

# Food News

March 2024

## Agriculture and Irrigation News

### How to win on Amazon: debunking the myths and misconceptions for food brands

On Feb. 15, Tom Harrison, a seasoned entrepreneur, and recognized expert in e-commerce, talked about the common myths and facts surrounding product sales on the Amazon platform. With an average scrolling time of almost six minutes per user on the platform, he highlighted the importance of proper marketing techniques to quickly catch the buyer's eye. He also pointed out Amazon is the fast-growing online sales platform. Net sales in North America grew 9.6 per cent thanks to the platform's ease of use, Prime free shipping, and return policy.

#### Tom Harrison



#### HOW DID I GET HERE?

Former CPG Food Brand Founding Partner  
Manufacturing Frozen Cookie Dough Products  
Amazon Business Owner Since 2016  
Developed Two Successful Non-Food Private Label Brands In Sports Accessories & Hardware  
Amazon Business Consultant Since 2017  
Founder of TNT Ecommerce, a Full-Service Amazon Agency Specializing in working with CPG Food Brands

During the session, Harrison emphasized the importance of paid advertising. He said it contributes approximately 70 per cent of sales the first few years after a new product is launched. The remaining 30 per cent comes from unprompted traffic. Harrison recommended using strong keywords in your ads and Amazon description to make your brand and products stand out among competitors.

There were a few key take aways from this webinar: be willing to learn, accept mistakes will happen along the way, and ask for help to get over the hurdles.

**FACT**

More than 60% of sales on Amazon come from independent sellers- mostly SMBs

Your advertising strategy is not a one size fits all solution. Each product you sell may have very different advertising performance metrics and a blanket approach to spending could lead to decreased sales and limited brand exposure.

Amazon is always changing. You need to pay constant attention to your advertising, your competition and you need to make adjustments on a regular basis to capitalize on new opportunities that come to light through the data that Amazon is providing to you free of charge.

## Alberta Food Processors Association



This year, the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) celebrates 50 years. The anniversary will be marked by a gala in June. The Alberta Food and Beverage Awards will also return later this year to commemorate the occasion. Watch for more information by signing up for the e-newsletter at [Alberta Food Processors Association Newsletters](#).

### Workplace Safety Virtual Training

- OHS System Building – *March 6-7*
- OHS Roles & Responsibilities for Managers & Supervisors – *March 20*
- HS Committee – *March 27*
- Hazard Assessment & Control – *April 3*
- Incident & Accident Investigation – *April 10*
- Safety Auditor – *May 7-8*

**Register:** [Email AFPA](#) or contact Melody at [melody@afpa.com](mailto:melody@afpa.com) for more information.

### AFPA Food Forum: Food Safety and Marketing Conference

*April 17 & 30, 2024*

This conference is aimed at elevating food safety and business brilliance within the food industry. Speakers will address food safety, testing, labelling, and identifying non-conformities in GFSI audits. Participants will also find out how to enhance a company's online marketing presence and deal with cyber-security and artificial intelligence in the digital age. AdFarm will provide the keynote and share new innovations in ag marketing. The conference will take place on April 17 in Calgary and April 30 in Edmonton.

**Location:** Royal Hotel in Calgary and Edmonton Expo Centre in Edmonton

**Register:** [Complete the registration and payment forms](#).

## Lead Foods calls FPDC a powerful tool

Over the last 40 years the Food Processing Development Centre (FPDC) has helped many start-ups bring ideas to market, including new Canadians with a food business idea. One of these companies is Lead Foods. The relationship began more than six years ago when owner Leonardo Barbosa decided to bring Brazilian-style meat products to the Canadian food market.

Barbosa had a vision to produce authentic carne seca – a dried beef staple in Brazilian cuisine. It is made by drying salted cuts of meat, which is one of the most ancient preserving methods in the world. As a trained agronomist, Barbosa understood he needed support and equipment to produce a non-refrigerated shelf-stable marketable product.

“I knew carne seca had to be produced in a federally licensed and inspected food processing facility before I could sell it in stores,” says Barbosa. “I found out the FPDC was a Canadian Food Inspection Agency licensed facility and offered services and equipment for start-ups like Lead Foods to learn how to refine recipes and develop new processing methods.”



*Photo courtesy of Lead Foods*

Barbosa found solutions with expert advice from the food scientists and processing technologists at the FPDC. “We began by processing 600 kg of Canadian beef into carne seca,” says Barbosa. “With the knowledgeable scientists, great equipment and support, we’ve been able to develop more products and grow our company.”

The FPDC’s business development team offered coaching and new ways for Barbosa to improve his business. They also helped him connect with buyers who could bring his specialty product to new customers.

Since the family-owned business started working with FPDC, Barbosa has hired staff who process and package products at the facility on a regular basis. His determination and drive have enabled the company to be the first to sell carne seca to North American consumers. “We made history working with the FPDC,” says Barbosa. “We are the only company on the planet that is able to make authentic Brazilian-style carne seca and now we sell it in more than 200 stores in Canada and the United States.”

Following the success of carne seca, the company has collaborated with FPDC’s scientific team to develop refrigerated Brazilian-style meat products. One is the smokey flavoured paio sausage made from pork loin cuts, garlic and other spices. The other two are hot and mild calabresa. These products are red pepper-flavoured, cured double smoked pork sausage with a hint of fennel and bacon.



*Photo courtesy of Lead Foods*

Lead Foods has also combined the carne seca with the new sausages to create a refrigerated feijoada meal kit. Feijoada is the national dish of Brazil made with different cuts of meats and black beans. Consumers get an authentic Brazilian taste experience by adding ingredients to the Canadian-made meat in the meal kit.



*Photo courtesy of Lead Foods*

Barbosa imagined producing authentic Brazilian-style meat products and reaching international consumers. With support from the FPDC, his vision is becoming a reality. “The FPDC is a powerful tool to bring food products to the market,” says Barbosa. “I think it’s the best place in Canada to take a shot at food entrepreneurship. I came with an idea, and they helped make my dreams come true.”

## Webinars, events and programs

### Agriculture and Irrigation Webinar Finding an Ingredient Supplier

March 06, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.

Selecting the right ingredient supplier can have a significant impact on your business. Business owners depend on suppliers to provide quality, consistent, and reliable ingredients. Join a 60-minute webinar to understand the role of an ingredient supplier, how to find and evaluate a reputable company and develop a supplier Food Safety Assurance program for your business.

**Speakers:** Lindsay Sutton, Technical Account Manager, IMCD Canada and Shahzia Dhanji, Senior Compliance Officer, Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
**Register:** [Sign up for this free webinar.](#)

### Leduc County Webinar CanadaGAP and food safety practices for fresh fruit and vegetable growers

March 6, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

Participate in this webinar to understand CanadaGAP, its purpose, benefits, and practices. You will learn about web based CanadaGAP resources, business processes and fees for businesses working towards certification.

**Speaker:** Erin Hiebert, Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc.  
**Registration deadline:** March 5, 2024  
**Register:** Sign up for this free session by contacting Sharon at [sharon@leduc-county.com](mailto:sharon@leduc-county.com) or 780-770-9271.

### Municipal Sponsored Webinar Roadmap to Horticulture

March 26, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

This workshop is part of the Dig into Horticulture webinar series. During this session, you will find out why it's important to have a professional social media presence and techniques to boost online visibility. There will be advice on choosing the best platform to connect with a larger audience. You will also get ideas to enhance online engagement to help boost sales.

**Registration deadline:** March 26, 2024  
**Register:** [Sign up for this free webinar](#) or contact Sharon at [sharon@leduc-county.com](mailto:sharon@leduc-county.com) or 780-770-9271.

### Recognizing and Supporting Beneficial Insects in Horticulture

April 9, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

Join this webinar to learn how to recognize and support beneficial insects in horticulture. You will also find out about pollination, pest management, and nutrient cycling. The speakers will discuss how to preserve, conserve, and even augment specific insect populations to support plant and soil health. Pre-registration is required.

**Speaker:** Ken Fry, Entomology Instructor at Olds College  
**Registration deadline:** April 9, 2024  
**Register:** [Sign up for this free webinar](#) or contact Greenview Agricultural Services Department at 780-524-7621.

### Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference AWC West 2024

March 17 – 19, 2024

This three-day event is for women who are passionate about agriculture and food, including those studying or working in these industries. AWC will help you enhance your family life, career, industry and community. Attend the conference to network and make mentoring connections. Learn about career planning, goal setting, and developing life skills like financial management and health strategies.

**Speakers:** [Learn more about the speakers and program.](#)  
**Location:** Hyatt Regency, 700 Centre Street SE, Calgary  
**Registration deadline:** Noon, March 15, 2024  
**Register:** [Register and buy tickets](#) or contact Iris Meck at 403-686-8407.

### Advancing Women in Agriculture mini-Conference Table Talk 2.0

March 17, 2024 – 12:00 p.m.

This semi-annual event by Female Entrepreneurs in Agri-Food Development in collaboration with AWC is designed to foster partnership and community for women food founders and leaders. Participants will hear how entrepreneurs, a marketer and designer, and a brand strategist succeed in the agri-food industry. Networking opportunities will help you build connections with other business owners.

**Program:** [Featured Table Talk speakers](#)  
**Location:** Hyatt Regency, 700 Centre Street South Calgary  
**Register:** [Get tickets for the free workshop.](#)

## **THRIVE Academy Academy IV Demo Day Alberta**

*April 11, 2024 – 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.*

The THRIVE Academy is 12-week pre-accelerator program designed to support pre-seed and early-stage agrifood tech startups in commercializing their innovations. Attend Demo Day Alberta to engage with 15 agrifood tech companies from around the world and learn how they are using cutting edge technologies to disrupt the industry.

**Location:** 119 12 Avenue Southwest Calgary, AB T2R 0G8

**Register:** [Get tickets for the free workshop.](#)

## **Small Scale Food Processor Association Venture-Capital Ready: Investment Training for Women Entrepreneurs**

*Ongoing*

This 12-week virtual program is a new Canada-wide initiative for women entrepreneurs in the agri-food space. You will receive resources and support to move forward with your business plan. There are opportunities to network, find a venture capital investor and prepare your pitch.

The Government of Canada subsidizes this free program. There are two steps to check if you are a good fit: you need to register and complete an eligibility assessment online.

**Register:** [Complete the two steps.](#)

## **Funding**

### **Canadian Food Innovation Network Innovation Booster**

*February – March 2024*

Small- or medium-sized enterprises can apply for cost-shared Innovation Booster funding for food research and innovation projects. Up to 50 per cent of total eligible project costs between \$20,000 and \$200,000 may be awarded. Funding recipients must cover a five percent project management fee.

**Applications open:** February 15, 2024

**Application deadline:** March 14, 2024

**Funding notification:** May 17, 2024

**Apply:** [Find out how to apply at Innovation Booster.](#)