

# Developing the “Canada Brand”

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## ■ Branding Canada – An Opportunity for Canadian Pork

The purpose of this presentation will be to validate the significant importance of the current and future generic branding efforts and initiatives coordinated by the Canadian Pork Industry. I will describe the different elements that constitute the current and future environment in which the Canadian Pork Industry will have to operate and highlight the recent initiatives undertaken by the Canadian Pork Industry that will enable it to efficiently promote Canadian Pork both domestically and internationally. Finally, I will give a processors perspective on the importance of a Generic Branding Strategy and the compatibility of generic and specific branding activities.

## ■ Current and Future Environment

### Canada’s Pork Reality

#### **Significant growth of Canadian Pork production in the last 10 to 15 years**

- Overall pork output on the rise
- Domestic consumption is more or less flat
- Pork meat exports explode
- Live hog exports to the US continue to grow

#### **No branding initiatives up until recently other than.....**

- Trade activities / seminars in targeted international markets (CPI)
- Provincial boards or organizations coordinate local / domestic marketing initiatives

### **Canadian pork's reputation is second to none**

- Meat quality wise
- Business mindset is flexible to accommodate importer / user requirements

### **COOL confirmed in Japan**

- Previous to COOL, there was no incentive for the Japanese trade to identify Canadian Pork as imported
- US branding initiatives already in place (USMEF)

### **COOL in the US ??? in the EU ??? Other Trade / Market Access Issues**

- Like Japan, if implemented, fresh Pork at retail will be targeted.
- In export markets, Canada finds itself with increased competition from an ever expanding global supply base, as export markets continue to open up and/or change.

## **■ Current Ongoing Initiatives**

There are numerous private, regional or provincial branding and/or marketing initiatives for both domestic and export markets. The following three elements are the key components of the Generic Branding push that is contributing to better defining Canadian Pork.

Though most of the focus has initially been export oriented, all involved have also recognized that the Canadian Pork Story or Canadian Pork Identity, or ultimately the defining attributes that will enable all of us to say that this is Canadian Pork, will serve both domestic and export needs.

## **The National Branding Strategy for the Agriculture, Food and Seafood Sector**

This strategy is the fruit of a Canadian government initiative that eventually created the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), a policy agreed to and adhered to by the Federal, Provincial and territorial governments.

The APF created a platform for which the whole Canadian agricultural sector would be able to implement programs and systems that position it as a world leader in food safety, innovation and environmentally responsible production.

Once the systems and programs were in place, it was immediately clear that a Branding Strategy was necessary to ensure awareness and recognition at

home and abroad. Abroad, the Strategy would utilize the positive perceptions that the world, in general, has about Canada and use that to position the Canada Brand.

The core objective is to have potential consumers and buyers of agricultural products associate Canada as an unlimited supply of safe, competitive and wholesome foods. The message would then be packaged and circulated in a unified and common language and visual form.

The Canada Brand will be managed through the International Branding Working Group (IBWG), a collaboration of industry and governments officials. The IBWG draws its fuel from what is generated through the various Value Chain Roundtables, industry, associations, as well as Provincial and Federal departments and agencies.

Various buyer and consumer research is either completed or in progress, and communication and marketing tools are currently under evaluation with the National Branding Strategy set to be deployed in late spring 2005.

### **The National Pork Value Chain Roundtable**

The NPVCR is the fruit of the APF and served as the key vehicle which enabled the Canadian Pork Industry, with the participation of all industry stakeholders (Provincial and Federal governments, producers, processors, traders and industry suppliers) to embark in a thorough review: Who it was, what were its key markets, who were its main competitors and where we needed to eventually be. We were basically setting the table to better and more clearly define what is "Canadian Pork". The first meeting took place in Montreal in March 2003.

The various sessions helped us to better understand where we stood as we benchmarked ourselves rather extensively (SWOT), though not scientifically, against existing and future competition, namely the US, Denmark and Brazil.

We were able to categorize our key markets through a gold-silver-bronze approach but always keeping in mind that all and any markets are important, regardless of their size. However, we believe that categorizing our key markets would help us both prioritize and customize our efforts relevant to the specific market.

Once we were done with the SWOT process and some market analysis, we attacked the long journey of defining ourselves, defining the CANADIAN PORK STORY, by focusing on components where we needed to differentiate ourselves. That covered food safety, consistent and highest meat quality, total

integrity of the whole Value Chain, our responsiveness to specific customer needs and our ability to compete.

An endless list of either national and/or regional practices were inventoried and this process in itself helped all involved to realize that we had one hell of a story to tell. However, we never actually took inventory that would enable any, or all, of us to say that this is "Canadian Pork" or "the" Canadian Pork Story.

The next steps will consist of communicating findings and consulting with all stakeholders. Once consensus is achieved, we will finalize overall strategy and identify key initiatives that will set the table to implement the strategic plan.

### **Brand Canada Promotion - Japan**

With COOL in full force in Japan since August 2003, we could not wait for the outcome of the current Value Chain initiatives, so a pilot project was agreed to, involving Maple Leaf and Olymel from the processing sector of the industry, hog producers (represented by CPC) and the Federal government pooling resources to get this promotion launched. Nevertheless, the Canada Brand message did complement the findings of the Pork Value Chain Roundtable.

We were a few years behind the US (USMEF) who had already plenty of activities under its belt and who, incidentally, do operate with much deeper pockets with funding that is considerably more substantial than that available to the Canadian Industry. But the fact is that, previous to COOL, there was absolutely no incentive for the Japanese trade to consider identifying Canada Pork as such, as our meat was easily converted to being domestic Pork, which carried a significant premium over anything that was imported. Nonetheless, we still had a lot of catching up to do. We basically had a ton of trade recognition in our pockets, but with very little consumer awareness of Canadian Pork and its numerous attributes in Japan. The Chilled Pork category was the targeted product line.

The initial objectives were to make a statement to the trade that Canada, as an industry, was willing to take concrete measures and actions to make their customers aware of Canadian Pork and to start creating some consumer awareness. The greater Tokyo and Osaka areas were covered, with housewives (30 to 50 years old) with children targeted.

Market research indicated that close to 70% of those targeted consumers did not know that Canadian Pork was imported. Canada had a significantly better overall image compared to other potential sources of Pork imports. However, Canada had a very favourable image in general. Finally, 2/3 of the respondents did check what country the product came from when it came to purchasing imported Pork.

The creative strategy for the first promotion conveyed the message that Canadian Pork was safe and tasty, and that Canada was a major supplier of high quality Pork. All this while leveraging the overall favourable impression of Canada being a land of vast, clean nature by extending this comparison to Canadian Pork. Additionally, the tone of message covered trustworthiness, reliability and purity, again reflecting their image of Canadians.

The media coverage focused on some newspaper advertising (Yomiuri and Asahi), some women's magazines (4 in total) and finally advertising in the metro and railway lines in the two cities.

So far, two specific and separate campaigns have been prepared, with the first completed. The second campaign currently in progress, with more focus on specific industry criteria, such as high quality grain-based feed, CQA and strict hygiene standards. In addition to the similar media activity to the first campaign, POP material was made available and a Website was created. Finally we redesigned the specific Canadian Pork logo, the fruit of local focus group studies and evaluations.

### **Specific Private Company Benefits Created by Generic Branding Activity**

First and foremost, we are identified domestically as either meat or specifically Pork suppliers, and abroad as Canadian Pork meat suppliers before being identified as any specific company. There are huge benefits to all to be able to lift the bar to a leadership level and to identify exactly where that bar stands when Canadian Pork is in question. It adds tremendous weight to the efforts that the industry has previously deployed, and is currently deploying, to continuously increase consumer/trade awareness.

By creating, inventorying, defining and adhering to the specific attributes that make the Canadian Pork Story, we, the Canadian Pork Industry, create the common platform from which we all work and build from. This approach favours the elimination of the "weaker links" in the market. The common platform allows the Industry to focus its resources and activities to those that add value to the consumer/user and to the industry.

Eventual opportunities or needs for the industry to move quickly on adjusting specific methods or criteria, will be easier and quicker to implement because we have that Common Game Plan.

Building and developing specific branding initiatives is significantly enhanced when the broad industry guidelines and practices are both clearly defined and world-class.

This collective approach better positions us to improve market share by creating a third market segment within a country where you would have domestic Pork, generically branded Canadian Pork and other imported Pork.

## ■ **Moving Forward**

Some challenges lie ahead on how generic and branded activities will be able to interact and move forward together, as they just need to do that, move together forward. We must present interested customers/users with a concept that has teeth, but also the necessary flexibility that will help the end-user achieve their own specific goals and ultimately, ours as well.

The benefits from these initiatives will certainly show some short-term results. However, this is not the 100-yard dash but more of a marathon that will require dedication and discipline, with the conviction of all involved that this approach will serve all Pork industry stakeholders.