

FOOD NEWS



News and Information for Alberta's growing Agri-Processing Industry

March 2008

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY WORKFORCE BENCHMARKING STUDY RESULTS

A survey conducted in the fall of 2007 gives a snapshot of the current labour situation among the 126 food processing plants that participated in the survey.

Key Findings

- Current vacancy rate – **15%**.
- **67%** of food processing plants had vacancies.
- **48%** had positions that had been vacant for over four months.
- **3000** positions are estimated to be vacant in Alberta food processing plants, and of these, over 2100 had been vacant for over four months.
- Turnover rate (median) – **33%**.
- Worker productivity – value of shipments per hour worked ranged from \$36 to \$543 per hour worked with a median of **\$179** per hour worked.

To read more about the study, the impacts of the labour shortage and approaches companies go to [www.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afi12051](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afi12051)

Alberta Agriculture and Food already has a number of initiatives underway as part of a workforce strategy for Alberta's primary agriculture production and agri-processing industries. Funding assistance is available under the Workforce Development Program.

For assistance related to workforce issues contact **Karen Gingras**, Labour Retention Manager at **780-980-4220** or by email at karen.gingras@gov.ab.ca OR **Scott Dundas**, Labour Recruitment Manager at **403-556-3234** or by email at scott.dundas@gov.ab.ca

COBRA FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Join Ron Lyons of Alberta Agriculture and Food April 8-9, 2008 at the AFPA office in Calgary AB for a hands-on COBRA workshop designed to provide company management teams with in-depth understanding of financial management principles and how they apply in the businesses financial forecasting and risk assessment environment. Several key financial principles will be demonstrated through an interactive exercise with the COBRA financial analysis and forecasting model. Registration deadline: March 31st. For more details or to register, contact **Melody Pashko** at **403-201-3657 Ext. 21** or by email at melody@afpa.com OR **Ron Lyons** at **780-980-4363** or by email at ron.lyons@gov.ab.ca

FOOD SECURITY/DEFENSE COURSES – I, II & III

Larry Wallace, Senior Food Defence Specialist from the Guelph Food Technology Centre is instructing this series of courses from April 21-23, 2008 in Calgary. The Food defence is an integral part of all food safety audits and these courses may help you to save your company from costly and agonizing recalls and lawsuits. The following three courses are offered over the 2½ days are:
Food Security/Defence III: Role and Responsibilities of a Food Defence Coordinator
Food Security/Defence II: Development of your Food Defence Policies & Procedures
Food Security/Defence I: Passing the Food Security Section of Your Food Safety Audit
Contact **AFPA** at **403-201-3657 x25** or by email at safety@afpa.com

SPRING FOOD SAFETY WORKSHOPS

- **HACCP IV: Validation and Verification of Your HACCP Plan**
Calgary – April 1-2, 2008
 - **HACCP V: Effective Auditing of Your HACCP Plan**
Calgary – April 3-4, 2008
 - **HACCP I: Documenting Your Prerequisite Program**
Edmonton – April 14-15, 2008
 - **HACCP II: Development of Your HACCP Plan**
Edmonton – April 16-18, 2008
 - **Managing Allergen Issues**
Edmonton – May 28-29, 2008
- Course and registration details are available on-line at www.afpa.com/snq/train.shtml

AGRICULTURAL PROCESSING INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Agricultural Processing Industry Employment Program provides opportunities for career related experience and skill training for students employed in Alberta's agri-processing industry. Employees and employers must apply together for the program; Alberta Agriculture and Food does not do any matching. Employers must be processors who are adding value to a raw agricultural product; employees must be post-secondary students and must not be related to the employer. Processors who hire a student for the summer will be reimbursed for one-third of the employee's salary up to \$500 per month. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The application deadline is **April 18, 2008**. The program runs from May 1 to August 31. Application packages or further information can be obtained by calling the **Ag-Info Centre** at 310-FARM or by request from betty.birch@gov.ab.ca

Alberta Agriculture and Food
(Dial 310-0000 for toll-free access)
Processed Foods Branch - 780-427-7325
Livestock Products Branch - 403-340-5322
Business Commercialization Branch 780-980-4722

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www.agric.gov.ab.ca