



Kong was made far more complex because it could eventually involve importing products from far-flung places such as Italy, Hawaii, Thailand, the United States and Canada.

President's Choice move into Hong Kong is the latest in its international growth following expansion into the United States and Singapore.

Al Wilson, export coordinator with Loblaw International Merchants, said the company plans to take President's Choice to England and Australia in the near future.

One of the biggest supporters of Canadian food products in Hong Kong has been Dah Chong Hong Ltd., which has extensive food retailing and wholesaling operations in the territory.



Mr. H.F. Chu, director of Dah Chong Hong.

Dah Chong's retails stores run aggressive Canadian food promotions throughout the year complete with hard-to-miss Canadian flags and large product displays.

Dah Chong's involvement with Canadian food started about 15 years ago when it decided to diversify into food retailing and sent senior executives around the world to source suppliers.

Dah Chong director H.F. Chu travelled across the country from Prince Edward Island to Newfoundland over a month and half period meeting with producers and suppliers. What he discovered was that Canadian producers were skeptical about an unknown firm from Hong Kong and somewhat reluctant to expand their export sales beyond the traditional U.S. market.



Shelves of this DCH store in Central are lined with Canadian cookies, vegetables and juices.

As a result, much of Dah Chong's initial efforts were spent educating Canadian producers about the opportunities available in Asia if they expanded their horizons.

"I like telling them that one day if there was a recession in the United States, you'll have all your eggs in one basket" he said. "Some of the Canadian manufacturers that we still have business with took our advice and split the risk."

One of those Canadian firms to toss its hat into the ring was McCain's, the Maritime food giant.

Their success in penetrating the Hong Kong market is evident by the wide variety of products available at DCH stores, including a number of popular frozen items such as Superfast Pepperoni Pizza and french fries.



Dah Chong's commitment to create a market for Canadian products in Hong Kong and China has led it on a number of interesting paths to get the formula correct.

One of the most interesting stories was Chu's discovery of salmon heads in Vancouver's Chinatown. Before a business meeting, he went to have dim sum and saw salmon heads in a shop. Intrigued, he asked the owner what they were used for.

Upon discovering they had a lot of tender meat and were usually thrown away by fish processors, Chu realized he had hit upon an excellent opportunity.



He worked out an arrangement with a local processor to purchase five tons of salmon heads. When they arrived in Hong Kong, however, Chu said it was a "nightmare" because the processor thought the fish heads would be used as pet food and had not frozen them.



"I was disappointed and almost gave up the idea of developing this idea," he said. "I stopped for almost a year before I went back to another factory and told my staff to be careful how they washed and packaged the salmon heads." ♦

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