

## **Mutualism and cooperation**

### **Cooperation on the menu!**

Surprising! Not really, because cooperative enterprises are major players in providing an impressive variety of food products. But cooperatives are not easily recognized when you see them because the cooperative pedigree is seldom stamped on the package. To find out who they are, I suggest you read an article by Ms. France Denis, a communications consultant, writing for the magazine *Profil* under the sponsorship of the Fédération des coopératives funéraires du Québec.

O.K., I know what you're going to say. But take courage, there's no connection between funeral homes and the commodities discussed further on! Our focus is on fostering inter-cooperation and promoting a way to do business that has proven its worth in many fields. Now relax!

### **The Cooperative Movement**

A broad range of value added products

What comes to mind when you think of Sunkist oranges, Yoplait Yogurt, Welch's grape juice and Olymel hams? Give up? All these foodstuffs are the work of cooperatives.

In Quebec, many cooperatives market highly respected brand-name foods or beverages such as Québon, Yoplait or Natrel, plus fine cheeses under various product names such as Oka, Anco and Etchemin.

On its own, Agropur, the leading cooperative dairy in Canada, processes and markets over 20 per cent of all milk produced in Canada. As a going concern belonging to 4,800 milk producers, the Cooperative runs 18 plants in Quebec and Ontario. It directly employs some 2,800 people and has about 1,300 contract workers for collecting milk from farms and getting dairy products to market. Agropur and its subsidiaries offer the entire range of dairy products found throughout the Canadian market: bulk cheeses, fine cheeses, powdered milk, drinking milk and cream, yogurt and fresh desserts.

As for raising and processing chickens for market, Quebec cooperatives market their products under such names as Flamingo, Cavalier and Village. The Coopérative fédérée du Québec is highly visible in the meat and poultry sectors owing to its participation in various companies such as Taillefer and Olymel.

Quebec is also home to a cooperative for maple syrup producers that markets their wares under the Citadel brand. This cooperative was created in the 1920s