



## Healthy Canadians

There's no stopping the health juggernaut. Research into the health components of foods has always been with us, but never at this scale and with such resources. Case in point, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the St. Boniface General Hospital and the University of Manitoba are funding research into the health aspects of foods to the tune of \$17 million. For the first time, government scientists and hospital researchers will work side by side, identifying the active ingredients in functional foods and nutraceuticals, investigating their safety and hopefully spawn new opportunities and industry for crops grown in Western Canada.

The government is also tinkering with Canada's Food Guide, "to address our changing family structure, an aging population, increased home and work pressures and Canada's diverse multi-cultural profile." I, for one, will be interested in what the government suggests I eat to decrease my home and work pressures. Health Canada is holding public meetings this month to seek input from consumers, industry, academics and non-government organizations. Separate stakeholder consultations are planned for the fall to discuss specific content issues related to the guide.

On the other hand, some disturbing information from researchers from the University of Waterloo and the University of Alberta that involved 2,500 grade nine and 10 students. Dr. Rhona Hanning, a researcher from the University of Waterloo, says "nearly half of those teens taking part in the study weren't eating sufficient amounts from at



**"Nearly half of those teens taking part in the study weren't eating sufficient amounts from at least one food group,"**  
says Rhona Hanning.

least one food group." Ah, the curious logic of teens – "you mean potato chips aren't a food group? Who knew?" Even if Health Canada can build a better food guide, will teens care?

Focusing on "Food as a Healthy Value Proposition" is the theme of an intriguing conference to be held in Toronto at the end of this month. From June 19 - 21, The Agri-Food Innovation Forum is featuring an outstanding roster of speakers. The forum concentrates on three major themes: Influences on Agri-Food innovation, Applying Agriculture to Good Health and Commercializing Agri-food Innovation.

John Kelly, executive director of MaRSLanding, is one of the four organizers for this conference. MaRSLanding is a two-year-old hybrid research conglomerate that facilitates information and technology transfer in the life science and biotechnology sectors.

Other partners of the Agri-Food Forum include AAFC, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and Ontario Agri-Food Technologies.

Kelly hopes that people will come away from the conference with a couple of messages. "Food is good for your health and we're learning more and more all the time about some of the components of food and what specifically they do for specific health attributes. The second is that you can create a pretty good business surrounding this in the functional, nutraceutical and even in conventional foods when you target correctly."

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### BUYERS' GUIDE ALERT

At the end of this month, *Food in Canada* will be sending out the forms for our annual Buyers' Guide that appears in our October issue. Please look over the forms carefully, as we have made changes to some of the sections, deleted obsolete or confusing terms, as well as added completely new category listings. The listing is free for all industry suppliers. If you haven't received your questionnaire by the first week of July, please email Ashley Templeton, our sales co-coordinator, to get one: ashley.templeton@food.rogers.com