

**Workshop Title: Possibilities in Organic Processing**

**Speaker(s) & their title(s):**

Edward Charter, Food and Bioscience Technology Manager for BioFoodTech  
Nathan Archibald, General Manager of PEI Berries  
John Rowe, President of Island Abbey Foods

**Executive Summary:**

Edward Charter moderated an organic food processing panel session along with Nathan Archibald and John Rowe, discussing the benefits of food processing, and their experience with BioFoodTech. BioFoodTech is a technology center owned by PEI provincial government that works to help innovative entrepreneurs turn concepts into prototypes, and put their products onto shelves. Through this panel discussion, Edward presented basic guidelines to follow for processing organic products, while panel members Nathan and John provided examples of their success working with BioFoodTech.

**Detailed Notes:**

Edward has found that current trends in the food industry are supporting organic production of processed foods.

Current consumer demands include:

- Fresh foods-less frozen
- Clean labels- with no artificial ingredients and no chemicals
- Healthier snacks
- Rethinking the term 'natural'
- Exclusion diets- gluten free, vegan etc.

Why process foods?

- Longer storage time
- Availability all year
- Ready to eat, or easily prepared
- Frozen or canned vs. fresh

How can food processing benefit a producer?

- Ability to ship products to farther markets
- Greater food safety from heat treatments etc.
- Spread out handling and processing time
- Use of good quality culls for juice etc.
- Enhanced nutrition through processing (e.g. fermentation)

CFIA regulations that cover organic processing:

(Found in the Organic General Principles and Management Standards)

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Section 8.3 processing and handling

General requirements

- Minimally processed, mechanical, physical and biological
- Allowed substances are used
- No co-mingling during processing with non-organic food, or non-permitted substances
- Approved cleaning agents are used
- Permitted substances List states which food additives are approved.
- Thermal and chemical methods of processing are not mentioned in standards, and should be reviewed with certification body

Section 8.4

Pest management in processing facilities

- Physical methods should be used first, accepted chemicals used second, and an unaccepted material used as a last resort

Section 8.5

Transportation

- No co-mingling during transportation
- Must ensure physical separation and documentation

Labeling

- A product can be certified organic if 95% or more of the ingredients are organic
- If the product contains more than 70% organic ingredients you may label your product claiming a percentage of organic ingredients.
- If the product contains less than 70% organic ingredients, the company is not allowed to make any organic claims

**Speaker Nathan Archibald of PEI Berries Ltd.**

Discussed how his company was formed, and outlines the process developed by BioFoodTech to produce fruit puree from organic blueberries, haskap, and cranberries. BioFoodTech helped the company with food safety and sales to put his product on shelves, and gain access to foreign markets. Nathan explains that it takes more time and money to process organic products, but the end result was worth the extra effort in his case.

How they grow their berries?

- To improve pollination Nathan established 'bee pastures' among their fields. Allowing pasture to grow in 22 foot wide strips throughout all their fields, encouraging biodiversity, and providing natural bee habitats.
- Eliminated fungicides and insecticides
- Harvesting with small tractors to avoid soil compaction

Clean and Freeze line

- Built to clean and freeze blueberries and cranberries
- Planning to experiment with strawberries and haskap.

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Processing:

- Hydro ThermoDynamics technology is used
- Takes fruit, breaks it down and makes it more digestible for human consumption.
- Patented technology liquefies the entire berry (peel, seeds, and pulp)
- Nothing else is added

Nathan's company received 2015 Food Product award with a blueberry juice product

**Pure Blueberries**

100 % whole wild blueberry puree with no preservatives, non GMO, gluten free, contains all portions of the fruit, including skin.

**Pure cranberries and maple** (the company's newest product line)

100 % Whole Wild Cranberry Puree made with concentrated maple sap

**John Rowe of Island Abbey foods**

Discusses his business idea to process honey through slow dehydration into a solid that became HONIBE.

After breaking a jar of honey in his backpack during a hiking trip John decided he wanted to find a way to put honey into a solid form. BioFoodTech was approached and contracted to work on John's idea. Today HONIBE is the first and only company in the world making solid honey products.

The honey drop was invented first for use in tea, but the company grew to produce honey gummies, honey lozenges, and more. They are now exporting their products to 40 countries.

Most of his honey is sourced in PEI, however some is sourced in other maritime provinces or western provinces, and is never sourced outside of Canada.

John recommends starting small and working your way up. To get from the basement to a larger scale production it is important to have mentors.

Trying to build equipment and scale up is challenging. BioFoodTech helps move ideas into products, and put them on shelves. BioFoodTech also provided advice regarding grants and financing.

Marketing advice:

- Attend tradeshow
- Some tradeshow will give awards- recognition opens new doors.