



THE GLOBE AND MAIL

CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ♦ FOUNDED 1844

Perspective™
LONDON 2010

LONDON 2010



Setting the stage for success in food and agriculture



Rob Kelly and Cathy Siskind-Kelly are the husband-and-wife team behind Black Fly Beverages, a successful, London-based company with an ever-increasing stake in the alcoholic cooler industry.

Last year, London also became home to a new, 130,000 sq. ft. production facility for one of Canada's largest frozen dessert-producing companies, the Original Cakerie. The new facility, a \$47-million investment located in London's Innovation Park on 23 acres of land, employs more than 200 people.

London's success in the food processing and agriculture industries is no accident. Access to raw materials, research institutions, transportation, a highly skilled workforce, business services, and a host of other amenities provides companies with the resources they need to succeed. The London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) also works to find new areas of investment in the industry, and provides assistance programs for companies in the industry.

To learn more about London's competitiveness for food-related businesses, visit the LEDC's website at ledc.com.

Food and Beverage Fast Facts

- London has more than 60 food and beverage processing companies
- More than 6,000 people are employed in London's food-related businesses
- Middlesex County (where London is seated) contains more than 2,600 farms on more than 620,000 acres of land, which includes more than 512,000 acres of crops
- London has no industrial development charges
- London is one of Ontario's largest research-intensive communities
- London's food processing industry is very diverse – well-recognized names include Labatt, Kellogg's, McCormick, Heritage Coffee, Sofina Foods, Sun Valley Foods (a division of Cargill Ltd.), Nestle, Original Cakerie, and Black Fly.

In a recent marketing campaign, the City of London asked a question: what common ingredient is found in beer, cereal, spices, coffee, chicken, ice cream and cake? The answer is London, Ontario. London's diverse economy includes large holdings in the food processing sector, and the city has seen a swell of investment in recent years, with 2009 and 2010 being no exception.

In December 2009, Sikorski Sausages, a company that has called London its home since 1983, announced that it would complete a retrofit of its existing plant on Childers St., and also create a 12,000 sq. ft. addition. With the new addition, expected to be complete by mid-2010, Sikorski Sausages now has added capacity to produce its more than 100 types of specialty meat products.

Even with the added space, Peter Sikorski, the company's CEO, says that it's the employees who truly make the company successful.

"Our production staff is the company's biggest asset," says Sikorski. "On behalf of everyone at Sikorski Sausages, I would like to thank London for providing us with a great place to call home."

London is also home to the Black Fly Food and Beverage Company, producers of the Black Fly line of alcoholic cooler beverages. Co-founded by the husband and wife team of Rob Kelly and Cathy Siskind-Kelly, the company has grown in leaps and bounds since its inception, and attributes much of its success to a firm base in London.

"Being in southern Ontario puts us in proximity to the largest supplier and consumer base in Canada, and in close proximity to LCBO's head office," says Siskind-Kelly. "The London Economic Development Corporation has facilitated connections for Black Fly with key staff at the Ontario Ministry Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Food Processing HR Council, and Ontario Export. Through these channels, Black Fly has connected to international buyers and support programs that are driving the company's efforts to expand nationally and internationally."

McCormick Canada also found a home in London. In June 2008, McCormick announced that it had acquired honey-producer Billy Bee, and would relocate the operation to its new 210,000 sq. ft. facility in London, which opened in April 2009.