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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ALBERTA FOOD PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION

WINTER
2023-24



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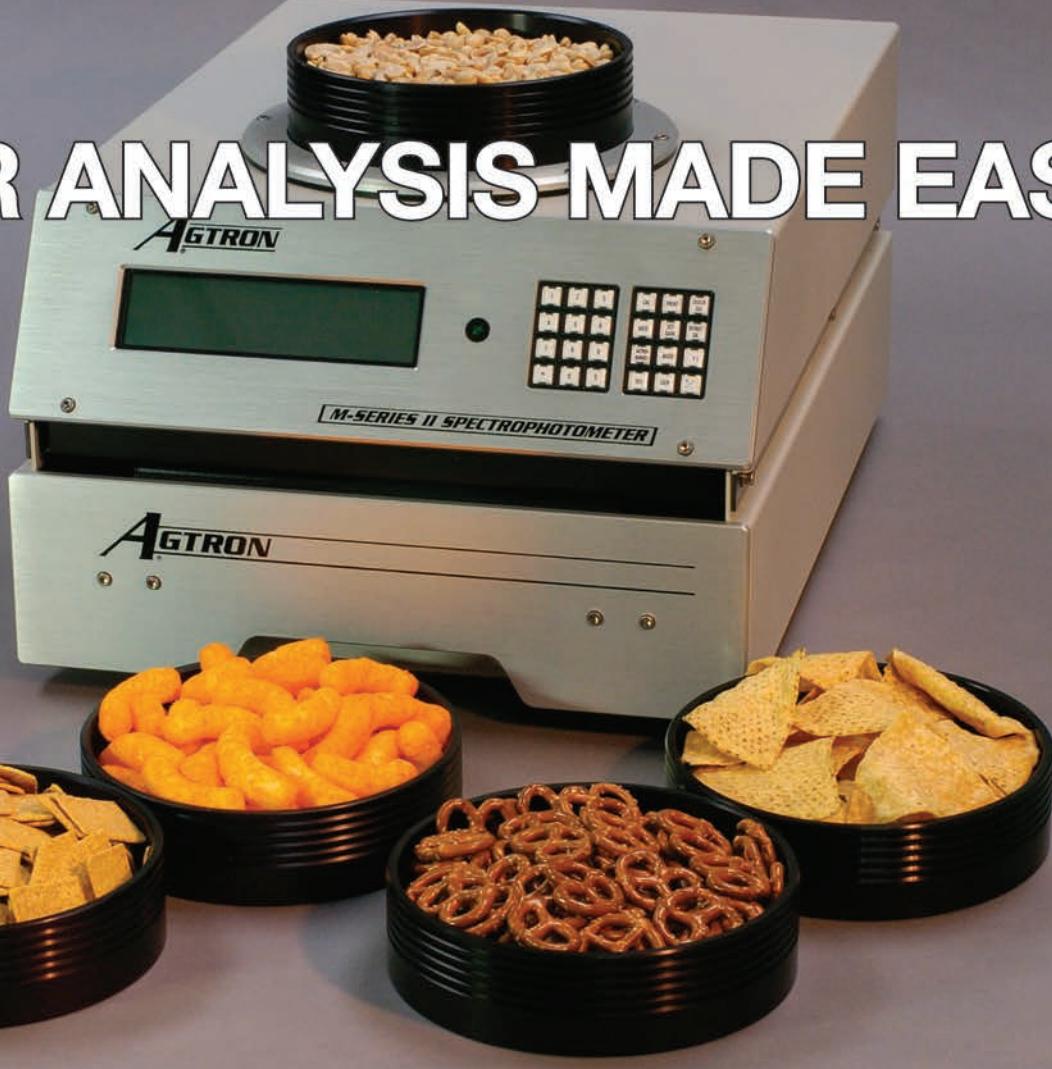


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Eric Haak
AFPA Chair
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HELLO AFPA MEMBERS,

As we celebrate another successful year, it is evident our association has made significant strides in advancing the interests of our members and the food and beverage processing industry here in Alberta. This year, we are excited to celebrate the official launch of our multi-year Made in Alberta program — a collaborative effort with Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation to promote and support locally grown, processed, and produced food and beverage products, all while creating a strong brand identity for food and beverage producers in the province.

Made in Alberta has brought with it a renewed sense of energy and enthusiasm to our association. The program is all about looking forward and shining a positive light on our industry. Since its official launch at our annual general meeting in Calgary in June, our Alberta Food Processing Association (AFPA) team has been attending events and creating billboards, commercials, and ad campaigns to encourage consumers to look for the Made in Alberta label when shopping at local

markets and retailers. With more than 300 Made in Alberta partners already signed up — and more being added every day — our efforts appear to be gaining traction. Be sure to look for the label next time you visit your local grocery store or farmers market.

Despite all the positive work being done, these continue to be challenging times for our industry. The impact of high interest rates and rising costs has had a major impact on consumers and processors alike. Workforce recruitment and retention challenges paired with a significant shortage of skilled labour have hit our industry hard.

As the representative voice of the largest processing industry in our province — representing an economic impact of over \$15 billion annually — AFPA has an important role to play. Whether it's enhancing collaboration within the food processing ecosystem through our new co-packing portal, tackling ongoing labour market challenges through our Labour Market Survey, or bridging the gap between students and employers with our Food Futures Student Placement Program, at AFPA we are always finding ways to support our members and the industry.

The contributions made by AFPA in the areas of food safety and health and safety have been instrumental in safeguarding the reputation of our industry and the well-being of

our members. By providing training, resources, guidance, and advocating for favourable policies, AFPA has demonstrated its commitment to supporting members in maintaining the highest standards of safety and quality. Together, we will continue to prioritize and promote food safety and health and safety excellence within the Alberta food processing sector.

As we look forward to celebrating 50 years as the leading voice of Alberta's food processing industry, AFPA is poised to build on these accomplishments and propel the food processing sector forward. Our focus will remain on promoting sustainable growth, fostering innovation, and advocating for favourable policies that benefit our members. We will continue to invest in initiatives that address industry challenges, support research and development, and ensure our members have access to the resources and expertise needed to thrive in an ever-evolving marketplace. It is through our collective efforts that AFPA has achieved such remarkable success over the past year. As we celebrate our achievements today, let us also remain steadfast in our mission to promote and advance the Alberta food processing industry. Together, we can create a prosperous future for all.



Eric Haak
AFPA Chair
Sunrise Bakery Ltd.



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SUPPORTING ALBERTA'S PRODUCERS:

THE MADE IN ALBERTA PROGRAM



Made in Alberta.

The Made in Alberta program, administered by AFPA and made possible by funding from Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, is a voluntary labelling program dedicated to supporting and promoting local food and beverage producers in the province of Alberta. Its goal is to help shoppers identify local products through an easy-to-recognize Made in Alberta label clearly visible on product packaging.

To qualify as a Made in Alberta partner, unprocessed products such as vegetables, fruits, and eggs must be raised, grown, or sourced in Alberta. Processed food and beverages may use ingredients from outside the province, as long as the final substantial transformation takes place in Alberta.

The program strives to showcase and celebrate the diversity and quality of products made in our province. AFPA's Made in Alberta program plays a crucial role in connecting producers with consumers, retailers, and industry partners, thus contributing to the prosperity and sustainability of Alberta's thriving food and beverage sector.

With hundreds of food and beverage products already listed in our digital Made in Alberta Product Catalogue — and more being added every day — our website, www.madeinalberta.ca, is the go-to source for consumers actively seeking to buy local and support their neighbours.

TASTE THE DIVERSITY: ALBERTA'S CULINARY JOURNEY FROM THE PRAIRIES TO THE PEAKS

As part of Canada's western Prairies, Alberta boasts a food landscape as rich and diverse as the people who call this province home. Here, culinary innovation thrives, and the fusion of cultures and flavours



Vresh Foods is on a mission to educate Canadians on the hidden side of South Asian cuisine.

give rise to a tapestry of tastes that reflects the vibrant diversity of Alberta's population. From the intriguing haskap berry hailing from Eastern Siberia and Japan, to inventive takes on traditional Indian pantry staples and Mediterranean classics, all the way to performance-oriented chocolate crafted to empower athletes on their journey to new heights, Alberta's food scene is a testament to the boundless creativity and culinary ingenuity found in this province. Join us on a delectable journey through Alberta's gastronomic mosaic, where every bite tells a story of diversity, exploration, and the shared love of good food.

PRAIRIE HILL FARMS LTD: THE SUPERFRUIT OF THE PRAIRIES

Prairie Hill Farms Ltd., a food plant manufacturing facility in Picture Butte, Alberta, is on a mission to connect the world with the nutrition and taste of the Prairies — and it all starts with a little-known fruit that packs a big punch: the haskap berry.

Aurora, Indigo Gem, Indigo Treat, and Northern Jewel, names that conjure up images of Alberta's natural beauty, are some of the haskap varieties Prairie Hill Farms processes to create their unique line of barbecue sauces, juices, jams, syrups, and spreads. These unassuming berries belong to the Boreal series of haskap varieties and carry a rich taste and range of health benefits, earning them the title of the "superfruit of the Prairies."

Originating from Eastern Siberia and Japan, these "little presents on the end of branches" were introduced to Alberta by the Vandenberg family in 2013. Recognizing the unique flavour profile and super-packed health benefits of the haskap berry, the Vandenberg orchard, Prairie Hill Fruits, expanded into a fully operational food plant manufacturing facility by 2020.

Prairie Hill Farms recently took full advantage of AFPA's Food Safety Program to complete their Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) training.

"The hands-on training and knowledge gained from that program put our staff years ahead," says Plant Manager Robert Milojevic.

Today, with 17 full-time staff, Prairie Hill Farms is an industry leader in bottling, freeze-dried, and frozen food production. Their products can be found in Safeway, Sobeys, and Co-op stores, as well as in local boutiques and markets across Alberta.

As proud participants in the Made in Alberta program, the team at Prairie Hills Farms has embarked on a journey to introduce this extraordinary berry to the world, aiming to establish it as a global nutritional staple while preserving the genuine prairie flavours in every delectable product they produce.

To learn more about this inspiring Made in Alberta company, visit www.phfhaskap.com.

VRESH FOODS: A FRESH TAKE ON AN INDIAN CLASSIC

In the heart of Alberta, a culinary revolution is underway, and it's all thanks to the innovative spirit and entrepreneurial passion of the team behind Vresh Foods. This remarkable Made in Alberta company is on a mission to educate Canadians on the hidden side of South Asian cuisine. At the core of this culinary experience is ghee, an ancient cooking ingredient often described as "liquid gold." But what exactly is ghee, and why is it gaining so much attention?

Ghee is a type of clarified butter that has been used in Asian and African cooking for over 3,500 years. To make ghee, butter is slowly simmered until the moisture evaporates, leaving behind pure butterfat. The remaining milk solids are then caramelized and strained out, resulting in a golden, nutty, and brown-buttery liquid with a unique flavour profile. The flavour notes are reminiscent of butterscotch, movie theatre popcorn, and even caramel.

One of the most remarkable features of ghee is its incredible shelf life. The absence of moisture prevents spoilage, especially when refrigerated. Moreover, ghee is an excellent



Prairie Hill Farms processes haskap berries to create a unique line of barbecue sauces, juices, jams, syrups, and spreads.

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ALBERTA food processors association



Infused Mediterranean Foods has a lineup that includes traditional hummus and four original, chef-inspired hummus flavours, as well as heat-and-eat authentic falafel.

alternative for individuals with dairy issues, as it contains no lactose, whey, or casein. Unlike regular butter, which can burn easily due to its milk solids, ghee boasts a high smoke point, making it suitable for various cooking methods. Ghee is exceptionally versatile and can be used for general frying, baking, and spreading.

Starting out as a small meal kit delivery service run out of a community kitchen in Calgary during the COVID-19 pandemic, this proudly Made in Alberta company is now sourced, packaged, and sold in major retailers and markets all over the province as well as British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

"The challenge now is to get people to try it," says company co-founder and Chief Ghee Officer, Vreshin Naga. "If you know how to use cooking oil or butter, you know how to use ghee."

In a world where the cost of dairy has skyrocketed and many traditional ghee companies have shuttered their doors, Vresh Foods is thriving. The company has taken a different

approach, focusing on educating consumers and delivering a high-quality product. Through concept selling and continuous education efforts, Vresh's line of contemporary Indian pantry products has grown from modest beginnings to becoming a staple in Canadian kitchens. The journey involves getting people to try it, buy it, and buy it again.

Winner of *Avenue* magazine's Made in Alberta Awards for Best Savoury Food Product and named on their "31 Best Things to Eat and Drink in Calgary" list, Vresh Foods is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit embodied by so many Made in Alberta brands. Their uniquely quirky and fresh spin on traditional Indian pantry products is sure to elevate any cooking experience.

To learn more about this inspiring Made in Alberta company, visit www.vreshfoods.com.

INFUSED MEDITERRANEAN FOODS: A DELICIOUS JOURNEY INSPIRED BY TRADITION

Ruba Alqishawi, a trained Red Seal chef with a background in nutrition and business management from NAIT, is the driving force behind Infused Mediterranean Foods. Since 2017, she's combined her expertise with her passion for Mediterranean cuisine to present a range of products that capture both tradition and modern tastes.

Alqishawi's products are a fusion of authentic flavours from her Palestinian heritage merged with a contemporary Western touch. Central to her brand is a commitment to quality, ensuring ingredients are sourced in Alberta, free from preservatives, oils, sugars, and artificial colours.

Infused Mediterranean Foods is a proud Made in Alberta company known for crafting unforgettable taste experiences by combining fresh ingredients and authentic flavours with a unique twist.

Rooted in traditional family recipes passed down through generations, Alqishawi emphasizes the harmony of flavours, noting the symbiotic relationship with a simple phrase: "Hummus and falafel are a married

"I know every supplier and understand the impact my business has on them."

— Ruba Alqishawi, Infused Mediterranean Foods

couple." Every product is crafted with premium, gluten-free, plant-based ingredients without any additives.

Infused Mediterranean Foods quickly became a favourite at the St. Albert Farmers' Market. When the summer market ended, loyal customers actively sought her products, underscoring their quality and appeal.

Throughout her journey, Alqishawi's mother, Dalal, has been a constant pillar of support, playing a crucial role in the company's growth and operations.

The company's dedication to the local community is evident. Alqishawi prioritizes sourcing ingredients from local farmers and family-owned grocers. Additionally, the packaging is locally designed and printed.

"I know every supplier and understand the impact my business has on them," Alqishawi says.

Beyond her culinary endeavors, Alqishawi has a significant presence in the entrepreneurial community. Since 2020, she's served as a business instructor and mentor at the Anderson Career Training Institute (ACTI) and as a mentor and guest speaker at Action for Healthy Communities. Furthermore, she's an active member of Made in Alberta and AFPA.

Currently, Infused Mediterranean Foods products are available in 20 retailers across Alberta, featuring traditional hummus, four distinct chef-inspired hummus flavours, and ready-to-eat falafel. For a taste that seamlessly combines tradition with innovation, Infused Mediterranean Foods stands out.

Alqishawi's unyielding commitment to innovation continues to introduce Canadians to evolving Mediterranean flavours.

For more about this standout Made in Alberta company, visit www.infusedmediterraneanfoods.ca.

THE RISE OF 7 SUMMITS SNACKS, CANADA'S #1 ENDURANCE CHOCOLATE BAR

In the world of outdoor enthusiasts and thrill-seekers, conquering the Seven Summits challenge — an elite mountaineering feat where climbers aim to conquer the highest peak on each of the seven continents — is the ultimate achievement. But every adventurer knows that success is not only about reaching the summit; it's also about fuelling the body with the right snacks. Enter 7 Summits Snacks, a proudly Made in Alberta brand that has become synonymous with adventure, providing athletes with the energy they need to reach new heights.

Kristyn Carriere's passion for adventure began at the age of 19 when she joined Disney on Ice as a figure skating performer and set off to travel the world. After earning a degree in nutrition and food science from the University of Alberta, she headed to Europe where she worked as a chocolate scientist for globally renowned chocolate brands Cadbury and Godiva.

Back home in 2018, Carriere's sister, Leanna, a personal trainer and tri-athlete, posed a simple yet profound question: can chocolate be a part of an endurance athlete's diet? This question sparked an idea that would soon become the cornerstone of 7 Summits Snacks — creating a nutrition bar that not only tasted delicious but also provided the ideal balance of fats and sugars for athletes.

Carriere, armed with her background in food science, understood the importance of using high-quality, ethically sourced ingredients. 7 Summits Snacks' mission was clear: to craft a high-performance sports nutrition bar that was unlike anything else on the market.

Today, 7 Summits Snacks produces Canada's number one endurance

FUEL YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE



7 Summits Snacks produces endurance chocolate bars made from locally sourced products.

chocolate bar. This Edmonton-run company is proud to create their products locally, sourcing Alberta-made honey and using a co-pack facility in Calgary. Their commitment to quality is unwavering, with real chocolate as a primary ingredient, a stark contrast to other energy bars that rely heavily on cocoa powder. Their dedication to sustainability extends to their eco-friendly packaging, a reflection of their continued passion for the great outdoors and everything their brand stands for.

As 7 Summits Snacks continues to grow, Carriere and her team envision a future where their products are available throughout Canada and around the world. So, next time you plan an outdoor escape, remember to pack a bag of 7 Summits Snacks. You'll be fuelling your body with the energy it needs while supporting a brand that's Made in Alberta.

To learn more about this inspiring Made in Alberta company, visit www.sevensummitssnacks.com.

CELEBRATING LOCAL

Our province's food industry thrives as it embraces the diverse culinary traditions of its people. The Indian-inspired delights of Vresh Foods, the classic taste combinations of Infused Mediterranean Foods, the farm-fresh goodness of Prairie Hill Farms, and the adventure-driven offerings of 7 Summits Snacks are examples of Alberta's food producers' commitment to quality, sustainability, and innovation.

Whether you're a local or a visitor, take a journey through the many tastes and flavours of Alberta. Discover the hidden gems that make Alberta's food scene a true culinary adventure.

Visit www.madeinalberta.ca for these and hundreds of other uniquely local Made in Alberta products. And next time you visit your local farmers market or grocery store, be sure to look for the Made in Alberta label!

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Navigating the Storm:

CONFRONTING LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

Our industry has long been a pillar of Alberta's economy, contributing \$15 billion annually and providing countless jobs across a variety of sectors. Despite our size and impact, Alberta's food and beverage processors face formidable challenges in the current labour market, including shortages of skilled labourers and an aging workforce, low automation levels, recruitment and retention issues, and inherently challenging working conditions.

The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services. As a recipient of a Workforce Partnership grant, AFPA, in partnership with other industry leaders including the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC), has commissioned a labour market assessment for the food and beverage processing industry in Alberta. This comprehensive study, conducted by MNP LLP (MNP), is aimed at addressing employment and diversity concerns within the sector and is currently in its final stages of completion.

The research, initiated in January 2023, seeks to provide a strategic framework for tackling the challenges of workforce recruitment and retention, as well as the shortage of skilled labour. MNP has engaged with a broad cross-section of industry members to gain a comprehensive understanding of the various labour market challenges impacting the industry. In early October 2023, two industry roundtable sessions were held to validate the research findings and to gather feedback on the draft recommendations and strategies.



The findings from this assessment have the potential to inform policies and strategies to address these pressing concerns.

CONCERN TO ADDRESS

Some of the high-level initial findings of this research include:

- Major challenges facing the industry both today and in the future include inflation, workforce recruitment and retention, and the shortage of skilled labour.
- Availability of labour is a significant factor in the labour shortage, and this makes it difficult for businesses to attract and retain workers.
- Recruitment challenges exist particularly among youth and domestic workers while retention issues are reported across all occupation groups.
- Production workers and logistics are where businesses have the highest number of vacancies and where they are struggling the most to fill positions.
- Challenging working conditions, such as long hours, night shifts, and cold plants, and a general lack of

interest in working in the sector have been identified as a factor.

- Most companies have some but not a lot of human resources (HR) capacity or support. A lack of HR capacity is more common among smaller businesses.
- Automation has yet to be widely adopted. Most businesses have automated less than 20% of their manufacturing. The size and scale of operations is a factor in this. Larger companies tend to have higher levels of automation.
- English language skills and digital skills were noted as the skill sets with the largest gaps in terms of need and availability. Educational programming will need to reflect this.
- General labourer positions are the occupation group that is most routinely sought through immigration channels.

The findings of the research will be synthesized into a final report, which will be completed in late 2023.

The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.

Canada Alberta

Elevating Food Safety in Food and Beverage Processing: THE AFPA ADVANTAGE



In the ever-evolving world of food and beverage processing, ensuring the safety and quality of products is not just a priority — it's a necessity. Your commitment to food safety is not only a legal obligation but also a fundamental step in building trust with consumers and ensuring the long-term success of your business.

The Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA) understands the unique challenges facing our members and, for more than five decades, has provided solutions to elevate food safety practices in our industry. With a deep understanding that no two companies are alike, we offer comprehensive training, consulting, and resources to support your food safety efforts.

In today's highly regulated industry, staying up to date with the latest food safety practices is crucial. AFPA's training courses are designed to meet the requirements of various Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) schemes, ensuring that your business is well-prepared to meet industry standards and regulations.

Our food safety training covers essential food safety principles, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), and other critical topics. These programs are designed to equip food and beverage processors with the knowledge and skills needed to maintain the highest standards of safety and quality.



CONSTANT SUPPORT TAILORED TO YOUR COMPANY NEEDS

Whether you are a small producer or a large-scale manufacturer, AFPA's training can be tailored to your specific needs, offering practical insights and real-world solutions.

In partnership with Food Safety Solutions, AFPA offers expert consulting to help businesses develop, implement, and maintain robust food safety management systems. These services are available to AFPA members at discounted rates, making it easier for companies

With a deep understanding that no two companies are alike, we offer comprehensive training, consulting, and resources to support your food safety efforts.

of all sizes to access professional guidance.

Food safety management systems are critical for ensuring the safety and quality of products. AFPA's consulting covers a wide range of areas, including risk assessment, process optimization, compliance with regulations, and crisis management. By working with experts in the field, food and beverage processors can navigate complex regulatory landscapes with confidence and ensure that their products meet the highest safety standards.

FOOD SAFETY TEMPLATES AND MANUALS

For small to medium-sized processors looking to meet the requirements of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR), AFPA offers valuable resources in the form of food safety templates and manuals, at very reasonable rates. These resources serve as practical guides to help businesses establish and maintain robust food safety practices.

By providing access to templates and manuals, AFPA empowers processors to streamline their food safety processes and adhere to regulatory requirements without the need for extensive research and documentation. This support is invaluable for businesses looking to grow and expand their market reach while maintaining the highest level of food safety. Contact info@afpa.com for additional information.

AFPA ON DEMAND

In addition to traditional training, AFPA also offers a digital platform called AFPA On Demand (www.afpaondemand.com). This self-paced learning platform provides a convenient way for food and beverage processors to access a wealth of resources (both food safety and workplace safety related), including

webinars, training modules, and educational materials.

AFPA On Demand is a valuable tool for businesses seeking to enhance their food safety or workplace safety knowledge and skills in a flexible and convenient manner. Whether you're a newcomer to the industry or a seasoned professional,

AFPA On Demand has something to offer, allowing you to stay on top of the latest food safety practices and regulations.

To explore how AFPA can support your food safety or workplace safety journey, get in touch today, and consider checking out AFPA On Demand.



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Alberta's New Occupational Health and Safety Legislation: IMPROVING WORKPLACE SAFETY IN OUR INDUSTRY



In March 31, 2023, Alberta ushered in new Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation, bringing about significant changes and obligations for employers across the province.

Alberta's OHS legislation sets the minimum standards for workplace safety, emphasizing the need for continuous adaptation in the face of evolving industry and working environments. Compliance is now not just good practice but a legislated requirement. Organizations with 20 or more employees must establish a formal 10-element health and safety program, including the formation of a health and safety committee. Those with five to 19 employees must designate a Worker Health and Safety Representative and incorporate hazard assessment, control measures, employee training, emergency response procedures, inspections, investigations, and collaboration with other worksite parties.

AFPA plays a pivotal role in helping companies achieve compliance with these new requirements, with a primary focus on implementing formal health and safety programs and attaining the coveted Certificate of Recognition (COR).

Recent visits from Alberta OHS Peace Officers have led to the issuance of orders and penalties for non-compliance within the industry. Common areas of deficiency include the absence of formal safety programs, inadequate training, and lack of awareness regarding worker rights and OHS responsibilities among managers and supervisors. The importance of Health and Safety Committee Technical Rules and Requirements Training is also underscored, and AFPA provides provincially approved health and safety committee training to meet these needs.

PUTTING THE FOCUS ON FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY SAFETY

In recent years, there has been a heightened focus on safety within the food and beverage industry. AFPA has been collaborating closely with Alberta OHS, Partnerships in Injury Reduction (PIR), and COR to promote a Safer by Design approach to workplace safety. We offer a range of OHS/COR courses and training, making it easy for organizations to meet these industry-specific requirements.

The new OHS legislation underscores the importance of workplace safety, requiring organizations to adapt to and establish formal health and safety programs. Meeting



the province's minimum OHS legislation for workers and supervisors requires a focus on competency. Supervisors are expected to undergo foundational training in hazard assessment and control, incident investigation, and OHS roles and responsibilities. Workers must also receive adequate job and safety training and demonstrate competency in their roles.

As we move forward, it is essential to prioritize workplace safety, recognizing that it is not just a business value but also a legal and ethical responsibility. Alberta's OHS legislation is mandatory and legally binding, making it a primary priority for all food and beverage organizations. It is the law and must be adhered to, alongside any other management systems.

AFPA'S FOOD AND BEVERAGE HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER PROGRAM

AFPA offers the Food and Beverage Health and Safety Officer (FBHSO) designation for individuals committed to workplace safety within the industry. This designation serves as formal recognition of their efforts and dedication. Candidates must fulfil specific requirements, including the completion of six AFPA COR courses, plus required elective courses, and a final exam. To maintain the designation, you must attend professional development, management, or any workplace safety courses over a three-year cycle and pass a refresher course and final exam.

"The FBHSO designation is a commitment to elevating workplace safety in our industry," says Anis Muhammad, Byblos Bakery Health Safety and Project Manager and FBHSP designation holder. "It signifies expertise in legislation, policies, and procedures, ensuring that our workplaces are safe for everyone. Employers have a responsibility to

recognize dangers before they happen because everyone deserves to go home safely to their families."

FARM SAFETY

Did you know AFPA can build you a customized, formal Farm Safety Management System to further assist you with key implementation and required training?

We will create, develop, and help implement your Farm Safety Management System, which includes Farm Safety Policy, AB OHS/Farm and Ranch Legislation Overview, and Basic Requirements as well as Animals and Their Environment, Dust, Dust Control, Horses, Zoonotic Disease, Ammonia and Emissions, Methane/Silo Gases, H2S, Respiratory Protection, Chemicals and Use, Air Quality, Transport of Farm Equipment, Harvest, ATVs, Tractors, Rollovers, Worker Safety, Working Alone, and Hand Signals.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

Employers should consider the impact of their safety efforts on their workplaces, employee health, and safety. Key lessons learned should be shared, and priorities for 2024 established. AFPA stands ready to assist with safety training and development needs to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

New Alberta OHS legislation became effective on March 31, 2023. You must have at minimum one hard copy available to all workers at all times. Official AB OHS Handbooks are available at www.alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer.

WORKERS' THREE BASIC OHS RIGHTS

Alberta's OHS legislation is founded on the Internal Responsibility System, emphasizing shared responsibility among all levels of management, supervisors, workers, and other stakeholders. The philosophy is that everyone in the workplace has a duty to maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Alberta's OHS legislation guarantees workers three fundamental rights:

- 1. Right to Know:** Workers have the right to be informed about workplace hazards, control measures, emergency response plans, inspection results, investigations, and training.
- 2. Right to Participate:** Workers can actively engage in health and safety activities, including expressing concerns, attending meetings, participating in inspections and investigations, and serving on health and safety committees.
- 3. Right to Refuse Dangerous Work:** Workers can refuse to perform tasks they consider unsafe. Employers are encouraged to display a poster outlining these rights in their workplaces to ensure employee awareness and training.



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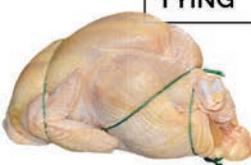


MEAT STRING

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Connecting Alberta's Food Industry: Introducing AB Food Connect

In the dynamic landscape of the food industry, collaboration is key. Time and time again, AFPA has heard from small processors that one of their biggest challenges is finding a local, reliable co-packer to support their needs. Enter AB Food Connect, AFPA's online industry resource dedicated to connecting food and beverage producers with co-packing partners throughout the province of Alberta.

Funded by Prairies Economic Development Canada and by contributions from ATB, BDC, FCC, and MNP, AB Food Connect is a database for small Alberta processors to find an Alberta co-packer, re-packer, or processor with excess capacity or available commercial and commissary kitchen space. Whether you're an established co-packer or a brand in search of co-packing solutions, we can help you get connected.

It's easy to get started. Simply visit www.abfoodconnect.com and

click *Register* to get started. For co-packers, the registration process involves creating a profile that highlights your expertise and the services you offer. This is your digital storefront where you can list certifications and credentials seekers may be looking for when selecting a facility.

Seekers, your journey begins by creating a profile that outlines your co-packing needs. Specify your requirements, from production volumes to packaging preferences. By using AB Food Connect's advanced search function, you will be matched with co-packers who align with your specific criteria.

In a few simple steps, AB Food Connect transforms the co-packing experience, making it efficient, transparent, and tailored to your unique needs. Embrace the future of food industry collaboration with AB Food Connect.



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Investing in the Future of Food

AFPA has received funding from the Government of Alberta through the Work-Integrated Learning Industry Voucher Program to support the food and beverage industry. AFPA's Food Futures program provides wage subsidies of 50% (with a maximum subsidy \$5,000 per placement) to employers to hire current post-secondary students and recent grads

(up to 12 months) for temporary work experience placements (minimum 200 hours), which can take place at any time during the year. Placements can be in any area relevant to the industry, including nutrition and food science, marketing, agriculture, technologists, accounting and finance, human resources, IT, logistics, safety, engineering, business, and web development. This flexibility ensures that employers from diverse backgrounds



can participate and benefit from the program.

"When I get asked 'How do you have so much staff now?' I tell them

"Food Futures is one of the most straightforward grants I have come across. It has made a huge impact on my business." — Vreshin Naga, Vresh Foods

it's because of AFPA's Food Futures grant," says Vresh Foods co-founder Vreshin Naga. "Food Futures is one of the most straightforward grants I have come across. I couldn't be more excited for a program like this. It has made a huge impact on my business."

Participation in Food Futures is a streamlined process, with four straightforward steps. Employers can start by applying through the program's website (www.foodfutures.ca) followed by submitting placement details, matching with a suitable student candidate, and, finally, receiving reimbursement after the placement's completion. Detailed eligibility guidelines are available on the program's website.

By investing in Food Futures, employers in Alberta can secure a brighter future for the food and beverage processing industry, while students and recent graduates gain valuable real-world experience. This innovative program fosters a win-win scenario, supporting the growth and sustainability of the food industry in Alberta.



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Building Industry Bonds

In an industry as diverse as Alberta's food and beverage production, the importance of collaboration and shared goals cannot be overstated.

As AFPA continues to honour its history of collaboration with members like the Alberta Pork Producers and extends a warm welcome to associates like the Alberta Craft Distillers Association (ACDA), it reaffirms its commitment to building an industry in Alberta that thrives on unity and collective effort. By celebrating the strength of its bonds and embracing fresh collaborations, AFPA is moving toward a sustainable, innovative, and prosperous future for Alberta's food and beverage producers.

AFPA is delighted for readers to get to know Alberta Pork and the ACDA.



ALBERTA PORK

While AFPA values the contributions of all its members, it's worth noting that partnerships and a shared vision are what make effective industry advocacy possible. AFPA's enduring partnership with Alberta Pork is a prime example of how cooperation benefits the province's food and beverage ecosystem. This relationship highlights the value of working together and providing mutual support, essential in an industry as dynamic and diverse as agriculture.

"Alberta Pork has consistently shown their commitment to collaborating closely with AFPA, helping us advocate effectively for the interests of food producers across the province," says Eric Haak, Board Chair of AFPA. "We are proud of the level of



Bryce Parsons of the Alberta Craft Distillers Association says an AFPA membership has given the company a broader reach within the Canadian food and beverage scene.

support and collaboration they have fostered within our association."

"Alberta's pork producers and processors are integral to the agri-food industry, together contributing \$1.6 billion annually to the provincial economy and providing nearly 20,000 jobs," said Darcy Fitzgerald, Executive Director of Alberta Pork. "Collaboration across the value chain makes it possible, thanks to the many hard-working people on farms and in processing facilities across the province."

To learn more about Alberta Pork, visit www.albertapork.com.



ALBERTA CRAFT DISTILLERS ASSOCIATION

As AFPA continues to promote collaboration within the industry, it looks forward to the potential that new members bring. One

such addition is the ACDA, recently welcomed by AFPA as an associate member.

The ACDA consists of Alberta's small distilleries and their representatives. Representing 33 craft distillers and one associate member, ACDA believes that Alberta possesses the essential elements for a globally competitive distilling industry, including quality grains, pristine water, and, notably, the entrepreneurial spirit of its people. The association's objective is to provide a unified industry voice across all stakeholder groups, aiming to bring their vision to fruition.

ACDA relies on the input and support of distilleries within the province and is dedicated to maintaining continuous communication and advocating on behalf of its members to government and regulatory bodies. They are committed to creating the optimal market conditions in Canada to ensure that the craft distilling industry continues to expand and thrive.

ACDA's inclusion in AFPA underscores the association's commitment

to connecting different food and beverage producers. ACDA's focus on local ingredients and artisanal craftsmanship aligns with AFPA's goal of promoting Alberta's culinary excellence.

"Being part of AFPA gives ACDA a stronger voice and a broader reach within the Canadian food and beverage scene," says Bryce Parsons, Board Chair of ACDA. "We see tremendous value in collaborating with other industry players to strengthen our impact."

ACDA is particularly pleased to be part of the Made in Alberta program, which focuses on supporting local producers.

"The Made in Alberta program aligns perfectly with our mission to champion local, craft distilleries and celebrate the spirit of Alberta," says Parsons. "We're excited to contribute to this initiative and support our fellow local producers."

To learn more about the ACDA, visit www.albertacraftdistillers.com.

"We see tremendous value in collaborating with other industry players to strengthen our impact."

— Bryce Parsons, Alberta Craft Distillers Association

A FUTURE BUILT ON COOPERATION

AFPA's commitment to supporting local producers through initiatives like the Made in Alberta program is unwavering. By promoting local brands and products, they not only boost the local economy but also celebrate the rich diversity of Alberta's culinary scene.

In this spirit of unity and shared vision, AFPA looks ahead with optimism. The association is dedicated

to fostering a unified voice with our fellow associate members.

By harnessing the collective strength of our members, AFPA is poised to lead Alberta's food and beverage industry toward a future that is economically prosperous, environmentally responsible, and deeply rooted in supporting local producers. Together, we are shaping a sustainable and vibrant future for the province's food and beverage industry.



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Last Spike Brewery: SUPPORTING THE CRAFT BREWING INDUSTRY



Last Spike Brewery supports over 40 individual contract clients, offering seasonal and all-year-round support.

In the heart of Calgary, Last Spike Brewery stands as a testament to Canadian craftsmanship and a pillar of innovation for brewers seeking to reach new heights in the industry. With two fully automated brewhouses, a full-service quality control laboratory, and a dedicated team with decades of experience, Last Spike is not just a brewery — it's a destination for innovation and collaboration in the rapidly expanding Alberta craft-brewing scene.

A NAME ROOTED IN HISTORY

The name Last Spike holds a deep significance, paying homage to a pivotal moment in Canadian history. In 1885, the "last spike" was driven into the Canadian Pacific Railway at

Craigellachie, British Columbia, just 500 kilometres from the brewery. This historic event marked the completion of a transcontinental railway that connected our vast nation, from sea to sea. It symbolizes the Canadian spirit of ingenuity, resilience, and the determination to pursue bold ideas.

It also reflects the life journey of Last Spike's sole owner, Paul Tompkins. Born in Calgary, Alberta, he has lived all over Canada through his personal and professional life. Establishing Last Spike Brewery in Alberta is a tribute to the province that sent him on his way.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Last Spike was born from the idea of connecting the finest brewers Western Canada has to offer,

providing a base of operations to support their contract brewing and blending volume requirements as and when required. With close to 100 years of collective brewing knowledge, Last Spike's dedicated team is on a relentless quest for excellence. They're not just committed to meeting their clients' high-quality expectations — they aim to surpass them.

Quality brewing requires the best tools, and Last Spike is well-equipped with high-tech brewing and packaging equipment that can provide a capacity of close to 200,000 hectolitres of brewing and blending volumes per calendar year. In a facility covering 69,000 square feet, Last Spike Brewery supports over 40 individual contract clients, offering seasonal and all-year-round support.

THE SCIENCE OF BREWING

With an increasingly knowledgeable consumer base and constant innovation in brewing sciences, quality control has become a critical factor for success. Last Spike's full-scale lab is where good beer becomes great. Through rigorous research and applied sciences, the lab ensures the control of raw materials, yeast identification, bacteria targeting, fermentation principles, and aging processes.

PROUDLY MADE IN ALBERTA: BRONC LAGER

In addition to creating exceptional beer to support the craft brewing industry via contract brewing, Last Spike also shares beer directly with the community. They proudly present Bronc Beer, "a Great Buck'n Beer." Bronc Beer is an easy-drinking, affordable beer brand brewed in the West, for the West. With their flagship lager comes their Light Lager, Copper Ale, Wheat Ale, and soon-to-launch Session IPA. They are beers for any time, any place, and anyone. It's a no-fuss, great-tasting beer that embodies the spirit of Alberta.

Last Spike Brewery is a proud partner of AFPA's Made in Alberta program. Where possible, ingredients are sourced locally from Alberta farmers and suppliers. Though not everything is possible to source in Alberta, the

team focuses on supporting local to the best of their ability.

THE AFPA ADVANTAGE

Emma Maddison, Last Spike General Manager, says the company's AFPA membership has proven to be a game-changer for Last Spike Brewery.

"AFPA is a membership that is never re-considered. The value this association and its team bring to the table cannot be overstated," Maddison says. "Having a centralized hub like AFPA lets you know that you are not alone and there are other local businesses experiencing the same challenges as you."

AFPA is a constant source of information on programs and initiatives that you may not know were out there. The association's dedicated team is happy to assist you and is made of real people you can talk to and have a laugh with. They care about their province, they care about the businesses they serve, and they care about you!

Last Spike has been keen to get involved in various AFPA programs, including Made in Alberta, Food Futures, training courses, and AB Food Connect, the new co-packing portal.

"AB Food Connect is a platform to highlight Last Spike's services not just at the provincial level but also nationwide," Maddison says. "This is



Last Spike Brewery is well-equipped with equipment that can provide a capacity of close to 200,000 hectolitres of brewing and blending volumes per calendar year.

an exciting initiative that has potential to be a real game changer for all the companies involved."

The connections, opportunities, support, and resources provided by AFPA prove that membership is a worthwhile investment for any business in the food and beverage industry in Alberta.



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AFPA AT 50



This year marks AFPA's 50th anniversary as the representative voice of Alberta's food and beverage processing industry. To mark the occasion, we have a number of special events and announcements planned. You won't want to miss it!

Stay in the know by visiting www.afpa.com, subscribing to our newsletter, and following us online

(X: @AFPA_FOOD, Facebook: @AFPAFOOD, Instagram: @abfoodprocessors).

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