

Opportunities...

Meat Snacks

Agri-Foods

Industry Overview

In 2011, Alberta produced almost 20% of total Canadian agrifood exports and was the third largest provincial exporter of agrifood products. The changing international economy has created many new value added opportunities for Alberta's agrifood industry, and many of these opportunities such as meat snacks fit well in the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor region.

Canada is the world's fourth-largest agriculture and agrifood exporter using advanced technologies and a solid knowledge base to export more than \$40.0 billion in product annually. The industry boasts a complex, integrated and globally competitive supply chain providing food, beverages and agriculture products to more than 175 countries. Value added agricultural products are one of the fastest growing segments of this industry. Markets are expanding for new value added products including functional foods, food ingredients, and industrial and other non-food uses.

Trade agreements, modern technology, transportation and sophisticated communications systems allow for greater global access to goods and services. Demand for convenient food and other agricultural products will continue to increase as populations rise.

Sector Overview

Agriculture in the EATC helps support the province's food processing sector which is the third largest manufacturing sector in the province. Alberta is also home to the third largest food and beverage producing province in Canada.

In 2011, almost half of all agrifood manufacturing in the province was concentrated in the meat products segment. Meat snacks are one of the fastest growing categories of processed snack foods. Meat snack sales in the US market are growing with sales increasing 20% over the past five years.

The three primary forms of meat snacks include "jerky" made from dried meat with a variety of flavorings and seasonings, "snack sticks" which are a form of a dry sausage like salami or summer sausage and "pork rinds" which are a crisp snack created by frying pork skin.

Snacks are becoming a bigger part of the North American diet. As lifestyles become increasingly hectic, younger consumers are developing more health conscious habits and the need for convenience is helping to grow the demand for meat snacks. Protein plays an important part in our food choices and is viewed as a healthier option prompting some buyers to reach for beef jerky rather than less healthy options.

Market Assessment

Alberta's agrifood processing industry and the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor enjoy favourable conditions for the development of food processing opportunities. The region's strategic location allows for quick and inexpensive goods transport. Combined with effective road, rail, and air links to markets, Alberta has become a major distribution centre. Goods can be quickly and easily shipped to Western Canada and the rapidly expanding markets in the Pacific and Northwestern United States, as well as Pacific Asia and the Russian Far East.

Alberta also offers an extensive network of research and development facilities in and near the EATC to help develop and commercialize products and processes. Agricultural research in the region has resulted in better production methods, new crop varieties, and a large, varied genetic pool of breeding livestock.

Alberta and the EATC region are ideally suited as a market for investment opportunities in the meat processing sector. Livestock farming has always been a major part of the EATC region's economy. All classes of livestock are raised in the region and the area is also a leader in the production of grains and oilseed.

The EATC Advantage:

In addition to the EATC region providing access to large amounts of livestock and a well-developed transportation corridor, the region offers several other benefits to the meat processing industry.



Benefits and Advantages

- The region offers exceptionally strong regional, provincial and federal agrifood research and development collaboration opportunities
- Proximity to end customers, thereby increasing understanding of local market conditions and opportunities, resulting in stronger relationships with customers
- The meat processing cluster is well established with such major companies as the XL Foods meat processing plant in Brooks
- Food processing development opportunities within the EATC region have access to a myriad of provincial and federal initiatives, programs and financial incentives aimed at promoting greener technologies
- Investments in snack meat processing can build on existing animal supply and manufacturing capacity in the region
- The region can allow for economies of scale whereby companies can set up operations, raise livestock and process them all in the same area, resulting in efficiency and significant interest to investment partners





The Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor is a major initiative underway to enhance and promote a north/south transportation corridor that stretches from the US border in the south to the R.M. of Wood Buffalo in the north. The Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor will include Highways 36, 41 and 63, with links to the Edmonton-Calgary corridor to the west, to Alberta's abundant resources in the north east, and to Saskatchewan in the east. It is a major component of the "Ports to Plains Corridor" of the United States, Canada and Mexico.

There are over \$100 billion in Major Capital Projects happening right now in the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor (EATC). The EATC is part of the world's third largest oil reserves - the Alberta Oil Sands.

Why are businesses investing in the EATC?

- Great location between markets and suppliers in Northern Alberta and the U.S.
- Close access to major centres, but with low land costs
- Excellent north-south and east-west transportation routes
- Plenty of room to expand operations
- Diversified business sectors including energy, agriculture and manufacturing
- Excellent quality of life to attract new workers



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