

## National Meat Training System

The Canadian meat industry faces critical challenges in maintaining existing production levels due to labour shortages and global market pressures, which drive the need to launch new products and implement new technologies in order to remain competitive.

Olds College completed an extensive study of the training needs of the Canadian meat industry ([www.oldscollege.ca/NMTC](http://www.oldscollege.ca/NMTC)). The finding of this study is the foundation to the development of the concept of a National Meat Training System (NMTS) and is viewed as an essential step in the long term success of the Canadian meat industry.

The NMTS will provide an articulated training structure encouraging career advancement and ultimately industry retention. The structure of the program and the advancement of participants through the system would allow for multiple entry and exit points to provide multiple career paths and certification levels for certificates, diplomas and degrees.

The concept will focus on innovative delivery systems to increase access and accommodate existing meat industry personnel with an aim to create national standards and certification. The foundation of this system is based upon three pillars: recruitment, training, and technology transfer.

Pillar 1 – Recruitment - Develop an integrated human resources recruitment strategy for the meat industry through image enhancement and the establishment of multiple career paths within the industry.

Pillar 2 – Training – Develop standardized curriculum and certification for career paths in the meat industry with multiple delivery options to provide training to potential and current meat industry personnel.

Pillar 3 - Technology Transfer – Establish a forum with the capability of showcasing new technologies and processes for the meat industry.

The (NMTS) will be governed by a Canadian National Meat Training Council (CNMTC) consisting of industry representatives and training providers. Their role will be to provide overall guidance and direction to NMTS. Significant effort and coordination of industry and other training providers will be the key to the success of the system. Operating objectives will be accomplished through the establishment of the training council, creation of partnerships and establishment of needed facilities.

The NMTS will include a National Meat Training Center (NMTC) which will be governed by the Canadian Meat Training Council (CMTTC).

The NMTS when fully implemented will provide the Canadian meat industry with the following:

- educated work force that will enable the meat industry to grow, adapt to new technologies and effectively respond to global drivers;
- recruitment tool to attract human resources in a very competitive labour market;
- retention tool which will provide meat industry workers and professionals with accessible and achievable career path options;
- certified and auditable training programs that will enable Canada to stay competitive on the global market; and
- provide the meat industry with a national standardized training system to ensure quality and food safety in all meat facilities.

## 2. Background

On April 30, 2004, the Alberta Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development released a document entitled, "Alberta Beef – Focus on the Future – A Strategic Framework for Repositioning the Industry." The content of this document was the impetus for a proposal to the Advancing Agriculture and Agri-food Fund to conduct a needs-assessment in several key areas.

The proposal had four objectives:

1. To promote a new and innovative concept that would be a positive focal point for the Canadian meat industry;
2. Assess industry support for the development of a national meat training center;
3. Strengthen industry collaboration and training consensus across Canada; and
4. Provide clear recommendations for the development and funding of the national meat training center.

The final report of the study provided industry validated recommendations for initiatives which included:

1. Promote the meat industry as a viable profession with multiple career paths.
  - a) Work with councils (sector, meat);
  - b) Promote meat industry in high schools; and
  - c) Develop promotional materials.
2. Implement industry-recognized training which is flexible and meets the diverse industry needs of plant workers, supervisors and managers.
  - a) Short burst;
  - b) Modularized;
  - c) On-site;
  - d) Off-site;
  - e) Train the trainer;
  - f) Online; and
  - g) Certificate.
3. Implement certified training for specific positions in the meat industry.
  - a) Apprenticeship – Value Added Processing;
  - b) Health and safety training;
  - c) Food Safety, and Quality Assurance training; and
  - d) Supervisory & Management training.

A comprehensive training system that addresses these recommendations does not currently exist in Canada. Investigation of international training systems has lead to proven training concepts that will benefit the Canadian industry. Specifically, entry level training systems from Australia and advanced training systems from European Countries (see appendix A). This proposal presents a viable solution in meeting the human resource and skill development needs of the Canadian Meat Industry while creating future industry leaders.