



Feeding the world

# OLYMEL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REPORT





# FEEDING THE WORLD, THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW

## **Innovating to produce healthy, safe food of impeccable quality**

For Olymel, feeding the world means ensuring access to quality food products that are safe, nutritious and environmentally friendly. As a food producer, processor and distributor, Olymel is committed to implementing industry best practices at every stage of production and ensuring the safety, wholesomeness, traceability and quality of products throughout the supply chain. Its certified food safety management system, centralized microbiology laboratory and staff training help assure its domestic and international customers that the food it distributes can be consumed with confidence.

Olymel also leverages a process of innovation and continuous improvement to increase the added value of its products. Its research and development teams analyze new food products and trends in order to expand its product line and optimize operations. For example, they can improve the nutritional quality of food by reducing salt, fat or allergens, implement new processes at plants to increase efficiency or reduce food waste, and work with companies that are experts in environmentally responsible packaging that ensures food safety.

## • Food safety

With consumer satisfaction and protection at heart, Olymel strives to meet the strictest hygiene standards in the world and to develop a solid corporate culture in this area.

## • Nutrition

Olymel is increasing initiatives to improve the nutritional profile of its products, notably by reducing and eliminating certain ingredients. It also aims to help consumers make informed choices.



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## • FOOD SAFETY

Olymel complies with all government regulatory requirements and industry best practices with respect to food safety. Each processing facility has implemented a preventive control plan required by the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations to implement procedures related to food hazards and risks. These plans are based on the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), a rigorous management system designed to prevent, reduce and eliminate biological (microorganisms), chemical (allergens, cleaning products, pesticides, etc.) and physical (glass fragments, metal shavings, etc.) hazards that threaten product safety.

The company has also implemented a supplier management program for raw materials and food products to control risks throughout the supply chain. In order to be approved, a supplier must undergo a thorough review and submit letters of guarantee and proof of a third-party audit. In addition, Olymel also conducts audits at a frequency determined by the risk presented by the supplier.

### **GFSI-recognized certifications**

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) promotes the continuous improvement of management systems to ensure confidence in the distribution of food products worldwide. All of Olymel's processing

facilities are certified to a GFSI-recognized food quality and safety standard, either the SQF Code (the Safe Quality Food Institute's health and quality program) or the BRC (the British Retail Consortium's food safety standard). These certification programs ensure that food products are manufactured, processed, prepared and handled in accordance with the HACCP system and applicable regulatory requirements.

The SQF Code and the BRC are recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), which was created to validate the food safety standards of different sectors and countries and ensure the reliability of the food distribution system worldwide.

### **Staff training and awareness**

Olymel offers the SAPHYR program, an internal food safety training and certification program for processing plant employees and management teams.

The 11 training modules cover all aspects of food safety: risk assessment, hygienic design of equipment and the plant, cleaning and sanitation, allergen management, microbiology, foreign material management, cooking, refrigeration and freezing, validation, sampling strategies, labelling and regulations. There is also a module on food safety culture, which outlines the attitudes, values and beliefs that staff should share about food safety.

In addition, awareness campaigns are carried out in facilities to develop good habits among employees. Employees are encouraged to report any unusual situation that may compromise product safety to their supervisors.

### **Consolidation of the food safety management system**

Since September 2019, Olymel has been using Datahex's Paperless Forms in its production and distribution sites. The software facilitates the data analysis that is essential to maintaining and improving quality and safety systems in order to guide companies in their decisions. By eliminating paper forms, this solution makes it possible to standardize, centralize and process data from all facilities more efficiently. It facilitates access to information, non-compliance tracking, and presenting statistics and reports.



### Central microbiology laboratory

Microbiological analyses are essential in verifying food and production environment safety as well as their compliance with applicable regulations. In 2021, Olymel set up a microbiology laboratory to provide analytical services tailored to the needs of its plants. The laboratory has acquired state-of-the-art equipment and analytical techniques that automate laboratory work, increase capacity and reduce analysis time. Software ensures the complete traceability of samples from arrival to the issuance of certificates of analysis, while highly qualified personnel supervise the activities.

The laboratory, which is already in operation, provides services to all Olymel plants and will eventually be able to perform more than 100,000 tests per year, including indicator bacteria counts (mesophilic aerobic bacteria, enterobacteria, coliforms, lactic acid bacteria, yeast, moulds, etc.) and pathogenic agent detection (Listeria, Salmonella, Campylobacter, etc.).

### Involvement with agri-food organizations

Olymel regularly participates in various events to discuss developments, issues and trends in the field of food safety. Olymel also participates in college and university educational programs by giving courses, lectures and demonstrations on various topics related to meat quality and safety and by taking on interns. In addition, certain staff members sit on the committees of several associations to share best practices in food safety. They work with the following organizations, among others:

- Canadian Meat Council.
- Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council.
- Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec.
- Safe Quality Food Technical Advisory Council.
- Food and Beverage Canada.
- International Association for Food Protection.
- Institute of Food Technologists.
- Mouvement québécois de la qualité.
- Quebec Association for Food Protection (AQIA).

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**Sodium reduction.** Reducing sodium consumption to 2300 mg per day is one of the measures proposed by Health Canada to reduce the risk of high blood pressure, which leads to stroke and heart disease. In 2012, the federal agency published voluntary sodium-reduction targets for 94 categories of processed foods, which Olymel met in 2012 for its poultry products and in 2016 for the majority of its pork products.

An assessment report produced in 2018 showed that average sodium intake in Canada was still higher than the target originally set. As a result, the government revised its targets in 2020, and Olymel is expected to make adjustments for some products and meet the new targets by 2025. These targets include reducing salt in certain recipes while maintaining taste by using certain spices.

**Removal and identification of allergens.** Faced with the increase in food allergies in industrialized countries, Olymel is working hard to remove some of the ten main food allergens identified by Health Canada from

its products, including peanuts, nuts and sesame seeds, wheat and other sources of gluten, mustard, soy, milk and eggs. In 2021, slightly more than 50% of Olymel products sold in retail, in restaurants and to institutional customers were allergen-free. Peanuts and tree nuts have been removed from all products.

For nearly 15 years, Olymel has clearly indicated on the websites of its retail brands (Olymel, Flamingo, Lafleur, Nostrano, Bilopage, Pinty's, Tour Eiffel, La Fernandière, F. Ménard, Chef Georges and Mother Hen) the allergens contained in each of its products. In addition, several verification steps ensure that allergens and sources of gluten are accurately identified in the ingredient lists on packaging. Please note that Mother Hen products do not contain any allergens.



### Mother Hen: The best for children

The Mother Hen brand, owned by Olymel, is known for the quality of its ingredients. Its baby purees are made with natural ingredients: no added sugar, salt or preservatives and no allergens. The nutritious, tasty and additive-free recipes contain only organic fruits, vegetables and premium meats.



### Gluten free

Olymel offers a complete line of certified gluten-free products, including Flamingo crispy chicken products, to meet consumer needs. Its processing plants are certified by the Canadian Celiac Association, the only voluntary gluten-free certification program in Canada, and independent auditors ensure they meet the program's requirements annually. Products that carry the certification seal are guaranteed to be safe and gluten-free.





### No antibiotics

Raising animals without antibiotic treatment is a real challenge. The stringent requirements for certifying an antibiotic-free farm, including the number of birds needed to make a producer commercially viable, are demanding. Accounting for consumers' ability to pay is another issue. To meet the demand for meat products from animals raised without antibiotics, Olymel participates in research in various sectors aimed at reducing the cost of raising animals without antibiotics in order to make them safer and more accessible.

- NSERC Industrial Research Chair in metabolic activity and the functionality of bioprotective lactic cultures
- Testing the Impacts of Antibiotic Alternatives on Pork Quality and Safety

### Healthy ingredients

Aware of the impact its choices have on consumer health, Olymel favours ingredients that promote healthy eating. For example, it uses only non-hydrogenated vegetable oils without trans fats in cooking its products. In addition, it supplies several leaner cuts of chicken, pork and turkey that are higher in protein.

Olymel also pays special attention to developing products that are healthy and taste good. Over the years, it has developed healthier and more natural deli meats by limiting the use of artificial preservatives and nitrites.

### Research and development teams

Innovation is the key to standing out and staying competitive in a constantly changing industry. In 2020, Olymel restructured its research and development department into three teams to effectively respond to consumer expectations and market requirements. These teams work together closely to monitor food industry trends, develop and improve products and optimize processes.

- **The Food Science and Technology team** is the scientific reference for all things food-related. It ensures that Olymel is prepared for the future by being aware of new ingredients, processes and equipment. It ensures mastery of all aspects of ingredient functionality and behaviour. For example, the team analyzes the most promising new compounds to determine if they can replace certain ingredients.
- **The Development and Innovation team** responds to product development needs by ensuring that its various projects are carried out efficiently and within reasonable deadlines. In addition to creating new products, expanding existing lines and modifying recipes, it oversees the development of new packaging and collaborates with the marketing team to commercialize innovative projects.
- **The Product and Process Optimization team** works with food processing plants to improve products, processes and equipment. Its main objectives are to improve efficiency, reduce production costs, ensure consistency in product quality and reduce losses and rejections to avoid food waste.



- Olymel deli meats without artificial preservatives
- Olymel Smart & Natural deli meats
- Lafleur natural bacon
- Lafleur Wieners with natural ingredients