

Pizza popular with Saudis

Simon Dagleish expects to sell hundreds of thousands of frozen pizzas, worth close to \$1 million, to Saudia Arabia during the next year.

The success of Dagleish's Aloro Foods Inc., a Mississauga, Ontario company, is one reason an Ontario trade delegation set off to Saudi Arabia recently — to sell popcorn and pizza.

The Saudis are spending more than \$5 billion a year on imported food these days, with much of it going for snacks. If that is what they want, Ontario trade officials think there is no reason why local businesses should not be in on the action.

According to Charlie Milne, a trade specialist with Ontario's agriculture ministry, Saudi Arabia is the world's fourth biggest importer of popcorn, "which is saying something in a country that doesn't have one movie theatre". Popcorn, a favourite "munchie" for cinema-goers in Canada and the United States, is sold in movie houses in vast quantities.

"You can buy popcorn everywhere," says Charlie Milne, so that is one of the items the Ontario delegation tried to sell. Canadian companies have one advantage in that they make the North American-type products the Saudi Arabians want.

That still does not mean it is easy to do a deal, as Simon Dagleish attests. After his initial contacts with the Saudis a year ago, he had to return to Canada and figure out how to make pizzas that satisfy Islamic food laws, which forbid the use of any pork product.

Pork-free sources

Keeping pork out of the sausage meat was not the only problem. Rennet used in cheese and some of the preservatives used in frozen pizza are derived from pork products, so he had to find sources that were guaranteed pork-free.

Then there was a special package design: English on one side, Arabic on the other. It took much time and effort. But it was worth it when the first 25 000 pizzas arrived in Saudi Arabia recently. Simon Dagleish had money for the shipment in hand within days.

Charles Milne hopes this year's trade delegation will do even better than last year's mission, which brought an estimated \$3.2 million in sales to Ontario food companies.

New air service links Ottawa and Boston

The Canadian Transport Commission has authorized two regional airlines, First Air of Ottawa and Pilgrim Airlines Inc. of New London, Connecticut, to introduce competing regular air services between Ottawa and Boston.

The agency said the proposed services could start when First Air received permission from the United States Civil Aeronautics Board.

Radar technology monitors ice conditions

A new type of radar technology developed by Intera Environmental Consultants Ltd. of Calgary, Alberta is being used to monitor ice conditions in the Beaufort Sea.

It is the first commercial application of Star-1, Intera's \$7-million synthetic aperture radar system. Canadian Marine Drilling Ltd., a subsidiary of Dome Petroleum Ltd. of Calgary, is expected to use it regularly during the next several years.

Synthetic aperture radar attempts to obtain high-resolution images without using the large antennas of more conventional radar systems, by employing a large amount of spectral signal processing.

Intera president Brian Bullock says that the system offers high-quality information with virtually no time lag, a service that traditional radar systems cannot provide.

This requirement is designed to prevent Pilgrim from getting a head start on First Air. Pilgrim Airlines Inc. said it now had all the government approvals to start the service.

The two airlines said they expected to start their Ottawa-Boston scheduled flights later this year with turbo-prop planes. The two cities currently are not linked by direct regular air service.

"We don't expect any difficulty in keeping the Star-1 system busy all year round," he said.

The system is mounted on a fixed-wing aircraft. A 50-kilometre swath of surface is scanned and the findings are recorded digitally on board the aircraft. The data can also be transmitted immediately to a ground station to be reproduced as a hard-copy drawing.

Star-1 was developed after a synthetic aperture radar research model was purchased in 1975 by the Canada Centre for Remote Sensing, a division of the federal Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Intera, given a contract to explore commercial applications of the technology, concluded that ice monitoring for the oil industry offered the most immediate opportunities.

