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Story on page 18



IN THIS ISSUE: AUTOMATE NOW • FLEXIBLE PACKAGING • INKS & COATINGS

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SENIOR PUBLISHER

Stephen Dean • (416) 510-5198
SDean@canadianpackaging.com

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Adnan Shah • (416) 510-5117
AShah@canadianpackaging.com

EDITOR

George Guidoni • (416) 510-5227
GGuidoni@canadianpackaging.com

FEATURES EDITOR

Andrew Joseph • (416) 510-5228
AJoseph@canadianpackaging.com

MEDIA DESIGNER

Brooke Shaw • (519) 428-3471
bshaw@annexweb.com

ACCOUNT COORDINATOR

Barb Comer • (888) 599-2228 ext 235
bcomer@annexweb.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Anita Madden • (416) 442-5600 x3596
AMadden@annexbizmedia.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Tim Dimopoulos • tdimopoulos@annexbizmedia.com

COO

Ted Markle • tmarkle@annexweb.com

PRESIDENT & CEO

Mike Fredericks

ANNEX BUSINESS MEDIA

80 Valleybrook Drive, North York, ON, M3B 2S9;
Tel: (416) 510-5198; Fax (416) 510-5140.

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CIRCULATION

e-mail: rthava@annexbizmedia.com
Tel: (416) 442-5600 ext 3555
Fax: (416) 510-5170
Mail: 80 Valleybrook Drive, Toronto, ON M3B 2S9

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ANNEX PRIVACY OFFICER

privacy@annexbizmedia.com
Phone: 800-668-2374

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PUTTING BREAD ON THE TABLE

Bread riots have been a well-documented staple of social unrest and upheaval throughout history. Even today, there are countries around the world where a sudden shortage of one of life's basic necessities can spark violent domestic turmoil with oftentimes-tragic consequences.

But this being Canada, it seems somewhat expected that last month's allegations of price-fixing of packaged bread products by some of the country's leading retailers have been largely received with a collective yawn by consumers and the financial markets, where share prices of Canada's major grocers remained unchanged even after they had gone on record to says the were fully co-operating with Canada's **Competition Bureau**.

That said, the Canadian grocery industry has some serious explaining to do in coming months in order to come truly clean with both the public and the Ottawa watchdog mandated with preventing the abuse of market power by its dominant players or, as seems to be alleged here, cartel-like behavior.

According to the bureau, the Ontario Supreme Court granted the agency the search warrant to raid the offices of leading breadmakers and retailers, "Based on evidence that certain individuals and companies have engaged in activities contrary to the Competition Act."

This could include fixing prices, rigging bids to manipulate a tendering process, manipulating market allocation by artificially splitting up sales territories and markets, or engaging in output restrictions by agreeing to control or limit the quantity of goods supplied to the market.

While the affected companies have no doubt been strongly advised by their lawyers to remain silent while the investigation unfolds, that silence may ultimately work against them if substantial evidence of rogue market behavior is eventually uncovered.

Most average Canadian consumers will agree that the price of packaged bread sold at most supermarkets has gone up very noticeably in the last several years—certainly at a much faster rate than the growth in their disposable incomes. And while this is true for many food items, the symbolic emotional significance of bread affordability as a basic right, not a luxury indulgence, must not be overlooked.

There is no denying that bread producers have displayed plenty of innovation in recent years by launching many original artisanal-style breads infused with an ever-growing range of supposedly good-for-you ingredients, but such new product development should not be funded by consumers paying somewhere around \$3 for a loaf of standard, pre-sliced white sandwich bread that used to cost half as much a few years ago.

Canadians already pay a lot for their groceries, whose rising prices continue to outpace the growth in their incomes and family budgets. According to **Statistics Canada**, food prices in September were 3.5 per cent higher than they were a year ago—way ahead of the annual inflation rate.

Given the growing levels of consumer debt, this is not a good recipe for boosting consumer confidence—still the most critical fundamental for a thriving economy—moving forward. Which is why it is imperative for the bureau to get to the bottom of the whole mess in a hurry, if only to reassure consumers that they are not being taken for granted.

★ COVER STORY

18 HIGH ON THE HOG *By Andrew Joseph*

Venerable Manitoba pork processor beefs up its product portfolio of high-quality fresh and ready-to-eat meat products with installation of robust thermoform packaging equipment.

Cover photography by Walter Janzen



DEPARTMENTS & COLUMNS

3 UPFRONT *By George Guidoni*

4-6 NEWSPACK

Packaging news round-up.

8-9 NOTES & QUOTES

Noteworthy industry briefs.

10-13 FIRST GLANCE 10-13

New packaging solutions and technologies.

14-15 ECO-PACK NOW

The latest on packaging sustainability.

16 imPACT

A monthly insight from PAC, Packaging Consortium

35 PEOPLE

Career moves in the packaging world.

35 EVENTS

Upcoming industry functions.

36 CHECKOUT *By Sarah Harper*

Joe Public speaks out on packaging hits and misses.

FEATURES

22 THE WESTERN UNION *By George Guidoni*

A well-executed strategic acquisition of leading West Coast flexible packaging products manufacturer vastly expands the geographic reach of fast-growing TC Transcontinental Packaging group.

26 FAKES SCARES *By Andrew Joseph*

Innovative Ontario manufacturer of application-specific automation systems joins the war on fake drugs with a robust serialization and track-and-trace solution.

31 UPON CLOSER INSPECTION *By Chris Young*

Tips for choosing the right X-Ray detection system.

32 PAINTING BY NUMBERS *By George Guidoni*

Leading manufacturers of package printing inks and coatings respond to evolving market needs for more impactful, safer and greener formulations.

34 MEMORY LANES

Our readers recalling the good old days in the packaging business in a historical retrospective marking our magazine's 70th anniversary.

A PROUD CANADIAN RYE WHISKY BRAND GOES UP THE CREEK WITH NEW PACKAGING



Canadian whisky may be an acquired taste for some. But as the \$185.6-million acquisition of **Forty Creek Distillery Ltd.** by the Italian beverage giant **Gruppo Campari** in 2014 shows, there is no shortage of whisky aficionados worldwide to have cheerfully bought into the high-quality rye whisky blends produced by the Grimsby, Ont.-based distiller with globally-acclaimed flair for innovation and uncompromising devotion to flavor.

This purity of purpose is fittingly reflected in the first-ever packaging refresh for the distiller's flagship **Forty Creek Barrel Select** and **Forty Creek Copper Pot** brands of whisky just released into the Canadian markets last month.

Featuring proprietary new 750-ml bottles, new aluminum caps and classy embossing calling out the brand's home province, each element of the new packaging was carefully developed with input from the brand's legions of fans across Canada.

"We were fortunate to be able to engage with both Forty Creek and Canadian whisky fans on a personal level at focus groups in Hamilton, Toronto, and Calgary,"

explains John Andersen, Campari's senior brand manager for North American Whiskies.

"Their feedback was instrumental in guiding the direction of our new packaging design," he says. "The result is something that is as special on the outside as the whisky is on the inside."

As Andersen points out, the packaging update provided a timely occasion for the 25-year-old brand play up its proud Canadian heritage by increasing the prominence of the maple leaf graphic in the brand's logo.

"For Forty Creek, the new packaging was an opportunity to improve overall brand perceptions and to really communicate the premium quality in our range of whiskies," says Andersen, praising renowned design and branding consultancy **Claessen's International** for bringing the new packaging design to life.

"Together, the new packaging features provide an accurate physical manifestation to the innovative, premium and bold characteristics that are at the very heart of Forty Creek," Andersen states, noting that **Forty Creek** whisky is currently the fastest-growing brand in its category across North America, with the special distinction of being Canada's first successfully launched whisky brand in over 70 years.

In addition to the new bottles of **Forty Creek Barrel Select** and **Copper Pot** bottles hitting the shelves across Canada, Campari is planning to roll out new packaging for **Forty Creek Cream**, **Spike Honey Spiced**, **Double Barrel Reserve**, and **Confederation Oak** between the fourth quarter of 2017 and early 2018.

ONTARIO PREMIER JOINS MARS MISSION CELEBRATIONS

It may not be the next giant leap for mankind like a manned flight to Mars, but **Mars Canada's** recent capital investment spree at its food manufacturing plants in Ontario is a remarkable leap of faith in the province's economic future well worth celebrating at the highest level.

So it was only fitting that Ontario's premier Kathleen Wynne was one of the many distinguished guests last month at the company's public unveiling of the 50,000-square-foot facility expansion of its food manufacturing plant in Bolton to increase production of its ready-to-heat rice and grain products marketed under the heat **Uncle Ben's** and **Seeds of Change** brand labels, respectively.

Built at a cost of \$77 million, the new state-of-the-art building—boasting internationally-recognized **LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)** certification—represents the largest single investment in the history of the **Mars Food** business, according to the company.

Expected to create 37 new high-skilled full-time jobs, the Bolton expansion comes on the heels of a \$70-million facility expansion completed at the **Mars Chocolate** facility in Newmarket earlier this year, which led to creation of 30 new full-time jobs there.

"I want to thank Mars Canada for continuing to grow, innovate and create highly skilled jobs in Ontario," premier Wynn said at the official ribbon-cutting ceremony in Bolton.

"Mars' success shows that our plan to create jobs and grow the economy is working," said Wynne, citing the Liberal government's five-year, \$650-million **Business Growth Initiative** aimed at helping to grow



Ontario premier Kathleen Wynne (left) helping to serve up a plateful of a Seeds of Change ready-to-eat grain side-dish produced at the Mars Canada's Food facility in Bolton, Ont.

Ontario's economy and create jobs by promoting an innovation-based economy by helping small companies to scale up, and modernizing regulations for all businesses.

"Our economy is strong, our budget is balanced, and we are attracting job-creating investment from around the world," Wynne stated.

"Our plan builds on this momentum by creating more fairness and opportunity for people and businesses across Ontario," she added, "so that everyone can share in the benefits of our growth."

"The expansion of our Bolton Food facility greatly increases our capacity to meet the growing demand for our ready-to-heat products by bringing more healthy, convenient and tasty rice and grains to the dinner table," added Mars Food Canada's general manager David Dusangh.

"We are proud to celebrate this opening and our continued commitment to creating highly skilled jobs and benefitting the local economy," Dusangh stated.

FAMED CHEESE BRAND OFFERS A TASTEFUL SNACKING OPTION

Putting good things into small packages is a tasteful packaging strategy for attracting today's snack-loving, on-the-go millennial consumers, and there is a whole lot of goodness packed inside each individual 20-gram portion of the **OKA L'Artisan** cheese produced by leading Quebec dairy producer **Agropur**.

Offered in five- and eight-piece multipacks held together with thin plastic meshing, the triangular pre-cut portions of **OKA L'Artisan** are the company's follow-up to last year's successful launch of individual portions of the original **OKA** brand cheese, which won the prestigious **2016 Coup de Coeur Award** for innovation from **Quebec's Food Processing Council (CTAQ)**.

According to Agropur, **OKA L'Artisan** mixes the unique traditional taste and scent of **OKA** cheese—first made by Trappist monks in the Quebec village of Oka over 120 years ago at in in a monastery located in an idyllic setting overlooking two mountains—with the widely beloved flavor of traditional Swiss cheese to produce an "irresistible" and highly innovative cheese product.

"Its refined taste and creamy texture are bound to make it a gourmet snack hit with people who appreciate and understand quality," Agropur states, "while making it a favorite choice for today's busy moms, hardened 'foodies' and ordinary cheese-lovers alike."



FOR THE RECORD

Please note that a recent feature story published in the September 2017 issue of **Canadian Packaging (Henderson Scores!, Pages S8-S12)** inadvertently contained some inaccurate information.

For the record, the aluminum beer cans supplied to **Henderson Brewing Co.** by **Sessions Craft Canning** are manufactured by **CROWN Beverage Packaging, North America**, a unit of Philadelphia, Pa.-headquartered group **Crown Holdings, Inc.** Also, please note that Jeff Rogowski is the sole founder of Sessions Craft Canning, Mississauga, Ont.-based provider of mobile canning line services and products to Ontario's craft beer and cider producers.

The **Canadian Packaging** magazine sincerely regrets the errors.



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FLEXIBLE PACKAGING JUGGERNAUT ON HOME TURF WITH LATEST ACQUISITION

Montreal-headquartered **Transcontinental Inc.** is continuing to grow its flexible packaging business at a rapid pace with the acquisition of **Les Industries Flexipak Inc.** earlier this month—its fifth major strategic acquisition since the formation of **TC Transcontinental Packaging** in 2014.

Founded in 1998 by Charles Boustany and nowadays employing 55 people, Montreal-based Flexipak specializes in flexographic printing, lamination, and the production of bags and pouches for customers in the CPG (consumer packaged goods), food processing and retail industries, with a strong focus on including frozen fruits and vegetables, seafood, snacks, grains, nuts and beverage (shrink films) markets.

Notably, it is the first flexible packaging company in Québec to have been awarded the vaunted *BRC Packaging Certification*, first standard in the world to be recognized by the **Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)** benchmarking committee, with an *AA* grade.

“I am excited to announce this fifth flexible packaging acquisition in North America, and our first in the province of Québec, which marks yet another step in the development of our North American network,” say TC Transcontinental’s president and chief executive officer François Olivier.

“This transaction extends our footprint to Eastern Canada by adding a Montréal-based facility equipped with a state-of-the-art platform, and it gives us the opportunity to further develop our existing business relationships with retailers in the country.”

Says Olivier: “Driven by its belief in outstanding customer service and innovation, Flexipak has a strong family business culture that will naturally blend with ours.

“We are truly delighted to welcome Flexipak’s employees to the TC Transcontinental and look forward to growing our flexible packaging business



François Olivier,
President and CEO,
Transcontinental Inc.



The Flexipak team poses for a group picture just outside the company’s BRC-certified flexible packaging products converting facility in Montreal.

with them,” says Olivier, adding TC Transcontinental intends to retain all current Flexipak managers and employees—including general manager Karl Boustany.

“Flexipak has been a family-owned business for nearly 20 years, and I am very proud that it is joining a solid family-controlled corporation headquartered in Montréal,” says Flexipak founder and president Charles Boustany.

“The fact that we were chosen by TC Transcontinental is an indisputable validation of our successful business model,” he states. “TC Transcontinental is led by seasoned leaders who foster a long-term vision to grow its flexible packaging division, and I am confident that Flexipak’s talented team, led by my son Karl, will continue to thrive as part of TC Transcontinental Packaging’s North American network with a continued focus on quality and excellent customer service.”

Says Boustany: “Our two companies are a natural fit, and TC Transcontinental’s entrepreneurial spirit, core values and strong culture will undoubtedly resonate with Flexipak’s employees as they embark on this new chapter.”

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■ Atlanta, Ga.-headquartered **Graphic Packaging Holding Co.** has signed a definitive agreement to acquire most of **International Paper Company (IP)**'s North America Consumer Packaging business in a deal estimated at US\$1.8 billion. Under the term of the deal, Graphic Packaging's existing businesses will be combined with the acquired IP assets to create a US\$6-billion integrated paper-based packaging company that will be 79.5-percent owned and solely operated by Graphic Packaging—with IP owning the remaining 20.5 per cent. "We are excited about the platform for future growth created by this combination," says Graphic Packaging president and chief executive officer Michael Doss, adding he expects the new partnership, which will assume US\$660 million of IP's existing debt, to achieve about US\$75 million in cost-savings over the next three years. "We expect the transaction will significantly increase our mill production and converting scale, meaningfully increase our exposure to the growing foodservice market, provide significant runway to realize synergies, and drive strong financial results [through] cost reductions, increased paperboard integration, and procurement and mill efficiencies."



■ Bala Cynwyd, Pa.-headquartered paperboard packaging converter **PaperWorks Industries** has announced a US\$3-million investment in a brand new sheet-fed lithographic press at its converting plant in Greensboro, N.C., which will enable many value-added enhancements in a single pass that traditionally take two or three passes to achieve. According to the company's vice-president

of packaging sales and marketing Brandon Clairmont, the unique configuration of the 10-station press will have the capability to apply matte and metallic inks, specialty coatings and pigments with seven-color printing in a single-pass process to deliver higher-impact graphics in a cost-effective manner. "By investing in the latest printing technology, we are able to push the visual impact boundaries to provide quality folding-carton solutions for our brand-owner and private-label partners," says Clairmont. "It is just one more example of how PaperWorks helps its customers to grow their sales."



■ According to Burlington, Ont.-headquartered automation supplier **Bosch Rexroth Canada**, Bosch Rexroth's **GoTo Focused Delivery Program** has continued to grow for the fourth straight year since being launched in Canada. Now offering more than 5,000 different drive and control products for fast delivery in 10 days or less from order placement, "The GoTo Focused Delivery Program is continually

optimized and updated, so that the product offering remains fresh and reflects the latest technologies while continuing to grow, even as older or less popular products are rotated out of the program," says Bosch Rexroth Canada's national marketing manager David Lopes. While hydraulics remain the biggest single category in the growing product portfolio, adding more than 100 new components last year, the electric drives and controls portfolio also experienced a significant expansion in the latest GoTo program update, introducing new product offering that include the new-generation **IndraDrive** family of servomotors and drives. For further information, please go to:

www.boschrexroth.ca/GoTo

■ **Sharp Packaging Services**, a division of global contract packaging and clinical supply services group **UDG Healthcare, plc.**, has completed a US\$14-million acquisition of a 146,000-square-foot pharmaceutical packaging facility in Bethlehem, Pa., from leading Japanese-owned pharmaceuticals manufacturer **Daiichi Sankyo Inc.** Located on a 16-acre site with potential to expand up to 325,000 square feet, the **FDA**-inspected plant houses two high-speed bottle lines, two blister lines, cold and frozen storage, office space, and a 2,500-square-foot analytical laboratory. As part of the transaction, Daiichi Sankyo will also become a commercial client of the plant, with Sharp providing packaging, clinical and analytical services for several of the company's U.S.-branded products. "This acquisition is consistent with Sharp's strategy of continued growth and capacity expansion to support new and existing clients," says **Sharp US Packaging** general manager Doug Hill. "The company can now offer additional serialization options to valued customers in bottling, blistering and C-II packaging, as well as extended redundancy and risk mitigation."

■ San Francisco, Ca.-headquartered private equity firm **Genstar Capital** has completed the acquisition of **Tekni-Plex, Inc.**—Wayne, Pa.-based manufacturer of specialty medical packaging materials and components for niche healthcare and food industry applications—from affiliates of **American Securities** for an undisclosed amount. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, Tekni-Plex operates manufacturing facilities in eight countries to produce highly engineered products like medical tubing and compounds, pharma barrier films, dispensing components, closure liners, and specialty food packaging. "We have invested heavily in our facilities, equipment and organization over the past several years, so that today Tekni-Plex's well-respected brands hold leadership positions in all of its key market segments," says Paul Young, chief executive officer of Tekni-Plex. "Our strong emphasis on product innovation and R&D (research-and-development) will continue to drive new products that create differentiated customer relationships."



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■ St. Louis, Mo.-headquartered industrial machinery and services conglomerate **Barry-Wehmiller** has announced the merger of its **Barry-Wehmiller Design Group** and **Barry-Wehmiller International** subsidiaries into a single global corporate entity to operate under the **Design Group** name. Bringing together more than 1,400 engineering and information technology professionals, the merged company can now offer a diverse range of IT consulting and equipment design services in the manufacturing domain, in addition to being a supplier of manufacturing automation and control systems, facility design, process engineering, construction management and regulatory compliance services for the world's leading companies in industrial sectors, including packaging, as well as life sciences and consumer products. "The combination of our two firms allows us to share our collective experience and technical capacity, and leverage organizational efficiencies as a premier engineering and IT consulting firm for industrial clients," says group president for consulting services Joe Wilhelm. "This merger enables Barry-Wehmiller International to achieve its full potential within the well-established business model of Design Group," adds Barry-Wehmiller's chief executive officer Bob Chapman. "This significantly broadens our depth and range of client services by approaching the market as one firm."

■ Printing inks and coatings supplier **Sun Chemical Corporation** of Pasippany, N.J., has completed the acquisition of **Digital Graphics, LLC**, Santa Barbara, Ca.-based formulator of changeable advertising signage and displays utilizing invisible inks. "Transitions Digital Graphics is a technology company with a compelling advertising display solution that brings an interactive visual experience to consumers," said Mehran Yazdani, president of Sun Chemical's Advanced Materials group. "This acquisition will strengthen our strategic in-

itiative in electronic packaging by providing exciting new solutions in point-of-sale advertising. It also supports our strategy of continued expansion into sustainable high-growth, high-value markets."

■ Atlanta, Ga.-headquartered **Graphic Packaging International, Inc. (GPI)** has captured the coveted *Top Innovation Award*, along with 10 other awards, at last month's **2017 Paperboard Packaging Council Awards** competition in Scottsdale, Az. Produced for **GF Harvest LLC**, a gluten-free oats company based in Powell, Wy., the **Integraflex** collapsible cup (see picture) is a hybrid packaging solution combining two distinctly different paper-based substrates to create an innovative on-the-go container that is completely recyclable. In addition, GPI was also recognized with two *Eco Awards*, one *Gold Award* and seven *Excellence Awards* in the food and beverage categories. "Winning these awards gives confirmation that our design and product development teams are able to create both award-winning and effective packaging solutions that help build powerful brands for our customers," says GPI's vice-president of sales and commercial market development John Best. "It is always nice to be recognized alongside the best companies in our industry, and taking home the Innovation of the Year award is a testament to our development teams and the work they do for each of our customers on a daily basis."



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Schneider Electric



SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC ANNOUNCES NEW CANADIAN PRESIDENT

SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC, THE GLOBAL SPECIALIST IN ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND AUTOMATION, ANNOUNCED THAT SUSAN UTHAYAKUMAR WILL BECOME COUNTRY PRESIDENT, CANADA ON JANUARY 1, 2018.

"Susan is a strong and accomplished leader and an advocate for the customer," said Annette Clayton, CEO & President, North America, and Chief Supply Chain Officer. "She has the vision and proven ability to inspire and connect with our people who strive daily to deliver on the needs of our partners and customers."

Susan, a 13-year veteran of Schneider Electric, was most recently Vice President, National Sales, Canada, responsible for developing and executing the sales strategy for the company's electrical distribution and industrial automation products and solutions.

In her role as Country President, Canada, Susan will be responsible for overseeing all strategic initiatives in the country and driving its revenue and growth. She will continue to play an integral part in elevating Schneider Electric's presence in Canada as a leader in energy management and automation.

BACK IN A FLASH

Proco Machinery Inc. has launched two new automatic deflashers/trimmers for high-impact bottle applications involving heavy-wall thickness containers made of polycarbonate, E-PET, and other tough resins for extrusion and injection blowmolding systems. Operating at robust speeds of 3.5 seconds per cycle, the new **PADM3-1S Automatic** and the **Pnetrium-Plus** automatic deflashers offer simple control systems activated by a touchscreen interface connected to the machine via an umbilical cord. The design enables the operator to adjust the console position as needed via the color touch panel by adjusting its



timer and control settings—controlling the unit in either automatic or manual modes. According to the company, the **Pnetrium Plus Deflasher** is designed to remove the flash on various containers up to 10 gallons, and it can be configured to deflash multiple containers simultaneously, with its precision guide rods ensuring highly accurate alignment of the punch tool during the deflashing operation.

Proco Machinery Inc.

SOMETHING TO COUNT ON

Automated Packaging Systems has introduced a new,



fully-integrated counter and bag packaging system designed for high-speed counting and packaging of bulk small products. Featuring a **DATA Count U-162 Counter** from **DATA Detection Technologies** that has been custom-engineered to work with the **Autobag 500** bagger to improve productivity and reliability for bag packaging applications requiring speed and precision, the new high-speed system is capable of counting up to 25,000 objects per minute. Comprising a hopper, a vibratory feed track system, and an advanced mathematical algorithm to ensure high levels of accuracy, the **DATA Count U-162** accurately detect variable shaped products from 0.5-mm to 25-mm in size, utilizing an advanced vision system that capable of counting multiple items simultaneously within the bulk product flow.

Automated Packaging Systems

SURE TO IMPRESS



The new model the **SurePress L-4533AW** digital label press from **Epson America, Inc.** is an operator-friendly seven-color inkjet label press built for reliable, high-quality and cost-efficient performance in short-run label printing applications. at a low total-cost-of-ownership (TCO), according to the company. Designed to deliver highly accurate color reproduction on a wide variety of substrates, the **L-4533AW** offers advanced automated printing features, including up to eight hours of unattended printing, email alerts and minimal manual cleaning. Offering remarkable reliability with all



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components built by Epson, including the ink, print-head and controller, the *L-4533AW* features versatile substrate support and prints on off-the-shelf materials from 3.15-inches up to 13-inch-wide, and as thin as .00314-inch.

Epson America, Inc.

GENERATION X



Designed to help food manufacturers benefit from high detection sensitivity and improved OEE (overall equipment effectiveness), the new-generation **X38** model X-Ray inspection system from **Mettler-Toledo Safeline** is a vertical X-Ray beam system for pumped food products boasting a complete new set of software algorithms that have been specially developed for piped food products, including meat and poultry, fruit and vegetables, dairy, baby food, syrups, jams and preserves. Offering optimal detection capabilities for contaminants such as calcified bone, mineral stone, glass shards and metal filings, the X38 was built to ensure the timely and accurate opening of the reject valve to facilitate precise removal of the contaminated product with minimal product waste, while its robust *IP 69*-rated design is ideally-suited for the demands of rigorous hygiene regimes required by pumped production lines. According to the company, the X38 X-Ray system can be easily integrated into production pipelines with flow rates of up to 14 tonnes per hour, depending on the diameter of the pipe and the application, with built-in ability to calibrate X-Ray settings automatically without having to remove all product from the path of the beam.

Mettler-Toledo Safeline

FEISTY FROM FESTO

Available for delivery across Canada from **Festo Inc.** within one or two business days, the new rugged *VU-VS-...-S* solenoid valves and compact *VUVG-...-S* solenoid valves for individual connections are said to be suitable for about 80 per cent of all compact or heavy-duty pneumatic applications, according to Festo. Manufactured at the company's new state-of-the-art Scharnhausen Technology Plant in Germany, the *VUVS-...-S* compact solenoid is especially well-suited for tasks such as small parts assembly and item sorting in electronics, food and packaging industries, as well as for special machine construction where the design requires pneumatic valves to fit in tight installation spaces. For its part, the rugged *VUVG-...-S* unit—available as an electrically or pneumatically actuated valve—can be expanded to form a valve terminal with an individual connection in a myriad of applications, from conveying and filling to woodworking, in a temperature range from -5°C to +50°C.

Festo Inc.



INDIVIDUAL THINKING

Agr International Inc. has expanded the capabilities of its *Process Pilot* automated blowmolder control system with the addition of the *Individual Mold Control* system enhancement—providing PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottle manufacturers with the ca-



pability to manage thickness distribution during production on the individual mold level. By using an advanced control algorithm, the *Individual Mold Control* option provides the means to reduce individual mold station variability by proactively adjusting the pre-blow start time of each mold station through individual mold offsets—making it possible to achieve a tighter overall distribution model over the entire mold set.

Agr International Inc.

DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Designed to provide to provide gentle and economical means for moving product down to a lower level, the new *Spiral Chutes* from conveying specialists **Dorner Mfg. Corp.** leverage gravity to slide the transferred packages downwards. Featuring a patent-pending stair step design to ensure the products won't get stuck or jammed when being lowered from overhead conveyors, mezzanines or platforms, the lightweight *Spiral Chutes* are exceptionally well-suited for handling product in a broad variety of package types, including cardboard, pouches, flexible packaging, corrugated boxes and others. Even if packages begin to accumulate as they travel down, the *Spiral Chutes*' self-clearing design effectively prevents downtime-inducing jams, according to the company. Available in four standard widths and two construction options, the *Spiral Chutes* can be custom-fitted with numerous options to suit specific application requirement, and they can be use to move the product either clockwise or counterclockwise as needed.

Dorner Mfg. Corp.



EVEN FLOW



Developed primarily for the storage and purification of oysters, clams and mussels, the next-generation **Saelplast 405** wet storage container from Saelplast is a 400-liter multi-purpose wet storage designed to maintain even flow of water to achieve perfect oxy-

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generation of each individual shellfish, according to the company. The container's unique patented water flow design features exchangeable corners—enabling it to incorporate different perforations or even no openings—that can be removed and cleaned separately if required for enhanced hygiene and food safety, and it can be stacked four-high on one pallet to maximize storage capacity. Manufactured from highly durable polyethylene and polyurethane materials, the *Sæplast 405* features integrated water channels, an integrated grid waste separator, fast-release plugs for rapid emptying, and emergency air inlet castings for use in the event of a failure in water flow. Operating without the need for any external pipe or drain connections, the *Sæplast 405* container can be easily outfitted with a variety of product tracking options such as barcodes, QR codes and RFID (radio frequency identification) tags, along with personalized customer logos.

Saelplast

ABLE TO LABEL



Weber Packaging Solutions has developed a new online craft beer labeling solutions that allows craft brewers to order their specified quantities of labels in rolls of 500—printed on Weber's **HP Indigo** digital label presses—by submitting their graphic designs and orders online at www.go-label.com. According to Weber, customers can choose from three label materials—white semi-gloss paper, white flexlyte film or silver metallized paper—each available with a top layer of either gloss or matte UV varnish, or gloss or matte film overlamine.

Weber Packaging Solutions

BUILT FOR THE FUTURE

The brand new **Videojet 1860** continuous inkjet (CIJ) printer from **Videojet Technologies Inc.** is equipped with advanced predictive capabilities—in-

cluding an industry-first ink build-up sensor—to provide users with up to eight hours of advanced notice of common potential fault conditions. Designed to enhance current productivity performance and to evolve as future production needs change, the Videojet 1860 printer employs over 150 sensors to continuously monitor over 50 key indicators of printer performance,



providing diagnostics, analytics and guidance to facilitate timely corrective actions to avoid machine downtime. Moreover, the printer's 45-degree slanted printhead design delivers increased versatility through easy line integration with more mounting options to achieve closer proximity to the product—enabling the printhead to get within two millimeters of the product surface to produce crisper, higher-quality product codes even on gabletop and other angular packaging shapes.

Videojet Technologies Inc.

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CASCADES MAKING BIG INVESTMENT TO MANUFACTURE MORE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PACKAGING FOR FRESH MEAT



From Left: Cascades executive chairman Alain Lemaire, Drummondville mayor Alexandre Cusson, Québec's minister of economy, science and innovation Dominique Anglade, Cascades president and chief executive officer Mario Plourde, and Cascades Specialty Products Group president Luc Langevin pose for a happy group picture at the official announcement of Cascades' major capital investment projects at the Cascades Inopak plant in Drummondville, Que.

Leading Canadian containerboard and paper tissue products group **Cascades Inc.** has announced a \$21-million capital investment upgrade for two of its plants specializing in the production of specialty plastic packaging for fresh meat products.

The Kingsey Falls, Que.-headquartered Cascades says it will spend \$15 million at its **Cascades Inopak** plant in Drummondville, Que., to expand the building and install a high-performance rPET (recycled polyethylene) line that includes a cutting-edge built-in decontamination unit.

According to Cascades, "This will make it possible to significantly increase the production capacity of our recyclable Integral brand packaging, which is made from recycled PET and allows for food products in certain markets, such as fresh protein, to be kept for double the amount of time, thus radically reducing food waste."

For its part, the company's **Plastiques Cascades** plant in Kingsey Falls will undergo a \$6-million modernization project that will include addition of a new extrusion line and two recycling lines.



The EVOK range of polystyrene foam meat trays produced by Cascades contain at least 25-percent recycled content.

Best-known as manufacturer of the **EVOK** range of polystyrene foam meat trays containing at least 25-percent recycled content (see picture), the Kingsey Falls plant will be able to increase its production capacity by 25 per cent, according to Cascades, while doubling its internal recycling capacity.

"These investments will facilitate an eventual increase in this percentage and, by extension, further reduce the carbon-dioxide emissions of products marketed by our customers," says Cascades president and chief executive officer Mario Plourde.

"They will also generate creation of more than 10 new jobs, primarily in the production and sales sectors, and will consolidate the 216 jobs that already exist at these two facilities," Plourde points out.

"We are particularly proud of the fact that we lend our recovery expertise to the food sector by taking the fight against food waste to yet another level," he adds.

According to the **Cascades Specialty Products Group** president and chief operating officer Luc Langevin, "In addition to our fresh protein containers, we are pleased to provide our customers with produce packaging that also offers unique environmental value-added."

"Cascades is the first company in North America to manufacture low-density PET packaging containing 80-percent rPET," Langevin points out, "and compared to the competition we can reduce the quantity of materials by approximately 10 per cent for each container made."

"In addition to using fewer resources, our products are recyclable and provide optimal performance attributes."

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GREEN EXHIBIT BOOTH IS A STUNNING SHOW-STOPPER

If a picture is really worth a thousand words to make a convincing point, then global label manufacturer **Avery Dennison** might well have just written the world's longest-ever ode to environmental sustainability with its unique booth exhibit at the recent **Labelexpo Europe 2017** international trade fair in Brussels, Belgium.

With nearly half of the display booth made from recycled label waste collected from numerous Avery Dennison customers, the Glendale, Ca.-headquartered labeling manufacturer made a compelling statement on the need for industry to address the issue of label liner waste, according to the company's global director of sustainability Renea Kezar.

"Building our exhibition booth out of label waste provided a real opportunity to learn more about creating uses for our waste material, as well as a chance to educate our customers and employees about how we can all become more adaptive and responsible," says Kezar.

"Liner waste is an industry issue, and we are committed to pioneering the best ways to drive its reuse," Kezar explains. "With 'Pioneering Change' chosen as our theme for Labelexpo, this first-ever booth to be constructed partly from our own liner waste is another way we are supporting our sustainability goals and helping to push our industry forward in addressing the need for waste reduction."

As Kezar relates, the collected waste material was recycled, reprocessed and combined with other recycled cellulosic materials into a product called **ECOR** by **Noble Environmental Technologies**—a global company providing circular



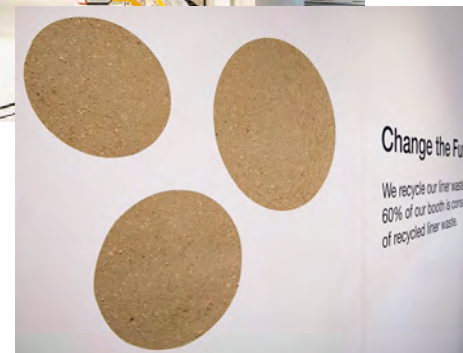
economy solutions to corporate partners in Europe and North America.

Noble converted the collected waste into panels that were then used in a number of elements of the booth, including meeting rooms, storage areas, technical areas, floors, walls and an activation zone called 'Change The Future.' Moreover, the **ECOR** material used to construct the booth is itself recyclable, according to Noble.

"This **ECOR** material is fully recyclable into new product after serving its useful life as a trade-show exhibition booth", says Noble's vice-president Derek McSpadden.

"We were very pleased to partner with Avery Dennison on a project that makes their sustainability commitment immediate, real and visible," McSpadden states, "and we look forward to further working with Avery Dennison on developing many innovative uses for their non-virgin materials and waste."

Adds Kezar: "The reliance on liners in the pressure-sensitive industry, and the related waste, is an issue we are very keen to address and one of our 2025 sustainability goals, which includes a commitment to help our customers reduce the waste from our products."



HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE COMPETITION



Waste recycling pioneer **TerraCycle**, a brainchild of a young Canadian entrepreneur that has grown to become a global leader in the recycling of hard-to-recycle waste, has been named a winner of the **United Nations (UN)**'s *Momentum for Change Lighthouse Activity* award.

Formally awarded at this month's United Nations **Climate Change Conference (COP23)** in Bonn, Germany, the award recognizes the Trenton, N.J.-based company's relentless efforts in the development of the world's first fully-recyclable recyclable shampoo bottle made from plastic waste collected from the beaches around the world.

Made specifically for the world's Number One shampoo brand Head & Shoulders marketed by leading consumer goods conglomerate **Procter & Gamble (P&G)** of Cincinnati, Ohio, the bottle includes 25-percent discarded beach plastic collected from polluted beaches, oceans, rivers and other waterways as part of a global project announced at the **World Economic Forum** last January in Davos, Switzerland.

Launched in France on the store-shelves this past summer, the distinctly shaped Head & Shoulders bottle features compelling call-to-action recycling graphics to call out the project's complexity and earnest commitment to reducing marine pollution. (See Picture)

Working jointly with P&G and **SUEZ Environment**, a French utility company specializing in wastewater treatment and waste recovery, TerraCycle manages the collection process alongside several prominent NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and

clean-up crews on six continents.

"We are honored to be recognized for the work we and our partners are doing to take action against some of the world's biggest environmental issues," says TerraCycle chief operating officer Tom Szaky, who founded TerraCycle in 2001 after dropping out of his sophomore year at **Princeton University**. Coming to Canada at the age of four in 1987, Szaky grew up in Toronto, which is home to the company's **TerraCycle Canada** subsidiary.

Says Szaky: "We hope that calling attention to this project will help people become aware of the magnitude of the beach plastic problem and be inspired to get involved."



Tom Szaky,
Chief Executive
Officer,
TerraCycle

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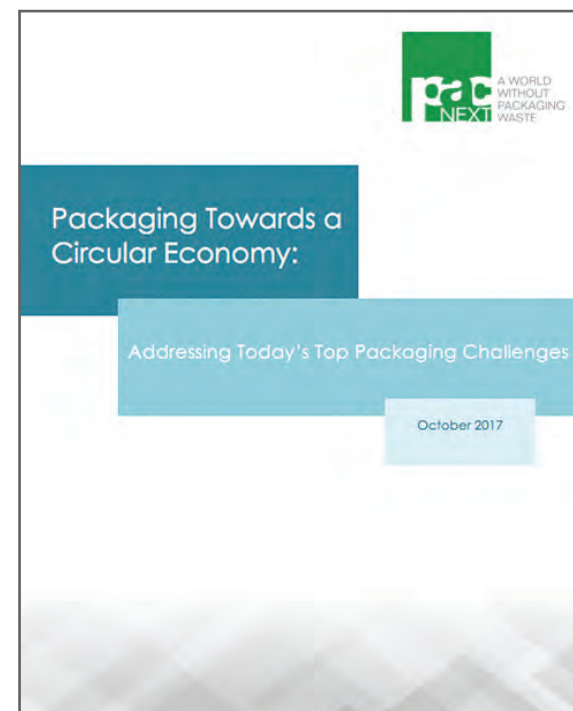
PAC NEXT Releases Breakthrough Reports!



PAC NEXT is proud to announce the release of **Packaging Towards a Circular Economy: Addressing Today's Top Packaging Challenges** accompanied by **Packaging Fact Sheets**. The report and supporting documents provide recommendations and evolve the work from the original Top 10 Packaging Challenges For Recycling paper.

The report is a result of the Packaging Innovation Gateway project team's effort to provide guidance on the design, capture and recovery of packaging in order for materials to be successfully recycled or composted.

The project is led by Brent Heist of Procter & Gamble and Daniel Lantz of Scout Environmental and involved consultation with over 30 project team members over a 12-month period. The team continues to review packaging case studies in a safe and collaborative forum with a goal to finding practical solutions to today's recycling and composting challenges.



JOIN US TODAY TO LEAD THE PATH FORWARD!

PAC puts members first. We take pride in taking the time to understand our members and their individual needs so that we help them reach their sustainability goals. Whether you design or manufacture packaging, manage packaging materials to be recycled, influence policy for the recovery of packaging, or educate future leaders in packaging, there is a place for you at PAC!



PAC FOOD and PAC NEXT 2016-2017 Membership Report

PAC NEXT and PAC FOOD also released the **2016-2017 Membership Report** which highlights the range of valuable services and products that have benefited our members over the past two years, including tours, webinars and seminars that feature high-profile speakers. These two member-led initiatives are focused on scaling up solutions that drive towards a circular economy and serve the packaging industry as a whole.

Together with the PAC NEXT and PAC FOOD initiatives, we will journey towards A World Without Packaging and Food Waste.

Access the reports by visiting pacnext.com



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- Fred Hartzler, President, Express Packaging



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Rewriting
THE RULES



From Left: Some of Winkler Meats' senior management team braving the weather outside their southern Manitoba production facility include controller Gerry Hoeppner, production manager Chris Graham, general manager Frank Isaak, director of sales and marketing Brian Benedictson, and vice-president Jeff Senebald.

HIGH ON THE HOG

Manitoba pork processor leverages robust thermoforming packaging technology to boost its line efficiencies and product shelf appeal

BY ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR

PHOTOS BY WALTER JANZEN

Putting pork on the forks of millions of meat-loving consumers may not be everybody's idea of an easy way to earn one's daily bread and butter.

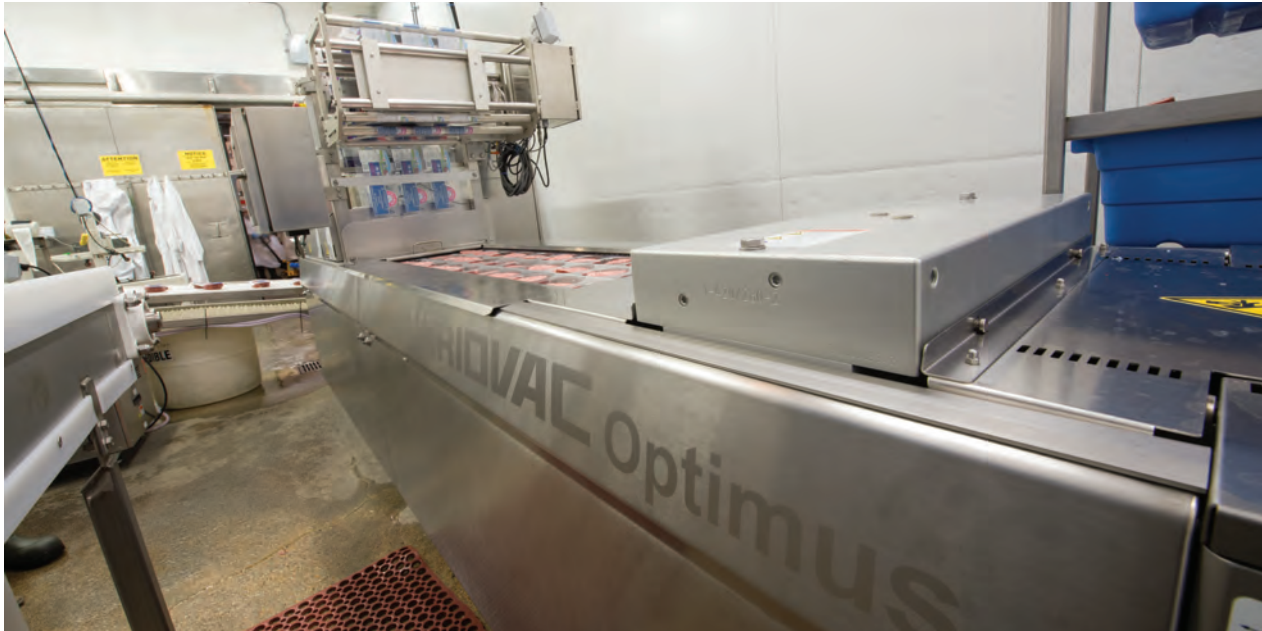
But for the hard-working folks at **Winkler Meats Ltd.** in Winkler, Man., producing a diverse variety of high-quality fresh and processed pork products is a labor of love that has been growing stronger by the day with the passage of time ever since the company's inception back in 1964.

Founded and operated by the Dyck family for 45 years until its 2009 acquisition by **The Progressive Group**, Winkler Meats offers a textbook case of a small

farming operation blossoming into an industry stalwart through strong work ethic, unyielding focus on product quality and innovation, and proactive investment in modern-day processing and packaging technologies to maintain a strong competitive edge in a cutthroat marketplace.

Located on the western edge of Manitoba's Red River Valley about 120 kilometers south of Winnipeg, Winkler is a welcoming community of some 12,591 residents, according to last year's Canadian Census, that serves as the unofficial industrial hub of southern Manitoba.

As part of the Progressive Group, which maintains a stock of approximately 35,000 sows to supply the pork producer's federally-inspected abattoir and processing facility, Winkler Meats is an integral component of that hub, as well as a key contributor



In June of 2017, Winkler Meats installed a brand new Variovac Optimus thermoforming machine, supplied by Reiser (Canada) Co., capable of producing fully-sealed packages at robust throughput speeds of over 12 cycles per minute.



Installed on top of the Variovac Optimus thermoforming machine supplied to the Winkler Meats facility by Reiser (Canada) Co., a Videojet model DataFlex 6420 thermal-transfer printer applies the best-before/freeze-by dates and lot code numbers to the top film layer just prior to sealing.



A variation of Winkler Meats best-selling Farmer Sausage brand, the Mini Farmer Sausage is a premium, traditional, naturally-smoked skinless sausage made with high-quality pork cuts and spices.



A Winkler Meats employee inserts a probe into a sausage curing inside one of the two Maurer ASR 3637 EL/WA computer-controlled friction smokehouses to monitor the smoking time and temperature levels.

to the local economy.

“Our present-day operations like on-site slaughter, deboning, processing, packaging and shipping are all run much like they did for 45 years by the Dyck family, albeit on a much grander scale,” Winkler Meats vice-president Jeff Senebald told the *Canadian Packaging* magazine in a recent interview.

“The Progressive Group supplies approximately 95 per cent of Winkler Meats’ live animal requirements, enabling Winkler Meats to boast the Verified Canadian Pork certification on its packaging,” says Senebald, citing the company’s diverse and growing product portfolio comprising over 50 varieties of sausage and cured products.

While the company used to slaughter and process beef in the past, the change of ownership saw the slaughterhouse transitioned into a pork-only operation.

Any other meats processed at the site—including

beef and turkey—are shipped in boxes of pre-cut portion to go right into processing and, curing and packaging.

Boasting a fully-validated approach *HACCP* (hazard analysis and critical control points) and **BRC (British Retail Consortium)** accredited under **GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative)**—certification for food safety from the **Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)**, the 20,000-square-foot processing facility has recently obtained the critically important **USDA (United States Department of Agriculture)** certification that now permits it to export its products to the U.S., Mexico and Japan, according to Senebald.

“Each year, we process over one million kilograms of local-reared meat into hams, wieners, deli meats and Farmer Sausage,” says Winkler Meats general manager Frank Isaak, noting that the plant produces over four

million sausages per year.

Citing the aforementioned *Farmer Sausage* as the company’s signature brand, Isaak estimates that pork accounts for about 85 percent of the plant’s processing output, with 10 per cent for beef and the rest primarily for turkey.

As Isaak explains, the company’s comprehensive farm-to-table capabilities are vividly supported by the abundant choice of products and packaging formats available for both its RTE (ready to eat) and NRTE (not ready to eat) products.

For example, the RTE product line-up includes smoked turkey thighs and drumsticks; Canadian back bacon chunks and deli meats; smoked pork loins (whole and sliced); smoked leg hams, old-fashioned hams; and a rich variety of sausages comprising skinless smokies for foodservice, *All Beef Hot Dogs*, *Diamond Dog* all-pork wieners and the all-beef *Game Day* and



Bomber Hot Dogs varieties.

For their part, the NRTE products include the company's best-selling skinless, 100-percent Verified Canadian pork *Farmer Sausage*—offered in regular, mini, sliced and a crumbled pizza-toppings sizes—along with skinless *Mild Italian Farmer Sausage*, *Breakfast Sausage*, and a variety of private-label brands produced for some of western Canada's major grocery retailers.

"We are also the only supplier to all of Winnipeg's professional sports venues that are home to the NHL's Winnipeg Jets, CFL's Winnipeg Blue Bombers, the AAB's baseball team Winnipeg Goldeyes, and the Winkler Flyers junior hockey team," says Isaak, noting that all of the meat products manufactured by the plant's 65 full-time employees are fully-certified as being gluten- and allergen-free.

While the plant currently operates a single daily shift, Isaak says there are plans being made to introduce a second shift in early 2018 to keep up with growing market demand, along with a longer-term plan to double the size of the current production facility.

"Our busiest time of year begins in April and runs through December, which means an increase in raw inventory to finished product," says Isaak, citing consistently growing volumes at the plant's slaughter, boning, processing and two packaging departments.

As Isaac explains, the live hogs are delivered to Winkler Meats either before or day of the slaughter, and are housed in a holding barn until the transfer to abattoir.

After slaughtering, the carcasses are eviscerated and split by a **Kentmaster Hog Saw**, so that the hogs can then be dressed weight trimmed, rinsed and placed into a carcass cooler for chilling, to be ready for processing the very next day.

The boning department then processes all slaughtered animals to meet all the mandated fresh pork specifications and Winkler Meats' stringent sausage production requirements, with CFIA inspectors checking the meat twice to ensure there is no contamination or excessive bacteria build-up.

"At this stage, the hogs are cut to plant specification for further processing, including trimming specific cuts to meet our sausage production needs, placed into buckets and transferred to the processing cooler for further processing," says Isaak.

"The market hogs are cut into primal cuts, bone-in and boneless loins, side and back ribs, bellies, legs, etc., after which they are then vacuum-packed, boxed and sold as fresh cuts."



Winkler Meats recently switched from pre-printed plastic bags to rollstock pre-printed clear film—both supplied by Winnipeg's Winkpak Ltd., which in combination with the Variovac thermoforming machine supplied by Reiser has helped the meat processor see increased plastic consumption savings.



The processing department then uses select cuts of meat from the boning line and treats them with one of several Winkler Meats specially-formulated spice blends, after which the pork is ground, chopped and mixed using a **Seydelmann** grinder and/or a Seydelmann bowl chopper to meet the specs of each individual product recipe.

The processing department employs two **Handtmann** sausage stuffing machines that are able to apply either cellulose, fibrous, collagen or natural casing as required.

After stuffing, the product is transferred to one of two high-tech **Maurer ASR 3637 EL/WA** friction smokehouses for smoking and cooking.

These state-of-the-art smokers use two types of natural hardwood, with solid oak used to provide a smoke that gives the sausages its unique red color, and then hickory wood chips are added to infuse the smoked flavor into the meat.

"Our smokers are computer-controlled to ensure

product consistency," states Isaak. "There are probes inserted into a few of the sausages in each batch entering the smoker to monitor temperature and time to ensure we create the perfect sausage every time," he says, "as well as to ensure there is no opportunity for harmful bacteria to grow."

With the skinless *Farmer Sausage* products, each batch stays in the low-temperature smoker, says Isaak, after which the sausages are cooled to meet stringent CFIA standards in preparation for packaging.

Isaak says that cured products are injected with a brine mixture via a **Fomaco** injector prior to smoking, after which they are gently tumbled and allowed to rest overnight before being smoked, cooking and transferred to the RTE cooler.

After racks of sausages, for example, are removed from the NRTE cooler, they are taken to the NRTE specific packaging department, where an operator moves all the designated "skinless" sausages through a **Marel Townsend 2600** peeler, which uses a combination of steam and air to remove the cellulose casing around each sausage link.

The product is then hand-placed into the film pockets that are formed by the company's newly-installed **VARIOVAC Optimus** thermoforming machine supplied by Reiser.

Purchased earlier this year from Burlington, Ont.-based **Reiser (Canada) Co.**, and installed at the NRTE packaging department in June, the fully-automatic VARIOVAC Optimus horizontal form/fill/seal packaging machine is equipped with **Videojet's DataFlex 6420** thermal-transfer printer to apply the best-before/freeze-by date and lot numbers.

Product then passes through a **Loma IQ3+E** metal detection product safety system before being boxed, palletized and placed into a shipping cooler.

The IQ3+E metal detection system was only in-





After sealing on the thermoforming machine, packs move through a Loma Systems IQ3+E metal detection unit as part of Winkler Meats' food safety program.

stalled at the Winkler Meats facility this past autumn.

“It’s been working very well for us, and we are quite happy with it,” says Isaak, adding that Winnipeg-based **PAL Distributors** sold them the Loma unit. “We also have plans to add a second Loma *IQ3+E* metal detection system when we undertake our expansion.”

He says that all natural and collagen casing sausages follow the same process flow, except for bypassing the peeler, while all the sliced products is put through the **Treif Puma** slicer prior to being packaged.

According to Isaak, the arrival of the *VARIOVAC Optimus* system has had a profound impact on the department’s productivity, despite being marketed by Reiser as an entry-level thermoforming machine.

“We use it to pack all of our NRTE products,” Isaak states, saying the operator-friendly machine is well capable of working three shifts a day, if required, with only minimal maintenance.

“It has doubled our output on some of our products within this department and increased all others,” Isaak extols, praising the compact machine’s modular design and heavy-duty, stainless-steel construction.

Designed to facilitate for quick-and-easy changes to package size changeovers, the *VARIOVAC Optimus* allows operators to store up to 40 pre-programmed recipes, while its removable covers and side panels makes it easy to prepare for cleaning and scheduled sanitary washdowns.

Equipped with Reiser’s proprietary **RAPIDAIRSYSTEM** that eliminates the need to pre-heat the packaging film, the *VARIOVAC Optimus* produces consistent high-quality packages and seals at speeds of more than 12 cycles per minute, depending on the product.

“Our *VARIOVAC Optimus* has been working extremely well for us,” Isaak asserts. “It is easy to operate, and has provided our brands with a great seal and a great package on the retail shelf.”

“Because we are very pleased with our dealings with Reiser,” offers Isaak, “we are currently working with them to supply us with the necessary equipment for our forthcoming expansion, which will include new thermoforming equipment on the RTE side.”

Currently, the RTE products—sliced by a Treif Puma slicer or cut into chunks on a **Holac Cubixx 100 L** dicer—are packed and sealed by **Sealed Air Corporation’s Cryovac** rotary vacuum-bag packer, with all pertinent dates and lot code data applied by a **Leibinger Jet 3** inkjet printer—also supplied by PAL Distributors.

As Isaak explains, one of the biggest benefits of the **RAPIDAIRSYSTEM** system aboard the *VARIOVAC* machinery will be to lessen the plant’s reliance on using pre-printed plastic bags, supplied by Winnipeg-based **Winpak**, and switching to rollstock clear film also supplied by Winpak.

“With Reiser’s help, we determined that switching from plastic bags to plastic film could increase our packaging line efficiency, increase the quality and appearance of the packages, and could see significant savings in plastic consumption,” notes Isaak. “And we already have seen all of that.”

Like Isaak, Senebald says he is looking forward to the next Reiser machine installation at the Winkler Meats plant.

“We are a growing facility, thanks to the hard work of our employees and the quality recipes for our popular meat products,” sums up company vice-president Senebald.

“Along with our plans to expand across Canada and international markets, it is imperative that we continue to expand our production facilities and capacity, which include purchasing top-flight processing and packaging equipment.

“Thanks to Reiser, we have already notably improved our production line efficiency,” Senebald concludes, “and we look forward to working with them in the near future as we increase our capacity and grow into further success in the marketplace.” 🍁

SUPPLIERS
Reiser (Canada) Co.
VARIOVAC PS SystemPack GmbH.
Videojet Technologies Canada Ltd.
Winpak Ltd.
Sealed Air Corporation
Loma Systems (Canada) Inc.
Leibinger Group
Marel
Fomaco
Treif Maschinenbau GmbH
holac Maschinenbau GmbH
Jarvis Canada Limited
Kentmaster Manufacturing Co., Inc.
Seydelmann KG
Handtmann Canada Limited
Maurer-Atmos Middleby GmbH
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THE WESTERN UNION

Strategic West Coast acquisition provides another perfect fit for the fast-growing flexible packaging products powerhouse



Equipped with state-of-the-art film production and converting equipment, the vertically-integrated Flexstar operation in Richmond, B.C. runs a busy 24/7 production schedule throughout most of the year to produce high-quality flexible packaging products for a diverse range of customers across western North America serving the cereal, nutrition bars, confectionary, frozen foods and coffee markets.

BY GEORGE GUIDONI, EDITOR

Building a trail-blazing industry leader from scratch in a fiercely competitive market can be a daunting endeavor.

But for the Montreal-headquartered **TC Transcontinental**, the publicly-traded company's robust growth in the North American flexible packaging industry in the last three years bears all hallmarks of a sound business plan carried out to textbook perfection.

Since its formation in the spring of 2014, the **TC Transcontinental Packaging** division has orchestrated a string of well-executed strategic acquisitions that have boosted its status and market reach in leaps

and bounds—today ranking as one of the 25 largest North American producers of flexible packaging products.

Starting with the 2014 acquisition of Clinton, Mo.-based **Capri Packaging** and following up with the 2015 buyout of Brooklyn, N.Y.-based **Ultra Flex** and Lenexa, Ks.-based **Robbie Manufacturing** in the summer of 2016, TC Transcontinental's strategic move into the world of flexible packaging has proven to be a resoundingly astute example of business diversification leveraging the company's traditional strengths in the printing and publishing industries.

And while its latest acquisition may not have been its largest, the October 2016 purchase of the Richmond, B.C.-based **Flexstar Packaging Inc.** has a



Transcontinental Flexstar general manager Marc Bray credits proactive investment in new machinery and skill training for the operation's success.



FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

comforting patriotic vibe to it well befitting one of Canada's most illustrious and successful business enterprises generating about \$2 billion in annual revenues.

As company president and chief executive officer Francois Olivier stated at the time, "I am proud of this latest acquisition in our strategy to grow our flexible packaging network as it is our first in Canada.

"Flexstar enables us to extend our footprint to the West Coast," Olivier explained, providing us a coast-to-coast platform to better optimize our production.

"In addition, it brings us new manufacturing capabilities with film extrusion, a complementary sales force, and the ability to generate additional synergies."

For Flexstar Packaging president and co-founder Marc Bray, who has headed the company since its inception in 2005, the opportunity to take the company to the proverbial next level of growth as part of the fast-growing TC Transcontinental Packaging group of companies is a resounding validation of Flexstar's own stellar record of organic growth that helped it generate \$36 million in the fiscal 2016.

MUTUAL BENEFITS

"The sale to TC Transcontinental was a very good strategic move for our company," says Bray, "and we believe it was mutually beneficial.

"TC Transcontinental brings the overall experience and organization of a large manufacturing company in addition to significant financial resources to continue to grow our position in North America," Bray told the *Canadian Packaging* magazine in a recent interview.

"For its part, Flexstar Packaging provides TC Transcontinental Packaging with an expanded North American footprint to the West Coast, an experienced, highly skilled workforce, and some unique capabilities such as radial laser scoring and new blown film specifications."

Employing 135 people, the company's vertically-integrated Richmond operations comprise a state-of-the-art 61,000-square-foot film extrusion facility and a next-door 30,000-square-foot converting facility housing all the slitting, bagmaking and radial laser scoring equipment.

Throughout most of the year, both facilities operate on a busy 24/7 production to produce high-quality flexible packaging—both rollstock and pre-made bags—for customers in the cereal, granola bars, confectionary, frozen foods and coffee markets, Bray relates.

"Over 90 per cent of our products are used in direct food-contact applications," he notes, "and while we ship our products across North America, our primary focus is on western North America.

As Bray explains, Flexstar Packaging has continually invested in the most technologically advanced production and converting equipment right from the outset, combined with ongoing skill training for its machine operators and all other employees to maximize its technology investment.

"We find that our location provides a very good environment to find a skilled and educated workforce to support our growth in technology and machinery," says Bray, "and we have been successful in adjusting our schedule for peak demands by cross-training our workforce to increase our production flexibility."

The formidable combination of best-of-breed technology, process expertise and a highly-trained workforce has played a large part in making Flexstar an attractive investment proposition for TC Transcontinental.



A roll of pre-printed film loaded onto the high-speed pouchmaking machine to be converted into finished flexible pouches.



A high-speed pouchmaking machine in full-action mode at the Transcontinental Flexstar converting facility in Richmond, B.C.



Machine operator at the Flexstar converting facility making on-the-fly adjustments to the wide-format laminator, manufactured by the Nordmeccanica Group, processing high-quality packing films used to produce high-barrier flexible packaging for a diverse range of food industry applications.

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FLEXIBLE PACKAGING



Armed with an array of strategically-positioned Banner R58 Expert series registration mark sensors, the laser-scoring/perforations systems at the Flexstar facility enables the company to add a diverse range of enhanced value-added packaging features..

mental Packaging to extend its North American footprint, Bray reasons.

"It was a very good cultural fit and the transition process has been excellent," he states.

"We also believe that the acquisition allows us to better optimize our production and better support our customer base.

"As part of TC Transcontinental Packaging, we are happy to move forward driven by its vision to be a North American leader in flexible packaging," Bray proclaims.

"We are very confident that the years ahead will be successful and marked by many notable accomplishments."

BEST IN THE WEST

According to Bray, Flexstar's confident mindset is well-supported by an impressive list of technological innovations and breakthroughs that the company has been able to bring to market over the years, including:

- Being of the first converters in western North America to offer HD Flexo printing process capabilities, developed by leading global prepress technologies supplier ESKO, using high-quality digital printing plates to superior print quality rivaling that of gravure and offset printing.
- Developing several commercial retort lidstock and numerous hot-fill applications for liquids using its pre-made pouch technology.
- Developing many internal blown film specifications for specialty packaging applications.
- Developing unique laser-scored opening features and perforation patterns using an advanced web radial laser score technologies, with further investment in this technology planned for 2018.
- Working jointly with **Dow Chemical Canada**

to develop a recycling-ready multilayer barrier pouch that qualifies for the **How2Recycle** label certified by the **Sustainable Packaging Coalition (SPC)**.

"We are the most vertically integrated flexible packaging operation in western North America," says Bray.

Boasting a wealth of advanced leading-edge production and converting technologies that includes three flexo presses, three laminators, three bag machines, blown film extrusion, slitting, and laser scoring/perforations.

"We are a full service shop and can do full graphic separations, HD flexo printing, expanded gamut printing and internal platemaking," Bray points out.

"Our facility has been undergoing investment and change since our inception in 2005, and every piece of equipment we operate is new," says Bray.

"It is all part of the transformation of this facility to be a highly technical, full-service convertor to support our growing customer base," he states.

"We have followed a strategic investment platform and have developed a flexible machine roster—a key in providing the service levels required for our customers to be successful in their business."

Bray says the flexible packaging industry, like other packaging sectors, is constantly challenged by rising customer expectations for superior quality and service, as noted by pronounced trends to:

- **Shorter lead times.** "Improving the product speed-to-market has created the need for us to improve our overall manufacturing flexibility to manage short turnarounds, un-anticipated opportunities and new product launches," Bray explains.
- **Enhanced Graphics.** The need to create more effective shelf appeal for the product through HD (high-definition printing) expanded gamut print-



The towering, high-output Windmoeller & Hoelscher plastic film extruder supplies the vertically-integrated Flexstar operations with the vast majority of its multilayer film requirements.



FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

ing, metallic inks, spot matte coatings and other value-added features.

- **Technology.** Utilizing new materials and package features like laser-score opening, venting for frozen microwave applications, alternate barrier materials to increase product freshness, etc.
- **Information.** Using *ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)* data to improve shipping, invoicing, and inventory accuracy. “This also helps us manage raw materials by using historical usage information across the customer base,” says Bray.

“Today’s consumer trends towards healthy eating, convenience, snacking, sustainability and mobile technologies are all driving demand for new packaging innovations, designs and formats,” he notes.

LEAD POSITION

In addition to addressing these key marketplace trends, Flexstar Packaging is also keenly aware of its CSR (corporate social responsibility) obligations insofar as reducing the company’s environmental footprint, Bray asserts.

“Flexstar is a leader in Western Canada in terms of sustainability programs, having made significant strides in material recovery, waste reduction and recycling,” Bray states.

“We separate our wastestreams and recover over 95 per cent of our raw material scrap, which earned us a 2008 BC Export Award for sustainability,” he notes.

According to Bray, the Richmond plant is also planning to begin installing a high-efficiency 50,000-cfm (cubic feet per minute) regenerative thermal oxidizer by the end of this year, which will enable it to capture and destroy over 98 per cent of the *VOCs (volatile organic compounds)* generated by the facility’s operations.

Bray says he is very encouraged by the fact that Flexstar Packaging and TC Transcontinental Packaging are both on the same page in respect to environmental sustain-

ability and other key CSR objectives.

“For TC Transcontinental, social responsibility is all about achieving sustainable profitability in the pursuit of its business activities, while safeguarding a healthy environment and being engaged in the communities we serve,” says Bray, exuding plenty of optimism about Flexstar’s future business prospects as part of the TC Transcontinental Packaging group.

“I believe that TC Transcontinental Packaging has grown the way it has because of its obsession with anticipating its customers’ needs,” Bray opines.

“We intend to follow this path by constantly evolving to stay close to our customers and partnering with them to ensure their success, since their success is our success.

“If we continually move forward and improve, we feel we can maintain our edge on any competitor by focusing on delivering the highest possible level of value, quality, product performance and speed-to-market.

Says Bray: “This is a competitive business, with plenty of competition from both North American and off-shore converters.

“Because we produce a very wide range of products, we have many competitors,” he concludes, “but having said that, we are very confident in our abilities to listen to our customers attentively, to understand their needs, to deliver optimal packaging solutions to preserve their products, and to continue to bring them true value through continued knowledge, creativity and dedication.” 🍁



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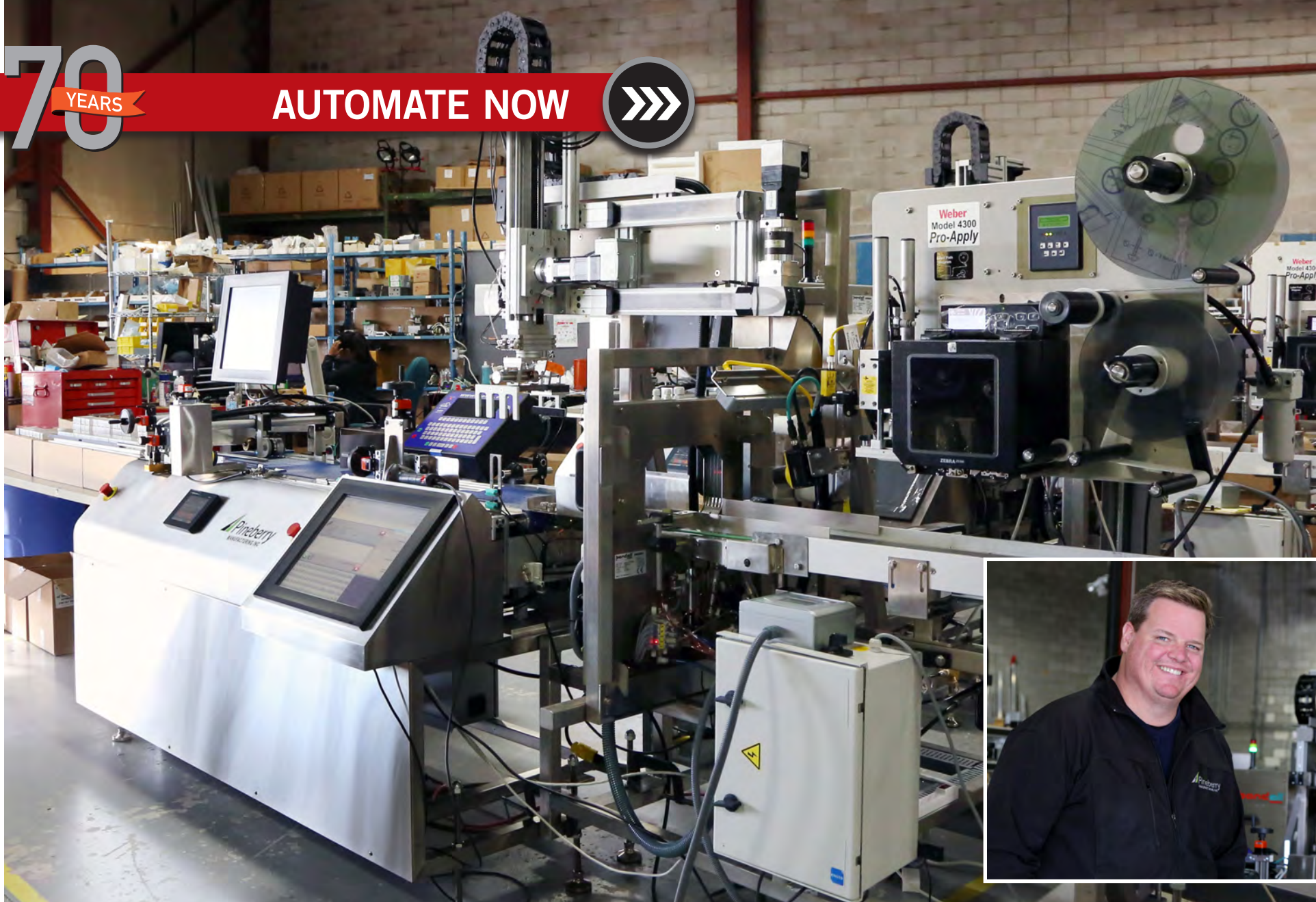
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Pineberry Manufacturing president David McCharles (*inset*) oversaw the development and refinement of the fully-automatic CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System that he says can play a very useful role in helping to stem the flow of fake drugs and medicines into the Canadian market.

FAKE SCARES

Canadian machine-builder leverages cutting-edge automation technologies to develop an effective solution in ongoing global war against counterfeit drugs

BY ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR

PHOTOS BY NAOMI HILTZ

While the so-called fake news may have been grabbing a lot of media attention lately, there is nothing remotely fictitious about the real and present danger to modern society stemming from rapid global proliferation of fake drugs and medicines.

Blamed for an estimated 700,000 deaths each year by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, counterfeit pharmaceutical products account for an estimated 30 per cent of all medications in circulation within developing and emerging countries.

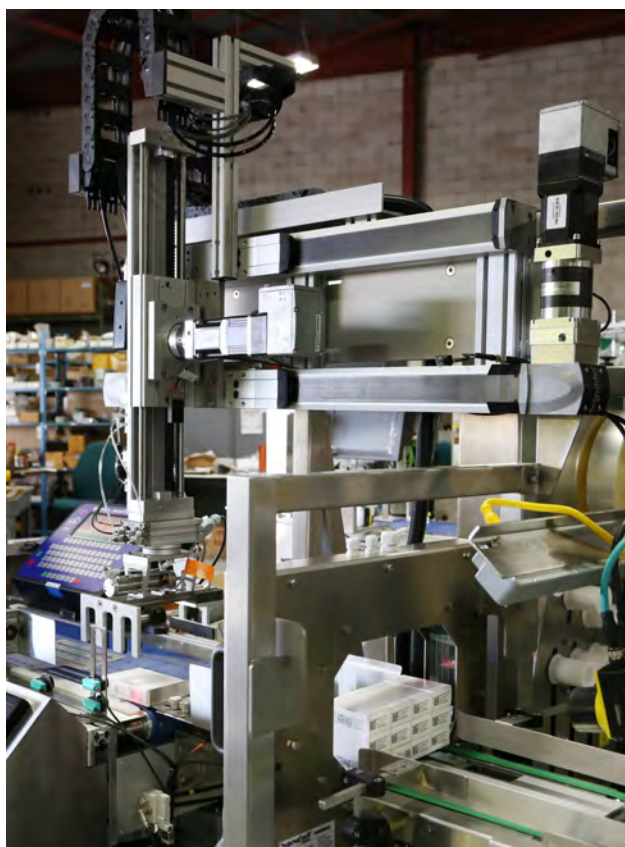
In the European pharmaceutical industry alone, counterfeit drugs are estimated to represent a \$15 billion illegal industry, according to WHO research.

To safeguard domestic consumers, Canada mandates widespread use of the **DIN (Drug Identification Number)**—a randomly assigned computer-generated eight-digit number assigned by **Health Canada** to a drug product prior to it being marketed in Canada.

The main idea is to reassure the Canadian public that the pharmaceutical product has undergone and



Supplied by German manufacturer of plastic motion products igus, inc., the black e-chain cable carrier on top of the Schneider Electric robotic gantry system is a lubricant-free, dry-running slide guide designed to protect all electrical wiring and cabling.



The small-footprint robotic gantry system developed and manufactured by Schneider Electric stacks pharmaceutical packs in groups of 12 using an automatic Bandall machine—distributed in Canada by Banding Systems—that bounds the individual packs tightly together with a single strip of thin clear plastic wrap.



The igus company Manufactures by igus, the orange-colored DryLin SLW Cross Slide and Slide Carriage facilitate precise positioning of the Videojet Wolke inkjet printhead to generate clean, high-quality printing of product data required for full traceability.

passed a review of its formulation, labeling and even its instructions for use.

Providing a unique identification for all drug products sold in dosage form in Canada—both prescriptions and OTC (over-the-counter) meds, the DIN must identify the manufacturer; product name; active ingredient(s); strength(s) of active ingredient(s); pharmaceutical form; and route of administration.

For all that, counterfeit drugs are still making their way into Canada, as evidenced by the nation's current opioid crisis.

Which is why Canada has joined over 40 other nations in a collaborative effort to crack down on counterfeit drugs with new track-and-trace laws and standards to thoroughly regulate pharmaceutical products as they pass through the supply chain with strict new serialization, aggregation and coding requirements, alongside other information technology solutions.

“The current global pharmaceutical landscape is changing, and we believe our company can help af-

fect that change,” **Pineberry Manufacturing Inc.** president and chief executive officer David McCharles told *Canadian Packaging* during a recent visit to the company headquarters.

Located in Oakville, about a 20-minute drive west of Toronto, Pineberry's busy, yet tidy 12,500-square-foot facility manufactures dispensing and feeding equipment such as friction feeders, tray denesters and custom automation for the food and direct mailing markets, but recently expanded its scope to include providing a small footprint solution for the global pharmaceutical industry.

While the company achieved a lot of its earlier growth through its plastic card solutions for affixing, verifying, inspecting, counting, decorating, punching and other security applications, McCharles says it was important for Pineberry not to be a one-trick-pony.

“That is why we are now becoming more actively involved in designing and manufacturing small footprint serialization and aggregation systems specific to

the pharmaceutical industry,” says McCharles, citing the company's latest mechanical marvel simply called the **CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System** because, as he aptly puts it, “That's exactly what it does.”

As McCharles explains, “Our CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System will provide any company involved in pharmaceutical packing with that ability to serialize, which will lend itself to ease-of-mind for pharmaceutical companies.

“The biggest reason for companies to possess proper serialization is to prevent the influx of counterfeit drugs into the legitimate community,” says McCharles, noting by the end of next year every legitimate pharmaceutical company around the world is going to require a serialization number on each pharmaceutical product.

“There are a lot of people getting sick from these fake drugs,” he asserts, “and that's just not acceptable.”

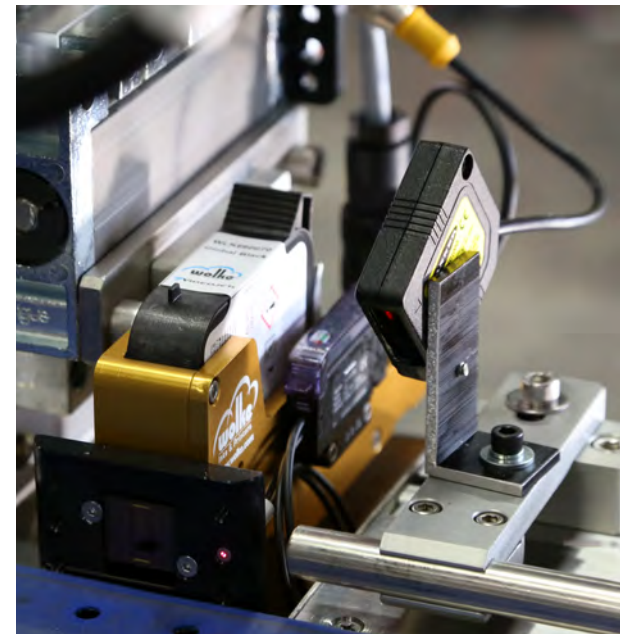
McCharles says that most counterfeit drugs are



The fully-automatic banding machine supplied to Pineberry by Banding Systems in the process of applying a clear plastic wrap around one dozen individual product units to create a single, tightly-held 12-unit pack that also has an individual coded label applied to it to assist in the track-and-trace verification and validation of legitimately produced pharmaceutical products.



One of two Cognex cameras placed within the Pineberry CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System to scan and verify each product code placed onto each a pack.



The CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System developed by Pineberry deploys Videojet Technologies' Wolke printer to apply high-density 2D barcodes and QR code onto the products as the first step in ensuring effective product safety and authenticity through advanced serialization and track-and-trace capabilities.

fraught with health risks by either containing too much of the correct medicinal ingredients, not enough of them, or simply containing anything except for a fake pharmaceutical corporate trademark or logo.

According to McCharles, the *CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System* offers an effective solution for stemming the influx of counterfeit drugs from other countries to Canada.

"We have already been quite involved in packaging and pharmaceutical machinery serialization products for some time," he notes, "but this new system marries aggregation (clustering or gathering) to provide an additional layer of traceability for the consumer of the product."

In essence, the new Pineberry system provides a more reliable means to gather product in a quick and efficient manner after the product packages have been filled, while maintaining full real-time tracking and

traceability for the customer.

In operation, each filled pack travels through an **igus** alignment section that maneuvers it so that it travels straight through the **Videojet Wolke** inkjet printhead that applies individual coding data onto each package.

"The igus company supplies us with their DryLin SLW Cross Slide and their Slide Carriage products," mentions McCharles. "Using the DryLin Slide Carriage, we have integrated a handcrank with dial indicator for precise product guide positioning."

Unlike recirculating ball bearing systems, the corrosion resistant **DryLin** linear guides are oil-free and have been designed to run dry, without the need for wet, messy lubricants or costly maintenance.

The igus *DryLin SLW* linear systems are based on the company's **DryLin W** linear construction kit.

According to igus, the *DryLin SLW* products are a low-cost solution for manual adjustments, but can also

be fitted with a motor for electrical adjustments.

"Using the DryLin SLW Cross Slide, we are able to precisely position the printhead to product height, and the printhead distance and product distance to allow for a clean, high-quality print," he continues, adding that the hand crank easily allows vertical and horizontal adjustments."

Once done, a **Cognex** vision system scans each pack to verify that all the required printed data has been placed, applied correctly, and is easily readable.

"We have a pneumatic reject system in place that will blow any poorly packed product right off the production line," says McCharles.

Each product pack is tracked via an encoder and a **Schneider Electric** PLC (programmable logic controller) monitoring all of its movements.

Once individual serialization is achieved, the individual packs move to the front of a Schneider Electric-designed gantry robot that gently grabs four of the packs at a time with its EOAT (end-of-arm-tool) gripper and stacks them three levels high—creating tidy blocks of 12 packs apiece.

Driven by several integrated Schneider Electric servomotors, the high-speed gantry system can move at speeds of up to eight meters per second, according to McCharles.

"These servo motors help the robotic system not only be very fast, but steady and very accurate, with the flexibility to modify the stacking patterns as required," McCharles notes.

"Using anything from Schneider Electric goes a long with our customers, and I can tell you that our pharmaceutical customers definitely appreciate us using such a high-quality entity in the electrical field and energy sector that manufactures controllers, servomotors, and robotics," McCharles states.

"We have been working with Schneider Electric for eight years now," he adds, "and we have never been disappointed."

"They supply all of our PLCs, motors and HMI (human-machine interfaces) terminals," McCharles points out, "and now some of the robotics they have built for use within our projects—like this new custom-built robotic gantry system that enabled us to develop the compact-footprint design offered by the CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System."

"We are very impressed with their gantry robotic system."



The movement of Schneider Electric gantry robot's product feeder is controlled by igus-manufactured lubrication-free linear bearings made of high-strength thermoplastic.



A Magelis HMI (human-machine interface) from Schneider Electric allows the operator to control the Serialization and Aggregation System with a user-friendly touchscreen.

Unlimited advantages...

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A Balluff BES0341 capacitor helps to ensure that the Schneider Electric robotic gantry system always comes back to its set position after every operation.

After the cartons have been stacked, the 12-pack blocks are transferred through an automatic **Bandall** system—distributed by Orangeville, Ont.'s **Banding Systems, Inc.**—which swiftly bundles the units into a single 12-pack bound by a breadth of clear plastic wrap.

“At this point,” explains McCharles, “another Cognex vision system takes a look at the 12-pack, recording all 12 of the individual pack codes applied previously.

The newly-formed 12-pack then has an additional label blown onto the clear plastic banding wrap by a **Weber** model **4300 Pro-Apply** labeling system, with the label containing a single QR code that combines all of the data from each of the one dozen individual packs of product.

The 12-pack then exits the Pineberry *CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System* to await further packing into a master carton where another label is added containing data of all its contents. Further downstream, when the master carton is palletized with other such cartons, another label can be added for complete identification of what it contains.

“It’s a full track-and-trace solution that leverages aggregation and helps to improve the customer’s inventory management performance,” says McCharles.

“For example, if you need to determine a case’s contents but do not want to open up the case, you can now scan the QR code on the outside of the case to get the serial number, and then using the aggregation relationship, you can determine the identity of all the contents.”

The key end-user benefit, McCharles says, is that the system removes the need for customers to open up the case and scan all of the individual products just to determine if the one pack you are looking for is there.

“Manufacturers, wholesale distributors, repackers and pharmaceutical supply chains would all benefit from utilizing our *CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System*,” notes McCharles.

“And that Schneider Electric robotic gantry arm is pretty amazing too,” says McCharles, while also reserving special praise for Pineberry’s software technology partner **Adents**, a leading French software developer with North American operations in New Jersey.

“Adents developed the whole serialization software suite through a partnership with Microsoft to create a very nice software program—the best we have seen on the market,” McCharles proclaims.

“It helps bring together, or integrate if you will, all of the different elements and components of our *CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System* into a highly effective system solution,” says McCharles, underlying the importance of finding the right automation partners for developing new Pineberry equipment.

“With our name on the line,” he states, “having confidence in our partners, both new and old, is exceptionally important for us.

“Not only do we like to work with hard-working, robust equipment that we know won’t let the customer down, but we also enjoy working with good people,” McCharles adds, “such as those we know through Schneider Electric.

“For us, being a small business, it amazes me sometimes at how well they treat us,” he states, complimenting Schneider Electric’s efficient product distribution network. “I know that if there’s a part I need right away, I can make a call and get



Using a Zebra ZE500 print engine, the Weber Model 4300 Pro-Apply labeler blows a label onto the clear plastic band wrapped around the 12-pack of collated product cartons.

it delivered the next day. It’s the same with their global network, an important element considering so many of our projects are literally installed around the world.”

Having acquired Pineberry in 2009 after joining it five years earlier, McCharles says he is pleased with the company’s accelerated growth in recent years, along with development of high-quality friction feeding, printing and custom automation solutions for the packaging, pharmaceutical, e-commerce, distribution, food and beverage, plastic card, graphic arts, and mailing and fulfillment industries.

“We have gone from being a local Canadian company to more of a global one, with installations around the world, including South America, Europe and Australia, with a lot of our new business derived from customers in the U.S.,” says McCharles, saying he expects a warm market reception for the company’s *CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System* solution.

“Companies can start getting serious about new track-and-trace requirements now or they can start later,” he says, “but obviously becoming more familiar with the technology as soon as possible can only be an advantage to any company.

“Our *CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System* provides a practical and cost-effective way for pharmaceutical companies to ensure their products conform to current and even upcoming global track-and-trace-efforts.”

As McCharles sums up, “Our primary goal has always been to help our customers be more efficient and thus more profitable.

“To do so, we design and build our systems by working closely with our customers throughout the automation process to ensure they receive an automation solution that is specific to their needs.” 🍁



Please see the video of Pineberry Manufacturing’s new *CartonTrac Serialization and Aggregation System*, incorporating Schneider Electric’s gantry robot and other technologies, in full-action mode on Canadian Packaging TV at www.canadianpackaging.com

SUPPLIERS

Pineberry Manufacturing Inc.

Schneider Electric Canada

igus inc.

Videojet Technologies Canada Ltd.

Cognex Corporation

Banding Systems, Inc.

Bandall

Weber Marking Systems Canada

Adents International



UPON CLOSER INSPECTION

Maximizing the performance and payback of your X-Ray detection technology investment

BY CHRIS YOUNG

Perhaps it's been a while since you purchased an X-Ray detection system. Or this may be your first time. In either case, how do you know how to choose the right system for your business?

Herr are a few important guiding principles that will help you choose a system that not only meets your detection goals, but does so in a way that maximizes your ROI (return-on-investment) and OEE (overall equipment effectiveness).

KNOW THE COST AND LIFE EXPECTANCY OF REPLACEMENT PARTS.

Most buyers today are savvy enough to know there's more to the cost of X-ray equipment than just the upfront cost.

If you are upgrading from metal detection to X-Ray inspection, for example, you will want to factor in the ongoing costs of two of the most expensive replacement parts: the tube (also called the generator), and the detector. To account for these ongoing costs, ask about the life expectancy and replacement cost for both parts before you buy. Similar to car buying, you will find some brands have longer-lasting parts than others.

UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH PERFORMANCE AND LOW POWER USAGE.

In choosing a system, it always helps to understand how it works. The lifetime of an X-Ray tube can be compared to that of a three-way light bulb, in a sense that the X-ray tube will always eventually fail after a number of hours of use.

The power setting impacts X-ray tube longevity, so that the tube will fail sooner when operating at a higher power setting.

But before you think about reducing the power setting to increase the lifetime of the X-ray tube, you must understand that there is a trade-off.

Reduced power means reduced image quality, and thus poorer detection limits.

From an engineering standpoint, optimizing machines for both high performance and low power use is exceptionally challenging.

That is why most X-Ray machine manufacturers today specialize in either high performance (i.e. finding the smallest contaminants) or low-energy, long-life systems. Historically, machines with high detection capability normally use high amounts of energy and therefore have very low lifetimes, whereas machines using less power typically have poor detection rates.

At least that's the way it used to be until just recently, when **Anritsu Corporation** challenged our engineers to develop a solution to reduce power usage while maintaining the high detection level of our machines.

Despite these divergent goals, our engineers succeeded in developing the so-called **ALL (Advanced Long Life)** technology.

Systems equipped with ALL technology, such as the Anritsu **XR75** X-Ray inspection system (picture above), offer an X-ray generator and detector with three times the life of conventional models, combined with a new, more efficient cooling system that lessens power consumption by about 20 per cent over the tube's lifetime.

Hence there is no longer a need to for high performance or lower power usage: you can have both with Anritsu's ALL technology.



DO NOT IGNORE THE VALUE OF SUPERIOR DETECTION CAPABILITY FOR REDUCING FALSE REJECTS.

One misconception we often hear from buyers is the belief that a machine just needs to be "good enough" to meet your detection specification.

Many buyers are unaware that extra performance capability beyond your specification is a valuable asset.

But let's consider an example of comparing three detection systems that detect stainless steel at 0.7-mm (System A), 1.0-mm (System B), and 1.5-mm (System C) respectively:

If your detection goal is to detect stainless steel at 1.5-mm and greater, it may appear that any of these systems is a suitable detection solution, assuming all the other factors like equipment cost, reliability, etc., are equal.

However, what many buyers don't realize is that superior detection capability of Systems A and B that detect smaller contaminants than your specification level can be "converted" to improve a machine's capability to reduce false rejects by enabling your machine to be set at a lower sensitivity level.

In this light, System A offers the best solution in terms of achieving your detection performance specification and significantly decrease false rejects.

And why should you care about false rejects?

With the continued trend of downward cost pressures in the industry, food processors are increasingly paying attention to line efficiency using measures such as OEE, with many production plants treating OEE as a key performance indicator to their operational metrics.

Boosting the yield of production lines by reducing false rejects is an efficient way to increase the output of an operation without the capital costs and space required to install additional lines.

The OEE metric is comprised of three factors: machine uptime, process yield, and speed to determine overall effectiveness of equipment.

Essentially, false rejects are a waste of good product, which directly impact process yield and thus OEE of the line.

That's why X-Ray systems with superior detection capability (i.e. smaller than your specification) will improve your process yield by reducing false rejects.

In addition to reducing false rejects, superior detection capability also provide the flexibility to have a higher level of detection on "as-needed" basis in extreme scenarios where line operators know that something accidentally dropped into a batch—allowing them to increase detection levels for the period of time to ensure the detection of such contaminants.

CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF EQUIPMENT DESIGN ON YOUR SANITATION REQUIREMENTS.

While performance and cost are the most important criteria, customers are increasingly requesting clean design to streamline sanitation processes and eliminate hiding places for biological contaminants.

Design features such as easy parts removal/attachment, easy-to-clean conveyors, one-touch removal of shield curtains, and removal/attachment of rollers without tools can all streamline the cleaning processes and, at the end of the day, more efficient cleaning contributes to better ROI performance. 🍁

Chris Young is business development manager with the Elk Grove Village, Ill.-based **Anritsu Infivis Inc.** subsidiary of **Anritsu Corporation**, globally-operating manufacturer of X-Ray, checkweighing and metal detection technologies headquartered in Kanawaga, Japan.



PAINTING BY NUMBERS

Printing inks manufacturers working harder than ever to help brand-owners meet their growing list of packaging goals and objectives



A pouch of roasted peanuts treated with the SunBar oxygen-barrier coating for longer shelf-life.



A flexible stand-up pouch treated with the SunInspire specialty coating to achieve a pearlescent visual effect.

BY GEORGE GUIDONI, EDITOR

As the modern global packaging industry continues to evolve at an accelerated pace to respond to the global population's growing demands for more consumer packaged goods (CPG) of all types, so do the industries serving the world's leading suppliers of packaging products and their end-use clients.

Nowhere is this more evident in the growing, but highly competitive market for the package printing inks and coatings used to turn lifeless packages made of paperboard, rigid plastic or flexible films into engaging, attention-grabbing merchandising vehicles for brand-owners to differentiate their products on the retail shelves or, increasingly, in the e-commerce space.

According to a recent report from the New York City-based market research and consulting firm **P&S Market Research**, the global printing inks market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.7 per cent over the next five years—reaching almost US\$23.9 billion by 2023—with packaging and labeling applications accounting for a healthy part of that growth.

"Factors such as rising GDP (gross domestic product), increasing disposable income, growing youth population and the continuously changing lifestyles of consumers would result in significant growth in demand for packaged goods," the report states. "Such trends are expected to have a positive impact on the global printing inks market during the forecast period."

"The global printing inks market is driven by the growth in the packaging industry in countries such as the U.S., China and India," the P&S study says, "and the use of printing inks in packaging industry is expected to further rise during the forecast period on account of their increasing applications in tags and labels, metal cans and flexible materials."

To benefit from that growth, however, leading global ink companies must offer packaging end-users more advanced UV-cured inks and more eco-friendly, water-based formulations "to ensure optimal efficiency and short production time," the report notes, citing regulatory frameworks such as the **FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)**, and *Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act* in the U.S. that prohibits the usage of inorganic solvents and toxic metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium and hexavalent chromium.

"The growing trend for adopting environment-friendly is expected to improve the efficiency and reduce the harmful effects of inorganic and toxic materials used in conventional printing inks," the P&S

report states.

For leading ink companies like **Sun Chemical Corporation**, Parsippany, N.J.—headquartered subsidiary of the global industrial chemicals group **DIC Corporation** of Tokyo, Japan, such trends point to the need for ever-closer collaboration with the company's vast client base in the packaging arena.

"We provide much more than just inks today" says Rod Staveley, president of **Sun Chemical Canada** in Brampton, Ont.

"We constantly work with our partners to develop innovative solutions that could lower the weight of a package, for example, offer a security solution to combat counterfeiting, or provide an effective barrier from contamination."

As Staveley explains, "Sun Chemical offers a wide range of custom-tailored technical support: from polymer design and synthesis and color science to pigment synthesis, chemical analysis, and materials characterization."

"It is not unusual for us to be asked for a specific type of ink color or varnish that didn't previously exist," he states, "but it is always our goal to help customers achieve the previously unachievable."

"We often utilize our technical team to develop a solution to get them what they need along with the appropriate type of finish, whether it is a gloss or matted look."

"We can provide inks with stronger colors and densities for a variety of substrates," says Staveley, citing a "plethora of packaging challenges" facing brand-owners in meeting all the regulatory and environmental requirements while still developing effective and attractive packaging to sell their products.

"Regulatory and recycling concerns to keep food and consumers safe have all led to safer and improved packaging," Staveley notes, "but these trends and demands have often created other problems for the packaging engineer."

"Brand-owners and consumers may want extended shelf-life, for example, but this often runs counter to the desire to downsize packaging to reduce cost and waste," he explains.

"Product packaging may be just one aspect of contemporary brand management, but the reality is that it reaches into many areas of business-critical concerns," says Staveley, citing product identification, presentation and storage, environmental, protection against contaminants, and anti-counterfeiting features as some of the most requested performance attributes demanded by today's CPG clients.

"There are also promotional concerns such as point-of-sale product differentiation, promotional offers and contests, integration with online/social media, consumer loyalty, repeat purchase and consumption,"



A sampling of high-end glass containers decorated with Sun Chemical's SunVetro organic UV screen inks.



Staveley adds.

“Moreover, packaging now needs to be informative with product information, traceability, storage and usage instructions, ingredient labeling, health information, allergens and recycling details.”

To maintain its status as a leading supplier of printing inks and coatings for packaging applications, Sun Chemical has delivered several innovative new purposed products into the market in recent years, including:

- The **SunInspire** specialty coatings, formulated to enable a brand's product packaging to stand out on store shelves visually through high-luster metallic, fluorescent, glitter, pearlescent, and iridescent finishes.
- Designed to engage the consumers' sense of touch, the new **SunInspire** tactile coatings—ranging from coarse and gritty to soft and smooth—help create a more interactive consumer experience through the use of specialty color-shifting, reticulating, and other aromatic coatings, Staveley relates.
- For their part, the relatively new **SunBar** oxygen-barrier (aerobloc) coatings are designed to enable effective package lightweighting of packaging eliminating the need to insert *EVOH* (ethylene vinyl alcohol) polymer layers in the packaging structure from packaging, while also improving the laminate flexibility.

“These innovative oxygen-barrier coatings provide a smooth, homogenous, pinhole-free layer that can be easily overprinted with inks and laminated to a variety of secondary films to provide effective, recyclable, biodegradable and press-ready packaging substrate with a reduced carbon footprint,” Staveley points out, “and easy application with few changes to existing equipment.”

As Staveley reveals, Sun Chemical has formed a partnership with overlamine manufacturer **acpo, ltd.** of Oak Harbor, Ohio, to provide pre-coated films directly to packaging converters.

“Sun Chemical's relationship with its converting partners is critically important to our success,” Staveley notes.

- Jointly created with leading anti-counterfeit and authentication technologies developer **Document Security Solutions (DSS)**, the new **AuthentiGuard** coatings utilize covert readable tagging systems, special-effect inks and smart sensor technologies to help brand owners, supply chain personnel and consumers to validate product authenticity with a smartphone.
- Developed to help brand-owners decorate their glass and ceramic packaging with bright and vibrant effects to liven up the shelf presence, the **SunVetro** series of organic UV screen inks significantly expand the color gamut compared to the traditional frit glass bonding process, according to Staveley.

“This allows brand-owners to not only produce standout designs directly decorated on the glass,” he says, “but to do so using real brand colors that meet the current industry regula-

tions regarding heavy metals and VOC (volatile organic compound) content.”

- Addressing sustainability, the **SunSpectro SolvaGreen** flexographic and gravure solvent-based inks—developed for surface-printing of biodegradable films—are formulated with naturally-derived resins and additives, while the **SunVisto AquaGreen** water-based inks are formulated with high levels of biorenewable sourced resins and deliver the required critical performance attributes needed across a range of paper packaging applications.

“Products today must work ever harder to compete for consumers' attention in an increasingly multichannel environment for both promotion and purchase,” sums up Staveley, “and brands only have an average of about six seconds to make an impression.

“That's why Sun Chemical will continue to work closely with brand-owners and their converting partners to provide the right solutions for all their diverse needs.”

The need for this collaborative approach is readily echoed by Dr. Thomas Griebel, North American key account manager for packaging inks at **hubergroup Canada Limited**, Mississauga, Ont.-based subsidiary of German inks giant **hubergroup**.

“We believe that with our vision of working together as a team and following our motto, ‘More than just ink,’ enables printers to delight their CPG customers, while delivering healthy returns to our shareholders,” says Griebel.

“Printing inks and coatings are still the major design component used to attract the consumer attention, with more and more challenging packaging designs requiring new ink properties that allow the combination foil-stamping, optic and haptic impressions from specialty coatings with conventional or UV curing inks.”

Citing hubergroup's long experience working with converters supplying packaging to the food industry, Griebel says the company's expertise in formulation of low-migration inks will serve it well as more stringent food-contact and environmental regulations come into force in North America and around the globe.

“Our low-migration ink solutions help ensure high-

est productivity and safety to our customers and safety at the same time,” says Griebel, noting that it's been 15 years since hubergroup commercialized its flagship **MGA Corona** conventional low-migration offset ink system.

“Based on our significant history in the low-migration field, we have become a trusted partner and advisor to our customers when it comes to safe food packaging,” Griebel says, citing the company's growing product portfolio comprising high-impact ink solutions for offset UV, AQ and UV flexo printing, and solvent-based inks for flexible packaging.

“In my role as product manager for our packaging program, I field questions about chemical migration, food contact, sustainability and regulatory compliance on a daily basis,” says Griebel.

“When it comes to food packaging, all of the aforementioned inks have to be completely safe and not compromise the packaged goods in any way,” Griebel sums up.

“This vision, combined with our dedication to the packaging market, forms the foundation for us to fulfill mission to be the preferred supplier of printing ink solutions in North America.” 🍁



Rod Staveley,
President,
Sun Chemical Canada.



Thomas Griebel,
Key Account Manager,
Packaging Inks,
North America,
hubergroup Canada Ltd.

SUPPLIERS

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TRIP DOWN THE MEMORY LANES

Our readers recall past glories and challenges along the way to industry prominence

With our 70th Anniversary year now drawing to a close, the *Canadian Packaging* magazine recently asked its readers to share some of their own history with us, which they did with commendable enthusiasm.

Here is a sampling of the submissions we have received to date, with those that we have been unable to accommodate this time around to feature in our upcoming December 2017 issue next month.



CCCA (CANADIAN CORRUGATED & CONTAINERBOARD ASSOCIATION)



Celebrating 150 years as a nation, Canadians have a multitude of reasons to be proud of our country—from our diplomatic, business and athletic success on the world stage to our acclaimed entertainment stars and celebrities beloved all over the globe.

Over the years, Canada has also played an important role in the technological advances across many industries—notably the corrugated packaging industry.

As the industry matured during the 1950s, oil ink was the common standard for printing on corrugated, with high graphics archived by skilled operators on printer slotters laying down oil inks on bleached linerboard with utmost precision. Back then, the stock came off the press and was stacked to sit on conveyor lines for at least a full day to dry before the closure operation was completed. Naturally, box plants required massive space to accommodate this process.

This all changed when flexo inks were presented to the industry in the late 1950s—prompting the industry to question if the flexographic water-based inks could ever match the caliber of print achieved with oil-based inks, and whether the customers would accept such a difference in print?

At the time, a progressive company called **Hinde & Dauch** dominated the growing corrugated packaging market with massive new plants in Montreal and Toronto. The late Bill Hurrell was the key manufacturing leader for Hinde & Dauch, while Clifford Pyke was a member of the management team that placed an order for the very first FFG (Flexo Folder-Gluer) machine ever built in North America.

Manufactured by **Langston**, at the time the dominant supplier of equipment to the corrugated packaging industry, the equipment's production and installation were shrouded in mystery and secrecy.

As Pyke recalls, Hurrell made several quite and secretive visits to Langston during the machine development stage, while Langston was happy to

work on a Canadian installation because it would keep the technology from the prying eyes of its competitors.

Around this time, Hinde & Dauch was merged with Montreal-based pulp-and-paper producer **Domtar**, with the Langston FFG finally making its way to Domtar's plant at 450 Evans Avenue in Etobicoke, Ont., just west of Toronto.

This new plant was highly focused on the beer packaging market where traditional oil ink was the standard, with all its aforementioned limitations.

While the new flexo inks offered a one-pass manufacturing process that would be a giant step forward, the beer market initially put up strong resistance to the flexo ink concept, often citing the risk of flexo inks rubbing off on the consumers' clothing.

Undaunted by their resistance, Hurrell and his team pushed forward. After moving the press in 1965 to another plant in Peterborough, Ont., they proceeded to reap the productivity benefits of the one-pass flexo printing process for the corrugated packaging produced for local customer and leading cereal producer **Quaker Oats**.

While there were certainly early challenges to overcome, the project was hugely successful and led the way for the industry, with the equipment remaining operational at the Peterborough plant until 2007.

Dave White, a long-time Peterborough plant employee and production manager when it closed in 2012, helped load the press onto a trailer for delivery to Alain Lemaire, former president of Cascades Canada Inc. in Kingsey Falls, Que., where it remains in storage to this day.



CASCADES INC.



“Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed!” was the motto of the **Cascades Inc.**'s founder and family patriarch Antonio Lemaire.

Before even creating Cascades in 1964 in Kingsey Falls, Que., the Lemaire family was already ahead of its time with a strongly-held belief that reusing, recovering and recycling were practices that could benefit the environment and society.

The story of Cascades is, above all else, the story of a family with deeply human values and a family of action guided by their forward-thinking views of the world.

At the time, the Company's original management style and unique business model was already a topic of study in universities, with the remarkable career paths of Bernard, Laurent and Alain Lemaire wisely recognized and held up as model examples.

The Cascades business model has significantly

evolved over the years. From starting out as primarily a manufacturer of paper and cardboard, the corporation has emerged as the largest collector of recyclable wood fiber in Canada, as well as one of the leading manufacturers of corrugated packaging products, tissue papers and innovative food and industrial packaging solutions in North America.

Nowadays operating as a vertically-integrated company, both upstream and downstream, Cascades ranks as the largest honeycomb paperboard producer in Canada, and the leader paper mill packaging operator in North America.

Forming a continuous loop, it can offer its customers a full range of converted products, as well as on-site pick-up of recyclable materials—using 3.2 million short tons of recycled fibers to make its packaging and tissue products in 2016. With over 50 years of experience in fiber recovery, Cascades is strongly committed to assuming a leadership role in sustainable development—again and again.



CARTIER



Back when it all started in 1980 under the original **Jean Cartier Packaging** banner, Cartier specialized in the distribution of packaging and sanitary products. Despite the rudimentary technological means of the time, the company was quickly recognized for its reliability and logistics performance. Listening to its customers, it quickly diversified its product offerings and services to include to include complete automated packaging lines.

Recognizing the value of the packaging function for its customers, by 2008 Cartier moved well beyond its initial distribution mandate, asserting itself as renowned specialist in packaging solutions.

In 2011, the reins of the company were officially passed to the second generation, with David Cartier becoming the company's president.

Shortly after, Cartier acquired a testing and simulation laboratory to optimize packaging—further affirming its position as a specialist.

In 2015, the company revamped itself with an innovative business model to help customers improve their packaging practices.

Today, Cartier Cartier operates under four complementary fields, including:

- a testing laboratory certified by the **International Safe Transit Association (ISTA)**;
- an automated packaging equipment division;
- an integrated technical services unit;
- and an extensive range of high-performance packaging and industrial products. 🍁

■ The **Society of Plastic Engineers (SPE)** has appointed Stephanie Clark as the Bethel, Conn.-headquartered plastic industry professional organization's new senior director for sales and advertising.



Clark

■ Australian-headquartered case-packing systems group **tna solutions Pty Ltd.** has appointed Steven Wolfe as general manager of the company's **tna North America Inc.** subsidiary in Dallas, Tex.



Wolfe

■ Cambridge, U.K.-headquartered product coding systems manufacturer **Domino Printing Sciences** has appointed Shane Dewar as European director of the company's Digital Printing Solutions division.

■ **DowDuPont Specialty Products Division** of Wilmington, Del., has named three outstanding scientists as the 2017 *Pedersen Award* medalists. Named after DuPont's renowned Nobel Prize Laureate Charles Pedersen, this year's awards recognize the outstanding technical contributions of:

- Paul Fagan of Wilmington, Del., for his technical leadership in the application of chemistry to the development of renewably sourced materials, including the production of sustainable polymers and the conversion of sugars to bio-based products.
- Arthur Ouwehand of Ingå, Finland, for his technical contributions in the fields of microbiome sciences and probiotics for applications such as animal and human nutrition.
- David Rodini of Richmond, Va., for technical expertise in the areas of aramid monomer and polymer production, as well as fiber functionalization and modification.



Fagan



Ouwehand



Rodini

■ Adents, East Windsor, N.J.-based provider of serialization and track-and-trace solutions for the pharmaceutical industries, has appointed Pavel Lotkov as director of product development.



Lotkov

■ St. Louis, Mo.-headquartered rigid plastic and glass packaging group **TricorBraun** has appointed Court Carruthers as the company's new president and chief executive officer, and Steve Grand as packaging consultant at the company's **TricorBraun WinePak** operations in Fairfield, Ca.



Grand

■ **Clysar, LLC**, Clinton, Ia.-based manufacturer of polyolefin shrink films for packaging applications, has appointed Vicki Larson as executive vice-president and general manager; Guangda Shi as vice-president of research-and-development (R&D); and Michael Vopatek as vice-president of operations.



Larson

■ **Tekni-Plex, Inc.**, Wayne, Pa.-headquartered manufacturer of medical packaging materials, compounds and tubing, has Glenn Fish as chief operating officer.

Dec. 5-6

Calgary, Alta.: **Canadian Food & Drink Summit 2017**, conference on the future of Canada's agriculture, food and beverage sectors by The Conference Board of Canada. At TELUS Convention Centre. To register, go to: www.conferenceboard.ca

Dec. 5-7

Accra, Ghana: **Agrofood and Plasprintpack West Africa 2017**. Concurrent exhibitions by Fairtrade GmbH & Co. Both at the Accra International Conference Centre. To register, go to: www.fairtrade-messe.de

Dec. 5-8

Shanghai, China: **Labelexpo Asia 2017**, exhibition and conference by Tarsus Group. At Shanghai New International Expo Centre. To register, go to: www.labelexpo-asia.com

2018

Jan. 17-18

Düsseldorf, Germany: **Future of Polyolefins 2018**, summit by Active Communications Europe Ltd. (ACI) To register, go to: www.wpigroup.com

Jan. 31 – Feb. 1

Atlanta, Ga: **IPPE (International Production & Processing Expo 2018)**, exhibition and conference by U.S. Poultry & Egg Association. At Georgia World congress Center. To register, please go to: www.ippexpo.org

Jan. 31 – Feb. 2

Paris, France: **Aerosol & Dispensing Forum 2018**, Jointly with the PCD Paris cosmetic and beauty packaging show by Easyfairs Oriex. Both at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. To register, go to: www.easyfairs.com

Feb. 5-7

Orlando, Fla.: **The Packaging Conference**, by Plastic Technologies Inc. At Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort – Bonnet Creek. To register, go to: www.thepackagingconference.com

Feb. 6-8

Anaheim, Ca.: **WestPack 2018**, packaging technologies exhibition by UBM. Jointly with Design & Manufacturing Pacific, PLASTEC West, ATX Automation Technology West and MDM West exhibitions. All at Anaheim Convention Center. To register, go to: www.anaheim.am.ubm.com

March 11-13

Boston, Ma.: **Seafood Expo North America 2018**, international seafood industries exhibition by Diversified Communications. At Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. To register, go to: www.seafoodexpo.com

April 4-5

Atlanta, Ga.: **Industrial Pack**, industrial, transit and protective packaging exhibition by Artexis Easyfairs. At the Cobb Galleria Center. To register, go to: www.easyfairs.com

April 16-18

Philadelphia, Pa: **PACK EXPO East**, packaging and processing technologies show by PMMI, The Asso-

ciation for Packaging and Processing Technologies. At Pennsylvania Convention Center. To register, go to: www.packexpoeast.com

April 24-26

Vancouver: **CPMA 2018**, annual convention and trade show of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association. At Vancouver Convention Centre. To register, contact Jennifer Oakley of CPMA at (613) 226-4187, ext. 218; via email joakley@cpma.com, or go to: www.convention.cpma.ca

April 24-27

Shanghai, China: **CHINAPLAS 2018**, international trade fair for the plastics industries by Adsale Exhibition Services Ltd. At the National Exhibition and Convention Center. To register, go to: www.ChinaplasOnline.com

May 7-8

Indianapolis, Ind.: **INFOFLEX 2018**, package printing and converting exhibition by the Flexographic Technical Association. Concurrently with the Forum 2018 conference. To register, go to: www.flexography.org

May 7-10

Orlando, Fla.: **SPE ANTEC (Annual Technical Conference)** by the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE). At the Orange County Convention Center. To register, go to: www.4spe.org

May 29 – June 1

Milan, Italy: **IPACK-IMA 2018**, international processing and packaging technologies exhibition by UCIMA-Italian Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Association. Concurrently with **MeatTech**, **Plast**, **Intralgitica** and **Print4All** (including **Grafitalia**, **Converflex** and **Imprinting**) exhibitions. All at Fiera Milano. To register, go to: www.ipackima.it

June 13-14

Paris, France: **Pack&Gift**, promotional and event packaging trade fair by Idice. At Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. To register, go to: www.packandgift.com

June 19-22

Munich, Germany: **Automatica 2018**, industrial automation and robotics exhibition by Messe München GmbH. At Messe München. To register, go to: www.automatica-munich.com

2020

May 7-13

Düsseldorf, Germany: **interpack 2020**, global trade fair for packaging technologies by Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. At Messe Düsseldorf fairgrounds. Contact Messe Düsseldorf (Canada) at (416) 598-1524 for information on participating as part of the Canadian Pavilion or as individual exhibitor. For more general information and registration, go to: www.interpack.com

June 16-26

Düsseldorf, Germany: **drupa 2020**, global printing industries trade fair by Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. At Messe Düsseldorf fairgrounds. In Canada, contact Messe Düsseldorf (Canada) at (416) 598-1524; or go to: www.mdna.com



TIMELY TIPS FOR SCHOOL-SAFE PACKAGES

With today's parents facing more daily challenges than ever before, packing lunches for their kids to take to school should not be a challenging endeavor. But it is. Gone are the days when all you had to worry about was whether your children would eat what you packed for them: there are now far more complex issues at play. For example, it seems incredible how many children have nut allergy nowadays—enough to prompt schools near and far to completely ban peanut butter and many other products containing nuts. And with all the other food allergies out there becoming better known and understood, a healthy lunch has become as much a dilemma for the parents as it is for teachers, who are now tasked with policing what their students bring to school and educating parents on what constitutes a healthy lunch. Happily, there are some packaging innovations out in the market to help both parents and teachers get through it all without completely losing their minds.



With some schools now going as far as only to allow for litter-less lunches to be brought along, the funky-looking **Yumbox** mini traveling case—manufactured by Delaware-based **Boolaboo, Inc.** in several design configurations—offers a terrific solution. The six-compartment **Yumbox** I picked up is just perfect for toddler and young, picky little grazers that carve variety, with its internal compartments doing a commendable job of keeping all the different food items away from each other, while also accommodating both wet and dry foods. Actually invented by two real-life moms, the lightweight, compact, dishwasher-safe, and both **BPA-** and **phthalates-free** contraption also packs a handy educational value-added component by including the name of each food group in the container's interior compartments—thus helping children to learn about all the different essential food groups early on.

With the ongoing yogurt craze showing no signs of slowing down any time soon, even Canada's leading bookseller **Indigo Books & Music Inc.** is happily jumping onto the fast-rolling bandwagon with its own branded **Chill Yogurt 2 Go** insulated cup. Featuring a separate built-in compartment for toppings and an attached spoon, the **Chill Yogurt 2 Go** container is not only also a perfect 'litter-less lunch' solution for the kids, but with its 12-ounce volume capacity it is also a very adult-friendly grab-and-go contraption requiring a bare minimum of time to prepare the night before.



Speaking of time, I often find myself amazed by the sheer market longevity of the **Black Diamond** brand of **CheeStrings**, which I fondly remember enjoying back in my own school years—peeling off all that stringy deliciousness one layer at a time in clear defiance of the old 'Don't play with your food' adage. While the product's packaging has gone through a multitude of transformations over the years, it's nice to see that the passage of time has not dulled the

brand's sense of fun and joyfulness gloriously captured on the 168-gram pouches of **Black Diamond CheeStrings Ficello** splashed with vibrant colors, cool skateboarding graphics and a well-communicated nutritional message at the top of the pouch. Marketed by brand-owner **Parmalat of Canada** under the cheeky "100% cheese 100% fun" tagline, the eight-piece packs of cheesy awesomeness do just credit to the brand's seemingly timeless appeal.



Produced by **Treasure Mills Inc.** at a certified peanut/nut-free baking facility in Aurora, Ont., the **School Safe** brand of **Banana Chocolate Chip Snack Cakes** retails in a cheerful box containing eight individually-wrapped min-loaves that can be safely stored in a freezer away from the children's wondering eyes, while also prolonging the

product's freshness right up to the moment of consumption. Thawed and ready to eat in five minutes after leaving the freezer, these delicious pieces of wholesome all-natural indulgence are a wonderful treat both for the kids and the moms concerned about their nutritional intake and proper portion control.

To give credit where it's due, kudos to **General Mills** for responding to the peanut-free school requirements by making its **Nature Valley Lunch Box Granola Bars** in a certified peanut-free facility. Containing no artificial colors or flavors, while providing 20 per cent of recommended daily fiber intake, that tasty bars—packed five to a box decked out in soothing earthy colors—leverage the natural deliciousness of chocolate chips to dispense just the right amount of sweetness to make the kids feel like they are enjoying candy, without all the excess sugar that kids and many adults alike could really do without.



Since being launched in the Canadian market in 2012, the **Mott's Fruitsations** pouches have become a hit with parents and a common staple for lunch boxes not subjected to the aforementioned 'litter-less' protocol. Offering a delicious low-calorie way to get your kids to eat their fruits and veggies, the unsweetened, gluten- and peanut-free purees really hit the sweet spot for packaging convenience with their resealable spouted stand-up pouch format, eye-candy graphics and, above all, guilt-free parental peace of mind in regards to sound nutrition and early development of healthy eating habits.

Sarah Harper is a freelance writer and a working mom living in Kingston, Ont.



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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

ADVERTISER	PAGE	ADVERTISER	PAGE
Anritsu Company	11	Plan Automation	6
Atlantic Packaging Products Ltd.	2	Plexpack Corp.	14
Capmatic Ltd.	8, 36	Regal Beloit America, Inc.	7
Cascades Containerboard Packaging	5	Reiser / Robert Reiser & Co.	10
Domino Printing Solutions Inc.	17	Schneider Electric Canada Inc.	9
FlexLink Systems Canada Inc.	24	Sealed Air	25
Fortress Technology Inc.	12	Sun Chemical Limited	13
Harlund Industries Ltd.	9	TC Transcontinental Printing	IFC
Heat and Control	15	Uline Canada Corporation	33
igus® inc.	29	VC999 Packaging	6
Loma Systems	21	Veritiv Canada, Inc.	OBC
Mettler Toledo	IBC	Videojet Canada	1



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