

The Business Case For Training Investment in Ontario's Meat Processing Sector

Ontario Independent Meat Processors

This project is funded in part through the Food and Beverage Industry Innovation Fund (FBIIF)



From the President of OIMP



December, 2009

Dear Fellow Ontario Meat Sector Business Owners and Operators,

Whether your operation is large or small, urban or rural, primary slaughter or further processing, dedicated to poultry or to red meat, it has one vital thing in common: it runs on our people!

That's what this business plan is all about: our people. Ensuring our people have the right skills is one of the keys to our sustainability and our future success. And it's one we cannot afford to neglect or defer.

Although it is masked by the decline in manufacturing employment brought on by the current recession, all the demographic trends in Ontario point to the fact that our workforces will begin to experience an ever-increasing number of retirements in the decade ahead, as the Baby Boom generation ages. In this business plan, we publish custom-tabulated Statistics Canada data from the

2006 census that shows our workforces are, on average, older than other sectors of manufacturing in Ontario, especially in the most highly skilled occupations. Among manufacturers, we will be hit first.

As a sector, we have two choices. We can prepare proactively for the future now or we can scramble to survive later in the decade ahead when the skilled worker shortage becomes increasingly acute. At OIMP, to be responsible leaders, we believe the only choice is to be proactive and prepare.

That preparation means that we need to become fully engaged now to source the skilled workers we will need three to five years from now. This business plan reports the results of the training needs and barriers survey that you participated in this past spring. It also provides the big picture context of our sector from Statistics Canada data. It then moves to a series of seven recommendations to ensure our sector is ready for the future.

I believe that this plan is a decisive call to action – for my firm and for yours. As a sector we need to engage. We need to respond to the significant infrastructure investment that both the federal and Ontario governments are making in the Institute of Food Processing Technology and seize this moment for our sector's future. We need to show that if they build it (and they are!) we will come. Please read the plan and make a commitment to make the coming decade the training decade for our sector in which we work together to ensure we have the skilled workforce we need to be productive and safe.

In the service of our sector,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Facciolo'.

Tony Facciolo
President, Ontario Independent Meat Processors

Ontario Independent Meat Processors (OIMP) is the representative voice of the independent meat processor in Ontario, working closely with agricultural and commodity organizations and various levels of government for over 30 years. OIMP's membership includes meat and poultry processors, retailers, wholesalers and suppliers to the industry.

Acknowledgments

OIMP acknowledges the support of its members and other sector firms in completing the Training Needs and Barriers Survey in the late spring of 2009 and in participating in focus groups and individual interviews. The information gained from this interaction with employers in our sector was essential to the development of this plan. Representatives from educational institutions in Ontario and western Canada as well as government staff provided valuable input.

As noted on the front cover, OIMP gratefully acknowledges the funding support provided by the Food and Beverage Industry Innovation fund, under the joint responsibility of the Agricultural Adaptation Council (funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors (AOFPP).

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“One of the keys to success in the meat business is having qualified, committed workers. As our Ontario population ages, we anticipate that the challenge to find sufficient skilled workers to sustain and expand our businesses will intensify. We need to prepare today for the workforce we will need tomorrow.”

*Laurie Nicol, Executive Director, Ontario Independent Meat Processors
in the letter to firms accompanying the training needs survey.*

Notice To Reader

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the consulting firm contracted to undertake this work, **JAYEFF PARTNERS** (division of Fitting Group Inc.), and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Ontario Independent Meat Processors, the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors, the Agricultural Adaptation Council, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and/or the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

What Sector Employers Report

Connecting with firms on the front-line

“We need your help to develop a thorough understanding of the needs of our sector. With the information provided by the survey, we will have the facts we need to work with government on initiatives to develop and/or find the right kind of workers our sector will need in the future. Training initiatives and worker skills development must be market-driven. Because you are the market, it is vital that you make your needs known so any future public investment in training is wisely made.”

Laurie Nicol from the letter accompanying the survey of sector firms

Survey of the Ontario Meat Industry's Worker Training Needs

1. Business Profile
Please tell us about your business and your current workforce.

1. What are the first two digits of the postal code for the address where your plant is located? (If you have more than one location, please complete a separate survey for each location)

2. Is your plant located on a public transit route?
 Yes No

3. Which government body carries out meat inspection at your plant?
 CFIA (Federal) OMA (Ontario) MDA (Manitoba) SDA (Saskatchewan) Other (specify)

4. Indicate all the operations in which your company is directly involved.
 Slaughter Rendering/Presalting Marinating/Brining Washed/Chilling Retail Counter Sales Other

5. Indicate the total average number of workers in your company.
 Full-time (35 hours per week and higher) _____
 Part-time (Permanent workers who work less than 35 hours per week) _____

6. Indicate the hourly wage range at which the majority of your processing line workers are paid.
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About Their Training Needs

The Needs of Meat Processing Sector Employers Are Unique

Indicate which three (3) categories of worker represent the highest need for training in your plant? (n = 74)

Answer Options	Response Percent
Butcher / Meat-cutter	72%
General Labourer	39%
Quality Control	34%
Sausagemaker	32%
Supervisor	28%
Kill Floor Worker	24%
Management	18%
Skilled Line Worker	18%
Control & Machine Operator	7%
Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright	7%
Forklift Operator	7%

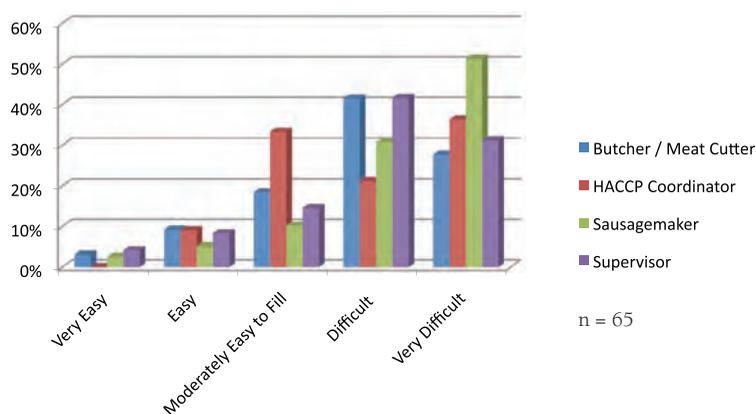
The most unique requirement in meat processing

“Knife skills are the most unique requirement of meat processing, not only for use in primary slaughter operations but also downstream in the production side in preparing ready-to-serve portions. The skill of properly sharpening knives was repeatedly raised as very important as a factor in reducing repetitive strain injury and fatigue while increasing productivity and quality.”

Focus Group #1 Participants’ Summary

Employers Report Difficulty Filling Meat Sector Specific Positions

Most Difficult Positions To Fill



Selecting from a list of 12 options, employers consistently identified positions unique to the meat sector as the most difficult ones to fill, as the responses above show. These occupations are where the need for sector-specific training is highest.

The adjustment to meat processing represents a ‘huge learning curve’

“Participants indicated that with the recession, they are definitely finding a larger pool of workers available, as measured by resumés dropped off. However, they have not experienced any increase in qualified workers available. Many of those seeking work come from backgrounds in auto assembly and auto parts manufacturing, including candidates at the supervisory level, and find the adjustment to meat processing represents a “huge learning curve.” There is a lack of understanding of hygiene, food safety and how maintaining a clean environment affects product quality. Even graduates from food science programs don’t have much background specifically in meat science.”

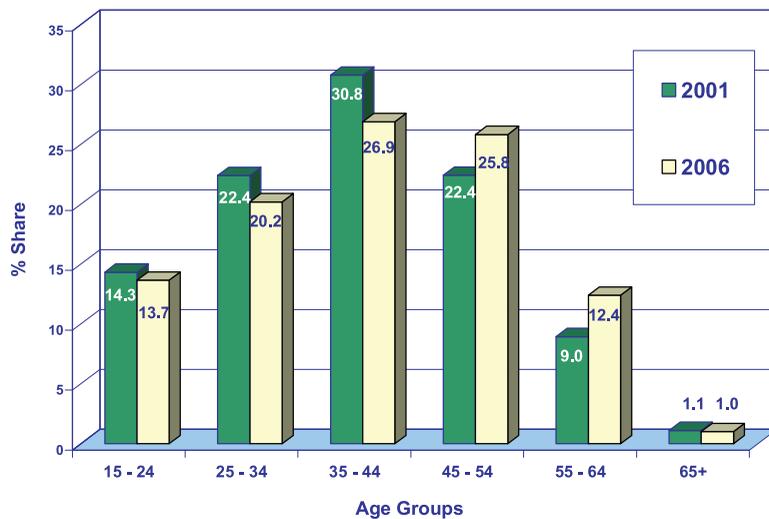
Focus Group # 2 Participants’ Summary

Workforce Renewal and Its

Mel Soucie, a highly respected labour market economist, was engaged to assess the current Statistics Canada, much of it developed from custom tabulations not otherwise published. identify long-term trends. The information represents findings that are particularly relevant increasingly be needed to fill an increasing rate of retirements especially in skilled

Ontario's Meat Processing Workforce Is Ageing

Age Distribution for the Meat Manufacturing Labour Force (NAIC-3116) in Ontario - 2001 & 2006



The number of workers 45 or older increased between 2001 and 2006 while the number under age 45 decreased in all categories. As the impact of this ageing works its way through the coming decade, the percentage of workers retiring will begin to significantly increase from current levels. A regional analysis of the data showed that firms in the GTA have the greatest proportion of older workers.

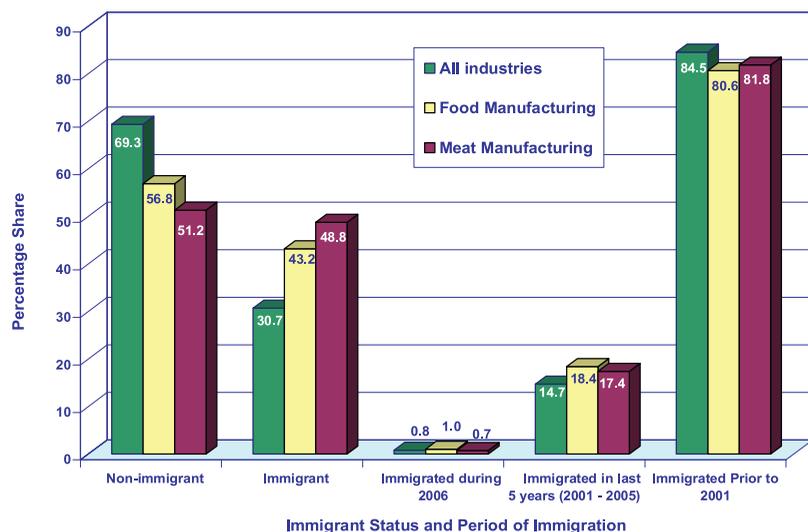
An ageing workforce means a growing proportion of retirements each year ahead... and retirements mean the need to attract new workers to the sector will grow in step.

Source for both graphs: Statistics Canada: Custom Tabulations from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses

The Sector Relies More On Immigrants For Workers Than Other Sectors

Historically, meat processing firms have been able to attract immigrants to their workforce. The sector's proportionately higher dependency on immigrants in the workforce increases its vulnerability if the supply of immigrants declines in competition from other parts of the world. Birth rates in many developed countries are well below replacement rate and are falling in the many parts of the developing world, trends which indicate that immigrants may not be as abundant a source of workers in the future as they have been in the past.

Immigrant Composition of the Ontario Labour Force - 2006



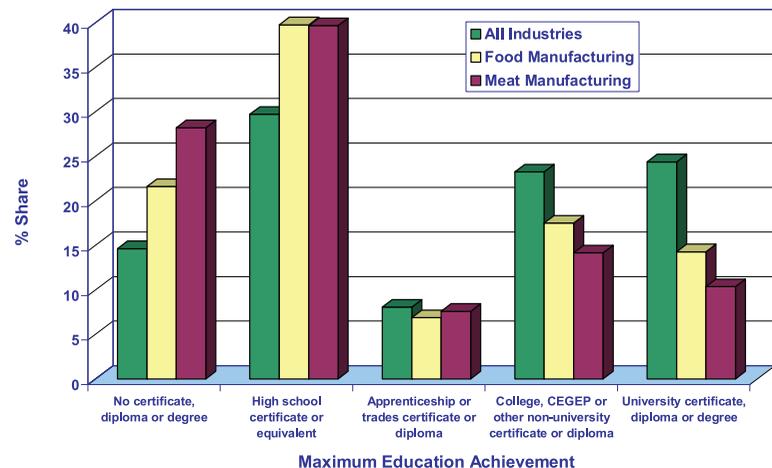
Implications For Training

profile of the Ontario meat processing sector's workforce, based on extensive data from The analysis included a comparison of changes between the 2001 and 2006 census to the sector's present and future training needs. This analysis shows that new workers will occupations and supervisory roles.

The Existing Workforce Needs Training To Raise Its Skill Levels

The graph on the right shows that the meat sector has less educated workers than both food manufacturing in general and all industries in Ontario. The lack of education among both the non-immigrant (depicted) and immigrant workers in the sector underscores the need for training to raise skill levels. Among immigrant workers, 35.3% have no diploma, certificate or degree at the high school level compared to 28.2% for non-immigrants. Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulations from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses

Education Achievement for Ontario's "All Industries" (NAIC: 11-91), Food Manufacturing (NAIC-311) and Meat Manufacturing (NAIC-3116) Non-Immigrant Labour Forces - 2006



The Most Highly Skilled Occupations Will Need Renewal First

The table below shows that the proportion of the workforce aged 45 or older has grown in all skilled categories except for "stationary engineers and auxiliary equipment operators," which has been relatively constant. This data indicates that these skilled positions, representing nearly one-third of the workforce, will be the most critical ones to renew over the next five to ten years, as current workers retire.

Critical Occupations for Human Resource Planning Purposes in Ontario's Meat Manufacturing Industry - 2006					
NAIC-3116: Meat Manufacturing Occupation	% of Labour Force 45+ in Age		Labour Force		
	2001	2006	2001	2006	% Change in Labour Force 2001 to 2006
Total labour force	32.5	39.3	19,260	21,155	9.8
H212 Industrial electricians	42.9	58.3	70	120	71.4
H221 Stationary engineers and auxiliary equipment operators	52.4	50.0	105	70	-33.3
H4 Mechanics	40.8	45.3	380	430	13.2
A391 Manufacturing managers	32.7	44.3	550	440	-20
J172 Industrial butchers and meat-cutters, poultry preparers and related workers	30.3	41.8	4,180	5,865	40.3

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulations from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses

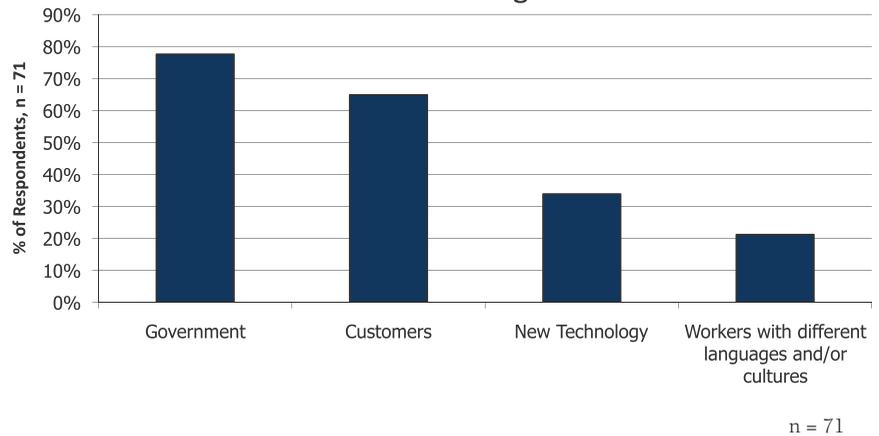
Factors That Impact Training

Government Requirements

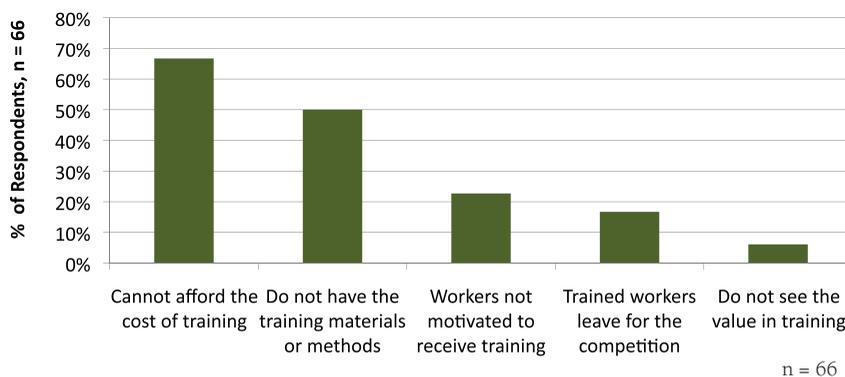
Government was identified as the number one factor that drives training needs. A subsequent survey question further probed which levels and departments of government have the greatest impact. The answers varied depending on whether the facility was federally or provincially inspected.

The role of customers is also very significant with 65% of firms indicating that customers are a major reason for undertaking training. As the trade increasingly raises the bar as to what it requires as assurance from suppliers as a condition of doing business, the need for training will continue to increase.

What factors are driving your current training needs?



What limits your investment in training?



Affordability

The two top barriers to training were identified as its affordability (67%) and the lack of access to good training resources (50%).

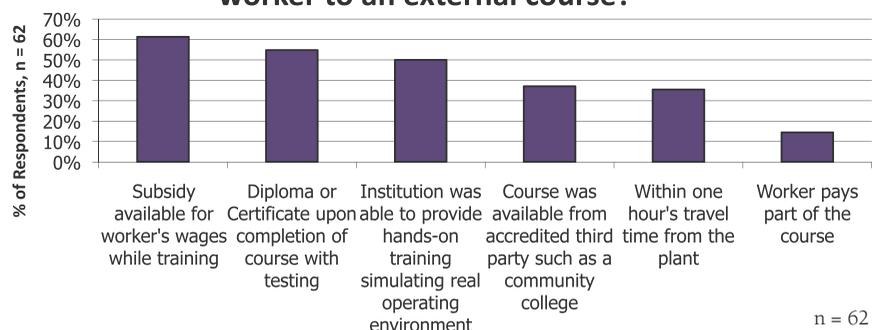
The cost of training is more than its explicit dollar cost. There is also an opportunity cost. Many small to medium sized firms report that they cannot give up a key production worker to go offsite for any extended period of time to receive training as the worker is needed on the production line.

Access To The Right Training

Employers state that they are more willing to invest in training if:

- they have government support to offset the direct cost (61% of firms)
- the course is from an accredited deliverer (37% of firms)
- the course confers recognition on the worker for successful completion (55% of firms)
- the course is offered at a site that is accessible for the worker (36% of firms)

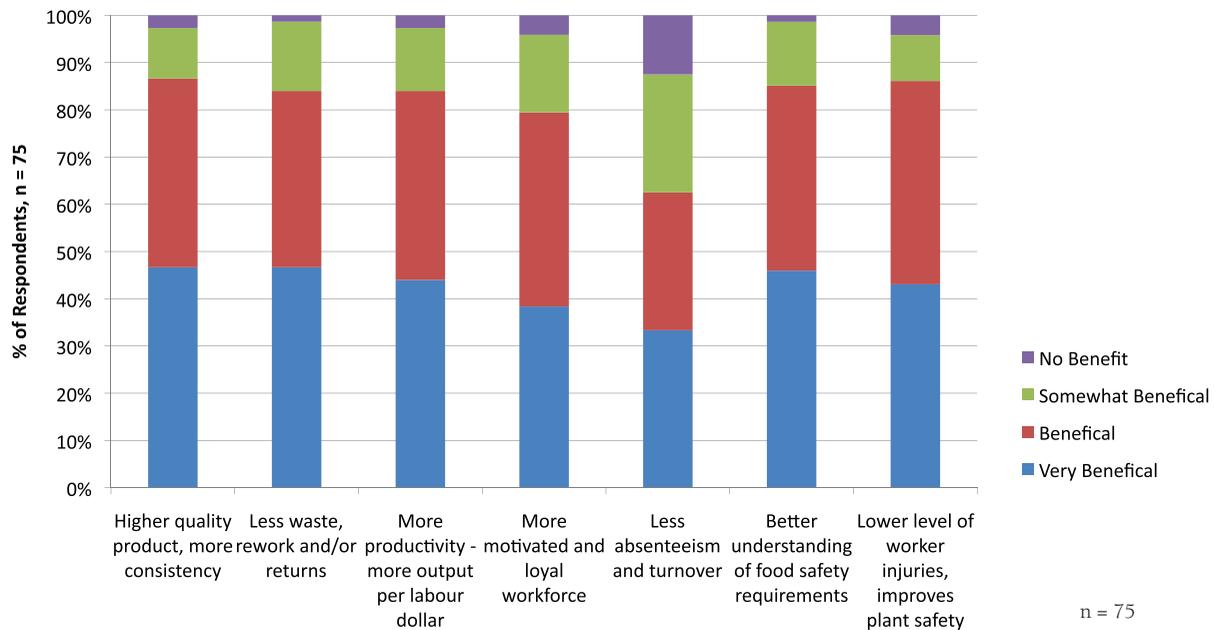
Under what circumstances would you send a worker to an external course?



and That Training Impacts

Employers Identify Vital Benefits From Training

What are the greatest benefits your company receives from training employees?



Over 80% of the firms participating in the survey believe that training contributes to their competitiveness by improving product quality, reducing waste, boosting productivity and improving product and plant safety.

For Ontario's meat processing sector to strengthen its commitment to training it needs to:

1. Set specific goals for the next five years and measure progress towards attaining them
2. Engage individual firms, industry associations, technology suppliers, training institutions and government in a concerted, collaborative effort to expand training capacity for the sector, breaking down the barriers of cost and access
3. Instill a training culture across the sector

Summary of the Sector's Needs for More Training Capacity

Ontario's meat processing sector's production workforce had 19,201 workers in 2007 and has remained stable. There are three distinct segments of this workforce for which this business plan for training is needed.

Attracting new workers
with appropriate skills

1

10% of the existing workforce is expected to retire by 2015.

- The oldest workers are the most highly skilled. This projection means that approximately 2,000 new production workers will be needed over the next five years and at least 600 of them will be needed in the jobs requiring the greatest skill.
- Based on recent trends, approximately 50% of these workers are expected to be immigrants and 50% are expected to come from Ontario's school system. This means that at least 1,000 workers will be needed in the first half of the coming decade who are in high school in Ontario now. These students need outreach to put careers in meat processing in their plans and offer them training options to develop skills which will serve both them and their future meat processing sector employer well.

Enhancing the skills
of existing workers

2

80% of the employees in the sector are production workers. Over 30% of these workers are highly skilled.

Employers have identified several compatible needs:

- Short courses from one day to one week's duration that workers can take off-site at an accredited institution
- Certified trainers that can deliver training on-site customized to the specific work environment
- ESL training for immigrant workers to help them with their comprehension of training materials
- Providing more training materials in the first languages of immigrant workers

Developing supervisors
in their vital role

3

5% of the workforce are Managers and an additional 4% are Manufacturing Supervisors.

While employers in the sector recognize that there are many excellent courses for developing supervisors in gaining competencies in areas like human relations that are not sector-specific, they also identified a need for meat management training for supervisors:

- an understanding of the 'big picture' in which they are able to understand the integration of the different phases of the operation including the importance of measuring yields
- an understanding of how actions in one area of the operation impact another including the importance of food safety
- excellent problem-solving skills with capacity to analyze situations and implement effective solutions

Plan 2015: Five Sector Goals To Meet By 2015

In order to put talk about training into action, it is important to have quantified, measurable goals in a defined timeframe, on which the sector can focus to achieve results. The following table summarizes goals to move the sector forward. The recommendations which follow provide specific steps towards implementation.

Goal	Goal Statement	Measurable Outcomes	Implementation Recommendations Pages 12 to 17
1	To develop a co-op program for students in the senior years of vocational high school to offer meat sector work experience in meatcutting roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To place a minimum of 200 students per year in these programs by 2015 To obtain a 75% placement rate on graduation in the Ontario meat processing sector such that graduates are working in the sector one year later 	4,5
2	To initiate meat specialization in the third year of the Institute of Food Processing Technology's three year certificate program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To graduate 30 students per year by 2015 in the new program with the meat specialization option To obtain a 90% placement rate on graduation in the Ontario meat processing sector such that graduates are working in the sector one year later 	1,5
3	To provide for more on-site customized training delivery on the production floor of firms in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a system for certifying trainers and making their time available to sector employers To certify a minimum of 10 trainers by 2015 with the ability of 50% of the trainers to train in the principal first language of immigrant workers 	2,5
4	To initiate a meat management training program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To graduate 25 supervisors and management employees per year in the new program by 2015 	3,5
5	To double the investment in training by Ontario sector firms by 2015 over current levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a template for measuring individual firms' investment in training explicitly To obtain adoption of the template measurement system by 15% of firms in the sector representing 30% of workers by 2015 	5,6,7

Seven Recommendations For Implementation

Goal # 5 is essential to ensure that the training capacity is effectively used by firms in the sector.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Launch A Post-Secondary Certificate Program With Meat Specialization

A New Institute Presents a Unique Opportunity

The timing for the creation of the Institute of Food Processing Technology couldn't be better. This multi-partner project is described in more detail on the opposite page. The Institute will offer a three year certificate program in food processing technology. The core curriculum subject matter will include food safety and security, process automation, industrial electrical systems, refrigeration technologies and plant management practices.

The Meat Sector Needs to be Engaged so That its Needs Are Met

The Ontario meat sector accounts for 24,000 jobs out of 110,000 for the food and beverage industry. As one of the largest sector employers in Ontario's food processing industry, the meat sector needs to ensure that graduates from this three year certificate program in development by the Institute have the opportunity to specialize in meat processing in the third year and graduate with their meat processing specialization designated on their certificate.

- A meat sector curriculum advisory subcommittee needs to be formed immediately to develop the meat specialization content in the context of the overall curriculum development now being led by an industry committee — participants in the focus groups expressed a willingness to engage in such development work
- The meat sector curriculum advisory subcommittee needs to be an active participant in the search for instructors to deliver the program as the passion and knowledge of the instructors will be vital to its success
- The sector needs to encourage its major technology suppliers to showcase their equipment at the Institute so that students in the program can develop hands-on familiarity with its operation and be exposed to the latest advances in technology in process automation and safe food handling
- In order to facilitate hands-on processing of meat products (excluding slaughter) for demonstration purposes:
 - the Institute needs to be designed with sufficient refrigerated storage capacity and ambient temperature controls to handle meat products and be built to the standards required by CFIA
 - the Institute needs to develop a relationship with one or more local firms for the supply of the demonstration raw meat material and for its disposition at maximum value after processing, recognizing that the labour to transform the product will be contributed without cost
- Employers in the sector need to encourage students to opt for meat specialization in their third year and to hire them for jobs on graduation
- The Olds College (Alberta) Meat Processing Certificate course curriculum should be carefully reviewed by the curriculum advisory subcommittee. It has potential to be licensed for use by the Institute with whatever modifications the committee determines will best meet the sector's needs in Ontario. This fifteen week program has a proven track record that can serve as the major inspiration for the Institute's meat specialization program. Olds College program staff have expressed their willingness to work with the Institute on its adaptation and implementation.

Using The Opportunity Provided by the Institute of Food Processing Technology



Key Facts About The Institute of Food Processing Technology

- The Institute represents approximately 60,000 square feet of advanced training and applied research space, directly adjacent to Conestoga's new 200,000 square foot School of Engineering and Information Technology.
- These state-of-the-art facilities are under construction as part of Phase 1 construction of Conestoga's new Cambridge Campus. The IFPT is being built on a 130 acre parcel of land immediately adjacent to Hwy 401 and will be seen by an estimated 70,000 commuters daily.
- Ground-breaking occurred on September 25, 2009.
- The Institute of Food Processing Technology will provide a meaningful solution to addressing the skills shortage and securing a trained workforce to sustain and grow the food processing industry.
- Funding support was announced by the federal and provincial governments in May, 2009. Completion is targeted for March 31, 2011 with the first students in September, 2011.
- The Institute is expected to have capacity for 500 full-time students and 300 students in the Food Operator apprenticeship program.

The goals of the Institute are fully aligned with the needs of the meat processing sector. The meat sector represents over 20% of the Ontario food and beverage processing industry's workforce. To ensure it accounts for its proportionate share of the graduates, the meat sector needs to be immediately engaged in the development of curriculum, the design of facilities, and the marketing of the program. The census regions "South Eastern" and "South Central" accounted for 30% of the firms in the meat processing sector in Ontario in 2008 according to Statistics Canada. These census regions are within one hour's drive of the Institute of Food Processing Technology's Cambridge campus.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Expand the Range of Training Options for Existing Workers

Given the lower than average educational attainment of the meat processing sector's workforce as compared to other sectors of manufacturing, the need to raise skill levels of the existing workforce is high. Based on the survey of individual firms to determine the most effective way to deliver training, the following recommendations are put forward:

“Participants believe that short courses are best – there could be a core program with various elective courses that lead to a certificate when all are completed; training is best done in small blocks to make it easier to absorb and apply and reduce consecutive time away.”

“Timing of courses is important – the optimal window is February to April excluding Easter”
Focus Group #2 Summary

Expand the Range of Meat Specific Short Courses Available

- Workers need access to short courses of one day's to one week's duration
- As the number of meat-specific short courses available at present is not considered by many firms to be sufficient, more development work needs to be done to expand the range of courses available
- Short courses can be delivered by the Guelph Food Technology Centre, the Institute of Food Processing Technology, or any Ontario College of Arts and Technology that can serve the meat processing sector's employers' needs

Certify Trainers For On-Site Training

- Training is an excellent use of recently retired supervisors with excellent people skills to enable them to impart their life-time learning
- By certifying trainers and publicizing their availability, more firms can be encouraged to use them for on-site training
- Trainers that are able to speak the languages of immigrant groups should be increasingly sought after

RECOMMENDATION #3

Launch a Meat Management Training Program to Develop the Next Generation of Supervisors

- Although many requirements for supervisor training can be met through existing courses (especially as they relate to topics that cut across all sectors, such as skill in managing the diversity of today's modern workforces), there are meat specific components that supervisors would benefit from being able to access
- Meat specific components include food safety best practices for handling meat as well as business principles for measuring yield and why it is important to control
- Employers need supervisors with top notch analytical skills so that they can troubleshoot problems, identify root causes and implement effective solutions
- Employers need supervisors who are able to integrate their understanding of different facets of the operation together so that the impact or consequence of a decision in one area is grasped on other areas upstream and downstream
- Employers need supervisors who care about the customer and are responsive to what the market needs — courses are needed that expose supervisors to learning in which they interact with downstream customers and consumers to better understand how actions they take affect the end-user's enjoyment of the product
- Olds College in Alberta is launching Canada's first meat management course module. The Ontario sector needs to follow-up its progress closely to determine if it could be licensed for offering in Ontario also, most likely at the Institute of Food Processing Technology.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Pilot Co-Op Education With High School Students for Production Roles Requiring Meat-Cutting Skills

To ensure that the meat processing sector is not overly dependent on the supply of immigrant workers, more effort needs to be made to stream appropriate young people from Ontario high schools into careers in the meat processing sector.

- A series of vocational high schools in different regions of Ontario where the meat processing sector is represented need to be engaged to provide a co-operative education experience in collaboration with local employers in the sector
- The Thompson River University model in BC, outlined below, can serve as a model to adapt to Ontario with emphasis on meat-cutting at the processor rather than the retail level
- The students' experience needs to include developing competency in meat-cutting skills including proper technique for sharpening the knife as well as dexterity in its use
- As many employers indicated that students from Ontario's education system may not have as commendable a work ethic as immigrants, the co-op education experience needs to instill the importance of work ethic and team work — employers must be enabled to screen out those students that do not meet their standards
- On completion of their high school studies, participating co-op education students should be eligible for meatcutting jobs at firms in the sector having been prequalified both respect to their skills and their work ethic
- To raise the positive profile of working in the sector, successful high school graduates need to be recognized by the sector

Learning From Best Practices in Other Jurisdictions

BC – Thompson River University (TRU)

- Candidates must successfully complete a post-secondary pre-test, participate in an instructor interview, and have a strong physical build with good manual dexterity.
- An increasing number of students are from Career Technical Centre (CTC) high schools, which allow students to enroll in the program as part of their fulfillment of a high school diploma. They comprise 28% of the current enrollment in the TRU Retail Meat Processing program.
- The CTC students enter TRU in their Grade 12 year. Upon completion of the 9-month TRU Retail Meat Processing Program these students are eligible to receive their Level 1 Retail Meat-cutting Apprenticeship. Further, after approximately 18 months of work experience they are eligible to return to TRU to receive four weeks of training to earn their Level 2 Retail Meat-cutting Apprenticeship.
- Student fees for tuition, materials, and other school costs, are currently at \$4,400. CTC high school students are subsidized \$3,500 towards their school fees by the BC government.

Europe

One participant related experience in master butcher apprenticeship in Europe which is a seven year program leading to the designation of master sausage maker. The program is integrated with in-class study as well as practical work in a butcher shop. The examination process includes taking a complete carcass and being required to butcher the whole animal to ensure that the apprentice understands all phases of the process. *Focus Group # 2 Summary*

Western Canada

Western Canada is ahead of Ontario in terms of the number of post-secondary options for obtaining meat specific training. While the courses are designed for meat-cutting at retail, they provide examples for Ontario.

Olds College in Alberta is recommended as a model for the Institute of Food Processing Technology for meat specialization and meat management. Olds College has a hands-on learning environment in which students work with meat products.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Engage a Training Champion to Develop and Promote a Training Culture for the Sector

In order for the sector to have a central point for coordination and promotion, the Ontario Independent Meat Processors (OIMP) organization needs to be responsible for the position of a training “champion” who has the lead role for implementing the recommendations. This position would most logically be located at the Institute of Food Processing Technology and report to the Executive Director of OIMP.

The responsibilities of this position include:

First Year

- Act as the key support resource person for the meat-specific curriculum advisory subcommittee identified in Recommendation #1
- In this role, the training champion will coordinate their meetings, record their conclusions, and liaise on their behalf with the curriculum development team at the Institute of Food Processing Technology (IFPT) and the industry curriculum advisory committee developing the overall content for the third year certificate program
- Work with representatives of Olds College once their role has been defined and accepted by IFPT
- Develop a resource centre where training materials are accessible for use by employers — the purpose is to bring together in one central point the best training materials available on the most relevant topics

Second Year

- Work with vocational high schools and sector employers to establish pilot programs to stream senior year high school students into knife-skills work experience utilizing a co-operative education model
- Develop a system for certifying trainers that can then offer fee-for-service on-site training for firms in the sector
- Promote the opportunities for working in the meat processing sector in high schools and to immigrants in close collaboration with the initiatives undertaken by AOFF

Third Year

- Work with sector employers to encourage greater attention to measuring the amounts invested in worker training and developing a pilot project to benchmark across firms
- Develop and implement a strategy for recognizing the valuable role of meat sector workers in society and increasing the esteem for their work

Measuring Success

The success of this new role will be measured by the extent of employer engagement in sector training initiatives, the number of students attracted to meat processing courses and the extent of their employment on graduation in the sector in Ontario.

Funding the Position

While the position is proposed to be funded initially by grants, the position must be sustainable after three years. Revenue sources will include the sale of training materials to employers.

RECOMMENDATION #6

Individual Employers in the Sector Invest More Resources in Training

Due to the fiscal situation in both senior levels of government, employers cannot rely on the government to solve the training challenge. Government can play a vital enabling role. Individual firms must take responsibility to utilize the opportunities that lie ahead and support the initiatives of OIMP. Specific measures that individual firms can take include:

- Rethink the way that training costs are accounted for to make them explicit and measurable within the company's systems
- Establish a formal budget to allocate progressively more funds to training each year including the time and attention it receives from senior levels of the firm
- Engage with curriculum advisory bodies to provide direct input into what training content and delivery approaches would provide the greatest value
- Engage in active outreach with high schools, both to attract students for co-op placements and for attracting candidates to the three year certificate program with the meat specialization option
- Embrace the Institute of Food Processing Technology as the key source for co-op placements, apprenticeships and permanent hiring after graduation
- Provide funds for scholarships to encourage students to choose careers in meat processing

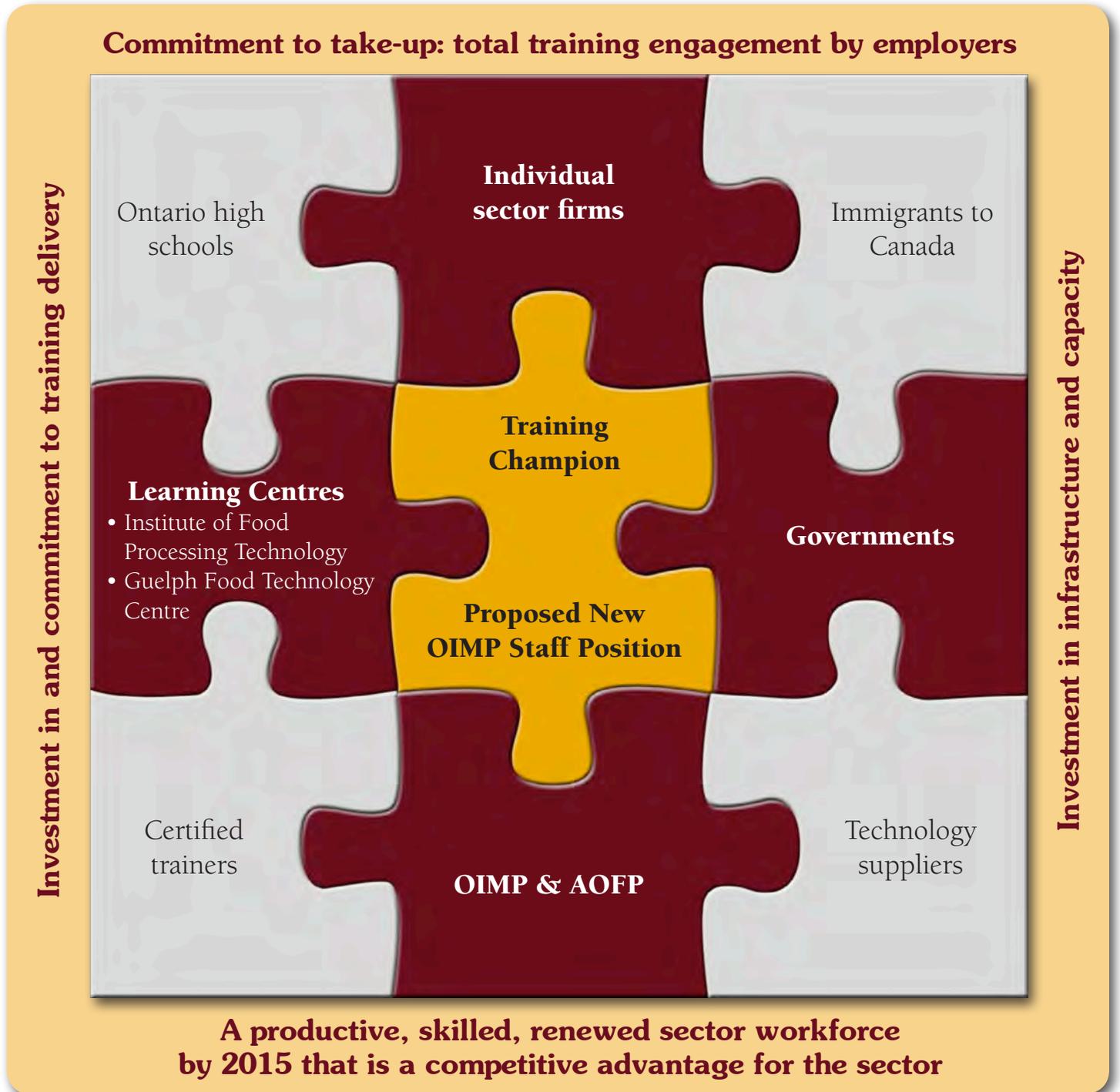
RECOMMENDATION #7

Government Consider Providing Incentives to Encourage Training by the Sector

At a time when governments are facing serious fiscal pressures brought on by the recession, any request for government funding for the sector needs to be focused and able to demonstrate significant economic benefit.

- The sector is a major employer in Ontario with over 24,000 workers in production, distribution, sales and administration (19,201 workers are directly engaged in production)
- Government has invested wisely and significantly to create the Institute of Food Processing Technology and needs to follow-through, working with sector employers, to ensure that the sector will derive maximum benefit from the new training capacity it represents for Ontario
- Government can assist the sector by supporting Recommendation # 5 to engage a training coordinator, covering the salary, benefits and space for this position for three years as well as a reasonable program delivery budget
- Government can consider targeted training incentives to complement those already available for apprenticeships to encourage vocational high school students to pursue careers in meat-cutting at the processor level
- Longer term, as the impact of retiring Baby Boom generation workers begins to be more severely felt, government can consider providing incentives within the Income Tax Act, analogous to the Scientific Research & Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credit, to encourage firms in all sectors of manufacturing to invest more in qualifying training activities

Putting the Pieces of the Training Puzzle Together



To Act Now or Not to Act Now?

If the meat processing sector does not act now to address its training needs:

- Today's once-in-a-generation opportunities will be lost
- Some firms may face survival issues in five years due to insufficient skilled workers

If the meat processing sector does act now as this business plan recommends:

- Sector employers will have higher productivity and higher quality in five years' time due to the skilled workforces they employ
- Ontario will have a competitive advantage in meat processing that benefits the entire value chain including livestock and poultry farmers, input suppliers, service providers, local communities, grocery retailers, food service operators and consumers

The choice is clear.



Ontario Independent Meat Processors

info@oimp.ca www.oimp.ca

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