

Maple Leaf Foods

Growing with Manitoba

Visit EconomicDevelopmentBrandon.com for more Brandon business profiles

If one were to ever sit down and compile a list of watershed moments in Brandon's history that have helped it grow into the city it is, Maple Leaf Foods' entrance into the local economy would undeniably be among them. Its world-class, state-of-the-art pork processing facility officially opened on Richmond Avenue East in Brandon in 1999, providing one shift of production of raw, retail-ready pork product. The plant then expanded its footprint in 2008 and began a second shift of production. Currently running two production shifts and one sanitation shift, Maple Leaf Foods is one of Brandon's largest employers and has propelled Brandon's socio-economic status into that of a 50,000-population community. The plant employs more than 2,000 hourly and salaried employees in a variety of roles including the skilled trades, production, human resources, finance, engineering, healthcare, health & safety, food safety, and quality assurance. The plant sees approximately 100 hog transports trucks dropping animals off at the plant each and every day, culminating in the processing of approximately 70,000 – 75,000 hogs per week.

The raw, retail-ready pork product processed at the Brandon plant is shipped domestically (providing 20% of Canada's pork products) and also worldwide, with large business done in the American, Mexican, Japanese, and Korean markets. The plant also supplies other Maple Leaf facilities with raw materials for further processing into ready-to-eat products like bacon and hot dogs. In fact, one out of every two packages of hot dogs and one out of every three packages of bacon sold in Canada was produced by Maple Leaf, regardless of the name on the package.

While a Canada-wide shortage of hogs has resulted in the plant currently operating below capacity, management have chosen to use the situation to ask itself, "How can we get better?". The plant has taken advantage of the holding pattern the Canadian hog industry currently finds itself in, investing heavily over the past year to re-tool its equipment and processes for optimum production. That included a \$5 million upgrade of equipment on the cut floor in 2014 and the \$14-million construction of a Co2 stunning section in 2015 to achieve a less stressful method of moving hogs through the system, which also improves product quality. Tens of millions of dollars in improvements to the plant's packaging area are also on the horizon, as is strategic automation of lower-end jobs to allow for the creation of better-paying job opportunities.

A proudly Canadian company, Maple Leaf is Brandon's largest private sector employer, and is focused on hiring locally and from within the country. The company has also carried out international recruitment from South America, Europe, and Asia to meet its staffing requirements. Over the course of its international recruitment efforts, Maple Leaf Foods was the catalyst for the arrival of in the range of 1,700 temporary foreign workers to Brandon. Many of those individuals have since had their families join them in Canada – invariably changing the face of Brandon. Maple Leaf Foods employees and their families work, live, and play in the City of Brandon, and have changed the entire fabric



- Maple Leaf Food's 643,000 square-foot processing facility is the largest manufacturing operation supporting Maple Leaf's fresh pork requirements for both domestic and international markets
- Brandon's largest private employer with over 2,000 hourly & salaried employees
- Processes approximately 70,000 – 75,000 hogs weekly and designed to process up to 18,000 hogs per day
- Plant supplies other Maple Leaf facilities with raw materials for further value-added processing
- 60% of hogs processed at the plant are raised in Maple Leaf Food-owned hog barns

Maple Leaf Foods

Growing with Manitoba

Visit EconomicDevelopmentBrandon.com for more Brandon business profiles

of the community with respect to the housing market, the public education system, public transit, the various restaurant and entertainment opportunities in the community, and the overall offering of social service supports. Maple Leaf has also been active in providing settlement support for these new employees, including English classes to support their transition into the country. The multicultural fabric of Maple Leaf's employee base is also evident in the fact that the plant functions in five official languages: English, Hindi, Spanish, Mandarin, and Ukrainian. With so many employees from such varied backgrounds, the plant's full-service cafeteria and in-house retail meat market for staff have proven to be extremely popular.

Maple Leaf Foods also prides itself as being a supporter of the community it has been welcomed by, and so it's highly likely that if you're eating a hot dog at a neighbourhood or charity fundraising barbeque, it's been donated by Maple Leaf Foods. The local plant also recently became a foundation sponsor of the Brandon School Division's Food For Thought program, which provides before-school meals for children at 18 schools across the community.

With the changes to the federal temporary foreign worker program, Maple Leaf has revamped its domestic recruitment efforts in Canada, with management representatives travelling as far west as Vancouver, BC., and as far east as Gander, NL., to attract employees with the plant's generous relocation and settlement support package. Recruitment of staff from within Manitoba's own borders, especially those from Winnipeg, have been the most successful of those recent ventures, simply due to geographic familiarity and an affinity for their home province.

While the meat processing industry simply won't appeal to everyone, the company's hallmark values of hands-on knowledge and leadership provide a far greater likelihood for staff to be able to work their way up from the shop floor into management roles – a unique opportunity within the North American meat industry.

Maple Leaf Foods has undeniably changed the face of Brandon, Manitoba, by providing meaningful employment, by being a good neighbour, and by organically establishing itself as an integral part of the community. With more than 15 successful years behind it and countless more ahead – Maple Leaf Foods is truly invested in making Brandon as strong as it can be.

