

# NEWS FILE

The Voice of the Canadian Food & Beverage Industry

## Going for the Gold

What famous potato led to a diplomatic incident between the U.S. and Canada? Our very own Yukon Gold potato, now celebrating its 40th anniversary.

First bred in 1966 by Agricultural Canada at Ontario's University of Guelph and released to the public in 1980, the Yukon Gold variety is now a well-loved member of the vegetable marketplace. But in fall 1997 it became the focus of a well-publicized public relations slip-up at the Clinton White House.

At a state dinner for president Zemin of China, on Oct. 30 1997, U.S. first lady Hilary Clinton claimed the tasty new Yukon Gold to be an American invention. Proudly boasting that the menu of chilled lobster, Oregon beef and Yukon Gold whipped



potatoes was "made of entirely American ingredients," she mistakenly thought the Yukon name had meant an Alaska connection. The food editor of the *New York Times* was quick to point out that it was in fact a Canadian invention, and apologies were forthcoming from the White House Press Office. The "Yukon" part of the name is just a clever marketing tag invented by the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research division, and refers to the potato's golden colour.

These Canadian-bred potatoes have a wonderful golden-yellow hue because of the pigment anthoxanthin, the same colouring that gives cauliflower and sweet potatoes their tint. While European farmers also grew the yellowish varieties, in North America only the white strains were planted as they were desired by the food industry. Starting in 1953, head researcher Gary Johnston and his lab technician, Hans Von Sivers, worked to develop a new variety or "cultivar" of potato. Actually part of a breeding program joining the Canadian and Ontario Departments of Agriculture, their research involved cross-pollinating varieties and then waiting a full growing season to analyze and taste their efforts. As a result it took more than a decade of dedication to get useful results. In 1966 they finally harvested the Yukon Gold, the result of a cross between the Norgleam potato and the W5279-4. By mixing a North American white with an ancient South American yellow-fleshed strain they produced a unique-looking and tasting Canadian varietal.

The texture of the Yukon Gold falls somewhere between Idaho and Red potatoes, making them versatile for a wide variety of *(continued on page 10)*

## EDUCATION on the *menu*

Canadian chefs interested in widening their career opportunities now have another resource at their fingers. Starting this September Holland College's Culinary Institute of Canada (CIC) will offer an applied degree in Culinary Operations, with the goal of better preparing chefs to work efficiently in a variety of different environments.

The program will focus on skills and knowledge such as food product development, research, production efficiency, food safety, tech-



nology and even media presentation of food products. According to the Charlottetown, P.E.I. school, the program will help prepare chefs for a variety of non-traditional chef roles and workplaces, including with grocery retailers, food manufacturers and schools. "Chefs today are responsible for far more than producing wonderful food on a plate," says Holland College president Dr. Brian McMillan, explaining why the program is necessary, and noting that the program is "industry specific and industry driven."

Developed in consultation with the CIC's national advisory committee – including culinary entrepreneurs, R&D managers, restaurant operators, nutritionists and others – the two-year program is open to Culinary Arts diploma graduates or working chefs.

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cooking methods. Yukon Golds have a golden-yellow buttery flesh and nutty flavour. The anthoxanthin and glutathione flavonoids in the potatoes are famous for their anti-aging properties, and at only about 100 calories each, they are also a great source of potassium, and vitamins C and A.

Since the commercial introduction of the Yukon Gold in 1980 the same breeding program has marketed the OAC Temagami, the Red Gold, the Trent, the Simcoe and the Rose Gold. We can only hope the current U.S. White House doesn't claim these Canadian creations for its own as well.

— Jonathan McDonough

## Smart Talk about Regulation

Last month's Smarter Regulation of Foods in Canada conference was an important step forward in re-thinking Canada's often complex and heavy-handed food regulation system.

Held in Ottawa on March 21 and 22, attendees included government representatives from Health Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, as well as major food and beverage companies and ingredient suppliers from across the country.

Leading off the debate was keynote speaker Dr. David Jenkins, Canada research chair, Nutrition and Metabolism, and professor at the University of Toronto's Department of Nutritional Sciences. As well as urging Canada's regulators to promote diet and lifestyle as having the ability to prevent and treat conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol, Dr. Jenkins touted the benefits and opportunities of producing value-added food products from plant ingredients that could be grown in Canada, such as psyllium and phytosterols. "We need desperately to get these foods out there, as well as nutrition education and sensible labelling," he said. Among other solutions, Dr. Jenkins suggested in no uncertain terms "scrapping Schedule A" of the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting foods represented as a treatment, preventative or cure of certain listed diseases), while enacting legislation to promote new product innovation.

Others, such as Ian Munro, president of Mississauga, Ont.'s CANTOX Health Sciences International, recommended a more flexible government framework for food regulation that can deal with issues such as emerging technologies, bioactive food substances, and chemically altered traditional ingredients. Most speakers agreed that Canada's Food and Drugs Act is no longer responsive enough to keep up with the changing pace of the Canadian food industry, and is in fact holding back competitiveness for Canadian companies as a whole.

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On an optimistic note, H el ene Goulet, associate assistant deputy minister for the Health Products and Food Branch of Health Canada, announced that, "The Food Directorate is examining the current regulatory framework under which food additives are controlled in Canada...to reduce the regulatory burden where there is no obvious health protection or health benefit rationale, and establish a more modern approach to the food additive regulations." According to Goulet, the proposed regulatory amendments and pre-publication in *Canada Gazette* Part I should take place by winter 2006/2007, with final amendments in *Canada Gazette* Part II by next fall.

For conference chair Ron Doering, partner at Ottawa law firm Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP, the two-day session yielded some positive results. "This conference of the regulators and



### Grocery Trend Watch

More than 125 delegates from the food and beverage industry met in Halifax this February for the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors' (CCGD) annual Atlantic Conference. The one-day event focused on the grocery industry, Atlantic Canadian food trends and what CCGD vice-president for the Atlantic Region Jeanne Cruikshank described as "go-to-market strategies adopted by three major distributors." (Above) Allan Beaver of Sobeys Inc. spoke during one of the retail member briefing sessions on Atlantic market trends and opportunities.



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regulated demonstrated that everyone agreed the status quo wasn't acceptable," he says. "The conference had many examples of cases where already the food regulatory system was undermining innovation and competitiveness, and that the situation will only get worse if there aren't significant changes. We do in fact have a small group getting together next week already to see if we can maintain the really good momentum that the conference started."



### Winning Walnut Recipes

In February the California Walnut Commission hosted its first annual culinary contest, highlighting dishes featuring walnuts. Judging of the original recipes took place at the International Food and Beverage Show in Toronto. Winners of this year's California Walnut Inspirations Contest are Mary Fabiano from Toronto's Summer Kitchen Fine Foods, Best in Desserts and Best in Show; Michael Ogus of Toronto-based Carole's Cheesecake Company, Best in Frozen; Ralf Tschenscher of Vancouver's Lesaffre Yeast Corporation, Best in Bakery; and Wilma Olive-Mills of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.'s Chocolate F/X Inc., Best in Snacks and Confectionery.

### Sweet Deal

Ice cream isn't usually what comes to mind when considering Winnipeg, but that may soon change with the recent opening of a major new ice cream plant in the city. With the capacity to produce 14 million litres of ice cream per year, Prairie West Ice Cream Inc. will be one of the largest ice cream makers in Western Canada.

"We're co-packers," explains Prairie

West vice-president Ben Morthorst, who has more than 25 years experience making ice cream, and who is also a partner in an ice cream plant in British Columbia. "We won't be selling our own ice cream. We will be producing ice cream for other labels." According to Morthorst, the company opened

with several production contracts already in place, including production with a major food retailer for its Western Canadian stores.

Morthorst says he expects the company to expand this spring when Prairie West begins its second production line.

— Myron Love

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## NEW CONSUMER PRODUCTS

- Frozen dinners have been taken to a new level with the launch of **Knorr Frozen Entrées** from Toronto-based **Unilever Canada Inc.** The meals-for-two were inspired by popular restaurant menu items and culinary trends, says the company. Each meal comes in a stand-up foil bag, and can be prepared in the skillet or microwave. The five entrées include: Grilled



Chicken Alfredo with Portobello Mushrooms; Shrimp Fra Diavolo with Penne and Tri-coloured Peppers in a Spicy Tomato Sauce; Spinach & Ricotta Cheese Ravioli in a Tomato Sauce; Roasted Chicken & Linguine with Mozzarella and Zucchini in a Tomato Basil Sauce; and Shrimp, Asparagus & Penne in a Creamy

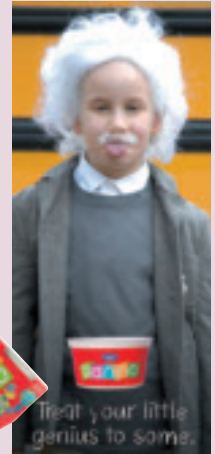
Tomato Basil Sauce. Each 680-g bag is available across Canada at a suggested retail price of \$8.99.

- Antioxidants are now available in salad dressings, thanks to Toronto-based **Renées Gourmet**. The company has launched **Wellness Dressing**, a six-flavour line of salad dressings created with pomegranates, blueberries and carrot juice. Made with flaxseed and



canola oils, the new dressings are also a source of omega-3. The products use organic ingredients and are dairy, lactose, gluten, peanut and trans fat free. The flavours include: Pom-Berry, Fig Balsamic, Lemon Garlic, Tuscan Italian, Peppercorn Ranch and Roasted Garlic Caesar. The products, which come in 270-mL bottles at a retail price of \$4.99, carry the Health Check symbol of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

- Parents can now serve their kids an omega-3 enriched yogurt made just for them. Montreal-based **Danone Canada** has introduced **Danino**, available in four flavours: strawberry, raspberry, peach and banana. The yogurts come in 100-g sizes and contain 20 mg of DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid.



Danino uses DHA derived from microencapsulated fish oil. It's tasteless and odourless and doesn't alter the flavour of the yogurt. Danino is found in all major supermarket chains and has a suggested retail price of \$2.99 for a four-pack of 100-g tubs.

- Sobeys Inc.**'s private label line, **Compliments**, now features a line of chewing gum. The new gum comes in four flavours: peppermint, spearmint, cinnamon and wintergreen. It is also available in two packaging formats: consumers will find 20 pieces in resealable pouches or 12 pieces in the traditional blister packs. The gum is available at Sobeys, IGA extra, IGA, Foodland and Price Chopper stores. Sobeys' suggested retail price is different in each region of Canada, but is generally 20 to 30 cents less than the leading brand competitor.



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**Coke invests in Winnipeg plant**

The Coca Cola plant in Winnipeg – at 155,000 sq. ft. – may be the company’s smallest Canadian plant, but thanks to \$700,000 in upgrades over the past few months, it is now one of the most efficient Coca Cola plants in North America.

Among the improvements is a new canning line that can process a number of different size cans simultaneously, including the standard 355-mL can as well as the 437-mL can used for the Rock Star and Full Throttle energy drinks, and the 273-mL mini can used for certain recipes. The Winnipeg plant

primarily serves Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario, but the mini cans and energy drinks are produced in Winnipeg for national distribution.

According to Janice Harrington,

Coca Cola’s Calgary-based public affairs and communications manager, the company has plans to invest another \$1 million in upgrades at the Winnipeg plant over the course of this year.

– Myron Love



**Reading to your health**

Consumers who eat cereal also happen to be avid readers – of the back and side panels of their cereal box. According to General Mills Canada Corporation and the Dairy Farmers of Canada, on average, consumers will read those panels eight times. That fact prompted General Mills and the Dairy Farmers to form a new partnership in late March to highlight the nutritional benefits of whole grains and milk, all in the same space.

In addition to a series of nutritional tips, General Mills and the Dairy Farmers will offer a coupon redeemable for two litres of milk with the purchase of specially marked boxes of Cheerios Honey Nut Cheerios, Multi-Grain Cheerios and nine other brands. The offer will be available in April and May in all major supermarket chains throughout Ontario and Western Canada. General Mills will also add 10-second tags about the offer to its television commercials.

Photo: Scott Lemmon Photography

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IN BRIEF

- The **British Columbia Chef's Association** has named Vancouver-based **Far-Met Importers** Associate of the Year. Far-Met imports and distributes exotic, gourmet food products used and/or carried by restaurants, retailers and specialty shops across Canada.
- **Grissol**, the division of Toronto-based **Dare Foods Ltd.**, recently joined the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's Health Check Program. Grissol is known for its Melba toasts, breadsticks and croutons.
- Grand Manan, N.B.-based **Admiral Fish Farms** has achieved Safe Quality Food (SQF) certification for its farmed salmon processing operation. SQF is owned by the Food Marketing Institute.
- The **Ontario Independent Meat Processors** has launched an online directory, [www.ontariomeatproducts.ca](http://www.ontariomeatproducts.ca), for consumers. The directory lists specific products and shows consumers where they can find them in Ontario. The site also provides directions to retail stores and farmers' markets and links to recipes and member company sites.
- Vancouver-based **Whitefish Group** has announced the launch of **Whitefish Specialty Beverage Agency**. Whitefish creates solutions for quality brands. The agency's flagship brands include the Czech Republic's Royal Brewery of Krusovice, Allan Scott Wines and Estates from Marlborough New Zealand, Portugal's Cortes de Cima Family Vineyards, and Russell Creek Winery from Walla Walla, Washington.
- Atlanta-based **Coca-Cola North America** has launched Vault, a hybrid energy soda that "drinks like a soda" and "kicks like an energy drink."
- Omaha, Neb.-based **Tyson Foods Inc.** will close its Norfolk beef processing plant and West Point slaughterhouse.
- Mississauga, Ont.-based **Industrial Laboratories of Canada Inc.** and Mississauga, Ont.-based **Micro-Chem Laboratory Inc.** have been working together under a joint marketing and processing alliance since last fall. Effective this month, the two companies will merge their businesses and be known as **Industrial Laboratories of Canada Inc.**
- In June the **Agri-Food Discovery Place**, a state-of-the-art agricultural research centre, will open at the University of Alberta. The \$24-million centre will house two major research facilities: the Crop Utilization and Enhanced Materials Research Centre, and the Meat Safety and Processing Research Centre. A story in the *Edmonton Journal* reported that the new meat research centre will change meat safety research in Canada. The story went on to say that the centre will allow researchers to duplicate the commercial meat processing environment and find new ways to eliminate harmful bacteria from meat.
- **HD Snax Ltd.**, a wholly owned subsidiary of Winnipeg-based Old Dutch Foods Ltd., has made an all-cash offer to acquire 100 per cent of Kitchener, Ont.-based **Humpty Dumpty Snack Foods Inc.**'s common shares.

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## SUPPLIER'S UPDATE

• Australia's **YourHealth Group** has signed a trademark license agreement with Dartmouth, N.S.-based **Ocean Nutrition Canada Limited**. The agreement enables YourHealth to include the MEG-3 brand on its complementary medicines. • Milford, Mass.-based **Waters Corporation** has purchased the food safety technology business and associated net assets of Watertown, Mass.-based **Vicam**. Vicam produces food safety test kits designed to test for the presence of mycotoxin microbiological organisms in a wide variety of food products. • Laval, Que.-based **Warnex Inc.** has announced that Midlothian, Va.-based **AmeriSci Bio-Chem** will offer real-time PCR pathogen-testing services using the Warnex Rapid Pathogen Detection System. AmeriSci is a scientific service laboratory. • Milwaukee, Wis.-based **Chr. Hansen** has announced a new portfolio of product concepts and natural ingredients aimed at health and wellness. These include anthocyanins, dairy flavours and a line of vegetarian savoury flavours. • A joint effort by Ukraine-based **Myronivsky Hliboproduct**

Myronivsky Plant



and the Netherlands-based **CFS** has resulted in a new 4,300-sq.-m meat plant just outside of Kyiv. The plant will produce packed poultry, pork and red meat products. It will use CFS equipment for preparation and marination, as well as for five customized convenience food production lines. • Decatur, Ill.-based **Archer Daniels Midland Company** and Forsyth, Ill.-based **Matsutani America Inc.** have produced Fibersol-2, a digestion-resistant maltodextrin. Fibersol-2 is a soluble dietary fibre that doesn't impact taste or interfere with mineral or calcium absorption. It has been added to Tropicana Pure Premium Essentials Fiber orange juice. In other news, Archer Daniels Midland Company has acquired the Cook cocoa powder line from **World's Finest Chocolate**. The Cook powders range

*(continued on page 18)*

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## SUPPLIER'S UPDATE

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from naturals to highly alkalized, and will be integrated into ADM Cocoa's De Zaan cocoa powders. • Homewood, Ill.-based **Silliker Group Corp.** has acquired the **Clabo Group**, a network of food testing and consulting laboratories in France. • Park City, Utah-based **Wasatch IceWater Company** has teamed up with Cincinnati, Ohio-based **Ampac Flexibles – Converted Products**, a unit of Ampac Packaging LLC. Wasatch will market its artesian water in Ampac's 16-oz. (473 mL) stand-up flexible pouch. • The Netherlands-based **Quest International** has launched Impaq Taste

Technology. Impaq can enable 30 per cent sugar and fat reduction and up to 50-per cent salt reduction in food and beverages without compromising taste. • Dresden, Germany-based **KSW Microtec** has developed the KSW-VarioSens Basic label that will enable food manufacturers to monitor the temperature of their products from production to consumer. • Hoffman Estates, Ill.-based **Kerry Bio-Science** has launched a product range of food-grade natural ingredients. The company says the new line of natural shelf-life extenders offers a safe solution to spoilage issues



Danisco celebrates the grand opening of its new North America Headquarters and Innovation Center. (From left to right): Mayor Carol Lehman of Gardner, Kan.; Steve Kelly, Kansas Deputy Secretary of Commerce; Tom Knutzen, executive vice-president of Danisco A/S; Deborah Rolf, president, Danisco North America; Alf Duch-Pedersen, chief executive officer, Danisco A/S; and Consul Karen Nielsen, Royal Danish Consulate.

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commonly associated with natural and organic food processing. • North Bergen, N.J.-based **Frutarom USA Inc.** and **Tyton Ingredients** have signed an agreement allowing Tyton to distribute Frutarom's Hydrocolloid Gums in Canada. • Denmark-based **Danisco** has opened its new state-of-the-art North America Headquarters and Innovation facility in New Century, Kan. The 240,000-sq.-ft. facility is home to 150 employees, and Innovation labs for food protection and analytical testing, fruit preparation and confectionery, culinary and meat, bakery, dairy and beverage. • Geneva, Ill.-based **Fona International**, a developer and manufacturer of custom flavours, has formed four business unit groups: Sweet, Confection, Savory and Beverage. • **Monsanto Co.** has agreed to pay the **University of California** an upfront royalty of US\$100 million plus ongoing royalties. The settlement resolves claims that the agribusiness giant infringed on the University's DNA patent used to make a dairy cow growth hormone. The settlement was reached a day before trial. • The **Systemedia Division** of Atlanta, Ga.-based **NCR Corporation** has received qualification as a Generation 2 radio frequency identification (RFID) label converter under **Alien Technology Corporation's** certification program. Systemedia manufactures printer consumables. Alien Technology provides RFID products. • Calgary-based **AVAC Ltd.** will invest \$800,000 in **Ceapro Technology Inc.'s** CeaProve, a calibrated wafer made from a proprietary formulation of proteins, fats and complex carbohydrates. The product can help identify a pre-diabetic state as early as five to 10 years before the onset of full-blown diabetes.