

Workshop Title: Artisan Food Processing

Speaker(s) & their title(s): Edward Charter, Food and Bioscience Technology
Manager for BioFoodTech

Additional speakers:

Mike Beamish -Deep Roots Distillery

Reid Barnet – CEO of Quannessence Skin Care Products

Jeff McCourt – Glasgow Glen Farm

Executive Summary

Edward Charter moderated an artisanal food processing panel discussion along with Mike Beamish, Reid Barnet, and Jeff McCourt. Edward and his guest speakers discussed trends, which focus on craft processing in the food/ drink industry, and outlined their experience marketing distilled liquor, beauty products, and artisanal cheeses.

Detailed Notes

BioFoodTech is a technology center owned by the PEI provincial government that works with clients to turn concepts into a prototype, and place products onto the shelf. The company also provides advice regarding marketing, grants and financing. Edward Charter discusses a growing interest in consumers for artisanal or craft food products, and the benefits gained from processing value-added products.

Benefits of processing to the consumer:

- Convenience
- Longer shelf life
- Variety
- Maintain nutrition

Benefits of processing to a producer:

- Accessing farther markets
- Food safety
- Spreading out processing time
- Using good quality culls for juice etc.
- Improving nutritional content through processing (e.g. fermentation)

Benefits of fermenting / Benefits of probiotics:

- Improving intestinal tract health
- Enhancing immune system
- Reducing symptoms of lactose intolerance or other allergies
- Reducing certain risks of cancers

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Artisan craft processing terms:

- Gourmet
- Premium
- Artisanal
- Heirloom
- Natural
- Organic, local, or wild

Craft brewing is an example of an artisanal product that can be quantified, and has grown exponentially in the past few years. Historically North America had several craft breweries, however during prohibition these disappeared. Throughout most of the 1900s craft breweries were nearly non-existent.

1979- the ban on artisanal brewing was lifted.

1982- Grant's brewery opened in WA

1986- 5 brewpubs were open in the US

2012- there were 2075 craft breweries and micro breweries in the US

Artisan Distilling, Artisan Balsamic Vinegar, and Cheese making have also been growing industries observed in the past decade.

Artisan workshops offered through BioFoodTech

- Fermented foods
- Cheesemaking
- Fermented beverages
- Distillation

Guest speaker: Mike Beamish of Deep Roots Distillery

Beamish Orchard planted its first 200 trees in 1990, planning to grow his trees organically from the beginning. Now Mike has nearly 500 trees on 3 acres that were certified organic in 2003.

Wanting to diversify his product line Mike decided to try:

Apple butter:

- Started small on stovetop, however BioFoodTech helped upscale this process.
- To improve nutrition it was important to include apple skins, without making a product that was unappealing to eat.
- BioFoodTech helped develop a process to grind apples enough to puree the entire apple, with skins included.

Distilling:

If apples are fermented and distilled, the process destroys pathogens, which allows Mike to use discarded apples that are not allowed for processing his apple butter. His engineered still was purchased from the US.

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Products made through his distillation process include:

- Apple brandy
- Blueberry fruit spirit
- Haskap liqueur
- Maple liqueur

For more information check out deeprootsdistillery.com

Guest speaker: Reid Barnet of Quannessence Skin Care Products

Developed a product line for people working in the specialty make up and beauty industry. Reid outlines the steps taken to develop a successful business, using natural materials, and marketing your products to health conscience consumers.

Assess the market need:

- Is our product something that the market needs?
- Identify the needs for your line
 - Safe natural products
 - Therapeutic facials

Viability

- Market analysis
- Organic or natural focus
- Cost structure and pricing model- what does it cost to produce? If you can't compete on price you need to be innovative.

Capability

- Do you have the expertise, or can you find someone who does?
- What will it cost, and how will you finance the project?
- Innovation PEI

Deliverability

- How will you sell the product?
- Door to door, farmers market, online, wholesale?

Product Development

- Research "the hell" out of the industry
- Google
- Suppliers
- Competition
- Make a prototype and test the product

Market testing

- Receive feedback from experts in industry.

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Product Differentiation

- PEI branding
- Sourcing local botanical extracts
- Investigating new technologies and extracts such as fireweed (prevents acne, antimicrobial, reduces rash conditions)
- Accessing local research infrastructure such as BioFoodTech

Unforeseen Challenges

- Processing time to market
- Adoption of products by consumers
- Regulations
- Marketing and Sales- started knocking on doors, develop relationships in industry, approach larger markets

Reid's Best Business Advice:

“Deliver what you claim, and be consistent.”

Guest speaker: Jeff McCourt of Glasgow Glen Farm

Owner of Glasgow Glen Farm on PEI and has recently taken over the “Cheeselady” business. Jeff describes his experience in the food industry, his love of artisanal cheese making, and some good advice for new business owners.

Jeff graduated and taught at the Culinary Institute in PEI, and has experience teaching artisan cheese making workshops at BioFoodTech. In 2013 he decided to buy ‘The Cheeselady’ business.

Steps to take when starting a new business:

- Write a business plan- templates are available online
- Find a mentor
- Approach banks to secure a loan, or find investors to fund your idea.
- Jeff sold cheese lots in advance to secure funds (similar to a CSA)
- Worked with ‘the cheeselady’ to learn the business.
- Expanded the cheese business to include wood fired artisan pizza, bread and additional complementary products. (Diversify your product line)

Jeff's Best Business Advice:

- You will only get out what you put into your business. You need to be willing to put in time, sweat and tears if you want to succeed.
- Approach local restaurants and chefs to market your craft products.
- Promote your product at craft fairs and farmers markets- get the people to try a sample and let the product sell itself.
- Be creative. If you have a good idea, you will always find the money.