



## Canadian Exporters: Profile

Christian Dubé, Executive Director • **CardioMed Supplies Inc.** • Gormley, Ontario

One company that will be making use of the Canadian Business Centre in Mexico City (CBCM) in the near future is **CardioMed Supplies Inc.**, a manufacturer and distributor of highly specialized medical supplies.

A family-owned firm located in Gormley, Ontario, just north of Toronto, *CardioMed* is run by Christian Dubé and his wife, Vera. It was begun in 1979 to manufacture products for use in open heart surgery. About six years ago, having established themselves in this area, they began to produce items for hemodialysis. Products such as their kidney-cooling jackets, for use during delicate kidney transplant surgery, are unique in the world.

The Dubé family attended Canada Expo in Mexico City last March. The company had been exporting for years — to Japan, Turkey and Brazil, among other places. They had entered the Mexican market in the mid-eighties, but suffered a setback when a client who had taken delivery of a large inventory of their products was forced into bankruptcy as a result of the earthquake in central Mexico City.

"That was a bad experience for *CardioMed*, of course," Dubé recalls. "The entire facility of our client was destroyed. But we tried to maintain a relationship with physicians we had met. It was difficult to ship or get through the customs regulations. That's why we were so glad to participate in Canada Expo, which was a well-organized showcase, and we are still interested in Mexico, especially since NAFTA."

It was a successful trip for the Dubé family. "Things are already developing. We had dialogues with four companies we met there; two

have placed trial orders for the product I was exhibiting, which was from the hemodialysis arm of the business. I think there will be further contact with the other two, and I hope others who took our product information, and who have the intention of representing us in Mexico, will have visited medical institutions so we can organize our distribution deals."

Christian Dubé plans to return to Mexico City in January, to attend a medical supplies show at the CBCM, renewing these contacts and developing others. "I'm helping form an association for Ontario medical manufacturers — there wasn't one before, yet almost all of the exhibitors at Canada Expo in this field were from Ontario. The January event will be a follow-up for us."

At the moment, Dubé and his wife, who is import/export manager of the company, are going through the enormous amount of paperwork required to sell to Mexico's Social Security Department. "To do that — to tender for government procurement — you have to have the product registered. Also, we have to generate samples — they actually want to see the products."

*CardioMed* is looking further afield in Latin America. Christian Dubé visited his reps in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in August, and is eyeing other South American countries. "They are developing fast," he

notes, specifying interest in Venezuela and Argentina. "They are growing, and sophisticated, but don't yet have the sorts of advanced medical products we produce."

*CardioMed* operates in what is a kind of "Medicon Valley" in Gormley, a small community "with clean air" that has also attracted such firms as Cook Manufacturing, Lilley, and MacNeill Laboratories. The 15,000 square foot facility includes factory space and "clean rooms" — laboratories pristine enough for the necessary sterile conditions of medical manufacturing.

"They say a husband and wife can't work together, but Vera and I have been in this from the beginning, 17 years ago," Dubé chuckles. Son Raphael, "a rookie in the marketing department," according to his father, was also along "to take a first-hand look at the export scene." Raphael is planning to study Spanish, as the company will certainly be developing more links with Latin America. An older son, Ross, is involved in the Canadian endeavours of the firm, and daughter Christine, who is still at university, spent part of her summer working in the office.

So, as a family business, *CardioMed* seems set for at least another generation. "Everyone in the family is involved," says Christian Dubé, "except the two cats."

### Access

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