



Ontario

Ontario Farm Products
Marketing Commission

Newsletter

November 2004 – Issue #114

Diet & Health Trend: Marketing Opportunity or Minefield?

In the 1940's, the cereal industry started fortifying its breakfast foods. The strategy helped eradicate many dietary diseases. It also started laying the foundation for a generation which would increasingly come to judge food for its impact on health while being faced with burgeoning food choices to sort through.

An Ipsos-Reid study in 2003 confirmed that diet and health concerns are positioned to have a major impact on what food will be produced and marketed. According to Ipsos-Reid's Susan Jones, "Nutrition and wellness, while not completely understood by

consumers, will continue to expand as a philosophy. There is a growing, unstoppable demographic that increasingly will eat for health and will look for palatable foods that can support this focus."



"46 percent of consumers are influenced by products labeled as a source of Omega-3 fatty acids."

Source: Ipsos-Reid survey

In 2004, General Mills announced its plans to convert all its cereals into whole grain products. "With industry-wide sales of breakfast cereals down close to 3%, cereal marketers are trying to regain respect at the breakfast table," according to Bruce Horovitz of USA TODAY.

Producers, too, are walking cautiously through the diet & health minefield and trying to research what will sell best in the future. In the September issue of *The Grower*, Jamie Reaume reported, "there's a food revolution taking place." One that is very positive for Ontario's horticulture industry which has been behind the "5 to 10 a Day Program" for years.

But the revolution doesn't stop with horticulture crops. When Burnbrae Farms started marketing Omega-3 eggs in the late 1990's, they were on to something. The Ipsos-Reid survey referenced earlier found that 46 percent of consumers are influenced by a "product labeled as a source of Omega-3 fatty acids." The dairy industry is on the scene in a big way now too. Producers supplying Neilson's have a feeding regime which makes Omega-3 a naturally occurring fatty acid. Parmalat and Natrel sought permission from the Ontario Farm Products

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If you think this trend is only about losing weight, think again. The *Atkin's Diet* may have given everyone a one-dimensional view of what is happening, but *Atkin's* appears to be a weight-loss fad already on the wane. Trends, on the other hand, are sustainable. The number one reason motivating 58 percent of Canadian adult consumers to change their diet is "to maintain health" and consumers are "trending" to do it in large numbers. The Ipsos-Reid study found 62 percent of Canadians have made changes over the past year to their eating habits. That is up dramatically from figures in the 1990's.

The challenge for producers and processors is to see the long range opportunities.

Industry Seminar Speakers

The following list of speakers will be featured at the December 7th Industry Seminar entitled, "Diet & Health: Marketing Opportunities and Minefields for Ontario's Agriculture and Food Sector."



Dr. Bruce Holub

*Professor and Researcher,
University of Guelph*

Dr. Holub's work with Omega-3 fatty acids has led to the commercialization of new foods and a better understanding of the relationship between diet and health.



Mr. Terry Dean

*General Manager, Health
Check, Heart and Stroke
Foundation of Canada*

The foundation created the Health Check program in 1999 to help consumers identify healthy dietary choices.



Ms. Carolyn O'Brien

*Director of Science and
Regulatory Affairs, Food
and Consumer Products of
Canada (FCPC)*

FCPC member companies are developing strategies to build on the diet-and-health trend such as Kraft's *Obesity Initiative*.



Ms. Wendi Hiebert

*Food & Nutrition
Specialist and Writer,
Ontario Egg Producers
and Torstar Newspapers*

The role of the food writer and nutrition consultant is taking on increasing prominence among consumers eager to determine what to eat and what to avoid.



Mr. Ron Lemaire

*V.P. and Director of
Marketing, Canadian
Produce Marketing
Association (CPMA)*

The successful "5 to 10 a Day" campaign and its alliance with health organizations has made it an early success story in the effort to communicate to consumers about the impact of diet on health and market horticultural crops at the same time.



Ms. Joanne Gallagher

Manager of Nutrition Education, Dairy Farmers of Canada

Although milk has long positioned itself as a health food, recent promotional efforts are pushing this connection in direct ways to catch the attention of consumers who face more beverage options than ever before. ■



Frank Ingratta congratulating
Rod Stork

\$7,997 Donated to Leadership Programs

Retiring Chair, Rod Stork, was overwhelmed and grateful for the donations made to leadership programs in Ontario to mark his retirement from the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission and the Ontario Public Service. A total of \$7,997 was donated to assist the efforts of the Ontario 4-H Foundation and the Centre for Rural Leadership. Specifically, 4-H Ontario will be

the recipient of \$5,493 while the Centre for Rural Leadership and its flagship program, the Advanced Ag Leadership Program, will receive \$2,504. Thanks to everyone who attended Rod's retirement party and contributed to a philanthropic send-off that befits a person so committed to the development of the men and women in Ontario's agri-food sector. ■

Diet & Health: Marketing Opportunities and Minefields for Ontario's Agriculture and Food Sector

O F P M C ' S 1 3 T H A N N U A L I N D U S T R Y S E M I N A R A N D R E C E P T I O N

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Elm Hurst Inn, Ingersoll, Ontario

About the Industry Seminar:

The connection between diet and health has become a marketing issue with significant potential for the agriculture and food sector. The "Atkin's Diet" showed how sizeable the impact can be. The elimination of trans-fats has shown how influential the trend can be. The attention being given to Omega-3 has shown how positive the outcome can be.

The seminar program will involve presentations and panel discussions. The morning program will examine the trend's impact on research, certification and business strategies. In the afternoon, speakers will explore the role of communications. Speakers include:

- **Dr. Bruce Holub**, *University of Guelph researcher*
- **Mr. Terry Dean**, *Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation's Heart Check Certification Program*
- **Mr. Ron Lemaire**, *Canadian Produce Marketing Association*
- **Ms. Wendi Hiebert**, *Food Writer and Nutrition Specialist*
- **Ms. Carolyn O'Brien**, *Food and Consumer Products of Canada*
- **Ms. Joanne Gallagher**, *Dairy Farmers of Canada*

About Registration:

Registration fee is \$95 per person for the seminar which includes breakfast, lunch and reception.

- Please make your cheque payable to the "Minister of Finance."
- Please forward your registration and payment no later than

December 1st to Carla Royston:

Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission,
One Stone Road West, 5th Floor
Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2
Phone (519) 826-4463 Fax (519) 826-3400

The Elm Hurst Inn is accessible to people with disabilities. When registering, please let us know if you have any special requirements which will enhance your participation.

Marketing Board/Association

Address

Registration Contact Person

Telephone # ()

Directors and Senior Staff		Directors(✓)	Senior Staff(✓)	Phone #	Fax #
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
Committee People				Phone #	Fax #
1.					
2.					

Diet & Health Trend:

Marketing Opportunity or Minefield? *continued from cover*

Marketing Commission in 2004 to allow Omega-3 fatty acids as an additive to create a new milk beverage. After confirming the support of Dairy Farmers of Ontario for this regulatory change, the Commission approved the idea with the objective of increasing the total volume of milk being sold and giving consumers more choice.

Ten years ago, soy beverages weren't mainstream, but now they are in every grocery store. They are often being marketed by the same manufacturers representing dairy products. Today, Ontario Soybean Growers is investing a portion of growers' research dollars to look at ways to, "double the isoflavons in food-grade soybeans because the health benefits being attributed to isoflavons (will have a major impact on sales)," according to the University of Guelph's soybean researcher, Dr. Istvan Rajcan.

Likewise, white and coloured bean producers printed "The Big, Beautiful Bean" recipe booklet in 2003 to promote the health benefits of beans together with delicious ways to serve them. In response to the question, "Why eat beans?" the booklet contains a memorable alliteration,

"beans help build a better baby," because of the folic acid inherent in beans. And the list of benefits goes on.

Ontario's tomato growers and processors may get a major boost from research involving the health benefits of lycopene which is being linked to cancer prevention. The Ontario Tomato Research Institute was founded by the Ontario Food Processors' Association and the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers in 1997 to co-ordinate and fund research relating to all aspects of processing tomatoes.

Earlier this year, Kraft's CEO, Roger Deromedi, told *Grocer Today* that some of the company's lagging sales can be tied to consumers' focus on healthy eating. "Low-carb diets like Atkins and South Beach, the focus and concern about obesity and increased demand for natural products are requiring a shift in how we market and what we market," said Deromedi. With that in mind, Kraft has dedicated \$500 million to an initiative aimed at marketing healthier snacks.

The diet & health trend has also influenced how promotion is designed. Notably in Canada, Dairy Farmers of

Canada have moved from lifestyle slogans such as the 1990's "Drink Milk, Love Life" to graphics showing milk forming strong biceps and healthy bones in 2004. South of the border, the U.S. Potato Board has launched a \$4.4 million campaign to communicate "The Healthy Potato" message to American consumers. With the slogan, "Get the Skinny on America's Favourite Vegetable," the board's 3-year plan includes advertising, nutrition information and a Weight Watcher's pick-of-the-season promotion.

With so many foods vying for attention, health organizations and food writers are becoming increasingly important to consumers as unbiased advisors capable of assessing which foods are of value to their health.

On December 7, 2004, the diet and health trend will be explored at an industry seminar put on by the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission. See page 2 for a list of speakers participating in the seminar. ■

Upcoming Annual Meetings and Conventions 2004

Date	Organization	Location	Telephone
	Ontario Bean Producers' Marketing Board		(519) 652-3566
November 25	District 1	Shetland	
November 25	District 2	Coldstream	
December 2	District 3	Mitchell	
December 2	District 4	Seaforth	

This information is provided strictly for our readers' convenience. Please note that organizations may restrict attendance to some or all of their agenda items. Please contact each organization for more information on programs, agenda items open to non-members, and location. While the Commission endeavours to ensure this information is correct, readers are responsible for confirming its accuracy with individual organizations before making any plans to attend. ■

Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission

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For more information about this newsletter please email us at graham.howe@omaf.gov.on.ca

This newsletter is available on our website <www.gov.on.ca/OMAF/english/farmproducts/index.html>

