

Food Safety Updates

Volume 2, Issue 1, January 2012

Food Safety Checks KEEPING YOU ON TRACK IN THE KITCHEN

Reminders

- √ Empty trash
- √ Before leaving the kitchen clean all utensils, pans, equipment, etc. — wash, rinse and sanitize
- √ Hairnets are required in the Starting Block kitchen

The Inside Track Pressing Oil with the Blackledges

Dan and Bonnie Blackledge of B & B Farms are currently Michigan’s only producers of Michigan-grown and pressed canola oil. Their motto – “From our farm to your table” – sums up the Blackledges’ vision in growing and pressing their own canola oilseed. “We’re really proud of the fact that this is grown in Michigan on our farm,” Bonnie emphasized.

Starting this year, the Blackledges kept 5,000 pounds of the 170,000 pounds of canola seed they grow annually and send to Canada for processing. Of these 5,000 pounds they estimate they can produce 200 gallons of oil, or 1,600 pint-size bottles. “If we sell 1,200 to 1,300 bottles this year, that will be good,” said Dan.



Dan and Bonnie Blackledge and a bottle of their B & B Canola Oil

Dan was looking for a way to add value to his crop and began investigating what would be involved in cold pressing canola oil from the seed. This would also be a way to cut down on transportation costs.

“I was exploring a business model besides farming and I wondered what would happen if we tried to press canola ourselves. We thought we could find someone in Michigan to process for us but we ran into some problems. Eventually, out of desperation, we bought a press,” said Dan, laughing. “Now we’re glad we did.”

Canola is not a common Michigan crop, and the Blackledges’ Marion farm is one of about four in the state that grew canola during the past year. “With corn prices this high we might be the only ones growing next year!” Dan said. (p. 2)

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WELCOME!

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING RECENTLY MDA LICENSED KITCHEN USERS WAYNE JOHNSON AND MELISSA WILSON OF EL CAMINO HOT SAUCE & USDA LICENSED KITCHEN USER SUZANNE VER HOEVEN OF SUZI-Q’S PASTIES

RISK FACTORS IN FOOD PREP

REGARDLESS OF THE FOOD PREPARATION PROCESS USED, THESE FOLLOWING MEASURES ARE NECESSARY.

- ✓ **No bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods (or use an approved, alternative procedure)** to help prevent the transfer of viruses, bacteria, or parasites from hands
- ✓ **Proper handwashing** to help prevent the transfer of viruses, bacteria, or parasites from hands to food
- ✓ **Restriction or exclusion of ill employees** to help prevent the transfer of viruses, bacteria, or parasites from hands to food
- ✓ **Prevention of cross-contamination** of ready-to-eat food or clean and sanitized food-contact surfaces with soiled cutting boards, utensils, aprons, etc., or raw animal foods - *HACCP Manager Training, Version 4.0*

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to your food safety
questions!

Visit:

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Food_Safety_Education/
Ask_Karen/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Ask_Karen/index.asp)

Additional Resources

- **US Department of Agriculture**
-www.foodsafety.gov
-blogs.usda.gov
- **Type FDA What's New in Food** into Google search

In 2006, Dan met a chemical engineering professor from Michigan State University investigating canola for fuel. "He was having trouble finding a good source for canola oil, and I told him, I think I can grow that stuff," said Dan. When Dan discovered that prices for canola as a food crop exceed its value for fuel, the Blackledges followed the trend.

Dan still maintains a test plot in partnership with MSU on which he grows around 40 varieties of canola plants. He is also experimenting with canola meal—the waste product of pressing canola, similar to soybean meal—for livestock feed. This year, the Blackledges gave canola meal to deer hunters to use as bait. They are also working with a local dairy farmer who agreed to include canola meal in the cows' diets and monitor milk production per cow.

The Blackledges plan to sell their oil at farmers markets and hope to expand via internet sales. With their plan to grow only non-GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) canola seeds, they are also eyeing health food and specialty stores as retail outlet opportunities.

For Bonnie, the entrepreneurial thrill of selling your own product is still fresh. "I've never done something like this with a product before in my life," she said. "I am so excited when somebody wants to buy it!"

Contingent on canola oil sales, Dan is considering expanding production. "In about two years more, we're thinking about starting our own building at the farm," he said. "If we can market it, sell the oil—that's the question."

For now, the Blackledges will be processing their amber-colored oil in the Starting Block Kitchen where they are finding the production and business support they need. "The Starting Block is the perfect place to come and work on this stuff," said Dan. "Coming in, they knew so much and we knew zero."

Learn more about B & B Farms online: www.canolaoilproducts.com

"We 'thank our lucky stars' for finding this commercial incubator kitchen with their knowledge and mentor-support in food processes."

The Starting Block is West Michigan's Non-Profit Regional Kitchen Incubator and Entrepreneurial Center. Our Mission is to incubate and support the entrepreneurial spirit by providing licensed commercial kitchen facilities, entrepreneurial education, and peer-to-peer networking to new and expanding businesses. The Starting Block will be the premier regional resource for growing any new idea into a profitable, local and wealth-creating business.

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