



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Bel Canada Group pursues its strategy for sustainable innovation and diversification

With the launch of Babybel® Plant-Based and the integration of MOM Group, Bel Canada Group unveils expands its plant-based offer

Montreal, October 13, 2022 – Bel Canada Group pursues its strategy for sustainable innovation and diversifies its offering with plant-based products to complement its existing dairy options. With this strategic approach, the Bel Group aspires to be a world-class leader in cheese alternatives. The company is also expanding its plant-based product offering in Canada with the launch of Babybel® Plant-Based. This innovation is added to the integration of the MOM Group, makers of GoGo squeeZ® fruit pouches based in Toronto, the acquisition of All In Foods, and the launch of Nurishh® and Boursin® Dairy-Free products in Canada.

“The Bel Group's mission is to offer healthy and responsible food for all. Knowing that plant-based products are part of the solution to growing environmental challenges, we must adapt our approach to nutrition,” says Cristine Laforest, General Manager of Bel Canada Group. “The Bel Group has therefore the mission of offering a more balanced range of products by 2030, with 50% dairy products and 50% fruit and plant-based products.”

Growing demand for plant-based products

Bel Canada Group aims to create products that will appeal to all types of customers, including those who cannot consume dairy products and those who adopt a flexitarian approach. Demand for plant-based products is growing, with a recent study¹ showing that 52% of Canadians are eating a plant-based diet or want to incorporate more plant-based foods into their daily lives.

However, the market for plant-based alternatives to cheese still represents a very small share of the total cheese market, thus creating an opportunity to develop an offer that will meet consumers' expectations in terms of taste. With slightly more than \$38 million in annual sales in Canada, this represents 1.1% of the total pre-packaged cheese market.² Marie-Ève Robert, Vice-President of Marketing, Bel Canada Group explains: “Well-known brands such as Boursin®, Babybel® and Nurishh® show great potential to drive the spreads and plant-based snacks segment. In fact, this category has grown by 62% since the launch of Boursin® Dairy-Free in 2021, and GoGo squeeZ® fruit pouches by over 30% in 2022.”

¹ Ipsos, August 2021.

² AC Nielsen, Market Track, August 13, 2022.

“We are always attentive to the needs and expectations of consumers. This is at the heart of our innovation strategy. With this in mind, we are pursuing our sustainable strategy with the launch of Babybel® Plant-Based, a dairy-free, certified plant-based and non-GMO product,” adds Marie-Ève Robert. “Our goal is to offer the same unique experience we know from Babybel®, but in a plant-based version.”

Taking sustainability one step further

The diversification of plant-based products complements the measures put in place by Bel Canada Group to reduce its environmental impact. For example, the packaging for the Babybel® product line is made of compostable cellophane. In terms of production, the company has been committed to integrating its corporate social responsibility vision throughout the construction of its Sorel-Tracy plant. For example, Bel Canada Group collaborated with a neighbouring company, Maison Riviera, to pool its energy-generating facilities for operations. This approach makes it possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The building was also built and thermally insulated to be energy efficient, and air systems were designed to allow for energy recovery.

Bel Canada Group, in collaboration with the international NGO Climate Fresk, has also set up a training program for its employees and all its business partners to raise awareness of climate change. Employees will have the opportunity to contribute in their own way to the company's approach to social responsibility.

By 2023, Bel Canada Group aims to produce nearly 90% of its products in Canada. Moreover, by 2035, Bel will reduce GHGs in its facilities by 25% and align itself with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) goal of holding global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

About Bel Canada Group

Bel Canada Group is a subsidiary of Bel Group, a fifth-generation international family-owned company and a world leader in branded cheeses and a major player in the healthy snack market with distribution in nearly 120 countries. Created in 2005 to boost the development of the group's activities in Canada, the subsidiary now employs 200 people, including 80 at its headquarters in Montreal. Its main brands, Boursin®, The Laughing Cow® and Babybel®, are produced under subcontract in Canada with local partners active in dairy processing. Website: www.bel-canada.ca.

About Bel Group

The Bel Group is one of the world leaders in the branded cheese sector and a major player in the healthy snacking segment. Its portfolio of differentiated, international products such as La Vache qui rit®, Kiri®, Babybel®, Boursin®, Nurishh®, Pom’Potes® ou GoGo squeezeZ®, as well as some twenty other local brands, have enabled it to achieve a turnover of 3.38 billion euros by 2021.

11,800 employees in some forty subsidiaries around the world contribute to the Group's mission of providing healthier and more responsible food for all. Its products are produced in 29 production sites and distributed in nearly 120 countries. Website: www.groupe-bel.com.

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Media requests: Gabrielle Landry
glandry@national.ca
514-688-5837