



Healthy eating and food safety





Healthy eating and food safety

Conscious of what they eat, consumers are well aware of the link between good nutrition and long-term health. They're increasingly interested in what's in their food and are looking for products that contribute to healthier living. As a leader in the Canadian agrifood processing sector, we're coming up with even more ways to help them eat better and provide their families with more balanced nutrition.

Priority one: Offer healthy foods by reducing or eliminating ingredients deemed undesirable.

REDUCING SODIUM

It's a well-known fact: too much sodium increases arterial hypertension, a major contributor to heart disease. In 2010, Health Canada estimated that Canadians consumed more than twice the recommended amount of sodium.

Responding quickly to this issue, we conducted research to find ways to substantially reduce the amount of salt in our products while preserving their great taste. We worked to meet and even surpass voluntary targets set by Health Canada to reduce the sodium content of processed foods.

Poultry. Since 2012, the sodium content in all our processed poultry has met government recommendations, which represents a reduction of 26.5 tonnes of sodium.

In 2013, we received a DUX award in the Improved Food Product category for a substantial reduction in the sodium content of our processed poultry products. The DUX awards recognize leaders in the Quebec food industry whose products and initiatives contribute to improvements in the health and eating habits of Quebecers.

Pork. We foresee that by 2017, 98% of the hams, sausages, bacon and deli meats we produce will contain recommended sodium levels, representing an additional reduction of 275 tonnes of sodium.

New products. All new products launched since 2012 meet Health Canada's recommendations for sodium content.

REDUCTION OF ALLERGENS

According to most experts, food allergies are increasing in all industrialized nations. Aware that this issue impacts more and more families, we devote extensive effort to removing some of the 10 principal allergens identified by Health Canada from our products, namely nuts and grains, gluten, mustard, soy, milk and eggs.

Allergen-free products. In 2016, more than 50% of the products we sold at retail, to restaurants and to our institutional clients contained no allergens whatsoever. In fact, peanuts, tree nuts and sesame seeds have been completely removed from our products.

Information on allergens. For close to 10 years, we've clearly indicated on our retail websites (Olymel, Flamingo and Lafleur) which allergens are contained within a given product.

Furthermore, multiple stages of verification ensure that allergens and sources of gluten are accurately identified in the ingredients list on each package.

Gluten-free certification program. All our processing facilities are certified by the Canadian Celiac Association, the only voluntary gluten-free certification program in Canada. Every year, independent auditors ensure that we meet the program's requirements. Therefore, products bearing the certification seal come with a guarantee that they're safe and gluten-free.

Gluten-free products. In 2016, a new line of Flamingo gluten-free crispy chicken products received the DUX award in the Improved Food Product category, recognizing our timely response to a growing health challenge.

Thinking about tomorrow means putting people's health first by offering them foods that are healthy and balanced.



USING HEALTHIER INGREDIENTS

Always listening to consumers and our customers, we're constantly innovating to improve the nutritional profile of our products by using simple, natural ingredients just like those people use at home. We also work to eliminate or reduce chemical ingredients and artificial flavours as well as other additives without compromising food safety.

100% natural. In 2012, we launched our Smart & Natural line of ham, chicken and turkey deli meats made with natural ingredients, reduced in sodium and free of gluten and added preservatives. Building on this success, in 2013 we did it again with the introduction of Lafleur Natural Bacon.

Nitrite-free. In 2012, Flamingo nitrite-free shaved turkey and chicken products were finalists in the Canadian Grand Prix New Product Awards. The awards organizers, the Retail Council of Canada, recognized the value of this innovative new line of nitrite-free, gluten-free and low-fat poultry deli meats.

Antibiotic-free. To meet the growing demand for meat products from animals raised without antibiotics, we take part in research in different food segments aimed at reducing the cost of antibiotic-free farming of animals to make this type of offering more accessible.

Since 2016, we've offered Flamingo-brand turkeys and chickens raised without antibiotics and we plan on gradually increasing the supply of antibiotic-free meat available for sale.

ACTION PLAN

- Reduce the sodium content of all pork products in line with Health Canada recommendations.
- Gradually eliminate ingredients deemed undesirable such as allergens and artificial ingredients.
- Increase the supply of meat from animals raised without antibiotics and sold at competitive prices.
- Gradually introduce processed products made with meat from animals raised without antibiotics.



Priority two: Ensure the safety and quality of our products.

We want to guarantee our customers at home and abroad that all our products can be consumed with complete confidence. Relying on a process of continuous improvement and the dedication of our staff, we employ industry best practices at every step of the manufacturing process. Our goal is to comply with internationally recognized food safety and quality standards and foster a thriving corporate culture in this area.

SQF certification. Since 2012, all of our facilities in Canada have been Safe Quality Food certified. This program, recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative, guarantees our customers that our foods are produced, treated, prepared and handled according to the regulatory standards established under the HACCP system, which is based on rigorous controls and documentation of food safety at every phase of production.

In 2014, we initiated the process leading to SQF Code Level 3 certification for our processing facilities. This level indicates that in addition to carrying out complete food safety risk analyses, we apply an audited program to ensure food quality. In December 2016, six of our nine processing facilities were Level 3-certified.

SAPHYR program. In 2014, we undertook the development of an internal food safety program for staff at our plants. In 2016, about 100 of them successfully completed the 10 modules the training entailed: risk evaluation, equipment, plant hygiene, cleaning, sanitation, cooking, refrigeration, freezing, labelling and regulations.

ACTION PLAN

- Obtain SQF Code Level 3 certification for all processing facilities.
- Train 900 new employees within the framework of SAPHYR certification.

Priority three: Help people make informed food choices.

Faced with a number of problems linked to food consumption, we believe that it's our responsibility to encourage our customers and consumers to make healthy choices. That's why we're constantly seeking to develop products that promote healthy, flavourful and nutritious eating, but also tools that offer practical information adapted to our different customer groups.

Health and Wellness Program. This program offers our institutional clients more than 100 pork, chicken and turkey products that respect strict nutritional criteria. This program is constantly updated with the latest nutritional information and recipes adapted to different industries.

Fight against obesity. For consumers, we aim specifically to fight the problem of obesity, the rate of which has doubled over the last 25 years. In 2016, we took steps toward the development of tools that foster weight management. This program will include the promotion of eating habits that increase satiety as part of a reduced-calorie diet, notably through the integration of complete proteins, including animal protein.

ACTION PLAN

- Continuously update our Health and Wellness program.
- Implement an information program and tools for the integration of animal protein in calorie-reduced diets.