

Food Safety Sentinel

ISSUE NO. 2 *Quarterly Newsletter for Alberta Agriculture's Provincially Licensed Meat Facility Operators*

Industry Day 2014 in Red Deer

Industry Day 2014, an annual forum organized by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) Food Safety and Animal Welfare Division, was held in Red Deer on May 3. The event was designed to engage with the Provincially Licensed Meat Facility (PLMF) owners and operators and to provide an opportunity to share information, collaborate on issues and identify items for discussion.

Here's a breakdown of the events that took place:

- This year's keynote speaker Perry Deering, owner and operator of Deerview Meats in the Medicine Hat area, talked about his return on food safety investments and how it led to large customer accounts with retailers such as Co-op grocery stores and gas stations.
- ARD Food Safety Policy and Extension Acting Section Head Darlene Dittrich talked about how PLMFs can access free extension services and advice from ARD's Food Safety Specialists to help improve food safety in provincial meat plants.
- Alberta's Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) and ARD staff talked on the various Growing Forward 2 funding programs available to PLMF operators.
- A representative from the company BIO presented information on a software called bioLinks, a single system that provides traceability, inventory and sales management for food processors. The program was a former ARD pilot program called "Food Inventory Tracking Sales System" (FITS).
- ARD Livestock Welfare Specialist Jeffery Hill spoke on new humane handling technologies.
- Safe Food and Animal Welfare Branch Head Wanda Aubee spoke on the feedback that was received from last year during the industry consultations in 2013.
- The Executive Director Jeff Stewart spoke about how ARD addressed the Cuff report.
- ARD Food Safety Policy and Extension Acting Section Head Darlene Dittrich discussed the roadmap for regulatory change and the current and future status of the regulatory review.
- Meat Inspection Acting Branch Head Becky Best led Q&A for small group discussion.
- PLMF operators formed small groups to consult on regulation review, and results of discussion were presented by each group.

For more information on the highlighted events at Industry Days 2014, please contact the newsletter editor at kimberly.comeau@gov.ab.ca or call 403-381-5114, toll free dial 310-0000

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June 2014

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Alberta  Government

Alberta Pork Calling on All of Industry to Participate in Movement Reporting

As of September 3, 2013, Alberta Pork became the delegated authority to administer the **Alberta Swine Traceability System** on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Regulations for “farm to slaughter” came into effect December 1, 2011, and starting in early spring this year, “farm to farm” will become mandatory under the provincial regulations and nationally on July 1, 2014.

For “farm to slaughter” movement within Alberta, it is the responsibility of the receiver to report and/or submit the movement to the traceability fax line. Movement reporting for receivers is as simple as completing the receiver portion of the manifest and faxing it to 1-888-715-4563. This number is located on every Alberta Pork manifest towards the bottom of the page.

The **Alberta Swine Traceability System** is just a tool that those in the value chain have to protect the industry. This requires the participation of all in the value chain including producers, transporters and packers. The more participants reporting into the system will improve the information and ultimately help industry keep foreign animal diseases (i.e. PEDv, Swine Fever, etc.) out of Alberta and/or mitigate their impact if it should arrive.

As the delegated authority, Alberta Pork’s role is to educate and provide support to those in the value chain to comply with the swine traceability regulations. Throughout 2014, Christina Carley, Alberta Pork’s Traceability Coordinator, will be carrying out extension visits with federal and provincial processors and assemblers. The purpose of these visits is to discuss roles and responsibilities as well as review the process for each receiver and discuss any specific needs. If you have not had an extension visit from Christina, feel free to call and schedule an appointment. Manifests are available from the Alberta Pork office at no charge. Simply contact the Alberta Pork office toll free at 1-877-247-7675 (PORK).

For manifests, questions or additional support on the Alberta Swine Traceability System contact Christina Carley, Traceability Coordinator, by phone at 1-780-440-8461 or by email at christina.carley@albertapork.com.



Photo and article courtesy of Alberta Pork

GROWING FORWARD 2 FUNDING STILL ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

PROGRAMS THAT APPLY TO YOU

- Agri-Processing Automation and Efficiency—Livestock
- Agri-Processing Product and Market Development—Livestock
- Business Management Skills Development
- Business Opportunity
- Livestock Welfare Processor
- Food Safety Systems Processor

For more information visit
www.growingforward.alberta.ca/Programs/

Alberta Agriculture Processors and Producers Labour Employment Needs Summary Report

It is well known that Alberta faces labour challenges and a strong labour market force is essential to the competitiveness of the Agri-Industry and the ability to achieve food safety requirements. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) and the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA) contracted a workforce demand survey of Agri-Food Processing Operations and Agriculture Production Operations of Alberta in 2012. The goal of this survey was to help ARD gain a better understanding of the labour market situation and industry needs, and enable ARD to develop appropriate programs to meet the needs of Alberta agriculture processors and producers.

Here are the highlights of the 2012 study:

- It is expected that most human resource challenges will emerge as a major issue in the next 3 years.
- Vacancy rates are higher among producing companies (27.5%), compared to processing companies (12.3%)
- Major hiring requirements will be to meet demand expansion, employee turnover, and retirement needs in both sectors.
- Employers in both sectors are implementing proactive human resource strategies to retain existing staff.
- 64% of processing companies make greater use of the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program as compared to 50% producing companies. Awareness of available federal and provincial labour market programs is relatively low among both processors and producer respondent groups.
- There is considerable potential for ARD to implement a Workforce Development Program (WDP) to help mitigate human resource pressures among processor and producer companies.

Programs Offered to Address Labour Shortages

- Temporary Foreign Worker Program
- Federal Labour Programs
- Provincial Labour Programs
- Workforce Development Program

If you would like assistance with your labour needs please contact **Scott Dundas at scott.dundas@gov.ab.ca**

Did you know.....

All facilities who cut or wrap uninspected meat have to post a sign that is visible to the public which reads:

The sale of uninspected meat is prohibited in Alberta. Uninspected meat is processed on these premises for the owner of the animal.

Join us in passing the word—**Uninspected Meat Sales are Strictly Prohibited.**

Contact your meat inspector or regional supervisor for a new Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development poster.

Useful Links for Food Processors

- **Food Business.** A comprehensive link to food business resources to ensure opportunity development and expansion of markets for agri-business:
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agp13532](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agp13532)
- **Alberta Agriculture's Processing Industry Directory.** This directory is used as a guide for learning about our agri-processing companies in Alberta and their supporting agencies. It serves as a quick reference for current company information including contacts, products and brands. It can be found at:
<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app68/foodindustry>
- **The BizInfo website.** Are you an entrepreneur? The BizInfo website provides a valuable source of business and marketing information for both start-up and growth businesses. Check it out at:
www.agriculture.alberta.ca/bizinfo
- **Programs and Services for Growth.** A comprehensive list of funding programs, services and supports available to agri-food processors:
<http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/app52/programsservices>

Changes in Halal Labelling

Halal claims on food label, packaging or advertising material must now include the name of the certifying body.

This will provide consumers with assurances that the food meets a certifying body's standard and allow them to obtain specific information about the standards the food has met.

For more information visit www.gazette.gc.ca or talk to an ARD Food Safety Specialist in your area

Introducing The New Food Safety & Animal Welfare Divisional Web Page

The **Food Safety and Animal Welfare Division** of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development has recently launched their new website.

The website provides food safety information and resources, updates on food safety events and allows access to food legislation.

In addition, there is a web page called '**Information for Alberta Agriculture's Licensed Meat Facilities**' specifically designed with your needs in mind.

Visit us at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/foodsafety

Consumer Trends and New Opportunities for Small and Medium Business

- **Online Purchasing**—Most purchasing decisions are made online—41% buy products or service online.
- **Health Conscious**—The demand for specialty, natural and organic products are strong and generate high profits for food manufactures. 31% of Canadians are willing to pay a premium for health-enhancing products.
- **Environmentally Conscious**—Consumers are looking for green and local products. Companies need to highlight the local characteristics of their products, clearly demonstrate the ethical aspects of their supply chain and reassess the relevance of labels and certifications.
- **Customization**—Consumers are looking for custom-made products to fit their needs. In 2013, nearly 75% of consumers claimed to want personalized products and services in Canada. By delivering made-to-order products, companies are able to increase their margins and minimize risk.
- **Thrifty Shopper**—Since the 2008-09 recession, customer habits have become the new standard. When consumers make purchases, almost two-thirds consider the lowest possible cost the most influential factor.

Reference:

Fernando, J; (2014, March). Emerging Consumer Trends and New Opportunities for Small and Medium Business. Economics and Competitiveness Division, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND COURSES

ALMA FutureFare 2014

June 16-17, 2014

Edmonton, Alberta

For details visit www.alma.alberta.ca



NAIT Online Food Safety Course

July 1—July 25, 2014

Online

For details visit www.nait.ca



National Meat Training Centre at Olds College Meat Processing Program

September 2014 (15 week program)

Olds, Alberta

For details visit www.oldscollege.ca



SAIT Butchery and Charcuterie Management

September 2014

(1-year certificate program)

Calgary, Alberta

For more details visit www.sait.ca



FOOD SAFETY SUPPORT

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development has a team of food safety specialists available to assist you to assess and improve your food safety programs.

Improving food safety programs is a good business decision as doing so can enhance food safety, quality and consumer confidence; reduce waste and recalls; and open doors to additional markets.

CONTACT A FOOD SAFETY SPECIALIST

Edmonton: Son Nguyen 780-913-1444

Airdrie: Mark Miller 403-948-8534

Calgary: Janice Futz 403-422-0406

Lethbridge: Kevin Smith 403-892-0213

To call toll-free within Alberta, dial 310-0000