

BC Provides New Credentials For Commodities and Processed Foods

continued from page 1

The legislation can be a double-edged sword admits Sandhu. She doesn't want it to negatively reflect on conventional products and she is also quick to point out that a small group couldn't use the legislation to be granted "a de facto monopoly for a product category." The legislation allows you to be certified but doesn't exclude anyone else from being certified. It's not like a patent.

Jo Ann Sandhu explained that the program grew out of the desire to more clearly define organic production. Its broader application will, "enable industry to develop certification programs with prescribed words and symbols," according to Sandhu.

Although the government is not, itself, doing the certification testing, it is

imposing stiff fines on any party found to be misrepresenting their product or process to consumers. "We are quite serious about this. If an industry is built around claims and somebody decides to cut corners because they think nobody will know but they get caught, you could collapse the credibility of the whole industry," says Sandhu.

Sandhu stresses this Act is not a panacea for their agriculture and food industry. "Any producer group has to weigh the administration costs of a certification program against the increase in margin it delivers. You have to determine if your claim will trigger anything with consumers. This certification attempts to retain value for the things you've done on the farm or in the plant as the product moves through the chain." ■

Soyfoods Canada Launched by, Growers & Manufacturers

continued from page 2

and attractive foods and beverages," Mr. Nathoo said.

Noting that Canada is a major food grade soybean grower, Tom Lassaline, Director of the Ontario Soybean Growers, said "Canadian companies have demonstrated advanced product and market leadership in soy and have developed a pool of intellectual capital equal or superior to anywhere in the world."

One of the first initiatives of Soyfoods Canada will be to urge Health Canada to allow Canadian soyfood manufacturers to make scientific health claims along the lines of that approved in 1999 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

In the U.S., food products that contain a minimum of 6.25-grams of soy protein per serving are allowed to state on their labels and in advertising, that soy protein, consumed as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease.

Founding directors, in addition to Mr. Nathoo as Chair and Mr. Lassaline as Treasurer, are Bill Hawes, Tofutti-Cholac Foods, Barrie, Ont., Vice-chair; Andrew McVittie, W.G. Thompson & Sons Ltd., Blenheim, Ont., Secretary; and Paul Hazzard, St. Clair Agri Services Ltd., Wallaceburg, Ont.; Evaline Kasner, Meatless Gourmet Inc., Kirkland Lake, Ont.; Eric Hart, Galaxy Foods Inc., Scarborough, Ont.; Sue Keller, OntarBio Organic, Brampton, Ont.; Hubert Lacoste, Moulin Aux Abenakis, St. Claire, Que.

Membership information is available from Paul Hazzard, (519/627-1491 and prhazzrd@mnsi.net) ■

O F P M C

Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission Newsletter

January 2001 - Issue #84

BC Provides New Credentials For Commodities and Processed Foods

BC's agriculture ministry is launching the next generation of motivational labeling to woo consumers. The impact of the certification program will be strongest in its home province, but the effects could resonate to any market where BC food products compete for consumers. The legislation behind the program is called the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act.

Speaking to Ontario marketing board representatives and food processors, Jo Ann Sandhu from the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, said focus group studies showed many consumers want more information on the health and environmental benefits of the foods they buy. They also want the

claims to be backed up by proof. Meaningful product information had to be certifiable and that process had to jointly involve both industry and government.

It all boils down to a way to market food having certified features or following particular best management practices. It looks as if

health claims and environmentally friendly practices will make up the mainstay of claims. According to Sandhu, "It's not a producer Act. It's really a consumer Act but it does provide producers with the opportunity to validate claims that they want to put on products." At the end of the day, it will be producers that drive the process since they must pay for third party inspection of the claims they want to promote.

Here is one scenario that might see itself playing out in BC. As Sandhu explained, "We might receive a proposal from an industry group citing consumer interest

“This may be a way to recapture consumer confidence in your production systems.”



Jo Ann Sandhu, BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

in products that have certain characteristics or active ingredients. The group would like to certify under the Act that they are providing products with these characteristics. The group may especially want the certification because their products don't physically look any different from the regular products on the shelf beside them. The certification may be what they need to get a higher value for their product." continued on page 4

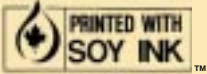
In This Issue

|                                                                 |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| BC Provides New Credentials For Commodities and Processed Foods | 1 |
| Director’s Workshop                                             | 2 |
| Soyfood Canada Launched by Manufacturers, Growers               | 2 |
| Tomatoes May Market Health Claims                               | 2 |
| OFPMC Update                                                    | 3 |
| Upcoming Annual Meetings and Conventions                        | 4 |

Director's Workshop

Monday, April 9, 2000 - Guelph, Ontario

Invest a half day to hone your skills and knowledge as a marketing board director. This workshop is valuable to directors in their first two years of office and producers contemplating that role in the future. See page 2 for more information on the workshop.



# Director's Workshop

## Opportunity to Hone Skills

**Date:** Monday, April 9, 2001

**Open to:** ▶ Directors  
▶ Senior Staff  
▶ Committee People

**Cost:** \$40/person.

Back by popular demand, this practical workshop offers lots of advice to make the job of any director more productive and effective.

For the first time, this workshop is being opened up to future directors. So if you are a committee person with a desire to get more involved in the future, this course is also for you.

Discussions and presentations will be led by people who understand the issues and dynamics around the board table and in the field with the producers who elected you.

Registration forms have been sent to each board Chair.

You can also get on the list by calling Graham Howe at (519) 826-3404.

Seating is limited to 50 and priority is given to directors. ■

# Soyfoods Canada Launched by Growers & Manufacturers

In a development that signals the further growth of the soyfood category, Ontario Soybean Growers has joined forces with Canadian companies and interest groups involved in the industry to form a national trade association, Soyfoods Canada.

Representatives of 18 organizations launched the new association at a meeting in Toronto, giving it a mandate to "encourage growth, integrity and sustainability in the Canadian soyfoods industry by promoting soyfoods, including soy-based foods and ingredients, to consumers."



Maheb Nathoo, CEO of SoyaWorld Inc., Vancouver, B.C., was elected chair of Soyfoods Canada. He listed the objectives of the association as working with government to establish guidelines for new and existing soyfoods, acting as an

Hiroaki Iwamoto, Pres., Japan's Tendre Corp., spoke to soybean growers about a frozen tofu factory for Ontario.

information resource, providing a networking forum for the industry, and promoting soyfoods to consumers.

"We are moving rapidly into a new age of nutraceutical foods, and soy is central to this trend by offering unique health benefits in tasteful

*continued on page 4*

## Tomatoes May Market Health Claims

There is good news for the growers of tomatoes. They have a health claim that could turn into a solid market advantage. With the backing of their world organization, the World Processing Tomato Council, growers are "examining the process and associated costs necessary to satisfy the requirements of the United States Food and Drug Administration to make a health claim for tomatoes" according to the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers (OPVG).

At the crux of the move is a white paper written by European scientists that promotes the virtues of the antioxidants in processed tomatoes. The paper was

presented at the SIAL food show in Paris. The white paper isn't a lone report. It builds on numerous studies that have demonstrated "that the daily consumption of tomatoes decreases the cancer risk to the upper respiratory and digestive tracts, to the lungs and to the stomach," says OPVG.

Imagine the acres necessary to supply the consumption of processed tomatoes if baby boomers grasp the health ramifications of changing their diets to eat more ketchup, salsas, etcetera. These are all products that are within the reach of any income demographic. ■

# OFPMC Update

*The following is a summary of issues recently addressed by the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission.*

## DFO Review

The Commission met with members of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) board of directors and senior staff to review operations and key issues.

DFO took over responsibility for two programs formerly run by OMAFRA in the last two years. In the case of the Raw Milk Quality Program, they have continued to make improvements on quality-related issues. The financial protection program, known as the DFO Credit Program, is likewise running smoothly with third party analysis and verification being performed by Agri-Corp.

DFO also addressed the status of its strategic plan and board governance planning. The board's 1997 strategic plan will be undergoing a thorough review in February 2001. The planning session next month will revisit the vision and action plan to ensure they address emerging and expected issues. Likewise, DFO has a board governance manual and they have invested time analyzing their approach to board governance.

## Licensing Consultations

Between April and November last year, representatives of the Commission

consulted with various industry stakeholders for processing grapes, seed corn, vegetables, tender fruit, potatoes and asparagus regarding processor licensing. Specifically, the Commission was interested in reaction to the concept of transferring responsibility for licensing processors/dealers to the marketing boards involved.

The majority of stakeholders were of the view that the Commission should continue to perform the licensing function. A prevalent comment was the value perceived in having a third party perform the licensing function and assist in resolving disputes if they arise. There was also a perceived conflict of interest if the licensing was done by boards, which could lead to unnecessary friction in the industry.

Following a discussion, it was moved by the Commission that no further action would be taken on this issue at this time.

## Appointment of Arbitrators

Annually the Commission appoints arbitrators and conciliators who will be available to act in these roles should the need arise as a result of pricing negotiations.

## Greenhouse Vegetable Name Change

The Commission was asked by the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board to consider changing Regulation 417 and 418 to allow their name to be changed to Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers.

The Commission has agreed to pursue the regulatory changes necessary to officially change the name of the board.

## Apple Vote

A mail-in expression of opinion vote for Ontario apple producers is being held from January 26, 2001 to February 9, 2001. The purpose of the vote is to determine whether or not apple producers wish to have the Ontario Apple Marketing Commission terminated.

To be eligible to vote, producers must have owned or rented more than 2 1/2 acres of apples as of October 1,2000.

Vote packages will be mailed on January 24/01 to all eligible apple producers registered with the Ontario Apple Marketing Commission. All returned ballots must be postmarked no later than February 9/01. ■

## New Marketing Analyst Joins Commission



Marilyn Sewell joined the Commission in mid-December. She will be working with four marketing boards including turkey, broiler hatching egg & chick, asparagus and sheep.

Marilyn has held a number of responsible positions with OMAFRA, both in Guelph and in the field, including Acting Manager of the Farm Products Appeal Tribunal. Most recently, Marilyn co-ordinated a review of Ontario's agricultural drainage programs. She has lots of policy analysis, strategic planning and facilitation experience and has worked with agricultural and rural organizations across the province. ■