



What's New in BC

SPOTLIGHT ON BC : FUNCTIONAL FOODS & NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

WINTER 2011

Canada is home to a diverse range of functional foods and natural health products that compete among the world's best when it comes to nutrition, quality, scientific research and taste. This range includes both conventional foods, but also enhanced and fortified products, all of which provide basic nutrition, vitamins, minerals, micro-organisms and other bioactive compounds.

These products are found in plant, animal and marine sources, and are currently being used to enhance health, and well being. They come in many forms including vitamins and minerals, herbal remedies, homeopathic medicines, probiotics, amino acids, fatty acids, and traditional medicines.



Approximately 400 functional food and natural health product companies exist in Canada, a quarter of which are found in British Columbia. A 2007 Statistics Canada survey concluded that B.C.'s functional foods and natural health products sector is made up of over 80 companies with around 3,000 products. B.C. is the largest producer of cranberries and blueberries in Canada and the fourth largest producer of farmed salmon in the world. B.C. had 94 functional food or natural health product companies in 2007, and rose 99% to 187 companies in 2010, according to Vancouver's Western Canadian Functional Food and Natural Health Product Network.



B.C.'s beautiful landscape of rich forest resources provides quality opportunities for companies to process forest-based nutraceuticals such as xylitol and plant sterols. B.C. producers are innovative and continue to identify and enhance the nutritional value of functional foods and natural health products. Advanced technologies are used to better develop and manufacture their products. This includes extracting bioactive compounds from micro-organisms and fruits.

Canada has a high standard for foods, especially for natural health products and pharmaceuticals. Canadian research scientists from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the National Research Council are also working together with governments, universities and the private sector to improve the quality of Canada's plant and animal products. B.C. takes part in this research through the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

Local researchers have been successful in developing effective methods for standardizing and confirming the potency and bioactivity of ingredients in natural health products and functional foods. Many natural health products contain ingredients that are a result of this ongoing research such as high-lutein wheat, oat, barley beta-glucans and omega-3 eggs.

The regulation of natural health products is monitored by two government organizations, the Natural Health Products Directorate of Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, both ensuring consumer safety.



As international interest in eating healthy and maintaining a healthy lifestyle grows, the Canadian functional foods and natural health products industry will continue to be a growing and research-based sector; one that is beneficial for the health of consumers while seeing success in both domestic and export markets. To learn more about the Canadian functional foods and natural health products industry, please visit: <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1170856376710&lang=e>

Regulation of Natural Health Products

In Canada, the commercial sale of natural health products must adhere to the licensing provisions of the Natural Health Products Regulations, which was released in January, 2004. The purpose of the regulations is to ensure that Canadians have access to natural health products that are safe, effective, and high in quality.

To legally be sold in Canada, all natural health products must have a Product Licence, and the Canadian sites which manufacture, package, label and import these products must have Site Licences. There are specific labelling and packaging requirements, good manufacturing practice standards and evidence norms that must be met in order to obtain product and site licences. As of December 31, 2010, 25,919 product licences were issued, representing over 43,000 products while 1,120 site licences were issued.

Labelling requirements are in place to ensure that consumers can make safe and informed choices about the natural health products they choose. Examples of the type of information required on the labels of these products include: product, name, dose, route of administration, product licence number, recommended use, complete list of ingredients, and any risks associated with the product, such as cautions, warnings, and known adverse reactions.

To find out more information about the regulation of natural health products, please visit: <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1171305709916&lang=eng>



Food Health Claim Roadmap Webcast: **Training on Use of a Health Claim Decision Tool - Part 1 of 2**

Presented by the Food Regulatory Issues Division of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Thursday, March 10, 2011 at 1:00-2:30 p.m. Eastern Time

This webcast will be presented in English. Simultaneous French translation available

To help with the numerous decisions and activities that are involved with nutrient or health claim statements on food product labels in Canada, a new management tool is available for industry, business development specialists, trade associations and others; all of which is involved in new product development or marketing food and food ingredients in Canada.

Using a logical process with four main steps, the Roadmap guides the user through a series of regulatory considerations to investigate when making a decision about whether to pursue a nutrient claim and/or health claim for a product. Each step incorporates activities organized under four tracks: Regulatory, Science, Market and Business.

This tool will help participants gain the knowledge required to function in Canada's regulatory environment and take advantage of market opportunities for foods with added health value. For more information, please visit: <https://event.on24.com/eventRegistration/EventLobbyServlet?target=registration.jsp&eventid=287038&sessionid=1&key=9143570E2EA6C2A3ABE9C78E51423312&sourcepage=register> or contact Lynn Stewart by phone 613-773-0153 or email lynn.stewart@agr.gc.ca



Media Monitoring

Growing functional-food demand yielding healthy bottom lines for local companies

Business in Vancouver – July/August 2010

Stricter government regulation of natural health products is about the only thing likely to keep Port Coquitlam-based Sequel Naturals (<http://sequelnaturals.com/>) from continuing its 50% annual growth rate. CEO Charles Chang expects revenue to top \$21 million for the year that will end July 31. That compares with \$14 million last year.

"We want to continue at 50% growth for the next few years," he told *Business in Vancouver*. "Our revenue goal next year is about \$30 million."

Sequel Naturals produces "functional foods" – mostly powders that become nutritional smoothies when mixed with water or added to a fruit blend. Functional foods have higher levels of antioxidants, vitamins or other nutritional supplements. It's a hot sector.

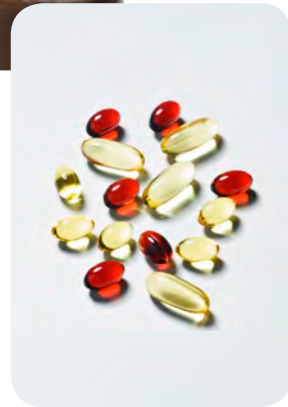
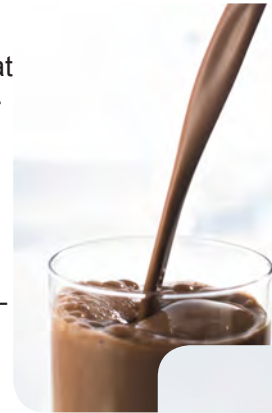
Canada's nutrition industry generated \$6.6 billion in 2008 and grew at an 8% clip, said Fenton Fong, former director at Vancouver's new dissolved Western Canadian Functional Food and Natural Health Product Network.

He estimated that about \$1.12 billion of that \$6.6 billion is functional foods. B.C. had 94 functional food or natural health food companies in 2007, according to Fong. That grew 99% to 187 companies in 2010.

"There's a growing trend of understanding and acceptance by society that better nutrition, or lack of nutrition, has a direct correlation with health and chronic diseases," he said.

Increasingly foods are falling into a grey area between being pure foods and being supplements.

For a copy of the complete article, please contact atsbc@agr.gc.ca



Rooted in Science, Innovating for the Future



In 2011, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) scientists and their collaborators are celebrating 125 years of science and innovation. AAFC has 19 research centres across Canada. In British Columbia, staff at the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre (PARC) in Agassiz and Summerland work to create opportunities for all Canadians through agricultural research and innovation.

The Summerland location, containing quality control laboratories and a food research pilot plant, contributes to innovative solutions for health and wellness by identifying and using components from Canadian crops and by-products to develop foods that promote health beyond basic nutrients (functional foods and natural health products).

PARC Research Scientist Joe Mazza was one of the first scientists to study anthocyanins and natural health products. His research and development of natural food colorants led to the discovery that anthocyanin, a pigment abundant in berries and red wines, is a potent antioxidant. The food industry as a whole is using the discoveries that Dr. Mazza and his research team have come across in order to develop new functional foods and natural health products that could reduce the risk of disease and improve the overall health and wellness of consumers. Dr. Mazza has become recognized as a world leader in his specialized field.

For more information on the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre, please visit: www.agr.gc.ca/science

For more information, please contact the BC Regional office at 604-666-6344 or email: atsbc@agr.gc.ca. Aussi disponible en français.

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