

Shape Foods, Inc.

Essential for Brandon

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Over the past several years, an innovative approach to the flax processing industry has quietly been “taking shape” in Brandon, Manitoba.

Situated on a sprawling piece of industrial land at 2001 Victoria Avenue East, Shape Foods, Inc. flipped the switch on its Brandon flax crushing plant in January of 2010 and since then, has been slowly and steadily building its capacity as a unique and intriguing manufacturer of flax oil and flax meal product. Capitalizing on a proprietary cold-pressed process that does not rely on the use of additives, chemicals, or preservatives, Shape Foods sets its product far apart from its competitors with its simple slogan, “Not Just Good. Essential”.

The use of flax oil and meal in the food ingredient industry has been steadily gaining in popularity in recent years, thanks to the proven health benefits of the Omega-3 component of the ancient seed crop. Omega-3 is not naturally produced by the human body, but is essential for human life. It is not found in many plant oils, but is abundant in flax seeds. Health Canada has recently affirmed that the addition of the fatty acid in regular diet can help to lower cholesterol. In addition, recent research on flax has indicated that it may reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes, and can also have anti-inflammatory effects and aid in digestion.

Accessing both conventionally-produced and organically-produced flax seed from suppliers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, the seeds are trucked to Brandon and then cold-pressed via Shape’s proprietary process and the oil product extracted. The flax meal is partially defatted through this process and essentially becomes a food grade value-added aspect of production. Through this unique cold-pressing, Shape prides its oil product on being able to retain its flavour and nutrients, and also as being shelf-stable for up to two years, without the short term taste fall-off of other similar products competing in the market that require refrigeration. In addition, all Shape Foods flax products are Kosher, Halal, gluten-free and vegan.

Along with sale of the packaged product under its own Royal Harvest brand name, Shape Foods also sells its flax oil and meal product to other private label clients, as well as in bulk form to users in a number of other industries. Versatile markets for the bulk oil in the food industry include the manufacturing of flax milk, food spreads, as a finishing/flavouring oil, or as gel capsules in the nutraceutical supplement market. The bulk meal, meanwhile, is sold for ingredient use in bakeries, and in the manufacturing industry for the production of pet food and animal feed. Shape’s commitment to ensure its customers are getting maximum benefit from the product is evident by its willingness to provide technical processing advice to its bulk ingredient users to ensure no onset of rancidity occurs through improper handling or mixing. The company even boasts a “Recipe Box” section on its website where you can find healthy food recipes for its oil and meal!



- Established in Brandon in 2009, moved to a 24/7 operation in 2015
- First company to produce edible cold-pressed, shelf-stable flax oil
- Local manufacturer of flax oil and flax meal primarily for export markets
- Flax is purchased from a number of suppliers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta and processed through a unique method of cold pressing
- Employs approximately 40 full-time people at Brandon plant



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Since its beginnings, Shape Foods has positioned itself as primarily an export company, with resulting success in markets in Korea, Taiwan, China, Japan, southeast Asia, Europe, the United States and Canada. Still, its executive team attributes a great part of its success to date to the Brandon region's ready supply of flax and its extremely good access to human capital. Brandon's proximity to the Food Development Centre in Portage la Prairie has been advantageous for Shape Foods. In addition, established academic partnerships with the University of Manitoba's Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals, Brandon University's Rural Development Institute and Department of Chemistry, and Assiniboine Community College has also made Shape Foods' Brandon location an advantageous one.

In early 2015, production at Shape Foods moved to a 24-7 operation and the company is currently adding presses as it continues to build capacity at its 70,000 square-foot facility. The business's current employee complement of approximately 40 people fulfill roles ranging from production floor workers, team leaders, sanitation and maintenance staff, quality assurance staff, research and development teams, logistics staff, and senior management. The plant also relies on Brandon's skilled trades sector, with many contracts undertaken for work in the electrical and mechanical realm.

Shape Foods has maintained a low profile since production at the plant began in 2010, while quietly developing a solid customer base and positioning itself as a global company. Though its goals are far-reaching, the company remains rooted in the local business community. Shape Foods is not just good for Brandon, it's essential!

