

# CMC'S 85<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BY DEANNA ROSOLEN

Sylvain Fournaise, president of the Canadian Meat Science Association, may have summed it all up when he called 2004 a “traumatic year” in his opening remarks at the Canadian Meat Council’s (CMC) 85th annual conference. He went on to say that Canada wasn’t prepared, for instance, when avian flu struck and that we “need to learn from these expensive crises.”

Despite the crises, the mood was generally optimistic at the conference, which was held in Gatineau, Que., from Feb. 1 to 4. But it was also reflective as the industry looked back on a year that included avian influenza and BSE, the fallout of these crises and how they were handled.

Not surprisingly, Brian Read, president of the CMC, opened the conference with a focus on disease prevention. “[Prevention] is the cheapest way to go, though it’s not newspaper worthy,” he told the audience. “There are ways and means to protect our industries. We need to work together on this.”

The Technical Symposium, which ran the first day, had presentations that were geared around related themes: disease prevention, emergency response, traceability and what to do with animal byproducts.

Jim Clark, a senior staff veterinarian, and Bill Anderson, acting director of the Food of Animal Origin Division, both of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, talked about disease prevention. Clark, who also gave an overview of the government’s emergency response plans, called on processors to be more vigilant when it comes to what’s coming into their shops.

Anderson emphasized the need to prevent specified risk materials (SRMs) from entering the human food chain. He explained that preventing SRMs from being used in non-food products and animal feed can help

reduce human exposure to potentially infected material by more than 99 per cent.

When it comes to emergency response, traceability is critical. Norm Cheesman, director of industry relations at the Electronic Commerce Council of Canada, talked about Can-Trace, an industry-led initiative of several groups, including the CMC. “The aim,” he says, is “to develop a generic, voluntary traceability data standard for all food product produced or sold in Canada.”

In November 2004, Can-Trace released the Canadian Food Traceability Data Standard Version 1.0 and is currently pilot-testing the standards in the beef, pork and produce sectors. Version 2.0, he says, is coming, along with toolkits and integration guidelines. For more on the data standard, visit: [www.can-trace.org](http://www.can-trace.org) Another interesting topic to come out of the Technical Symposium was Dr. Erick Schmidt’s presentation on the “Refinement of Animal By-Products into Safe Products.” Schmidt, who is CEO of

Biosphere Technologies in Alberta, says his company has developed a high-pressure thermal hydrolysis process called Bio-Refinex. The internationally patented process, which was developed in Canada, is now entering the commercial stage. The goal, he says, “is to take large volumes of food and carcass waste, destroy the pathogens, and then refine them into valuable products instead of continuing the traditional polluting practices involving incineration and landfills.”

The refining technology has application in the processing of SRMs linked to prion diseases. The challenge with BSE, for example, is to denature the infectious agent, the prion protein, without destroying the amino acids, which are valuable



From left to right: Darcy Rector won the President’s Award (a new award presented to a regular or an associate member for outstanding service to and support of the Canadian Meat Council). A special award was presented to David Adams, who has attended 50 consecutive CMC conferences. Brian Read, 2004 president of the CMC, congratulates Dr. Richard Holley and Garnet Altwasser. Holley was this year’s recipient of the Science & Technology Award. He is professor and head of the department of food science in the faculty of agriculture and food science at the University of Manitoba. Altwasser, of Brooks, Alta., was this year’s Honourary Member. Altwasser is the owner of Lakeside Packers and was a CMC president in 2001.



## Quality Products Demand Quality Ingredients!

- **Spice Blends**
- **Custom Blending**
- **Phosphates**
- **Marinades**
- **Seasonings**
- **Natural Spices**
- **Food Additives**  
(Sodium Erythorbate)
- **Casings, Nets**
- **Custom Grinding**
- **Flavour Development**
- **Black and White Pepper**  
(Cryogenically ground to preserve flavour)
- **Kosher and Halal capability**



**Your #1 source for ingredients and additives**  
[www.wiberg.ca](http://www.wiberg.ca)

### WIBERG Corporation

931 Equestrian Court, Oakville, Ont. L6L 6L7  
Tel: 905-825-9900 • Fax: 905-825-0070 • Email: [info@wiberg.ca](mailto:info@wiberg.ca)

**Vancouver, B.C.** Tel: 604-255-5584 • Fax: 604-255-5311  
**Los Angeles, California** Tel: 714-672-9823 • Fax: 714-672-9855

## CMCCONFERENCE

feedstock materials for industrial processes, such as biogas and plant nutrient production.

When we see food waste and rotten carcasses, he says, "You have to redefine what you're looking at. So you're really looking at nitrogen and phosphorous and calcium and all kinds of valuable trace minerals, which should not be wasted."

During the second part of the technical symposium, on intramuscular fat, the issue of pale soft exudative (PSE) meat came up. Dr. Casey Owens, from the Centre for Excellence for Poultry Science at the University of Arkansas, explained that in the U.S., there's a loss of US\$2 to US\$4 million per plant per year due to PSE in the poultry industry. She says PSE leads to lost yield, problems in further processing and variation in colour. Owens says they suspect there is a connection between PSE and heat stress.

Dr. Austin Murray, a research scientist at the Lacombe Meat Research Centre, talked about intramuscular fat (IMF) in pork. Canadians are adverse to higher fat content, but too low can affect tenderness. The average IMF in Canada is about 2.1 per cent – that's what's needed for acceptable juiciness, tenderness and flavour. The problem is if Japan, for example, is a target export market, pork with even a three to four per cent IMF may not be enough.

The theme of Day 2 of the conference was SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Different experts looked at the pork and beef industries, animal health and emerging supply nations.

Rick Young, president of Maple Leaf Consumer Foods Inc., looked at processed meats. In this sector, strengths include food safety, human capital, ability to innovate and the fact that protein consumption is growing. Under threats he talked about how accountability has changed. It used to be the industry was responsible for providing safe food and legible packaging. Now in addition to providing safe food and legible packaging, it's responsible for providing legible packaging that includes information on allergens and trans fats – among others, being sensitive to the obesity crisis, how it markets to children and providing information on the long-term health risks of foods. As Young explained, "What people eat is their choice, but we're accountable for them making educated choices."

Finally, meat processors, food scientists and government experts were treated to a snapshot of today's youth. Max Valiquette, president of Youthography Limited in Toronto, showed the audience what Canada's youth, between 10 and 29 years of age, look like. Here's just a brief synopsis: 80 per cent come from families of one to two siblings, sixty-seven per cent of unmarried 20 to 24 year olds live at home. This group has more money to spend and takes control of food choices at an earlier age (there are 11 year olds who call themselves vegans). Many buy food after school, are exposed to more diverse food choices and are open to alternatives and concerned about trans fats. Valiquette added that the industry should reassess its marketing strategies and consider speaking to kids directly.

[deanna.rosolen@food.rogers.com](mailto:deanna.rosolen@food.rogers.com)

[WWW.FOODINCANADA.COM](http://WWW.FOODINCANADA.COM)



MALABAR SUPER SPICE CO. LTD.

## Where service blends with quality

Malabar takes great pride in its technical knowledge, product, quality and customer service.

- We offer **competitive pricing on all of our quality products** including seasoning blends, ingredients, spices, sausage casings, a full range of meat processing supplies and equipment.
- We **stock more than 1,000 products** and regularly create specialty blends.
- We will **fill any sized order** with no minimums.
- We have unparalleled order processing speed and **guarantee delivery within 2 to 3 days** for local orders or within 7 days out of province.

Please call us toll free at  
**1-888-456-6252**

**MALABAR SUPER SPICE CO. LTD.**  
459 Enfield Road, Burlington, Ontario L7T 2X5  
Phone: 905-632-2062 Fax: 905-632-8119  
[www.malabarspices.com](http://www.malabarspices.com)

