



COVID-19 – Peer Support Group Meeting Notes

April 21 & 23, 2020

WATCH PAST MEETINGS: <https://www.meatpoultryon.ca/peer-support-group/>

Summary and Update from Last Call – Franco Naccarato, MPO
<p>Updates from last week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- CAP program deadline has been extended until the end of June.- Working with OFA at modifying OntarioFresh.ca as a directory for MPO members that will be marketed and promoted.- Wage subsidy program application opens on April 27.- Inspectors being redeployed as needed.- Cross-training of provincial/federal inspectors via special funding from government so inspector service can continue and be steady.- MPO is working on campaign/messaging for consumers.
Guest Speakers
<p>Blayne Kumar and Neil Conolly, Bright Immigration TOPIC: Update on Temporary Foreign Worker Program – Click here for presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlights<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Program more accessible○ LMIA permits now 2 years (not 1)○ Advertising period waved until Oct 31, 2020○ Application processing time shortened○ Employers have up to 9 months to submit work permit○ \$1500 grant to offset costs during employee quarantine period
Roundtable Discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ New restaurant modelling that has been successful<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sooters Catering – retail/home delivery box program<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplier providing prepackaged assortment of vegetables for them to resell• Offers the mix vegetable packages, with different meat packages and essential pantry items like milk, eggs, bread etc.



- Chef's Plate or Hello Fresh modern – Hayter supplies their turkey. Many restaurants moving to this model on a local scale (box meal kits with recipes)
- How can you as a supplier help encourage other restaurants to do the same?
- How can you change your packaging to be convenient for families?
- How can you change your “freezer” packages to suit a consumer's usage over 1-2 week period.
- Fortinos - Hot and ready meal counters are being closed to push product through PC Express due to demand. Pre-packaged meals are still available.
- **How has COVID affected your business**
 - Freezer BBQ mixed pack demand has been high. But if a key ingredient is missing the kits cannot be put together.
 - Digital presence is and will be important into the future.
 - Pre-seasoned products are in high demand.
- **Challenges**
 - Shortage of packing materials and trays.
 - Foil trays can be expensive and take more time to pack.
 - A bit of lead time on equipment needed.
- **What are retailers looking for**
 - Vacuum pouches for deli counters.
 - Custom prepared ready to cook product.
 - Sealed packaging is more attractive.

General Discussion

- Physical distancing in plants is becoming difficult.
- What is the right strategy for temperature checks? Generally readings are not accurate.
- Protecting workers is a priority and being able to show public health that you are taking steps to reduce exposure.