

## Space for Canada on Colombia Supermarket Shelves

*Colombians — from importer to distributor to vendor — want a fresh new source of supply and they have a keen interest in Canada as being that source.*

In Colombia, "excellent opportunities exist in the value-added food sector," says a memo from the Canadian Embassy in Bogota.

However, less than one-tenth of one per cent of Canada's more than \$450 million in exports to Colombia in 1994 was accounted for by foods and beverages!

This, Embassy commercial officers say, can be attributed to two factors: the Colombian infatuation with products from the United States; and Canadian producers' neglect of this market.

But a turn-around is in the offing in a country whose economic growth over recent years continues to exceed five per cent.

A revolution in Colombia's food industry is offering Canada a chance to penetrate this market of 34 million people whose shoppers, rather than patron-

izing the mom and pop corner store, will be making their purchases at large super markets and giant, no-name, bulk-buying establishments, some of which are being built by organizations from the Netherlands and the United States.

### Canada as Supply Source

Embassy commercial officers, in a recent concentration on the food sector, have discovered that Colombians — from importer to distributor to vendor — want a fresh new source of supply and they have a keen interest in Canada as being that source.

They see Canadian products as a viable alternative to U.S.-made goods for two reasons: Canadian products are comparable in quality and are

*Continued on page 7 — Space*

## Colombia Coming on Strong as Canadian Growth Market

*Continued from page 1*

level of imports, from consumer goods to plant equipment. The retail service industry is changing rapidly and giant building and hardware products stores are being established.

The same applies to the retail food industry, with "excellent opportunities" existing in the value-added food sector (see separate article above).

### Environment

Colombia's Ministry of the Environment is organizing and developing an environmental code that will help rectify damage to the environment that, over the years, has resulted from uncontrolled development of resources and mismanagement of industries, cities and towns.

The country offers many possibilities in the treatment of waste, including in the recycling of waste

newsprint, plastics, and other environmentally abusive products.

### Environment Trade Fair

In this regard, between October 25 and 28, 1995, a table-top catalogue show in Cartagena will be hosted by the Commercial Division of the Canadian Embassy in Bogota. The event is being held in conjunction with an environmental expo hosted by both the Colombian Minister of the Environment and of Energy and Mines.

*Being sought* at the table-top show are Canadian companies willing to transfer technology and know-how through joint ventures or other associations to establish profitable environmental businesses. Examples include companies that might have a process to convert plastic bottles to park benches, or auto tires to flooring.

*NOT being sought:* studies on the extent of Colombia's environmental problems. The Embassy, too frequently, is hearing: "We don't want companies to come down here, run a study and tell us we have a problem. Now we want solutions."

*Where to send:* Interested parties should forward, **immediately**, 25 pieces of literature to David Clendenning, Latin America and Caribbean Trade Division (LGT), Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa K1A 0G2, Tel.: (613) 996-5548; Fax: (613) 944-0479.

General trade inquiries concerning Colombia may be directed to the person mentioned in the preceding paragraph or to Zen Burianyk, Canadian Embassy, Bogota, Colombia, Tel.: (011-57-1) 217-5555/217-5152; Fax: (011-57-1) 310-4509.