



Canadian Trade Successes 11-06
Wild West Seasonings

WILD WEST SEASONINGS ACQUIRES A TASTE FOR MEXICO

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Wild West Seasonings

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Key Quotation:

“Thanks to some timely introductions and key meetings, we’ve made contact with many of the resorts in Mexico as well as some cruise lines,” explains Rod Schwartz.

Story details:

For years, Saskatchewan hunters would bring their meat into the Sportsmans Den, a sporting goods store in Swift Current. There, co-owner Rod Schwartz would use his exceptional skills—and his equally impressive seasonings—to process the meat into what many described as just about the best jerky anywhere. It was so good, in fact, that in 1993, Schwartz and his wife Janet abandoned the sporting goods business altogether and moved to Winnipeg to create and sell their seasonings full-time.

Since then, the market for food products created by Wild West Seasonings—the company the couple formed in 1995—has expanded beyond their wildest dreams. From the immediate Winnipeg area, across Manitoba, throughout the western provinces and into the United States—it seems they simply can’t satisfy the appetite for Wild West’s delicious creations.

“It wasn’t always easy,” says Schwartz. “Right after moving from Swift Current, we’d travel across Manitoba selling our jerky and sausages from the back seat of the car. I would approach sporting goods stores, hardware stores and grocery stores to find a place on their

shelves for our products.”

Not once, the couple insists, did they have second thoughts about their decision to turn their culinary skills into a business. “Our products always got a great reception so we knew things would work out if we just kept knocking on doors,” says Schwartz. Their confidence was rewarded when their jerky won rave reviews at the Red River Exhibition, the Calgary Stampede and Klondike Days.

The next move, south into the United States, east to Ontario, and down into Mexico, would prove more challenging. But with financial assistance from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada’s programs and services, Wild West Seasonings was able to participate in trade missions to potential markets like Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco and Texas.

More recently, the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council helped Wild West identify and cultivate new markets in Mexico. “We had signed a contract to introduce one of our new products, Caesar Pleaser (a dried Clamato cocktail), into restaurants and bars in Mexico,” explains Schwartz. Unfortunately, that deal fell through. However, thanks to some timely introductions and key meetings, we’ve made contact with many of the resorts in Mexico as well as some cruise lines.”

The Schwartzes know it won’t always be clear sailing, but they’re confident that once the Mexican markets get a taste of their products, they won’t be able to resist coming back for more.