

IN THE NEWS

Upcoming Events

The Western Canadian Meat Industry Convention & Trade Show

February 16-18, 2007

@ the Mayfield Inn, Edmonton AB

The Alberta Food Processors Association invites you to attend their upcoming conference and trade show. Meet your fellow processors and retailers at the opening reception and sample the entries in the People's Choice Competition. Hear presentations on the State of the Industry and other relevant industry topics. Tour the exhibits at the Trade Show on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. A hands-on Sausage Seminar has been arranged at NAIT for Sunday afternoon and the conference ends on a high note at the banquet and casino where the winners of the Processed Meat Competition will be announced. For more details, or to register as a delegate, contact Melody Pashko at 403-201-3657, or visit the AFPA website at www.afpa.com.

Come and see us at the Malabar booth - #35

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The 2007 Food Industry Expo

February 23 & 24th, 2007

@ the International Centre in Mississauga, ON.

This is the largest show of its kind in Canada providing one location to showcase innovations, connections and solutions to processors and suppliers in the meat & food processing industry. The Ontario Independent Meat Processors Association (OIMP) and the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors host this national, two-day event. For more information, visit the OIMP website at www.oimp.ca or www.FoodIndustryExpo.ca.

Come and see us at the Malabar booth - # 207, 209 & 211.

The Meat of It: **Batters and Breadings**



Children and adults love fried foods! There are chicken nuggets and fingers for the kids, and breaded calamari and schnitzel for the adults. As demand continues to grow, so does the requirement for crispy, crunchy and flavourful fried products.

Breaded products continue to enjoy a high demand. To the processor, they offer an opportunity for higher yield, and entry into this high demand product area. They also can provide a wide range of challenges, such as quality of adhesion, visual and flavour appeal, freeze/thaw stability, moisture and oil transfer, and potential oxidization. The production of breaded product involves many steps, and investment in multiple, single purpose pieces of equipment. Properly resolved, processors can reap the benefits of this high demand, high yield category of product.

Most fried foods will use some kind of coating that may include a batter, a breading, or a combination of both. A batter is often used as a base and functions as a "glue" to hold the breading to the food product. Most batters contain 80-90% flour and starch, combined with water. Wheat flour is commonly used, however rice flour, corn flour, soy flour and potato flour may also be used. It is important to keep the batter well mixed during production, so that a consistent viscosity is maintained, allowing for a uniform coating. There are adhesion batters, tempura batters and specialty batters containing herbs and spices that add new flavours to the product.

It is the breading that adds the crunch and the golden brown colour that consumers expect in fried foods. There are many variations among breading formulas, which may include a home-style breadcrumb, a Japanese (Panko-type) crumb or a specialty breading. Salt and seasonings are often added to both batters and/or breadings, to provide a unique product.

Breading is used to add value, yield and flavour to everything from shrimp to chicken to vegetables, but not all breading systems are created equal. Different applications demand different breading systems, as well as different methods for processing.

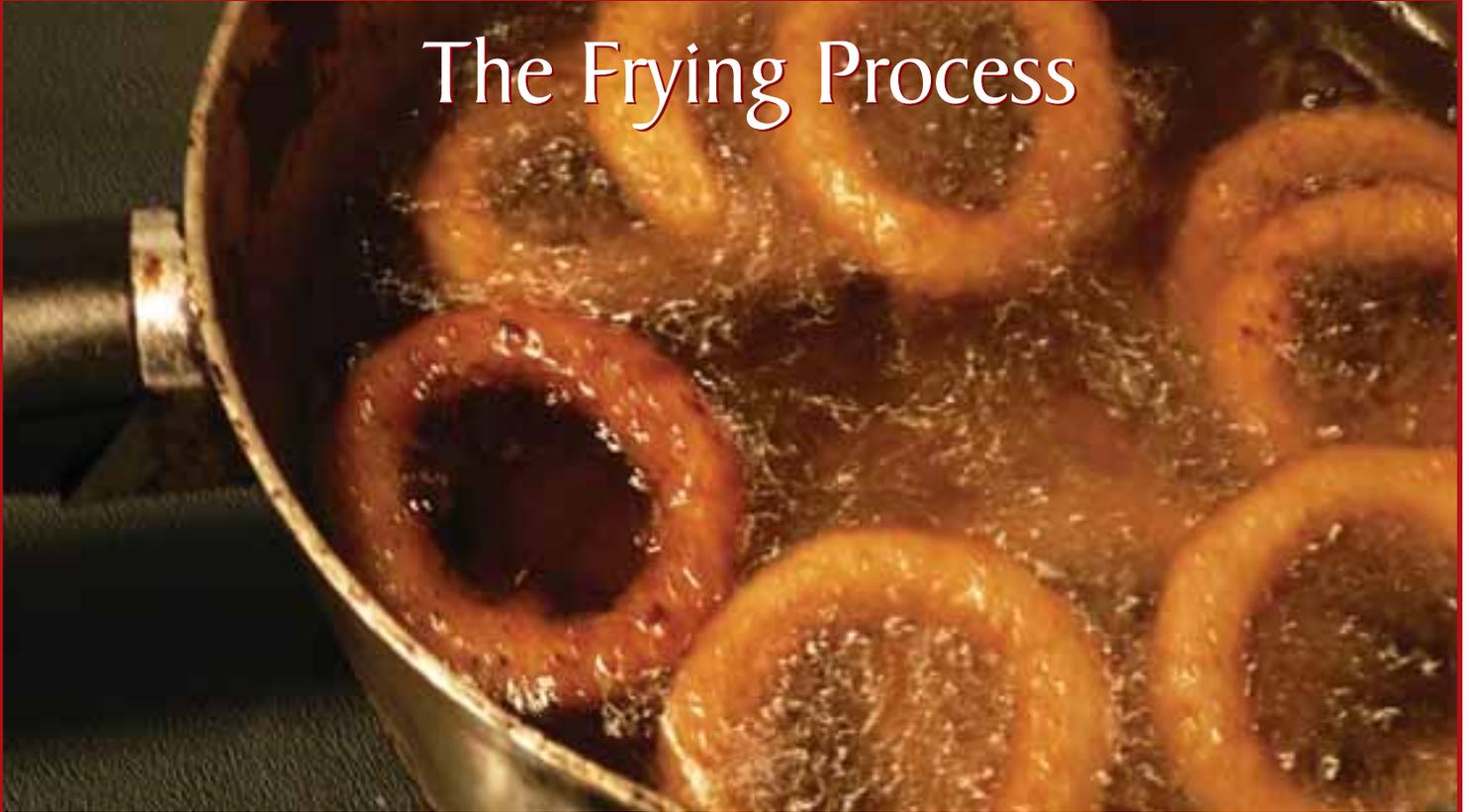
From a visual, textural and sensory perspective, batters and breadings can add a distinctive appeal, but which breading system is suited best for your application?

Here are some questions that will help you determine the best method and breadings for your products: The first is to decide which type of product you are breading. You can merely add a crispy breaded coating, where the meat (or cheese, or vegetable, etc.) is the primary source of flavour, or you can punch up the flavour by incorporating strong flavour into the breading.

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FROM THE LAB

The Frying Process



One of the most important, and often overlooked, factors in ensuring great deep-fried food is the selection and use of the oil used to fry the product. Here are some key factors to keep in mind when choosing, and using, oil in frying:

Some Key Guidelines

- 1.** Always use oil that has a neutral flavour, such as Canola or Safflower. This will prevent any distinct 'off-flavours' that can be caused specifically by the oil's flavour.
- 2.** Make sure that the oil you select has a high smoking point. The ideal temperature for deep-frying is 375°F (190°C). Olive oil, as an example, is not well suited to deep frying as its smoking point is below the ideal frying temperature, leading to a scorched taste in the products you fry, as well as a smoky kitchen! Take care when setting frying temperatures, as some oils will burst into flames at temperatures as low as 500°F (260°C).
- 3.** Do not over-fill your deep fryer. If the frying basket is crowded with too much product, the temperature of the oil will plummet rapidly, leading to an excessively greasy and unappealing finished product.
- 4.** Be aware of (not 'beware of!') the Health Conscious Consumer. In today's world, you will most likely have to

field questions from your customers about what oil is used to deep-fry your product. Oils such as Palm and Coconut are high in saturated fat, so you may want to avoid these. It may be helpful if you keep a "Nutrition Facts" panel from your oil container present, so you can answer these questions quickly and easily.

- 5.** Change your oil as often as is economically feasible, and try to fry "like products" at the same time. If you deep fry chicken, pork and fish in the same oil, try to do the chicken all at the same time, pork at the same time and fish at the same time. This will help you to avoid any crossover of flavours. If you must use the same oil for all three, fry the fish last, as it has the most distinct odour and flavour. Changing the oil will prevent these 'off-flavours'.

Need help with your fried products?

Contact Chris, our technical specialist, at 1-888-456-6252, or via email at lab@malabarsuperspice.com.

Continued from page one... **The Meat of it: Batters and Breadings**

Breadings can be soft and puffy, or hard and crispy. Are you selling the product raw, par fried, or Ready to Eat? Will the product be frozen before shipping? Is the end user going to deep fry the product or bake it?



What type of appearance are you aiming for?

One trip to the grocery store will demonstrate that processors use a wide variety of breadings that vary in terms of coarseness, crunchiness and colour, so it is important to have an idea of what appearance you're aiming for before choosing a breading system, as the results are as much a result of process as they are of ingredients. Some products can be produced using a one-step batter/breader, while others require a two, or three step process using a Pre-dust, Batter and Breader. Pre-dust is typically used in the case of Chicken or Fish, where the surface is slippery and Breadings have a tendency to fall off.

How much "pick-up" would you like?

It is very important to find that balance between "value added" and palatability. Typical pick-up rates are 25%-50%. Generally speaking, products destined for retail will have more breading and incorporate additional fat or oil, allowing the end user to bake the product. Foodservice products tend to be lower in pick-up, since the end-user will usually fry the product for maximum point-of-sale appeal.

Are there any ingredients that you would like to avoid?

As with virtually any processed products, there can be certain ingredients that you'd rather leave out. The reasons can vary from consumer concerns to increasing product marketability, and it is important to determine this early in the process. Trans-Fat containing oils, milk ingredients and soy are among the ingredients to consider avoiding.

What type of equipment will be used in the production of your breaded product(s)?

In choosing a pre-dust, batter and breading, it is important to know how they will be applied to your products. Will the application of the breading be done mechanically, or by hand? Also, if the product is to be heat-treated, will this be done in a deep fryer, frying line, or in an oven?

As with any product, a variety of factors contribute to the quality and profitability of breaded products. Often, the best way to find the answers you are looking for is to ask the right questions.



Malabar works with customers to develop ideal ingredient solutions, as well as the process to ensure that all of your breaded products are both visually appealing, and delicious. For more information on Breadings, Batters and Pre-dusts for your application, contact Chris at 1-888-456-6252.

Halenda's

THE MEAT DEPOT

Industry PROFILE

In this section, we hope to bring you some interesting interviews and perspectives from other organizations in the Meat and Specialty Food Processing industry. In this issue of The Main Ingredient, we interview Richard Halenda, of Halenda's Meat Depot in Oshawa, Ontario.

MI: How long have you been working in the meat processing industry?

RH: I started working as a young boy in my father's processing business, which he started in 1954. Since then I've been in the industry, in one form or another. I think I'm like a lot of others out there, who are carrying on a family tradition.

MI: Tell me about Halenda's Meat Depot.

RH: Halenda's Meat Depot was born out of the need for quality, affordable and above all traceable meat blocks for the independent processor. We provide a variety of meat cuts to processors - both fresh and frozen - including pork, beef, veal, fresh turkey and turkey parts, and fresh chicken. Coming from the processing side of things, I'm all too aware of the challenges and pressures facing operators, and saw the need for a supplier to step in and look after the independents.

MI: You mention challenges and pressures facing operators - what are these?

RH: Well, right now there are a lot of these - many of them coming fairly recently, and all at once. You've got an industry that's adapting to competitive conditions that are tougher than ever, especially for independents, as well as new government regulations, and new technologies. This is true across the food processing industry, but especially true for specialty meat processors, and sausage manufacturers.

MI: Why is this 'especially true' for independents like specialty meat processors and sausage manufacturers?

RH: Well, things are getting tougher in that the trend towards consolidation has left independents on their own among larger and larger competitors. It's also left the smaller processor with less and less support from suppliers. At the same time, these independent, 'freestanding' processors are facing, as of 2006, full regulation and inspection under new Ontario government legislation, and these regulations require that they are able to trace, 'from farm to table', where their products come from, while the type of

products they make often require that they combine several meat sources to produce one product.

That's not all - this comes at a time when there is a marked shortage of meat cutters - for whatever reason, meaning that raw materials are even harder to prepare efficiently and cost-competitively.

MI: Sounds like the 'perfect storm' for the independent processor.

RH: Something like that! [laughs] That's where we've found a niche where we can really add value for the independent processor. We make use of collective buying power to wholesale meat blocks that are plant-prepared - as a result, these meat blocks are made up of muscle and trim that has been sorted, graded and electronically identified. We can then make available a fully traceable, ready-to-process product that can be repackaged according to a processor's needs, and is available in small or large quantities - the skid-load or the truckload - and available in assorted skids as required. It solves a number of problems for the processor, and allows them to do what they do best.

MI: How has the response been?

RH: Almost overwhelming - remember, this is a sector of the industry that has seen less and less service in the last decade while they've had to work harder and harder. We're a nice surprise for them, I think, and that's what I like to see. We like to think we empower the processor and make things easier, not harder for them. It seems to be working!

MI: Thanks for your time Richard - best of luck to you!

RH: Good to speak with you - all the best.

For more information on Ontario's Food Safety and Quality Act, and on Meat Inspection Regulation, visit the website for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs at www.omafra.gov.on.ca, or call OMAFRA at (519) 826-3100.

For more information on the Canadian Food Inspection System, visit www.cfis.agr.ca.

For more information on Halendas Meats, contact David Nadeau at 1-866-573-MEAT (6328) ext29, or visit www.halendasmeats.com.

BLEND of the MONTH



If all of your breaded products look the same, and you're in a bit of a "Crunch" to come up with something new, we've got just the thing...

Try our three-step breading system to produce Crunchy Chicken. Your customers will love the unique look, crunch and taste of this fantastic product. Surprisingly light with lots of crunch, this product is ideal for use with chicken breasts, or pieces, and is versatile enough for use in breaded wings, or even veal.

The easy three-step process uses the following Pre-dust, Batter and Breading:

- Pre-dust for Crunchy Chicken (MALPRED-021)
- Batter for Crunchy Chicken (MALBATT-021)
- Breading Flour for Crunchy Chicken (Product# 1407)

To ORDER A SAMPLE, or if you have any questions, contact Chris at **1-888-456-6252**, or email **lab@malabarspices.com**.



OUR PRESIDENT'S Message



A Note from Our President: Here's to YOU In the New Year.

As another year begins, I appreciate the opportunity to thank all of our customers for their business and loyalty throughout 2006. It was an exciting year for us, as we introduced new marketing initiatives and made Malabar's products and services available to meat and poultry processors across Canada. We have also expanded our product lines, adding many new and innovative products, among them netted casings, polyamide plastic casings, Proliant meat ingredients, and the versatile dicer machine manufactured by Rühle.

As we consider our New Year's resolutions, we welcome feedback from you, our customer. We would love to hear from you personally. Feel free to contact me directly by email at doris@malabarspices.com with your thoughts, questions, and ideas. I look forward to your emails. Above all, I wish you good health and prosperity in 2007!

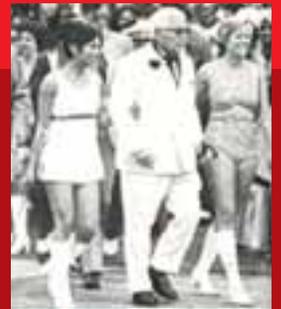
All the best to you, from Malabar!

Doris Valade
President, Malabar Super Spice Co. Ltd.

Did You Know?

The Colonel's 11 Herbs and Spices

Colonel Sanders experimented with chicken recipes as early as the 1930's, when he had his restaurant, Sanders Court & Café, in Corbin, Kentucky. His food experiments included using the pressure cooker, and he was able to make a great tasting fried chicken quickly. The Colonel Sanders chicken franchise started in 1952, as the Colonel travelled across the United States demonstrating his pressure-cooked, deep fried chicken. By 1964, there were more than 600 franchised outlets in North America. Colonel Sanders died of leukemia in 1980, and his special recipe remains locked away in a safe in Louisville, Kentucky.



For more information on any of the subjects covered in Malabar's newsletter, or to suggest topics you'd like to see covered in future editions, please contact Sara Alexander at marketing@malabarspices.com.

Look for our next edition in March 2007.

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