

Italy is a leader in technology in several sub-sectors of the agri-food industry including the processing of meat and vegetables, in particular, tomatoes. Italian ham and salami are manufactured at 1,800 plants and consumed daily, both in Italy and throughout Europe, and the process-

Italian companies can either export or form a partnership with a Canadian firm. But since Italians already export, this only means additional competition for Canadian firms. A partnership, however, can serve the financial interests of both Canadian and Italian firms.

in forming partnerships. The recent announcement of the joint venture between Parmalat and Haricana of Quebec, to build a 50-million dollar bottled water plant, is a manifestation of what can be achieved.

The Canadian Embassy in Rome and the Canadian Consulate in Milan

# Strategic partnerships with Italian companies

ing of tomatoes is an Italian forté. Factory machines turn tomatoes into dry powder, using a procedure similar to the manufacture of detergent.

Italy manufactures thousands of cheeses, several of which are known to Canadian consumers including Gorgonzola (a blue cheese), mozzarella, and what is said to be Italy's king of cheeses and the cheese of kings — Parmigiano Reggiano — produced in Parma, in northern Italy. Italian expertise in the dairy and cheese manufacturing sector has resulted in Parmalat, a major Italian multinational corporation, acquiring Canadian operations of Ault Foods and Beatrice Foods.

However, it is in the pasta sector that Italians are probably best known, producing a myriad of shapes and sizes from the minuscule minestrone noodle to the extra-large lasagna noodle. An increasing number of Italian pasta factories are found on several continents.

Wine is produced in all 20 regions of Italy with Canada particularly valuing those from Tuscany. Again, Italy's expertise in this sector is renowned and many of its wines are guaranteed vintages (*denominazione di origine controllata e garantita*).

In the baking industry and biscuit making, Italy is called the land of 1,200 loaves (*pane*).

With all this expertise, Italy needs more markets to sell its products.

In the context of globalization and downsizing trends, Canadian firms may want to seek financial and/or technological support to consolidate their position in the North American market.

Italian firms, on the other hand, want to develop in North America, and are attracted by Canadian firms with effective distribution networks in Canada and the United States. This is an area of considerable strength for Canadian firms.

**SIAL Montreal** [International Exhibition of Food, Beverages, Wines and Spirits], held March 4-6, 2001, brought together numerous firms from around the world, with one of the largest contingents from Italy, for which 6,000 square metres of space was booked. This was an excellent occasion to meet with 22 Italian food companies and to assess their interest

are extremely active in promoting partnerships which are beneficial to Canadian industry as a whole, including co-production, licence agreements and joint venture projects.

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## Correction

In the April 2, 2001, issue of *CanadExport*, in the article "FITTING Canadians to do business with the world," the correct Web site for Team Canada Inc should have read as <http://exportsource.gc.ca>

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and acted as a catalyst for bilateral trade. Canada is encouraged by India's economic reform efforts and the results that it has achieved. The Government of Canada will continue to seek new commercial opportunities in India's evolving business environment, particularly in the information technology sector.

For the complete statement by Minister Manley, see the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Web site [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca) and click on Foreign Policy/Publications/Ministers' Speeches and Press Releases.

A more detailed article on this subject will appear in the next issue of *CanadExport*. ✪