

# grocery

BI S

CANADA 

March /  
April 2021  
Vol 11 | No 2  
\$9.95

FORTINOS

60  
YEARS

VINCE  
SCORNIAENCHI  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

+ OUTSTANDING  
WOMEN IN PRODUCE



## Accelerating Your Growth

\*Total Categories

**Total GMCC +2.7pts**

As at-home consumption increases, we are well positioned to lead your growth with our broad based portfolio.

\*Categories in which we compete - Nielsen National incl NFLD GB+MM+DR, \$Vol%Chg, 52wks to Jan 30, 2021

## Increasing Capacity

**+12-15%**  
on high demand  
platforms

General Mills made significant investments to bolster our North American network capacity, to ensure your shelves are full of food Canadians love.

## Unleashing our Capabilities

- New holistic Category Growth Stories focused on accelerating your post-covid performance.
- Multi-million-dollar investment in differential data, analytics and loyalty solutions to unlock growth.
- A renewed focus on bringing value and joy to consumers, even in times of uncertainty,





# the World Loves

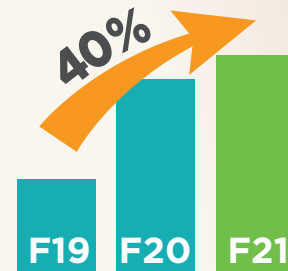
## Engage to Accelerate Future Growth



### Boldly Building Brands



Accelerating media investment to drive trips and build baskets.



**71**  
NEW PRODUCTS  
LAUNCHED  
across  
11 Categories!

### A Force for Good



**\$92 million**

to support charitable causes in 2020\*.

\*Fiscal year ending May 2020



- Proudly joined the Canada Plastics Pact\*, and are on our way to achieving our sustainability target to design **100%** of our packaging to be recyclable or reusable **by 2030**.  
\* [www.plasticspact.ca](http://www.plasticspact.ca)

- Joined the groundbreaking "**10x20x30**"\*\* initiative to root out food loss and waste from the supply chain.  
\* <https://champions123.org>

“As I reflect on 2020, I'm proud of the way we've partnered with you - our retail customers - to deliver the food Canadians need. Even throughout this challenging time, General Mills took actions that will not only sustain, but accelerate our shared future performance. Looking ahead, you will see our continued focus on boldly building our brands, unleashing our capabilities and continuing to be a Force for Good in everything we do.”

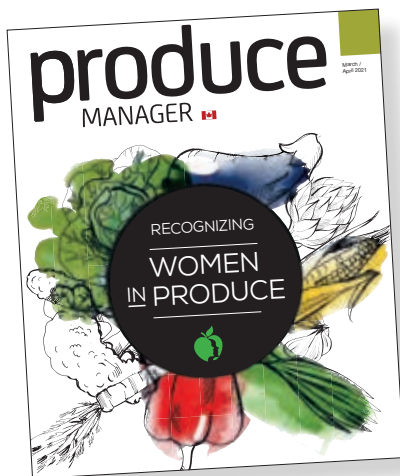
**Vince Mendes de Franca**  
Vice President of Sales at General Mills





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One of Fortinos' Burlington, Ont. stores



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## **FORTINOS**

Keeping it Fresh for

**6** Years

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Keeping It Fresh For 60 Years



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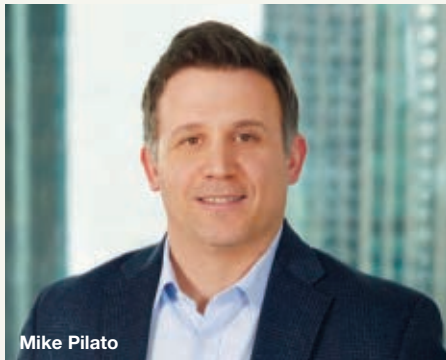
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**2020**  
**SPECIAL REPORT**  
**ON USA FOOD**  
**AND BEVERAGES**



# Transitions



Mike Pilato



Mark Hornick

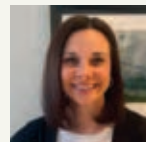
**Mike Pilato** has been named president and CEO of Jamieson Wellness, effective June 1, 2021. He will replace **Mark Hornick**, who retires on that date. Pilato joined Jamieson Wellness in 2018 as president of the company's Specialty Brands division and was promoted to president of Jamieson Canada in February 2020. He has held multiple leadership roles in the CPG industry.



**Jon Janower**, chief operating officer at Choices Markets, assumes responsibility for management of Choices Markets following the announcement of the retirement of CEO Ishkander Ahmed.



**Brian Clayton** and **Tanya Willer** join Kimberly-Clark as



senior marketing and sales strategy directors.



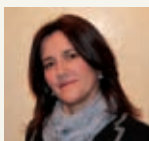
**Patrick Good** joins KFI Canada as the director of marketing.

UNFI Canada promotes **Andrea Parete** to director of sales for Loblaw and Shoppers



Andrea Parete

Drug Mart; **Deborah Viti** is the new director of field sales;



Deborah Viti

**Melinda Zoccoli** is now vice president supplier



Melinda Zoccoli

services and marketing.

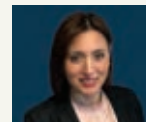
Lagoon Seafood hires three new representatives for Quebec: **Erick Charpentier**, account manager, **Nadia Lalonde** and **Carine Hage** as sales reps.



Erick Charpentier



Nadia Lalonde



Carine Hage



**Sabrina Zollo** joins Lactalis Canada as vice president of marketing for cheese and tablespreads.

**Sarah McMaster-Sutton**

is the new corporate communications manager for Lactalis Canada.



**Neil Green** is the new national sales manager at Vega, a Danone company.

**Dan Casson** is appointed vice president of sales for Baby Gourmet Foods.



**Mark Cecchetto** is president, business executive officer, confectionery, for Nestlé Canada.

**Lisa Beausoleil** is the business executive officer for Foods Canada.



Crossmark Canada's **Melissa Martin** and **Mike Bannerman** are now senior

director of client services for headquarter and retail, respectively.







Maurizio Patarnello



Nicholas Reichenbach

Former Nestlé veteran **Maurizio Patarnello** is the new CEO of Flow Water Inc. He succeeds founder **Nicholas Reichenbach**, who takes on the role of executive chairman. Patarnello has more than 27 years of experience and most recently served as CEO and chairman of Nestlé Waters.



Former Sobeys executive vice president **Lyne Castonguay** joins

Saputo U.S.

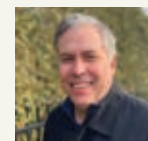
**Rick Wiley** is promoted to head of commercial operations for Maybourn Canada.



**Fabien Brault**, who was the U.S. national sales manager at GURU Organic Energy

Beverages, has joined Well Told as director of sales. **Geoff St. Clair** has been named director of finance.

**Dale Gelinas** is now vice president of strategy and planning at Traditional Medicinals.



**Jason Dubroy** is the new senior vice president, commerce and experience, at Mosaic.

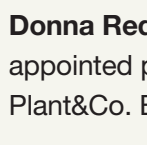
**Scott Lomas** is promoted to senior regional sales and merchandising manager at Brand Momentum.



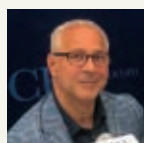
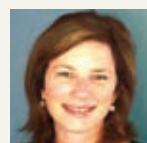
Former Walmart Canada marketing vice president **Tammy Sadinsky** joins CIBC as senior vice president of brand and marketing.



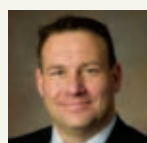
**Colin Ivey** is the new vice president category and shopper development for Irving Consumer Products North America.



**Donna Reddy** is appointed president of Plant&Co. Brands.

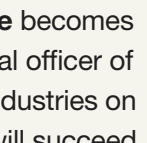


Former Loblaw and Shoppers Drug Mart executive **Joe Magnacca** joins the board of directors of Next Frontier Brands, an international conglomerate of FMCG.



**Éric Gemme** becomes chief financial officer of Lassonde Industries on April 1. He will succeed **Guy Blanchette**, current executive vice president and chief financial officer, who retires in March.

Éric Gemme



**Rod Kirwan** is Lantic Inc.'s new vice president of sales and marketing.



**Eric Demetriou** joins Advantage Solutions as sales director.





Unilever

# Introducing Unilever's latest innovations







## Empire to acquire majority stake in Longo's

Empire Company Limited plans to acquire 51 per cent of Longo's and Grocery Gateway for \$357 million based on an enterprise value of \$700 million.

In addition to taking a majority stake in the company, the agreement includes options that could see Empire eventually take full control of the business. Longo's will continue to be led by president and CEO Anthony Longo and his executive team. The transaction will expand Empire's e-commerce offerings and for now Empire says Voilà and Grocery Gateway will focus on operating independently to capture market share, with Empire stating it's committed to growing Grocery Gateway.

"Longo's has built one of the most successful and sought-after brands in the GTA and Southwestern Ontario," says Michael Medline, Empire's president and CEO. "Longo's is a crown jewel of grocery and as a values-driven company, Longo's culture aligns closely with Empire."

Longo says the partnership supports the grocery chain's "next chapter of growth" adding that "the more we learned about Empire, the clearer it became that this was the right team to partner with. We will continue to offer the same high-quality service and fresh products, exceptional private label offering and the convenience of e-commerce that our guests have come to know and love."

**grocery**  
BUSINESS

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@grocerybusiness



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## Tony Morello, Jim Delsnyder to head new plant-based food business in Canada

Well-known industry veterans Tony Morello and Jim Delsnyder have been named CEO and COO, respectively, of Zoglos Incredible Food Corp. The stand-alone corporation will be managed in Canada on a global scale.

Zoglos, which has been producing kosher and plant-based foods for 25 years, has big plans to expand in North America.

As part of the Zoglos expansion plan, B.C.-based equity investment firm Eat Beyond Global Holdings has invested in the company. Zoglos said in a statement that it has plans to become publicly traded via reverse takeover in the coming months.

“The confidence that Eat Beyond has shown in Zoglos will only help expedite the innovation pipeline that exists in our newest technology and help bring those innovations to Canada,” says Morello.

“Opening up to the mainstream market means making plant-based food choices available for all Canadians regardless of your budget.”



Tony Morello



Jim Delsnyder

### IN MEMORIAM



### VINCENT MENDES DE FRANCA

Longtime Colgate executive Vincent Mendes de Franca served as president of Colgate-Palmolive Canada from 1981 to 1993.

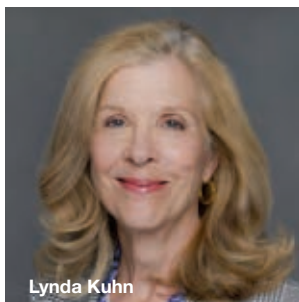
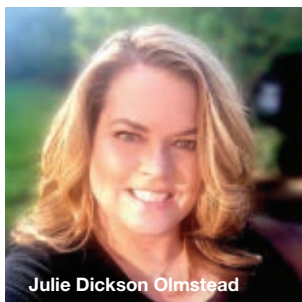
He spent most of his career with Colgate, beginning in the 1960s in his native Guyana. Over the course of 20 years, he assumed increasingly senior positions with the company in different countries, including Trinidad, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Brazil, until he relocated to Canada to assume the role of president of the Canadian business. He passed away in Unionville, Ont. on January 5, 2021. He was 83 years old.

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## Grocery industry members appointed to government food policy council

Several members of the grocery industry have been named to the federal government's Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council.

**Julie Dickson Olmstead**, managing director of public affairs and corporate social responsibility for Save-On-Foods, **Larry McIntosh**, president and CEO of Peak of

the Market, and **Lynda Kuhn**, senior vice president, Maple Leaf Foods and chair of the Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security, join 20 other Canadians representing different facets of the food chain who will advise the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food on current and emerging issues to help address food system challenges and opportunities.

International  
Food Fair



# TUTTOFOOD MILANO

fieramilano 22-26 October 2021

## Adding value to taste

#BetterTogether

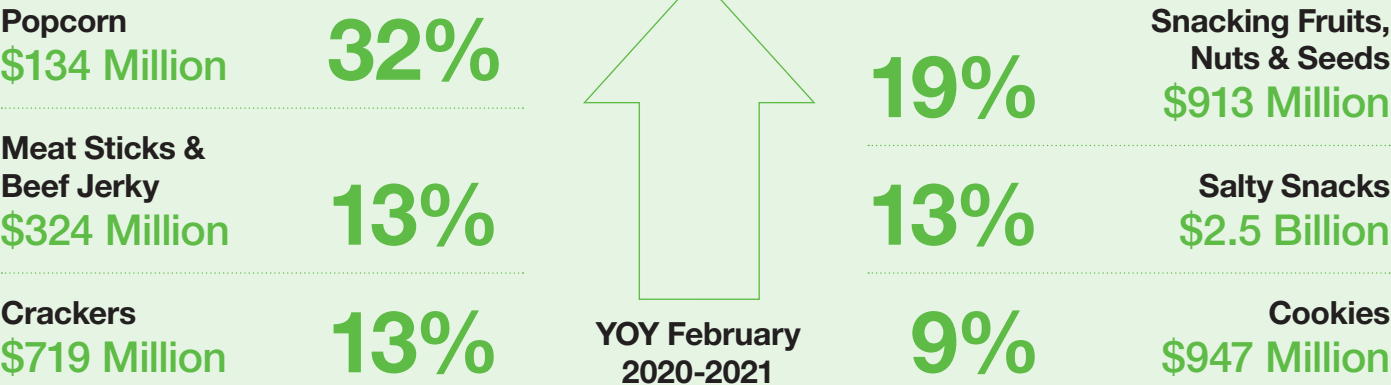
TUTTOFOOD MILANO +  Milano

ITA  
ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY





# CATEGORY INTEL SNACK TIME



Sales growth for the 52-week period ending Feb 6, 2021



You're behind Canadian food  
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## 3 GENERATIONS - PROUDLY CANADIAN OWNED



**SPONSORED BY:**  
**NATURE'S PATH**  
**ORGANIC**

## THE RISE OF READY-TO-EAT

In 2020 we saw a trend shift in the behaviour of our target demographic, with a surge in the number of people eating breakfast—and most meals, for that matter—at home<sup>(2)</sup>. With that came an increased interest in self-care and a focus on shopping for, and preparing, healthy and convenient meals made using organic ingredients.

Organic and Non-GMO are two of the most commonly used breakfast cereal claims over the last 5 years<sup>(3)</sup> in Canada and continue to grow!

**+20%**



**+30%**



## NATURAL & ORGANIC READY TO EAT CEREAL CATEGORY<sup>(1)</sup>

**7X**

**MORE GROWTH VYA**  
(TL FOOD IN CANADA SAW  
3.5X MORE GROWTH VYA)

**1/3**

**OF GROWTH THIS  
YEAR IS FROM  
NATURE'S PATH**

**2020**

**614**

**1,142**

**2019**

**207**

**52**

■ Rest of Category Unit Change (000'S)

■ Nature's Path Unit Change (000'S)

## ROLE OF VALUE IN NATURAL & ORGANIC CEREAL

One of the key shifts in shopping habits this year has been the focus on value. Fewer trips to the grocery store and larger shopping baskets mean even the Natural & Organic shopper is seeking a good deal.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The grocery landscape in Canada has changed. To win on both wellness and value, look to Nature's Path Ecopac to deliver on category growth.

**UNIT SHARE  
OF CATEGORY**

**17%**

**CONTRIBUTION  
TO GROWTH**

**38%**

**INDEX ON  
GROWTH**

**226**

**OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS,**  
Nature's Path Ecopac (600-999GM) items  
have been driving growth in the **ADULT &  
FAMILY BREAKFAST CEREAL CATEGORY**<sup>(4)</sup>.







**NOT JUST A BREAKFAST COMPANY**

# #1 ORGANIC TORTILLA CHIP BRAND IN CANADA

**QUE PASA SALTED IS THE #1 SELLING ORGANIC TORTILLA CHIP IN CANADA(6)**

**"LOW/NO/REDUCED CARB" IS #3 FASTEST GROWING CLAIM ON FOOD PRODUCTS IN CANADA OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS +250%(7)**

**NEW!**



## EMERGING SUBCATEGORY: ORGANIC GRANOLA

**48%**

**NATURE'S PATH GRANOLA**

**52%**

**A/O GRANOLA**



**9/10**

**BEST SELLING ORGANIC GRANOLA ITEMS ARE FROM NATURE'S PATH IN CANADA**

**OUR GRANOLA REPRESENTS**

**29%**

**OF TOTAL UNIT GROWTH**

**ALL ORGANIC GRANOLA**

**+1MM**

**UNITS IN SALES**

**POUCHED GRANOLA**

**33%**

**INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR(5)**



References: 1. Nielsen MarketTrack TL RTE NHO Cereal L52W National GDM Incl. NFLD 2. Nielsen COVID-19 Report Wave 2 3. Mintel Q4 2020 Breakfast Cereal Claims vs. Date of Publication Report 4. Nielsen MarketTrack TL RTE NHO Cereal L52W National GDM Incl. NFLD 5. Nielsen MarketTrack TL RTE NHO Cereal L52W National GDM Incl. NFLD 6. Nielsen Strategic Planner L52W 7. Mintel Q4 2020 Food Category Claims vs. Date of Publication Report

# Grocery Foundation's "Laugh for Kids" raises \$2M+

The Grocery Foundation's virtual fundraiser, Laugh for Kids, raised more than \$2 million for hungry school children.

More than 6,000 people attended the first virtual event, held January 30, to watch a comedy show with special appearances by several well-known people, including Pinball Clemons, Max Kerman of the Arkells and comedian Shaun Majumder. Canadian game show host, actor and comedian Gerry Dee and CTV Television morning show personality Anne-Marie Mediwake hosted the evening event.

A record number of sponsors, 55, supported the event and included "knock-knock" submissions from celebrities and

industry leaders such as Sobeys' Michael Medline, Longo's Anthony Longo, Metro's Eric La Flèche and Serge Boulanger, and Save-On-Foods' Darrell Jones and Jamie Nelson.

"This year's gala was another example of just how innovative and giving members of this industry are," says Shaun McKenna, executive director of The Grocery Foundation. "We're indebted to so many partners who helped us continue its legacy and to this year's Gala Planning Committee who were vital to the evening's success."

McKenna also credits the 2021 planning committee: Niluka Kottegoda, Mike Thomson, Pat Pessotto, Dan Hansen, Carla Costa, Iven Zanardo, Marie-Eve Royer, Carmela Serebryany, Margaret Hudson, Tom Shurrie, Tom Gunter, Maria Legare, William Yu, Aidan Cosgrave, and Jenny Yuen.

### 2021 WUSATA® trade events - sign up today!

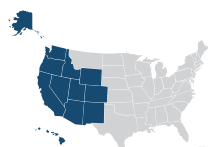
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- August  
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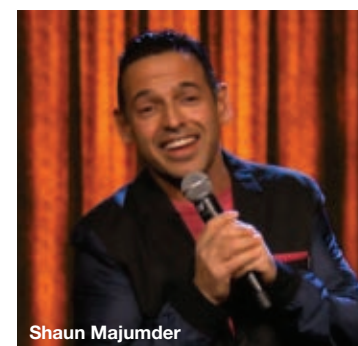
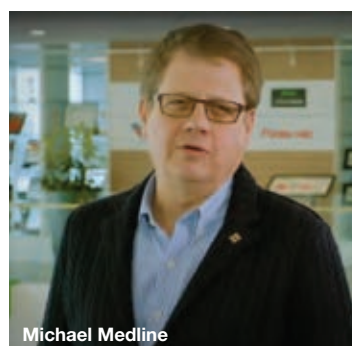
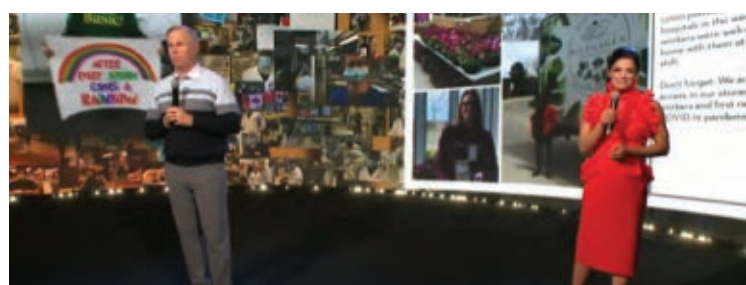
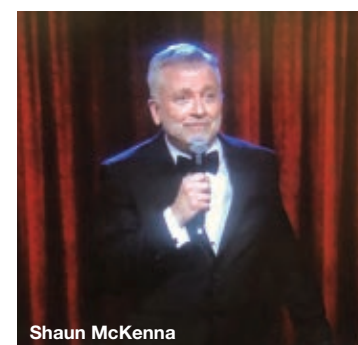
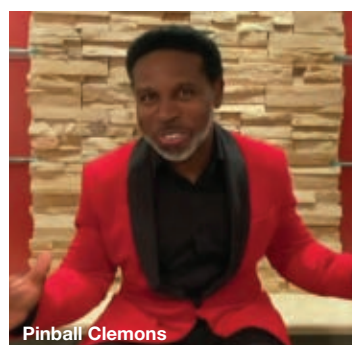
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food & drink



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# Food & Allied Golf donates despite golf cancellation

The Food & Allied Golf Tournament 2021 has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the second year in a row.

Despite not holding the tournament, the organizing committee has continued its support of the Grocery Foundation with a \$5,000 donation. An identical donation will be made to Feed Ontario – formerly the Ontario Association of Food Banks.

“We are extremely grateful for this generous donation and will ensure that 100 per cent finds its way to student nutrition programs at a time when, due to the pandemic, hungry children need support now more than ever,” says Shaun McKenna, executive director of The Grocery Foundation.

Next year’s tournament will be held on Friday, June 3, 2022.



## STORE OPENINGS: A RECAP

**Save-On-Foods** opened two stores: a 36,000 sq ft store in Chiliwack, B.C. in March 2021 and a 25,000 sq ft store in Kimberly, B.C. in February 2021. In November 2020, it also opened its 14th location in Calgary, Alta. The chain now operates 182 locations in Western Canada.

**Farm Boy** opened its 35th and 36th stores in January 2021. The 35th store opened in Waterloo, Ont. while the 36th marked the banner’s third Toronto store.

**Red River Co-op** opened a new food store in Winnipeg in February 2021. The location includes a made-in-Manitoba food section and a pharmacy.

**FreshCo** announced the location of the next seven stores as part of its expansion across the country. The company plans to open six new FreshCo locales in Alberta and one in Northern Ontario. With this announcement, Empire Company

has confirmed 37 of the 65 locations in Western Canada it is planning to open over a five-year period.

**Healthy Planet** debuted a new store design in Hamilton, Ont. in December. The 8,000 sq ft location has larger frozen meat and seafood offerings and a revamped layout to better showcase food, health, beauty and nutrition departments. It's also exploring fresh options for future locations.

**Fresh St. Market** celebrated the opening of its largest location in Kamloops, B.C., a 36,000 sq ft store with gourmet food offerings.

**Costco** moved its St. Catharines store to Niagara Falls, Ont. in November 2020. The location is a larger 145,312 sq ft store. The original store has re-opened as a Costco Business Centre.





STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

# STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

**FROZEN DINNERS & ENTREES**



Conagra Brands is one of North America's leading branded food companies with a sharpened focus on innovation. Conagra continues to evolve and adapt to satisfy people's changing food preferences, and its frozen portfolio is no exception.



The global frozen food market was valued at USD \$291.3 billion in 2019<sup>2</sup>, with Conagra Brands a major player in this category.

"In 2020 the Canadian frozen category grew +19% and continues to see sustained growth. Working with our partners has been fundamental in ensuring we are meeting the demands of this growing segment, including developing tailored programs that align to our customers' needs and the needs of consumers across Canada. We've implemented many strong programs and have seen the great development of all our brands that are currently outpacing frozen category growth."<sup>1</sup>

– Leslie Mackay, Vice President, Sales

- ▶ Panic situation around the globe has propelled the demand for frozen food products with their longer shelf life
- ▶ Consumers reducing the number of visits are shopping for frozen food products
- ▶ This has propelled demand for frozen food capable of retaining the properties of nutritional ingredients for a longer time<sup>2</sup>



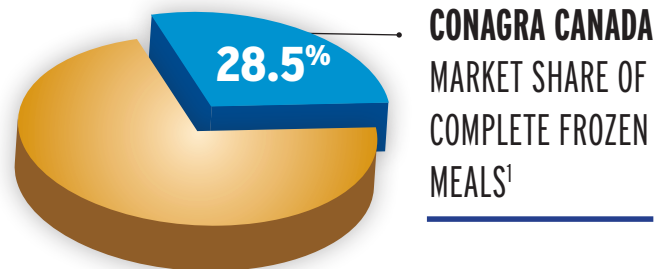
## Frozen Category

### ► Canadian frozen category size:

**\$1.5 billion** in annual consumption and grew **+19%** ↑ vs. year ago.<sup>1</sup>

### ► Canadian Complete Frozen Meals category:

**\$512 million** in annual consumption and grew **+10%** vs. year ago.<sup>1</sup>



“There has been a substantial acceleration in the category overall. Where Conagra continues to develop and deliver value is through its **diverse portfolio of frozen options** that appeal to different tastes across all meal occasions. We have continued to innovate in this space, developing options that align with on-trend consumption habits. We truly pride ourselves on meeting the demands of our retailers and their customers.”

– Jonathan Yeh, Frozen Pillar Marketing Director

### ► Conagra Canada frozen brands:

**\$241 million** in annual consumption, growing **+19%** ↑ vs. year ago<sup>1</sup>

### ► Conagra brands include frozen meals, handhelds, meat pies, and plant-based<sup>1</sup>

### ► Conagra Canada Frozen Meals (Single-serve + Multi-serve ) = **\$146 million** annual consumption<sup>1</sup>

## CONAGRA BRANDS INNOVATION



Healthy Choice offers options to satisfy a variety of modern health needs.



Power Bowls  
Grain-Free



Simply with Riced  
Veggies

**HEALTHY CHOICE BOWLS POWERED BY GARDEIN**



**#1 FROZEN**  
**PLANT-BASED BRAND<sup>1</sup>**



## HUNGRY-MAN



### XL Bowls

Large single-serve bowls inspired by quick-service restaurant-style meals.

## TOFU & MEAT DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

- Fastest growing food FMCG (fast-moving consumer good) in Canada<sup>3</sup>
- Grew **+31%** in the latest 52 weeks, with Meat Alternatives segment outpacing the category at **+33%**<sup>1</sup>



CONAGRA BRANDS CANADA  
PLANT-BASED = **\$30 MILLION**  
ANNUAL CONSUMPTION<sup>1</sup>

## CONAGRA BRANDS INNOVATION



### Veggie Made Bakes

Delicious and convenient meals made with riced cauliflower or pasta made from vegetables.



### Family Size Skilllets

Complete dinner for the entire family with Asian-inspired flavours.

“Plant-based alternatives continue to be the fastest growing food category in Canada<sup>3</sup>, with one-quarter of Canadians wanting to add more plant-based options to their diets.<sup>4</sup> Our plant-based meat alternative brand **Gardein**, Canada’s **#1 frozen meat alternative brand**<sup>1</sup>, allows consumers to enjoy a flexible lifestyle with a huge variety of delicious, plant-based foods.”

- Veronika Popkova, Senior Brand Manager

1. Canadian Nielsen Consumption Period Ending December 26, 2020  
2. Grand View Research April 2020  
3. Nielsen President's Report Q3 2020  
4. Mintel Report, Plant Based Food and Drink Canada, May 2020





“With Canadians eating more meals at home, they are looking for convenient solutions for meal-time shortcuts as they juggle work, home life and family in an unprecedented time. We have seen an influx in demand for larger format entrees, like Marie Callender’s lasagna, and multi-serve options like Swanson Skillets that deliver on taste and quality, that the entire family can enjoy without the lengthy meal prep and high cost.”

- Tebbie Chuchla, Head of Marketing

## Merchandising strategies to satisfy Frozen Dinner shoppers

### 1. COMBAT MEAT FATIGUE

be first to market with on-trend innovation, including:

- Health & Wellness
- Comfort foods with a twist
- Plant-based
- Ethnic favourites

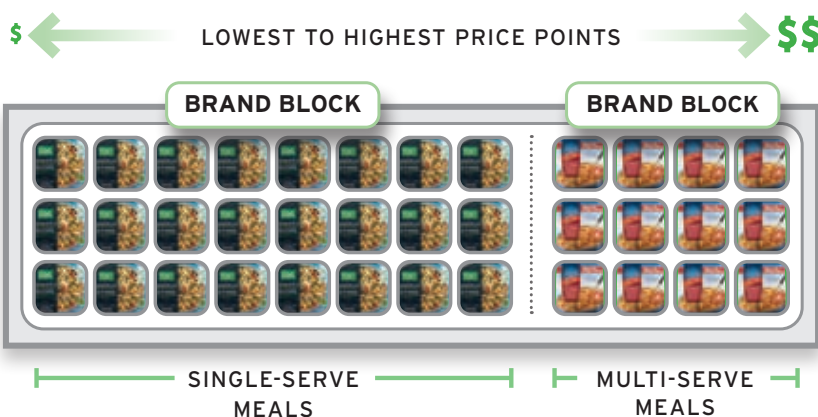
### 2. IMPLEMENT

“multiples” pricing strategy to drive larger basket ring



### 3. ORGANIZE

planogram flow from Value to Premium, and Brand Block



4. Canadians are eating more at home, which has revitalized the Multi-Serve Dinner segment; to capitalize, retailers should revisit listing and display strategies

### 5. USE FLYERS

to attract pre-planned shoppers and allocate display space to support incremental demand

- Christopher Bilous, SR. Manager, Customer Insights & Analytics

# ONE ON ONE

with **Ian Roberts**

Vice President and General Manager Canada

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## **What special challenges did the frozen category present, and how was the company able to meet these?**

While navigating the unprecedented past year we have continued to evolve and adapt to satisfy people's changing food preferences. The frozen category has seen accelerated growth and it has been important to ensure that our innovations are meeting the needs of an evolving consumer base and shopper demand, whether it be online or in-store. With families spending more time eating together this past year, multi-serve formats like Marie Callender's and Swanson increased in popularity. Which is why we're excited about offering consumers new options such as Marie Callender's Veggie Made Bakes and Swanson Family Size Skillets.

## **How have changing consumer shopping/consumption habits impacted the frozen category, and how has Conagra Brands responded?**

As consumer shopping/consumption habits have continued to evolve, we have identified key trends we follow that inform our growth of the frozen category, including: **Modern Health**, **Convenience** and **Flavour Forward**. **Modern Health** trends have indicated that many people are seeking healthier meals and options that appeal to varying lifestyles and dietary preferences. Flexitarian eating habits continue to be on the rise amongst Canadians and we are so excited to work with our retail community to meet that demand. **Convenience** and accessibility are central to driving demand. Canadians are looking for convenient options for pre-packaged meals where they don't have to sacrifice great taste and variety as they are more time-pressed, either from working more hours or juggling responsibilities at home. For those new to preparing their own meals, convenient options also remove both the barrier of prep time and the fear or apprehension around learning to cook. **Flavour Forward** trends indicate consumers are looking to try new and interesting flavours as well as seeking out quality family favourites in larger multi-serve SKUs to alleviate culinary fatigue in the household.

## **What role have the grocery business heroes - frontline workers, warehouse workers, truck drivers - played during the pandemic, and what would you like to say to them?**

During the unprecedented times of the past year, our community of amazing employees, facility team members and partners in the grocery industry have really shown their strength. In our own frontline, our team has continued to make products that support the needs of our consumers, and we are grateful for their dedication. We are also amazed and inspired by the grocery industry all across Canada. The individuals who run each and every grocery channel continue to provide Canadians with incredible customer service and reliability that consumers have come to depend on, with continued emphasis on safety for both staff and consumers.

## **What positive changes have been implemented as a result of the pandemic that you believe will be maintained going forward? How has the pandemic changed our way of doing business?**

The biggest impact we have seen is a solidification of our partnerships, improved communication, and collaboration across the board on how we work together. We always knew we had amazing partners and an amazing team, but the past year has truly crystalized this for us. We have been able to act quickly with our partners and our team to meet the needs of our customers, consumers and their demands - to pivot and adapt as needed, to listen, to come together and to truly learn more about how we can innovate to be ready for the future. While we've been extremely productive through virtual meetings and communications with partners, we do look forward to meeting in person, when it's safe to do so, to continue to build paths for growth together.



# Middle Eastern Cuisine Makes Its Move

**I**n recent years, as Canada has seen immigration growth from the Middle East, it's fair to anticipate demand will grow for the delicious, colourful and fresh food from this area of the world. Middle Eastern cuisine promotes food sharing (called mezze) and has a major focus on vegetable dishes, making it a healthy, on-trend food choice.

According to our research, almost 25% of Canadians enjoy Middle Eastern dishes in restaurants. With this level of restaurant penetration, and as with Indian and Thai food, consumers will typically want to prepare Middle Eastern meals at home. This, coupled with the growth of home cooking due to the pandemic and it's likely that a new base of Middle Eastern shoppers will enter the category.

This trend has created an opportunity for AB World Foods to launch Al'Fez, a new line-up of sauces, kits, marinades, and pastes designed to help Canadians prepare fresh authentic Middle Eastern



Jean-Francois Dery, General Manager  
AB World Foods

meals in their own kitchens. There has been notable growth in the World Foods aisle over the past few years and this growth has only accelerated since the onset of the pandemic. Middle Eastern cuisine, and the Al'Fez brand, with its delicious and healthy product options, is the next exciting opportunity retailers have to offer to Canadians who are seeking new international flavours.

Our research has also revealed that while 25% of consumers enjoy Middle Eastern meals in restaurants only 13% prepare them at home. This may be because consumers are unable to find the appropriate products at their grocery store or are unsure of proper cooking methods. For retailers, this gap presents an opportunity to grow the category through merchandising and education.



**13%** Canadians currently prepare Middle Eastern food-at-home

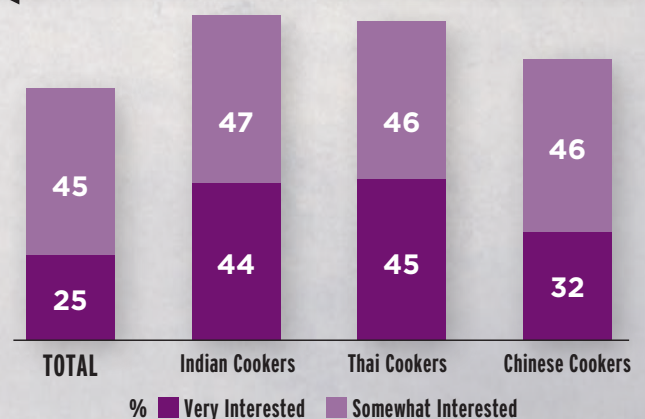
**25%** of Canadians eat Middle Eastern food out-of-home

## BEST PRACTICES

- **Create a one-stop destination** in the World Foods aisle so it's convenient for consumers to find products and ingredients in one location.
- **Educate consumers** on how to cook popular Middle Eastern dishes at home by stocking the right balance of solution-based products and ingredients. For example, popular dishes include shawarma, kebab, chicken tagine and couscous; tahini and harissa are sought-after ingredients.
- **Clearly communicate ease of use** and suggestions on how to prepare the dishes at home. Creating exciting events and merchandising opportunities in store will also help grow the Middle Eastern food category.



Interest in the new Al'Fez brand is high with World Foods shoppers





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new



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# Chasing FMCG Dollars

by Mike Ljubicic

**2020 brought lockdowns, restricted movement and social distancing to the lives of consumers.** FMCG retailers and manufacturers were forced to quickly adapt to supply chain challenges, government regulations and changes in consumers' priorities. Although the long-tail impact of an economic slowdown will continue into 2021, the success of the FMCG industry depends on how retailers and manufacturers, leveraging prime locations, e-commerce, assortment and promotions, will address these shifts in the retail landscape.

In Canada, the inflationary trends from earlier in the year subsided somewhat in Q4. However, strong dollar growth was still present across all regions. While the holidays brought a small surge in the number of shopping occasions in December, we are still far from the levels experienced prior to COVID-19. The average basket value is still much higher than before, and e-commerce continues to be a strong driver of growth across all categories.

As 2021 begins, some of the highest revenue-generating grocery stores globally are facing sweeping changes to their customer base that is effectively shifting the balance of power in FMCG. Stores that were once the largest sales contributors

are now seeing share declines, while those that may have been previously viewed as "underachievers" are over-performing against previous benchmarks.

Across Canada, we are witnessing the move from urban to rural, from in-office work to working from home. This shift, coupled with a significant reduction in business travel as companies seek to normalize the cost savings the pandemic facilitated, equates to more at-home meal occasions. So, whether it's self-prep or order in, consumers will continue to search for convenience that will ensure home meal replacement (HMR) options gain traction.

As consumers adapt to new daily routines, it is important that retailers meet their needs with quick and convenient meal occasions built to maximize bundling opportunities, supported by quick and cost-effective delivery options.

And finally, communicating expanded options and solutions that will meet consumers' everyday needs will be imperative to the success of non-traditional categories. ■

**Mike Ljubicic is executive vice president of North American Retail, NielsenIQ**



## Convenience Channel Wins

Convenience and gas channel performance fluctuated with the intensity of COVID-19 government restrictions but won overall by recognizing consumer willingness to make close-to-home quick trips to avoid line-ups when shopping for core everyday needs.

The convenience and gas channel refocused by:

- Delivering against core everyday needs at competitive prices. Basic meal occasion categories such as milk, eggs, cheese, and bread saw larger basket sizes and above average double-digit growth.
- Competing with QSR/HMR with combo offerings of pizza or wings, a 2L beverage plus a large bag of salty snacks for only \$20.
- Partnering with third-party delivery companies to bring prepared meals and core essentials directly to consumers' homes.

## GROCERS, TAKE NOTE:

# Consumers are now more food literate

by Sylvain Charlebois



**Food literacy is about trust in food systems and how much knowledge one will have about food in general. It can be measured in many ways. For grocers, dealing with a more food literate marketplace requires a different approach. What is being sold will need to change as well.**

The Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University, in partnership with Caddle, surveyed a total of 10,004 Canadians, 11 months after the start of the pandemic. When asked about awareness of how food choices can impact aspects of our lives, 70.5 per cent of Canadians believe health is most important, followed by the economy at 52.7 per cent. The environment is third at 28.3 per cent, and community is last at 23.0 per cent. Results suggest consumers are thinking about their immune system, and local food to help the economy, more so than before the pandemic.

Cooking is a significant way for consumers to become more food literate

### Preparing meals

**24.3%**

of Canadians claim that they have prepared all the meals consumed since the beginning of the pandemic.

**55.9%**

feel they have prepared most meals themselves.

### Using recipes

**35.5%**

have learned a new recipe (three ingredients, three steps) since the start of the pandemic. Given the amount of time many Canadians have spent at home, that figure was lower than expected.



## Canadians who know 7+ recipes

**62.1%** now **vs.** **56.6%** before pandemic

Generation X followed the Canadian average in terms of the number of known recipes, before the pandemic and now. Millennials have learned to cook the most during the pandemic. The correlation between age and the number of recipes known remains strong. Grocers need to recognize that younger generations want to learn and are learning about cooking. Older generations are still cooking, but are set in their ways and may need some inspiration along the way.

**Spices** were the most popular choice for new ingredients among Canadians.

**67.5%** have tried new spices, followed by **vegetables** at **36.9%**, and **oils** at **27.9%**.

Uninspired consumers could rely on grocers to be more daring in the kitchen and show some cooking audacity.

## Consumers are exploring new food experiences

Since the start of the pandemic:

» **38%** of Canadians have taught a new recipe to someone they live with

» **37%** of Canadians have designed a new recipe for themselves

» **48%** of Canadians have used a new ingredient

## Where consumers source information

The survey looked at two determinants for food choices: trust and influence.

### Most Trusted Source

- ✓ Online
- ✓ Doctors
- ✓ Friends or Family

### Top Ranked Influence

- Internet Searches
- Friends and Family
- Health Professionals (Nutritionists and Dietitians)
- Canada's Food Guide

This is where grocers need to work to increase their credibility. If you have a dietitian or nutritionist on staff, ensure that your customers can connect directly with them so that they become more than just a photo on a poster.

*Sylvain Charlebois is professor in food distribution and policy, and senior director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University. [sylvain.charlebois@dal.ca](mailto:sylvain.charlebois@dal.ca)*

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# 5 Global Sustainability Learnings

by Stewart Samuel



**The retail food industry** continues to innovate across the social, environmental and economic sustainability pillars. We highlight five case studies that are enabling retailers to move forward in this area.

## 1 | **JUMBO, The Netherlands: waste-to-product**

Jumbo has partnered with waste-to-product company Renewi. Orange peels are collected in-store and processed into new ingredients by PeelPioneers, a circular solutions business of citrus residual flows. Once shoppers purchase a fresh orange juice in Jumbo's stores, the orange peels are collected and taken to one of its four distribution centres. The peels are sorted and delivered to PeelPioneers by Renewi, where they are transformed into ingredients that Jumbo can use in other products such as candied orange peel, an ingredient used in Jumbo's chocolate orange muffins.

## 2 | **ZABKA, Poland: lab store**

Zabka has opened a store with sustainability at the heart of the concept. The technologies applied in the store in Białołęka, a district of Warsaw, focus on four key areas of environmental sustainability: green energy, circular design, clean air and green transport. There are approximately 20 environment-friendly solutions in and around the store. These include pioneering solutions like kinetic floors and windows with quantum dots, which generate renewable energy.

## 3 | **AUCHAN, Portugal: reducing bread waste**

Auchan's new initiative, "Bread for cooking," is focused on reducing food waste. Shoppers can purchase older bread, which can be used for toast or breadcrumbs, at discounted

prices. The initiative, which supports the retailer's zero-waste project, provides shoppers with good quality products while enabling them to save money.

## 4 | **COOP, Sweden: private label ratings**

Coop Sverige is rating its 17,000 private label products by 10 parameters that encircle sustainable development. These have been developed by World Wildlife Fund (WWF)'s sustainable food chain initiative, launched in 2005 to address sustainability challenges in the food and grocery industry. Trials began last year and the new service will launch more fully this year. Customers can access the information by scanning each product's individual barcode.

## 5 | **CARULLA FRESHMARKET, Colombia: carbon neutral**

Grupo Éxito recently opened the 14th store under its Carulla FreshMarket banner. The forward-thinking format has been certified by the Colombian Institute of Technical Standards and Certifications (ICONTEC) as the first carbon neutral food retailer in Colombia. This store, which features 45 new innovations, showcases Grupo Éxito's commitment to reducing climate change.

Key features include a sustainable livestock model, a renewable energy system, consisting of 362 solar panels, which will reduce the emission of 60 tons of CO2 annually, natural refrigeration cooling systems and a digital refill machine for purchasing soap/laundry detergents in bulk. ■

*Stewart Samuel is program director at IGD Canada.  
stewart.samuel@igd.com*



# Grocery Delivery Made Easy

The grocery delivery app that makes your delivery logistics scalable, with an exceptional consumer experience that keeps your customer coming back



## Hello Savings!

Your customers save. No markup on groceries, just a simple flat rate per delivery.



## Retailer Partnership

Pickups also offers the ability to partner with the retailer and customize an API key that can be integrated within the checkout of your online store.



## On-Demand Delivery

Not tomorrow at 4 pm or next Thursday at 11 am. If the stores' order is ready for pickup in-store or curbside, we'll deliver it right to you.

## How Does Pickups Work For Your Customer?

1

### Download our App!

Create a profile and log in. You're now ready to have groceries (and everything else!) picked up and delivered on-demand

2

### Order online from your local grocery store

Shop directly on your favourite grocery store site, then select in-store or curb-side pick up

3

### Place a pickup request through our app

Once you've ordered online from your local grocer, place a pickup order through our app. Upload your receipt or details and a driver will be dispatched on-demand to have your groceries picked up and delivered to your doorstep

4

### Track your order

Sit back, do some online shopping for your summer wardrobe or catchup on your to-do list, because your groceries are en route. Conveniently track your delivery and receive a notification once it's arrived

For the best Pickups experience, download our app on Android and iPhone



<http://onelink.to/gS8vag>

1-855-3PICKUP • [www.pickups.mobi/groceries](http://www.pickups.mobi/groceries)



# Delivering the goods - on demand

Pickups delivery service offers a new solution to an old dilemma

**A** company launched in summer 2020 is taking an innovative approach to the perennial problem of last-mile delivery.

Pickups makes it easy for grocers to offer their customers delivery service on demand. Retailers can also scale up their delivery offering quickly, since the solution leverages a crowdsourcing model to add drivers as needed.

Unlike third-party shopping platforms, Pickups allows retailers to control the customer experience. “Our drivers are drivers, not shoppers,” says CEO Nick Romeo. “The retailer does what they do best, which is control the pick and pack of their products to ensure quality and freshness – we simply deliver!”

For their part, customers can take advantage of store specials, promotions, points, and discounts by shopping directly with the retailer. They can receive their order within an hour of it being ready – no need to compete for delivery time slots.

To use the service, shoppers simply download the app, shop directly from the retailer, upload the e-mail or receipt of the order being ready, and then place a delivery request. They can view their order being picked up and delivered in real time. Customers pay a flat fee for delivery, based on order size and distance.

The Pickups technology also allows retailers to expand their offering to the delivery of non-food items. such as furniture and home décor, home improvement, parcels or packages

**“We’re not dependent on the retailers, but we’re willing to partner with them to help them offer a better added value.”**



Nick Romeo, CEO, Pickups

for personal or business, floral – the list goes on. “We have the ability to match any item, size and number of items with

the appropriate vehicles on demand,” says Romeo, who brings a CPG background to what he describes as “a garage band idea that quickly moved into an organization that has been built around the foundation of community and service.”

The company also offers an enterprise solution whereby retailers can integrate on the back end and leverage Pickups’ pool of drivers to fulfill their deliveries as well as integrate at checkout. “We’re not dependent on the retailers, but we’re willing to partner with them to help them offer a better added value,” says Romeo.

Pickups is currently available in the GTA, with plans to expand gradually across Canada.

Backed by a team of passionate founders and colleagues, Romeo says Pickups is focused on “revolutionizing the last-mile space, one package at a time.”

**[www.pickups.mobi](http://www.pickups.mobi)**





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\*Source: Nielsen L52W, 3 Channels, P/E Dec 26 2020



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# Agricultural Commodity Price Pressures



## *Can grocers continue to hold the line on food inflation?*

by Kevin Grier

Agricultural commodity price pressure is brewing. A recent USDA report showed a big reduction in estimated corn yields, the largest reduction by the USDA in 25 years, which sent grain futures soaring again. Corn and soybean stocks are going to remain tight for the foreseeable future. Wheat futures have increased 37 per cent from their summer lows in early February. Corn futures are up over 70 per cent over the same period. High crop prices, particularly corn, tend to spill over on processed vegetables. Grain corn is a food inflation driver that impacts several categories, including meat.

Additionally, there is now a large drought area in southwestern United States. There has not been a serious drought in midwestern United States crop regions in several years, but conditions this year may be pointing in that direction for planting and growing in 2021.

There also has not been crop-based food inflation pressure in several years. This is important to grocery food pricing because there is a direct relationship between crop prices and food inflation. Higher crop prices tend to lead to higher food prices with a time lag as they work through the food manufacturing and distribution system.

In a recent *Grocery Business* column, I noted that the growth of food inflation has been quite modest. It was surprising because I expected grocers to increase prices due to strong pandemic-driven demand and the fact that most meals are being consumed at home. Food store inflation was just 2.4 per cent in 2020 compared to nearly four per cent in 2019. That low rate of inflation, despite high demand, can be attributed to the intensity of grocery competition in Canada.

As I have noted before, there are two main food inflation factors: commodity inflation and competition. As we look ahead, there are divergent forces at work. Commodity inflation is indicating higher prices at store level while, conversely, intense competition is keeping a lid on prices.

Something has to give and it won't be commodity inflation, so either grocery margins will take a hit or retailers are going to have to call a truce on the price wars. ■

**Kevin Grier is a food market analyst based in Guelph, Ont., who creates subscription reports, market research and presentations for industry leaders.**  
[kevin@kevingrier.com](mailto:kevin@kevingrier.com)



# SCOTT LORIMER

Senior Vice President, Retail Sales, at Maple Leaf Foods

## How did you begin your CPG journey?

Journey is a good description. My father was in this industry and I always saw that he enjoyed his job, so I jumped at the chance to join it out of university and was very lucky to join Lipton, a division of Unilever, after graduation, and my career grew from there.

I've had the opportunity to build my skills in many functional areas, including sales, marketing, food service and trade marketing across several CPG organizations. I'd describe it as a combination of learning, being challenged and working with some great people along the way. The last year has made me even more grateful to be part of an industry that has been deemed an essential service.

## How has the past year changed the industry?

The landscape changed dramatically in 2020. Safety was already important, but the last year made paramount the importance of keeping our people safe and protecting the food supply network. I'm proud of the work done at Maple Leaf and while we have not been immune to challenges, our organization has made tremendous steps to ensure we rose to these challenges.

We have also learned how to operate in a virtual world and adapted how we stay connected. The lack of casual drop-ins/elevator catch-ups or face-to-face meetings has forced us to be more prescriptive and planful to ensure that connections with our own teams and with our partners remain a priority.

## CAREER PATH

2018 – Present	Senior Vice President, Retail Sales, Maple Leaf Foods
2016 – 2018	Vice President, General Manager, Sales, Maple Leaf Foods
2013 – 2016	Head of Sales, SC Johnson Canada
2010 – 2013	Senior Director, Business Development, PepsiCo Foods Canada
2007 – 2010	Senior Director of Business Development, Frito Lay Canada
2004 – 2006	Director of Marketing, Frito Lay Canada
2001 – 2004	Director of Sales, Frito Lay Canada
1999 – 2001	Channel Marketing Manager, Frito Lay Canada
1992 – 1999	Various Roles in Marketing, Sales and Trade Marketing, Unilever Canada



# LEADERS

ON

# LEADERSHIP

## What qualities do you look for in a leader?

When I entered this industry, I remember someone referencing the 3Ps: Passion, Persistence and Perspiration. This always resonated with me and the words take on more meaning every year, perhaps none more than 2020.

As senior executives, you must be people-focused and have the ability to balance empathy and accountability. You need to be transparent and humble in your approach. Just because you have the title doesn't mean you have all the answers. The people you work with can provide tremendous insights and ideas to spur a business to new heights, but you must give them that permission. You must also be optimistic and set a vision for your team or business and inspire others to follow.

## What forces are driving change now?

Three major changes come to mind. First is e-commerce. As shoppers adapt to this new channel, retailers and vendors continue to invest in this area and it's accelerating with COVID. Figuring out the new digital shelf is paramount to helping shoppers seamlessly find the brands they are looking for and being available for them in the way they want, such as pick-up or delivery.

There are new developments in data. Vendors traditionally held more data and played a primary role in helping retailers. With the emergence of retailer loyalty and digital programs, they now have access to real-time data to help manage their business. The opportunity moving forward is working together to decipher this immense amount of data available, to bring shopper solutions to market with speed and agility.

Finally, there has been an evolution in sustainability, an important and growing change that will only amplify in the years ahead. As an industry, we will need to tackle tough problems like our carbon footprint, reducing/eliminating plastics, and long-term sustainable food practices.

## How is Maple Leaf realizing its sustainability goals?

At Maple Leaf, we are guided by our vision to be the most sustainable protein company on earth. I'm so proud these aren't just words on a page; they guide us in all we do. Whether it's leadership on animal care practices, leadership in raising animals without the use of antibiotics, leading the real food movement with our iconic Maple Leaf brand, investing in new protein spaces through our Greenleaf Foods business, setting and achieving ambitious sustainability initiatives, including being the world's first major carbon-neutral food company, or investing capital to fuel growth like our new London, Ont. poultry facility, we are deeply committed to the North American food industry. Our Maple Leaf Leadership Values underpin all these initiatives and I believe it separates us from many and hope that retailers see the value in this.

## Why is CPG a great place to build a career?

This is a great industry to be in and it continues to evolve. The food and retail business will always play a critical role in the lives of consumers. It allows you to build skills in many different functional areas such as sales, marketing, digital and so forth, and affords broad general management experience. You will be challenged and have the opportunity to own your results in a meaningful way. I can't think of a better industry to support and enable a long and successful career in an important and meaningful field that provides safe and nutritious food people need. ■



JOIN US VIRTUALLY

**CPMA**  
**BOOTH**  
**#251**

# WOMEN of CATANIA

A tribute to 8 influential and inspirational women behind the success of Catania Worldwide.

Catania East  
Production Supervisor



Alejandra Cruz

Catania North  
Quality Control and  
Compliance Manager



Camilla Silva

Catania Mexico  
General Manager



Alejandra Diaz

Catania West  
Imports/Grower  
Accounting



Jennifer Buss

Catania North  
Quality Control Supervisor



Leena Tran

Catania North  
Business Development & Marketing Manager



Lila Baig

Catania North  
Production Manager



Viviane Andrade

Catania West  
Sales/Account Manager



Connie Gil



# produce

MANAGER 

March /  
April 2021



RECOGNIZING  
WOMEN  
IN PRODUCE



**WOMEN**  
**IN PRODUCE**



**Walmart** 

**CONGRATULATIONS**

**CARLEIGH WHITE**

Procurement Manager – Produce

For Your **FRESH IDEAS!**



# WOMEN IN PRODUCE



The Canadian Produce Marketing Association, in partnership with *Grocery Business Magazine*, has developed the Women in Produce initiative to recognize the achievements of outstanding women in the produce industry.

These 10 women were nominated by industry peers for their contributions to promoting produce in grocery retail. Congratulations to all and thank you for your outstanding work.



**We are fortunate** that our industry is open to educating those who show an interest and a desire to learn. My education came from walking the fields, orchards, greenhouses and operational facilities with our growers and vendor partners. I am thankful that I had that opportunity, as they gave me the “addictive taste” for the produce industry that shaped my career!

Our industry recognizes and appreciates people who are authentic, passionate and driven, while success within it comes from having expertise, creativity and confidence. I have personally found that being a woman in a male-dominated industry is an advantage, not a challenge. Women in produce have multiple opportunities to shine, as have the honourees, many of whom I know. Congratulations to each and every one of you!

**Oleen Smethurst**

Past chair of the CPMA,  
Assistant Vice President/General Merchandise Manager, Corporate Foods,  
Costco Wholesale Canada





**WE ARE  
WE ARE  
WE ARE** | **GROWERS  
FARMERS  
CO-OP**

## **RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY**

We are proud of Lindsay Young for her passion in serving our customers and her leadership in Canada's produce industry. Congratulation to Lindsay and all the Women in Produce Award recipients.



Lindsay Young  
Category Development Manager, Produce  
Federated Co-operatives Limited



## “Congratulations to these leaders!”

We are all responsible for inspiring young women to come and share their talents and emotional intelligence with us to continue building an industry based on respectful relationships and driven by the passion to always do better, together!

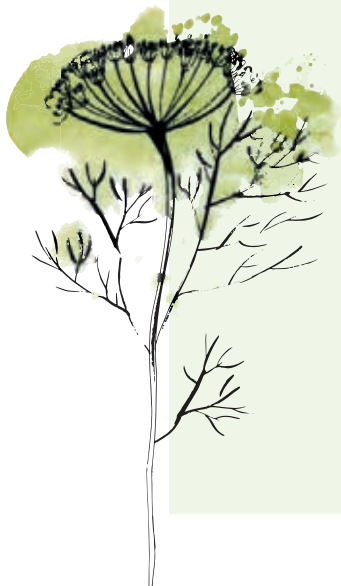
**Sophie Perrault**  
President and CEO  
Quebec Produce Marketing Association (QPMA)



## “Two weeks into my produce career,”

I walked the trade show floor of an international convention. The obvious scarcity of women made me curious. Why would an industry based on a healthy food like produce not attract women? As I came to know the industry, I realised there are in fact many women in produce. They may not always be shouting their achievements from the rooftop, but they are there embracing change and leading innovation. With these women as inspiration, we will start to see more women choose produce as a career and the industry will be better for it.

**Michelle Broom**  
President  
The Ontario Produce Marketing Association (OPMA)



“To be selected for this award was an honour and every one of these women deserve it. They have earned our appreciation, gratitude, and respect through strong leadership, initiative, and resourcefulness while setting a solid example for everyone.

We gain respect and acceptance through hard work, dedication, and passion that makes a difference. As we look ahead to the changing world that we face, we realize there will be difficult and demanding challenges. The future offers great opportunity for women to consider a career in produce, with doors opening like never before. When more women ascend to leadership roles, they become role models for the next generation. Every one of these nominated women fit that description and deserve the ultimate of credit and thanks.

**Margie Schurko**  
Marketing, ABC/PCP Customs Brokers;  
Secretary/Treasurer, BC Produce Marketing Association (BCPMA)



## OUTSTANDING WOMEN IN PRODUCE

### LEADERSHIP



**Angela Santiago**

CEO, Co-founder  
The Little Potato Company

"I continue to be honoured and humbled by my part in producing healthy food for people and the impact of this is not lost on me. When my dad and I decided to grow the little potatoes he grew up eating as a child in the Netherlands, it was the beginning of creating a new product category. By creating something new with something that is old, The Little Potato Company made the category interesting and exciting again."

"As the company has grown, the challenge to maintain and enhance the culture and values on which the company was founded takes work and daily practice. Translating our company values into real behaviours in the workplace may not be easy, but it is really the only way to go if those values have any worth at all. This requires a kind of vigilance and attention that keeps us on our toes."



**Mireille Thibodeau**

Vice President, Fresh Procurement and  
Merchandising, Sobeys Inc.



## Ashley Pinto

Produce Procurement Category  
Director, Produce Development,  
Loblaw Companies Limited

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"There are a few key areas where I have been able to make impactful contributions to the produce industry. Building programs in partnership with Canadian growers to extend local seasons longer than historical trends; participating on the board of directors of the Quebec Produce Marketing Association, representing

Loblaw in advancing issues around food safety, grower retail partnerships and supporting the consumption of fruits and vegetables.

"Thanks to the mentorship I've received from prior leaders and peers, and via my participation as Learning and Development Co-Chair of Go Further Women at Loblaw, I have helped to elevate the profile of women aspiring to excel in the food retail industry.

"The feedback or advice I provide most often to others is that, in general, people undervalue the importance of networking and getting to know others across the industry. There is so much experience to learn from if you're open to meeting new people, and asking for their thoughts and/or advice. Along those same lines, I would also always recommend seeking out mentor/mentee connections and investing in relationships with diverse individuals who bring different perspectives and viewpoints."

"I support the idea that all realization comes from a team effort; it is not defined by one single person. I'm really proud of my team and colleagues and all that they accomplish every day for the produce industry. My contribution is to ensure that produce is a strategic priority at Sobeys. I believe that produce is a vector of differentiation for our stores.

"The pivotal moment of my career was when, following a reorganization, Sobeys' leadership team put me in charge of the meat department, a couple of years ago. Not only was I a woman in a man's world, but I was also a young woman without any experience at all in the meat industry! From that experience, I have learned how important it is to be authentic and humble, to be ready to learn from others and not step into a new role with the attitude of someone who knows everything.

"The pandemic has put in light the importance of increasing locally grown produce in Canada, all year long. I think supporting local is a priority, now, more than ever."

## ON BEHALF OF NATURE FRESH FARMS

**Congratulations  
to this year's  
Women in  
Produce  
Honourees**



**NatureFresh  
Farms**

[naturefresh.ca](http://naturefresh.ca)

OUTSTANDING  
WOMEN IN  
PRODUCE

MARKETING

**Jane Rhyno**

Vice President, Sales  
and Marketing, Highline  
Produce Limited  
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“Being part of a fast-growing company, I’ve been so fortunate to be able to build a new department — finding and cultivating the team to meet the needs as we grew. It’s exciting to not only have a direct impact on improving and developing the business but to work each day with excellent people who live their values and share the passion for our industry.

“My father was also in the industry and he shaped and influenced me in so many ways. I remember him taking me on store visits when I was young. Besides looking at the product, he drew my attention to what the shoppers were doing: to see what they were looking at and to think about why. He was very consumer-focused and that focus and practice of asking ‘why?’ is something that has stayed with me to today.

“Your approach to relationships and how you carry out your work will last longer than any win or loss. Come to what you do with integrity and honesty and try to foster that ability to see and care about what’s important to the other people you’re working for and with.”



*Congratulations*

**Ashley Pinto**  
on being recognized  
as one of the leading

**WOMEN  
IN PRODUCE**

**You are an inspiration to us all.**

From your family at

**Loblaw Companies Limited**





## Luci Faas

Product Development Specialist,  
Nature Fresh Farms

“When it comes to packing and marketing English cucumbers, opting for petroleum-based polyethylene plastic wrap has long seemed unavoidable. In most cases, we see plastic wraps ending up in landfills—so we wanted to do something about it and came up with this 100 per cent home compostable cucumber wrap idea. The film is made from a starch-based material and printed PLU with compostable ink. This concept was very new, and my initial research started from scratch—meaning googling and making phone calls.

“It took a good two years for us to launch this product on the North American market. I would say my important work achievement is that I helped convert this new and innovative idea into reality. I believe this will pave the way for more sustainable packaging options to grace the shelves of grocery stores across the continent.



“Sustainable packaging should not be a premium item but should be more accessible to everyone, including growers and consumers. If we can introduce such solutions that truly reduce the environmental impact, work on standard machines without compromising the quality of produce, and do not become too costly, we have the potential to transform the way people consume fresh produce.”



Thomas Fresh  
Director  
National Accounts



“**WOMEN  
IN PRODUCE**  
**2021**”

## CONGRATULATIONS Michèle McMillan

“For being recognized for your  
outstanding career achievements”

from your Thomas Fresh Family

[thomasfresh.com](https://thomasfresh.com)

## MARKETING

“naturSource is going to be 41! I started it with my husband 40 years ago—we were honestly ‘Hippy dippy Crunchy Granola’ kind of people. We have built a working vocabulary—with customers and the curious—about natural foods and what ‘natural’ really means; all of what has become so common today was not in people’s minds at all back then!

“Back then, a shipment of papaya had come in and didn’t have sulphites in it. So it wasn’t that bright orange. It was this beautiful, natural colour. Food is so beautiful, multi-shades...you can tell I’m totally into colour. This idea is what Salad Topper came from in 2008. It’s going back to a very different way

### Trudi Oberfield

Vice President Creative,  
naturSource

-----

of thinking and educating people who used to say...you want me to eat this birdseed? I’d say, ‘yes, I do!’

“We were just further down the road in terms of the integrity of these beautiful ingredients...We are a family company; my son is here now. There is a value in that; people talk about family; it’s a really good culture. I’m very proud of our company.”



CONGRATULATIONS  
**TAMMY VAUTOUR**  
Director Quality Assurance Produce - Metro

---

RECIPIENT OF THE

**WOMEN  
IN PRODUCE**

*Congratulation to all winners*

**metro**





## SALES



"Having now worked in both the retailer and grower/packer/shipper areas of the business, I can say that the distribution of fresh produce to Canadians is an area of pride for me. Also, with Canada's diverse population and growing appreciation for flavours from around the world, being able to provide non-traditional produce items that allow people to experiment at home. Through the pandemic specifically, home cooking has become the norm and people, including myself, have been more adventurous in their cooking ventures and looking for more of these non-traditional produce items.

"The produce industry as a career path is not necessarily top of mind when students are graduating from colleges and universities. They do not realize that we too require accountants, marketers, sales and IT people and the like. When building

WOMEN  
IN PRODUCE

### Michele McMillan

Director – National Accounts,  
Thomas Fresh

-----



your career path, set both short- and long-term goals for yourself with timelines. Understand that the timelines may need to be flexible due to changes within the industry. Find a mentor or mentors who can guide you in acquiring the knowledge and experience you will need.

"Be a mentor. Don't be reluctant to share your knowledge and experience to help others grow, as this is how we build a stronger industry."

Sobey's  
Inc.

## Congratulates



Mireille Thibodeau

for

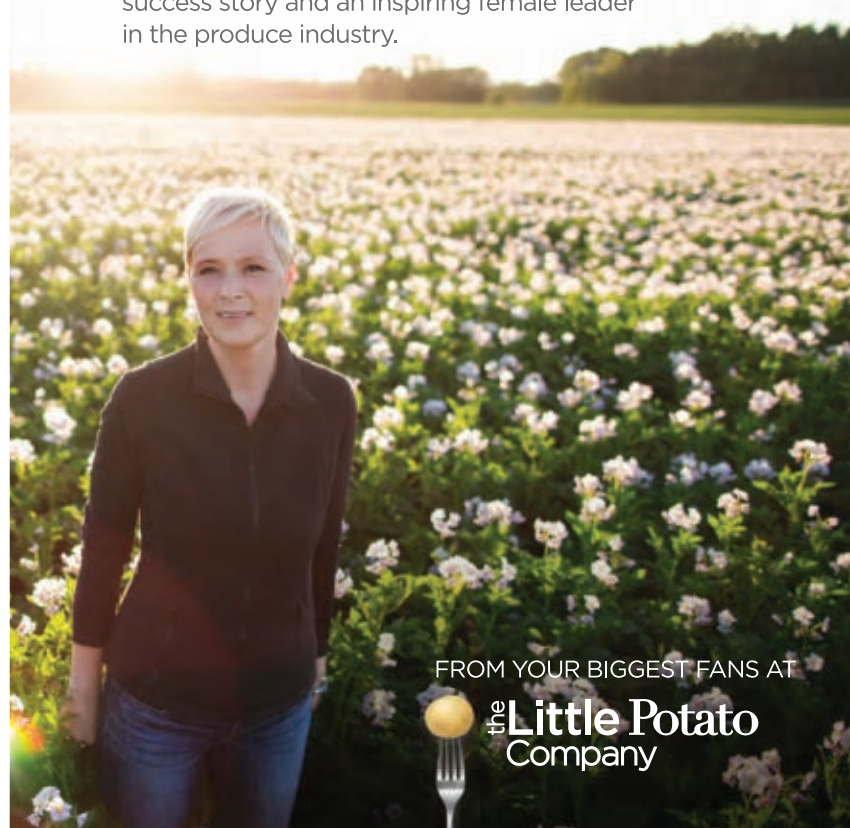
## Outstanding Leadership

WOMEN  
IN PRODUCE

## ANGELA SANTIAGO

Co-founder and CEO, The Little Potato Company

Congratulations on being a great Canadian success story and an inspiring female leader in the produce industry.



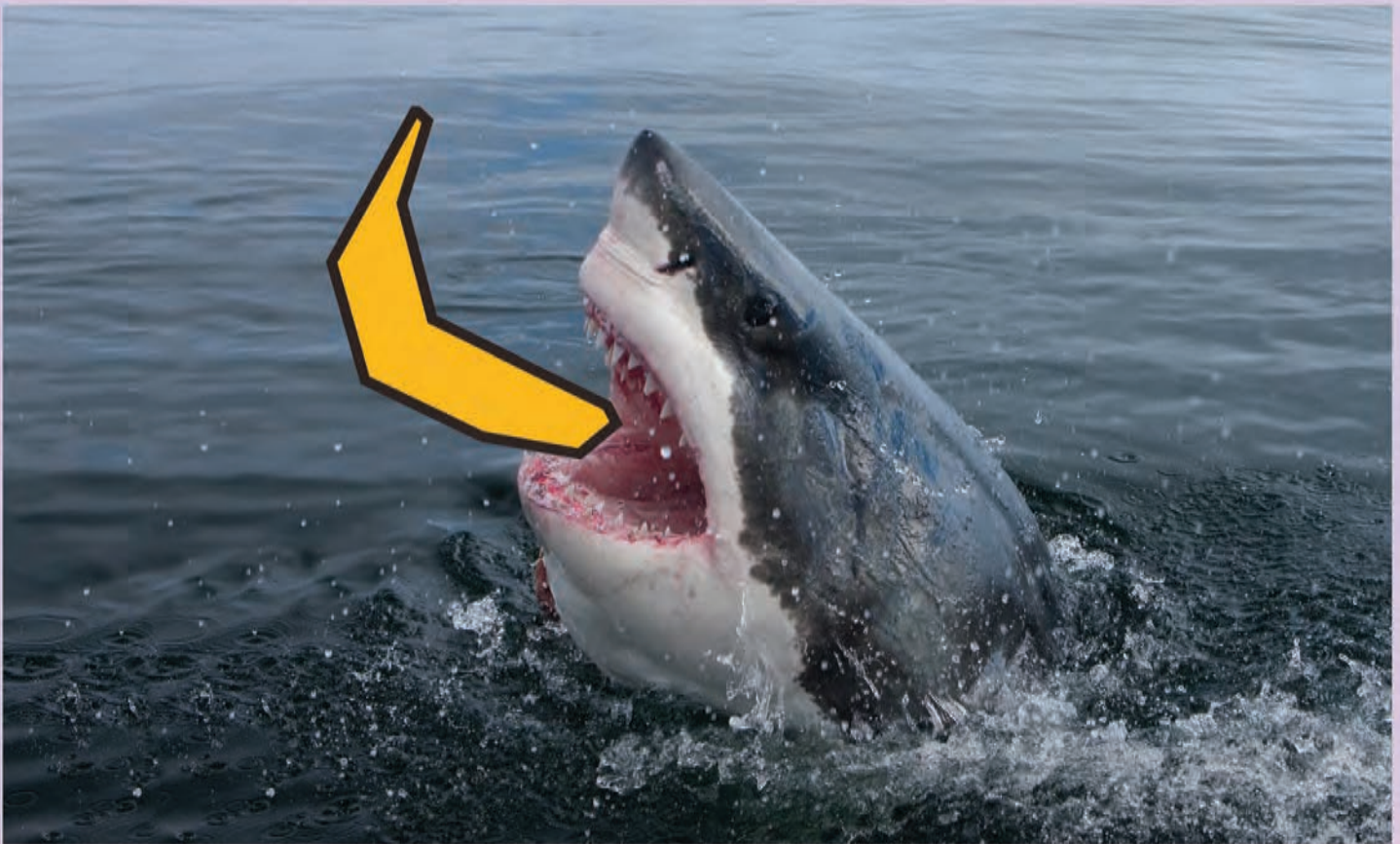
FROM YOUR BIGGEST FANS AT



The Little Potato  
Company

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But a fruit dedicated to making sure farmers are paid fairly for their work?  
We'd be lucky to get an hour. Available year round:  
this is the only banana you should buy.



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## MANAGEMENT

### Lindsay Young

Category Development  
Manager, Federated  
Co-operatives Limited



"I am passionate about local, whether it's fostering new relationships with growers who are just starting out or nurturing the long-term relationships we have developed with local growers across Western Canada for many years...Working with local growers to supply local produce to the communities we serve is one of the most important achievements in my role.

"My first grower trip to California was pivotal in my career. It was an eye-opening experience to witness firsthand the hard work and dedication that goes into growing fruits and vegetables. The effort and care involved in growing, harvesting, packing and transporting produce to the end consumer is something most people do not fully appreciate. Experiencing this with our team of produce category managers was an invaluable experience that was instrumental in growing my knowledge of the industry.

"There are many challenges facing the produce industry, such as labour shortages, climate change, logistics and food safety. As a grocery retailer, food safety is our number one priority. It's important to me that we keep our customers safe and they trust the products we have on our shelves. I believe that food safety is and will continue to be an important issue facing our industry."

## OPERATIONS

"I would say the work I am doing related to sustainability within the produce industry is my most important contribution. I am working with current vendors to look for ways to make any packaging that is used on products we sell more sustainable, reducing packaging where it makes sense, and moving towards fully recyclable packaging on items where it is necessary.

"Sustainability, and what resources and efforts are being placed in this area have also become part of the discussion with all new vendors and new items that are presented. This is such an important initiative for our future and being able to offer our customers products that we can feel good about moves us all in the right direction.

"Weather causing inconsistency of supply will always be an issue that cannot be controlled. One opportunity we do have is improved traceability of products. This will help immensely with our food safety efforts, the speed at which we can remove potentially harmful products from shelves and help minimize waste on safe product when recalls do occur."



### Carleigh White

Procurement Manager,  
Walmart Canada





**Tammy Vautour**  
Director of Produce  
Quality Assurance,  
Metro Richelieu Inc.  
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## OPERATIONS



“Over the last 18 years in produce, I would say I have broken a few glass ceilings where the positions had only ever been held by men. I’ve won awards as a top performer; I’m respected in the industry and a role model to other women coming into the business who often seek my guidance.

“When I was based out of our Toronto facility, our VP at the time was Bernadette Hamel. She was an energizing, powerful woman whom I admired so much. She had broken so many glass ceilings in the industry,

how could you not be impressed! During one of her visits, she asked me if I would ever relocate to work from the head office in Quebec. Without hesitation, I said yes! I have been blessed at Metro to work with some incredible people.

“I feel the pandemic is the biggest issue that we face daily. My teams are spread across three warehouses, as the work they do does not permit them to work from home. I am so proud of all the hard work they’ve put in...Their mental wellbeing is very important to me and I try and connect with them as much as I can.”

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**DES CROUTONS™**

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PLANT-BASED PROTEIN  
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**GARLIC & HERB**  
AIL ET FINES HERBES

**575 g**

**IF YOU WANT BREAD  
WITH YOUR SALAD,  
EAT A SANDWICH**

**Co-Founder Trudi Oberfield**  
honoured with Grocery Business &  
CPMA Women in Produce Award!

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**GLUTEN FREE**  
**MADE IN A PLANT-BASED FACILITY**

**AVAILABLE IN GARLIC & HERB, VEGAN CAESAR, AND TERIYAKI**





## GoodLeaf Farms gets Ontario Made designation

GoodLeaf Farms has received approval for the Ontario Made designation for its entire product line of greens grown in its indoor vertical farm in Guelph, Ont. And in January, its leafy greens became available at Longo's and Whole Foods Market stores across Ontario.

The Ontario Made program, created by the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), is supported by the government of Ontario and is designed to promote and support locally made products in the midst of the province's economic recovery. A label has also been developed to help consumers easily identify, access and purchase products that are made in Ontario. The GoodLeaf Farms produce designated as Ontario Made are its Asian Micro Blend, Spicy Mustard Medley, Pea Shoots, Micro Arugula, Baby Arugula and Baby Kale.



## Kingsville greenhouse grower uses LED technology on winter crops

Allegro Acres in Kingsville, Ont. has harvested its first greenhouse crop of winter-produced peppers using LED light technology from Sollum Technologies, becoming the first in Canada to do so. The initiative was undertaken in collaboration with Harrow Research and Development Centre of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with support from Sustainable Development Technology Canada. The red, yellow and orange commercial-grade peppers were seeded in October 2020 and harvested in December to ship to grocery stores.

## Ontario grower Red Sun Farms expands

Red Sun Farms is expanding North American operations to better serve customers with more locally grown produce. It's adding 35 acres of growing space for the 2021 growing season. The move comes on the heels of a 63.8-acre three-phase expansion in Kingsville, Ont. completed in 2020. With this growth, Red Sun now has 211 acres of growing space in Canada as well as additional space in Mexico and the U.S. Red Sun is also in the midst of expanding its cold storage and will add 22,500 sq ft to the Kingsville facility.





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Safe Food Corporation, Edgewater, NJ  
[www.sunnyfruit.com](http://www.sunnyfruit.com)



## Ontario produce industry awards mark member achievements

The Ontario Produce Marketing Association (OPMA) celebrated the efforts of its members to promote Ontario-grown produce during its 2020 virtual awards ceremony, held November 19, 2020. The event also honoured the 30th anniversary of the OPMA. Five individuals received awards.



### **Cory Clack-Streef Produce Person of the Year**

Peter Quiring,  
Nature Fresh Farms

### **OPMA Fresh**

Tom Heeman,  
Berry Growers of Ontario



### **Outstanding Achievement Award**

Joe Sbrocchi,  
Ontario Greenhouse  
Vegetable Growers

### **Lifetime Achievement**

Gord Love (2nd from left),  
North American  
Produce Buyers



### **Lifetime Achievement**

Vince Pillitteri,  
Seaway Farms

## Industry Event

### **CPMA Fresh Week April 12-16**

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association's "Get Fresh" virtual event takes place April 12-16. Ron Lemaire, president of the CPMA, says the event is taking place in lieu of the annual convention and trade show that has been cancelled for 2021 due to pandemic regulations. The virtual event will kick off with keynote speaker Laurent Duvernay-Tardiff, a professional football player and Super Bowl champion, and a graduate of medicine from McGill University.

Fresh Week will include multiple streams of educational seminars, a match-making business development program, a new product showcase and networking events. For details, visit CPMA Fresh Week online at [convention.cpma.ca](http://convention.cpma.ca).

## Recognizing Women in Produce

New this year at Fresh Week is the Women in Produce initiative, a collaboration between the CPMA and *Grocery Business* Magazine that recognizes the achievements of outstanding women in the produce industry. Ten honourees from the retail and supply side of the business will be recognized during CPMA's virtual event on April 13 at 7:00 p.m. Read about the nominees in this issue of *Grocery Business'* Produce Manager.

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- No Shells business has tripled in the last year. Are you getting your cut?
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# Plant Bytes

Where Canadians  
purchase fruits and  
vegetables



74.9%

GROCERY STORES

10.8%

FARMERS' MARKETS



## PRICE MATTERS

**Gen Z** shoppers are more willing  
to pay a premium for **LOCALLY  
GROWN PRODUCE** versus  
**Baby Boomers.**

50+%

GEN Z

25%

BABY BOOMERS





# Greenhouse Grown Crops

Quality perceptions of greenhouse-grown crops are about the same as for crops grown conventionally.

63.4% same quality

27.4% better quality

9.2% worse

Dalhousie University/Agri-Food Analytics Lab, Caddle

As shoppers continue to stalk the produce department in search of innovative ideas, consider these produce picks to spark shopper interest.

## FIDDLEHEADS

A Canadian spring delicacy, typically consumed while hot with melted butter.

## ROMANESCO

Part of the cauliflower family with a fractal-like visual appearance.

## SALSIFY

A root vegetable that looks like a brown stick and is related to parsnip and has a mild oyster taste when cooked.

## SAMPHIRE

Traditionally grown along the U.K. coast, when cooked has a fishy and salty taste.

## RED PERILLA

Also known as Shiso, this Japanese herb is useful as a seasoning and often used in place of basil in cooking.

## CHINESE WATER SPINACH

Also known as Hollow Heart, the stems are hollow and easy to chew, and best cooked as a stir-fry.

## LOTUS ROOT

Versatile vegetable that can be boiled, braised, stir-fried or deep-fried.

Source: foodfor.net.com

CPMA<sup>®</sup>  
**fresh  
week**

APRIL 12-16/2021  
#CPMA2021

# REGISTER NOW!

## Don't miss Fresh Week's

- Keynote addresses from industry leaders
- Critical discussions with top CEOs
- Business development opportunities

**convention.cpma.ca**

*get fresh*

INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS,  
REIMAGINED



## 2021 SPECIAL REPORT ON USA FOOD AND BEVERAGES



# Safety and Synergy

By Sally Praskey

**As President Biden recently put it, “the United States has no closer and no more important friend than Canada.”** He said this alongside Prime Minister Trudeau (virtually, of course) at the pandemic-era equivalent of a press conference, but President Biden’s statement resonates beyond these extraordinary times. It is a message that speaks to our integrated economies, to our ties of family and friendship, and to our shared values.

Canadians rightfully love their local products and supporting their local economies. But we also want consumers and retailers alike to recognize the essentially “local” nature of so many U.S. products, especially those that can’t be grown in Canada. And as our governments set their ambitions for the role agriculture can play in combating climate change, we’re proud that U.S. agricultural production methods are just as innovative as our finished products. With consumers focusing more on the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the products they choose to purchase, we’re excited to share the stories behind U.S. agricultural products with our Canadian customers and build recognition of the “local” benefits of U.S. products to the health of our cross-border regional economies and along environmental dimensions.

While trade shows, trade missions, and new product showcases were all thoroughly disrupted over the last year, our remarkably resilient cross-border relationships – some stretching back decades, others forged in the crucible of COVID – have continued to bring more than \$20 billion of U.S. high-value products to Canadian consumers through an increasing number of channels. And I know we’re all eager to put the pandemic behind us, but I’d be remiss for not appreciating the dedicated exporters and their Canadian industry partners who helped bring a number of virtual trade missions to Canada during the pandemic to build a pipeline of new product offerings.

Interest in fresh, innovative U.S. products remains strong, and I’m confident that by working with U.S. companies in 2021, Canadian retailers will continue to find new ways to connect with their customers and new opportunities for success.

Cheers!



**—Evan Mangino, Agricultural  
Attaché, United States  
Department of Agriculture**



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# USA and Canada safety systems in sync

Shopping at a grocery store in Canada or the U.S. is a pretty similar experience. Other than some different local brands and minor differences in labelling, the variety of food products is virtually the same. This is not surprising considering that in 2019, Canada imported \$25 billion worth of agri-food products from the U.S., while exporting a similar value. This represents a whole lot of food, and shows why we find many American products on our grocery store shelves.

But what about the safety of these products? How were they handled before reaching the shelves? And are they just as safe to eat as products from Canada?

About a decade ago, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Health Canada and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) looked to answer these questions when both countries undertook a project to assess each other's food safety systems. The assessment looked at the legislation, policies, inspection and enforcement of each food system both north and south of the border. Though the two systems are not the same, the assessment found that they both successfully manage food safety risks and achieve similar public health outcomes.

In 2016, the three parties formally signed the Canada-U.S. Food Safety Systems Recognition Arrangement (FSSRA) recognizing each other's food safety systems as providing a comparable level of protection for consumers.

For Canadian consumers, this means that all food products imported from the U.S. meet the same high food safety standards already in place at home. The Arrangement supports public health measures by enhancing information

sharing and scientific collaboration between the two countries, which is important during food safety outbreaks.

The FSSRA also benefits the food industry by simplifying trade. Equivalent systems equal increased confidence in each other's products and can help with decision-making when it comes to sourcing food products.

Additionally, it further strengthens the collaboration between the CFIA and FDA, through enhanced information and regulatory cooperation. This ensures that as our systems evolve and improve, they continue to provide the same public safety outcomes.

Consumers take many things into consideration when shopping for groceries, but when it comes to the safety of Canadian and American food products, they can count on products from either country as being equally safe to eat!

## U.S. Agricultural Exports to Canada

# \$28.1 Billion (Cdn)

In 2020, this represented **14%**  
of total U.S. global exports

**58%** of Canada's global  
consumer product imports are  
from the U.S.

# CALIFORNIA CHERRIES. ALWAYS A TOP PICK.

When it comes to food safety, California Cherries are the right choice. At the start of the pandemic, our industry sprung into action to develop checklists to guide field, packing shed and office operations.

We also built a Covid-19 resource centre on our website to make sure industry members had access to important resources like educational materials, signage, government guidelines and testing assistance.

Health and safety information for Canadian retailers and shoppers is now available on our website and via shippers' social channels.

**You can feel good about picking California Cherries.**



[calcherry.com](https://calcherry.com)





# Effective Consumer Engagement: A Winning Promotional Strategy

**With traditional in-store sampling sidelined by the pandemic, U.S. produce suppliers had to think outside the box to conduct their promotions.**

That's where LiveWell Marketing came in. This past summer, the agency piloted a virtual demo on behalf of California Pears. In the demo, a registered dietician stood behind a traditional in-store table in front of a green screen that featured a backdrop of the particular retailer's produce department. The dietician greeted the viewer and gave a 30-second presentation about the product on the demo table.

"LiveWell buys advertising space on Facebook and Instagram and geotargets the ad to within five kilometers of whatever banner we are doing this demo for," explains Ken Berger, Canadian representative. At the same time, Berger will have negotiated flyer ad space with the retailer, while also ensuring that the grocer's online shopping platform is carrying the product being marketed. As the demonstrator is talking, a call-to-action button invites the viewer to go either to the retailer's flyer page where the product is advertised, or to the "add to cart" page of the online shopping platform.

The results of the pilot were encouraging. "The numbers blew us away," says Berger. "The percentage of click-throughs for that ad was exponentially higher than other Facebook or Instagram ads that normally pop up. So that gave us the impetus to offer it to other commodities I work with and for other retail banners." Recently, Berger conducted a similar promotion for the new Cosmic Crisp Washington Apple, with plans in the works for Florida Citrus and California Walnuts.

Another digital promotional vehicle ties in with loyalty points programs. A promotion late last year on behalf of Florida Citrus featured a flyer ad with a bonus offer of Air Miles with the purchase of a three-pound bag of grapefruit. The result was "double the average weekly volume in number of cases of grapefruit sold," says Berger. "That was immensely successful."

A third type of promotion that Berger says "had wonderful success" was digital banner ads on the retailers' websites that delivered basic messaging about the product. The ads were spread about various pages on the website and would pop up depending on what the shopper was searching for.

"The beauty of all of these promotions is that, because they are digital, the retailer is able to provide some really robust analytics in terms of numbers of clicks and which pages showed the highest number of click-throughs, which is the kind of information we don't get from brick-and-mortar promotions," says Berger.

Since last summer, Berger has run successful promotions for all the stores in the Metro, Loblaws (both market and discount), Longo's and Walmart banners. And while he looks forward to the return of in-store demos, which "are a fabulous way to get product into shoppers' mouths," the digital promotions have served up new options for reaching consumers.

**U.S. – Canada two-way  
trade reached  
\$61 Billion (Cdn)  
in 2020**

# THE *Twist*:

YOUR DAILY CITRUS INSPIRATION

Life is full of twists and turns and sometimes you need a daily hit of inspiration. Since 1893, we've been growing the very best citrus California and Arizona has to offer.

For the freshest, zestiest, vitamin C-infused recipes, visit our virtual booth at CPMA or **sunkist.com**.

# Sunkist®





# Missions accomplished

## Bringing innovative products to Canada



**Many innovative products from the U.S. that end up on the shelves of Canadian grocery retailers are a result of programs organized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs).**

The four Groups include:

- Food Export Midwest USA;
- Food Export USA-Northeast;
- Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA); and
- Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA).

Each promotes the export of products from various parts of the U.S. by sponsoring buying missions and participation in trade shows.

"We provide opportunities for Canadian grocers and food and beverage importers to connect directly with small to medium producers of premium food and agricultural products," says Henry Vega, WUSATA Canada trade representative.

Pre-pandemic, suppliers also visited stores and met in person with distributors and brokers from Canada, but for the past year, missions have taken place virtually.

"Last year, when all our events were impacted by the pandemic and related travel restrictions, we quickly pivoted and successfully converted activities to a virtual format," says Bernadette Wiltz-Lang, executive director, SUSTA. "We have a contingency plan for all events in 2021. This year, we are planning to launch a digital marketing program for SUSTA companies,

including education on digital marketing and social media advertising."

While virtual missions provide a viable – and less expensive – option during the pandemic, "I think face to face, especially when you're talking food, is more important," says Kathy Boyce, Canadian in-market representative for Food Export. "I hope that it will go back to that. In-person missions also give suppliers the chance to visit the stores."

The USDA runs cost-share programs – called 50% CostShare for SUSTA, FundMatch for WUSATA, and the Branded Program for Food Export – that provide qualified suppliers with reimbursement for up to 50 per cent of eligible international marketing expenses, such as trade show participation fees, travel costs to an event, bilingual point-of-sale materials, and more.

Like Food Export and SUSTA, "WUSATA is ready to host Canadian grocers, distributors, brokers, importers, buyers, category managers, influencers and friends in the food and beverages trade to our virtual activities and whenever possible, U.S.-based activities," says Vega. "Our international recognition and partnerships enable us to foster the U.S.–Canada food and beverage market and new innovations that meet the latest in global flavour and packaging needs."

[foodexport.org](http://foodexport.org)  
[susta.org](http://susta.org)  
[wusata.org](http://wusata.org)

Food Export's Kathy Boyce had 27 companies participate in her most recent virtual trade mission, which she pronounced "very successful."

Boyce provided participants with research on their categories before they met with the brokers and distributors, while suppliers sent product samples in advance of meetings. "I ran more than 200 meetings over four days on the Zoom platform," she says. "Every half hour, we moved the buyer and the company into their own breakout rooms, so at any time, we were running 13-14 meetings."



# CALIFORNIA WALNUTS. ALWAYS WITHIN REACH.



California is Canada's closest walnut growing region supplying 90 percent of this country's shelled and in-shell walnuts. California walnuts are grown, harvested, and processed under standards and regulations that are mandated by federal and state authorities and often exceed quality standards set by the USDA.

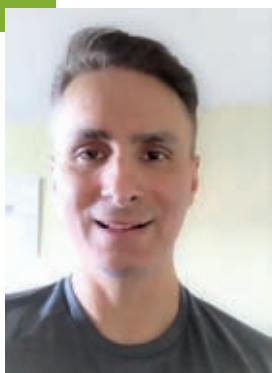
We're proud that our industry responded to the pandemic quickly, accepting the challenges posed by these unprecedented times. And despite it all, we stayed safe and were able to meet consumer demand with no supply interruption.

Available year round packaged and in bulk, count on your California neighbours for walnuts that are both healthful and safe. It's what your shoppers are looking for.

[walnuts.org](http://walnuts.org) [noixdecalfornie.ca](http://noixdecalfornie.ca)







## Atlas Brand Management and Food Export Group: A Natural Fit

Calgary-based broker Nick Alexantonakis has forged a reputation for connecting Canadian distributors and retailers with the best in natural food brands from the U.S.

For the past decade, Alexantonakis, who is president of Atlas Brand Management, has attended buying missions and trade shows sponsored by the U.S.

Department of Agriculture's Food Export Group, which promotes the export of products from the U.S. Over the years, he has listed many brands that have gone on to achieve success with retailers across Canada.

A case in point is WOW Baking, a Seattle-based company that makes a line of gluten-free cookies. As it prepared for the Canadian market, the company took advantage of Food Export's Branded Program, which reimburses qualified suppliers for up to 50 per cent of international marketing expenses. "The Branded Program in some instances has made the difference whether or not a brand can really make a go of it in the early going because of the extra costs that are covered," says Alexantonakis. "We've grown WOW Baking into a national brand. It has distribution all over the country and I think that the Branded Program had something to do with that."

As a buyer, Alexantonakis also benefits from Food Export's programs, having attended missions in different parts of the U.S. over the years. "I think those missions are invaluable," he says. "It allows you a more intimate experience with manufacturers, and you get to learn more about them as a business owner and their products."

Because Atlas Brand Management operates primarily in the natural channels, Alexantonakis gives preference to products that have certification, such as organic or Non-GMO Project Verified, because "ultimately, it's hard to communicate to the customer that these products are clean if they don't have the right certifications."

The broker deliberately keeps its portfolio small. "Our main objective as a broker is to make sure that we provide focus and attention to our principals," says Alexantonakis. "We want to make sure we offer a one-on-one relationship with our principals so that we're not stretching ourselves too thin."

Retailers reap the benefits of this commitment. "Brokers are usually looked upon as an extension of the manufacturer," says Alexantonakis. "We're the eyes, ears, face of the brand, so retailers depend on brokers and distributors to introduce exciting new products to them."

The company and its distributors keep on top of the latest trends, "whether it's a fad, or something like gluten-free, which has evolved into a way of life," says Alexantonakis. "But categories change; consumer tastes change. Ultimately, we don't know what's going to work but we know the categories that people shop the most in, such as confectionery and salty, that I don't think will go away. We carry a variety of brands that have one common theme – and that's that they're healthier for you. That way, we appeal to everybody."





# A COMMITMENT TO SAFETY. FROM OUR FAMILIES TO YOURS.



**CALIFORNIA**  
**PEARS**

California Pear growers are dedicated to the safety of Canadian shoppers. From picking to packing, we follow strict mandatory guidelines, our packing lines are sterilized daily, and our facilities are independently inspected throughout the year.

We're also ensuring the best possible pears for Canadian families by offering consumer-friendly bagged pears and committing to never use artificial ripening inhibitors. And with an increasing focus on climate change and healthfulness, our artisan growers are meeting the demand from shoppers and retailers for more organic California Pears.

**California Pears. Tasty. Trustworthy.**

**[calpear.com](http://calpear.com)**







# The Best in Beers

Since 2013, Craft Brands Co. has been partnering with U.S. brewers to offer exceptional artisanal beers to Ontarians.

The Toronto-based importer credits its successful partnerships in large part to programs offered by the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA), including in-person and, more recently, virtual trade missions. “In 2020, we helped facilitate and participated in a virtual trade mission in Ontario,” says Craft Brands co-owner and managing director Chris Goddard. “Ontario can be a difficult market to break into and it certainly takes time – usually around a year to get a seasonal listing to start – and patience.”

The grocery channel in particular can be challenging. “Many grocers in the province work off of a planogram, and because of the seasonal nature of the alcohol listings, it can be difficult to have the timing work out,” he explains. In addition, forecasting is complicated by the fact that warehousing and distribution are handled by the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO).

The company has had success bringing in two supplier-partners to Ontario as a result of Goddard’s last in-person visit to the U.S. The first is Flying Dog Brewing and its Gonzo Imperial Porter. “We had a great launch for the winter season in fall 2020 and hopefully will have it back in market again for fall 2021, as well as a new seasonal listing, Double Dog Double IPA for winter 2021.” Also on tap is Heavy Seas’ TropiCannon, which Craft Brands will launch this summer at the LCBO, “and will hopefully be able to get some grocery listings for it as well.”

Meanwhile, he continues to forge connections virtually. “We did get a chance to connect through a virtual speed-



Chris Goddard

dating and sampling event,” says Goddard. “Our agency helped to get the samples into Ontario with the SUSTA team and then get the samples out to the various agencies participating. It was actually quite fun!”

As consumers increasingly opt for healthier choices, Goddard says there is a trend now to low-alcohol and low-calorie beers – “beers that would fit into an active lifestyle or a ‘better-for-you’ category,” he says. “There is always excitement around award-winning beers, so some of the OG and classic U.S. craft beers do very well in market. Our trends follow the U.S. craft trends quite closely.” Goddard also cites sour beers, which the LCBO describes as “one of the hottest beer styles in the world, appealing to both connoisseurs and casual beer lovers looking for something a little different.”

And something a little different is what Goddard finds by participating in the SUSTA programs. “Working with SUSTA has been very educational,” he says. “We have met some great suppliers and discovered some truly amazing brands.”



# Peanuts are **QUALITY** nutrition

Over 82% of all nutrition-packed peanuts sold in Canada are sourced from 7,000 peanut farming families in the U.S. The American peanut industry's extensive research and advanced technology in plant breeding, cultivation and harvesting combine to deliver the most flavourful and safest peanuts available.

To learn more about the versatility, taste and health benefits of Quality USA peanuts, visit [peanutbureau.ca](http://peanutbureau.ca)







## IN DEMAND: California Raisins

Naturally dried under the sun with no added sugar or juice, California raisins are one of the safest, cleanest foods and are trusted by retailers and consumers worldwide.

California raisin farmers and packers take no chances when it comes to food safety standards. These include stringent safety inspections, testing and grading in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Every year, the raisin industry is subject to a comprehensive survey, which consistently shows that raisins delivered to packers do not contain pesticides or chemicals beyond the levels generally recognized as safe by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Furthermore, there are numerous restrictions and reporting systems that all farmers and growers must adhere to, and raisins are washed several times as they are processed to ensure a clean product.

As the number one supplier to the Canadian market, California Raisins meet the needs of retailers in a variety of ways, including as an economical product ingredient. An ideal ingredient for in-store bakery items as well as for ready-to-eat products, colourful raisins pack a nutrition, flavour and texture punch.

**Attention retailers! For inspiration, California Raisins offers resources such as recipe ideas and technical brochures. For more information, check out website:**

[californiaraisins.ca](http://californiaraisins.ca)

## Field Tomatoes Fresh From Florida

When Canada's outdoor-grown field tomato season ends in late September, Florida becomes Canadians' closest and the only U.S. source for trusted field tomatoes from mid-October to late May, providing retailers, foodservice operators and the patrons they serve with a true alternative to hothouse-grown or imported tomatoes from Mexico, Guatemala, or other countries.

There's something special about tomatoes grown outdoors, in real soil and under real sunlight, that produces an interior texture perfect for slicing and dicing. Unlike greenhouse tomatoes, hand-picked Florida round and roma tomatoes, as well as grape, cherry and specialty tomatoes, are renowned for their consistent great taste, firm and meaty texture, and "slice-ability," making them the perfect go-to tomatoes for at-home enjoyment.

Shopper surveys consistently show that Canadians prefer the taste and flavour of Florida field-grown tomatoes over shade, greenhouse and hothouse

tomatoes by a margin of almost four to one. In a sea of greenhouse options, including Florida field tomatoes in one's category mix will benefit sales, profitability and, most importantly, the joy of taste by your customers.

Nothing is more important to Florida's multi-generational tomato farming families than the confidence of their customers specific to quality and safety. The Florida tomato industry was a pioneer in food safety, this at the behest of its growers back in 2008 when Florida became the first in North America to adopt a comprehensive, science-based food safety program complete with annual training, certification, mandatory government inspection and audits. Every Florida tomato grown, packed and shipped is 100 per cent documented, ensuring the highest level of compliance with current food safety standards.

[floridatomatoes.org](http://floridatomatoes.org)





# MARKETING U.S.-GROWN APPLES IS AT OUR CORE

VISIT OUR NEW  
CANADIAN WEBSITE,  
**usaapples.ca**  
for a complete shipper's list and more information.

The U.S. Apple Export Council (USAEC) is a trade association representing the States of California, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.



USDA funding allows us to branch out, and proudly promote the availability of these delicious apples in the Canadian market:



McIntosh



Empire



Jonagold



Gala



Honeycrisp



Red Delicious



Golden Delicious



Fuji



Braeburn



Red Rome



Cripps Pink



Granny Smith

Contact Ken Berger, Canadian representative for the  
U.S. Apple Export Council at [ken.berger@rogers.com](mailto:ken.berger@rogers.com).

**usaapples.ca**





## Spreading the Word about Watermelon

Canadian retailers rely heavily on the U.S. to supply reliable and high-quality watermelon to its customers during the spring, summer and fall months. As Canadian consumers were seeking more economical meal solutions through the pandemic, demand for U.S. watermelon has grown even more, as evident in the 40-million-pound year-over-year increase in U.S. watermelon exports to Canada during the prime watermelon season in 2020.

With a category item like watermelon, good merchandising is important because it confirms the value, health and versatility of the product, which also happen to be some of the primary drivers for sales. Last year, the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) released a retail kit that is accessible to retailers online or via postal mail. The kit is a guide to watermelon and includes the latest consumer research as well as marketing tips and opportunities available to effectively market watermelon every day of the year. In addition to this kit, NWPB has many other educational tools and POS materials for retailers on everything that watermelon has to offer.

*Although not feasible in 2020 or this year, the National Watermelon Queens have travelled to select Canadian retail partners to help promote watermelon to Canadian consumers. NWPB also collaborates regularly with Canadian retailers on other in-store and digital promotion partnerships.*

[watermelon.org](http://watermelon.org)

## The Delights of Medjool Dates

**The ongoing pandemic has required even greater diligence and flexibility to ensure food safety. One of the brands that is leading to safeguard the health of Canadian shoppers is Natural Delights Medjool Dates.**

The Bard Valley date growers have made food safety and the supply chain their top priorities throughout farming, production and packaging. According to Natural Delights' marketing director David Baxter, "early on, we began checking everyone's temperature daily, scheduled additional cleaning times, and built plexiglass barriers in our facilities." They also implemented strict protocols for wearing gloves, masks and face shields, and began all-day sanitization of equipment.

The Bard Valley straddling Arizona and California views Canada as a local market. Because the growing area is only days away, a constant supply of Natural Delights is always available year-round, and with less handling than required with overseas shipping.

Canada's leading Medjool date brand, Natural Delights are sold in 100 per cent post-consumer recycled clear tubs, packaging that ensures an extra layer of shopper safety.

But even a safe product still needs to be merchandised properly, especially with over 20 SKUs available. "We have a complete range of merchandising tools," says Mauro Santelli, the new director of sales for Canada. "These include half- and mini-pallets, display racks and bilingual displayers.

[naturaldelights.com](http://naturaldelights.com)



# FRESH FLORIDA ORANGES ARE IN SEASON



Florida's subtropical climate and sandy soil make the perfect conditions for growing the sweetest and juiciest oranges. That's why Florida Oranges are the best choice when it comes to enjoying fresh-squeezed orange juice at home or on the go.

Consumers continue to seek foods and beverages that provide immune system support for their families. Fresh Florida Oranges provide essential vitamins and nutrients, like vitamin C. Whether squeezed into juice or eaten whole, Florida Oranges are a nutritious and delicious way to add sunshine to every day.

For Florida Citrus Growers, growing citrus is not just a family tradition, it is a way of life. They take pride in providing citrus to people around the world while following the highest safety and quality standards possible.

**Don't wait.**  
Florida Oranges are  
at peak season now.

[www.floridacitrus.ca](http://www.floridacitrus.ca)





## A “Golden State of Mind” for California Wines



California Wines has launched a new global brand campaign and business strategy in Canada, showcasing California wine as a leader in sustainable winegrowing, innovation, and winemaking advancements while promoting the commitment of generations of family farmers and winemakers to producing high-quality wines.

Called “Golden State of Mind,” the campaign’s first phase aims to grow awareness and appreciation for California wines through digital advertising and consumer-focused promotions to meet wine drinkers where they are most active in discovering and purchasing

wine. Starting with the introduction of a new look and logo for California wines, the campaign will roll out across Canada beginning in Spring 2021.

“This is an exciting junction for California Wines; we have an opportunity to forge a new path, to share California’s unique attributes, so that we continue to grow and evolve in the minds and glasses of our Canadian wine consumers and build more robust sales for California Wines,” says Danielle Giroux, Canadian director for California Wines.

[discovercaliforniawines.com](https://discovercaliforniawines.com)



**In a world of  
uncertainty, one  
thing is sure:**

**California Prunes deliver on  
taste, quality and unparalleled food  
safety practices – certainties  
Canadians can fully appreciate.**

Each generation of prune growers has “paid it forward,” contributing to the layers of craftsmanship required to grow the world’s best prunes. Now, more than ever, shoppers want reassurances their food is safely grown. California Prune growers have always adhered to strict quality and safety measures and during the past year, they adapted to ongoing COVID regulations to ensure that their customers received consistent,

premium-quality prunes with every purchase.

These dedicated growers, packers and shippers overcame obstacles, including greater protection of staff and different ways of working together, to ensure the supply chain kept moving, providing its key markets with premium prunes. Their synergistic efforts were best realized in the Canadian market, where strong demand led to an increase in U.S. prune exports of 20 per cent since August 2020. California Prunes are also available in a variety of derivatives, ideal for industrial-scale product formulations where they can add nutritional benefits and a naturally sweet taste to many products.

To capitalize on consumers’ increasing interest in California Prunes, retailers should consider increasing visibility beyond the baking aisle to spur impulse buying.

With 42 per cent of Canadians reporting they are looking to purchase California Prunes, you should consider highlighting California origin on pack or including California Prunes in the produce section as a salad topper, or in the deli section with charcuterie items.

The California halo is also a nod to being as “local” as prunes get for Canadians.

[californiaprunes.ca](https://californiaprunes.ca)

## The Certainty of California Prunes

# TEAM UP with California Prunes

A champion snack choice for all Canadians.



“We’re constantly looking for ways to better our minds and bodies—on and off the field.”

– Canadian National Women's Softball Team

**69%** of Canadians believe that  
**CALIFORNIA/USA PRODUCES THE BEST PRUNES.\***

**35%**  
of Canadians  
**PURCHASE PRUNES AT  
LEAST ONCE A MONTH.\***

**25%**  
**WOULD BUY PRUNES MORE OFTEN,**  
if they were more  
available (or more prominent)  
in the stores where they shop.\*

**42%**  
of Canadians reported  
they would **LOOK FOR  
CALIFORNIA PRUNES** the  
next time they buy prunes.\*



If you are interested in purchasing California Prunes or obtaining product information and prices, visit [CaliforniaPrunes.ca/trade](https://CaliforniaPrunes.ca/trade) for a list of California Prune handlers.

CaliforniaPrunes.ca | @CAprunesCAN   

\*Based on an independent survey conducted by Rose Research in June 2020 among 1,500 Canadians (primary grocery shoppers).

 **california  
prunes**<sup>TM</sup>  
Prunes. For life.





# Shoppers Say: “Specialty Cheese, Please!”

**Specialty cheese is more popular than ever as consumers, hunkering down in their homes during the pandemic, seek a variety of food options.**

“Consumers are cooking at home more and because of that, the specialty cheese category has seen substantial growth,” says Nick Stoller, associate brand manager at Wisconsin-based Sartori Cheese.

And that’s likely to continue. “We expect to see these changing behaviors from the COVID-19 pandemic turn into longer-term habits for consumers, causing them to look for more convenient forms of specialty cheese,” adds Stoller, such as for snacking, as well as grated and shredded varieties for cooking.

Abby Despins, director of communications, Emmi Roth, Fitchburg, Wisc., agrees. “Consumers have favoured hard specialty cheeses that are cooking-friendly, such as parmesan and Gruyère,” she notes. “We believe this was driven by consumers craving comfort foods during the pandemic. However, we also saw products like ready-made fondue perform very well outside of just Q4 as consumers tried to create special events in home.”

For their part, cheesemakers quickly adapted to meet enhanced food-safety measures by providing pre-cut/wrapped cheeses, says Laura Ginsburg, agricultural development section chief, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

## Tracking the trends

Flavour, versatility, and value are the watchwords when consumers are choosing specialty cheese, says Despins. Although plant-based is top of mind for many, it still represents only a small percentage of total cheese sales, she adds. “It will be interesting to see how this develops.”

Both Ginsburg and Despins cite e-commerce as a growing trend in the industry. “E-commerce grocery sales continue to grow and we foresee this trend continuing in

the coming years, even in the specialty cheese category,” says Despins.

While consumers have been gravitating toward higher-quality cheese for years, they are also trying a greater variety of cheeses, “as they offer a small extravagance that is both simple to serve or prepare, and not unattainable price-wise,” says Alison Rosenblum, customer development manager at Tillamook, an Oregon-based farmer-owned co-op.

Whatever their preference, consumers want to know the story behind the cheese they are buying. “Here in Wisconsin, there are so many stories to tell behind specialty cheese brands, and the better the stories that are told via packaging, social communities and more, the more we can connect with consumers,” says Despins. “We’ve also seen strong sales of cheeses that have source-identified characteristics, such as coming from a single farm, supporting a particular kind of farming or cheesemaking practice, and have a story that supports the brand,” notes Ginsburg.

And that extends to social responsibility. “Quality” doesn’t just mean that consumers just want expensive products, says Rosenblum. “Quality means better flavour, authentic make processes, real ingredients, and business practices that consider people, farms, and the environment.”



# MORE THAN AN APPLE, IT'S AN INSPIRATION

The Cosmic Crisp® is a brand-new apple that was classically bred. But this is more than just a new apple, it's better! The Cosmic Crisp® is also great for cooking and baking because it's so sweet, juicy and crispy. And better still, the Cosmic Crisp® is naturally very slow to turn brown. Orchard-grown only in beautiful Washington state, Cosmic Crisp® apples are available now.



**EASY  
SNACKING**



**DELICIOUS  
BAKING**



**BEAUTIFUL  
ENTERTAINING**



# COSMIC CRISP®



And to help boost sales, order our bilingual displayer bin and POS by contacting  
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416-200-7207

Imagine the Possibilities™ at [cosmiccrisp.com](http://cosmiccrisp.com)







# Cooperators Upcoming Events

## Beer, Wine & Spirits Virtual Trade Mission

**Organizer:** Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA)  
**Date:** May 19, 2021  
**Contact:** Heidi Kim, hkim@argylepr.com

### Additional Information:

This virtual mission is an opportunity for Canadian beer, wine and spirits agents and buyers to connect directly with southern U.S. beer, wine and spirits companies seeking representation in the Canadian market. Participating Canadian agents and buyers will receive samples from select companies, then participate in curated one-on-one meetings through private video conference calls.

## Specialty Alcoholic Drinks Virtual Trade Mission

**Organizer:** Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA)  
**Date:** April 6-9, 2021  
**Contact:** Henry Vega, henry@congressum.ca

### Additional Information:

WUSATA welcomes the opportunity to connect Canadian importers of beer & cider, coolers, wine and spirits with 20 producers from Nevada, Washington, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana and New Mexico.

## Specialty Foods Virtual Trade Mission

**Organizer:** Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA)  
**Date:** April 12 - May 7, 2021  
**Contact:** Henry Vega, henry@congressum.ca

### Additional Information:

WUSATA welcomes the opportunity to connect Canadian importers of packaged foods and non-alcoholic beverages with 30 producers from California, Oregon, Washington, Utah and Hawaii.

## ATTENTION Canadian Brokers, Distributors, Importers & Retailers

## Learn how to offset the cost of promoting U.S. products in Canada



**Taste USA invites you to attend a seminar  
on May 12, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. EST**

- To learn first-hand about a **cost-share funding program** that can help you expand your business by importing and promoting U.S. products in the Canadian market.
- U.S. companies can request from **\$2,500 to \$300,000 USD** to **cover 50%** of eligible international marketing expenses implemented by their partners in the Canadian market.

**To attend the seminar, please e-mail: [info@tasteusa.ca](mailto:info@tasteusa.ca)**



This event is organized by  
the U.S. Department of  
Agriculture in collaboration with



# Upcoming Events

## 2021 Sweets & Snacks Expo

**Organizer:** Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA)  
**Date:** June 23-25, 2021  
**Location:** Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A.  
**Contact:** To register, please visit [sweetsandsnacks.com](https://sweetsandsnacks.com)

### Additional Information:

The largest candy and snack industry trade event in North America, the Sweets & Snacks Expo is attended by thousands of confectionery and snack retailers, manufacturers and suppliers for a reason – here you'll find all the product innovations, insights and industry connections you need to build a world-class in-store or online experience that will delight your shoppers.

## Western Nursery Products, Cut-Flowers & Live Plants

**Organizer:** Western United States Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA)  
**Date:** August 2021  
**Contact:** Henry Vega, [henry@congressum.ca](mailto:henry@congressum.ca).

### Additional Information:

WUSATA welcomes the opportunity to connect Canadian importers with growers and producers of nursery products, cut flowers and live plants from the western region of the U.S.

# U.S. New

## Simply 7 Snacks

Simply 7 makes snacks with mouthwatering flavours and clean, simple, and real ingredients such as quinoa, lentil, and kale. All snacks are non-GMO Project Verified, Certified Gluten Free, Kosher and Vegetarian.

[simply7snacks.com](https://simply7snacks.com)



## U.S. Cooperators and U.S. Departments of Agriculture at CPMA

Bard Valley Date Growers  
[naturaldelights.com](https://naturaldelights.com)  
 California Strawberry Commission  
[californiastrawberries.com](https://californiastrawberries.com)  
 Idaho Eastern Oregon Spanish Sweet Onions  
[usaonions.com](https://usaonions.com)  
 National Watermelon Promotion Board  
[watermelon.org](https://watermelon.org)  
 North Carolina Department of Agriculture  
[ncfreshlink.com](https://ncfreshlink.com)

Pear Bureau Northwest  
[usapecans.com](https://usapecans.com)  
 Sunkist Growers Inc.  
[sunkist.com](https://sunkist.com)  
 Washington State Fruit Commission/Northwest Cherries  
[northwestcherries.net](https://northwestcherries.net),  
[wastatefruit.com](https://wastatefruit.com)  
 Wonderful Pistachios & Almonds  
[wonderfulpistachiosandalmonds.com](https://wonderfulpistachiosandalmonds.com)

## Other Taste USA Partners not at CPMA

Almond Board of California  
[almonds.com](https://almonds.com)  
 American Peanut Council  
[peanutsusa.com](https://peanutsusa.com)

American Pecan Council  
[americanpecan.com](https://americanpecan.com)  
 American Pistachio Growers/ Cal-Pure Pistachio  
[americanpistachios.org](https://americanpistachios.org),  
[getcrackin.com](https://getcrackin.com)  
 American Sweet Potato Marketing Institute  
[americansweetpotato.org](https://americansweetpotato.org)  
 Blue Diamond Almond Growers  
[bluediamond.com](https://bluediamond.com)  
 California Cherry Marketing and Research Board  
[calcherry.com](https://calcherry.com)  
 California Cut Flower Commission  
[ccfc.org](https://ccfc.org)  
 California Fig Advisory Board  
[californiafigs.com](https://californiafigs.com)

California Olive Oil Council  
[cooc.com](https://cooc.com)  
 California Pear Advisory Board  
[calpear.com](https://calpear.com)  
 California Prune Board  
[californiaprunes.org](https://californiaprunes.org)  
 California Ripe Olive Committee  
[calolive.org](https://calolive.org)  
 California Table Grape Commission  
[grapesfromcalifornia.com](https://grapesfromcalifornia.com)  
 California Walnut Commission  
[walnuts.org](https://walnuts.org)  
 Florida Department of Citrus  
[floridacitrus.org](https://floridacitrus.org)  
 Florida Tomato Committee  
[floridatomatoes.org](https://floridatomatoes.org)

Ginseng Board of Wisconsin  
[ginsengboard.com](https://ginsengboard.com)  
 Hawaii Coffee Association  
[hawaiicoffee.com](https://hawaiicoffee.com)  
 Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association  
[hawaiifloriculture.org](https://hawaiifloriculture.org)  
 Hawaii Papaya Industry Association  
[hawaiipapaya.com](https://hawaiipapaya.com)  
 Intertribal Agricultural Council  
[indianag.org](https://indianag.org)  
 National Confectioners Association  
[candyusa.com](https://candyusa.com)  
 National Sunflower Association  
[sunflowerusa.com](https://sunflowerusa.com)



# Product Showcase



## The Amazing Chickpea

The most unique feature of these chickpea-based spreads – which are not only nut- and gluten-free – is that they taste like peanut butter. Since the company's recent founding, the line has expanded to include single-serve cups and pouches of spreads as well as dry pouch mixes and its newest innovation, 5 Minute Hummus Mix.

[theamazingchickpea.com](http://theamazingchickpea.com)

## Northwest Hazelnut Company

Northwest Company offers all varieties of hazelnuts, in both inshell and kernels. Roasted, pasteurized, or chopped for quality and safety. Its grower-processor team has been active for more than 40 years, when the George family entered the hazelnut industry. Northwest continues to innovate new processing methods while expanding its line-up to include a variety of hazelnut pastes.

[hazelnuts.com](http://hazelnuts.com)



Organic Trade Association  
[ota.com](http://ota.com)

Raisins Administrative  
Committee  
[calraisins.org](http://calraisins.org)

Synergistic Hawaii Agricultural  
Council  
[shachawaii.org](http://shachawaii.org)

U.S. Apple Export Council  
[usaapples.com](http://usaapples.com)

U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council  
[blueberrycouncil.org](http://blueberrycouncil.org)

U.S. Meat Export Federation  
[usmef.org](http://usmef.org)

U.S. Soybean Export Council  
[ussec.org](http://ussec.org)

USA Rice  
[thinkrice.com](http://thinkrice.com)

Washington Apple Commission  
[bestapples.com](http://bestapples.com)

Western Growers Association  
[wga.com](http://wga.com)

### State Regional Trade Groups

Food Export Northeast  
[foodexport.org](http://foodexport.org)

Food Export USA Midwest  
[foodexport.org](http://foodexport.org)

Southern United States Trade  
Association  
[susta.org](http://susta.org)

Western United States  
Agricultural Trade Association  
[wusata.org](http://wusata.org)

### Alcohol Groups

Brewers Association  
[brewersassociation.org](http://brewersassociation.org)

California Wine Institute  
[discovercaliforniawines.com](http://discovercaliforniawines.com)

Distilled Spirits Council of the  
United States  
[distilledspirits.org](http://distilledspirits.org)

New York Wine and Grape  
Foundation (NYWGF)  
[newyorkwines.org](http://newyorkwines.org)

Oregon Wine Board  
[oregonwine.org](http://oregonwine.org)

Washington State Wines  
[washingtonwine.org](http://washingtonwine.org)

### Cooperators Not Active in Canadian Market

American Seed Trade  
Association (ASTA)  
[betterseed.org](http://betterseed.org)

American Sheep Industry  
Association  
[sheepusa.org](http://sheepusa.org)

California Agricultural Export  
Council  
[n/a](http://n/a)

Kentucky Distillers' Association  
[kybourbon.com](http://kybourbon.com)

Kentucky Thoroughbred  
Association  
[kentuckybred.org](http://kentuckybred.org)

Mohair Council of America  
[mohairusa.org](http://mohairusa.org)

National Industrial Hemp Council  
[hempindustrial.com](http://hempindustrial.com)

National Pecan Shellers  
Association  
[ilovepecans.org](http://ilovepecans.org)

Texas Pecan Growers Association  
[tpga.org](http://tpga.org)

The USA Dry Pea and Lentil  
Council  
[usapulses.org](http://usapulses.org)

U.S. Dairy Export Council  
[usdec.org](http://usdec.org), [uscheeseguild.org](http://uscheeseguild.org)

U.S. Grains Council  
[grains.org](http://grains.org)

U.S. Livestock Genetics Export  
[uslge.org](http://uslge.org)

U.S. Tart Cherries  
[uscherries.com](http://uscherries.com)



# YOUR opportunity to grow as Tommee Tippee outperforms!

Tommee Tippee is the fastest growing brand in Canada at **+\$244K & +34%**

Playtex -11% (-\$477K) Gerber -6% (-\$80K) Continue to rapidly decline

Tommee Tippee is growing in all 3 categories: **Bottle+29%, Cups +37%, Pacifiers +66%**

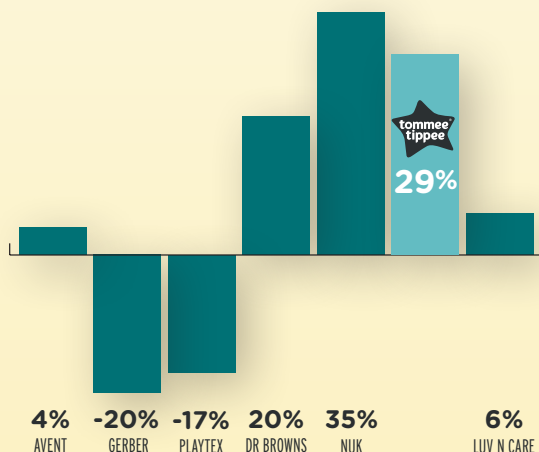
Premium Brands are driving the growth

Source: NIELSEN \$, NATIONAL, GB+DR+MM, L24W PE JAN 30, 2021

## TOTAL Performance in Canada L24W **+3%** Tommee Tippee **+34%**

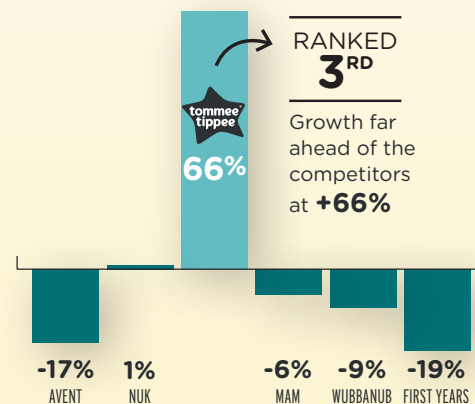
### TT BOTTLES

BOTTLES \$5.6M +1% > TOMMEE TIPPEE +29%



### TT PACIFIERS\*

PACIFIERS \$8.5M -3% > TOMMEE TIPPEE +66%



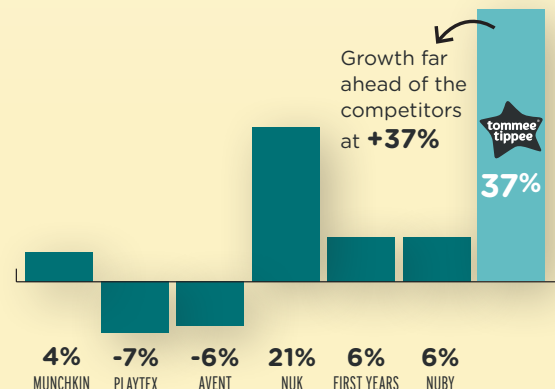
RANKED  
**3<sup>RD</sup>**

Growth far  
ahead of the  
competitors  
at **+66%**

\* NIELSEN \$, NATIONAL, GB+DR+MM, L24W PE JAN 30, 2021

### TT CUPS

CUPS \$7.0M +1% > TOMMEE TIPPEE +37%



Growth far  
ahead of the  
competitors  
at **+37%**

Contact: Richard Wiley,  
Head of Commercial Operations, Canada  
Mayborn Group Limited  
for more information on new products shipping now  
Tel: (416) 709-2134 • [rwiley@mayborngroup.com](mailto:rwiley@mayborngroup.com)





# Setting the stage for sleep – and profits



**T**here's a reason why Tommee Tippee's line of baby feeding and sleep products is growing at a remarkable rate of 34 per cent\*; grocery retailers can share in that growth while helping customers with babies and toddlers get the sleep they so desperately need.

Babies won't automatically sleep just because it's nighttime. In fact, a study by Ergoflex revealed that new parents lose 44 days of sleep in a baby's first year. Sleep is new parents' biggest unmet need, and their anxiety can run high. Many believe poor sleep for them and for baby is inevitable until baby develops.

But there are ways to encourage healthy sleep habits, and that's where Tommee Tippee can help. "At Tommee Tippee, we strive to make life with baby easier and more enjoyable," says Sharon Swan, brand director of Tommee Tippee North America. **"Being well-rested can be a big factor in that, making this collection a natural and necessary extension of our range."**

Tommee Tippee is known for its award-winning bottles. The company's Closer to Nature bottles – the most breast-like ever – are naturally anti-colic; a valve in the nipple reduces air ingestion that

can cause these periods of prolonged crying and fussiness. After all, a happy baby is one who also sleeps better.

Parents who tried using the Closer to Nature bottles to reduce these symptoms in their child reported **80 per cent**

less colic. In fact, **97 per cent** of moms recommend using Tommee Tippee bottles. **Bonus: the bottles do not leak and have fewer parts than other brands, making them easier and faster to clean.**

Once children reach toddler age, they are often raring to get out of bed – no matter what the time. Enter the GroClock. The clock features fun images of the stars and sun to communicate when children should go back to sleep and when they can get up and wake their parents, using the times parents have pre-set. A perfect product for grocers' online offerings.

Tommee Tippee is the top brand in Australia and the U.K., and the fastest growing baby feeding brand in Canada. **"Despite the coronavirus, Mayborn/Tommee Tippee had an explosive year of growth at +34 per cent,"** says Wiley. "With the Gro brand now direct and new products coming this fall, we are now just hitting our stride."

## The GroClock is one of the most popular sleep items in Canada

**The Gro brand** – which features an extensive line of sleep products for newborns, babies and toddlers – is a recent acquisition for Mayborn Group, but has been a strong player in Canada for years. Orders are now being taken directly by Rick Wiley, Head of Commercial Operations, Canada, Mayborn Group Limited (rwiley@mayborngroup.com or at 416-709-2134).



# Fermenting **GROWTH**

*Since launching in grocery, the beer and wine category has experienced steady growth. Grocery Business looks at how the category is evolving and how grocers can explore new ways to grow sales even further.*

## Grocers' Views

### **Loblaw Companies Limited**

#### **A changing retail landscape**

.....

"Even before the pandemic, customers clearly preferred the convenience of having beer and wine available as part of their grocery trip. The pandemic has accelerated this trend as Canadians heeded the public health advice and limited their trips," says David Harrington, vice president, national liquor and optical, Loblaw Companies Limited. Harrington says that beer and wine categories tend to mirror broader food trends.

"A few of the bigger trends we're seeing include changes in packaging and formats and a major shift out of beer bottles and into cans. And we're also seeing a preference towards purchasing larger formats. For example, many more Canadians have embraced 4 L boxed wine; it offers incredible value and the quality and depth of options have come a long way in recent years."

Increasingly, Canadians are also looking to purchase not just local, but hyper-local alcoholic beverages. "This was happening before the pandemic, but we've seen local/Canadian pride swell during the pandemic."



David Harrington

The "better-for-you" movement has been growing alongside the local one. "The RTD category had a breakout last year on the back of seltzers and their low-sugar, low-calorie content."

And while there is much change in the beer and wine category, to continue to grow this segment, Harrington says for Loblaw it's about "staying close to what customers want and not over-complicating things for them. These categories are full of selection, but that can be overwhelming for someone, especially when they're there as part of a full grocery trip. Our job is to simplify and help them make a confident choice, whether it's picking up a nice bottle of wine to pair with a meal or discovering the latest local beer. Value remains important in this category. We see it clearly in provinces outside of Ontario where retailers are free to set prices. Customers have responded incredibly well to our PC Optimum loyalty program in the provinces in which we are able to use it in this category."



## Metro Inc.

### Strategizing to grow in the long term

The beer and wine category was on a growth trajectory at Metro Inc. prior to COVID-19, but the pandemic “further accelerated our growth,” says George Kioussis, director, category management.

Sales of beer and wine at Metro locations have varied because approximately one-third of stores carry wine and another 40 per cent carry beer. And some stores feature stand-alone beer or wine sections, while other stores offer both.

“Interestingly enough, our sales are almost split evenly between beer and wine on aggregate, with a slight edge to beer due to a higher store count. However, when you examine sales generated on a per-store basis, we enjoy higher sales velocity with wine (including co-located outlets) and since the pandemic, our ratio of beer versus wine sales in total has narrowed,” says Kioussis.

While the pandemic has driven sales in the category, grocers need to secure future growth post-pandemic. Metro’s strategy begins with offering “the most sophisticated planogram and breadth of assortment for our shoppers. We’re extremely passionate about delivering and nurturing the best customer experience in our stores. Our assortment strategy (balancing imports and VQA

wines) ensures we have the top SKUs captured across core countries and varietals, which in turn ensures category shopability is a success.”

He adds that Metro works continuously with its key supplier partners to understand shopper behaviour trends and analyzes its “assortment architecture from a varietals and country of origin standpoint” to ensure it remains on the “leading-edge of the innovation curve. We also showcase premium fixtures and a presentation that creates a comfortable yet elegant ambiance for our customers.”

To win long term in this category, Metro plans to track market trends while focusing on legacy brands, as well as “expanding our large format variety, tailoring our local assortment based on regionality as well as driving our seasonal mix and in-store execution. We’ll complement this with in-store signage to aid in category education and navigation, and exploit food and beverage pairings to inspire and grow customer baskets to ensure sustained growth.”



George Kioussis



# RADLER SEASON IS IN SESSION!



For more information contact:

**JIM MANZ**

Vice President, Sales and Key Accounts

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# Vendor Insights

## Waterloo Brewing

### “Better-for-you” options for better sales

Waterloo Brewing has seen a surge in sales, spurred on by the pandemic. Jim Manz, vice president of sales and key accounts, says the biggest spike occurred in spring 2020, when beer volumes grew dramatically for the Ontario brewery. Year-to-date, sales are up close to 70 per cent. And beer sales will continue to grow in grocery.

“As consumer awareness that beer and cider are available at grocery improves, consumers have adopted a one-stop shop, so adding a few cans or a six-pack of their favourite brew is becoming more commonplace. And grocers have become more sophisticated in their approach to managing the category as it grows in importance to them in driving traffic and basket size.”

Some of that growth will come from “better-for-you” options, predicts Manz. “There will be continued growth for low-cal, low-sugar, low-alcohol as well as non-alcoholic options. Malt-based seltzers are also seeing strong momentum.”



Jim Manz

## Sleeman Breweries

### Beer buying shifts

Since the pandemic began over one year ago, Sleeman Breweries has seen sales shift to grocery, mostly in Ontario, while in Quebec “a large amount of volume has moved from traditional grocery outlets to big-box stores, as people are buying in bulk during lockdowns,” says Jessica Embro, key account manager, The Beer Store and Grocery.

A significant change in the grocery channel is a growing preference for cans over bottles and a trend towards the premium light category. “In Ontario, we have seen the number of grocery beer and cider authorizations grow from 60 in December 2015 to the maximum allowed 450 in 2020. Ontario now has unrestricted wine authorizations, which have increased the competitive landscape for alcohol within the channel,” says Embro, adding that Sleeman is also seeing “robust growth in the craft beer (micro and macro) segment specifically in Quebec, with a 22 per cent share in 2020.”

Embro adds that the “better-for-you” segment is witnessing growth and Sleeman is seeing more space being allocated to this segment. “We also foresee brand extensions within the segment, such as, for example, the Sleeman Clear 2.0 Peach.”



Jessica Embro



**California is the No.1 country of origin for table wines in Canada\***  
= Consumers look for California wines



**Consumers are willing to pay a premium for wines from California\*\***  
= higher transaction value for grocers



**81% of consumers will buy a brand if it does good! : Over 80% of the wine produced in California are produced in a certified sustainable winery : California Wines are trusted by the consumer\*\*\***

## CALIFORNIA WINES, AS ALIVE AS THE PLACE THEY'RE GROWN



**f** @CaliforniaWinesCanada  
**ig** @California.Wines.Canada  
 dicovercaliforniawines.com  
 sustainablewinegrowing.org

\*source ACD Jan 2021

\*\*source ACD Jan 2021 (avg price point for California wines nationally is >\$15 vs overall avg of \$12)

\*\*\* Source :Edeleman 2019 Brand Trust report



# CALIFORNIA CRUSH!

## DIVERSE REGIONS & STYLES:

California has a vast array of spectacular wine regions creating world-class wines that compete with the best in the world. Each region has a distinct personality with unique styles and characters. With so much to choose from there is a wine for every taste and occasion! Emerging regions such as Lodi are quickly becoming famous for its Zinfandels while Paso Robles is producing luscious Cabernet Sauvignons in a smoother style. As consumer demand for fresher, lighter style white wine offerings increase California is answering the call by offering crisp Pinot Grigio and unoaked Chardonnays to ensure a wine that “fits” for everyone’s tastes.

## IMPORT CATEGORY LEADERS:

Canada is the largest export market for California wines. Why? The reason is that California offers such a wide range of wines with diverse styles to suit almost every palate and pocket book. It’s easy to curate the perfect assortment to meet a wine lover’s needs—from famous iconic wines to the everyday tried and trusted brands that over deliver in the bottle every time.

It’s no secret that California is a special place. It’s the birthplace of innovation which allows all to dream big and aspire to be the best—and its wines share the same spirit. California wine comes from some of the most interesting soils and terroirs on earth, embraced by its trendsetting winemakers and growers.



## CONSUMERS ASPIRE TO THE CALIFORNIA LIFESTYLE, SUNNY, OPTIMISTIC AND INNOVATIVE BY NATURE.



## MATCH MADE IN ...CALIFORNIA

California’s culinary scene is the hotbed of gastronomic trends, showcasing leading edge cuisine and fresh food pairing ideas rooted in the award winning chefs and restaurateurs who are passionate about showcasing the bounty of the Golden State. Fusion trends that combine spices and twists to everyday known favorites set California apart. In true California style, there are no rules when it comes to pairing wines and creating great tastes. With a healthier lifestyle reflected in the cuisine, the tastes are bold and fresh. California’s award winning chefs have helped take the humble avocado to new heights, created pistachio pesto and the now ubiquitous California roll, or upside-down sushi. There is simply no better time to drink California wine.

For more information: [calwine.ca](http://calwine.ca) or [DiscoverCaliforniaWines.com](http://DiscoverCaliforniaWines.com)

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larryb@grocerybusiness.ca  
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Gerald Whitley

## Corby Wine

### Consumers want brands they know and trust

Beer and wine in retail is undergoing a “massive transformation,” with wine sales experiencing exceptional growth, says Gerald Whitley, manager, regional trade marketing for the Prairies and Atlantic regions and the grocery channel for Corby Spirit and Wine. In Ontario, the grocery channel grew 141 per cent in 2020, with Corby wine sales growing 199 per cent.

“Consumer channel preferences are shifting to e-commerce and direct delivery or, where possible, to grocery stores that sell beer and wine to minimize exposure and unnecessary trips to additional stores. When consumers do visit stores, they are going in prepared with purchases in mind, and stocking up and large formats are very popular now.”

When consumers are shopping in stores, they’re not browsing as much or trying new brands, adds Whitley. “They’re playing it safe and looking for wine brands they know and trust. It’s one of the reasons fueling the rapid growth of Jacob’s Creek, which is the sixth-largest brand family in the Ontario grocery channel and growing at 214 per cent on the year, almost 1.5 times faster than the total category of +141 per cent in the last 12 months.”

Whitley says he expects to see more changes as grocers become more savvy wine retailers, and that they will continue to incorporate POS and display elements from other categories into wine. “I don’t think we will see a broader selection of wines; instead, we’ll see some rationalization as grocers concentrate efforts on winning key brands, countries of origin and varieties, so a ‘less is more’ approach.”

## California Wines

### E-commerce for wine comes of age

Consumers are shifting to “tried and true” brands in large part because of the perception that they are safer. “California Wines has benefited from this trend with many well-known, trusted brands available at grocers,” says Danielle Giroux, director, California Wines Canada. The pandemic has resulted in significant change in the wine category in grocery.

For one, Giroux says consumers are becoming more concerned with safety and saving. “At the same time, without being able to travel and spend on vacations abroad, consumers spend more on a bottle of wine to ‘treat themselves,’ and are trying new styles of food from the comfort of their homes paired with a special bottle of wine.”

Secondly, e-commerce “has come of age for wine,” adds Giroux, and is rapidly becoming a “habitual way of shopping for wine.” As of October 2020, according to Wine Intelligence Vintrac, of consumers who shop for wine online, 55 per cent said being able to add wines to their normal grocery shopping was a key factor in their buying decisions, second only to a promotional offer.

Shoppers are also more concerned with country of origin, which has risen in importance to be the third top purchase cue behind grape varietal and brand name.

Giroux adds that sustainability continues to rise in importance among wine purchasing consumers.

“California Wines is poised to meet the growing demand for ‘brands that do right.’ With more than 80 per cent of wine crafted in California now made in a certified sustainable winery, California wines have led the change towards sustainability in winemaking.”



Danielle Giroux

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## Philippe Dandurand Wines

### “Trailblazing grocers” eye bigger market share

The Dandurand Group has witnessed remarkable growth in grocery, with Ontario sales alone more than tripling in 2020, says Elias Aoun, vice president of sales and marketing Canada. And while the category is still relatively new in grocery, “we have seen a few trailblazing grocers” who are capturing more market share.

As consumers become accustomed to purchasing wine in grocery, grocers are looking for best-in-class category knowledge and expertise.

“This category has proven to drive more frequent trips to the store while building a bigger and more profitable basket. We invest a lot of time and resources to help the industry trailblazers, the ones looking to transform their stores and capture this unique opportunity to become

shoppers’ favourite destination for imported wines.” To do this, they’ll need a wider assortment of wines.

“Grocery has the opportunity to offer customers a unique experience in pairing wine with food, which further fuels the trend towards more convenient access to wine.”

Aoun adds that as consumer tastes and shopping behaviours evolve, they will turn to well-known trusted brands and make more informed choices. “Expect to see an abundance of ‘better-for-you’ products, organic options and environmentally friendly items make their way onto the shelf.”



Elias Aoun



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For more information contact:

**Roger McNaughton**

Vice President Sales & Trade Operations  
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## Mill Street Brewery

### “One-less-stop shopping”

Roger McNaughton

The grocery channel has been a boon for beer, says Roger McNaughton, vice president of sales and trade operations, Mill Street Brewery & Brickworks Ciderhouse.

“Beer in the grocery channel provides customers with the convenience of ‘one less shop’ while allowing grocers to grow basket size. A sociable beverage, beer is a naturally great pairing with many staple food items, from ribs and wings to pizza and salty snacks. Grocery makes the impulse pairing easily attainable for the customer, something we encourage grocers to explore.”

Lagers and IPAs continue to grow and an emerging trend for 2021 is more label transparency, adds McNaughton. “Beyond CFIA changes to the ‘beer standard,’ many brewers will voluntarily provide more information to customers. Calories, carbs and full lists of ingredients will be more prevalent to satisfy key shopper needs.”



Nick Nanos

## LCBO

### Higher than average growth in grocery

The LCBO has been a wholesale supplier to grocery since 2015 and since then sales of wine, beer and cider have continued to grow and in the past several months, the LCBO has seen “higher than average grocery shipments, although sales didn’t grow to the same extent as experienced in the first wave of the pandemic in 2020,” says Nick Nanos, senior vice president and chief supply chain officer for the LCBO. Nanos expects to see sales surge even more in 2021. “This past fiscal year we’ve successfully expanded the grocery program with 75 new active authorizations. The total number of grocers selling local and international beer, cider and in some stores wine, is now at 450, providing Ontarians with greater convenience and choice in how and where they shop for beverage alcohol.”

## Pelee Island Winery

### Sustainable vegan wines poised for growth



Darryl MacMillan

“Now that there is more of a built-in expectation regarding the presence of wine in grocery, customers are discovering more niche products and emerging wine styles,” says Darryl MacMillan, sales and marketing manager for Pelee Island Winery. For instance, Pelee sees sparkling wine and rosé variations trending now as well as demand for alternative packaging and gifting opportunities.

MacMillan sees a bright future for wine in grocery, specifically for single-serve options and low- and non-alcohol beer.

And he expects to see the sustainable, vegan wine category begin to grow to meet market demands.

“In 2017, our winemakers eliminated the use of all animal products in the fining and filtration of our VQA wines. Beginning with our 2019 vintage, our portfolio of Ontario VQA wines became VegeCert Certified Vegan, ensuring these wines are vegan. These products are also certified by Sustainable Winemaking Ontario and both programs are now featured on our labels. We will continue to innovate our packaging with an environmentally conscious mindset to reduce waste and use more recyclable materials.”

# Nº 1 CANADIAN FAMILY-RUN WINE AND SPIRITS AGENCY



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Wine Brand<sup>1</sup>

From the Nº 1  
Italian Supplier<sup>2</sup>

Nº 1 Malbec  
in Ontario<sup>3</sup>

*Dandurand.*



GALLEON

 Gato Negro

*Las Mulas.*

*Three Thieves*

  
FONTANAFREDDA

romeo's  
gin

  
Ménage à Trois

*Ste Michelle*  
WINE ESTATES

  
Santa Margherita

*Big Bill*

Danzante

*Les Jamelles*  
Céleste des vins du Sud de la France

THE SHOW

  
BOISSET  
FAMILY ESTATES

M. CHAPOUTIER  
JACQUES

*Umberto  
Cesari*

  
VILLA MARIA  
NEW ZEALAND

AVELEDA  
ESTABLISHED 1870

GEORGES  
DUBŒUF

  
BOLLA  
FONDATA NEL 1883

FRESCOBALDI  
TOSCANA

  
TOMMASI  
FAMILY • ESTATES

ERRAZURIZ  
VINOS DE FAMILIA DESDE 1870

EzFocus Canada, Wine and Spirits, Jan 2021.  
Excluding cooler and beer categories. <sup>1</sup>Based on the brand equity.  
Wine Intelligence, Power Index 2018-21. <sup>2</sup>EzFocus, Canada, Jan 2021.  
<sup>3</sup>EzFocus, Ont, Trapiche Reserve Malbec 750ml 9Ls, Jan 2021.



# Channelling Growth in **BEER AND WINE**

*Grocery Business* has partnered with Caddle to gain insights into consumers' outlook on beer and wine in grocery. The research, exclusive to *Grocery Business*, is based on surveys Caddle, a Canadian data insights platform, conducted with Canadians in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec in January 2021, the main provinces where beer or wine are sold through the grocery channel.

The category is likely to experience growth as other provinces consider easing restrictions on beer and wine sales in grocery. One such province is New Brunswick, which began a pilot program in 2014 to sell wine in select grocery stores and is currently studying whether to continue the program. Last year, New Brunswick approved the sale of beer in grocery stores.



## Wine Wins

22%  
purchase wine in  
grocery stores

77%  
want a wide selection  
of products

### *What Consumers Want*

A wider selection of local brands **72%**

A wider selection of international brands **61%**



# CLEAR 2.0

110 CALORIES & 3 GRAMS OF CARBS PER 473mL SERVING

THE  
PERFECT  
PAIRING



MUST BE LEGAL DRINKING AGE. PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.



# Beer Bets

27%  
purchase beer in  
grocery stores

72%  
want more  
**local brands**

83% of those  
surveyed want a wider  
selection of products

62% want a greater selection of **international brands**

## Shopping Sentiments

Speed of shopping, checkout and value  
for price are consumer's top priorities  
when purchasing **BEER** and **WINE**.

COVID-19 is impacting purchasing decisions...

FEWER RETAIL TRIPS MEANT THAT:

29% of consumers purchased wine  
33% of consumers purchased beer  
**IN GROCERY STORES**



**Gen Z** are **2X** more likely than  
**Baby Boomers** to purchase  
beer and wine from grocery stores  
because of the pandemic

# FROZEN HEATS UP

*While the frozen food category has performed well in recent years, the pandemic has fueled rapid growth*

## ON THE RETAIL FRONT LINES



Andy O'Brien

### M&M Food Market

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For Andy O'Brien, CEO of M&M Food Market, of all the observations that have been made about how the pandemic has shifted consumer eating and purchasing, the most significant transformation has been shoppers' perception of frozen foods.

"It evolved quickly with the onset of COVID and there is growing recognition that it's no longer a quality compromise. We spent five years retooling the business and evolving our portfolio to make food cleaner, develop more added-value meals such as meal kits and prepared foods, and expand the variety of frozen food."

Some of the biggest gains have been in the single-serve category and international foods, such as Pad Thai and Butter Chicken, with demand going "through the roof," says O'Brien.

O'Brien says M&M Food Market's focus on quality and variety has been paying off. "In the research we've done, customers have been surprised and delighted by

frozen and the shopping experience we offer. We've attracted a larger portion of the under-40s, who have grown up going to restaurants and have broad palates, and are purchasing our international foods, and seniors, who want to shop in a safe environment that's easier to offer in our smaller footprint stores, and who want single-serve, portion-control meals. We've seen a significant increase from these two groups and we'll retain a lot of those demographics post-pandemic."

O'Brien says he expects to see M&M's e-commerce business continue to grow and the chain is launching a new e-commerce platform with home delivery later this spring.

"We're testing home delivery in Milton, Guelph and Toronto. We have our own trucks and have been piloting the program for eight weeks. It's gone well and we plan to launch it with our own trucks next year. We're focusing on two-hour delivery and hope to improve on that moving forward."



## Longo Brothers Fruit Markets



**Mike Longo**

Like many retailers, Longo's saw a dramatic change in consumer behaviour in 2020 as consumers made fewer trips and purchased larger baskets. Shelf life became a focal point during this period, says Mike Longo, chief merchandising officer.

"In the frozen food category, we've seen the greatest growth in quick convenience segments, like potatoes, pizza and ice cream." In fact, ice cream has seen "significant growth as guests are looking for a way to treat themselves after a long day."

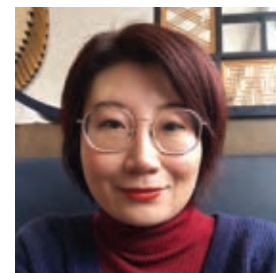
Shoppers are looking for frozen food options that balance convenience, health and the occasional indulgence. "Many frozen food options require little to no prep time while still offering balanced nutrition or a sweet treat. We've addressed these needs by bringing in a variety of meal options to meet customers' changing needs."

Longo says the stay-at-home movement has unleashed the home cook and the home baker in many and Longo's expects this grocery trend to continue. It "reflects our guests' desire to prepare more convenient meals at home. This includes the rise in demand for from-scratch ingredients as well as frozen foods. We also expect to continue to see increased utilization of our grocery delivery service, Grocery Gateway."

The frozen food category is undergoing change with a wider selection of healthier and plant-based options. For instance, Longo says dairy and sugar alternative frozen desserts have become more popular.

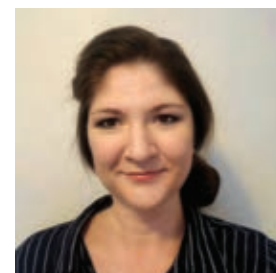
"Longo's expects this shift to gain popularity over the next five years. We are proactively exploring Longo's brand recipe development to create additional frozen product offerings we know our customers will love."

## Walmart Canada



**Betsy Wang**

Walmart Canada saw a jump in sales of frozen foods and a significant "customer conversion," say Betsy Wang, senior category manager, and Nicola Wepener, category manager, who both oversee frozen food at Walmart. Sales in frozen grew the most in vegetables, potato and side dishes, juice, fruit and pizza.



**Nicola Wepener**

With customers making fewer trips, baskets are growing. Customers continue to look for product availability, options for convenient meal solutions and "out of home" eating experiences and they're purchasing greater quantities per shopping trip.

"With the supply on many commodities constrained due to high demand, we have worked with both domestic and global partners to secure stock for our customers at the everyday low prices customers expect from Walmart. We have also secured more club packs for purchasing larger quantities," say Wang and Wepener.

Wang and Wepener expect to see customers slowly return to previous shopping habits pre-COVID-19. And over the next five years, there will be "a continued focus on healthy, good food at affordable prices and convenient meal solutions, such as a one-pot/pan bowl meal and steamable in-a-bag solutions, to name a few. These solutions will help time-starved families looking for a good meal that doesn't take hours of preparation."



## Denis Gendron

Consultant



- ▶ A leader with 30+ years of CPG experience including 9 years as President of United Grocers Inc. (UGI).
- ▶ Known for his expertise in Merchandising, Marketing, Analysis, Marketing and Strategic Planning
- ▶ Respected / appreciated for his reputation, relationships, integrity and communication skills

The Canadian food market is highly competitive, with the consumption habits constantly changing, influenced by several factors such as demographic changes, online commerce, social networks, climate change and increased demand for healthier products. Retailers, Suppliers and Manufacturers are facing significant economic pressures, and we can help you meet these significant challenges.

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### WE HAVE THE ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS

- To help you launch new products successfully (current and new customers, all channels, local or national)
- To provide ideas that will assist you to establish a winning game plan
- Market insights, competitive intelligence - by channel, by region, province or by customer
- E-Commerce has changed the Retail landscape forever
- The Pandemic has been life-changing to the CPG Industry
- What are the next **Big Game Changers**?

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We can assist you to embrace the changes, adapt, make things happen and become successful

**LET'S HAVE A DISCUSSION**

Denis Gendron Offices: Toronto & Montreal  
info@denisgendronconsultant.com • gendron.denis22@gmail.com • 647-466-6746  
www.denisgendronconsultant.com



# VENDORS' VIEWS



David Nagy

## Dr. Oetker Canada: Pizza

Frozen pizza recorded an all-time high in retail sales in 2020, breaking the \$700 million mark for the first time, while growing 22 per cent versus 2019.

“This was fueled largely by the restrictions and shutdowns in the food service channels, which limited out-of-home meal occasions and led to an increase in frozen pizza household penetration,” says David Nagy, head of sales for retail at Dr. Oetker Canada.

Dr. Oetker was a primary growth driver in the frozen pizza category at +25 per cent, adds Nagy, and the company expects frozen pizza sales “will continue to be very strong for at least the first half of 2021. The second half of the year will move towards the ‘next’ normal but still be stronger than historical levels, driven by the financial uncertainty of many Canadians and their search for qualitative and affordable alternatives to eating out.”

Nagy says consumers’ eating habits are shifting too as a result of working from home.

“Growth for frozen snacking products is outpacing growth for frozen meals.”

The frozen food category will continue to experience growth because “the value proposition of our products is more important than ever and products such as frozen pizza provide consumers with the taste and experience of restaurant and takeout at a fraction of the cost.”

Consumer trends will help accelerate growth, says Nagy.

“Consumers are more demanding and expect frozen foods to deliver on taste and health,” and the growing local movement means that consumers will look to brands “made in Canada that have a meaningful connection to communities they serve.”

# VENDORS' VIEWS

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**Ian Roberts**

## Conagra: Meals

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Frozen food products experienced significant growth in 2020 and Conagra was able to match the category growth of +19 per cent, “and at times exceed that growth due to our diverse portfolio of products to satisfy many lifestyles, needs and appetites,” says Ian Roberts, vice president and general manager Canada, Conagra Brands.

Conagra expects to see the frozen foods category grow with new consumers entering the market and they will want “variety, convenience, quality and of course great taste. People aren’t looking for the same thing every day or week. They want products that fit with their family, with their personal needs and lifestyle and with their desires to try new and unique offerings.”

Frozen food has evolved from past years, adds Roberts, because consumer expectations and tastes have evolved. “While the frozen category of the past was often focused on convenience, it often didn’t focus on taste, variety and health. We have seen an explosion of this in the past few years. Consumers are able to not only enjoy frozen foods that are convenient and fast, but truly satisfying, offering a greater complexity and richness of flavour.”



## Maple Leaf Foods: Meat

Frozen foods are “hot” again and sales trends at Maple Leaf Foods reflect this, says Kate Beresford, vice president of marketing for sustainable meat.

“Increasing interest in frozen predates 2020, but the pandemic fueled interest as consumers experienced meal prep fatigue, stocked up on essentials and faced added time pressures of schooling children at home for parts of the year.”

Canadians are keeping meat protein on hand, according to research by Five 3ME, says Beresford, and an increasing number of Canadian consumers are loading their freezers with meat protein.

“We saw consumers embrace the convenience that many frozen foods offer; they showed particularly strong interest in frozen items that offer a craft flavour and style like our Schneiders brand items. Our Schneiders frozen pastry items saw strong, double-digit growth. The portfolio includes quiches, indulgent deep-dish meat pies, and traditional meat and poultry savoury pies in a variety of sizes, like tourtiere. Their ‘comfort food’ style held strong appeal in a convenient ready-to-bake format, and that was a win-win in 2020.”

Beyond frozen pastry, Maple Leaf Foods’ frozen sausages and chicken products have also seen double-digit growth.

“Two new Schneiders products launched in September have performed particularly well. Our fully cooked, oven-ready chicken strips and chicken burgers in both spicy and crunchy styles captured consumer interest with a home-prepared style and bold flavour.

“Meeting consumer demand drives our business, and our millennial customers have made clear their interest in frozen items and their understanding that frozen foods are not just convenient, but nutritious options. We don’t think the new-found interest will dissipate post-pandemic, and we aim to entice them with a variety of interesting new innovations—but we can’t share the details just yet.”



**Kate Beresford**

# FROZEN MEALS: A PATH TO SUSTAINED GROWTH

by Joel Gregoire



**Canadians are tired.** Tired of being in a pandemic where fear is prevalent in their day-to-day lives and for many (particularly parents) carrying a burden of added responsibility. In response to this, a central question for companies and brands is, “how can they help?”

This question is particularly relevant for makers of frozen meals.

Without question, Canadians are spending more time in their kitchens. In a recent Mintel Report on Delivery Services and Meal Kits, three-quarters of Canadians said they’re cooking more meals at home due to COVID-19. While a subset of these individuals has undoubtedly honed their cooking skills since the start of the pandemic, cooking fatigue has also become more prevalent, which is a challenge frozen meals can address.

Mintel’s 2018 report on prepared meals affirms frozen meals’ role in addressing cooking fatigue by offering speed, ease and a break from cooking, all being identified as the main reasons why Canadians turn to the category. Added to that, frozen food also has the benefit of being relatively non-perishable, which is particularly appealing during the pandemic as just over one-third of Canadians continue to “stock up,” according to Mintel’s COVID-19 Tracker.

Mintel research also points to clear hurdles, with most Canadians viewing frozen meals as being “processed” and two-thirds saying they would eat them more often if they

were “less processed.” Building on this, when asked what specific claims would encourage them to eat pre-packaged meals more often, “natural ingredients,” “gourmet items” and “restaurant-branding” topped the list. Based on Canadians’ views, frozen meals’ path to sustained growth is not through offering cheaper options, but rather more natural and premium options that are grounded in convenience.

In conveying a sense of naturalness and “premiumness” in foods typically regarded as processed, packaging can play an important role. For instance, see-through packaging that shows ingredients (e.g., vacuum packed) can give the impression of added transparency and freshness being sealed in so shoppers can feel more confident in turning to frozen foods as being made from “real ingredients.”

As the pandemic (hopefully) subsides in 2021, many Canadians will undoubtedly return to a more “normal” reality involving going out and reconnecting with those outside of their households. COVID-19, however, has real potential to leave its mark through longer-term behavioural shifts.

Pandemic or no pandemic, understanding how consumers perceive categories like frozen foods and what they want from them is central for long-term success.

**Joel Gregoire is associate director for food and drink at Mintel.**

***jgregoire@mintel.com***



# FROZEN: THE COLD HARD FACTS

## Frozen Food Sales in Canada 2020

**\$7.5**  
Billion

**21% ↑**  
YOY growth 2020 vs. 2019

## TOP SELLERS YOY GROWTH 2020 vs. 2019

**Potatoes 31%**

**Meat Patties 25%**

**Fruit 25%**

**Vegetables 24%**

**Seafood 24%**

Last 52-week period 2020 vs 2019. NielsenIQ

## Canadians want their just desserts

Frozen desserts retail  
sales are forecast to be

**\$35 million**  
in 2021

Frozen bakery product  
sales will reach almost

**\$250 million**  
in 2022

Statista frozen food market in Canada, December 2020

## The Growth of Frozen Food is a Global Trend

**11%** CAGR  
Market growth  
acceleration

**\$64.69 Billion**  
Incremental growth 2019-2024

**33%**  
of global growth will  
originate from North  
America

Technavio, Global Frozen Food Market 2020-2024



*Congratulations*

**STEVE FOX**  
**Nestlé Canada Inc.**

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Thank you for your outstanding contributions to Nestlé Canada  
and to the entire industry. Your unwavering commitment and  
inspirational leadership has made a significant impact on all of us.  
All the very best in your retirement!

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From your friends at  
**Nestlé Canada Inc.**







# Our Journey Towards NET ZERO



**TARGET:** Halve the company's global emissions by 2030 and realize net zero by 2050.

**HOW:** Accelerating our efforts across three areas.

## OUR JOURNEY TO ACHIEVE NET ZERO INCLUDE:



### Carbon Neutrality, Manufacturing, Operations & Logistics

Several of Nestlé's brands including **Garden of Life**, **Perrier**, **S. Pellegrino**, **Acqua Panna** and **Nespresso** have made commitments to achieve carbon neutrality by 2022.

#### Key highlights include:

- ▶ Nestlé Canada has reduced CO<sub>2</sub> in its logistics operations over the last 6 years by **22%**, exceeding its goal by **10%**
- ▶ Since 2017, Nestlé Canada has reduced its food waste rate on average of **14%** in its factories and is saving an estimated 218 tons of food waste

### BY 2020, 100%

of Nestlé Canada's manufacturing and distribution facilities have achieved zero waste to landfill.



### Ingredients

Nestlé Canada is partnering with industry experts and suppliers to reduce the carbon footprint of its most emissions-intensive ingredients, ensuring that a more sustainable supply of natural resources and raw ingredients is used in its products.



### Packaging

Currently, **87%** of Nestlé's packaging is recyclable or reusable and Nestlé will continue to make progress on its efforts to make **100%** of its packaging reusable or recyclable by 2025 and to reduce its use of virgin plastics by one-third.

#### Packaging innovation highlights include:

- ▶ Nestlé Canada becomes a founding signatory to the **Canada Plastics Pact** and together with our partners we will rethink the way that we design, use and reuse plastics by 2025
- ▶ Häagen-Dazs partners with **Loop** to launch new reusable packaging
- ▶ Nestlé Good Start Infant Formula is now available in recyclable cans



All **Smarties** packaging will remove plastic material from its portfolio and fully transition to responsibly sourced paper in 2021



**Nescafé Sweet & Creamy** moving from plastic packaging to a recyclable carton



All **BOOST®** ready-to-drink 237ml meal replacement drinks (High Protein, Original, Plus Calories and Diabetic) have moved to recyclable, reclosable Tetra® Prisma packaging



**Nestlé Real Dairy Ice Cream** is one of the first recyclable ice cream containers in Canada

As the largest food and beverage company in the world, we are in a position to make a significant contribution to improving the health of our planet.

Learn more at <https://corporate.nestle.ca/en>





## EXIT INTERVIEW:

# STEVE FOX

*Steve Fox, who built a 37-year career in CPG and retired in March 2021, reflects on his work and the evolution of the industry.*

### What drew you to the CPG industry?

Actually, CPG was my Plan B. When I graduated from college, I had planned on joining my father's State Farm Insurance agency, but then life threw me a curveball. Apparently, I was "not a good fit." Today, I am grateful, but it was a tough first career lesson and I quickly learned that life will happen for you, not to you. Around the same time, Nabob Foods was launching its own sales organization and I joined the company in a sales role. It was a great organization where I was surrounded by high impact sales leaders like Boyd Stevens and Eric Sorensen, who helped me hone foundational skills that I continue to lean on today.

### CAREER PATH

2021 – March, 2021	Advisor to the office of the Chief Customer Officer, Nestlé Canada
2019 – 2021	Chief Customer Officer, Nestlé Canada
2003 – 2018	Senior Vice President, Customer Development, Nestlé Canada
1997 – 2003	Vice President, Sales, Pfizer-Adams Division - Adams Canada
1993 – 1997	Director of Sales, Kraft Canada
1982 – 1993	Sales, Jacobs Suchard – The Nabob Coffee Company

### Career milestones

Time is a powerful force. You can only truly appreciate key moments in retrospect. There are a few that stand out for me.

Glen Wilson at Kraft took a chance on me, offering me a big role when Kraft acquired Nabob. Moving from a highly successful single-focused category selling organization to one of the biggest CPGs at the time was a career game changer. The learning was intense, particularly getting to know the entire store, big portfolio and large team.

Later in my career, one of the most significant milestones was when Shelley Martin, Nestlé Canada's then CEO, allowed me tremendous autonomy to create a winning selling organization and to hand-pick the team. She was clear on the "what" and allowed me to develop the "how." We agreed that the Nestlé culture and its values were non-negotiable but



# Nestlé Canada Inc.

beyond that, she afforded me the latitude to innovate. It was a sales leader's lottery jackpot.

## Changes in the grocery industry

No question, it is technology. It has given us unprecedented access to data, driven the speed of decision-making and forced higher levels of agility and risk-taking. Global has become local in terms of product access and innovation. Supply chain, once in the background, is our lifeline to maintaining a competitive edge.

The digital world changed marketing in ways that were unimaginable. And who would have thought that we would be competing for the best talent this business has ever seen. We don't just sell anymore. We are strategic partners and advisors to our customers, and they look to us as integral to their success and sustainability. The grocery industry has become increasingly sophisticated and complex on every level.

## Changing customer shopping behaviour

Consumer behaviour is constantly evolving. At Nestlé, we are driven by consumer and customer centricity to fuel and inspire our plans. We are constantly defining our strategic relationship with our customers and they look to partner with us to navigate these uncharted waters. So, despite these unprecedented challenges, we are energized and find it an incredibly exciting time. No one could have predicted the shifts in consumer habits over this past year...trends towards convenience, "solutions buying" versus meal planning, bringing the restaurant experience to your home. But this isn't news to the CPG industry. It has always been, and always will be, a very dynamic industry facing emerging trends and technologies driving the ever-changing

landscape. At Nestlé, we have clarity and alignment. We are relentless in our focus on what truly matters to consumers and customers. Every single aspect of the organization is galvanized to support this commitment. The industry has evolved and has become increasingly sophisticated, but it is also an industry that has proven its agility to respond to and anticipate changing consumer needs.

## Advice for the next generation

The CPG sector is dynamic, challenging, exciting and unpredictable. It's not for the faint of heart. But if your goal is to grow exponentially and work with people who want to be part of an industry at the very heartbeat of the world, there is no better place to develop as a business leader and hone your analytical and communication skills. My advice for anyone who wants to build a successful career is that you need to understand:

- In this business, relationships are everything—from day one, you need to invest in building lasting relationships...ones that will stand the test of time.
- It's an industry where collaboration is key. You learn early that if you make time to help others, they will be there for you.
- You need to cultivate a vast and diverse network of people who have varied experiences, and represent every generation as well as cultural and social background.

## What will retirement look like for you?

I'm looking forward to redefining my purpose: finding more time for activities and hobbies, exploring Ontario, visiting my children and spending more time with my wife, Yvonne. I want to continue to do the things that challenge and give me fulfillment. It's important for me to find a way to give back. ■

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**JackDanielsSauces.com**



# Selling Summer Sizzle

**Consumers who have spent much of their time indoors for the past three seasons are more anxious than ever to resume some normalcy in their day-to-day lives.**

Summer is an opportunity to enjoy more time outdoors with friends and family, even amidst the ongoing pandemic. We've asked some suppliers how retailers can capture that sentiment to drive sales.



## LISA ALLIE

marketing director, portfolio and sports, PepsiCo Foods Canada

### SAGE ADVICE

Align with categories, brands and products shoppers are looking for and translate that into a compelling shopper program with clear execution guidance to maximize relevance and enable conversion. "Shoppability" is always critical and with current in-store safety protocols, ensure displays enhance the shopping experience and do not impede it.

### MERCHANDISING IDEA

Canadians are looking for products that are "Made in Canada" and for great value on products they love. PepsiCo Foods will be looking to celebrate our Made in Canada portfolios and to deliver Canadian-made snacks at good value. COVID continues to accelerate growth in e-commerce...winning in-store is still paramount, as the majority of Canadians will shop in a physical store, but investing to win along the full path to purchase is critical. We are focused on omnichannel programming and a key element is partnering with our customers on in-store and online digital and media activations.



### ERIN ROONEY

vice president, sales and marketing,  
consumer products, McCormick & Co.

#### SAGE ADVICE

Creativity and visual appeal: the display needs to stand out and be eye catching. Consumers don't want to be in stores as long with current COVID concerns. We need to catch their attention, situate merchandising where the traffic flow is optimal and make sure it's seen. Placement: cross merchandising is key to building a "one-stop-shop." Situate condiments and BBQ seasonings near protein and bakery, specifically the buns. Make the display accessible; impulse sales can be lost if it is difficult for the consumer to get to the products.

Consistent messaging is important. Summer is the longest merchandising season. Signage in-store combined with digital support—summer-specific sponsored search, shoppable recipes and fixed placements—will capture consumers throughout their shopping journey.

#### MERCHANDISING IDEA

Social distancing continues to limit space available for displays so it is important to be efficient with relevant seasonal merchandising. Although COVID has accelerated online shopping, in-store will still be of higher importance, as consumers can interact with and visualize the campaign and products. Online consumers are looking for speed and ease of use.

That said, more consumers are engaging in pre-shop planning, so there is an opportunity to capture consumers online first to build awareness and consideration to drive greater planned and impulse purchases. Consumer search indicates intent to buy and it is imperative to include sponsored search budget in the campaign to capture these hand-raisers.

We partnered with key retailers in late 2020 to develop shoppable recipes. Engagement rates with recipes were fantastic, with roughly two minutes spend exploring each recipe. The total reach of these campaigns saw more than 2.4 million unique visitors per week.



### SAGE ADVICE

Develop a campaign rooted in consumer insight. Summer is highly linked to the grilling season, which means an opportunity to show the latest hot food trends gaining popularity and that are relevant to consumers, while at the same time promoting key brands/products that pair perfectly with summer grilling. For example, burgers. The landscape is evolving beyond the classic meat burgers and options include more indulgent, restaurant-inspired beef burgers, chicken burgers and plant-based, which may require different condiments to elevate their taste and texture.

And bring on the appetite appeal with creative execution to inspire consumers to replicate the meal or recipe at home. Don't just adapt translation from English to French; there may be regional insights that require specific program differentiation.



### STEPHANIE GOYETTE

category business director, burgers and fries, salads, chicken, dips, international cuisine away-from-home, Kraft Heinz Canada

### MERCHANDISING IDEA

Be mindful of the evolving current landscape given COVID-19 restrictions and limitations, which means avoid promoting social gatherings right now.

We've adapted different themes for pre-summer and summer grilling that we can't reveal at the moment. We're developing new campaigns, POS and recipe content that aligns with our new "Taste Elevation" platform strategy, which is about being consumer-obsessed and making sure we deliver inspiration to consumers.

Best-in-class merchandising displays happen not only as big displays in front of stores, but also near front of store or additional secondary displays by the host food to help drive increased cross-basket purchases.

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### SAGE ADVICE

Increase awareness of products early in the spring. You want to connect consumer awareness with their summer plans, especially now that with COVID, people are likely to be staying at home and thinking about outdoor entertainment activities, home improvements, all in an effort to make it a better experience. So timing is important because first to market is first to the mind of consumers. Second, create a solution or a meal opportunity for people and get them thinking about warmer weather.

.....

### MERCHANDISING IDEA

Retailers will have to focus more on digital platforms. We're going to see people using more QR codes because it's easy to share product-related information right from a phone. With people moving to the suburbs and emphasizing their home space and home occasions, they want to elevate these occasions to a premium level, so they're upgrading their liquor and meat purchases, buying more exotic condiments and sauces to change the repetitive home eating experience.



**TONY CIMOLINO**  
chief marketing officer,  
Golden West Food Group



**MAX LAVOIE**  
president, House of BBQ Experts

### SAGE ADVICE

Products need to be easily accessible to be added to the cart. BBQ sauces are good in the centre aisle, but great near grilling meats and vegetables, as they inspire customers and drive a higher average basket. BBQing at home will be very popular this summer. POS tools help facilitate product integration and help energize the retail environment. We encourage retailers to make one unit of each SKU available for staff to taste. For example, the meat manager knows meat best and should feel equipped to carry conversations with customers about cuts of meat all the way to the plate and share expertise around flavour pairings to create enjoyment of the experience.

.....

### MERCHANDISING IDEA

POS tools facilitate products' integration into the market, for staff training and for customer education. We will continue to celebrate each product launch and use it as an opportunity to reconnect shoppers with the grilling experience.

it figures



# 2020: A Year Like No Other

	GROWTH RATE	\$ INCREASE VS. YA
Centre Store	<b>5.1X</b>	<b>+\$6,772B</b>
Fresh Departments	<b>3.2X</b>	<b>+\$2,876B</b>

National All Channels, 52 weeks ending January 2, 2021

## Changing Channels

	% CHANGE IN NUMBER OF BUYERS
Online	<b>+20%</b>
Warehouse Clubs	<b>-2%</b>
Grocery Stores	<b>+1%</b>
Mass Merchandisers	<b>-3%</b>

Grocery Composite, 52 weeks ending December 26, 2020

Online  
Penetration

**39%**  
**+6%**

52 weeks ended December 26, 2020



## Q4 Average Basket Size

2020	VS.	2019
<b>\$42.18</b>		<b>\$35.03</b>

Grocery Composite, 13 weeks ending December 28, 2019 and December 26, 2020

## Canadians Who Say They Are:

<b>59%</b>	<b>26%</b>
Visiting Stores Less Often	Stockpiling

NielsenIQ, November 2020



Carman Allison is vice president of sales consumer intelligence, Canada with NielsenIQ, a company that creates thought leadership insights for CPG manufacturers and retailers.

ALL STATS COURTESY:  
NIELSEN IQ



## Canadians Expanded Their Kitchen Creativity

<b>SPICES</b> <b>+32%</b>	<b>COOKING SAUCES</b> <b>+22%</b>
<b>ORIENTAL SAUCES</b> <b>+27%</b>	<b>ORIENTAL NOODLES</b> <b>+32%</b>
<b>DRY PASTA</b> <b>+24%</b>	<b>MEXICAN KITS</b> <b>+25%</b>

52 weeks ended January 2, 2021

**Takeaway** 2020 was a watershed year for grocery retailers. Via online or bricks and mortar, Canadians re-discovered their kitchens and culinary skills. Once daily life normalizes, retailers will need to develop innovative go-to-market strategies to retain at least a portion of 2020 gains.

# Night to NURTURE GALA

THE GROCERY FOUNDATION

Kids Help Phone

## A Special Thanks To Our Gala Sponsors

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# Launch it LIST IT



## Snack Right, Live Right

Introducing Live Right snacks from Dole. Made with flavourful fruit and savoury, crunchy nuts, Live Right snacks are 70% organic, non-GMO and plant-based.

[liverightsnacks.ca](http://liverightsnacks.ca)

## A Brazilian Favourite Comes to Canada

Nestlé Garoto's Serenata de Amor is a crunchy wafer filled with rich cashew nut cream enrobed in chocolate. Now exclusively available in Canada along with the rest of South America's much loved Nestlé Garoto products.

[morganwilliams.ca](http://morganwilliams.ca)

## NEW & NOW DISCOVERIES



## Plant Power in a Bowl

Conagra Brand's new Healthy Choice Power Bowls contain up to 19 g of plant-based protein, are meat-free and powered by plant-based brand Gardein. Two new options: Beef & Vegetable Stir Fry and Chipotle Plant-based Chick'n.

[healthychoicecanada.ca](http://healthychoicecanada.ca)



# Launch it LIST IT



## Sweet and Savoury Snacking

Introducing the sweetest line-up in the snack cheese segment. Cracker Barrel Sweet Combo is a combination of savoury bite-sized natural cheese paired with delicious sweet ingredients. Each package contains three individual snack trays.

[crackerbarrel.ca](http://crackerbarrel.ca)



## Water Wellness

Propel Electrolyte water from PepsiCo is an enhanced water beverage made with Gatorade electrolytes. This no-sugar, zero calorie water, designed to help consumers hydrate and replenish, is available in 6-pack formats and two flavours: Kiwi Strawberry and Grape.

[gatorade.ca](http://gatorade.ca)



## Pistachio Pleaser

Designed for Canadians looking for a lower salt option, new Wonderful Pistachios Lightly Salted launched in the first quarter of 2021 and are available in a 450-gram bag.

[getcrackin.com](http://getcrackin.com)



## New. Natural. Indulgent.

Introducing Astro Original indulgent flavours; a natural set-style yogurt with a rich and creamy texture which combines the goodness of Astro yogurt with the indulgence of dessert.

[astro.ca](http://astro.ca)



## Brewing Up Refreshment

Waterloo Brewing is introducing two limited-time Radler varieties, Watermelon and Tart Cherry, in Ontario to complete its core lineup of Grapefruit and Pineapple. Made from real fruit juice and craft lager, these new offerings are refreshingly crisp and available just in time for the summer season.

[waterloobrewing.com](http://waterloobrewing.com)



## Naturally Digestible

Proudly produced in Canada and sourced from Canadian dairy farmers, a2 Milk carries all the nutritional qualities of regular milk but with an important difference: a2 Milk comes from cows that naturally produce milk containing only the more digestible A2 protein type.

[a2milk.ca](http://a2milk.ca)

## Restaurant-style Meal Convenience

With three new high-in-protein 397g size bowls, Hungry-Man's new offerings will fit consumers' desire for the bold, on-trend flavours of restaurant-style meals: Nashville-Style Hot Fried Chicken Cutlettes, Chicken Fajita, and Chicken Croquettes & Jalapeno Pepper Mac 'n Cheese.

[conagrabrands.ca](http://conagrabrands.ca)



## Launch it LIST IT



## Pasta with Taste and Style

Di Martino pasta is PGI Gragnano Certified, bronze die extruded and made with 100% non-GMO Italian wheat. Containing 14% protein, this pasta is highly digestible and available in attractive special edition packs created by globally recognized designers Dolce & Gabbana.

[pastadimartino.it](http://pastadimartino.it)

## A Plant-based Energy Boost

GURU is a next-generation natural, plant-based energy drink made with natural, organic ingredients and no artificial sweeteners. Available in 350 ml and 250 ml sizes and in Original Organic Energy, Organic Energy Lite, Yerba Maté and Match.

[guruenergy.com](http://guruenergy.com)



## Shaking Things Up!

Activia is shaking things up with its no added sugar, gut-friendly, probiotic smoothies. These wholesome blends combine fruit, veggies and seeds, and come in three vibrant flavours.

[activia.ca](http://activia.ca)



## Smokin' Bacon

Hormel Foods' new Hormel Real Bacon Applewood Smoke Bacon bits have a unique, sweet, smokey flavour ideal for use on a traditional Caesar salad. These versatile bacon bits can top off waffles or be tossed with popcorn.

[hormel.ca](http://hormel.ca)



# **FORTINOS**

Keeping it Fresh for

6 Years





# CONGRATULATIONS **FORTINOS** ON YOUR **60<sup>TH</sup>** ANNIVERSARY!



**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING DANONE'S MISSION  
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Wishing you and your customers continued health!



**DANONE**  
ONE PLANET. ONE HEALTH







# FORTINOS

KEEPING IT FRESH  
FOR 60 YEARS



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Fortinos' success comes in large part from its ability to differentiate itself amongst its competitors to provide customers with the ultimate shopping experience.

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Fortinos and its management team have faced challenges during the pandemic, but strong leadership has helped guide the entire chain to ensure the safety of employees and customers.

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Vendor relationships are integral to Fortinos' success.

### 249 The Franchise Experience

Fortinos' 23 franchisee owners discuss what it's like to operate a Fortinos store and how they managed through the pandemic.

### 266 The Fortinos Way

# Celebrating 60 Years

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**F**ortinos has been at the heart of our communities since 1961 when Italian immigrant John Fortino, my uncle, and his family partners opened their first store in downtown Hamilton. Promising fresh food at competitive prices with excellent service, the business prospered. John's original motto of "honesty, modesty and hard work" still resonates, even more so today.

I was fortunate to be mentored by my Uncle John during the formative years of the business, learning that important decisions must be rooted in long-term thinking and not short-term quick wins. This philosophy is reflected in our leading-edge 23 supermarkets that cater to the unique demographics across Greater Toronto, Hamilton, Halton and Brampton. As a franchised business under the Loblaw corporate arm, my mission is to lead the evolution of the Fortinos banner, ensuring that our points

of differentiation are difficult for competitors to emulate, while enhancing the value proposition of our brand. Continually adding new products, services and concepts reaffirms our commitment to innovation for the sole purpose of building long-term customer loyalty.

Working with vendor partners with the objective of growing the top line has been key to achieving our points of differentiation, at the same time building one of the highest sales-per-square-foot businesses in food retailing. These partnerships continue to be pivotal to Fortinos.

A **fresh food hall** featuring best-in-class selection of deli meats & cheeses, unparalleled seafood and bakery variety and premium fruits and vegetables is integrated with an emphasis on local and sustainable. Registered Holistic Nutritionists, skilled floral designers,





**Vince Scorniaenchi,**  
**executive vice president, Fortinos**



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ON YOUR

# 60<sup>th</sup>

## ANNIVERSARY



## FROM OUR ICONIC BRANDS TO YOURS

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"Every day, I continue to learn about this crazy business and witness how Fortinos over the years has adapted, challenged, led, participated and constantly improved and creatively presented its food offering to our customers and their families...it has been the true JOY in my LIFE to work with the many dedicated people at Fortinos, my business family."

Paolo Presutti,  
senior director,  
store design

artisan meat cutters, certified baristas, certified cheese experts, culinary chefs along with commitments to fair-trade, organic and plant-based diet preferences all reflect a contemporary, customer-focused approach.

**Fortinos' unique Pane Fresco brand** takes ready-to-eat to new heights never before seen in a Canadian supermarket. With a philosophy of "eating well made easy," Pane Fresco represents a new generation of prepared foods to go. Made by in-house chefs from our Hamilton-based commissary, inspired by classic and contemporary Italian dishes, Pane Fresco, Italian for "fresh bread," offers over 30 varieties of hand-shaped artisanal breads, premium dinners, giant Roman-style pizzas, rustic pastas, fresh soups and sandwiches. Sit-down cafes, free wifi and good food meet today's growing need to provide convenience for time-strapped customers.

**Tradition is still valued at Fortinos.** For example, our signature fresh sausage is prepared with the original, 60-year-old recipe using only Ontario pork shoulder with no additives and preservatives. In line with current tastes and preferences, Fortinos professional butchers offer artisanal cuts, organic and all-natural meat. Trimming and personalized custom preparations are part of everyday service.

**Customers and employees come first** at Fortinos, with an intrinsic commitment to treat all with respect. Partnering with local non-profits, charity fundraising for kids and community food banks are part of the Fortinos culture and commitment to help build strong, viable communities. A lot has happened in 60 years but the fundamentals remain true to Fortinos — "Your Supermarket with a Heart!"



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Happy 60th Anniversary Fortinos!



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Red will indicate cart sanitization has started.



**2 Sanitize your hands**  
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When the light turns green, your cart is ready!

**Call us at the number below,** to learn more about this technology and how to get **PurePortal** in your store today!



# Congratulations

**FORTINOS**<sup>®</sup> on **60** great years!  
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carlton cards



# Management Team



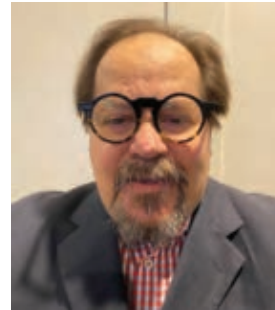
**Peter Weicker**  
vice president,  
merchandising and  
marketing



**Paul Spagnuolo**  
general manager, Pane  
Fresco



**Chris Wacholc**  
senior director, finance



**Paolo Presutti**  
senior director, store  
design



**Jack Cusimano**  
senior director, grocery,  
HBC, GM, NT



**Anita Ionni**  
director, customer  
relations & training



**Diana Fiorino**  
director, human  
resources & labour  
relations



**Beverly Wright**  
director, marketing



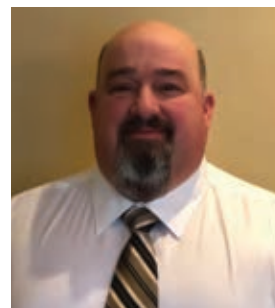
**Frank Scornaienchi**  
district manager



**Guido Alfonsi**  
senior director, DHB  
(deli, bakery, HMR)



**Joe Zukiel**  
district manager



**Nick Chirichella**  
senior director, meat  
& seafood



**Sergio Mazzuca**  
senior director,  
produce, bulk, floral

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**of success!**

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# Founders



**John  
Fortino**



**Umberto  
Spagnuolo**



**Stan  
Filice**



**Joe  
Carobelli**



**Mario  
Presta**



**Oreste  
Presta**



**Antonio  
Scornaienchi**



**Luciano  
Scornaienchi**

John Fortino stands beside the original store he and his partners opened in Hamilton, Ont., in 1961. Photo taken in 2002.



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for  
**60**  
YEARS

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**#1**

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by Mario Toneguzzi

**F**rom humble beginnings as a small street-front location in Hamilton, Ont., 60 years ago, Fortinos forged an incredible success story by keeping its eye focused on the roots of the supermarket's business and maintaining an unwavering commitment to its core values.

For the past six decades, Fortinos, which has grown to 23 locations in the Hamilton to Greater Toronto Area, has been driven by quality — quality of products and quality of customer service.

# HAPPY 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY FORTINOS

CONGRATULATIONS & WISHING  
YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS!  
FROM YOUR PARTNERS AT SAPUTO







“Laurie, my family and I have been fortunate to be part of the Fortinos family for over two and a half decades. The following words sum it up best for us: John Fortino and Vince: leadership and vision, franchisees - second family, dedicated, hard-working employees, people first, respect, proud but humble, work hard, play hard, integrity, attention to detail, customer-driven, teamwork, love, friendships.”

Joe Zukiel, district manager

It is at the heart of what the company does.

“We have not deviated from our core values over 60 years,” says Vince Scorniaenchi, executive vice president of Fortinos, who has been with the company for 48 years over two stints. “And that is about doing things with honesty, modesty and hard work. Being different to the marketplace. Always looking for the latest trend to make the customer experience better.”

The average size of a Fortinos location is about 85,000 sq ft and they’re all franchised stores. Big volume stores. Fortinos is typically two to three times bigger than a conventional store.

The size really speaks as to why Fortinos developed this model. Scorniaenchi says the marketplace today has a number of different segments — discount, e-commerce and the conventional stores.

When Fortinos thought about its supermarket model, it closely followed and researched emerging trends in society and among consumers, with an eye to creating the best value food store in the marketplace.

Fortinos has done that with its unique and innovative approach, which includes five different components to the store. It is a leader in the industry from the home meal replacement perspective. Pane



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Fresco offers fresh prepared meals daily that can be taken home or eaten in the store. Each store typically has about 100 to 150 seats.

Fortinos has also dedicated a large amount of space to fresh foods in its Market Square concept, with all the fresh foods at one side of the store with the most extensive food variety on the market.

Health and wellness is another key initiative for the company, as Fortinos has created a natural food store within the supermarket. Nature's Treasure carries more than 4,000 products and more than 1,300 vitamins and supplements.

The traditional grocery component also has the most extensive offerings on the market.

“You layer in beer and wine and PC Express for e-commerce, and to do all of that as extensively as what we have done, we need that kind of space,” says Scorniaenchi.

The most recent new store in North Oakville opened in 2015. A new store is planned for Milton in 2023.

“We’re looking at other possibilities. The complexity we have is that we are part of Loblaw and so Loblaw currently covers about 95 per cent of the Ontario marketplace with one format or another. We are looking at other locations where we co-exist or



*Congratulations*

# FORTINOS

# 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary



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complement sister banners,” says Scorniaenchi.

Fortinos has understood for years that it is never going to win on price against some of the giant retailers, but its value proposition lies in its philosophy of offering fair price, superior quality, exceptional variety and convenience — all in one stop.

“That’s our point of differentiation in the marketplace — to justify that we’re going to be a little higher-price than the discount guys,” Scorniaenchi explains. “That’s what we think about in everything we do. It’s about differentiating. Always on the fresh front and making sure we pass the test that it justifies the fair prices that we charge.”

Fortinos has experienced strong growth in recent years by sticking to its core values and providing a one-stop shop for all consumers.

“Our performance over recent years and our growth have been very good and we have been growing market share,” notes Scorniaenchi. “We believe we fill a void in the marketplace for great value based on quality and variety as points of differentiation. And we’re right on trend with growing movements on health and wellness and on freshness.

“We believe there’s great opportunity for many more stores in the marketplace and it’s just a question of where we can fit in.”

“We worked day and night in the beginning because there was no money to hire more people. You’d go in at 5 in the morning and never knew when you would get home.”

Mario Presta,  
founding partner





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CHEERS TO  
**60**  
—YEARS—



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FOR 60 YEARS



Scorniaenchi says the “extraordinary” steps Fortinos has taken during COVID to ensure the health and safety of its customers and its employees have impressed existing and new customers who have experienced the company’s stores in the past year.

The profile of a typical Fortinos’ customer is more of a “foodie” type — a customer who appreciates great quality, variety and uniqueness. In the early days, customers may have been more price conscious, but today the company has gravitated to customers who understand value more than price.



# Congratulations

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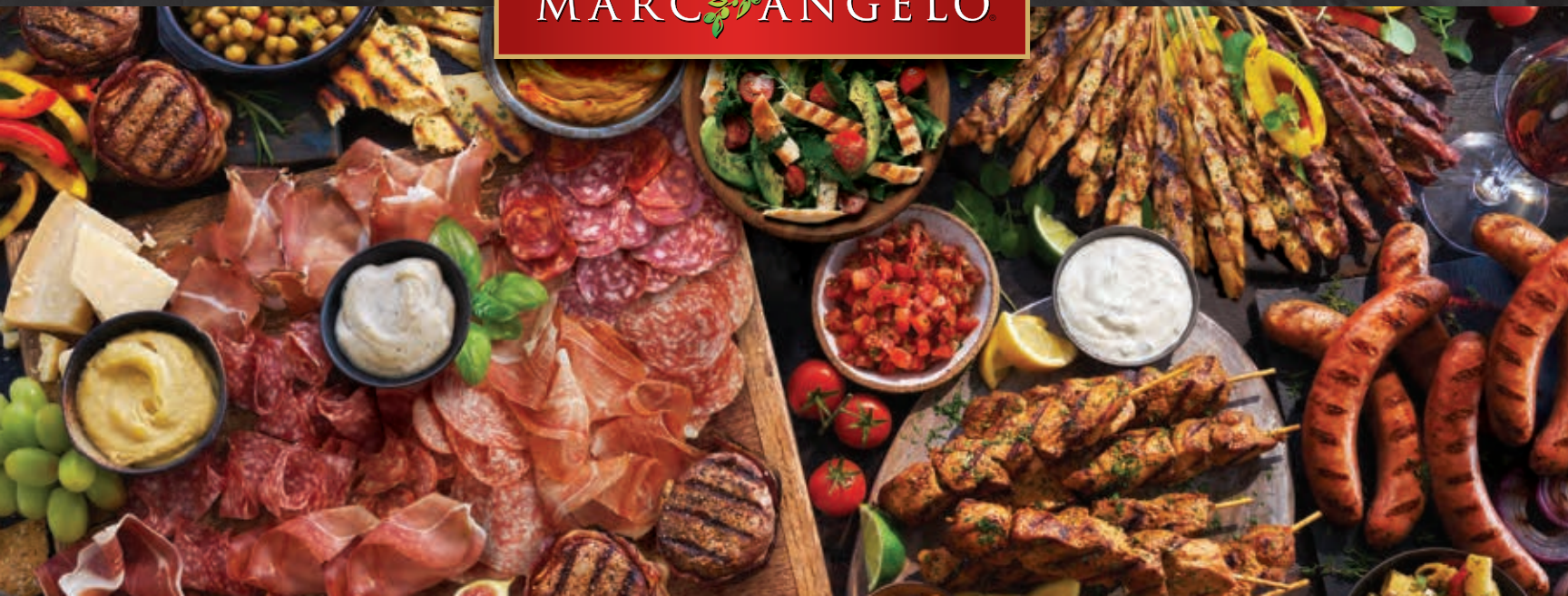
# 60<sup>th</sup>

# Anniversary

**Best Wishes on your continued success...  
Bravo!**

From your friends at

MARC  ANGELO







Scorniaenchi says Fortinos sees continued growth in its consumer base going forward. The supermarket has evolved from purely ethnic roots in its first years to now being more broad-based while still maintaining its Italian roots as its core. Over the years, the ethnic base has expanded to include South Asian, Eastern European and Jewish clientele. Fortinos' experience and expertise in Italian ethnic has translated to other ethnic groups because it understands what it means to be able to successfully cater to ethnic markets and

what you have to do to address those specific groups.

"Over the last 11 years, 21 of the 23 stores that we currently have are either new or have been renovated, all with extensive renovations, and 21 of those 23 have Pane Fresco as part of the makeup," says Scorniaenchi. "Although our number of stores hasn't grown, the capital spend in each of those stores was quite significant to bring them up to speed.

"These stores are built to last. What I mean by that is a typical lifecycle of a supermarket before you have to put a lot



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FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT  
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# FORTINOS

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FOR 60 YEARS



of capital in is somewhere between seven and 10 years. Because we care for our stores and do a lot of maintenance on them, our stores are built to last well beyond the 10 years.”

The renovations were undertaken to bring the model up to today’s trends in home meal replacements, enhanced fresh food offerings and the health and

wellness category. These were the key drivers for the renovations — building on the company’s reputation of being innovative and on-trend.

Fortinos is well positioned to successfully celebrate its 70th anniversary in 10 years.

“John genuinely cared about people. When he came to work, he’d walk around to every cubicle and say good morning to everyone. I never understood how he could remember everyone’s name at head office and in stores.”

Domenic Raso,  
John Fortino’s  
son-in-law





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on your 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
*from your friends at*



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# Building a Business



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FOR 60 YEARS



▲ From left: Gordon Clark, Frank Tucci, Vince Scorniaenchi, Jim Slomka, John Fortino, Paul Spagnuolo and John Shaver



The first Fortinos store in 1961 in Hamilton, Ont. Photo courtesy of Luana Raso.

Fortinos began as a dream of Italian immigrants with a tiny storefront in downtown Hamilton in 1961.

That 700-square-foot store laid the foundation for success over the next six decades, feeding on the tagline “Your Supermarket with a Heart!”

Today, the Loblaw-owned supermarket chain has 23 locations across the Greater Toronto Area, with an average footprint of about 85,000 square feet.

John Fortino, who passed away in 2011 at the age of 76, was the visionary behind the dream, believing that the most important part of the business was people.

The Italian immigrant steelworker, with the support of his wife Pileria, had a simple idea: give immigrants a fresh market that feels like home — a place where they could shop for their favourite fresh-cut meats and produce. Fortinos was really built as a supermarket where

“In the first week, we made \$500. Then it was \$1,000 a week and soon \$3,000.”

Umberto Spagnuolo on the opening of the first Fortinos in 1961.



# *“Can you please explain how you make such great pasta?”*

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Using semolina with a large particle size allows us to maintain the integrity of the gluten, so **your pasta will always be “al dente.”**

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We draw our pasta using traditional bronze plates, so that it's rough, porous and **able to absorb any type of sauce.**



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▲ The opening of Fortinos' Brampton store at Highway 7 and Brisdale in 2003 marked the first full-service gas bar.

those Italian immigrants in Hamilton could find a “taste” of home.

At the age of 20, in 1954, Fortino moved to Canada from Cosenza, a small southern Italian town.

Over its 60 years in business, Fortinos has kept its eye on the ball, operating on and embracing the philosophy that everyone is part of the family — employees, suppliers and business associates and customers.

The founding partners were Umberto and Gina Spagnuolo, Dora and Luciano

Scornaienchi, Angela and Franco Carobelli, Maria and Stan Filice, Oreste and Vittoria Presta, Anna and Mario Presta, and Rosina and Tony Scornaienchi.

“It was a family run business — my father was one of the original principals — and I started basically after school working pretty much every night in the store doing everything from janitorial duties to stocking shelves to cutting meat,” says Vince Scornaienchi, executive vice president of Fortinos, who has



on your **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

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# FORTINOS

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FOR 60 YEARS



guided the company's path over the years by keeping John Fortino's visionary principles at the forefront of how Fortinos operates.

"I liked being in the store, but I think what was most inspirational for me that drove me to be in this industry was going to the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto to purchase all the fruits and vegetables.

I used to go with John Fortino, my uncle, four or five times a week in the summertime when I wasn't in school. This is when I was about seven or eight years old. The action there, the vibrancy of that marketplace and all the entrepreneurial people there, the wheeling and dealing, the hustle and bustle, was just invigorating. I loved it

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▲ Paul Spagnuolo, far left, and Vince Scorniaenchi and Carmen Fortino in the background, join Dave Nichol of Loblaw Companies Limited and Santa during the opening of a Brampton store.



from the minute I stepped into the Terminal.”

John Fortino’s philosophy was to bring consumers good, fresh food at competitive prices in a clean and organized environment with excellent customer service. From the beginning, Fortinos has been part of each community it does business in.

Quoted in a 25th anniversary special in *The Hamilton Spectator*, John Fortino said: “We’re a team here. I hate the title of president, but I had to put it down when

we formed the corporation. I officially became the president, but I still get down on my hands and knees and wash floors if I have to.”

In his obituary, Fortino was described as a man deeply committed to family and community. It was the driving force as well for the supermarket with its humble beginnings, and remains a key pillar of the company’s success.

That commitment to family and community laid the foundation for a lasting legacy and it will continue to be a main driver for Fortinos’ future growth.

“I came in 1954 on November 2. I was 20 years old. I had my sister and my cousin here. My first job was in construction in building Greater Hamilton Shopping Centre but I worked only 17 days.”

John Fortino



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Marc Albanese, ▶  
director of product  
development

**F**ortinos' unique Pane Fresco concept has taken ready-to-eat food to entirely new heights and it's meeting a growing consumer demand, and market trend, for convenience and quality.

Pane Fresco is built on a simple philosophy of "eating well made easy." It represents a new generation of foods to go, suited for the busy lifestyle that people lead these days, and the food is prepared with the company's own unique recipes that are inspired by both traditional and contemporary Italian foods. Marc Albanese, director of product development, who spearheaded the initial

concept, continues to evolve the assortment. Researching, testing and developing new products is an integral part of keeping Pane Fresco on trend. "I'm passionate about food and continuing to build the Pane Fresco brand," says Albanese. "For me, it's all about the food experience, how it tastes, the sensory experience and the explosion of flavours after you've bitten into something wonderful. That's how I know it's a great product."

The foods are prepared in the company's unique facility, in Hamilton, for all the Fortinos stores in southern Ontario.



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“We do all the heavy lifting here and then it’s finished off at retail, at all the stores,” says Paul Spagnuolo, general manager of the Pane Fresco facility, adding that all the prepared foods, bread and pizza are made there.

The Pane Fresco concept (the name means “fresh bread” in Italian) was launched about 10 years ago. It offers hand-shaped artisanal breads, giant Roman-style pizzas, soup, and hot sandwiches as well as whole fully cooked, ready-to-eat roasts, classic vegetables, and rustic pasta classics.

Spagnuolo says that “from the commissary, we produce over 50 food offerings, which include breads, pizza

dough, and proteins that are then cooked and baked at store level.

“When we first started this, one of the things we found is that supermarkets typically didn’t offer very good prepared foods,” explains Spagnuolo. “They were doing it always on the cheap, with not a lot of thought behind it. It was almost like ‘let me jam it in here.’ Not like restaurants would handle it.”

While fast-food chains had a plan and strategy in launching their food offerings to the public, the same wasn’t happening on that scale for quality food products. Pane Fresco is like fine dining, but you can take it home hot or re-heat it and it’s like eating a good restaurant meal.

“I can honestly say that our company defines what a true family environment in the workplace can be. We encourage growth and development of employees and we feel great pride in watching each one of them succeed in their roles within our business.”

Frank Scornaienchi,  
district manager

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**6**  **th**



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Thank you, from one Canadian brand to another, for being the “Supermarket with a heart” that’s been offering quality and value to Canadian families for six decades.







“I’ll give you an example,” says Spagnuolo. “We do a prime rib. You can buy the whole prime rib or you can get a prime rib sandwich or a prime rib dinner. We use only the best meat. Certified Angus. Then we season it with fresh herbs and spices, vacuum-pack it, and the stores cook it on-site, using our processes and using good equipment.” He adds that the prime rib can be complemented with potatoes, vegetables, salads and other side dishes.

“We do the same thing for pizzas. We do the same thing for soups and sandwiches. They’re all our creations. We have some talented people that help us prepare those. Now it’s like a machine.”

Before any new food is launched, the people behind Pane Fresco take a close

look at how to prepare the new culinary delight. It all starts at the facility and reaches its completion at the store — an end-to-end process.

The Pane Fresco concept aims to address the market demands and consumer preference for good, prepared foods with fresh ingredients. The goal is to give consumers quality, nutritious food at reasonable supermarket prices.

It’s all driven by the consumer who is craving this type of offering in the marketplace.

Spagnuolo says the consumer today is hungry for different variations of food. In the past, it was either fast food dining or grabbing a bite to eat at a restaurant. But the evolution of dining has dramatically changed, especially in the last few years with people’s busy lifestyles.

“We had an old truck that I bought for maybe \$300 or \$400. It had no floor in it.

Many times, it broke down on the highway. In the winter, it was cold because we used to have to get to the food terminal so early. I’d sit and wait in line to load.”

John Fortino

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Pane Fresco is meeting that consumer need. Whether it's dining in at the Fortinos supermarkets or taking the ready-to-eat foods home, Pane Fresco has responded to the evolving market. Consumers are lined up on Friday night to get their pizza. And they're lined up early in the morning to get their fresh bread.

"We thought there was a market need for that — just eating a good, wholesome meal at a reasonable price without having to go to a fine dining establishment," says Spagnuolo.

The COVID-19 pandemic may in fact spur continued growth in this business, as consumers are getting more used to takeout food that they can bring home with them.

At the food processing facility in Hamilton, some of the food is pre-cooked while most of the selections are uncooked and seasoned to be cooked at the store level.

The facility covers about 30,000 square feet and is divided into two locations. One side prepares the fresh dough and the other side prepares all food ingredients that are further cooked in-store.

"The whole Pane Fresco concept is that it's been thought through from end to end: the equipment we use; the new rotisserie that we put into stores. These things are absolutely incredible at cooking whole chickens," says Spagnuolo. "And always with one thing in mind — quality."

"Many people don't realize this, but the shareholders were always paid equal salaries. It didn't matter if you were president, worked in produce or you were a janitor. John said it had to be the same for everyone."

Luciano (Louie)  
Scornaienchi

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There are many reasons why Fortinos has been a successful supermarket chain in southern Ontario for the past 60 years, but the commissary and meat processing plant have increasingly become key elements of the company's success.

And they are poised to facilitate its future growth.

The two facilities are located right beside the company's main office in Hamilton.

"Nothing replaces what we do at retail," says Paul Spagnuolo, who heads up both facilities. "However, it's part of a

whole support network, an essential part of our business, which is prepared, ready-to-cook or cooked ready-to-eat. It's part of that whole-meal solution."

At the Pane Fresco facility, fresh dough for bread and pizza is made and shipped on a daily basis to the stores, where it is baked.

"On the kitchen side, we make everything from seasoned prime rib to turkey to fully cooked meatballs and grilled vegetables. Essentially, we produce a lot of ingredients that they then use in recipes at store level," says Spagnuolo.

The commissary has been in operation





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for about 10 years. It serves as a central location where food is prepared — most of it uncooked and then finished at the store. It covers about 30,000 square feet and is open seven days a week and most of each day.

At the meat processing plant, fresh sausage is made, using an old recipe, and shipped to the stores three to four times a week. Nothing in the meat processing plant is ready to eat

but it's ready to be cooked. The plant also prepares kebabs, skewers, and fresh uncooked meatballs as well as burger patties.

The plant has been around for more than 50 years. Today, it covers about 10,000 square feet and operates five days a week.

"It's been open almost as long as the company," says Spagnuolo. "It's been moved — as we've moved from office to office, it moved with us."

There are about 15 to 20 different varieties of sausages made each week.

"It's made essentially like our grandparents did," says Spagnuolo, adding that some of the fresh sausage is also used as ingredients, for example, in Fortinos' signature pizzas.

Vince Scorniaenchi, executive vice president of Fortinos, says the company developed a recipe for

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homemade sausages many years ago, “which is probably 60 years old this year as well.

“We had it in our stores and it sold so well that we could not keep up with producing in-store anymore. So, we ended up doing it at our central facility. I would say that the volume is significantly higher than it would be in any other supermarket in Ontario. We’re known for the quality of our sausages,” he says.

“That allowed us to get into other areas like burger patties and shish kebabs made in house. It started off with the demand for our sausage, which necessitated a central location.”

The current meat processing facility opened in the early 1990s and in its peak season, it produces about 25,000 kilograms each week.

The sausages are sold primarily in the Fortinos stores, but the company has a

pilot test in one Loblaw store that could be rolled out in the future to more stores.

Spagnuolo says sausage has always been a key part of the Italian dining and cultural experience, as it can be used in a variety of ways.

“It’s been to the culture just like hamburgers are to Americans,” he explains.

Over the years, that appetite for sausages has become increasingly popular across different ethnic lines and Fortinos, with its meat processing facility, is poised to meet that growing demand.

“Nothing replaces what we do at retail. However, it’s part of a whole support network, an essential part of our business, which is prepared, ready to cook or cooked ready to eat. It’s part of that whole meal solution.”

Paul Spagnuolo



## Congratulations Fortinos on 60 successful years in the industry



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A photograph of a bakery display case filled with various cakes and pastries. The display is lit with warm, yellow lights. In the foreground, there are several cakes: a chocolate brownie cheesecake, a white cake with chocolate shavings, and a chocolate cake with white frosting and chocolate shavings. In the background, there are more cakes, including a large white cake with chocolate shavings and a chocolate cake with white frosting and chocolate shavings. The display case has glass doors and metal shelves. Price tags are visible on the shelves.

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Any business that has been around for a long period of time understands that keeping up with consumer and merchandising trends is a key to success.

And none has done it better than Fortinos for the past 60 years.

Giving customers what they want is critical, especially in a very competitive marketplace, as interests and trends continuously evolve and change over time.

“We’re really focused on creating meaningful points of differentiation versus our competitors,” says Peter

Weicker, vice president of merchandising and marketing for Fortinos. “Our philosophy is great products in great stores at fair prices.”







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Weicker says his team is focused on unique, specialty and premium assortment foods. Fortinos' goal is to be the one-stop for the "foodie," which is a growing consumer demographic today.

The company is keenly aware of the current food trends in society and growth opportunities in its business.

Weicker says today there is a big appetite from consumers for local products, for healthy eating, for ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook meals, and for multicultural food.

With increasingly busy lifestyles, people have been looking for quality,

quick meal solutions that go beyond fast food. The Pane Fresco concept was created by Fortinos to satisfy that hunger.

### **An international perspective**

From a multicultural perspective, because Fortinos trades in different marketplaces, each one might have a different multicultural demographic. The company therefore tailors its assortment to reflect that diversity within those trade areas.

There is another trend that has been growing and gaining momentum for the last few years

— consumers experimenting and enjoying an increasing variety of ethnic food offerings.

"Twenty years ago, Italian food was considered ethnic or multicultural. But today, Italian is mainstream. People don't really think of it as multicultural anymore. We're definitely seeing customers more interested in food trends, the foodie phenomenon, food exploration, trying different things, 100 per cent," says Weicker.

And Fortinos has been there over the last few years to satisfy that growing hunger.



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Part of the reason for the trend has been a growing immigrant population from different regions of the world. The ethnic demographic of Canada has changed significantly over the last number of years. It's a big reason there's more interest in those products. Customers from those ethnic communities are looking for those products. At the same time, consumers outside of that demographic have become interested in those foods as more television food shows are bringing more awareness to those culinary delights.

Those trends are fuelling the desire for people to explore new things, a desire Fortinos has recognized and acted upon.

"Obviously, Fortinos' heritage is Italian and that's a key," explains Weicker. "We view Italian as like table stakes. We need to win at Italian in all of our markets regardless of what the demographic is. The rest of our business we adjust and alter accordingly market by market."

For example, in Brampton, Fortinos runs a special South Asian program tailored to that specific market. The Burlington store has a bigger British offering.

But Italian products are the root and foundation that the grocery business across Fortinos has been built upon over the past 60 years.

### **A healthy innovator**

Weicker says another merchandising trend that has grown over the years is health and wellness. The company started its store-within-a-store concept called Nature's Treasure about 25 years ago. The

**"Twenty years ago, Italian food was considered ethnic or multicultural. But today, Italian is mainstream."**

Peter Weicker





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intent is to run a health food store within Fortinos. Weicker says the company is focused on health and wellness trends and prides itself in taking a leadership role in that category.

“Nobody in the supermarket industry was doing this 25 years ago,” he says. “We were very much an innovator and took a leadership role way back when and we’ve continued to grow and build on our assortment. For the last number of years, that department has been growing by double digits year over year over year, especially in the last five to 10 years. Our focus has been on hiring Registered Holistic Nutritionists in order to provide

the knowledge and service that our customers expect.”

The company is very focused on partnering with brands that were exclusive to the health food channel at one time because Fortinos customers want them in the grocery store. That includes food, vitamins and supplements.

Weicker says there are certain “hero” categories Fortinos wants to own as points of differentiation versus its competitors — pasta and oil as well as on-trend foodie categories such as spices.

The company is continuing to challenge itself to find more hero categories to ensure Fortinos remains a top destination for consumers.

# *Cheers to 60 Years!*

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“We knew we needed to come up with an entirely new concept...This was a \$25 million project. We had never done a brand new store like that. Everything in it was new and innovative. It was a good year in planning, brainstorming different concepts.”

Paolo Presutti on the 1996 opening of the first Fortinos 70,000 sq ft Adventure concept store on Plains Road in Burlington

Weicker says Fortinos’ fresh departments — whether it’s organic meat, organic produce, or organic gluten-free bread — are very focused on the health and wellness offering.

“From a local perspective, there’s a lot of focus on finding local Ontario suppliers to partner with,” he says. “Customers love to support local.”

And that has been a key initiative for Fortinos over the last few years as it sources more and more products that are produced close to home. Weicker gives the example of partnering with a fresh

turkey supplier named Hayter’s, a family-run business out of Dashwood, Ont.

Fortinos built a retail program with Hayter’s branded products in the supermarkets. Hayter’s has basically become Fortinos’ exclusive fresh and frozen turkey provider. Also, Hayter’s raw material is used to make Fortinos’ turkey sausage, and it is the turkey used in Pane Fresco for sandwiches.

Kawartha branded ice cream is another example of a local supplier that has become part of the Fortinos family of products.

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There are many signature Fortinos branded products that the company continues to grow and evolve. They're mainly in the fresh department, specifically meat. Sausage is one of the hero items for the supermarket, and it has been for the full 60 years — it started from day one. Fortinos has also launched a number of new items over the last several years, including meatballs and store-made fresh burgers – half-pound certified Angus beef Fortinos recipe hamburgers.

It's part of the unique, specialty, premium food offerings that customers love and it has become part of the reason behind the company's incredible success over the past 60 years.

"Customers trust the Fortinos brand," says Weicker. "They know it's going to be an outstanding eating experience and that it's only premium quality ingredients that go into that product. We've built the trust with our customers over many years to deliver a great product."

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For 60 years, the successful Fortinos grocery chain has lived by the motto and its tagline “Your Supermarket with a heart!”

It is truly the heart of how it conducts its business — being an integral part of the community that each store is located in, and giving back in various ways to that community so it can thrive.

Supporting local communities has always been at the heart of Fortinos — it’s built into its culture through a variety of initiatives, including:

- Non-perishable food donations - Put a Heart in Your Cart, where all the stores put together canned, non-perishable products sold to customers, which support food banks, shelters, and school breakfast programs providing access to food. Those food drives are held a minimum of three times a year. Fortinos stores also have daily collections and re-distribution of fresh food to local agencies that support people in need.



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- Frozen Turkey Drive – Over 13,000 frozen turkeys have been donated to families in need for their holiday dinner since 2017. The drive originated with the Food for Life agency, in Oakville, Ont. Based on the success of donations, Fortinos expanded it across all the company's stores.
- Fortinos is actively involved with seasonal campaigns such as President's Choice Children's Charity, Heart & Stroke, the Big Bike, local fundraisers, Terry Fox Run, and Salvation Army Christmas kettles.
- Fuel for Kids - working with vendor partners, Fortinos has been able to donate over \$170,000 to elementary schools across its markets since 2015. The program is partnered with veteran race car driver Dave Connelly, who has 17 years of driving experience with the CASCAR and NASCAR Series. Fortinos sponsors Connelly, who goes to local schools in Fortinos' trade areas and



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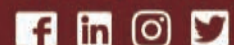


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“John was a great teacher; he spent a lot of time with me. He had a set format for the stores — produce on one side, meat on the opposite side, frozen in the middle, dairy along the back, grocery in between and checkouts along the front. The stores would get bigger in time, but he didn’t vary from that design.”

Paolo Presutti,  
senior director,  
store design

talks about road safety. Those schools can then host a community barbecue at a Fortinos’ store and all funds raised at the event go back to the local school.

- John Fortino Memorial Golf Tournament, in partnership with the Donnici Social Club, an annual fundraiser in Hamilton, Ont., that has raised money for many local, non-profit associations such as Good Shepherd, Food for Life, Neighbour 2 Neighbour, and Camp Trillium.

Because Fortinos is a franchised business with many of its franchisees living in the

community where they do business, the brand is very involved in many community events — from churches, schools and parades to festivals and a variety of fundraisers. Fortinos is committed to supporting its communities and encourages customers to take an active part in improving the lives of people in need.

PC Children’s Charity, for example, is an important and big initiative for Fortinos, as the company raises large sums of money every year internally through store events and fundraisers. The money raised goes primarily to fund

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lunch programs for schools where students are in need — where children and youth often go to school hungry.

The program in place with food banks is also a very big company-wide initiative where product is picked up daily from all the Fortinos stores. With such a large variety of fresh products cooked and baked daily, the company does have much unsold good food at the end of the day which ends up feeding thousands of people who are in need.

Vince Scorniaenchi, executive vice president of Fortinos, says the company's philosophy is quite simple. Franchisees are strongly encouraged to get involved with the local community through schools and churches — anything that is community-driven.

"We think it's very important because obviously without them, we would not be

**CONGRATULATIONS**

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“We have the opportunity to help people in our communities; not only is it built into our corporate mandate, but it’s who we are and we believe in it.”

Vince Scorniaenchi



who we are, what we are,” he says. “That’s fundamental.”

Scorniaenchi says the food banks are an important part of Fortinos’ community initiatives.

“We have a lot of product that is left over at night. It’s all very good product and there’s nothing wrong with it. So every morning, in every store, they come to pick up and they distribute it through their channel to people who are in need,”

he explains. “We’re helping out the people who are less fortunate.”

Scorniaenchi says it’s been a long-held principle in the company — starting with founder John Fortino through the past six decades — that it’s important to be entrenched in the community. That core value has carried on for 60 years.

Today, it’s important for any business to be personally involved in the communities they trade in.



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60

ANNIVERSARY

AND MANY WISHES FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS



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**1.29/lb** 2.84kg green peppers, product of Canada green, yellow or grey zucchini product of Ontario Canada no. 1 grade or eggplant product of Canada

**.29** each sweet bi-colour corn product of Ontario Canada no. 1 grade

**19.99** Bushel Roma tomatoes product of Ontario Canada no. 1 grade

**1.99/lb** 4.38kg jumbo green/red or black seedless grapes product of U.S.A. no. 1 grade

**4.49/lb** 9.88kg fresh whole rabbit

**4.99** 200-375 g Greenfield bacon, smoked back bacon, smoked sausage or wieners selected varieties

**2.49** each Wonderbread® buns 8 1/2" or Casa Mendocino 7" tortillas 204/340 g selected varieties

**4.99** 4-10% plain, chocolate or mini croissants selected varieties

**5.99** each Janes Pub Style chicken or chicken burgers 180 g or Lilydale turkey burgers 180 g selected varieties, frozen

**4.99** 125 g San Daniele sliced prosciutto selected varieties

**3.99** each Santa Lucia bocconcini 200 g or fresh mozzarella 2x125 g selected varieties

**4.99** 280-400 g Big Mountain Foods veggie patty, bites or crumbles selected varieties

**FOOD DRIVE** August 1<sup>st</sup> to August 28<sup>th</sup>  
Buy a food bag today & support families in need.

**\$10** For every bag sold, Fortinos will donate \$2 to our local food bank partners.

“For any business that has local presence with employees who live in the community, it’s important to look after the community,” says Scorniaenchi. “It’s absolutely critical.

“Our tagline is ‘Your Supermarket with a heart!’ That came from the very essence of looking after our communities, our employees, our customers. We put it right on our buildings. It is pretty broad-based, but it’s all entrenched around people.”

### SUPPORT THE HEART & STROKE FOUNDATION!

At 27, Allison suffered a cardiac arrest & was diagnosed with a rare heart condition.

After emergency surgery, Allison is now the healthy mother of 3! Her youngest also has this same genetic mutation –

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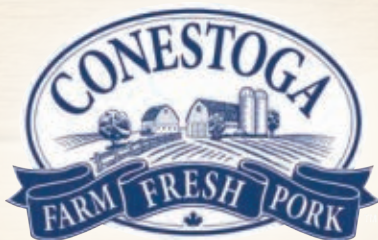
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# Congratulations

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*Your Supermarket with a heart!*

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**60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

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As part of its commitment to supporting communities, Fortinos has long been a supporter of PC Children's Charity. Formed by parent company Loblaw Companies Limited, the charity has been in operation for 31 years and helps feed millions of hungry children across the country.

## \$150 Million

PC Children's Charity 2017 commitment to tackle childhood hunger over 10 years.

### FEEDING AND EDUCATING CHILDREN ON FOOD

## \$11.8 Million

Money granted in 2019 to feeding children

## \$4.1 Million

Funding for food education in 2019

## 2,699

Schools that received a School Nutrition Grant in 2019

### FUNDRAISING FOR SUPPORT

Money raised to date:

- **\$20 Million**  
via its charity golf tournament
- **\$23 Million**  
via its Bowlerama Classic event
- **\$23 Million**  
via Colleague Donations
- **\$45 Million**  
via Customer Donations

## 837,442

Children impacted in 2019

## 36.9 Million

Healthy snacks served to children in 2019

## 76.1 Million

Well-balanced meals served to children in 2019

## 167,141

Children who learned about nutrition in 2019



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FOR 60 YEARS



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**CELEBRATES**  
**60 YEARS**



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\*market leader in Italy IRI Sept 2020





# FORTINOS

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FOR 60 YEARS



**W**hen the COVID-19 pandemic burst upon the Canadian scene in March of 2020, Fortinos wasted no time springing into action.

The guiding principle behind all the grocer's initiatives and protective measures was the health and safety of its employees and its customers.

"Our franchisees and their entire teams have done an amazing job throughout the

whole COVID situation," says Peter Weicker, vice president merchandising and marketing for Fortinos. "In mid-March, we were having conference calls with our franchisees daily and, in some cases, multiple times a day because the situation was evolving and changing so quickly.

"The communication and the changes that we needed to make to our business were coming fast and furious. The



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FOR EVERY BODY



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**60<sup>TH</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY



Proud to be part  
of the family





franchisees would have to take that information and disseminate it and get it implemented with their teams right away.”

Fortinos made significant radical changes within its stores. That included how customers line up at the cash registers, which was a major operational change.

All front-end displays were taken down — totally removing the shelving and the product — to create more space across the front of the store.

“The best way I can describe it is if you think of the bank lines where it would be one line, that’s what we implemented

across the front end of our stores to be able to allow for proper social distancing, and then we would have front-end managers directing our customers,” says Weicker.

That direction was given during one of the company’s conference calls with franchisees, and within 48 hours, all of the stores had it in place. Customers loved the system from the beginning because it was efficient and it provided the necessary protective measures to deal with the COVID pandemic. In fact, Weicker says customers adapted so well and willingly to the changes that they want Fortinos to keep the system in place even when the pandemic finally ends.

“I think the big thing for us was really focusing on trust and safety so our customers and our employees felt that we were doing all the right things to keep them safe and to build a strong sense of trust with our customers.”

Peter Weicker



# Congratulations Fortinos

ON YOUR

# 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

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Our soy sauce is brewed with four simple ingredients; Water, Soybeans, Wheat, Salt with No Added Preservatives.

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### The Uses

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Fortinos also took a leadership role in the wearing of masks for employees and customers, as well as temperature checks. Changes were made to the company's health and safety policies even before government mandates because, as Weicker says, "it was the right thing to do to keep our employees and our customers safe."

The grocery chain created an outside queuing shelter for the winter to regulate the number of customers in the stores at any time.

"I think the big thing for us was really focusing on trust and safety so our customers and our employees felt that we were doing all the right things to keep them safe and to build a strong sense of trust with our customers," says Weicker. "I think we did a great job with those things. I think we took a leadership role in a number of areas."

Safety measures were implemented in every area of the store, even at the front end where traditionally supermarkets sell magazines and treats like chocolate bars. Those racks were completely removed from the floor as part of the overall approach to the safety of the front end. The idea was that Fortinos wanted to create more space for its customers, to allow for proper social distancing and to try to keep the front end moving so people weren't pausing and contemplating



"Last year was a year unlike any other. On one occasion when an elderly individual was unable to use the online shopping, the store immediately offered to complete her order and had it brought to her. This is just one of the many examples where our staff went above and beyond to provide great service and to make sure that our most vulnerable customers stayed safe."

Frank Scornaienchi, district manager

**60<sup>th</sup>**  
*Anniversary*  
**1961-2021**

To our **AMAZING**  
employees and valued  
supplier partners,  
**THANK YOU** for  
**60 incredible years!**

From a tiny little store in downtown  
Hamilton to 23 locations today, Fortinos  
values have not changed in 60 years.



Hard work, respect for customers  
& employees, community service  
and unbeatable quality, freshness  
and variety in everything that  
we sell. That's why we're  
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**WE TRIM THE MEAT NOT THE CUSTOMER**

The Mountain News Wednesday, May, 15 1974

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Young Pork CENTRE CUT PORK CHOPS 1.09 LB.	Family Pack PORK CHOPS 95¢ LB.	Fresh GROUND BEEF 79¢ LB.	Eye of Top ROUND ROAST 1.39 LB.
--	--------------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------------

**Fresh Young PORK SIDE RIBS 89¢ LB.**

**Mary Miles BACON (3 L.B. VP) 79¢**

**Venetian CAPICCOLA 1.39 LB.**  
Hot or Mild By the Piece

**Venetian SALAMI NOSTRANI 1.69 LB.**  
By the Piece

**Fortino's Own ITALIAN SAUSAGE 85¢**  
Hot or Mild By the Piece

**GROCERIES**

48 oz. bottle  
**APPLE NECTAR 49¢**

Allen's Reconstituted  
48 oz. bottle  
**APPLE JUICE 49¢**

**Silverwoods ICE CREAM 19¢ Pint**  
Strawberry only (while they last)

Libby's 30 oz. tin  
**RED KIDNEY BEANS 3/95¢**

Libby's 18 oz. tin  
**ALPHA-GETTI 3/89¢**

Heinz 18 oz. bottle  
**BAR-B-QUE SAUCE 49¢**  
Hot or Mild

**VEGETABLES 39¢**  
quality & freshness.

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AT & SUN 9 - 6

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“Vince’s leadership, the full support of all of the franchisees, Fortinos corporate office staff, and retail store employees bonded and worked together like I’ve never seen before. This, I will always remember fondly. What an accomplishment! As for the rest of the COVID experience... I hope to forget it.”

Joe Zukiel, district manager

the purchase of chocolate bars or leafing through the latest magazine issues.

The goal was to get customers through the stores as quickly as possible.

From a product perspective, especially in the first few months of the COVID crisis, many grocery stores in the industry experienced some issues with empty shelves for things like toilet paper, disinfectant wipes and flour, for example.

Weicker says Fortinos took a very active role to source out alternative sources of supply to keep certain products on the shelves that customers wanted.

An example of that was flour. When for months it was in short supply in Ontario, Fortinos was able to source out a

20-kilogram bag of flour — a much larger size than it would normally carry. The result? Customers were buying it by the truckload, explains Weicker, because Fortinos was one of the only grocery stores that actually had flour.

Eggs too. They were hard to find at the beginning of the pandemic, but Fortinos was able to source a larger size — a 30-pack — that it would not normally carry. Fortinos made the extra effort to satisfy its customers.

“Our customers were buying it up like crazy,” says Weicker.

The same can be said of disinfectant wipes. Fortinos worked with a local supplier, RTS Companies Inc., in the small town of St. Clements, Ont., and in a



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IN DECEMBER 2020 BY  
**THE WASHINGTON POST**



**TATE'S**  
BAKE SHOP

**60<sup>TH</sup>**  
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*Your Supermarket with a heart!*



“We’ve gone through a lot of effort to take a leadership role to keep our customers and our employees safe, to build that trust to be able to properly manage in this environment.”

Peter Weicker



matter of weeks, a retail format was created with that company to provide customers with the disinfectant wipes, which had become a tough product to find because of enormous demand.

In a consumer-based business, it has been extremely important — perhaps even critical — that health protocols are done right. It is something customers are now expecting and, in fact, demanding from retailers and grocery stores.

“We have added significant costs to our business, whether it’s hand sanitizer, whether it’s giving our

shopping bags away for free, whether it’s adding labour to count customers coming into our stores, or adding labour to manage the queuing systems,” says Weicker. “We’ve gone through a lot of effort to take a leadership role there to keep our customers and employees safe, to build that trust to be able to properly manage in this environment. It’s absolutely critical, we believe, to do that. Customers are expecting that from us and we’ve received overall very, very good marks from our customers for what we’ve done.”

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FOR 60 YEARS



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**Looking forward to  
the next 60 years.**



[www.citruswirx.ca](http://www.citruswirx.ca)



# Supply Chain Matters:

## Building Strong Relationships

As any grocer knows, the most critical relationships you have are with your customers and your suppliers. And anyone who knows Fortinos will tell you that it is winning on both fronts. Fortinos' solid relationships with its suppliers are rooted in the founders' original philosophy of dealing fairly with everyone, which is ingrained in today's management team.

"We have a very good relationship with our suppliers," says Vince Scorniaenchi, executive vice president, Fortinos. "Our philosophy is to develop a healthy relationship that is based on striking a win-win result in every interaction. A one-sided deal is never sustainable and usually results in mistrust. Our common goal is based on growing sales as our primary focus."



# CONGRATULATIONS FORTINOS ON YOUR 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY





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79% of consumers purchasing seafood regularly\*



Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

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*Your Supermarket with a heart!*

Your friends at Toppits Foods





## Domenic Raso

**co-chairman of the board  
and co-chief executive officer,  
Burnac Produce Ltd.**

---

John Fortino hired me in 1977, and overall, I spent 22 years with the organization. When I started, we had only

three stores. At the time of hiring, I was playing for the Fortinos-sponsored soccer team; perhaps John liked my on-field work ethic. I started in the dairy department and three months later, moved over to the produce department, which I knew nothing about. From here, I was trained to be a produce manager and through the years held numerous positions, including VP of procurement and merchandising.

John was a true humanitarian. “Your Supermarket with a Heart” is not just a slogan; it is a true reflection of John. John knew every employee by name, regardless of their rank or position.

John’s motto was what he lived by — honesty, modesty, and hard work. That resonated to all who had the pleasure of working for him.

Fortinos not only seeks to build upon its past successes, but more so is always improving upon and emulating these key success factors across all departments to offer their customers the most unique, consistent and ultimately heightened shopping experience. It is embedded in their DNA to look after the customer first and view any decisions from a long-term perspective. Fortinos is a very customer-centric innovator. Fortinos offers consistency in quality and value offerings . . . The level of execution is second to none. Even after 60 years of substantial growth and success, it still has a family-run vibe.





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Gourmet Trading Co. and our brand partners  
congratulate **FORTINOS** *Your Supermarket with a heart!* for their exceptional  
service over the past 60 years, and we wish them  
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Having worked alongside for over half  
of Fortinos years, it has been always  
exciting to see what is next “in store”.

Well done Vince, Peter and Team.

The Team at Robert Shapiro & Associates

Congratulates **FORTINOS** *Your Supermarket with a heart!*  
on their successful journey.

Looking forward to many years ahead!





## **Frank DiBiase** **president, Molisana Imports**

---

Molisana Imports has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Fortinos supermarkets that goes back to the early 80s. My late father and founder of Molisana Imports, Pasquale DiBiase, forged a friendship with the Fortino family and, in particular, John Fortino. They had many things in common, coming from humble roots and immigrating to Canada, where they worked tirelessly in the food industry, for which they shared a strong passion. After the acquisition of Fortinos supermarkets by Loblaw Companies, the Fortino family remained a driving force, with Vince Scorniaenchi at the helm. The expansion took on a much faster growth, but behind it the family values carried on.

I was very fortunate to be a part of this culture and to share their passion. It has always been a pleasure to discover and bring forward our own innovation and present new concepts to them. They were always very receptive to us and always welcomed the innovation. In fact, they have made us feel a part of their family. Their success over the last 60 years is certainly their passion, expertise, and speed to market. They are often ahead of consumer trends with their innovation. A perfect example of this is their Pane Fresco concept, which continues to provide amazing culinary experiences. Despite its complexity, they make it look easy. I wish to congratulate the Fortinos team on this milestone anniversary. They should all be proud of their accomplishments.

Congratulations  
**FORTINOS**  
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Congratulations **FORTINOS** on 60 Successful Years!  
*Your Supermarket with a heart!*

From your friends at International Cheese Co. Ltd.





## **Rod Sturtridge** **president, Carlton Cards Canada**

---

For many years, I have admired Fortinos as skilled merchants that run outstanding stores. More recently, I have developed close relationships with members of their senior leadership, and that admiration continues to grow as I learn more about their business and their people.

All strong relationships are built upon trust and transparency as you work towards a common goal. We are proud to say that we have built meaningful relationships within all levels and functional areas of our organizations. The team at Fortinos are expert merchants who will listen to us as we provide our insights into how to drive category sales and conversion.

As someone watching from the outside, I would say that Fortinos' success has been driven by a complete understanding of their customer, combined with their merchandising expertise and willingness to innovate as needed. Whenever we host guests from other markets and countries, they are always very impressed with Fortinos and the shopping experience that they have created for their customers. The Canadian marketplace, and Ontario even more specifically, is extremely competitive and ever-evolving. Consider the different competitors that have come (and gone) over the last 60 years; the successful retailers are the ones that have a complete understanding of their customers' needs combined with the ability to adapt and change as necessary to compete.



A *Tribute* to 60 years of success  
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**Gray Ridge EGG FARMS**  
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**Congratulations**  
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*Your Supermarket with a heart!*

Celebrating 60 years of heart.



**CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR  
60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

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*Your Supermarket with a heart!*

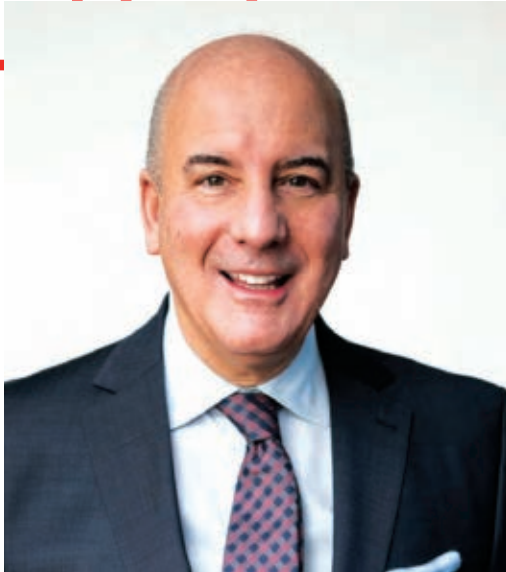
Thank you for your continued support

*Making Food  
The World Loves*



[www.generalmills.ca](http://www.generalmills.ca)





## **Patrick Pelliccione** **president, Jan K Overweel Limited**

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Our family history with Fortinos goes back a long time. My dad was one of the original owners of Primo Foods. So, we started servicing Fortinos when it first began with Primo Pasta. My dad sold the business and we started a new business, Jan K Overweel.

Fortinos has understood the needs of the community that they've been servicing. They have a great advantage that started with John Fortino and continued even after the Loblaw acquisition, leaving it as an independent banner within the Loblaw umbrella. Their management

team understood the needs of the community. When they started, they were servicing an ethnic community that had come from Italy. As they expanded the base of stores to the quantity they have now, they adapted the stores to the markets that they were going to and to the needs of the new generation that was shopping at the stores.

I think the success is due to understanding the community and adapting the stores to meet community needs.

Happy 60th  
ANNIVERSARY  
Fortinos

FINICA  
A Passion for food  
WWW.FINICA.COM



Congratulations  
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*Your Supermarket with a heart!*

on your

60<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY

from your friends at



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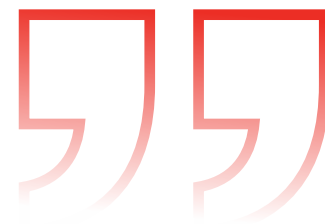
## **Stacey Kravitz** **president, UNFI Canada**

---

Fortinos always puts the customer first. The company has a passion for health and wellness, which is important in our space. The team wants to ensure their customers are educated to make healthy choices. This partners really well with our philosophy. They are at the forefront of what is happening in our world today.

They led the charge in the development of the Pane Fresco program. And they were one of the first grocers to incorporate gluten-friendly options in their home meal replacement and pizza programs.

Fortinos understands the importance of innovation within the health and wellness industry and wants options available for their customers. UNFI works on innovating and bringing new products to market and providing solutions in the health and wellness space. We partnered at the start of COVID to help Fortinos manage through that first surge and get products to their stores in a timely manner.



FROM THE HAYTER'S FARM FAMILY TO YOURS,

# FORTINOS<sup>®</sup>

*Your Supermarket with a heart!*

*Congratulations*

ON YOUR

**60** years —  
IN BUSINESS

WHOLESOME TURKEY RAISED WITH PASSION



Hayter's Farm, like Fortinos, has thrived because our founders' values still guide us. Our values have become tradition, and so have we in the lives of our loyal customers.



LOCAL | FAMILY | 3 GENERATIONS OF FAMILY





## **John Porco**

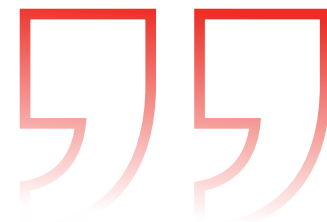
**chief operating officer, Unico Inc./  
Primo Foods**

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We've had long-standing relationships from day one. And we've maintained that relationship today with

Vince Scorniaenchi leading the team. We've had a very consistent approach to our business. Our products have done phenomenally well with Fortinos. Our brand is very strong. We've developed a tremendous bond with the company and we support each other every step of the way.

I've been here for 40 years. I started as a young man. Although Fortinos is now part of Loblaw, they've kept that family focus. Vince Scorniaenchi is a tremendous leader and he's passionate about what he does. We have a lot of respect for them. They have large stores and are the leaders in Canada with regards to merchandising of what I call ethnic foods. They know exactly what consumers are looking for. They appeal to them through their ads and in how their stores are designed.



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 on their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!







## Mike Maccarone group sales director, Conagra Foods

They're great merchants and really understand merchandising — keeping clean stores, having quality products in their stores.

They've always been a great partner with the vendor community. If you go back in the day, whenever you'd go to their office, you'd see everybody there, all the key players. They'd all say hi to you, even people that today have moved on to much bigger roles ... Even John Fortino would come out and shake your hand in the lobby and say, "Hi, how's it going?" There was

always that partnership; treating people fair and equitably was very evident even way back then.

They stick to their strategy. They're all about fresh — their produce, their meat. When you go into a Fortinos store, you know you're going to buy the freshest products. They're very, very big on quality, especially when it comes to fresh.



# Congratulations Fortinos on your 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!



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## Jim Slomka

**brand ambassador, *Grocery Business Magazine***

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I was born in Hamilton and have fond memories (as a kid) of shopping with my mom at the first store (5,000 square feet) at Mohawk and Upper Ottawa.

When I started in the CPG industry with Wm. Dunne & Associates 41 years ago, I met Vince Scorniaenchi and Paul Spagnuolo during my first week on the job at the original location on Queenston Rd — one of four stores in the chain. The head office and warehouse were located on Nash Road (where I met John Fortino). As a small independent, a lot of companies drop shipped orders via National Grocers. It was a big deal when our largest client (Union Carbide/GLAD) approved Fortinos as a direct customer, eliminating the upcharge and making them more competitive.

You can't make this stuff up — in the early 80s, Fortinos' buyer, Ciro Petti, used to call my place at 7 a.m. to place orders. I recall this did not go over well with my bride.

John and his partners (I met all of them) were true pioneers who attracted the right individuals and taught them the values of

hard work, honesty and integrity. It is one of the great Canadian success stories.

Five years ago, it was my honour and privilege to nominate and introduce Vince Scorniaenchi for the Golden Pencil, the highest award in the industry. Vince is respected by his competitors, suppliers, and colleagues — an entrepreneur and a visionary who has worked at Fortinos for 48 years. Vince is one of the great innovators, and under his leadership, he and his team have delivered executional excellence — resulting in some of the most exciting food stores in the world. Here's to your continued success.



Vince Scorniaenchi was the recipient of the 2016 Golden Pencil Award.

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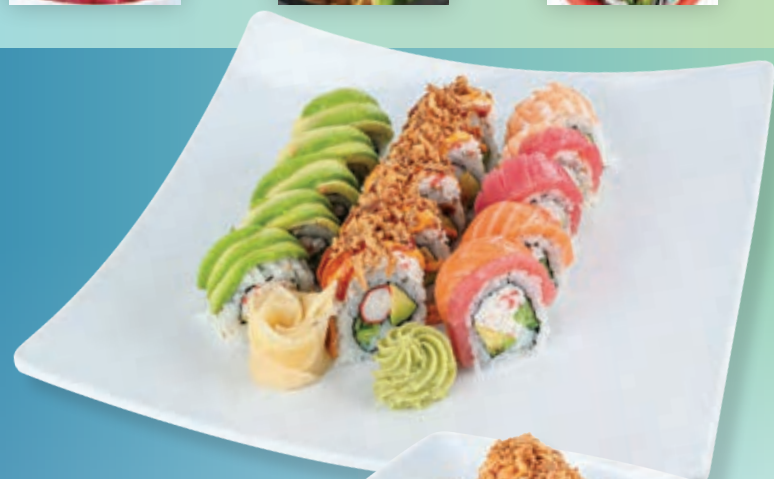


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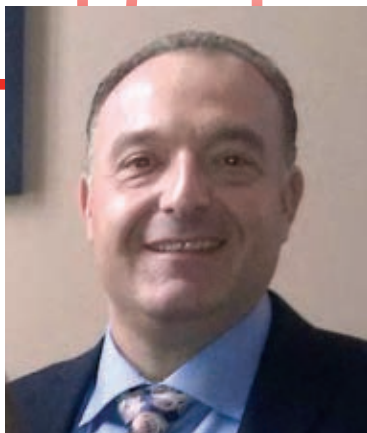
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## Vic Casasanta

**vice president of operations,  
LC Bakery Equipment Service Ltd.**

Our relationship goes a long way back with my dad and John Fortino himself. Dad was doing service on the bakery equipment for John Fortino many, many moons ago when John started with his original stores. That's how the relationship started.

As they continued to grow, my dad looked after the bakery equipment service . . . Their success comes from their constant commitment to quality. They're always

striving to continuously improve the quality and offerings in their locations. I can only speak to the bread and pizza program. The product offering is just incredible. The tenacity to continue to execute at such a high level is unheard of in the supermarket industry. That goes across all of the facets of their fresh programs that I'm involved in. It's just constantly trying to be innovative and really be true to fresh offerings.

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ON **60 YEARS**  
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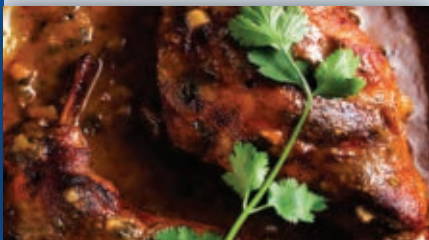


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## **David DiStefano**

**director of sales - Fine Cheese,  
Lactalis Canada**

---

I was born and raised in Hamilton, where Fortinos opened its first store. The banner's Italian roots strike home for me.

As a young boy going to Fortinos, every time I would walk through the door, people would know you by your first name and say, "how are you?" Even today, when you walk into a Fortinos, it's like walking into a family home.

I remember being fascinated by the lobster tank and the bread slicer machine. I could sit there watching customers slice their bread for hours. It seems ridiculous now, but as a young boy, it captured my imagination.

Vince is a visionary. He has taken the torch from the founders and carried it forward to create a leading grocery chain.



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60 years of being a leader and innovator in the Industry!

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## **Joe Pulla**

### **president, Johnvince Foods**

---

Johnvince has been a Fortinos supplier of bulk food for the past 60 years. Fortinos is a superstar within the bulk food space. The Fortinos team are visionaries and Fortinos is an outstanding retailer and the best in Canada.

When John Fortino was alive, my dad was doing business with him. Even

prior to my dad starting Johnvince Foods, he sold them nuts and dried fruits.

I admire how Fortinos pays attention to detail in their relationships with suppliers like us. Vince instills this in his team and it's something that I learned from too.

# Congratulations Fortinos on your **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

From the Arla® Canada team and our global dairy farmers and colleagues





## **Umberto Sabatini** **president, Sabatini Gourmet Foods**

Our relationship has always been one of loyalty — to them and them to me. Fortinos has always been forward-thinking, visionary. Thinking outside of the box. Always coming up with new concepts and ideas which seem to be successful. I've been along for the ride and I've been lucky enough to be part of it. They found me as a good partner to make products for them.

They are dedicated and they're always trying to strive for excellence . . . Our

very first meeting was pretty intimidating. My father was there with me. He was president at the time. They called us in after they tried our product to let us know they wanted to go forward with us on this concept that they had. That was the starting point. They strive for quality product and that's what we strive to make — a quality product.



# CONGRATULATIONS

**TO FORTINOS  
ON YOUR  
60<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY**

**FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT**





# The Franchise Experience

**Since opening its first store in 1961, Fortinos has expanded its reach to 23 locations across the Greater Toronto Area. The banner's formula for success is a simple one: create an unforgettable in-store experience to keep shoppers coming back. And every one of the Fortinos stores has excelled at this.**

**HAMILTON, ONT.**

65 Mall Road  
Opened in 1989

**Nino Gallo**

I have been a Fortinos franchisee since 1994 and have found that the business has certainly changed over the years, especially since introducing Pane Fresco. What remains constant is that we continue to deliver the best in product selection, quality and customer service.

Our customers trust us. They know that we will enforce policies to protect them in an effort to keep them safe while shopping during this pandemic. To know that they have this level of confidence in us reinforces that we are “the supermarket with a heart.”

**HAMILTON, ONT.**

1550 Upper James Street  
Opened in 1994

**Jason Zelinski**

Managing one of our smaller locations with 180 employees has created a family atmosphere inside the store, which I believe the customers appreciate. From management to staff, we are proud to be constantly driven to provide the best possible customer service and the freshest of foods. We believe that when you combine these two attributes, this combination results in the best possible grocery experience. I am proud to be part of a company that strives to differentiate ourselves from the competition through innovation and the development of new products.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our industry, I believe, forever. When the pandemic first broke, we witnessed a mass panic in our customers' buying habits. We witnessed our customers loading up on products such as toilet paper, cleaning products and canned goods, basically stripping our shelves bare. We also have seen the explosion of our e-commerce PC Express department, which had to adapt to servicing our panic-stricken customers almost overnight. We have seen how our staff and management rose to the challenge of servicing our communities through such trying times. COVID-19 has tested each and every one of my staff and management's resiliency and I am proud of their selfless acts in the service of our customers.



### HAMILTON, ONT.

1579 Main Street West  
Opened in 2004

#### Lucy Caluori

Working for an innovative supermarket is challenging yet exciting, allowing me to grow as a leader. Part of the excitement of managing is being a part of many diverse departments because of Fortinos' full-service offerings for all our customers. The employees and the customers are the heart of our business and working in this environment allows me the opportunity to interact with people and to build close bonds.

At the beginning of the pandemic, during very uncertain times, my employees came together as a stronger team, supporting one another. We were able to quickly implement a safe environment for each other, to better serve our customers within the community. As a result of this, our customers showed their appreciation by hanging a banner outside the store that thanked our staff for their service during this time. This unexpected gesture was surprising to us all and was very much appreciated.



### ANCASTER, ONT.

54 Wilson Street West  
Opened in 1998

#### Phil Cocchiara

Each day provides an opportunity to prove we are the best grocery destination in the Golden Horseshoe. We strive to bring the freshest products to the public. I believe our collective success is based on our ability to work collaboratively to bring a positive shopping experience to all our customers. Even as our business grows and changes, we remain true to our roots. We are, and always will be, the supermarket with a heart!

On March 11, 2020, when the World Health Organization announced COVID-19 as a

worldwide pandemic, it felt as though a general panic was setting in. Many people thought that grocery stores would close and that caused insecurity about having enough. I remember dry goods, canned food, and paper products literally being sold out in a matter of hours. It was a scary time, not only because there was this unknown virus, but also because it was becoming increasingly difficult to stock our shelves to meet the unprecedented demand. Never in my career had I seen anything like it. However, what I

### BURLINGTON, ONT.

1059 Plains Road East  
Opened in 1996



#### Paul Anderson

I have been with Fortinos 33 years and have seen the business grow from 13 stores to 23. Fortinos has always been an active community supporter – from the Fortinos Annual Family Picnic, to the Heart and Stroke fundraising dinners, golf tournaments raising money for Camp Trillium and PC Children's Charity. This is part of our culture and I take pride in ensuring this support continues at my store by supporting local non-profit organizations, schools and food banks. Through my personal experiences over the years and as a franchisee, I can say, this is truly a "Supermarket with a Heart!"

Throughout COVID, it's been very challenging to operate a business, especially one considered to be an essential service. There was much change with new protocols and safety standards needing to be implemented quickly but smartly. My team was very supportive of the changing environment. I could not have done this without the dedication and support of all of my employees. I would like to thank them for their contribution to the business during these unprecedented times.



# FORTINOS

KEEPING IT FRESH  
FOR 60 YEARS

## VAUGHAN, ONT.

8585 Highway 27  
Opened in 2013

### Fab Santangelo

I started at Fortinos in 1996. I have progressed throughout the business and now operate the Langstaff/Hwy 27 location. I have seen the business evolve with the addition of Pane Fresco. Initially, it was a challenging experience being a traditional operator, then managing a “restaurant-style concept” within the four walls, but this has been a great learning experience and now one which is hard to imagine Fortinos without! Pane Fresco has completely evolved our business, positioning us to be a major player going forward!

At the start of the pandemic, it was “all hands on deck” and every day was different and full of

challenges. The leadership team at Fortinos quickly responded by assisting in providing clear direction with strict protocols which enabled us to navigate each chaotic day ensuring customer and staff safety. It was reassuring knowing that we had this level of support, and made it much easier to manage the day-to-day issues.



like to remember most is the countless number of people who took the time to thank us for making them feel safe. Customers saw extra cleaning staff making the effort to clean high-touch surfaces and staff doing their best to help with physical distancing. Customers continued to shop with us because our stores were clean and they felt it was a safe shopping environment. Even now, customers will stop and thank us for keeping the shelves stocked and making them feel comfortable in these uncertain times.

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- Darren A. Cooper, President,  
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# FORTINOS

## KEEPING IT FRESH FOR 60 YEARS



### VAUGHAN, ONT.

2911 Major Mackenzie Drive  
Opened in 2001

#### Tony Ferrante

Operating a Fortinos franchise has been everything I have always dreamed of since I was 14 years old and began in the industry as a part-time dairy and frozen clerk. Over the years, I gained knowledge in business and customer service. Through hard work, I was able to achieve my goal at the age of 27 and become a Fortinos franchisee. As Fortinos grew, introducing Pane Fresco, it challenged me to learn not only how to run a grocery store, but now a restaurant too. Operating a Fortinos franchise is rewarding in many ways, most importantly, the relationships you build with your employees and your customers.

During the pandemic, when customers were looking for a safe place to shop, and employees were looking for a safe place to work, my leadership team and I felt it was our responsibility to deliver just that. The protocols and action plan we set in place did not go unnoticed. My staff at Queens Plate took it upon themselves to have each member of the team sign thank you cards along with a special message letting me know how much they appreciated the support I was providing to them on a daily basis during the pandemic. This was a special moment for me, to be recognized by my staff showing how much they appreciated my hard work as much as I appreciated their hard work! Although I have now taken the franchise location at Maple, this will always stay with me.

### VAUGHAN, ONT.

3940 Highway #7  
Opened in 1994



#### Joey Cosentino

I have been with Fortinos since 2000 and have operated my own franchise for the last 10 years. For the past seven years, I have owned the Fortinos at Highway 7 and Ansley Grove. I am proud to be part of an ever-evolving landscape that encompasses a world-class supermarket and a state-of-the-art home meal replacement offering with a carvery station, artisan bake shop, European-style cafe and a dine-in experience called Pane Fresco. Fortinos is constantly innovating, which sets us apart from our competition and places us in a great position moving forward.

When the pandemic broke out, it was very chaotic. Every day, we faced a new set of challenges. With direction from Fortinos, my staff and I were able to implement all of the proper protocols and procedures to keep employees and customers safe, which was our number one priority. We are committed to a high level of safety and focus, and customers have felt confident shopping in our store.

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# FORTINOS

## KEEPING IT FRESH FOR 60 YEARS



### **OAKVILLE, ONT.**

493 Dundas St. West  
Opened in 2015

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#### **Scott Valiquette**

Operating a Fortinos allows me to interact with customers on a daily basis. It also brings forward new and exciting challenges every day that gives me an opportunity to work with my team, produce great quality products and offer excellent customer service. Working throughout the pandemic has been especially challenging, yet it has provided us with more opportunities with ever changing customer shopping patterns. While new challenges arose, my staff members, who were working throughout the pandemic, exceeded any expectations asked of them and came together to serve our customers. Being a Fortinos franchisee has been the most rewarding experience of my career.



### **BRAMPTON, ONT.**

55 Mountainash Road  
Opened in 1996

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#### **Juan Arango**

Owning a franchise is a privilege. Better yet, it's a blessing to be able to meet so many different people amongst staff and customers and to help them in so many different ways. To be a role model and have people look up to you is an amazing feeling on its own. Can't forget about the significant role our stores play in their communities.

A moment I will never forget that occurred early in this pandemic was when an entire aisle of toilet paper, paper towel and Kleenex was completely empty. It was like something straight out of a movie! I realized the severity of the situation and had me already planning how to help keep some sanity in my store; I needed to think fast and be an even more effective leader for the rest of my team.



### **BRAMPTON, ONT.**

60 Quarry Edge Drive  
Opened in 1996

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#### **Antonio Portaro**

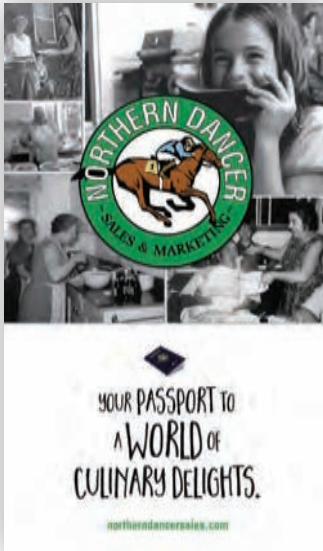
I have been in the grocery business for over 20 years and have a strong passion for what I do. I enjoy being a part of an amazing company like Fortinos, as they are fully committed to supporting their franchisees and are continually working with us to improve and evolve the business to meet the needs of our staff, customers and community.

When the announcement came that we were going into a state of emergency, everyone started panic buying, causing a strain on supply and workload. Our management and store staff came together as a team and put in extra effort to help make our store a safe environment and fully stocked for our customers, while overcoming their own fears of the unknown virus. The amount of recognition and thankfulness we received from our customers was very rewarding.

Our Brands, Our Partners, we salute **FORTINOS**  
on 60 years of success and look forward  
to growing our business with you for years to come.



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Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fortinos



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From your partners at



*Congratulations*

Fortinos on  
60 years of  
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**grocery**  
BUSINESS







## **BURLINGTON, ONT.**

2025 Guelph Line  
Opened in 1998

### **Dean Rodo**

Being a Fortinos franchisee is not just about being part of a company. It's being part of a community, part of a family. I have met and worked with some very talented people over the years and formed some very special relationships. I feel fortunate to be part of something very special!

This past year has obviously presented its fair share of challenges and uncertainties, but I could not be prouder of my staff. They conducted themselves with courage and professionalism, and for that, I am truly grateful. It has made us a stronger, tighter group and I now know that we can overcome any obstacles!



## **WATERDOWN, ONT.**

115 Hamilton Street North  
Opened in 1999

### **Miklos Kanalas**

Being a Fortinos franchisee in a small town like Waterdown is all about building relationships with our customers and giving back to our community. Whether it's a sports team, church group or any other local organizations, they know they can always count on their local Fortinos' support. We have a lot of long-time employees working at our store and we are all proud to be part of a business that is distinctive.

Back in March 2020 when the pandemic hit, we partnered with a local auto body shop to help out our society's most vulnerable, the seniors. We did their grocery shopping for them and employees from the body shop delivered it to their homes using their shuttle service, all for no charge. These seniors were happy that they could keep shopping at their favourite local grocery store from the comfort of their home.



## **HAMILTON, ONT.**

50 Dundurn Street  
Opened in 1988

### **Dan Dove**

I grew up learning this business and now lead a management team and staff of over 210. I started 20 years ago as a part-time clerk stocking groceries at Fortinos Ancaster. At that time, I couldn't have imagined how my career would progress and now have the privilege of operating my own franchise.

Over this past year since COVID began, we had to adapt quickly to challenges to provide a safe environment for my customers and staff. The community has relied heavily on the store to provide essential goods while many other businesses were closed. Many customers have taken the time to personally thank my staff and me for providing essential needs during this stressful time. It has been a very rewarding year knowing the importance of what we have accomplished and what we still have in front of us to reach the "new normal."



Congratulations on  
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**Fortinos!**

We are proud to be a supplier of  
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projects in the future.  
**Happy Anniversary!**



Fortinos,  
congratulations on 60 years  
from Turner Fleischer Architects.

Here's to many more.

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FLEISCHER**





## STONEY CREEK, ONT.

21 Upper Centennial Parkway South  
Opened in 2000

### Jessica Emanuele

I have been a Fortinos franchisee since 2011 and realized early on in my career that “great things in business are not done by one person; they are done by a team of people.” That is truly what Fortinos represents.

I am so proud of my team. 2020 was a challenging year, yet we grew closer as a team and faced it together through tears and laughter, every step of the way!

## ETOBICOKE, ONT.

333 Queens Plate Drive  
Opened in 2003

### Anthony Suljak

Over the past several weeks, I have come to learn what it is like to operate a Fortinos franchise. It is an absolute honour to be a public figure in my new community and to lead a team of great individuals who have risen to the occasion to come to work every day with a smile on their face through this intense pandemic. This pandemic has completely changed the way we conduct our daily routines. Yet at the end of it all, our staff continues to greet each customer with a smile and that makes me proud to be part of this team and experience of being a new franchisee.

I have come to learn that being a leader is more than just directing the daily workloads. It is also about taking the time to listen to our employees and what they have to say about being a

member of the team. I had a conversation just the other day with an employee who shared they enjoy coming to work because they feel safe.

Being able to share my thoughts and ideas with a team is wonderful, as it makes me feel like I am part of something bigger than just being the franchisee; it makes me feel like I am having a positive impact on how our employees conduct themselves from day to day and how they in turn may treat one another or even a customer, for that matter. My favourite part of my day is greeting all of my amazing staff in the morning with a smile and a hello asking, “how are you doing today?”

Earlier this month, I had a customer come into the store wearing a proper mask. However, while this customer

was shopping, she thought she would remove the mask completely to finish her shopping because she had a medical condition. When our staff noticed she was not wearing a mask, the employee contacted me. As I was approaching the customer, another customer was already telling her to put the mask on or else she could not be in the store. The best part of it all was that the customer was extremely polite and simply stated the customer at fault was endangering all of our employees and the other customers in the store. It was great to see that other customers who visit the store take that kind of pride in protecting our staff and customers.





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Happy 60<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary to  
**FORTINOS**  
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# FORTINOS

## KEEPING IT FRESH FOR 60 YEARS



### BRAMPTON, ONT.

35 Worthington Avenue  
Opened in 2003

#### Berkan Yagliyurt

As a new franchisee and new to the Fortinos banner, I have been very welcomed and overwhelmed by the amount of support I have received from everyone within the store and at the office. This has been an amazing experience and I look forward to my journey with this business.

I am extremely grateful to my team who have held up this business during the pandemic. The amount of support, loyalty and hard work from these amazing employees is the only reason we survived this pandemic! It has been a long road but I feel like we are finally coming out the other side.



### NORTH YORK, ONT.

700 Lawrence Ave. West  
Opened in 1996

#### Tony Ciccarelli

It is like being part of a large tree — a good foundation and strong roots with each branch serving as its own franchise. Needing a consistent source of nutrients, sunlight, water and the proper temperature which enables you to grow. Being part of the Fortinos franchisee team has been an opportunity for me to be an entrepreneur — to innovate, be challenged, motivate and nurture a great team, yet knowing that there is this solid structure behind me providing guidance and direction. I love it!

The story that I'd like to share truly surpasses all of the negative experiences that I have encountered

### HAMILTON, ONT.

75 Centennial Parkway  
Opened in 1988

#### Mike Rozenberg

Working at Fortinos is very fast-paced and can be stressful at times. No two days are ever the same. As a franchisee, you deal with product, employee and customer issues. You are the face of the store, good or bad. On a daily basis, you need to make sure that the product is in stock and fresh and that your employees are happy. Both translate into a great customer experience to keep them returning. You cannot run a business like this without a team. I am very fortunate to have great managers and staff in the store.

I will never forget when the pandemic hit and the store was completely wiped out in sections. Walking around the store felt like you were in a movie. With all of the uncertainty and stress during this time, it was great when customers would call or email to thank our staff for the job we were doing. It was very nice to feel appreciated when we were risking our health to ensure that families were fed.



during this pandemic. My store is situated in a diverse trade area with a cross section of demographics. Knowing many people were out of jobs and needed support, it was easy to get behind programs that helped people in need. We ran a frozen turkey drive over the holidays, collecting turkeys purchased from customers going to people in need for their holiday dinner. Flemington Park Elementary School is a vibrant school, but one with kids whose families don't have steady financial support. I called the principal and drove the turkeys over — it took three trips. The principal was overwhelmed when I presented her with a cheque for \$3,000 from funds raised from our food drive.

From our family to yours.



ORGANICALLY GROWN,  
CLOSE TO HOME



CHEERS TO 60 YEARS!



*Cheers to  
60 Years*

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*Your Supermarket with a heart!*



Dark Chocolate Berry Cake

**We're ready to party!**

We appreciate  
the Fortinos team and  
your passion for quality.



Your friends at



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## **BURLINGTON, ONT.**

5111 New Street  
Opened in 1990

### **Derren Paterson**

It's exciting to work for an organization that truly has customer satisfaction at the heart of everything we do. The attention to detail that is given to our depth assortment is outstanding and we are able to specifically tailor the assortment of each of our stores to our local demographics. I believe the quality of the product we provide is amongst the best in Canada. This makes shopping an exciting experience for our customers, who love to browse our assortment and purchase those hard-to-get items that are not available in other stores in my market. Fortinos truly is a store for food lovers.

One of the things I am most proud of over the last 12 months during the pandemic is the way my franchise and community came together to raise donation bags for the local food bank in December. My store employees wanted to give back to less fortunate people in the local community. Fortinos has a fantastic program where we sell \$10 food or non-food bags during the month of December to our customers for them to donate to the local food bank. My team pledged they would get behind the making of these bags and ensure they were always available for customers to buy in December so we could maximize donations. The customers in my community are extremely generous and as a result, we were able to donate over 3,000 \$10 donation bags that went to feed less fortunate people in the community, which translated to a full trailer of product. Awesome job by my team and special thanks to the Burlington community for their generosity.



## **OAKVILLE, ONT.**

173 Lakeshore Road West  
Opened in 2006

### **Ray Chehayeb**

Partnering with a company like Fortinos has been a great learning experience; it has taken me to the next level during the last five years and I'm very excited to see what the future holds. This has been a gratifying experience. I enjoy the daily interaction with our customers, while working alongside staff to provide my community with a fantastic place to shop and providing excellent customer service and fresh quality products that our customers have come to expect from Fortinos South Oakville.

It has been a huge challenge, to say the least, during the pandemic. We had to adapt and implement new policies and procedures on the fly at the beginning and try to maintain the store standards. No one knew what was going to happen and we had a lot of staff express concern about their safety. Some decided to stay home, but we still had to operate the business and continue to hire new staff to fill in the gaps. It was amazing and a great feeling to have people appreciate and thank us for the service we provided. I felt it brought the community a bit closer together spiritually while being six feet apart.

Congratulations!

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on 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

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## **BURLINGTON, ONT.**

2515 Appleby Line  
Opened in 2011

### **Kyle Robb**

Operating a franchise can be extremely challenging; we're constantly facing a number of obstacles each and every day throughout all aspects of our business. The reward is having employees with the desire and passion to work through these issues and solve each problem while continuing to deliver a satisfying experience for our customers in the community.

The truly unique experience of COVID was having the opportunity to lead a group of over 350 employees during so much uncertainty. More importantly, having 350 employees who tirelessly continued working day and night to help best serve their customers. It's been a pleasure having such an outstanding team of individuals who've left a tremendous impact inside our community.

## **STONEY CREEK, ONT.**

102 Highway #8  
Opened in 1984

### **Andy Di Benedetto**

As a new franchisee, it will be an exciting time. To gain trust from employees and customers is my top priority. I am grateful to begin leading a passionate team as we celebrate our successes and learn from our mistakes. The experiences that I have had while working with multiple franchisees has allowed me to develop my skills and build upon successful roots. To operate a Fortinos requires a bond with the employees. I aim to start the day by greeting the workers of each department, confirming they are confident in their ability to provide great service. Customer satisfaction relies on employee satisfaction. The most fulfilling aspect of operating a



Fortinos franchise will be creating a community, with my store being the heart.

I will always reflect on March 8, 2020, the day the pandemic was announced. With uncertainty and fear, my previous store overcame the challenges of dealing with the chaos. Initially, our customers were buying everything in very large quantities. I recall bagging 30 cans of dog food in one purchase. Turning to the customer, I joked, "you must really love your dog!" The customer replied, "as long as my dog is happy, I'm happy. And it tastes great too!" Together, we laughed as we continued bagging groceries.

# FORTINOS

KEEPING IT FRESH  
FOR 60 YEARS

## The Fortinos Way

### GOOD FOOD

**16**

**varieties  
of hot  
soup fresh  
daily**

**24+**

varieties of  
fair-trade, estate  
and organic  
coffee beans

25+ breads/buns

25+ pizzas



**85,000 SQ.FT.**

AVERAGE SIZE OF A FORTINOS STORE

**20+ varieties** of Montreal-style  
bagels boiled in honeywater and baked  
fresh daily @ Pane Fresco

PANE *Fresco*  
by **FORTINOS**

### GOOD HEALTH

**4,000+**

products offered in Nature's  
Treasures health department

**1,300+**

vitamins and supplements

### CARING FOR COMMUNITY

**\$170,000+**

money donated to elementary schools since  
2017 through a Fuel for Kids initiative in  
partnership with race car driver Dave Connelly

### IT'S IN THE MEAT

**20+**

variety of pork sausages made  
each week at Fortinos meat facility

**25,000 KG**

volume of meat processed weekly  
at meat facility at peak season

**13,000+**

The number of frozen turkeys  
Fortinos has donated to food bank  
partners since 2017



# FORTINOS

*From the Heart*



HEARTFELT  
WISHES  
ON YOUR

60

<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
FOR THE SUPERMARKET  
WITH

*Heart*



PINTY'S



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