Co-op members also receive equity and cash back on the full price of purchase through their membership benefits.

Focusing on Whole Health is part of Calgary

CO-OP



The Stuff-a-Bus event in partnership with Calgary Transit raises thousands of dollars for the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank.



Carryout service at all the food stores, full service at the gas stations, expert sommelier advice at Wine Spirits Beer locations are a few more perks of membership.

Keelor added, "We launched online shopping in late 2019 in our Wine Spirits Beer locations and later expedited that in food and other lines of business. Curbside pickup is free or we offer delivery for a fee. We include personal touches in our online orders — a little surprise item and a thank-you note signed by the person who picks the products."

But Calgary Co-op is also about taking part in supporting the community, and that's very important, Keelor noted. "Our members really appreciate the social purpose side of Calgary Co-op, which we do through the Calgary Co-op Foundation, and last year, we donated \$2.7 million to charitable partners."

Those charitable partners include four food banks — Calgary, Airdrie, Wheatland, and High River, Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids, The Calgary Senior's Resource Society, the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, The Children's Cottage, Meals on Wheels, and the Mustard Seed.

To further support the community, Calgary Co-op helps local organizations raise funds through charitable events. For example, every year the Stuff-a-Bus event in partnership with Calgary Transit raises thousands of dollars for the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank, and Calgary Co-op provides thousands of pounds of food for people in need. The annual Charity Golf Classic has been bringing together Calgary Co-op and its suppliers to raise thousands of dollars for local charities since 1993.

Through the Charity Plus Program, Calgary Co-op offers a five per cent discount for registered charities on almost all purchases. And the Community Gift Card Program gives community groups the opportunity to support their fundraising programs by receiving back a portion of the proceeds from the purchase of each Calgary Co-op Gift Card. And if all that weren't enough, Calgary Co-op matches many campaigns throughout the year.

Supporting the community is fundamental to Calgary Co-op's way of doing business and is responsible for a large part of its success and membership loyalty.

It's all about connection — to the members both in-store and online, to the suppliers, bringing in new and interesting local products, and to the community through charitable organizations that help all members of society. Calgary Co-op has a very strong and honoured reputation and that trust brings loyalty.



Supporting Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids are one of the ways that Calgary Co-op helps support the community.

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FAMILY AS A BUSINESS MODEL

There is another important element driving the success of Calgary Co-op and that is the people who work there. Keelor said, “We have over 3,850 team members and another 150 at Community Natural Foods, and I’ve always said, ‘Our people are our secret ingredient’. I know a lot of CEOs say that, but with Calgary Co-op it really is true. You cannot find a more dedicated, caring and inspiring group of individuals. They really care for each other and our customers.”

Calgary Co-op members are owners, and all the team members are also owners. Everyone has a stake in how the co-operative does; everyone is committed to ensuring its long-term

Keelor added, “A few years ago, we had our first 50-year employee — a grocery manager in one of our stores. And we have many 40- and 50-year employees coming up. We have to do service awards twice a year because there are so many people celebrating long service.”

“Our people are our secret ingredient” – you cannot find a more dedicated, caring and inspiring group of individuals.”

viability. It is this environment of belonging, of being together in the stores and in the community that is a huge factor in the strength of member loyalty and support and employee engagement. Everyone who works at Calgary Co-op is a member of a team — the Co-op team, and that is recognized on every level throughout the organization and the industry.

TAKING A PLACE AT THE TOP

In January 2022, for the sixth year in a row, Calgary Co-op was selected from thousands of entries as one of Alberta’s Top Employers. This is an annual competition organized by the editors of “Canada’s Top 100 Employers” to recognize Alberta employers that lead their industries in

offering exceptional places to work. True to its belief in community, Calgary Co-op recognizes this honour as a shared accomplishment. “It’s a testament to the dedication, resiliency and truly caring support and service that all team members have continued to provide to each other, our customers and our communities during a very unique and challenging year.”

Employers are evaluated using the same eight criteria as for the national competition: physical workplace, work atmosphere and social aspects, health, financial and family benefits, vacation and time off, employee communications, performance management, training and skills development, and community involvement. Employers are compared to other organizations in their field to determine which offers the most progressive and forward-thinking programs.

One of the reasons why Calgary Co-op earned the distinction of being an Alberta Top Employer reflects back to the pride team members take in their organization. Working at Calgary Co-op is more than simply a job.

Through the Co-op Community Foundation and community initiatives, Calgary Co-op invested over \$2.2-million in local food security programs in 2020, with a focus on

supporting local food banks, nutrition and education programs, as well as food sustainability initiatives. Additionally, the organization and its members donated more than \$389,000 to pandemic-specific initiatives in local communities.

And Calgary Co-op looks after its team members. Along with helping employees save for the future, it provides retirement planning assistance. And a variety of financial perks, including discounts on cell

phone plans, banking and more.

Calgary Co-op makes sure team members have the skills they need to succeed with programs such as the One-to-One Management Training Program and the Retail Training Program. Whether it’s advancement or other department opportunities, team members have every opportunity to grow their careers. On-going product knowledge training expands skill sets while offering competitive



CO-OP



compensation. And Calgary Co-op even offers team members a Career Development Assistance Program to help them and their families with academic aspirations.

When someone performs beyond expectations, accomplishes difficult objectives and surpasses goals, those achievements are recognized in the form of points that can be redeemed for gift cards, merchandise and

event tickets, donations to charities, and many more opportunities.

Calgary Co-op earned its place in the top 75 Alberta companies through comprehensive employee initiatives, but also because of the three values that are its building blocks: Service — meaning customers' needs drive exceptional shopping experiences; Caring — team members, member-owners, customers, and communities all together; and Excellence — a winning attitude is what keeps Calgary Co-op financially and membership strong.

"It's about the attitude when things go right and more importantly when they don't," Keelor explained. "There is a singular focus on our members and customers, and that takes the blame game away. Second, nearly seven years ago we developed a long-term strategy. On every wall in every one of our locations is that strategy along with our vision, mission and values."

Calgary Co-op employees know that they are an important part of their customers' lives and their community's strength. "To touch the lives of our community by being respected as the best, most trusted place to shop — every day." That is the vision statement that is manifested in every product they sell and every service they perform. Working at Calgary Co-op is more than a job — it's being part of a family.

PULLING TOGETHER IN DIFFICULT TIMES

In response to the pandemic, as an essential service, Calgary Co-op quickly implemented health and safety measures in-store and created programs to support frontline team members, customers, and the community. In a recent BMO podcast Keelor said, "Operating throughout the pandemic safety was and still is paramount. Members wanted to know they were shopping in a safe store. We were very focused on staying a step ahead in health and safety, supplier products, making sure we were listening."

The first action was to activate the emergency planning team with representation across all lines of business. Masks and gloves were made available to all employees. Measures such as sanitizing cashier stations, self-checkouts, and shopping cart handles were introduced. Plexiglas dividers went into place to provide distancing between staff and shoppers. Self-serve food bars were removed. All this seems ordinary now after two years of the pandemic, but at the time, Calgary Co-op was at the forefront of implementing these safety measures.

Stores made designated shopping hours three mornings a week for seniors, immunocompromised individuals, and those living with disabilities, plus pharmacies opened an hour earlier.

Keelor added, "We sent member emails, and used social media, to let them know what to expect when they walked into our stores. The pandemic had people thinking more about what they were buying, and shopping local became very important. We were fortunate to already have 'Team Local' in place and emphasized it even more.

In the early stages of the pandemic, we realized right away that some people couldn't leave home either through self-isolation or as part of a vulnerable population that weren't able to shop for themselves. So we created the Calgary Co-op Care Package of food essentials, free of charge. All they needed to do was drop us a line and let us know, and sometimes store personnel would drive over and deliver it. We sent out 2800 care

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To make sure team members had the support they needed, Calgary Co-op implemented the Champions Pay Program with a \$2.50 per hour pay booster for all frontline employees along with discounts to help them shop and care for their families.

“Through the pandemic, fuel volume fell over 50 percent at one point, so we removed full service for a few months at our gas stations,” Keelor said. “We simply didn’t have the volume to pay those bills, nor were members looking for full service. But we managed not to lay off anyone, juggled hours and kept all our people employed.

We work hard to communicate with team members throughout this pandemic — directly, video messages, and visits are still a regular occurrence. One unique thing about us that helps in this culture is that we are only in Calgary and surrounding areas, so

CALGARY CO-OP
Cares

I can visit all our stores in a couple of days. Most companies see their CEO maybe once a year. We meet with our store managers weekly, although during the pandemic this couldn’t always be in person.

Our team members have been on the front lines since the pandemic began. It hasn’t been easy every day, but when the community needed us the most, we have risen to the challenge.”

And there it is — the Calgary Co-op Vision that is proudly displayed on the walls of every location. “To touch the lives of our community by being respected as the best, most trusted place to shop — every day.” ●

Calgary Co-op implemented the Champions Pay Program for all frontline employees along with discounts to help them shop and care for their families.

packages into the community.”

Another program, Calgary Co-op Cares, provided an opportunity for members and team members to donate to six key charitable partners, and each donation up to \$25,000 was matched by Calgary Co-op.



**CONGRATULATIONS CALGARY CO-OP
ON YOUR 65TH ANNIVERSARY!**

Dairy Farmers of Canada celebrates your continued commitment to feeding Canadians and supporting local farmers and businesses.

Thank you for all that you do, and here's to another 65 years!



Innovation at SIAL



A Q&A with **Isabelle Marquis, Innovation Expert**

In general terms, how critical is innovation for food manufacturers?

Innovation is a word that has been the centre of attention for many years now, in the food industry like for many other sectors. While the reasons for that are multiple, the main objective for placing innovation as a business priority is clear and simple: be and remain competitive in a sector where competition (local and international) is fiercer than ever. Often confused with the idea of creating something new, innovation implies first and foremost to create value for your customers and the consumers. And to achieve that, you need a solid strategy: food companies who don't have an innovation strategy will have a hard time growing in today's business context.

SIAL refers to itself as the North American meeting place for food innovation. In terms of speakers and events, how is this put front and centre of the SIAL agenda?

Innovation is truly at the heart of SIAL show: from the exhibition mapping to the selection of speakers and all the different events planned, innovation is everywhere. Obviously, I have to mention the return of SIAL Innovation contest — a flagship event since the first edition of the show that had to pause last year because of the pandemic — which rewards the most promising and inspiring food innovations from around the world. Also returning are the Startup Village and its pitch competition, the American Buyers Program, as well as the Expert Hub where attendees can meet the expert of their choice to discuss about ideas and opportunities.

Another particularity of SIAL is its capacity to bring together all the different food sectors, and not just food manufacturers. In this year's edition, a special place is made for the foodservice sector with the presentation of many new products and equipment pieces, as well as several activities under La Cuisine by SIAL to address the new opportunities that arise from the progressive merge happening between foodservice and retail sectors (what many people call the grocerant trend). Finally, among the new events planned, let's mention a microbrewery village showcasing Quebec and Canadian craft-beer know-how.

In regards to speakers, the conference program is not 100 per cent finalized yet, but many of the seasoned experts that we've seen in the past will be there again this year (notably Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Peter Chapman, Dana McCauley, Gail Gastelu and Francis Parisien, to name a few). New this year, the Canadian Food Innovation Network will also present a few conferences.

Are there specific examples of some of the innovations attendees can expect to see at SIAL?

With over 800 exhibitors from about 50 countries, I can assure you there will be plenty of inspirations for everyone! I can't give you specific examples of innovative products yet, as the registration to the SIAL Innovation contest is still ongoing (deadline to register is March 15). This being said, I recommend visitors to book ideally two days at the show in order to have the time to discover the thousands of products, packaging and concept ideas that will be shared by the exhibitors and all the experts!

How does learning about these innovations help prepare retailers, distributors and others for the future?

Besides all the contacts and connections that happen at the show, the SIAL Canada show is an amazing opportunity to help food companies identify key insights that can help each and everyone to have a better sense of where the market is going. It's also a great place to see how others address some of the issues or challenges one may have, and find solutions for them. And of course, being connected with trends and innovation is a great way to find inspiration for new projects.

The SIAL Canada show is a very important B2B event and business development opportunity. But it's also an opportunity to connect with colleagues, meet new people and be in touch with all that the food industry has to offer, starting from its people. After two years of struggles, uncertainty and isolation, I think this year's show will be highly valuable on the human side as much as the business side! ●



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SASKATCHEWAN

RESPONDS TO CHANGING CONSUMER DEMANDS AND SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES

Despite supply chain disruptions and worker shortages, 2021 saw significant increases in value-added food processing and revenue in Saskatchewan.

David Marit, Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture, reported an increase of \$100 million dollars, most noticeable for meat revenues.

Typically, manufacturers will plan their year according to historical averages. They anticipate how much consumers will purchase, determining how much they will need to produce, using data from previous years.



David Marit,
Saskatchewan
Minister of
Agriculture

Geoff Propp of Harvest Meats explained that this is possible because consumer habits are notoriously hard to change. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, “the processing industry got shuttered when people changed their habits overnight. It created a year of pandemonium. There has been higher demand than normal from the retail side.

Previously, 85 per cent of our sales would come from retail and 15 per cent would come from restaurants. The retail side has increased significantly.”

Processors and retailers look forward to large revenue increases in the coming years thanks to announcements about expansions and new facilities in Saskatchewan. These include Cargill new canola crush facility in Regina, planned to open between 2024 and 2025. Red Leaf Pulp Ltd. invested \$350 million dollars into a new plant and is developing a way to process wheat straw, which will mean bigger returns for farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture anticipates these, and other recent developments, will result in 110 new permanent full-time jobs and 150 new construction jobs.

Proteins and whole cuts of meat are becoming more expensive. Many retailers and producers point to inflation and drought as the cause of rising prices. Partly in response to this, plant proteins continue to rise in popularity and retailers are noticing increased demand from consumers for plant proteins in snack foods like chips, pretzels and any product typically features wheat or rice. Major developments include Verdient Foods plant at Vanscoy, and Parrheim Foods, a division of Parrish & Heimbecker, new processing plant in Saskatoon.

Propp anticipates labour shortages will be one of the most significant challenges Saskatchewan faces this



Harvest Meats notes that their has been a higher demand than normal from the retail side.



coming year. Saskatchewan is lagging in population growth compared to other provinces coming in 9th out of 10. Historically, immigration has been the largest contributor to population

their order lead time of five-seven days to eight weeks. This means they now need an order of 4,000 boxes at a time to keep the plant operating. “Who can do that?” asks Propp.

Inflation is not only a problem for the supply chain but also the cost of living and quality of life for employees. Propp recalls the hyper-inflation of the 1990s and wonders how far he can afford to reduce profits in order to keep company wages at a level that actually supports his workers.

“People are everything in this sector. We can’t do anything without our staff.”

Despite shortages, the Minister remains optimistic for the sector. “There is a lot of processing capacity in Alberta and Saskatchewan, with lots of supply. Once Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Project gets up and running will see further expansion in vegetables. Coop grocery stores are looking at bringing in more local produce as well as private grocers. There is potential for growth there.”

Other planned improvements will ease strain on workers, like Harvest Meat’s adoption of automation for tasks like packaging and labelling. They are also testing rapid defrosting technologies to increase processing speed, allowing them to fill demand from customers faster.

PROCESSORS AND RETAILERS LOOK FORWARD TO LARGE REVENUE INCREASES IN THE COMING YEARS THANKS TO ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT EXPANSIONS AND NEW FACILITIES IN SASKATCHEWAN.

growth but that slowed significantly when COVID-19 hit. His company alone needs 20 new employees to meet production demands in the summer.

He anticipates supply chain shortages and disruptions will continue to increase freight costs, driving up the price of goods for consumers.

Shawn Harman of Star Egg Co. Ltd. in Saskatoon says that egg farmers have been impacted due to low feed supply caused by drought and supply chain challenges. Along with inflation, these factors have contributed to feed costs rising over 40 per cent.

Harvest Meats used to purchase their boxes from a company in Regina, but because of shortages and an increase in demand they had to change to a company in Winnipeg. This increased



Star Egg Co. Ltd. notes that egg farmers have been impacted due to low feed supply.



Producers and processors are well positioned to meet the changing demands from retailers and consumers, maximizing returns on investments. David Marit cites the expansion of Grain Millers Canada, Corp., the oat milling facility in Yorkton, to be one of the largest in North America, as an example of this. He says the large amounts of snow this winter will be of benefit to farmers and that everyone is hoping for lots of rain at the right time. There is a general optimism that as restrictions are lifted supply chain challenges will be alleviated and we will see a gradual return to stability. ●



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SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

By Nicole Sherwood



RETAILERS AND
MANUFACTURERS ARE
TACKLING SUSTAINABILITY

TAKING ACTION

Sustainability is not just a buzzword. Consumers are now demanding that retailers and manufacturers commit to sustainability, and they are voting with their wallets.

In a 2021 survey from Statista, Canadian consumers expressed their opinion on the commitment to sustainability of grocery stores. Fifty-six per cent of people found it really important to donate food instead of throwing it out. Of significant importance were also movement towards zero waste and ethical sourcing policies, which both scored 38 per cent.

Retail Insight noted that roughly 70 per cent of shoppers noted wasteful packaging for goods at food retailers and not enough focus on food waste reduction in grocers' sustainability targets. Sixty-one per cent said that retailers are doing too much promotion of obvious green efforts, like recycling and should instead focus on other areas like food waste.

They suggest that grocers can improve communication around their sustainability efforts like providing updates on milestones achieved or sharing what new steps they are taking, particularly around food waste.

Loblaw's is tackling food waste head-on. In 2017, they announced a target to reduce the food waste across their corporate retail operations by 50 per cent by 2025. At year-end 2020 they had surpassed their target and reduced food waste sent to the landfill by 86 per cent.

This was achieved through their partnership with Flashfood to sell food nearing its best before date for up to 50 per cent off the regular retail price. In 2020, Loblaw's donated more than five million kilograms of food to food banks and food recovery agencies. They also diverted more than 4.2 million kilograms of bakery food waste from nearly 140 grocery stores in Ontario and Nova Scotia to produce animal feed.

Their new target is to expand their food waste reduction efforts by engaging 20 suppliers who will commit to halving their food waste by 2030.

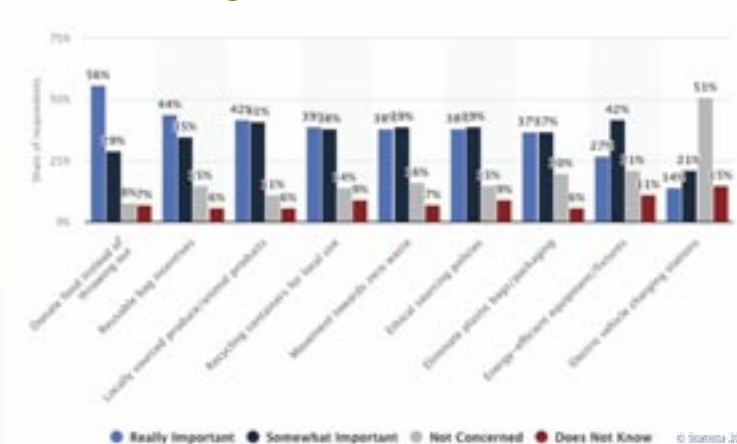
Empire Company Limited is committed to reducing food waste in their operations by 50 per cent by 2025, measuring and reporting their progress using the globally recognized Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Report Standard. They are working with likeminded partners to reduce food waste in their stores and supply chain. The food waste strategy has three areas of focus: prevention, re-use and redistribution and alternatives to landfill. At the end of 2020 they had decreased the amount of surplus food generated per square foot in their retail stores by 24 per cent, both corporate and franchise since 2016. They have seen a nearly 25 per cent year-over-year increase in the number of participating stores using the FoodHero mobile app in their IGA stores in Quebec and 134 per cent year-over-year increase in the number of items sold on the app. They have also successfully piloted Second Harvest's Food Rescue App in 16 stores in fiscal 2021 leading to a national partnership to rollout the platform in their stores across Canada.

Plastics are another concern for retailers.

Loblaw's reusable container program, Loop is now active and Loblaw is the first Canadian retail partner, providing an online portal and 15 President's Choice products available through Loop for customers who value re-use options. They also eliminated all individual plastic straws and stir sticks from takeout containers of their stores and all single-use plastic items for food sampling in their corporate stores by year-end 2020.

Looking ahead they will ensure that all PC plastic packaging is either reusable or recyclable by 2025. They are also investing \$1 million in plastics research and community clean-ups by 2025 — \$353,000 has been invested to date.

Importance of Commitment to Sustainability of Grocery Stores according to Canadian Consumers in 2020



Empire also has goals when it comes to plastics and packaging.

In 2019 they committed to removing avoidable plastics from the retail grocery industry in Canada – including their commitment to eliminate single-use plastic bags at their checkouts. They have made steady progress with this and now all of their stores nationwide have eliminated single-use plastic bags. They are the first national grocery retailer in Canada to target eliminating single-use plastic grocery bags across the country, taking what amounts to 800 million plastic bags out of circulation annually.

They are also improving waste diversion in their stores. Nearly 250 IGA stores in Quebec are certified on the Action Reduction Program that enables their stores to set concrete goals to communicate their waste reduction commitments to customers.

Over the past year Empire has developed or updated ethically or environmentally conscious purchasing guidelines with specific targets in respect to animal welfare, sustainable seafood and sourcing sustainable palm oil. By the end of 2022 they plan to source all fresh pork products from producers using gestation crate-free housing systems and source only cage-free eggs by the end of 2025. Currently 96 per cent of their Own Brands fresh and frozen fish and seafood is third-party certified and sustainable and/or recommended by Ocean Wise. As of December 2020, 100 per cent of the palm oil used in their Own Brands products was certified sustainable palm oil, with fully physically traceable certified sustainable palm oil making up 98.6 per cent. The remaining 1.4 per cent is certified through credits. ●

Loblaw's plastic waste reduction efforts include:

- Changing packaging on more than 40 President's Choice, PC Organics and Farmers Market produce items by replacing hard-to-recycle plastic to updated PET and RPET packaging that is more compatible with municipal recycling programs.
- Eliminating plastics straws and stir sticks from takeout counters and replacing them with alternative options.
- To date, they have eliminated more than 13.8 billion plastic bags through the pay-for-bag program, with partial proceeds being donated to WWF-Canada to fund various programs, including the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.



Drink Well. Do Good.

Making a positive impact with every drink is at the heart of everything Keurig Dr Pepper Canada does

Keurig Dr Pepper Canada's Senior Director, Communications and Sustainability, Cynthia Shanks discusses how the company's vision is reflected in its commitment to responsibly source, produce and distribute its beverages.



Describe how the company is making their products more sustainable.

Keurig Dr Pepper Canada (KDP Canada) is the third largest player in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in Canada and distinguishes itself in the marketplace with its modern vision and unique approach to doing business. This vision is reflected in its commitment to make a positive impact with every drink.

Less than a year after the merger that formed Keurig Dr Pepper in 2019, our team unveiled its corporate social responsibility strategy and our commitments to act as a catalyst for good for its employees, stakeholders, and for the good of our planet. Operated under the Drink Well. Do Good. platform, KDP's corporate social responsibility platform covers four areas of focus: environment, supply chain, health and well-being, and community.

We have since been working to meet our ambitious targets and to optimize our business practices toward specific behaviours that lead to sustainable practices and help to promote a more circular economy. We are focused on enabling a second life for our products. Circular solutions are at the heart of our sustainable packaging efforts, and we continue to focus on three priority areas: innovative design, increased recovery and use of recycled materials.

We are continually innovating our packaging designs and processes to reduce our total material usage and incorporate materials that are both recyclable and are highly valued as post-consumer recycled content. For example, our Snapple bottles — newly arrived in the Canadian market — are made from 100 per cent recycled plastic (PET) and use less packaging material.

Through various partnerships and investment, KDP Canada works to improve recycling behaviour among consumers and infrastructure in Canada. We are a founding member of the Circular Plastics Taskforce, which aims at helping build a circular economy for post-consumer plastics in Canada. We have also partnered with the Canada Plastic Pact to find solutions to packaging waste.

As part of this vision of circular economy and innovation in the design of our products, we focus on incorporating a significant amount of post-consumer recycled (PCR) content, including glass, metal, paper, and plastic, in our product packaging. In 2019, we manufactured our first coffee makers made in part with 20 and 30 per cent recycled plastic which has now expanded to several brewers of our portfolio and in some cases hit 50 per cent

post-consumer recycled content. All this without compromising the quality and durability of our products! And the journey continues, as our objective is to eventually incorporate recycled content in all our coffee makers.

Another key pillar in making our products more sustainable is responsible sourcing. We engage our suppliers, farmers, and business partners to support sustainable practices across our supply chain. We attained our goal of responsibly sourcing 100 per cent of our coffee in 2020 so we extended to incorporate other top priority crops, including coffee, cocoa, corn and apples, as well as other priority inputs, including packaging raw materials.

Discuss what the company is doing on a corporate level to be more sustainable. How is the company achieving this?

Sustainability is at the heart of everything that we do, including at the corporate level by integrating a zero-waste culture, building sustainable facilities, and closing the loop on our manufacturing waste.

By reducing our packaging, reusing recycled materials, and incorporating recyclable packaging into our products in creative ways, we are committed to working toward zero-waste from our manufacturing facilities sent to landfills. We continue to optimize our waste reduction strategies with our procurement team, including conducting site surveys, streamlining data collection and assessing new items not previously considered.

In collaboration with our local recycling partner, we launched a new pilot project in 2020 to close the loop on production scrap from our Montreal plant. This approach is expected to reduce GHG emissions, increase supply of recycled plastic and improve our waste management practices.

Community engagement is another key sustainability pillar for KDP Canada. Our community programs allow us to make meaningful social impact in key areas important to our business, while also enriching our communities and engaging our employees.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to making a positive impact and, while we recognize that there is always more work to be done, we are proud of the progress we continue to make. ●



The great story behind the great taste of Van Houtte.

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Learn more at VanHoutte.ca/drinkbigger



Core Values

Sustainability encompasses everything that Herbaland does

Herbaland's Marketing Manager Chelan Wilkins describes what the company is doing to be more sustainable and why it is important to them.

Describe how the company is making their products more sustainable. Discuss your switch to 100 per cent compostable pouches.

Sustainability is one of our company's core values and we encompass it in everything that we do. From production, manufacturing to our packaging we have been focused on being as earth-friendly and sustainable as we can. We use stainless steel molds in our production, which uses less energy, less water and is more efficient. It also allows for less waste as we can re-use our molds repeatedly without having to throw them in the garbage. We recently have taken the next step in our sustainability initiatives in our packaging. In the fall we launched compostable refill pouches for our top five selling vitamin gummy skus with great success and wanted to move forward with replacing all our plastic bottles with pouches made from plant-based renewable 100 per cent compostable materials. Our goal was to have fully sustainable packaging by 2025, however we have reached our goal two years ahead of schedule with our newly rebranded, pouches made from 100 per cent compostable materials. By switching our entire vitamin gummy line from plastic bottles to these pouches, we will be diverting over 60,000 bottles from production and potential landfills, converting into over two tons of plastic per year.

Discuss what the company is doing on a corporate level to be more sustainable. How is the company achieving this?

As a company, we have committed to numerous sustainable initiatives from encouraging ride share options, biking to work, plans to install charging stations for staff who own electric cars, reducing paper as much as we can (offering things digitally). We also work towards reducing less packaging when it comes to shipping. We encourage reusable containers and recycling as much as we can within the office as well as encourage composting all food scraps.

Discuss the automatic offset of carbon emissions from all orders. What does it mean? What impact does this have?

Starting from November 2021, we automatically offset 100 per cent of carbon emissions from all orders by investing in a certified environmental project — the Amazon Rainforest Protection. This initiative comes at

no additional cost to our customers — we donate from our own profits. We do invite our customers to double that impact at checkout, producing a climate-positive impact on sustainability!

When we say, "automatic offset of carbon emissions from all orders", that means we will help eliminate, capture, or otherwise mitigate all of the carbon emissions created from making our gummy products and shipping them to our customer's door. So, all the orders from Herbaland will be 100 per cent carbon neutral.

How have sustainable practices affected the production processes?

Our sustainable efforts begin with the raw materials we choose for our products. We carefully choose to create relationships with suppliers that provide ethically-sourced ingredients for our gummies. Our gummies are also made with non-GMO, gluten-free, vegan, and allergen free ingredients.

We prioritize sustainability in our production processes through using our innovative eco-forming technology. This technology reduces our overall waste through eliminating the need for non-reusable starch molds that are the industry standard. Along with creating compostable packaging for our products, we are working towards ensuring that our product orders will be packaged without plastic.

What plans does the company have for the future when it comes to sustainability?

Herbaland is continuously making efforts to improve the health of our planet through everything we do. We are currently obtaining our B-Corp certification and are establishing partnerships with other companies and organizations that also believe in the restoration of our planet. Recently, we've committed to planting a minimum of 2.5 million trees within the next three years with our new global tree planting partner — Veritree. ●

Sustainability is one of our company's core values and we encompass it in everything that we do.



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As a leader in the Canadian CPG market, Kraft Heinz has shown a strong commitment to advancing the goals of sustainability. Since we last interviewed the company 12 months ago, even more progress has been made. Western Grocer checks in with Nicole Fischer, the Head of Sustainability for Kraft Heinz Canada, to discuss their progress.

What is the Kraft Heinz approach to sustainability and what motivates it?

We are committed to responsible, sustainable practices extending to every facet of our business. Kraft Heinz's Environmental Social Governance (ESG) strategy prioritizes the issues that matter most. We recently released our 2021 Global ESG Report, *Stepping Up to the Plate*, at www.kraftheinzcompany.com. The report details our new and different ESG initiatives and how we are working to improve our impact on the environment – from renewable energy to packaging and other innovative solutions. The report outlines three key pillars: Healthy Living & Community Support, Environmental Stewardship, and Responsible Sourcing. We're setting ambitious environmental goals: reducing waste from landfill, supporting our community with food donations, and leading the charge for plastics recycling. We also recently committed to Carbon Neutrality globally by 2050.



How is Kraft Heinz Canada addressing food waste?

On our mission to reduce and eliminate food waste from landfills, we partnered with NorthStar Recycling to ensure any product that is not sold will be diverted from landfills for alternative purposes. These include composting and animal feed. Since we started working with them in mid-2020, we have diverted over 7 million pounds of waste from landfill and will continue to work towards our commitment of reducing food waste by 50% by 2025.



How is Kraft Heinz Canada supporting communities?

In addition to landfill diversion, Kraft Heinz Canada has also made a focus of increasing our donation rates to ensure all Canadian tables have access to food. In 2021, we increased our donation rates from 2020 by roughly 1 million pounds – more than tripling the previous year. This drastic improvement has been led through the coordinated efforts of Food Banks Canada, through Kraft Heinz Pantry Day, as well as partnering with Second Harvest to ensure we are providing food to as many as possible.

On October 16, World Food Day, Canadians can join the fight against food insecurity by purchasing a participating Kraft Heinz product at their local grocery store, which will then be matched with a donation to Food Banks Canada. Started in 2020, the scope and donation effort of Kraft Heinz Pantry Day makes it the largest one-day donation matching event for Food Banks Canada.



Has Kraft Heinz Canada made progress within sustainable packaging?

We have. Our most recent initiative has been the launch of the Ethical Bean Coffee and HEINZ BY NATURE recycling programs with TerraCycle. Through these programs, Canadians can collect and ship in difficult-to-recycle coffee bags of any brand or our baby food pouches and lids to



TerraCycle for free, earning them redeemable points and contributing to recycled materials projects. We're proud of these programs as they show our commitment to recycling, no matter the challenges involved. We're committed and on track to 100% recyclable, reusable, or compostable packaging by 2025. Other packaging initiatives include partnering with NorthStar Recycling as discussed and partnering with Loop – a state of the art circular reuse platform – for glass Heinz ketchup bottles.



What can we expect from the future of Kraft Heinz Canada sustainability?

Canadians can expect us to follow through on our commitments. We're aggressively pursuing sustainable packaging and manufacturing, improving the nutrition and sourcing of our food, and giving back to the communities that support us. Details of our commitments can be found at www.kraftheinzcompany.com/esg. Aside from these commitments, we are also helping to lead the charge for a circular economy for plastics through our involvement in organizations like the Canada Plastics Pact and Circular Materials. We joined the Canada Plastics Pact as a founding signatory in January 2021, and together with over 40 partners across the plastics value chain, we are working collaboratively towards ending all plastic waste and pollution in Canada. Circular Materials is a not-for-profit, producer-governed organization established to support Kraft Heinz and other producers with meeting their obligations under extended producer responsibility regulations across Canada. In Ontario, they support us with the province's Blue Box Regulation.



Launched in 2021, the Canada Plastics Pact (CPP) is part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's growing global Plastics Pact Network. By uniting businesses, government, and NGOs, CPP works to achieve a circular economy for plastics in Canada. Kraft Heinz is proud to be a partner of CPP. See more at www.plasticspact.ca.



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PRICE INCREASES

- Where Do We Go From Here?

INFLATION AND THE SUPPLIER/RETAILER RELATIONSHIP

My background in the retail industry comes from the supplier side of the equation and one of the most dreaded tasks of any supplier is to navigate a price increase on their products. No matter what the rationale we always knew that it would be a very tough conversation with retailers, and it only got worse as retailers consolidated and the big guys kept getting bigger.

There would be huge push back internally on most price increase conversations and many other options would be explored before finally relenting to the idea that the increase was a necessary evil. How can we cut costs or even cut spending on media, the lifeblood of a healthy brand? Will the new shelf prices make us uncompetitive versus other brands or increase the already large gap between our brand and private label products.

In short, no supplier WANTS to take a price increase. The end result would tend to be a "meet in the middle" approach to price increases where the supplier

would submit a four per cent price increase knowing full well that the true price increase that is passed along to retailers at the end of a negotiation would be more like two per cent.

In a low inflation economy, price increases were tough. In today's reality where inflation is higher than many in our industry have even seen, price increases are necessary or even critical in the shadow of increasing input costs, energy costs and labour costs for brand and private label suppliers.

Here at Field Agent Canada, our latest edition of our milk price study showed a 9.5 per cent average increase in the price of 4L 2% milk on a national basis. While there was a \$0.06 per litre farm gate price increase implemented by the Canadian Dairy Commission based on increasing costs of raising cattle, the average price per litre actually climbed by \$0.24.

In this case, as the price increase snaked its way through the supply chain, the increase ballooned by four times before reaching the shelf's edge.

In what might be the most talked about price increase that I have seen in my 25 years in the industry, the recent news that Pepsico would stop shipping its Lays, Ruffles and other potato chip brands to Loblaw banners stands out as the "nuclear option" that we have rarely, if ever seen before.

This is an interesting case and Pepsico may be one of the few that can make this type of stand. Loblaw

likely makes up a single digit percentage of its total North American chip business and given high brand loyalty we will likely see a lot of channel shifting to other retailers when shoppers only find empty shelves on their regular shopping trip.

Yes, it will be painful for both parties, but this is a face-off between two very strong companies that can afford to wait to see which side will blink first.

For smaller brands, the idea of a stop ship is a dream/nightmare. No one can afford to lose a third or a half of their business in order to implement a five per cent price increase. However, these companies are also looking at their P&L and realizing that something must give. Cutting marketing or substituting lower quality ingredients/packaging to contain costs is a road to a slow death.

For retailers big and small, inflation is reeking havoc and keeping up with the flood of price increases is very challenging. The retailer P&L has razor thin margins and there is little room for error. Retailers cannot afford to become uncompetitive vs. their rivals and cannot afford to absorb the price increases.

For smaller retailers in particular, negotiation power has weakened over the past couple of decades and pushing back on price increases is not really an option in most cases.

How do we move forward?

On the brand side, I think transparency is key. Identifying the impacts of input cost increases and openly sharing this information with retail partners is critical. A commitment to monitor those costs in the future and implement price decreases when input costs return to a normal baseline is only fair.

If an item increases by one per cent due to higher transportation costs and then 18 months from now the costs return to normal — then costs should return to normal. Simply "baking-in" the increase in perpetuity is not really fair for the retailer or the consumer.

On the retailer side, demanding transparency and being the advocate for the consumer, all the while protecting their bottom line through price increases is the lens that should be used by buying teams.

A more radical idea might be an independent panel of experts that act more like arbitrators in the price increase discussions. They would hold suppliers accountable on input cost increases and ensure the same net increase is being passed along to all retailers. The supplier would then be required to submit data into the future to ensure if input costs decrease then prices will decrease. The decisions of the panel would then be binding for the retail community, knowing that all players are being treated fairly. There is likely a greater chance of seeing pigs fly — but you have to admit the idea has some merit.

Inflation is going to be a reality of our industry for the foreseeable future. The old way of dealing with price increases by both sides will not work in this new environment. To ensure the health of brands and retailers and protect the consumer a new way forward is required. ●



Jeff Doucette is the founder of "Field Agent Canada" an on-demand panel of Canadian shoppers providing a suite of innovative services to Canadian retailers and brands. He can be reached at jeff.doucette@fieldagentcanada.com

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COLD BEVERAGES

By Melanie Franner

Chilled to Perfection

The pandemic changed many aspects of people's lives, including a renewed focus on health and an increase in time spent at home. Both of these factors contributed to the growth in the cold beverages market.

The market is massive when broken down into grocery retail, foodservice and convenience stores. Statista puts the Canadian market size (in millions) for Flavoured Soft Drinks at \$2989.55; Flat water at \$2669.45; Shelf Stable Juices and Drinks at \$1280.67; Milk at \$655.72; Carbonated Water at \$400.39; Juices and Drinks Refrigerated at \$237.7; and RTD Iced Tea Cans at \$125.84 among other segments.

COLD FACTS

"Canadians have shifted their priorities during COVID-19, which has impacted all aspects of their shopping behaviour," explains Hamna Nadeem, associate category business manager – cold beverages, Kraft Heinz Canada.

"Key macro trends that we are seeing in the category include a focus on sustainability, health and wellness, and performance," says Nadeem, adding that consumers are showing a preference for natural claims, recyclable packaging, healthier alternatives, and beverages that provide extra benefits, such as energy boosts, fortified waters and stress relievers.

Kraft Heinz currently has products in the RTD Juices, RTD Drinks and Flavoured Drink Mix segments of the category with brand names like Kool-Aid Jammers, Kool-Aid Clear, Heinz Tomato



photo courtesy shutterstock.com

CATCHING UP ON COLD BEVERAGES

Juice, Mio, Tang and Crystal Light and is the largest branded beverage mix company in Canada, representing the most preferred brands in both powders and liquids. It has 19 of the top 20 liquid concentrate skus and four of the top five BMX (beverage mix) brands in Canada.

According to Nielsen MarketTrack the liquid concentrate and powdered drink mix category size is \$144M (L52 Weeks PE Nov 2021 Nielsen MarketTrack) broken down into powdered beverages at \$49.8M and liquid concentrate at +\$94.2M. This segment has seen high growth vs pre-pandemic and is growing by +10.5 per cent.

Kraft Heinz Mio Liquid continues to lead the liquid concentrates category in dollar sales with \$32.1M and growth of +17.9 per cent. It is the top branded player with a 34 per cent market share. Kraft Heinz Kool-Aid Liquid Concentrate is growing by +22 per cent with dollar sales of \$12.8M.

Kraft Heinz has also brought to Canada a brand new RTD refrigerated juice as a first-to-market exclusive at Loblaws Real Canadian Superstores. Brazilian made Natural One is currently available in three flavour varieties (Orange, Mango, and Guava) in 1.5L size. The distribution partnership with Natural One is an example of how Kraft Heinz is greening the portfolio — bringing new products to market that align with consumer preferences.

Nadeem refers to the cold beverage segment as a “Drive the Basket” category, meaning merchandisers should consider leaning on in-store impulse, invest in display to “wow” the shopper and tempt via occasion/need state, and volume trade up (e.g. larger packs, volume through price).

FUNCTION FIRST

Functional drinks is one of the areas in the category that has undergone significant growth over the last couple of years. The global kefir market, for example, is expected to experience exponential growth by reaching US\$1.84B by 2027, while exhibiting a CAGR of 5.4 per cent between 2020 and 2027 (Fortune Business Insights).

Lindsay Scott, CEO & founder, Kindred Cultures, cites research that shows how the COVID-19 pandemic has renewed the debate on maintaining gut health, with several health experts emphasizing and highlighting the critical link between the immune system and the gut. She says that consumers are ardently looking for functional options with real ingredients.

The company’s water-based kefir products, which offer an alternative to dairy-based kefir products or even traditional kombucha products, is one example. The probiotic-rich, water kefir products are infused with organic, nutrient-rich foods to boost the immune system.

“We’ve had a positive reaction with grocers,” says Scott, who adds that the company’s marketing materials are designed to help attract new consumers into the nutritional category.

Lassonde Food Services has also focused on functional with its new Enhanced Water Simple Drop. The line offers a range of enhanced waters that are designed to help activate your day or support your immune system. Products contain only 3g of sugar and no sweeteners.

Similarly, the company’s OASIS Health Break Berries Smoothie satisfies the consumer trend to health and wellness.

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

Wonders of Water

Kindred Cultures is expanding its line of water kefir natural products with the introduction of a Lemon Turmeric Ginger flavour. Launched April 1, 2022, the new product is anticipated to be “an outstanding performer”. Best to merchandise next to the functional beverages section. The single-serve version is perfect for grab-n-go and deli coolers, while the larger one-litre version is best positioned in the nutritional beverages section.



Super Shakes

A new functional fruit shake from GnuSanté continues to be a success among tweens and busy families. Launched in 2021, Gnubees+ offers a balance of grass-fed protein (8g), fibre (4g), and vitamins C & D (30 per cent of daily recommended). It is available in four fun fruity flavours like strawberry wise, tropical unstoppable, lemon limelight and grape aspirations. Merchandise next to other smoothies and shakes in the produce section or along other kid-friendly options in the snack aisle.



Nature’s Way

Natural One offers a 100 per cent natural, refrigerated juice with no preservatives, additives or artificial flavours. The introduction from Kraft Heinz Canada offers exclusive blends made from the freshest juice picked from Brazilian farms. It is produced on a cold aseptic production line that preserves flavour, texture and keeps it fresher for longer. Position in the dairy refrigerated shelf set.



Double Your Pleasure

New from Lassonde Food Services is Enhanced Water Simple Drop, available in “support” and “active” varieties. The former offers vitamin A, C and E in either peach or raspberry flavour, while the latter provides vitamin B and green tea extract in a strawberry flavour. Merchandise in the water section. Also available is a lactose-free Oasis Health Break Berries smoothie. Position in the chilled family section.



Out of this World

Coca-Cola Starlight is the first limited-edition product to launch under Coca-Cola Creations. Inspired by outer space, and the magic it represents, Starlight offers a unique taste while reinforcing the strength of the core brand. While it is creative and connects culturally, the purpose behind it is still uplift, optimism and authenticity. “Lean into the intrigue” to merchandise by emphasizing Starlight’s fun and playfulness.



COCKTAIL TREND ALERT

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KEEP IT FUN

GnuSanté has combined fun and functional into its line of beverages geared to the younger market.

“Even before COVID-19, we were already seeing a push from millennials and gen Z for more health-conscious options,” says Autumn Kendrick, chief marketing and ideation officer, GnuSanté. “This has heightened with COVID-19, as people look to healthy eating as an opportunity to support their health.”

The company recently introduced a range of fun and flavourful profiles in its Gnubees+ line.

“We developed fruity flavours that only kids will love but that parents can enjoy and reminisce about their childhood,” says Kendrick. “We’ve created drinks that are

all delight and taste without the guilt, a better-for-beverage that actually tastes great.”

GnuSanté also hopes to soon introduce a functional sparkling tea focused on beauty from within (collagen and other synergistic ingredients).

Coca-Cola Canada has kept fun in the mix with its latest offering of Coca-Cola Starlight, the first flavour under its newly launched global innovation platform called Coca-Cola Creations.

“Overall, we’re seeing that the economics and consumer confidence are generally recovering and we’re emerging from the pandemic as a stronger business,” says Jacques Blanchet, senior manager of integrated marketing experience, Coca-Cola Canada. “We’re hoping our new, global innovation platform strengthens grocers’ relationships with their consumers as we continue to release unique limited-edition creations that drive excitement.”

COOLER SMARTS

Cold beverages continue to garnish a significant portion of the grocery aisles — attracting consumers of all ages. The pandemic has heightened this trend and demonstrated the category’s potential.

“Invest in price to ‘wow’ the shopper,” says Hamna. “Invest in display to increase the temptation to try new things.”

Grocers can add excitement to their offerings by adding exciting new skus, highlighting growth segments, and adding in a good mix of fun and flavour. ●

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ICE CREAM AND FROZEN NOVELTIES

By Robin Brunet

Cool Down

Whether it's ice cream or frozen novelties, Canadians certainly have a sweet tooth, especially during the warm weather months.

According to the latest findings from Statista, one quarter of all Canadians eat ice cream between two and three times per month, with the majority preferring to eat in their own homes. The market for artisanal ice cream and frozen novelties has increased in recent years, and the total volume of products Canadians consume has risen since a low of 3.9 litres per person in 2017 to just over four litres today. The ice cream market in Canada was forecast to be worth around 2.79 billion U.S. dollars in 2019.

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continued on page 98

Some like it hot.



Some like it cold.



But all Canadians love *Tim's* classic flavours.

Introducing Tim Hortons Double Double K-Cup pods and Tim Hortons Ice Cream – our classic flavours brought to you in a new dimension. From warming up with a cup of Double Double to chilling out with a scoop of Tim Hortons Salted Caramel Ice Cream, your customers will be thrilled to try their favourite flavours in two exciting formats. Of course, they have the quality your shoppers expect from us: our Double Double made with 100% Arabica coffee beans, and ice cream with 100% Canadian dairy with rich, indulgent inclusions. Make room on your shelves and in your freezers & order today.



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PRODUCT SHOWCASE

CONSUMERS WILL LOVE COOLING OFF WITH THESE DELICIOUS TREATS!

I SEE YOU

Chapman's 2022 lineup of new flavours, including No Sugar Added Coffee Chocolate and Salty Caramel & Peanut, will benefit from eye-level exposure in retail stores, says Mary Breedon.



“Place them at mid-height on the freezer shelves and devote two full shelves for all of our one litre and novelty offerings.”

SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

Salm has simple advice for retailers aiming to draw attention to Tim Hortons' new lineup of ice cream for the retail sector: ensure that the packaging is clearly visible. He explains:



“We've tested our packaging - colours and graphics - against competitors and can state that it almost literally pops off the shelf.”

DOUBLE EXPOSURE

Mike Rogiani believes the unique brands distributed by The Ice Cream Depot not only benefit from being displayed “behind a special door devoted to ‘new age’ ice creams,” but also by being exposed in secondary locations:



“Bakery department freezers could really maximize the exposure — as well as profits for retailers.”

BRAINSTORMING IS BEST

Scott Weneger cites end cap displays as a great way to merchandise Foothills Creamery ice creams and frozen treats. But that's not all:



“Fun should be at the heart of merchandising in this category, and we encourage retailers to contact us, as we can help develop colourful signage and other strategies for them.”

continued from page 95

As far as Mary Breedon, director of sales at Chapman's Ice Cream, is concerned, the reason for the strength of this category is simple. “Ice cream is one of the least expensive desserts and the one with the biggest variety. Meanwhile, frozen novelties address the insatiable demand for convenience. Our Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich is the most popular novelty in Canada, for its quality and consumer value.”

Breedon adds that the past few years of the pandemic have had an interesting effect on her company's frozen novelties as well as the No Sugar Added brand of ice cream. “In both cases sales grew significantly, which we regard as a demonstration of brand loyalty,” she says. “Therefore, retailers should ensure that these products are always in stock.”

This year Chapman's is launching two new No Sugar Added flavours: Coffee Chocolate and Salty Caramel & Peanut, as well as a chocolate coated vanilla No Sugar Added bar. “Our products are the outcome of us listening to what consumers want, and these are the latest examples,” Breedon says.

The Ice Cream Depot is a master distributor of Chapman's for Alberta, and its president Mike Rogiani credits Chapman's for its “ability to keep the supply chain full [throughout the pandemic] relative to competitors, allowing many more people the opportunity to try their product. We hope to continue that success with a loyal customer base who appreciates real ice cream.”

The Ice Cream Depot represents many special brands for all of Western Canada, including Mike's Cups (developed by Rogiani with real cream and available in 300ml format containers), Udderly Delicious (a Canadian made goat milk ice cream), and Desi-licious Kulfi (traditional Indian ice cream in six unique flavours).

But Chapman's remains Rogiani's flagship brand, and of the company's new products being released this year he says, “I think the new original 2L brick flavours are going to be a hit, and commitment to growing that category will secure more shelf space with products we know customers want.”

Having established one of the largest publicly-traded restaurant chains in North America, Tim Hortons is expanding their

portfolio beyond hot beverages and soups to include ice cream in grocery stores. “Our aim is to bring excitement back into the category by releasing five flavours that heavily lean into our iconic baked goods and beverages,” says Mark Salm, head of Canadian CPG retail sales & shopping marketing. “They include Apple Fritter, Double Chocolate Donut, Salted Caramel Iced Capp, Birthday Cake Timbits and Fruit Explosion.” These new ice cream pints are bursting with inclusions like caramel, apple and chocolate donut pieces.

Sourcing locally was important to Tim Hortons, which is why the brand has partnered with an Ontario-based producer to supply 100 per cent Canadian dairy for its ice cream. “One of the advantages of partnering with a local supplier is that it helps mitigate against supply disruptions due to the pandemic and shipping challenges,” Salm says.

Tim Hortons has been a beloved taste of Canada since 1964 and it was extremely important that their launch into this new grocery category replicated the great taste experience that our customers have come to expect. “If there is one thing retailers

Retailers should abide by a deceptively simple strategy:

be sure that freezers are fully stocked and ready for when the warm weather hits.

should abide by when stocking the Tim Hortons lineup of ice cream, it is that this premium 100 per cent dairy ice cream product be maintained at -18 degrees Celsius in order to preserve its high quality,” according to Salm.

Foothills Creamery Ltd. has produced dairy products for Western Canadians for over half a century, and Marketing Manager Scott Weneger points out that considering grocery retailers constantly try to satisfy consumer demand for foods with fresh, local ingredients simply made, his company has a marketing edge.

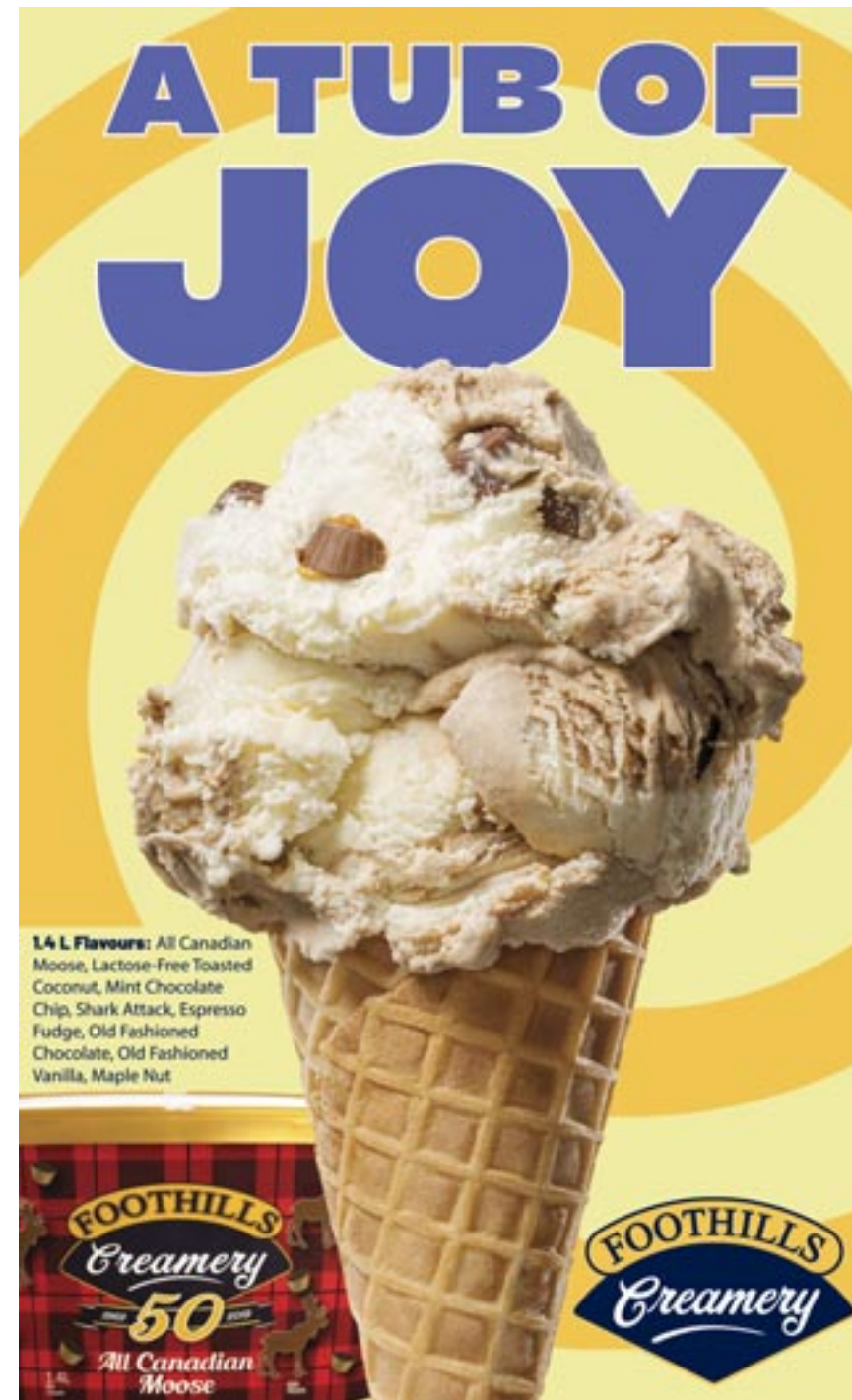
He explains, “We use the same barrel churned techniques as we did starting out in

1969, and we use the butter milk from this process in all of our ice cream, which makes it richer, creamier, and more full-bodied.”

Foothills offers over 80 different flavours of ice cream, sorbet, sherbet, and soft serve, and its eight ice cream flavours available in retail will be augmented this year by six new skus, details of which were not available at press time. However, as fancy as some manufacturers get in creating new products, Wegener suggests that in general, sticking to the basics in

the retail setting is a wise strategy: “By far our top selling ice cream is vanilla, and chocolate is not far behind.”

There are more ice cream and frozen novelty brands than the hues of a rainbow, and if hordes of people venturing outside during the height of the pandemic to stock up on their favourite treats mean anything, then retailers should abide by a deceptively simple strategy: be sure that freezers are fully stocked and ready for when the warm weather hits. ●



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Although COVID-19 shut down travel to other regions, it certainly didn't slow consumers' interests in cultural exploration. And what better way to explore than through food?

Exploring the world through flavour was an alternative to travel agrees Angela Doro, president of Freybe, who manufacture a wide variety of European meat products.

"It is a way to connect and bring joy to conversations over meals and snacks during the day," she says. "As people are snacking more outside of regular meal times, variety is essential."

Variety is something Europe has led the way with, at least in tea, according to Chuck Corrigan, business manager with C.B. Powell.

"In the tea category, European products have always been very attractive with innovative health and taste ingredients," he says.



The Kitchen's Cultural Foundation

AFTER CANADIANS TOOK TO THEIR KITCHENS AT THE START OF COVID-19, THEY BEGAN TO EXPAND THEIR HORIZONS, EMBRACING EUROPEAN FOOD OPTIONS

"Shoppers seek and appreciate new attractive tea items. Flavoured, organic green teas are especially growing in popularity."

Italian food has always been popular among consumers and Emmy Tran, media relations manager with the PR Department representing Mutti, which is available through Italpasta, noted that one in four dishes consumed worldwide are Italian food.

"We believe Italian food is more popular because it's nutritious and easy to make," she says. "It only takes fresh, simple ingredients to make a succulent dish without breaking the bank."

Pasta is obviously a staple of Italian food. Angelo Boras, vice-president, sales at Italtasta says that pasta has seen its share of growth during the pandemic.

“At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, the pasta category nationally saw a 16 per cent increase in value,” he says. “There’s something undeniably special and comforting about recipes that have been passed on from generation to generation. And with close to 20 million people reporting having European origins in the 2016 Census, it’s not surprising that European foods have seen an uptick.”

He recommends that retailers consider the ethnic backgrounds of their customers as well as the rise in interest in European foods when planning new shelf options.

Doro suggests thinking about the experience when choosing how to merchandise products.

“Be inspiring,” she says. “Make it easy to imagine the experience of exploring European countries through foods. A variety in the countries represented on the shelf and at many decision points in the store, will add incremental sales.”

Freybe launched A Taste of Europe charcuterie lineup in 2020 to meet the demand.

When that comfort and familiarity with ingredients and the cooking process grows, Tran says Canadians will seek more authentic ingredients while staying focused on another trend: fresh, healthy and socially-responsible food options.

“As retailers are looking to add to their offering, they should look to the leading brands abroad to find the best of the best,” she says. “Mutti has grown to be the No.4 tomato brand in Canada.”

Products with a true European origin are growing in popularity says Corrigan. While this includes items imported from Europe, it may also include items that are created from traditional European recipes made in Canada.

The world will see COVID-19 restrictions relax over time, but the return to the kitchen and the inspiration found in home-cooking is a trend likely to linger quite a while longer. European options will continue to be in high-demand as customers explore their own cultural food history as well as that of other regions. ●

STORE SPOTLIGHT

Specialty Stores Seeing Increased Interest

The world seemed to turn a little slower when COVID-19 began, and consumers started exploring their kitchens (some for the first time). This is when retailers experienced increased demands for specialty products. The Italian Centre Shop’s Edmonton, Alberta-based Little Italy location is managed by Carmelo Verduci. He says people have realized it’s not as hard to cook as what they may have thought.

“I think the main thing, predominantly with Italian food, is that it’s not complicated,” he says. “It’s not extreme. Italian is trendy.”

This trendiness has certainly helped his location invite new customers in who are building their cooking skills. Not only will they find an incredibly diverse range of Italian specialty products, but there are also several day-to-day Italian favourites as well as numerous items from other European countries like Poland, Portugal, Russia and Spain.

“We’ve been in this spot for roughly 60 years,” he says. “It’s a place where people know each other. Kind of like a gathering place.”

The store’s product lines follow the 80/20 rule with the high-demand items like olive oil, pasta and sauces taking up the 80. The 20 consists of specialty items, new taste opportunities and seasonal products. More than soup to nuts, this historic store has everything customers need from fresh meats and baked goods to middle-aisle shelf items.

“We do have signs that says ‘new product,’” he says noting how customers are made aware of new options. The store also creates large displays when new products arrive.

Verduci has seen the store’s new shoppers seek out staff, who wear white smocks, to answer questions about food and preparation. Trending authentic meats and cheeses as well as produce like eggplant have inspired many conversations.

Although Italian staples continue to be the highest growth items, he is also seeing strong take-up in the prepared, fresh meal options made out of another location’s commissary kitchen.



PRODUCT SHOWCASE

THESE EUROPEAN PRODUCTS WILL BE ENJOYED BY ALL.

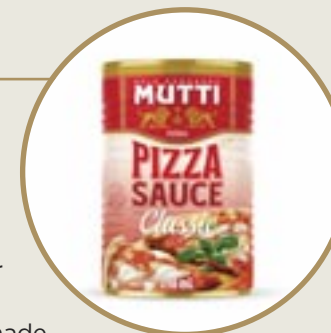
Sauce Sticks

With a rough surface texture akin to that of old-world crafted pasta, Italtasta’s new Artisan line is inspired by an age-old way of making pasta that sauce just loves to cling to. This Italian-style pasta also incorporates the best of Canadian craftsmanship with 100 per cent Canadian wheat in every bite.



More Pizza Nights

From the minimalism of a margherita pizza to piles of favourite toppings, Mutti Pizza Classica sauce brings it all together. More Canadians are making pizza at home, given the renewed interest in cooking. There’s also a greater desire for authentic Italian pizza, which Mutti delivers on, with a robust flavour made from 100 per cent Italian, sun-ripened tomatoes.



Smooth and Satisfying Tea

Flavoured green teas are growing in consumer popularity and Heath & Heather’s specialty options help retailers expand their offerings in that market as well as in organic teas. With flavours like green tea with coconut, green tea with Manuka (honey) and imperial matcha green tea, Heath & Heather, (imported by CB Powell is represented/sold through Natural Products Distributor, Puresource directly at retail across Canada) meets consumer desires for premium organic tea at an economical price.



Snacking with Smoke

Grab-and-go snacks are on the rise with the 80-to-100-gram snack stick segment leading the charge. Customers are reaching for Freybe’s new Smoked Salami Sticks in their convenient 100-gram package. These gluten-free and lactose-free salami sticks come in four flavours, making them a satisfying, protein-rich option, and a more frequent purchase.



Italpasta's Artisan Line Brings Canadian Wheat and Sustainability to the Mainstream

Italpasta has been a go-to choice for Canadian families for over 30 years. During this time, the company's products have filled Canadian pantries and grocery shelves with the highest quality pasta made with love and care.

Now comes Italpasta's newest offering – the Artisan Pasta line. The Artisan line is inspired by an age-old Italian way of making high-quality pasta, combined with Canadian craftsmanship and 100 per cent Canadian wheat. The six, unique pasta cuts are an ode to the simple things done right, resulting in a rough texture for sauce to cling to. This nutritious pasta provides a fuller delicious flavour with every bite.

The Artisan Pasta line's fully recyclable packaging is the first step in Italpasta's Small Impact, Big Change program. Canadians have always looked through the cellophane window on Italpasta's box packaging to see the pasta shapes inside. By making this small change and removing the window, the company takes one step closer to meeting its goal to fully transition all Italpasta packaging to more eco-friendly materials by 2030. Rest assured; what's inside is still made in Canada with the finest 100 per cent Canadian wheat.



KD Flavoured Cups Bring Excitement to the Snack Aisle with Bold New Taste Experiences!

KD flavoured cups bring together the unmistakable cheesy taste of KD with bold, exciting flavours: Jalapeno • Spicy Buffalo • Poutine

KD flavoured cups deliver the convenience consumers are looking for: Ready in 3.5 minutes; Individual portions; Portable.

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For more info: kim.allison@kraftheinz.com



Sesame Snaps Reinvents Itself and Invests to Answer Canadians' Snacking Needs

Unitop, the maker of Canada's favourite on-the-go snacks since the '70s, is innovating with the launch of the new Sesame Snaps Seeds and Grains bars as an answer to Canadians' snacking needs. These cereal bar replacements offer the same classic sweet taste and satisfying crunch that generations of loyal fans have loved, updated to include the latest trend: whole and ancient grains, which help regulate inflammation, boost the immune system and prevent multiple diseases.



As the pandemic drives us to be more conscious of our health, the demand for healthier snacking alternatives is higher than ever, with functional nutrition taking the crown as one of top snacking trends in 2021. However, not everybody is ready to swap out their comfort foods for whole and natural ingredients! Delicious and nutritious, the new spin and the old favourite is fulfilling the desire for healthier indulgences.

Packing a powerful punch without compromising on taste, new Sesame Snaps Seeds & Grains bars merge the nutritional benefits of sesame seeds with the even more robust health advantages of puffed ancient grains including amaranth, millet, quinoa and buckwheat, all in a convenient single serving that is both vegetarian and gluten-free. Made with natural ingredients, they contain no artificial flavours, colours or preservatives. A source of fibre and Omega-6, the gluten-free crispy snack provides 4g of protein per bar to propel you through the day.

For more information: www.sesamesnaps.ca

Bring Your Tims to a New Dimension!



Introducing Tim Hortons Ice Cream, a lineup of five ice cream flavours inspired by the classic tastes of Tims: Salted Caramel Iced Capp, Double Chocolate Donut, Birthday Cake Timbits, Apple Fritter and Fruit Explosion – allowing shoppers to take their favourite flavours to a whole new dimension. Tims ice cream is made with 100 per cent Canadian dairy is now available in the frozen aisle of grocery stores, allowing customers to indulge with what they love from the comfort of their own home!

For more information: msalm@timhortons.com

Convenience and Local Roasted Coffee from Cappuccino King



Cappuccino King is launching three convenient methods to enjoy their three favourite flavours of locally roasted and authentic Italian-style coffee. K-cup style, single serve coffee pods for reusable k-cup holders, and ESE single serve espresso pods will soon be at your fingertips. Watch for these new skus shipping in the spring.

For more information: peter@cappuccinoking.com

Aubrey D. Rebel Turn Up the Heat – and the Flavour with the Introduction of Two New Salsas

This spring, Aubrey D. is introducing two new hot salsas – The Very Hot Aubrey D. Rebel Tequila Lime Hot Salsa and Very Hot Aubrey D. Rebel Roasted Garlic Hot Salsa. Tantalizing the taste buds, the Tequila Lime Hot Salsa is filled with fresh tomatoes, glorious tequila and freshly squeezed lime juice. It is the pinnacle of party dips to be used with fresh tortilla chips or added as a sauce to tacos, taquitos, burritos, enchiladas, tamales and on your favourite entrée that needs a little spicing up. For garlic lovers, nothing will spice up your life – and taste buds – like the Very Hot

Aubrey D. Rebel Roasted Garlic Hot Salsa! Packed with delicious chunks of tomatoes and freshly roasted garlic, this is a crowd-pleasing dip that not only tastes good, but it is also a great looking salsa!

For more information: aubrey@gourmetchip.com



Mutti Launches New Authentic Italian Pizza Sauce!

Canadians love pizza, and with nearly three quarters of households buying some sort of do-it-yourself pizza in 2021, it's the perfect time to add a new pizza sauce to the category!

Mutti Pizza Classica has a neutral flavour profile that can be dressed up by the adventurous home chef or enjoyed as-is with the robust taste of Mutti's high quality, 100 per cent Italian tomatoes, front and centre. The new sauce joins the brand's lineup of 23 made-in-Italy products available in Canada – including Mutti Pizza Aromatica, which features the same delicious tomato flavour as the Classica, with the addition of basil and oregano for an authentic Italian pizza taste.

Mutti's high quality, 100 per cent sun-ripened Italian tomatoes are the star ingredient in all their products and it's no surprise that the brand brings the most profitable growth to the category with +\$1.9M contribution and is the fastest-growing brand at 4.5 per cent value share with an increase of +1.4PT VYA. Mutti is presently launching a year-long marketing-communications program that is already making waves from coast to coast. The campaign includes TV commercials, PR and influencer initiatives as well as events that will work together to drive consumers to stores to ask for Mutti products by name. In Canada, Mutti is distributed by Italpasta.

For more information: Mutti.ca



New from Grace Foods Canada

Add some Caribbean flavour to your dinner with Grace Bag N' Cook line of products. Grace's Dry rub seasoning comes with a flavour locked oven bag that keeps your meals juicy and well-seasoned. Bag N' Cook comes in three delicious flavours, Mild Jamaican Jerk, Hot Jamaican Jerk and Caribbean Curry. Bag, Coat. Bake.

Grace Jamaican Style Patties are baked scrumptious savoury pastries filled with certified Halal Jerk Chicken, inside a tender, flaky crust. Our Jerk Chicken Patties are ideal for a light lunch or quick, convenient snack on-the-go any time of day. Six individually wrapped baked Jamaican turnovers style patties, Hot or Mild, bake in a conventional or toaster oven. Just heat & serve!

Email GraceCanadaAnswers@gkco.com for more information.



Confetti Sweets Totally Awesome Cookie Mixes!

Stock the products your customers really want, Totally Awesome Cookie Mixes! These convenient, easy to make mixes with only the highest quality ingredients and no added preservatives are eye catching packaging sure to be noticed on shelf. Merchandisers are available to create maximum impact.

For more info: sales@confettisweets.ca

Café PHO – The True Essence of Vietnamese Coffee

Café PHO, brings a true essence of Vietnamese coffee with a great taste without any hassle or wait. Piping hot or cold, your customers can always count on Café PHO. The product is simple to use: just empty contents into a cup; add 100ml hot water and stir; top with ice cubes and it is ready to serve. Simple steps, same great taste.



For more information: ajayhanda@foodempire.com

Manitoba Harvest to Unveil New Superfood Lineup



Manitoba Harvest has unveiled its new product lineup at the recent Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim, CA.

The company introduced a line of Hemp Protein items blended with other powerful plants like Matcha and Kale, along with new formats like Ground Hemp Seeds which offer greater convenience to consumers looking to incorporate hemp into baked goods and snacks.

"Hemp has been one of the most misunderstood plants for decades,

and we're thrilled to see consumers beginning to understand its nutritional value. These new items take full advantage of Hemp's Protein and Omega content and will be a perfect option for consumers looking to enhance their wellness routine," said Sam Garfinkel, vice-president of marketing at Manitoba Harvest.

Manitoba Harvest's Power of Hemp Lineup Includes:

Hemp+ Matcha - This new Hemp protein powder blend delivers a kick of caffeine to boost your smoothie and fuel your morning.

Hemp+ Supergreens - An innovative new combination of Hemp protein powder and greens like Kale and Spinach for a super smoothie solution.

Hemp+ Chia & Flax - Three nutrient dense seeds come together to make a perfectly blended mix for breakfast and baked goods.

Ground Hemp Seed - The same Hemp seeds you know and love, now in a new format to add convenience for boosted baking.

Roasted Hemp Seeds with Sea Salt - Power-packed snacks with 10g of Protein, 10g of Omega 3&6, and 11g of Fibre per serving.

For more information: www.manitobaharvest.ca

Plant Veda's Spoonable Yogurt Plant Gurt to be Carried by Whole Foods Market

Plant Veda Foods Ltd. has announced that its Plant Gurt spoonable yogurt has been approved for sale by Whole Foods Market.

The Plant Gurt product line launched in late 2021 and features three flavours: plain unsweetened, mango, and blueberry. One tub of Plant Gurt (spoonable yogurt) contains billions of probiotics. Made with simple whole food ingredients, including unsweetened and natural agave sweetened options, Spoonable yogurts serve as a perfect snack, a base for breakfast bowls, cereals, smoothies, and so much



more. Spoonable yogurt tubs account for over 63 per cent of the \$115 billion USD global yogurt market.

Plant Veda intends to leverage Plant Gurt's initial rollout with B.C. outlets to the hundreds of other Whole Foods locations North America-wide.

"Getting Plant Gurt onto the shelves at Whole Foods Market is a great milestone achievement for Plant Veda," stated Sunny Gurnani, CEO of Plant Veda. "Product placement with Whole Foods is seen as the ultimate goal of many in the natural food businesses. Whole Foods' commitment to quality, combined with their rigorous product standards is yet another confirmation of the excellence and purity of our products."

For more information: www.PlantVeda.com

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for Cold Beverages



Our innovative Divide & Slide Snap Tracks always keep your Cold Beverages front faced! Our unique slanted mini shelf makes this a great self-managed retail display solution!

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for Ice Cream Novelties



The Kwickload® Hanging Pusher System is ideal for merchandising Ice Cream Novelties. Made from ABS plastic, its heavy-duty construction ensures reliability in freezers!



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- Can be mounted on a crossbar or stock freezer shelf
- Patented: US Patent Number 9521913 / Canada Patent Number 2848793

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A. Lassonde IncC-25	Digi Canada88	Kindred Cultures Inc91	Procurement Solutions InternationalC-21
ADN Refrigeration Ltd94	Direct Plus Food GroupC-27	Kohl & FrischC-21	PuresourceC-32
Arctic GlacierC-21	Discovery Organics87, C-27	Kraft Canada3, 84, 85, C-13	Sabroso Foods92
Arneg Canada Inc9	Elias Honey87	LaCroix Beverages Inc93	Saputo Dairy Products Canada ...C-23
Basha International Foods10	Farm Credit Canada26	Lactalis CanadaC-9	Sara Consulting & Promotions Inc C-23
BC Egg Marketing Brand12	Foothills Creamery77, 99	Level Ground Trading Ltd32, 33	Smucker Foods of CanadaC-34
Bergen FarmsC-29	Fresh Bites IncC-21	Maple Leaf FoodserviceC-19	Sparkis EggsC-11
Big Marble FarmsC-21	Fresh is Best Salsa & CoC-31	Marketing Impact LtdIBC	Spolumbo's Fine Foods & Deli ...C-17
Bimbo CanadaC-30	Freybe Gourmet Foods100	Matrix Marketing11, C-21	Star Egg Company Ltd74
Biro Manufacturing Company24	Future Enterprises Pte Lte7	Mirage EyewearC-19	Star Grocery14
Bodacious Artisan Foods Inc21	General Mills CanadaC-27	MolsonC-19	St-Hubert RetailC-25
Calgary Italian BakeryC-29	Gnu Sante92	Naturally Homegrown Foods Ltd C-25	Sunfresh Farms LtdC-34
Canada BeefOBC	Guru Lucky Snacks77	Nature's Plus30	Teja World FoodsC-17
Cappuccino KingC-29	Harvest Meats76	Noto GelatoC-32	The Ice Cream DepotC-33
CFIG17	Herbaland83	Nutristart Vitamin Company29	The Oppenheimer GroupC-17
CHFA31	Hussmann Canada IncC-9	OK Frozen DoughC-23	Tim Hortons96, 97
Colnuck Ltd8	ID Foods Corporation23, 90	Olaf Packaging Group Inc14	Tree of LifeIFC
Concord NationalC-25	Italpasta Ltd103, C-27	Omega Alpha Pharmaceuticals Inc C-15	Unilever Canada IncC-25
Confetti SweetsC-29	Jakes Seasoning IncC-25	Prairie Pride Natural Foods Inc .C-23	Young & Young Trading Co. Ltd .C-33
Creative Cycle10	Kellogg's CanadaC-19	Pratts WholesaleC-7	Zoglo's Incredible Food Corp25
Dairy Farmers of CanadaC-35	Keurig Dr. Pepper Canada ...61, C-25	Procter & Gamble IncC-15	





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