

The Main Ingredient

MALABAR

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter from Malabar Super Spice Co. Ltd. March/April 2008

Check out our New Site! MALABAR is pleased to launch our new, updated website, featuring a vastly expanded product range.

malabarsuperspice.com

In the News

Abattoir on the Move!

In April 2007 the first licensed mobile abattoir was on the road in Fort St. John, B.C. Operator Lars Jorgensen invested \$400,000 in the 53 foot-long unit that includes sanitation and hot water systems, grey water collection, and a chill cooler. Jorgensen's mobile abattoir has the capacity to handle 15 large animals per day, and meets all government inspection requirements. The plan for 2008 is to add 8 more mobile abattoirs; meanwhile a mobile poultry abattoir is in development.

Upcoming Events

April 16 & 17, 2008
Canadian Pork School
Olds, Alberta.

The Canadian Pork School provides participants with hands-on learning activities involving live pigs and carcasses to effectively develop an understanding of those factors that create value differences among pigs and the various components and functions of the supply chain and value-added products.

For more information, visit www.oldscollege.ab.ca or call **1-800-661-6537, ext. 4677.**

April 25, 2008
Canadian Spice Association
Annual Meeting
Sheraton Laval Hotel,
Montreal, Quebec.
(416) 595-5333 ext.41

May 6-11, 2008
Canadian Meat Council's
88th Annual Conference
Niagara Falls, Ontario
www.cmc-cvc.com, (613) 238-8888.

The Meat of It: Bacon!



Bring Home the Bacon!

The phrase 'bring home the bacon' dates back to the twelfth century, when a church in Dunmow, England promised a side of bacon to any married man who could swear before the congregation that he had not quarrelled with his wife for a year and a day.

According to food historians, human consumption of pork is an ancient practice, and at one time bacon referred to any type of pork, fresh or cured. The first commercial bacon processing plant was set up in the 1770's by John Harris in Wiltshire, England.

Bacon is made from trimmed hog bellies, also called 'sides', which have been skinned, cured and then smoked until partially cooked. Bacon is a fatter cut, and it is the fat that is integral to its flavour and texture. Over the years, demand for leaner meats have seen bacon fat content reduced from 60-70% fat to 30-50%. Most side bacon is sold in thin slices, sometimes referred to as restaurant sliced, and is approximately 1/32 of an inch thick, with about 35 strips to the pound. Regular slices are approximately 1/16 of an inch thick and have 16-20 strips per pound.

Traditionally, bacon has been a part of many weekend family breakfasts, but in recent years there has been increased sales of bacon as a sandwich condiment. Many restaurant chefs include bacon as a flavour enhancer in casseroles and on salads and pizzas.

continued on page 3

FROM THE LAB



Side Bacon Production

Producing good quality bacon is relatively simple if you follow proper technique. This month, **From the Lab** looks at how to produce perfect bacon every time.

Process:

Step 1 – Selection of quality bellies is key. Choose bellies of uniform size, if possible. Leaner bellies will result in increased yield, as meat will hold brine better than fat. PSE bellies will result in poor colour and poor yield.

Step 2 – Trim bellies to square at the top and bottom. Trim can be used in fresh sausage, as it is far more useful and valuable when fresh than after smoking.

Step 3 – Ensure bellies are properly thawed prior to injection. Four degrees Celsius (4°C) is ideal. Partially frozen bellies will result in poor brine distribution and pickle pockets.

Step 4 – Prepare the pickle. Typical salt level in finished product is 1.5 – 1.8%. The pre-cook level of Sodium Nitrite must not exceed 120ppm, Sodium Erythorbate should be a minimum of 400ppm, and phosphates should ideally be between 0.2 and 0.25%. Excessive sugar will contribute to blackening during frying, so a typical level will be 0.1%. Use of a “Complete Unit” (*MALBCUR-002 Complete Bacon Cure, for example*) is strongly recommended for ease of use and consistency of measure. Ensure that brine is properly dissolved, and agitated. Ideally, a brine temperature of 0 – 3°C should be maintained.

Step 5 – Pumping. Run several bellies through the injector to test pump level, and adjust settings accordingly. Check that this pump level is being

achieved at regular intervals, as needles can quite easily become plugged. It is suggested that placing the bellies fat side down on the conveyer belt will improve the pickle penetration and distribution, as well as reducing potential for fat particles to clog the needles. Pump levels of 15-25% are common in bacon processing. Keep in mind that excessive pressure upon pumping will tend to form pickle pockets between the layers of fat and lean, which can further result in the separation of the lean and fat portions during the slicing process.

Step 6 – Tumbling (optional), in addition to injection will ensure better brine distribution and colour development, with possible yield increases of 2-5%. The additional protein extraction can also lead to a better appearance on the surface after applying smoke, and can also reduce “curling up” during frying.

Step 7 – Smoking Schedule

Time	Dry Bulb	Wet Bulb	Humidity	Smoke	Humidity%
1 hr.	54°C	38°C	Off	Off	35%
1 hr.	60°C	49°C	On	On	55%
2 hr.	65°C	54°C	On	On	55%
To Finish	70°C	50°C	On	On	35%

Finish to an internal temperature of 54°C (130°F). If freezing, chill as gradually as possible (preferably over a 10 hour period) to avoid the separation of muscle and fat in the finished product.

For more information, contact our technical specialist at 1-888-456-6252, or via email at lab@malabarsuperspice.com.

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



You Asked...

Is pork genetically modified?

There is no genetically modified pork available on the market.

What about hormones in pork?

There are no hormones licensed for pork production. Regular meat inspections ensure that pork meat is hormone and antibiotic free.

Did You Know?

Research shows a positive link between cinnamon and weight management and blood pressure. Test results showed that consuming 6g of cinnamon with rice pudding helped to reduce blood glucose levels, and further tests using cinnamon extract have shown lower triglyceride levels, and improved insulin sensitivity (Food Technology, 01.08, pg 59-60)



Bring Home the Bacon!

continued from page 1

According to the NPD Group's National Eating Trends report, **50% of bacon consumed at home is served on a sandwich**, with bacon/lettuce/tomato sandwiches being the most popular choice. Breakfast and bacon still continues to be the favourite, as bacon consumption at breakfast averages 13 times per person per year. **More than two billion pounds of bacon are produced in the United States per year, and bacon sales grew by 15 percent between 2002 and 2007, according to the US National Pork Board.**

Specialty Bacon

Peameal Bacon is an Ontario-specific specialty bacon made from the centre-cut or rib end of the pork loin. It is cured in a salt and sugar brine, and then rolled in cornmeal. It is sold uncooked, and can be sliced and grilled, or roasted whole.

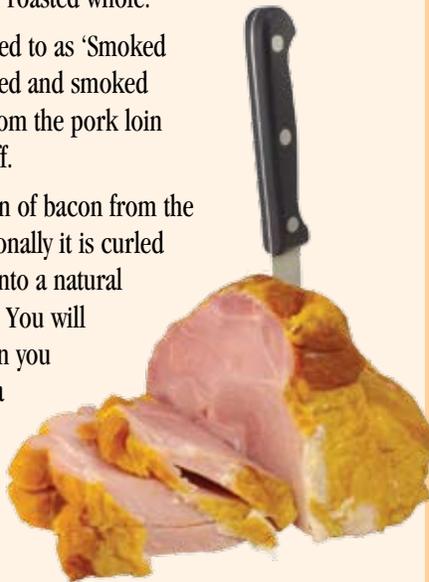
Canadian Bacon, also referred to as 'Smoked Back Bacon', is a fully cooked and smoked product that is also made from the pork loin cuts, with the fat trimmed off.

Pancetta is the Italian version of bacon from the pork belly (pancia). Traditionally it is curled into a tight roll and stuffed into a natural casing to preserve its shape. You will also find a flat pancetta when you travel through Italy. Pancetta is cured but not smoked, with salt, black pepper and spices added to create its unique spicy-sweet taste.

Value-Added Flavours

Consumer interest in added flavours has introduced a variety of value added bacon products, including maple, chipotle, and hickory flavours. The processing of bacon is similar to hams, and either graduated or single-temperature smokehouse schedules can be used. Why not consider adding bacon to your meat product choices as an economical and flavourful option?

See our technical section on page 2 for processing guidelines, as well as a selection of our complete bacon cure units for Peameal, and flavoured bacon products.



Market Update

Food Prices are on the Rise

We often hear of food prices going up due to weather issues (drought, hurricanes) or due to political situations that interfere with harvest or export activities. These considerations can cause prices to fluctuate up and down, from year to year. However, recent news indicates that there is a profound change sweeping world food markets, with significant long-term implications.

Rising living standards in India, China and other nearby countries, along with the demand for corn used to make ethanol as an additive for gasoline



have resulted in price increases for all corn, cereal and protein food products. India and China alone are adding approximately 50 million people a year to their middle classes, and they are requesting more foods with meat and dairy products. Over the past few months, grain prices have also increased. Many Canadian prairie farmers grow a variety of spring wheat, which is typically traded at prices in the range of \$4-6 per bushel. In mid-February of 2008, prices hit a historical high of \$18.53 a bushel on the Minneapolis grain exchange.

What does this mean to Canadian meat processors? In short, you will be paying more for non-meat ingredients, including soy proteins, milk/whey powders, corn flour, and cornstarch. Market prices are also much higher for meat extenders/binders, including wheat gluten, wheat crumb and wheat flour. Yes, this is great news to the Western Canadian grain farmers, but look for food costs to go up for all food processors.



(Reference: Report on Business, Globe and Mail, February 15, 2008)

Cures for the Season



Complete Bacon Unit MALBCUR-002 (20 kg unit)

This is a complete bacon unit including salt and nitrite, that's convenient and easy to use!

Maple Bacon Unit MALMBC-015 (25 kg unit)

This is also a complete bacon unit, but with added maple flavour to provide that little extra!

Peameal Bacon Cure Unit MALPBCUR-001

A complete unit especially formulated for peameal bacon.

Try something new!

For deliciously different bacon, we recommend the following! (Simply add to our Complete Bacon Unit (MALBCUR-002)).

Cajun Bacon Seasoning MALCBS-032

Add a little bit of heat to spice up your bacon.

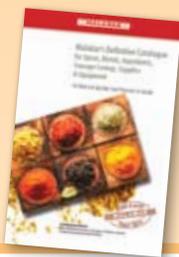
Smokey Bacon Seasoning MALSBAC-001

Customers will love the added smoky flavor.

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@malabarspice.com**.

Malabar's Definitive Catalogue

To request a copy, call Malabar at **1-888-456-6252**, or visit our website **www.malabarspice.com**.



Did You Know?

Malabar stocks
8-prong bacon hangers!



OUR PRESIDENT'S Message



There have always been price fluctuations for spices and ingredients. Prices are affected by weather catastrophes, political uprisings and competition from developing countries. As an example, at one time Sodium Erythorbate cost close to \$10.00/kg, and was available only from Japan. Today, Sodium Erythorbate costs less than \$5.00/kg, as Chinese markets have increased their production. Black and White Peppers have had an ongoing price cycle, with a roller coaster of highs and lows occurring approximately every seven years. However, overall we have been able to enjoy access to a large variety of food products at very reasonable costs. That is all about to change.

Over the past year, a number of global factors have resulted in significant price increases for food products that we have, until now, taken for granted. Derek Burleton of TD Bank Financial Group said recently that **"agriculture... has entered a new era of high prices, supported by rising food consumption from emerging markets and the prospects of competing demand for crops as a source of bio-fuels."** Market prices for soybeans, corn and wheat (all feed ingredients used by pig and cattle farmers) have increased significantly, then increasing our costs for corn starches, soy powders, and flour (all common binder ingredients for many meat and poultry processors). In addition, gas prices are predicted to rise to over \$1.25 per litre, which further adds to our costs of transporting our food products from source to customer.

Although some of the prices are expected to ease off, they will not return to the prices that we have been accustomed to. In the words of Francisco Blanch, head of global commodity research at Merrill Lynch & Co. Ltd, **"the commodities 'supercycle' of higher prices may last another 15 years as a 'perfect storm' of demand outstripping supply bolsters agriculture markets."**

Doris Valade
President
Malabar Super Spice Co. Ltd.



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@malabarspice.com.
Look for our next edition in May/June 2008.

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

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