



STEP – Agri-Value

**SIAL Canada 2018
May 2-4, 2018
Montreal, Canada**

TRIP REPORT





CONNECTING SASKATCHEWAN BUSINESS WITH THE WORLD

Overview/Mission Description

SIAL Canada is not only key to the Canadian agrifood industry, it is also a privileged entryway to the US and international markets. SIAL is the only event of its scale in Canada, with more than 1,000 national and international exhibitors from 50 countries hosting over 15,000 buyers from Canada, the U.S., and 60 other countries. SIAL Canada is the only national trade show that offers a complete range of food products under one roof.

STEP partnered with Alberta and Manitoba to create the Western Canadian Pavilion. Four STEP members exhibited in this pavilion, two chose to walk to show and five were represented at STEP's booth within the pavilion. Alberta hosted six companies and Manitoba hosted eight companies. The show organized free B2B meetings with incoming buyers from international markets. All participating companies were invited to sign up.

Summarized Agenda

The tradeshow portion of SIAL took place May 2 – 4, 2018. SIAL coordinated free informational seminars and networking events that took place during and outside of show hours. B2B meetings took place throughout the tradeshow hours and were pre-scheduled for exhibitors.

STEP coordinated one-on-one meetings with trade commissioners and multiple buyers. Members also had the opportunity to attend a STEP dinner.

Market Information

Demographic and social factors play an important role in determining the growth of the food and beverage sector, not only in Montreal, but the rest of Canada. In the last few years, trends in consumer demands have been noticeably changing. Prepared foods, health foods, specialty, organic, vegan, grain-free, ethnic, fair-trade, ethical and local products are all becoming more popular to the every day consumer. SME's producing these items are growing in demand.

In regard to logistics, the Port of Montreal has historically contributed to the development of Montreal and Canada, creating efficiencies and routes to new markets. Currently, many factors are working together to promote its growth: the signing of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union, which will increase trade with Europe; the Québec Government's Maritime Strategy, which specifically provides for investments in industrial port zones; and the development of a logistics centre on the south shore of Montreal.

In order to accommodate this growth, the Port is heavily investing in infrastructure. Container handling capacity will increase on the Island of Montreal and expansion of the terminal located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River will enable up to 1.15 million additional TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units).

Results

Four members exhibited, two walked and five were represented. Each exhibitor found the traffic to be substantial, which kept everyone heavily engaged on all three days. The quality of the traffic was also very positive; new contacts included importers/exporters, distributors, retailers, food developers, consultants, procurers/buyers, traders and more. Many of the new contacts made came from not only North America, but all areas of the world.

The pavilion was in a fantastic location, across from the B2B meeting area, constituting heavy and critical traffic. The show was well organized and the B2B program with international buyers added significant value. Company feedback was positive.

One STEP member entered their product into the SIAL Innovation Contest. This member beat nine other finalists and hundreds of entries to win first place (Gold), which is the all-round best consumer product at SIAL Canada. The member also won a \$10,000 prize.

Trade leads and total value in sales from this mission are still being tabulated.

Recommendations

The mission was successful. SIAL Canada is the largest food show in Canada and manages to attract a sizeable international audience. The show provides opportunities for companies interested in retail, food service and private label. SIAL allows established companies to grow their business and provides a great learning experience for companies new to the market.

The Western Canadian Pavilion could be expanded to include British Columbia. In order to differentiate the provinces within the pavilion, province names could be added to the displays. Some attendees visiting the booths needed an explanation as to how the pavilion was laid out.

The pavilion structure, although very attractive, makes exhibiting at this show fairly expensive, especially for STEP's smaller companies. STEP will look into alterations to the structure to decrease the cost, and in turn, increase participation from STEP members.

STEP will look to return to this show next year. SIAL 2019 will take place in Toronto.

STEP Contact for Further Information

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Pictures





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