The Main Ingredient
MALABAR
A Bi-Monthly Newsletter from Malabar Super Spice Co. Ltd. **Sept/Oct 2008**

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE! MALABAR's full catalogue is available online. **www.malabarsuperspice.com**

In the News

Malabar Super Spice Co. is very proud to be the **spice & seasoning supplier of choice for Canada's Barbecue Grand Champions – Team Cedar Grilling**. Team captain Steve Adams led the team to their 4th consecutive title at this year's Canadian Open Barbecue Championships, among a field of 26 teams.

On October 25, 2008 the team will compete in the **19th Annual Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational Barbecue** in Lynchburg, Tennessee. The Jack Daniel's Invitational is one of the most prestigious barbecue competitions in the world, and Team Cedar Grilling will represent Canada in all categories. We wish them the Best of Luck!

Upcoming Events

October 16, 2008

'Are You Prepared for a Recall?' - OIMP Food Safety Workshop
Mississauga Convention Centre, Mississauga, ON

The Ontario Independent Meat Processors (OIMP) is offering this workshop on preparing for a product recall. Join a group of food processors for this hands-on workshop and learn how to effectively and efficiently remove your product from the marketplace should there be a need.

To register or receive more information, please ***call Carla Royston*** at ***519-763-7605.***

February 3-4, 2009

Advanced Listeria monocytogenes Intervention & Control Workshop
The Allerton, Chicago, IL

This workshop is designed to help manufacturers of ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and meat products examine issues surrounding control methods, and to provide experience in developing appropriate sanitation protocols and testing plans for processing RTE products.

Space is limited to 60 participants. Register at www.meatami.com (click on education/events), ***or call Eric Zito*** at ***202-587-4223*** (ezito@meatami.com).

THE MEAT OF IT

Preventing FOODBORNE LISTERIOSIS

This summer has seen public confidence in some mainstream ready-to-eat brands slide as products from major Canadian brands were found to be contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes, leading to illnesses across the country. This issue Malabar explores how to protect your products and your customers from foodborne infection.

What is Listeria?

Listeria is a type of bacteria found frequently in the environment. One species, Listeria monocytogenes, can cause the serious foodborne illness listeriosis. Healthy people rarely contract listeriosis, but the illness can be serious for the elderly, newborns, pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems.

Where is it Found?

L. monocytogenes has been found in soil, leaf litter, sewage, silage, dust, water, on our hands and in our refrigerators. The organism often moves through the animal and human intestinal tract without causing illness, and has been found in many domestic and wild animals.

How does Listeria get into food?

Listeria monocytogenes is found in soil and water, and can grow in all kinds of foods, including fresh, organic, natural, and cooked products. Vegetables can become contaminated from the soil or from manure used as fertilizer.

Animals can carry the bacterium without appearing ill and can contaminate foods of animal origin such as meats and dairy products. The bacterium has been found in a variety of raw foods, such as uncooked meats and vegetables. Unpasteurized (raw) milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk may contain the bacterium.

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FROM THE LAB

Controlling Listeria in Your Operation

Controlling the growth of Listeria in your plant is key, and is especially important in the processing and production of ready-to-eat (RTE) products. Here are a few recommendations to control Listeria in your plant;

- Eliminate condensation in the RTE cooler
- Eliminate traffic flow between the RTE and raw meat areas, by establishing traffic patterns.
- Clean overhead fixtures in processing and refrigerated areas regularly.
- Remove standing water as soon as possible.
- Maintain clean dry floors in RTE area.
- Repair or replace damaged, pitted, corroded, or cracked equipment
- Dedicate tools to RTE equipment only, and sanitize before and after use.
- Equip RTE areas with dehumidifiers.
- Clean and maintain floor drains to prevent drain backup.
- Keep hallways to RTE area clean and dry.
- Be careful that heavy production does not reduce cleaning time.
- Make sure waste bins in RTE area are properly cleaned and maintained.
- Disassemble, clean and sanitize previously used equipment thoroughly.
- Have a good system of stock rotation and do not store meat for longer than necessary (reminder that *L. monocytogenes* can grow even at refrigerated temperatures).

Government and Industry Efforts

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have identified the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system as the most effective strategy for controlling the presence of *L. monocytogenes* and other pathogenic bacteria on food products.

For more information, visit the CFIA website at www.inspection.gc.ca, or contact the CFIA at 1-800-442-2342.

The information provided is accurate and reliable to the best of our knowledge, but is offered solely for consideration, without warranty or guarantee.

Did You Know?

Canadian, American and European regulations differ for 'acceptable' levels of Listeria monocytogenes.

In Canada, there is a "zero tolerance" for *L. monocytogenes* in high risk RTE foods (wieners, soft cheeses, deli meats, liver pate). If it is detected, immediate actions must be taken to prevent exposure of the population to the product. This would involve product recall from the distribution chain and destruction.

US authorities have established a 'zero tolerance' policy, enforcing the requirement for legal action when *L. monocytogenes* is detected in one or more samples of ready-to-eat (RTE) foods that 'support the growth of Listeria monocytogenes', that is, the food has a pH of greater than 4.4, is not customarily frozen, or has a water activity of greater than 0.92.

RTE foods with refrigerated shelf-life ≤10 days (packaged salads) and all low risk foods (ice cream, hard cheese, dry salami, salted fish, cereal products) must contain less than 100 viable *L. monocytogenes* bacteria per gram of product tested (<100 cfu/g).

European regulation requires that manufacturers test ready-to-use products and ensure the concentration of L monocytogenes remains below 100 cfu/g throughout shelf life.

Breaking News....

The Canadian Department of Health has very recently amended the Food and Drugs Act, issuing an immediate Interim Marketing Authorization ***to permit the use of sodium acetate and sodium diacetate in processed meats as preservatives.*** (Canadian Department of Health, September 20, 2008)

The use of sodium acetate and sodium diacetate is now permitted in the production of standardized flakes of meat; sausages of the type salami, wiener, frankfurter, blood sausage, black pudding, blood pudding, blood & tongue sausage; potted meat; meat pate; liver paste; liver spread; pate de foie; meat loaf; meat lunch; luncheon meat; cooked ham; corned beef; cooked meat roll; meat pie; brawn; headcheese; meat spread and unstandardized foods containing cooked or cured meat or poultry.

For more information on allowable levels and sourcing for both preservatives, call Malabar at 1-888-456 MALA (6252). We're here to help.

Preventing FOODBORNE LISTERIOSIS

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L. monocytogenes is a remarkably tough organism. It resists heat, salt, nitrite and acidity much better than many organisms. The bacteria survive on cold surfaces and also can multiply slowly at refrigeration temperatures. Freezer temperatures of 0 degrees Fahrenheit, however, will stop L. monocytogenes from multiplying.

Listeria is killed by pasteurization and cooking; however, in certain processed ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs, deli meats and soft cheeses, contamination may occur after cooking but before packaging.

What about food preservatives to control Listeria in meat?

Many studies have been done to observe the effects of different combinations of preservatives on the growth of various bacteria. L. monocytogenes are very salt-tolerant and are able to withstand higher salt concentrations than Salmonella. Nitrites alone are also not very effective in inhibiting the growth of L. monocytogenes, however tests do indicate that the salt together with nitrites can contribute to the suppression of L. monocytogenes at refrigeration temperatures. Smoking of meat and fish is a well known preservation process and has been shown to inhibit the growth of L. monocytogenes. In tests done on herbs and spices, some plant extracts have exhibited antilisterial activity, including hops extracts, pimento leaf, horseradish distillates, rosemary, and cloves. Studies are also underway using the ethanol extracts of certain types of oregano.

How can you control Listeria in your cooked meat processing facility?

Listeria does not enter the processing environment through any one source. It can be introduced from employees, equipment, animals or ingredients. Listeria can grow and spread in cool, damp environments including slaughter coolers, processing rooms and cold storage rooms. L. monocytogenes favors the exact conditions of meat/poultry processing plants, i.e., wet floors, cool and damp walls, standing water in rough floor surfaces, moist floor drains, etc. Listeria is destroyed by cooking, but it is then important to control subsequent contamination during post-processing procedures including peeling, slicing or packaging. Microorganisms may exist in the post-processing areas, including the transition areas between the production and cooking areas, finished product staging area, and packaging area. Take extra care in cleaning hollow conveyor rollers, hydraulic seals, casing removal systems, rubber seals on cooler doors, hand tools, and insulation around equipment.

For more details on Controlling Listeria in Your Operation, see **From the Lab**, further in this newsletter on page 2. If you have further questions, contact Malabar's Technical Staff at ***1-888-456-6252.***

New Guidelines: Controlling Listeria

Updates On Controlling Listeria

In lectures recently presented by the American Meat Institute Foundation, key notes in the evolution of Listeria control included the following:

- The benefits of dry floors were realized
- Persistent deep equipment growth niches were discovered and recognized as root cause problem areas
- Mid-shift cleanups were recognized as problem-causing sources of recontamination
- The need to 'rethink how we clean' has become evident: for example, spray washing is not a solution as the potential to support growth still exists within the machine, part or area, especially if water or moisture is left behind. Final step of any cleaning needs to include heat sanitization (by cooking in oven or smokehouse, or by covering equipment with a tarp and injecting steam).

Recommended further reading: "Control of Listeria monocytogenes in the food processing environment." By R.B. Tompkin, from the Journal of Food Protection, vol 65, no. 4, 2002, pgs. 709-725. To obtain a copy, visit www.foodprotection.org, and click on JFP Online.

New Product Showcase:

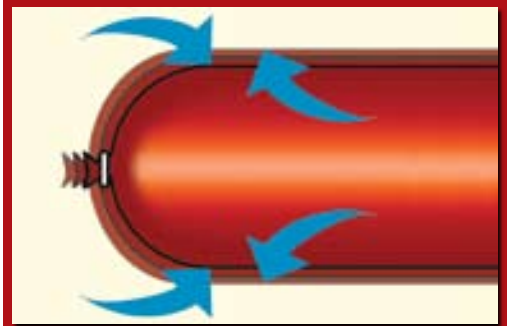
Kalle's NaloBar Sausage Casings

… An economical and effective replacement for your Nalotop (moisture proof) casings. Use for all your cooked deli sausages.

- NaloBar's unique barrier qualities allows for a long shelf life for unsmoked scalded and cooked processed meats as well as processed cheese products, without the need for secondary packaging.
- NaloBar casings boast both an oxygen barrier and a water barrier. As a result, a product's filling weight remains constant during storage.
- NaloBar casings come in a variety of colours, and are resistant to the growth of both bacteria and moulds.
- These polymer casings do not require further packaging and are a great replacement for the traditional moisture-proof fibrous casings.

Kalle casings are printable in up to 8 colours, and are available in cut pieces, shirred strands and reels. To request samples from Malabar Super Spice.

To request samples and to place an order, call 1-888-456-MALA (6252) or visit www.malabarsuperspice.com.



Blends
of the Autumn

The start of cool weather has customers looking for warm "comfort" foods, including meatloaf and meatballs. This issue, Malabar has a collection of innovative seasoning blends to warm your customers in the chilly weather.

Coarse Meatloaf/Meatball Seasoning MALCMS-043

This seasoning blend includes small pieces of onion, garlic, chives, green & red bell peppers and sundried tomatoes for a great taste and appearance. (Also available in a seasoning/binder unit with crumb added.)

Italian Meatloaf Seasoning MALIBS-428

Finer granulations of garlic, green & red bell peppers, and sundried tomatoes, and of course parsley, basil and oregano all blended together to create a great Meatloaf! (Also available as a complete seasoning/binder with crumb added.)

Tomato Beef Meatloaf Glaze MALTBG-203

A dry seasoning with a strong tomato base that is sprinkled onto your meatloaf and then baked. A great finish for any meatloaf.

To Order a Sample of any of the above or if you have a new flavour you'd like to try, contact us at **1-888-456-6252**, or email **lab@malabarsuperspice.com**

NOW IN STOCK

Malabar has **Roasted Garlic**, both Granules and Minced, now available. Call for your sample and pricing.

OUR PRESIDENT'S Message

The Renaissance of the Local Butcher

Wow, it's back to work as usual, but it is anything but usual! The outbreak of the bacteria Listeria at the Maple Leaf Foods plant in Toronto has pushed the Canadian meat industry into the global spotlight. With more than 200 Maple Leaf products on the recall list, the costs in dollars and reputation will be significant. However, as Maple Leaf struggles to move forward, the fall-out from consumers has resulted in renewed demand for the Local Butcher! As I visit meat processors across central and southwestern Ontario, I find companies experiencing production increases of 20%, and more. There is a traditional confidence in the local processor, and extra efforts are now being taken to avoid the large supermarkets in search of the smaller delicatessens, where consumers often find a wider selection of deli cuts, and also more innovative sausage and meat flavours. This renewed interest will provide for some long term customer growth, even once the dust settles.

Aside from the upturn in business for the local processor, there is a very serious lesson to be learned. Listeria is a common bacterium that can grow in any processing facility. Sanitation must be an integral part of each and every processing shift. Meanwhile, industry, government and consumer understanding must continue to be increased.

We have provided a few processing tips for you in this newsletter, and I encourage all of our customers to learn more and to be proactive to ensure your products remain wholesome, and your customers satisfied and safe.

Doris Valade
President
Malabar Super Spice Co. Ltd.

P.S. **Malabar's Definitive Catalogue**
To request a copy, call Malabar at ***1-888-456-6252****, or visit our website* ***www.malabarsuperspice.com.***

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@malabarsuperspice.com.
Look for our next edition in Nov/Dec 2008.
Malabar Super Spice Co. Ltd., 459 Enfield Road, Burlington, Ontario L7T 2X5 www.malabarsuperspice.com

Malabar is certified to provide both Kosher and Halal products, and is proud to be HACCP accredited.

Malabar takes your privacy very seriously, and we do everything in our power to safeguard it. We NEVER rent, sell, lend or otherwise circulate our mailing lists or other contact information to anyone outside of Malabar.