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Premier Issue

The official publication of the Small Scale Food Processor Association



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UP FRONT

- 5 A Message from the Minister of Agriculture and Lands
- 5 A Message from the SSFPA Co-Chairs
- 7 A Message from the SSFPA Executive Director
- 8 Support Our SSFPA Members

FEATURE

- 10 SSFPA Success: Member Companies Blaze Trails With Their Entrepreneurial Spirit

SSFPA LEARNING CENTRE

- 18 Why Do I Need A Value Chain?
- 19 How Can The BC Food Processors Health and Safety Council Help You?
- 20 Packaging and Launching Your Product to Market
- 21 How to Select Superstars!
- 22 Five Reasons Why You Should Care About Food Safety

23 BUYER'S GUIDE



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A Message from the Minister of Agriculture and Lands



I often comment on how the diversity of B.C.'s agricultural sector as a whole is one of its greatest strengths. With over 225 commodities, British Columbians have many great choices for buying local and the quality of our bounty is the envy of the world. The remarkable diversity of our food processing industry enhances our profile, providing consumers with thousands of choices and adding value to business with numerous unique items. I want to applaud our small-

scale food processors for their commitment to creating value-added products which bolster the viability and profitability of the agri-food industry.

The people of B.C.'s agri-food industry are innovative and recognize the need to adapt to changing markets in order to remain competitive. The stories in this publication are a testament to that spirit of innovation.

Producers have tapped into niche markets such as baby food and special dietary requirements such as gluten-free or nut-free diets. This is the kind of innovation that will help the agriculture industry remain profitable for generations to come.

Producers have tapped into niche markets such as baby food and special dietary requirements such as gluten-free or nut-free diets. This is the kind of innovation that will help the agriculture industry remain profitable for generations to come.

I want to applaud the people behind the unique stories you'll find in the following pages. They are not only providing British Columbians with a myriad of high-quality options for buying local, but they are making great economic returns and setting an example for business throughout the agricultural industry.

In just a matter of weeks, B.C. will be hosting the world at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. It is estimated that nearly 3.7 million meals will be served to athletes, workers, media, public and the Olympic family. I am very proud to be representing an industry that has such a wide range of fine products to showcase and feed our visitors. Thank you for your contributions to agriculture and the lifestyle we enjoy in this beautiful province.

Steve Thomson
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

A Message from the SSFPA Co-Chairs



It is our privilege to introduce the premier edition of the Specialty Foods Magazine, the official publication of the Small Scale Food Processor Association. This issue gives us the opportunity to showcase a strong, vibrant and growing local food processing industry as well as the Small Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA).

2009 has been another monumental year for the SSFPA. Our award winning Food Safety Initiative was yet again successful, our membership continues to grow and ongoing opportunities continue to develop. We are proud sponsors of our industry, a unified voice to government bodies, and provide a forum for like-minded entrepreneurs to communicate and get together.



The specialty food industry in Canada is very diverse and has posted a year-after-year growth rate of over 25 percent. Our membership consists of companies who

are in step with food trends and consumer taste. These businesses process products ranging from fine preserves, organic baby food, wild smoked seafood, gluten free products, nut free products, grass fed beef, high quality organic vegetables, nutrition snacks, and many more. These are high growth businesses that create local employment and support local suppliers and their communities. They are innovators who can compete in an international market place.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our members and the board for their support, ideas and input. Through the collaborative efforts of the board of directors, the members and the executive director the association has gained credibility and notoriety on a national level. This has allowed the association the opportunity to provide input on critical initiatives that impact the growth of our sector.

This magazine is a great vehicle to profile the successes of our members, valuable industry specific education articles and updates on association activities and events. We would like to acknowledge Matrix Group Inc. and the advertisers for their support in launching our bi-annual issue of the Specialty Foods Magazine – The official publication of the SSFPA. We encourage new members to join and become part of our exciting and growing association.

Maureen Drew and Greg Reinhart
Co-Chairs of the Small Scale Food Processor Association

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*Congratulations to the SSFPA
And All of Their Members on
the Inaugural Edition
of Specialty Foods
Magazine*



A Message from the SSFPA Executive Director



I have had the distinct privilege and honour of serving an organization whose members demonstrate a commitment to the economic health of their communities by ensuring success in their operations through best practises. The members' understanding and intricate knowledge of the issues they face and their innovation in navigating these complexities, provide the backdrop for the success of the association. The stories in the following pages portray the vision and entrepreneurial spirit that has contributed to the growth and development of the specialty food industry.

Since March 2002 the SSFPA has provided information to ensure that small scale food industry participants are prepared for the opportunities as they are presented. The association hosts a website which includes an up-to-date online directory of over 800 specialty food products; a wealth of information on implementing your food safety plans; links to resources to assist with business needs; and archives of all past activities. In 2009 the SSFPA hosted and co-hosted over 30 industry specific workshops and collaborated with BC Association of Farmers Markets and the BC Agri-Tourism Alliance and others for the "New Partners – New Opportunities" conference and trade show. Stay tuned for the 2010 "New Partners – New Opportunities" – Real People Talking to Real People events.

The Small Scale Food Processor Association has worked in collaboration and in partnership with industry associations, governments, private and public companies and in 2009 the association was recognized for their cooperative approach by receiving the "2008/09 Premier's Innovation and Excellence Award - Partnership Category" for work with the team to bring forward the Food Safety Initiative in the Province of British Columbia.

To all the Small Scale Food Processors in Canada we dedicate this First Edition magazine to you and wish you the best in 2010.

Candice Appleby
Executive Director
Small Scale Food Processor Association



SSFPA-Associated Program (FSI) is Awarded the 2009 Premier's Awards for Promoting Innovation and Excellence- Partnership Category

The 5th Premier's Innovation and Excellence Awards has announced the Food Safety Initiative (FSI) Program as the provincial winner of the 2008/09 Premier's Innovation and Excellence Award - Partnership Category. With the public's rising concerns about food safety issues, FSI was able to shift attitudes and practices of food processing plants to recognize the value of adopting internationally recognized food safety systems and in turn help strengthen BC's food safety system. The caption of the photo indicates the type of partners and the level of co-operation attained by this program. SSFPA is proud to be associated with FSI—along with these partners—and to help facilitate its success.

Front Row L to R: Maureen Drew, Co-Chair SSFPA; Rosemary Pede, Food Safety and Plant Health Branch, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands; Marg Bancroft, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Larry Copeland, Retired Director BC Centre for Disease Control. Back Row L to R: Phillip Watney, SSFPA Food Safety Program Manager; Navneet Gill, Food Safety and Plant Health Branch, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands; Premiere Gordon Campbell; Marney James, Director Food Safety and Plant Health Branch, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands; Sion Shyng, BC Centre for Disease Control.

SMALL SCALE FOOD PROCESSOR ASSOCIATION (SSFPA)

Mission: The Mission of the SSFPA is to represent the interests of Small-Scale Food and Beverage Processors.

Vision: Creating Regional Food Sustainability

The SSFPA Approach: Market-driven, extensive cooperation with individuals, companies, organizations and government bodies.

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SSFPA Success: Member Companies Blaze Trails With Their Entrepreneurial Spirit

From salmon to salad dressing, there is no lack of diversity in the products offered by SSFPA members, but there are also many things that those same manufacturers share in common. Their business successes are the result first of all, of a dream, followed by a lot of hard work and a belief in their product to back it up. SSFPA producers and processors have discovered a demand for their unique products or services, and have put their entrepreneurial spirit to work day and night and day again to fill that demand with something they believe in. None of it, though, would be happening if each and every one didn't share one other thing in common: a love of what they do.

Local is a way of life at Canadian Hazelnut

Canadian Hazelnut's home base is a 60-acre orchard in Agassiz, B.C., but its reach extends throughout that whole area of the Fraser Valley. "Not only do we process and harvest our hazelnuts, we also help harvest and do the processing for other local farmers around the Agassiz and Chilliwack area," says Pentti Hanninen, who bought the property with his wife Deborah in 2004.



The orchard was originally planted in 1981 by Henry Wigand, who believed the area was perfect for hazelnut growers. If Canadian Hazelnut's success is any indication, the man was bang on.

The Hanninens have an industrial-sized kitchen and processing facility on-site, where they work with hazelnuts they've grown themselves, as well as nuts they've purchased from other nearby producers.

"We believe in trying to sell as local as we can, as well as to help other local businesses by selling their products in our store," Hanninen says. "We believe in local products and are very happy to know that we help contribute to the local economy."

That local attitude extends to the people who help make the company run. "We believe in hard work, effort and a family-run-business. Though most everyone working on the farm is family, we do have a few local employees who are not, but we believe in treating them as if they are," Hanninen explains.

The on-site retail store sells raw, roasted, candied and chocolate-covered hazelnuts, as well as oils, butters and even hazelnut flour for baking. The nuts grown on the property are all organic, and the company strives to buy as many of its other ingredients as possible from local producers.

Several stores in Vancouver, especially at the popular tourist site Granville Island, carry Canadian Hazelnut's goodies, while Hanninen said a number of restaurants in the city also use his products.

The company has proven that such exotic treats as hazelnut smoothies, hazelnut veggie burgers and hazelnut pizzas are not only possible, but delicious. All it takes is a little creativity.

Contact: canadianhazelnut@telus.net

The wait for wine-vinegar is worth the end-result

It would be easy for Kim Stansfield to follow the lead of people all over the Okanagan and make white wine that she could pump out the door quickly...but what fun would that be?

Stansfield and her husband John Gordon own a 10-acre certified organic farm in Summerland, B.C., called Valentine Farm, where they have a small vineyard, fruit trees, berries and a market garden.

"We were looking for a value-added product, something we could do with what we were growing," Stansfield explains. That's when they hit on naturally fermented vinegars.

"Everybody used to make their own vinegar, and now in the past 50 years nobody does," Stansfield says.

"Making vinegar takes patience, but it also takes patience to sell it," she says, noting it can take 13 months for fermentation. "A lot of people aren't prepared to wait that long. They want a product out now. But that's what makes this special."

Stansfield and Gordon now sell a wide range of vinegars under the name The Vinegar Works at Valentine Farm. Their wine vinegars are as varied as the shelves of a wine store, with selections like pinot noir and Gewurztraminer, as well as fruit-infused versions featuring everything from raspberries to plums.

There is even a batch of eight-year-old dark balsamic in the works that won't be ready for sale until 2014. "We're always working on things, it just takes time," Stansfield says.

The couple sell their Vinegar Works products at their Summerland farm, where a one-bedroom guesthouse stays busy during the Okanagan wine festival season from May to October. The vinegars can also be found in retail stores, including private wine stores, a natural fit.

While accolades like the 2007 best certified organic processed product in B.C. are a feather in her cap, Stansfield said there is a whole other reward in making vinegars at home on her farm. "I love working outside. It's wonderful being able to do that."

Contact: www.valentinefarm.com



Healthier eating, straight from the bottle

When Dale Ziech chose to plant salad greens instead of fruit trees on his family farm north of Kelowna more than 20 years ago, little did he know he was changing his wife's career path forever.

One day about 15 years ago, Donna Denison, Ziech's wife, decided she no longer wanted to work away from Little Creek Gardens, the farm she shared with her husband, and instead wanted to do something that would complement the greens Ziech was growing. So she began bottling the salad dressing she'd been making for her family dinners for years and marketed it under the name Little Creek Dressing. It sold.

A fire a few years later at her pottery-studio-turned-bottling-plant threw a major wrench into the plans, but Denison's father encouraged her to carry on and she did, making use of the kitchen at a nearby resort to make her dressing.

Denison slowly but surely rebuilt and expanded her business, introducing strawberry and then cherry balsamic flavours to go along

with her original recipe dressing. Today, Little Creek Dressing is sold in about 100 stores in three provinces, and Denison hopes to soon launch new flavours, including a vegan apple cider caesar and an Asian apricot.

Despite the success, Denison still does most of the work herself, at home. A neighbour helps once a week, while Denison's twin daughters are now helping with the distribution.

"I've had such a tremendous response from people who tell me they're eating healthier food because of the dressing," Denison remarks. "I've gotten hundreds and hundreds of e-mails and letters from people who said their kids never ate salad before the dressing. What a wonderful thing it is to help people eat healthier food."

Denison said the dressings also work well as dips or marinades, and can go equally well on foods like rice and perogies. Believe it or not, some people even drink it right out of the bottle. "You can't believe the number of people who confess that to me," Denison says.

Contact: www.littlecreekgardens.com

Raising turkeys to a higher standard

When someone buys a turkey from JD Farms for the first time, it's often because the company's strict standards appeal to their desire for health-conscious food. The second bird, however, usually goes for an entirely different yet equally important reason.

"The second turkey is sold to the person because it tastes good," said Jack Froese, President of JD Farms, a family-owned and run turkey operation in Langley, B.C.

"One thing we really strive to do is give a really good quality product," he says. "We are a small processor and we have to do it right and have a good product to stand out in the marketplace."

JD Farms sells whole turkeys and processed turkey products like sausages,

deli meats and ready-to-eat meals in stores around B.C., as well as in its on-site retail outlet and bistro at its Fraser Valley farm, a property Froese and his family have owned and run since 1979.

Froese and his wife Debbie now have their daughter working in the office and their son managing the barn.

"People feel a real connection buying direct from the farm," he notes. "They trust us. What we say is what we do."

What they do is raise turkeys according to very strict standards including a natural diet of grain, vitamins and minerals with no antibiotics or animal by-products. The standards also include living condition requirements for the birds like minimum space allocations

and outside runs. JD Farms also buys turkeys from five other companies in the area who adhere to the same strict code.

Froese says those standards are reflected in the taste. "I think it's the feed," he explains. "In poultry feed the cheap source of energy is animal fat—tallow—and we use a canola oil base." The approach appears to be working.

JD Farms recently rebuilt its store and bistro after outgrowing the old one, and in 2008 was a nominee for the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce Medium Business of the Year award. The following year Froese was nominated for businessman of the year by the same organization.

Contact: www.jdfarms.ca

continued on page 14



Growing Forward

Food Safety Systems Implementation (Processor) Program

British Columbia food and beverage processors are well aware of the importance and economic advantages of implementing food safety systems in their operations. The purpose of the Food Safety Systems Implementation (Processor) Program is to offer education and funding for processors across British Columbia to develop food safety plans. The FSSI (Processor) Program delivers educational workshops, one on one consultations and funding to eligible food processors to implement GMP and/or HACCP plans. The Small Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA) is pleased to deliver this program in support of British Columbia food processors like you.

The FSSI (Processor) Program is composed of two elements:

Outreach Element – one-day education workshops and on-site consultation

Implementation Element – cost-share funding to individual companies to support the implementation of written GMP and/or HACCP food safety systems.

The Food Safety Systems Implementation (Processor) Program is part of Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative which offers programs and services to promote a profitable, innovative, competitive and market-oriented agriculture, agri-foods and agri-based products industry. Funding for this program has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.





"The HACCP program has helped us to establish our company as a reliable supplier of premium tofu. Through HACCP, our production processes are more efficient, our products enjoy consistent quality, and above average shelf-life."

Rita Cheng,
President, Superior Tofu Ltd.



More and more food retailers are expecting their food suppliers to have a HACCP plan. Nobody wants a major health scare from a food disaster! However, it can be difficult for a smaller company to know how to get started on developing a full HACCP Plan. That's why a "A Step by Step BC HACCP Plan" was developed.

Food Safety Planning Workshops

Food processors are invited to attend an introductory food safety workshop to learn basic food safety for food manufacturing using food safety systems such as GMPs and HACCP. The workshops are also a valuable educational tool. What's more, they offer an opportunity to network and learn about how you can enhance your bottom line.

The workshops are lead by **Lisa Weih**, CPHI(C), a food inspector and food safety educator since 1992.



The FSSI (Processor) Program is managed by **Phil Watney**, B.Sc. Phil has 20 years of experience in industrial microbiology, food processing and food safety. He is responsible for development and delivery of food safety education and funding assistance programs.

On-Site Consultations and Implementation Grants

Eligible companies that attend the food safety planning workshop may apply for FREE one-on-one site visits by Food Safety Consultants who will help conduct an assessment of your processing operation. This consultation is an advisory process, not an inspection. The information is entirely for your use – to help keep you and your business safe and to develop efficiencies that pay for themselves. The Food Safety Systems Implementation (Processor) Program also provides financial assistance to eligible food and beverage processing companies to help implement their food safety system plan. This funding can be used to assist with the purchase and installation of equipment to improve food safety and to train staff in the adoption of a food safety system.

For more information on the Food Safety Systems Implementation (Processor) Program, please contact the Small Scale Food Processor Association

Toll Free 1-866-547-7372

www.ssfpa.net/foodsafety

Sticking to their guns, with bang-on results

It's not easy to run a food processing company from a small fishing village on a remote island, especially when your ingredients and methods are questioned by everyone from the industry establishment to the "tough old guys" in the village.

Sointula Wild Seafoods and Smokehouse must be doing something right though, because despite that adversity, what they're doing is working.

Nick Orton, who runs the company with his partner Barb Horricks, took a job in Sointula, B.C.—located on Malcolm Island near the northern tip of Vancouver Island—about eight years ago. He liked it there. So when the opportunity came up to buy a smokehouse in town, he took it.

Both he and Horricks had experience in the organic and health foods industries, so he decided to use organic sugar, salt, maple syrup, herbs and spices to treat his fish, something essentially no one else in the business was doing.

"When we started it we were kind of scoffed at by the industry," Orton admits. "Our salt, for example, costs 35 times more than the salt any other smokehouse would use."

But Orton and Horricks stuck to their guns. "It's a commitment we have. We're trying to create the concept of sustainability in everything we do," Orton says, noting people have taken really well to the philosophy, as seven years in business will attest.

The smokehouse buys its fish from local fishers, often processing them within 24 to 36 hours of the initial catch. Most of the products feature the five Pacific species of salmon, but the company also offers tuna, ling cod and halibut products and is now experimenting with other types of fish like snapper.

Both Orton and Horricks say they love their jobs. "There's a certain primal fulfillment in getting your hands into the fish with the blood and the guts and being able to get a beautiful, clean product out of it," Horricks explains.

Contact: coastsel@island.net



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WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE



From 1 store to 15, gluten-free has put this company on the map

Most Canadians take for granted that they can eat things like pizza, pancakes, cookies and sandwiches without getting sick. But for people living with celiac disease, foods like that are either off limits, or difficult to find and of questionable taste.

However, Maggie Zsoltaros, CEO of Maggie's Gluten Free Kitchen in Canyon, B.C., is making food fun again for a lot of celiacs. "If you're celiac you are intolerant to gliadin. It's a gluten product. We can't absorb it. You can be very sick. You'll bloat, you'll get gas," Zsoltaros, a celiac herself, explains. "We bake everything with gluten-free products."

Zsoltaros, who used to manage group homes for people with mental disabilities,

said she and one of her group home residents who was a fellow celiac found it very difficult to find breads, pastries, buns and other flour-based foods that were made without wheat flour and actually tasted good. Most, Zsoltaros says, tasted "grainy" while others were barely palatable.

So she decided to start baking her own, and wouldn't you know it, word spread and people started offering to buy her baking. "That's how I decided to get into the baking business," Zsoltaros recalls. "I sold my first loaf of bread in May 2006."

Maggie's Gluten Free Kitchen sold its first batch of goods to a store in Nelson, B.C., and is now found in 15 stores in two provinces. Zsoltaros uses wheat flour substitutes like organic brown rice,

sorghum, corn starch, tapioca starch, quinoa and amaranth to make everything from bread, buns and pizza crusts to cookies, granola bars and pancake mix.

With a standalone kitchen to prevent cross-contamination, the focus is on ensuring the products remain gluten-free, but Zsoltaros also prides herself on making things that don't taste that way.

"If I didn't tell you I was serving gluten-free products you wouldn't know," she says. Her customers appreciate that.

"It's not a job it's a labour of love. I'm so pleased when I hear people say how much they enjoy it, especially when it's children. To me that's the payback."

Contact:
www.maggiesglutenfree.com

Nonuttin Foods knows "sumthin" about being nut-free

Although the name of her business jokingly suggests otherwise, Alana Elliott definitely knows a little something about the food business. Elliott, President of Duncan, B.C.-based Nonuttin' Foods, has been selling allergy-free foods since 2004, and quite successfully at that.



Elliott's daughter has several food allergies, and she was finding it difficult and frustrating to find good quality foods that her daughter could safely eat. "I'm one of these people who enjoys cooking for other people, so I developed all my own recipes at home," Elliott explains, noting that she translated that into a small business "with frustration and perhaps a little naivety."

Starting with raisin, apple cinnamon and chocolate chip granola bars, Elliott launched Nonuttin' Foods with the goal of providing safe food for children with allergies to nuts, dairy products, eggs, wheat and other common allergens.

"We were the very first nut-free granola bars in North America," Elliott says.

The company now sells chocolate, dried fruit, cereal, trail mix and other products in six provinces, and is planning to launch some new products in May, which is allergy awareness month.

"We've had phenomenal feedback. A lot of times we may be the only product a family can eat that they don't make themselves. We even get parents crying," Elliott remarks. "It's what keeps you going when you sometimes wonder what you're doing."

Nonuttin' has a four-page policy for allergen control, performs rigorous sample testing, gets written confirmation about the contents of ingredients delivered by its suppliers, refuses to accept damaged ingredient packages, and even asks its employees to sign contracts stating they won't eat nuts on their way to work.

Elliott still gets calls from sceptical parents unsure if the products really are safe to eat—something she can understand as the mother of a child with food allergies—but has never had a customer suffer an allergic reaction.

The company has been recognized with awards from the Duncan-Cowichan Chamber of Commerce and the Mid-Island Science, Technology and Innovation Council, but its most noteworthy honour may come at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, where Nonuttin' will officially be supplying granola bars to Olympic broadcasters.

Contact: www.nonuttin.com

Long-term success for the province's Aboriginal communities

Agriculture can provide Aboriginal communities with new jobs, a marketable commodity, and nutritious, locally produced food that they can sell in their local stores.

Many communities, however, have been unable to take advantage of supports that can help get agricultural programs off the ground.

That's where the First Nations Agricultural Association (FNAA) comes in. "Most of the programs that are available to non-native manufacturers through Agriculture Canada and other places aren't available to native manufacturers on reserve. A lot of what we do is trying to fill that gap," says



Trevor Kempthorne, General Manager of the FNAA. "We provide business and management services to Aboriginal farmers in British Columbia. We also do some advocacy work for them on a national level."

The FNAA, which has roughly 300 members, provides the full range of services including advice on marketing, financial planning, education and training, and developmental lending. The Kamloops-based organization has been in operation since 1978.

"We have a lot of clients who are relatively successful," Kempthorne said. "One of the goals in what we're doing is providing sustainable agriculture systems. We don't want 'one-year wonders.'"

Kempthorne says his organization helps its members with everything from cattle producing—he estimates that 10 percent of the beef production in B.C. is under Aboriginal ownership—to growing grapes and organic market gardens.

The FNAA has partnerships with non-native and Métis producers and processors as well as Aboriginal ones both on and off reserve, and works with them on both conventional and more traditional farming projects.

"One of the goals in what we're doing is providing sustainable agriculture systems. We don't want 'one-year wonders.'"

"Aboriginal agriculture goes back as far as time goes back, but we consider it quite different from the European style," Kempthorne explains. "A lot of it is geared towards wild harvesting."

The FNAA's policy is that they go only into communities where they have been invited to help, Kempthorne says, noting that once they have been asked they simply go in, see how they can help, and take it from there.

The approach seems to be working, as the organization received one of eight national Leaders in Economic Development awards from the Assembly of First Nations at its national conference in March 2009.

Contact: www.fnala.com



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An organic alternative for little ones

While eating organic is a valued way of life for many people, it's not always an easy one.

Kalpna Solanki discovered that it can be even harder when you're trying to find organic foods to feed a little one, in this case, her daughter.

"When she started eating solids at six months everything she ate was made at home using organic ingredients," explains Solanki, who decided not long after that to start BOBOBABY, a Burnaby, B.C.- based company that makes fresh frozen baby meals. "It felt like a really good idea to free moms from the kitchen and provide them with a really good organic product."

Solanki's company was the first in North America to offer frozen organic baby food, and she has since added a line for older children called BOBOKIDS, which features pancake and trail mix, full meals like stew and ratatouille, and something called a mookie.

"It kind of has a muffin-type texture but without the fat, and it's not as sweet as a cookie," Solanki explains. "It's a really good breakfast item."

Solanki prides herself on buying organic and fair trade items, as well as sourcing as locally as possible. She has also recently branched out, launching a line of organic trail mix called Munch Time for the vending machine industry, which she said is increasingly interested in healthy food. She's also partnered with a company called Food Matters to act as consultants for



"It felt like a really good idea to free moms from the kitchen and provide them with a really good organic product."

entrepreneurs looking to break into the food business.

BOBOBABY has won several awards and lots of kudos, including a hand-written note Solanki received from Hollywood actress Angela Bassett, thanking her for providing healthy food to kids.

"There are some days I wake up thinking 'Why do I do this? Why didn't I just get a job? Then some days things just work beautifully and you get an e-mail from someone saying 'thank you so much,'" she remarks.

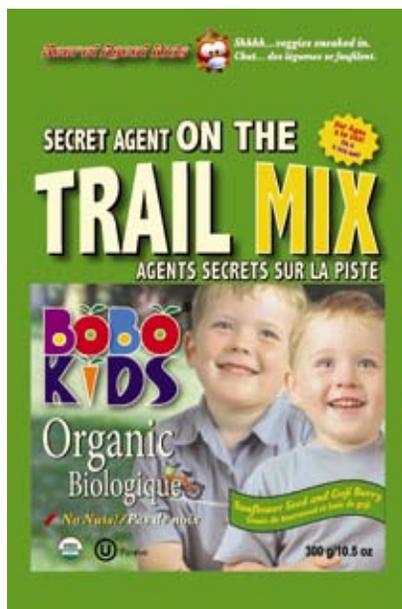
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Why Do I Need A Value Chain?



By Terry Ackerman

You are not alone if you are unsure if a Value Chain can help your company. Many small to midsized companies ask the same question. Simply put—the answer is yes. If you are part of a Value Chain you have a competitive advantage over other companies who are mostly involved in supply chains. Let me explain.

A Value Chain is formed when a mutual degree of trust and a mutual sharing of information is developed between companies who share a common goal, such as supplying a product to a customer. This mutual collaboration is the framework for a Value Chain.

A supply chain is an arrangement between two companies to buy or sell products or services. Usually there is limited trust and little or no sharing of information. Suppliers come and go, and the relationship is based on a Purchase Order.

A Value Chain is formed when a mutual degree of trust and a mutual sharing of information is developed between companies who share a common goal, such as supplying a product to a customer.

Imagine the possibilities for your company if your suppliers and customers all shared information with you about the market, new products opportunities, or new ways of doing business. What if they helped share some of the

risk in the market and enabled you to learn from their management experiences? Imagine a Value Chain.

It is my experience that most of you have no time or patience to spend on something that does not help your business grow or survive. A Value Chain is a proven method of improving your businesses sustainability and profitability.

Most of you already have the beginnings of a Value Chain. You have companies that you trust and with whom you share information. Start with one or two suppliers or customers. Build your Value Chain slowly and carefully, but be prepared to make changes if necessary. And it doesn't hurt to remember the old axiom: First the business—then the trust. ■

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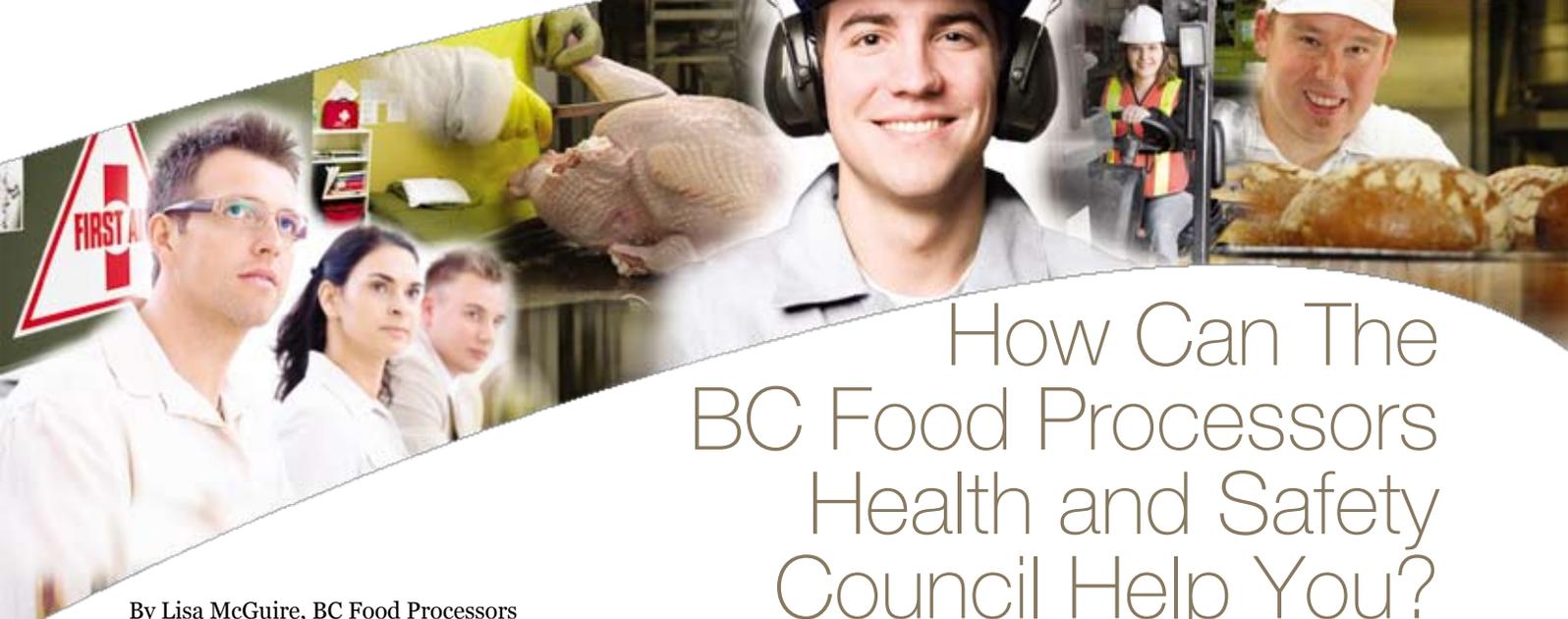
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How Can The BC Food Processors Health and Safety Council Help You?

By Lisa McGuire, BC Food Processors Health and Safety Council



The BC Food Processors Health & Safety Council is a not-for-profit organization that was set up in 2007 with the support of the food processing industry. We represent all parts of the food, beverage and nutraceutical industry, and it is important to note that **all** food processors in BC, regardless of size, have equal access to the Council's programs and services.

Our mission is to improve workplace safety by "*fostering commitment among employers to reduce the injury rate in all sectors of the food processing industry*". To do this we are working with industry to promote the value of workplace health and safety and demonstrate how a strong safety culture can positively impact on a company, provide effective safety training programs, share information on best practices, and otherwise support industry in reducing the injury rate.

What can we do for you, the small scale food processor?

- We can provide:
- Information – Ask us for a copy of our free "Health and Safety for Small and Medium Processors" guide, written in conjunction with WorkSafeBC, which provides a basic understanding of health and safety. We also send out a quarterly newsletter "Spotlight on Work Safety" which keeps you up to date. If you would like to receive a copy by mail, or email, contact the Safety Council.
 - Training – The new one-day Health and Safety Program Building Course is designed for businesses that need guidance in developing health and safety programs. It is scheduled in the lower mainland for Spring 2010.
 - Advice – Your first step is to log in to the Safety Forum on the BCFPHSC website and ask a question of one of our safety professionals.
 - One-on-one consultation – You can also request a Needs Assessment where a safety adviser will visit your facility and advise on gaps in your safety management system.

- Access to resources – Help is just a click away! With our powerful, new occupational health and safety resource database we bring together a comprehensive listing of over 300 consultants and trainers, 150 suppliers and close to 400 publications. Check it out at <http://ohsrg.bcfphsc.com>.

How much will it cost?

The Council is funded via a levy on all employers classified by WorkSafeBC as food processors. This means that we can offer many of our services at no additional cost.

How can I find out more?

Visit our user-friendly website at www.bcfphsc.com for more information about the Safety Council and the products and services, training and programs that we offer or call us at (604) 701- 0261. ■

Lisa McGuire, CRSP, is the Executive Director of the BC Food Processors Health and Safety Council. She is one of the founders of the BC Food Processors Association, which was originally comprised of Safety and Human Resource Professionals.

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Packaging and Launching Your Product to Market



By Ken Gallie, Label-Pak Printing Inc.

In our business we like to say “it’s the packaging that sells the product the first time, but it’s what’s inside that sells the package the second time.” I can not remember how many times I’ve seen a new product fail, all because sellers overlooked an aspect that prevented the product from moving off the shelf. It’s a costly mistake, especially when considering an average food product launch ranges from \$12,000 to \$15,000.

I have seen thousands of products succeed and a great many products fail. Here I hope to give you a “packaging recipe for success” to help you launch your product cost efficiently and in a timely manner. Before starting though, you need to answer a few questions:

- What is your product’s market? How big is it? Is it a growth market or is it crammed with similar products.
- Who is going to purchase your product?
- What will make your product different from your competitors?
- What are your competitors doing well, and, just as importantly, what are they doing poorly?
- Is your product shelf stable, or are there special handling requirements that need to take into account?
- How are you going to produce your product? Are you going to manufacture it yourself or are you going to have a private label company manufacture it for you?
- If you are planning to manufacture it yourself, this opens a whole host of

questions about machinery, location, processes, food safety, etc. If this is your route, my suggestion is do your homework in advance, as you can fudge some of this in the launch stage but as the orders start coming in, you will need to provide a safe product and meet demand.

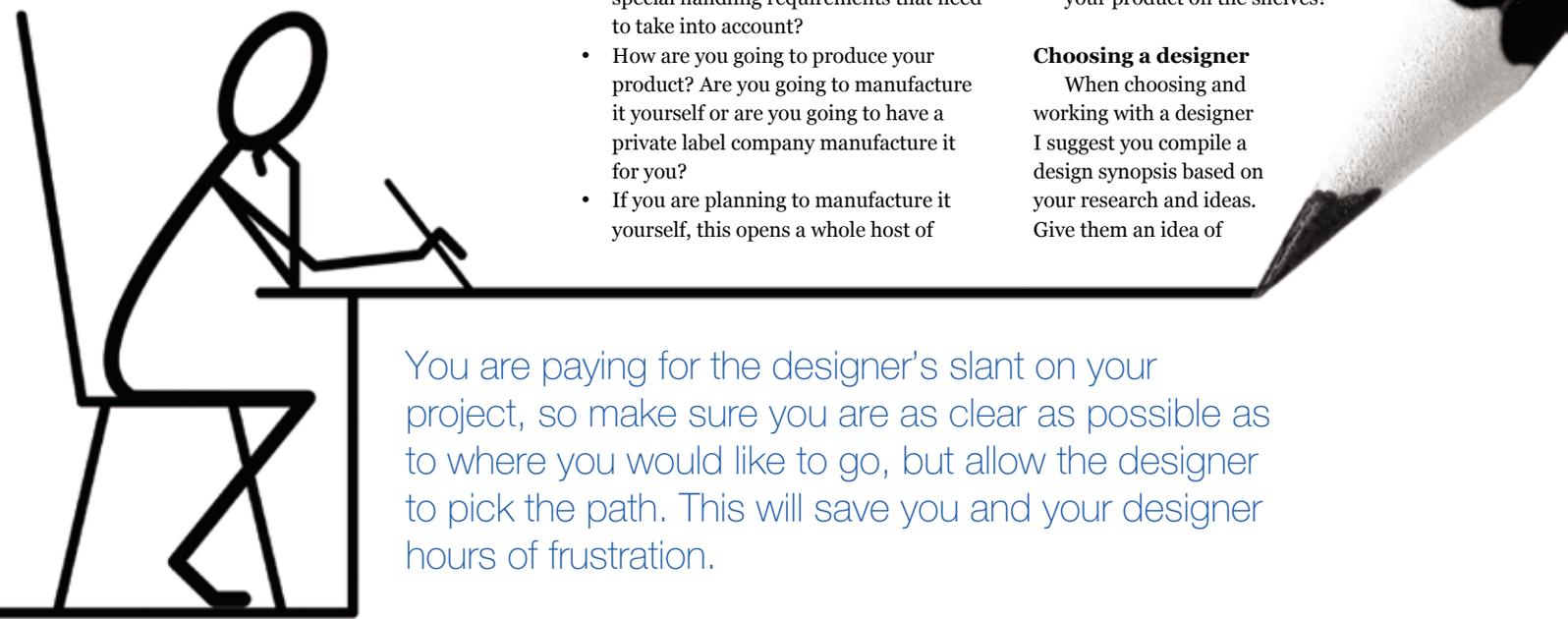
Doing your homework

Now that you have your product and an idea about what you would like, keep these questions and answers in mind:

- How is your recipe distinguishable from others in the market?
- What is your market? Is it specialized or very broad? Does the market understand your product (this is especially critical if you are looking at specialized or ethnic foods)?
- How do you need to prepare? Do you have costs? Do you have contacts?
- What is the volume needed (expected and projected)?
- Will you manufacture it? Or will you hire a custom packaging, or private label manufacturer?
- Ideally, where would you like to see your product on the shelves?

Choosing a designer

When choosing and working with a designer I suggest you compile a design synopsis based on your research and ideas. Give them an idea of



You are paying for the designer’s slant on your project, so make sure you are as clear as possible as to where you would like to go, but allow the designer to pick the path. This will save you and your designer hours of frustration.

what colours, look and feeling, and scope you would like your brand or design to evoke. Also, be clear about what you would like them to handle. This is critical if you're going to keep your costs in line.

You are paying for the designer's slant on your project, so make sure you are as clear as possible as to where you would like to go, but allow the designer to pick the path. This will save you and your designer hours of frustration. Two quick notes: one, remember in conceptual design, once you have seen the design, you are an owner. And two, prices are based on an hourly rate so designers like it when a client makes continual changes. Your cheque book on the other hand, won't.

Be prepared to interview a new designer, and ask for their portfolio and previous work. Look at the designs and the calibre of accounts they have worked on in the past. This will give you an idea of what to expect. If you have a large budget and are interested in multi-media (web, TV, print ads, etc.), then I would suggest a larger firm that have staff who can handle different medias. Smaller firms, and even independents designers, will offer you great service and reasonable fee structure if your needs aren't as complex.

If you reach a point where the design is just not working, be honest with your designer. If you pay your bill up they will usually not have a problem with it. And it is entirely in your rights to find another designer.

Branding

Your brand is your umbrella, under which the various flavours reside. I always recommend that you keep your brand easy to remember, but indicative of your concept/philosophy. Simple is good. Complex can get confusing. Above all, you should have some sense of pride when you look at your brand.

As for colours, the best brands have a subliminal meaning. This keeps the impression of your brand with the consumer long after they forget they name.

Choosing a printer

Printers, like everyone, have specializations. Some only print boxes, others only print labels. Do not ask your business card printer to print your cartons, as they probably will not know the packaging requirements and this could mean disaster. There is a growing group of companies that only specialize in packaging, and are a one-stop-shop. Their benefit is

continued on page 23



How to Select Superstars!

By Paul Lucas Paterson, Conceptual Development Group

It's time to add another team member to your staff. One of your favourite staff members has just given you his/her two weeks' notice. Staff turnover is inevitable and most businesses would agree, it is just another business reality. Retaining good staff is critical to the success of any business and may cost an average of \$8,500 per employee to train up to full capacity. This number factors all the related costs in training and development which will affect the bottom line.

For example:

- Paying the trainee's wage for three to six months.
- Paying someone to cover the trainer's duties while they are training the new recruit.
- Paying for the trainer's wage.
- Factor in the administration costs and payroll setup.
- The classified advertisement's costs.
- The manager's time to review resumes and interview.
- Paying for the mistakes that new employees tend to make in the first few weeks of training.

So, how do you minimize employee turnover? Well, by mastering fundamental management skills such as selection, training and development. Employee selection is the first step in building a cohesive team. When you select the wrong person for a job, all the training and development in the world will not create a superstar. To aid in this critical process, remember these Top Five Selection Techniques.

1 Develop departmental job criteria: This person has to compliment your existing team so you should create a job criteria. What skills or experience should they have had? What experience is needed for this position? Ask your team members for input and suggestions.

2 Application forms are a useful tool: Create or revise your application form to trigger different types of responses (e.g. behavioural/situational). Make it a task for the applicant to fill out the form as this tends to discourage

the people who are just there to punch in the time clock. Ask fun questions and ask why they chose to apply to your company.

3 Design an online classified advertisement that attracts the right people: Make sure your ad is clear and precise. You want to attract people that live the natural and whole food lifestyle.

4 Develop a list of interview questions: I have heard many managers say that they don't need to write the questions down. If you want a balanced and informed choice then write them down. Don't be shy to ask for specific examples of qualities and skills. Ask the applicant to "role play" a typical customer situation, this will enable you to gauge their probable response/attitude.

5 Encourage the participation of other department managers/front line employees in selecting their team members: After the initial interview process, ensure other staff interviews the short-listed applicants. This will allow shared accountability of the final decision and encourage the team to select the best possible candidate.

Some suggestions for advertising your job openings are:

- Photocopying your ad and posting it at universities, colleges and libraries.
- Talking at a school on Career Day and getting involved with your community.
- For management positions, advertise in an industry magazine and/or make inquiries with your business contacts (e.g. suppliers, consultants, etc.).

With these basic guidelines, any organization can successfully build an incredibly strong team. Now go out there and select your next Superstar! ■

Paul Lucas Paterson is a consultant based in Victoria, BC and is the President and CEO of Conceptual Development Group started in 1998. For more information, visit www.conceptualdevelopment.ca.

Five Reasons Why You Should Care About Food Safety



By Phil Watney, Program Manager, FSSI (Processor) Program

Did you know food safety can make your business run better? While its obvious purpose is to prevent problems with your product, food safety is also a powerful tool that can improve operations, simplify training, make better products and increase sales. Let's look at some obvious and not so obvious contributions food safety can make to your company.

Making food is hard work. From discovering your niche, to business planning, financing, sales, finding a facility, production, and marketing there are many steps, many new hats, and many learning curves. Did you notice food safety got left out? It often is. By mistakenly assuming it can't add to the bottom line, food safety often ends up as an afterthought only good for keeping the inspector happy. Be warned: when this happens control over product safety is actually very low and many other benefits are lost. A different approach is needed.

A proactive and integrated approach to food safety is best. This prevents problems from occurring in the first place and can make production improvements that add to the bottom line. The food safety systems most commonly used in food processing are called *Good Manufacturing Practices* (GMPs) and *Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points* (HACCP). These are especially effective because they are based on pre-planning, setting limits, writing procedures, training staff, monitoring and record keeping. This makes food safety systematic and easy to understand. By using these methods and linking them to other business activities, company-wide improvements in control and efficiency usually follow.

So, why is your company interested in food safety? Think of five reasons. Now read the list below to compare. This should give you ideas on how food safety can interact

and contribute to your other business activities.

To avoid a food safety incident

This seems like the only reason needed. Every company should do its best to prevent incidents from occurring and every company should have a recall plan in place to minimize damage if something does happen. By putting these controls in place you can sleep better.

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To meet regulations

The second obvious reason is to comply with the law. Are you trying to decide between selling raw ground beef across Canada or making muffin mix for sale on Vancouver Island? Remember, higher risk foods involve more government bodies and more regulations. Your local Provincial Health Authority and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will gladly explain the requirements and help you stay out of trouble.

To avoid legal liability

As manufacturers of food you can be found liable if a food-related illness is linked to your product. A written food safety

program is your only defence in a court of law. This is why your food safety activities must be recorded (i.e.: proof of cleaning, temperature monitoring and employee training). The saying goes, "if there is no record of it happening, it didn't happen."

To meet customer requirements

Food safety standards just went up again while you were reading this article. While more and more consumers and customers will ask for proof that your products are safe, this should be seen as a public relations opportunity, not a chore. By working to put food safety in place you show existing and potential customers you care. Showing you care will open doors for you and lead to increased sales.

To make product and process improvement

Are you always putting out fires at work? A written food safety plan will make everything start to run like clockwork. Take time to write Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for important tasks. Use these to train staff and each job will be done right every time without your supervision. With improved product consistency and quality, less waste and less returned products you should see a difference to your bottom line. How to mix a batch? How to clean the meat grinder? How to put on the date code? All of these are important for food safety but the real payback is knowing your employees are doing things right without you there.

Just remember, food safety is not just about food safety. ■

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continued from page 21

that they are immersed in the industry and their experience can steer you away from expensive mistakes before they happen.

A few key points:

- If you have chosen a good designer, make sure they talk to the printer to get the specifications the printer needs.
- File formats are critical, if a printer has to redo or work on your file, your cost will go up.
- Remember that volume is your biggest ally to driving packaging costs down. So do your market research!
- A rule of thumb I've passed on to my clients is never to load up with more than six months of packaging. Labelling regulations change and pressure sensitive label adhesive has a guaranteed shelf life of only one year.

Launching your product

So now you have done your homework. You know your product will sell. Your marketing materials are designed and your package is complete. Your pricing structure is finished and you have all your costs laid out. And you have just put in the purchase orders to get everything printed (in small quantities). Now what?

In a word, sell!

The point is to now get your product out to the public. I suggest you introduce it at a trade show—this is prime time to launch your product and get it in front of your prospective buyers. But be proactive, if you know that prospective clients will be there, pre-book appointments for the day of the show to get them to your booth. This not only builds interest around your booth, but focuses you on your actual purpose for attending a show...to sell! Standing in your booth waiting for people to show up is not an option!

Getting your products out in smaller- to mid-range stores is a good start. Specialty chains especially work very well to build your brand loyalty and your sales. As you grow, connect with brokerages that cater to the larger chains, as they will be able to get into the larger accounts that you might have challenges with. However, be cautious if they ask for exclusivity of your product.

Finally, even if the product takes off, you still need to keep promoting it! And if your product does take off, congratulations and enjoy the ride!

Good luck! ■

Ken Gallie has been in the Packaging industry for over 24 years, and with a passion for marketing he has worked on many national product launches. He can be reached at (604) 943-1588 or ken@labelpakprinting.com. www.labelpakprinting.com.



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Buyer's Guide

ASSOCIATIONS

BC Food Processors Health & Safety Council.....	19
Small Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA)	12, 13

BEEF JERKY MANUFACTURE AND WHOLESALE

Longview Meat & Merchandise Ltd.	inside back cover
---------------------------------------	-------------------

BIRCH SYRUP PROCESSORS

Moose Meadow Farm / Sweet Tree Ventures	6
---	---

CERTIFICATION AGENCY

Fraser Valley Organic Producers Association.....	18
--	----

CERTIFIED ORGANIC BEEF

Clear Creek Organics Ltd.	9
--------------------------------	---

CO-PACKERS

E-Fish-Ent Fish Company Ltd.....	18
St. Jeans Company.....	6

CORRUGATED BOXES (PACKAGING)

Crown Packaging.....	6
----------------------	---

EGG WHOLESALERS

Day Break Farms	19
-----------------------	----

FINANCIAL SUPPORT / INVESTMENT

Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.....	inside front cover
--	--------------------

FINANCING

Farm Credit Canada.....	outside back cover
-------------------------	--------------------

FOOD PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

Pemberton & Associates	4
------------------------------	---

FOOD SCIENCE PRODUCT MARKETING, SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Fresh Ideas & Solutions Inc.....	4
----------------------------------	---

FOOD TRADE SHOW

Sial Canada 2010	16
------------------------	----

GLASS CONTAINERS (JARS, DISTILLATES FOR OIL/VINEGAR ALIKE)

Bruni Glass	9
-------------------	---

GLUTEN FREE PRODUCTS

Maggies Gluten Free Kitchen	6
-----------------------------------	---

INSPECTION TESTING, CERTIFICATION AND VERIFICATION SERVICES

SGS Canada Inc.	14
----------------------	----

PACKAGING

Label Pak Printing Inc.	9
------------------------------	---

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ridgerock Studios.....	inside front cover
------------------------	--------------------

SANITATION SERVICES

CDS Sanitation.....	9
---------------------	---

SPECIALTY PACKAGING

Dominion & Grimm	4
------------------------	---

SPICES AND SEASONINGS

DGS Plus	inside front cover
----------------	--------------------

VEHICLE RENTALS, SALES AND LEASING

Hino Central – Langley.....	inside front cover
-----------------------------	--------------------

VITAL WHEAT GLUTEN AND BREAD PROCESSING

Permolex Ltd.	6
--------------------	---

WHOLESALE FOOD PRODUCTS

Bosa Foods.....	17
-----------------	----



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