

Major Upstate New York Food Wholesalers

Three of the seven major food retail stores in Upstate New York are supplied by very large food wholesalers. These wholesalers are S.M. Flickinger, P.J. Schmitt and Tops Markets. They own respectively Super Duper, Bells and Tops Markets. These wholesalers are the main suppliers to their affiliates, but they also sell among themselves or, for certain lines of products, combine with the competition to market their products in the area. The Buffalo wholesalers and their affiliate stores have separate purchasing organizations and both parties must come to an agreement before a new line can be stocked by the wholesaler. It may happen, however, that the retailing chain may decide to take a line on its own account.

It can sometimes take up to two years to make a sale, but once you have made it, you can count on a very reliable market a few miles away from the Canadian border. Conducting business in the Upstate New York area without continuous representation is difficult, since service calls are required to establish a new food product in the market.

The Upstate New York market is well serviced by brokers covering retail, wholesale and institutional accounts. The Canadian Consulate in Buffalo maintains an up-to-date list of food brokers, and can be invaluable in selecting agents who have proven successful in promoting food products. The broker is knowledgeable about the cost of promotions, procedures, food chains, etc. In some cases, listing can be secured once the food chain buyer knows that he will receive broker support.

It is recommended that prospective food exporter contact the Canadian Consulate to make arrangements for an exploratory trip (2 days) to the Buffalo area. The Consulate will help you design your marketing strategy, introduce you to food brokers, and comment on your pricing structure, commissions to brokers, competitive product situation, etc. Once you have selected your food broker, it is advisable to provide him with all the necessary support, including export literature, U.S. prices at a port

of entry (e.g. Buffalo) and even to occasionally accompany him on some of his calls.

In order to help Canadian food product manufacturers, the Canadian Government organizes an annual Fall Solo Food Show in Buffalo. This show has gained in interest from year to year and both Canadian company participation and N.Y. State attendance have grown substantially. It is a great place to introduce a company to the market and provides excellent exposure for those already selling here. In addition to our Solo Food Show, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture sponsors a P.R.O.F.I.T mission (Program for Raising Ontario International Trade) to Buffalo every spring and fall. With the assistance of the Buffalo Consulate this program is designed as an educational seminar for all new exporters of food products who wish to expand their present markets to the U.S. The Buffalo portion of the seminar includes tours of the U.S. Customs facilities at the Peace Bridge; a major food wholesaler's warehouse; and the opportunity to meet and ask questions of a local food broker, a U.S. Customs broker and a U.S. Government official from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in Buffalo. Through the joint efforts of this program many Canadian firms have successfully penetrated the U.S. market and achieved their sales goal in Upstate New York.

Although Upstate New York is a very competitive food market, several Canadian firms have discovered the merit of selling to the more than 5 million consumers situated only miles away from the Canadian border.

For further general information about the region or specific information regarding agents, brokers and distributors please contact:

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