

METRIC

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INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT

Metric here to stay on the farm — globally

"The process of total conversion is irreversible, and imperial will not make a comeback" an international consultant told Canadian farmers recently in the magazine Farm and Country.

John Sokol, a beef farmer in Ontario's Victoria County, an international consultant on agriculture and agribusiness, was the author. The magazine is distributed to more than 68 000 members of county agricultural associations across Canada.


Sokol said: "There are several reasons for this assumption. The two most important ones are global universality and efficiency. The world and especially Canada are becoming increasingly more dependent on International trade.

"It only makes sense," he said, "that this trade is conducted in one universally acceptable system of weights and measures."

"Australia and New Zealand adopted metric for this reason with less fuss than we have been experiencing in Canada. The United Kingdom, unless it makes the unlikely move of leaving the European Economic Community, will convert totally within a short time.

"The U.S. appears to be the lone dissenter, but that is only the case if one looks at the domestic consumer market. Within their heavy and high-technology industries, the Americans have been using the metric system before the official Canadian adoption of this method.

"In Trinidad and Barbados, which I frequently visit, the kilograms and grams have already replaced the pounds and ounces in the supermarkets and a similar process is under way in the farmers' markets.

"All official statistics and data in these islands and throughout other Carribean territories are published in metric only." 

Convert to compete

"United States export industries have the choice of moving with the tide or being left behind," state Henry H. Hitchcock and Joseph F. Coates, co-authors of a study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Metric Programs.

"Convert in order to compete," they counsel. "The increasing integration of the global economy, the opening up of new markets, the development of new items in trade and commerce and new competitors all argue for uniformity in the global measurement system.

In their analysis, the authors note that the key factors promoting the use of metric in the export trade of the industries studied are foreign competition and growing integration of the operations of multinational corporations. As other nations' products compete with U.S. products, marginal factors such as being designed in the metric system, or being able to work in the metric system, become more important to foreign buyers. In search of global economies of scale, large globally oriented companies find it

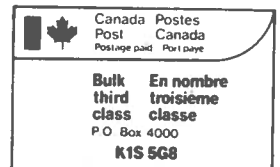
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Makers of Ragu go metric in U.S.


A new corporate quality policy on metric labeling that will help customers "obtain accurate information as to quantity of contents in a uniform and meaningful form, and comply in the U.S. with the voluntary Metric Conversion Act of 1975," has been initiated by Chesebrough-Pond's Inc. The policy will affect all divisions of the company, including Ragu Foods, Inc., Bass Shoes, Health-tex, Prince Matchabelli and Aziza cosmetics, Health & Beauty (Vaseline, Rave, Cutex, Q-tips, etc.), Hospitals, and International.

The goals of the metric labeling policy, according to company officials, are:

- to implement metric sizing and labeling of current and new products consistent with good business practices
- to provide for a free-flow between the U.S. and international divisions (of the company) of components and finished products.

"We developed the Metric Policy after the company analyzed current trends in global marketing and the occasional problems with odd metric sizes of domestic packages," said David Ham, Manager/Projects Planning for Ragu Foods. Since Chesebrough-Pond's sells many of its domestic products in its International Division, having a metric policy will reduce problems in adjusting inch/pound packages to metric sizes.


Specifics of the policy call for Chesebrough-Pond's to ensure that

"all U.S. and International unit packages contain a metric equivalent of the quantity of contents." Currently-used packages will be modified in a cost-effective process by changing labeling while making other text changes in the content declarations or other elements of the main display panels, and changing sizing when a new package or product is introduced or the content of a product is changed. 

(Reprinted, in part from the ANMC Metric Reporter)

Florida road signs show k/ph

The Department of Transportation in the sunshine state of Florida plans to erect up to 1800 dual imperial/metric road signs per month. The program which began in October of 1983 got off to a slow start, but is now moving into full implementation throughout the state.

The delay was the result of an anti-metric lobby on the floor of the Florida Legislature to try and terminate the program. However, the state law on dual road signs was not repealed, and the program is now well underway. 


October 7-13, 1984, has been proclaimed METRIC WEEK in New York State by Governor Mario M. Cuomo. Exhibits will be on display in the New York State Museum and the Concourse of the Empire State Plaza, Albany, N.Y.

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Convert to compete

economical to design, produce or operate using the metric system.

The U.S. domestic market is also affected, say Hitchcock and Coates "Where multinationals become dominant producers in an industry, we may see a growing amount of metric in the U.S. market as these companies seek economies of scale from global standardization.

"In looking to the future, metric conversion of U.S. operations may be essential; for some it may offer no near term advantage, but its absence could be insidious and ultimately harmful." 


Researchers in agronomy make switch

After nearly 20 years of experience with metric units three agronomic societies in the U.S., recently adopted SI (The International System of Units) for reporting research in their publications.

The societies, the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Science Society of America, made the change to enhance communications within their organizations and with other professionals in related fields inside and outside the U.S.

These closely related societies cooperatively publish five technical journals, one popular style magazine, and numerous books and other publications. Most of the materials published by the societies are manuscripts sent by authors located throughout the world. Thus, the need to communicate in common terms is important.

The change from metric to SI units took several years to adopt.

Sessions have been held to familiarize editorial boards, reviewers, and other workers with the new system and to encourage proper use of SI units. That effort continues. 



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METRIC SHOWING BENEFITS TO CANADIAN BUSINESSES

Refrigeration firm claims metric 'first'

Canadian statistics show that the vast majority of privately owned businesses employ between ten and twenty people.

One such company is the Eureka Refrigeration Company located in Downsview, Ontario. Employing ten people, this small business operation manufactures custom freezer doors for commercial installations.


What makes this enterprise unique is that it is a family business that has been in operation since 1886 — almost one hundred years.

Mr. Eric Cropley, a grandson of the founder, is a firm supporter of metric conversion. In fact he claims to have produced the first and possibly the only totally metric refrigerator door catalogue available in Canada.

Three years ago the company decided to implement a hard metric conversion to their Eureka products. Cropley believes that this has improved their overall marketing program, but he is quick to point out certain problems that the company has encountered through conversion, particularly in the area of producing an acceptable price list.

For example, special door hinges were imported from the U.S. in imperial sizes. On converting to metric these imported hinges had to be a different size, which meant that the import cost went up by as much as 300%, as the U.S. suppliers did not carry metric hinges as standard stock items.

Cropley's answer was to manufacture his own hinges, and to the company's surprise they found that these could be produced at not only a competitive price, but in certain instances at a more economical rate than the imperial sized imports.

Eric Cropley sums up his company's decision to adopt the metric system in simple terms: "We are proud of our manufacturing skills and the fact that we have been serving our customers for almost a hundred years. We have no problem in manufacturing in both metric or imperial." 

Memtech gains exports through conversion

The Memtek Corporation, an Ottawa-based, Canadian-owned manufacturing company, produces and develops specialized "reverse osmosis" equipment for industrial, environmental and military applications.


The specialized technique of reverse osmosis (the separation of solvent from solution through the use of a membrane) is not new. In fact, it was used during the Second World War to improve the quality of drinking water obtained from brine.

The Memtek Corporation was established five years ago and decided to introduce a soft metric conversion policy two years later. In reality, this conversion relates to all design and development calculations rather than production, as certain of the component parts of their equipment are imported from the U.S.

"The principal advantage in our adoption of metric system has been a substantial increase in our export

sales," reports Mr. Orest Nowakiwsky, the president of Memtek. "We are particularly pleased with the export success we have achieved in Central and South America, where the metric system is fully utilized. In three short years our overseas sales have increased from around 25% of production to almost 50%."

Reverse osmosis has a wide commercial application, especially in such areas as environmental control, i.e. discharge of harmful waste products, recycling of liquid waste and direct purification.

"Metric conversion has certainly helped us in our most recent development: a domestic reverse osmosis unit that can be easily installed in any private household. Apart from the obvious overseas market we believe the Canadian potential is considerable, especially in areas where there are purification problems with local domestic supplies." 

Rite Way Mfg. says metric's right way


The Rite Way Manufacturing Co. of Regina, Saskatchewan, has been producing specialized agricultural equipment for over fifteen years. Its founder, Mr. Leslie Hulicssko, introduced metric conversion into his production plant some eight years ago, recognizing that if the company was to succeed in overseas markets such conversion was needed.

Rite Way manufactures "short line" agricultural equipment such as harrow draw bars and packers, chisel ploughs and rock pickers which have a unique design that makes them ideal for dry farming conditions, i.e. for agricultural use in Australia, the Middle East and Africa. They are also manufactured to high strength specifications utilizing reinforced steel well in excess of any competitive products.

Over the past ten years their export sales have grown from zero to over 20% of production, reports Trevor Apperley, the Marketing Vice-President of the company.

Five years ago the company diversified and started to produce road sweepers in addition to its range of agricultural equipment. The first model was known as the 2400, which obtained its reference name from the fact that the sweeping brushes were 2400 millimetres wide. Today the company exports sweepers to several major U.S. cities, despite the fact that the U.S. competition in this specialized market is exceptionally keen.

Apperley is however concerned over the fact that suppliers of component equipment for this line of products are not able to supply in metric sizing. "This is a major problem in developing new and competitive equipment.

"We have recently produced a totally self-propelled street sweeper, the first of its kind in Canada. This will certainly extend our U.S. market potential, and we have high hopes for increased export sales as a result of this development." 

'Canadian Living' helps with metric recipes

'Canadian Living', a major home-makers' magazine with more than 450 000 circulation, offers its recipes in metric versions, and has attempted to guide its readers in the conversion to metric cooking.

The following question-and-answer in the magazine offers some helpful hints:

Q. I've started using the "right-hand side" of the ingredient lists in your recipes and find metric measuring easy but wonder why we are not weighing dry ingredients as they do in Europe.

A. First of all, we're glad to hear you refer to using the "right-hand side". It's very important in working with recipes that show dual measures (metric and imperial), as ours do, that you use either one system or the other, not a combination of both. Metric recipes are developed using standard metric measures (marked in millilitres) and imperial recipes with standard imperial measures (cups, tablespoons, teaspoons). So use your metric measures with the list on the

right, imperial measures with the list on the left and don't mix the two. Also, don't try to convert recipes from one system to the other unless you're an expert; baking recipes in particular will not always work out by simply converting and rounding out numbers.

As for weighing, when metric was introduced to the Canadian kitchen, it was decided to keep the volume method (which Canadians were used to) rather than adopt the European weighing method. This way there is no need to buy a scale for the kitchen or learn a new way of cooking; Canadian metric measuring utensils are used in exactly the same way as imperial cups and spoons. The only weights you'll see in a metric recipe (grams or kilograms) are for ingredients you will purchase by weight (meats, fish, cheese, produce), just as in imperial recipes.

Metric measuring, which uses millilitres and litres, also eliminates any confusion about whether an ounce is liquid or weighed, or whether a quart is Canadian (5 cups) or

American (4 cups). Metric measures are inexpensive and easily available. Be sure to buy the standard sizes: a set of 3 dry measures (50, 125 and 250 mL); a set of 5 small measures (1, 2, 5, 15 and 25 mL); and a measure for liquids (250 or 500 mL).

Our dual style for recipe ingredients, by the way, is the result of much effort on the part of our food features editors, Bonnie Cowan and Carol White.

Spacing within one column can be a problem, but Bonnie and Carol (plus our copy editors) keep this as clear as possible while maintaining consistency of style in other ways. For instance, the amount of chocolate required is given in squares, ounces and grams; flours and sugars are always specified as to type; all recipes include baking temperatures in both Fahrenheit and Celsius, baking times plus a test for doneness and final yields.

Recipe editing is a very specialized area of expertise, and we are proud of the standards set by our specialists. ♣

Most builders now metric say architects

Most builders in the construction industry are now functionally metric, according to the Ottawa architectural firm of Rysavy and Rysavy, despite the fact that the industry seemed to have been slow in moving toward conversion.

Commenting on the transition of the industry, Olga Rysavy, who with husband Paul set up the firm in 1972, says that early problems with builders have disappeared and that with few exceptions, standard sizes in building materials no longer present a problem for architects.

The firm, which may undertake as many as 10 major design projects a year, says virtually all public or industrial buildings they design now are to metric specifications. Their most recent projects have included a \$6 million industrial complex of 10 000 m² and a new fire hall complex.

"It's simpler working in metric," Mrs. Rysavy says. "Today, the young draftsmen coming out of

school and into the firm have all been trained in the use of metric dimensions, and they don't have problems.

However, says Mrs. Rysavy, the construction industry is somewhat unrealistic in insisting that plans be drawn to the millimetre. "It's too fine a measure. Nobody can build that accurately. In Europe, the centimetre is standard, and it's close enough. The extra zeros can lead to confusion."

Although Rysavy and Rysavy now design primarily in metric, there are a few areas in which the firm still uses imperial measure. Because one of its specialties is renovating and refurbishing historic structures, it is necessary to use imperial measurements.

One such interesting project was the Peace Tower of the Parliament Buildings, Ottawa which the firm had to redesign to accept modern stairwells and elevators without destroying its structural or esthetic integrity. ♣

Sing a Song of Metric

The J.C. Penny Company, a U.S. department-store chain, noted for their good works in the field of community education, use a light touch and a happy tune to teach the whys and wherefores of metric measurement. They composed, "The Metric Song":

"Put in your hand a pinch of sand
It weighs a gram, that's all —
And a grain of sand is a centigram
A hundred times as small

"The Metric System, that's the system when
You measure a stone or a telephone
You measure lead or a feather bed
Or maybe the weight of your sister Kate
And it's always based on 10." ♣