



For Immediate Release

As Coast Packing Co. Marks 95th Year, Venerable Family Business Emerges as Leading Advocate of Healthy Animal Fats

West's Leading Supplier of Animal Fat Shortenings Looks Back – and Forward, With Consumers Expressing New Openness to Zero Trans-fat Lard and Beef Tallow



VERNON, Calif. (Feb. 1, 2017) – Everything old is new again.

From ads to consumer surveys to menus at foodie hangouts, animal fats are having a moment -- but at [Coast Packing Company](#), that moment has lasted nearly a century. Still ensconced in its home base in Vernon, just southeast of downtown Los Angeles, the family-owned and operated business marks its 95th anniversary this month.

A closely held corporation, Coast Packing is today the number one supplier of animal fat shortenings in the Western United States. Coast is regional, national and, increasingly,

global. Markets extend from Southern California to Washington State, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Utah. Internationally, Coast is active in Mexico, and as the market allows, the company ships to Asia.

“We certainly didn’t get here overnight,” said Eric R. Gustafson, CEO of the 95-year-old company. “Coast Packing has been a quiet leader in the Southwest since the 1920s, growing and evolving in a way that now seems almost quaint. But when the bottom line includes considerations like quality, reliability and transparency, everything becomes easier to digest.”

With a legacy 95 years in the making, Coast Packing’s ties with its customers, partners and suppliers are both broad and deep. Coast Packing was founded as a Southern California livestock and meat-packing business in 1922 and expanded over the years into a regional food-industry powerhouse.

The three founding partners set out to build a livestock and abattoir business, and retained that focus for more than 40 years, slaughtering hogs brought by railroad from the Midwest and processing meat into various cuts to supply Southern California butcher shops. During those four decades, Coast Packing produced a full line of pork and beef processed and smoked products, including its popular 1950s favorite brand, Ol’ Smokey.



Eric and Ron Gustafson

In the early 1960s, after assessing the company’s profitability and competitive position, management decided that the business did not meet expected returns. While change was in the wind, the consensus was to remain in some facet of the food manufacturing industry, which was growing in tandem with Southern California itself. Given our extensive ties to the meat industry, the processing of animal and animal-vegetable shortening products became a natural choice. In 1970, Ron Gustafson stepped in on a full-time basis, guiding Coast through the transition and setting the company on the path to sustained success.

Today, the company sources raw materials from major meat packing plants across the United States. In some cases, supplier relationships are multigenerational, extending back 50 years and more. The company participates actively in various ethnic markets – from Hispanic retail chains, with its VIVA brand, to various Asian specialty markets. Coast Packing's reach reflects the demographic and ethnic makeup of the U.S. as a whole.

Coast sells to major manufacturers, distributors, retailers, smaller food service operations and leading bakeries, and is active in virtually every major area of the food industry and then some. Coast's refined and fully deodorized beef tallow has been an ingredient in lotions and soaps for more than 30 years.

"As an integral part of Southern California's restaurant, baking and food industries, Coast Packing was built on our line of quality shortenings and oils, backed up by both superior service and unsurpassed value," Gustafson said. "But our number one status isn't solely a statement about our size. While the numbers are significant, our growth has not fundamentally changed our status as a family business that prizes customer relationships spanning generations. We continue to live by the handshake."

According to Gustafson, quality and flavor profile come first at Coast. Its lard and beef tallow shortenings are original, authentic and consistent– they possess the classic flavor that consumers want. "Whether you use lard or beef tallow, you can taste the difference," he said. "Today's savvy consumers steer clear of industrially-produced partially hydrogenated fats in favor of healthy animal fats, which have the benefit of being consistently delicious, minimally processed and good for you."

As significant change occurs in the food industry -- now that partially hydrogenated oils (PHO) have lost their "generally recognized as safe" status with the Food and Drug Administration -- an education process has begun, and Coast Packing Company is deeply engaged in that process. Bolstered by the "zero artificial trans fat" status of its product line, the company is emerging as a thought leader, helping to enable those inside and outside the industry to understand the difference between artificial trans fats and natural, beneficial, animal-sourced trans fats.

Recent Coast initiatives – its new ["Taste the Difference"](#) flavor map in Los Angeles (and soon New York and Chicago), its ["Did You Know?"](#) infographic series and its founding support for the [Healthy Fats Coalition](#) – underscore the growing popularity of animal fats, especially among millennials.

"Coast Packing's longevity is a reflection of our culture, which places equal value on product quality and respect for customers," Gustafson said. "At Coast, past truly is prologue."

About Coast Packing Company

Now marking its 95th year in business, Coast Packing Company (www.coastpacking.com), a closely held corporation, is the number one supplier of animal fat shortenings – particularly lard and beef tallow -- in the Western United States. The company sells to major manufacturers, distributors,

retailers, smaller food service operations and leading bakeries. The company participates actively in various ethnic markets – from Hispanic retail chains, with its VIVA brand, to various Asian specialty markets. Based in Vernon, Calif., Coast Packing Company is regional, national and, increasingly, global. In some cases, supplier relationships are multigenerational, extending back 50 years and more. Coast is a founding member of the Healthy Fats Coalition (<http://www.healthyfatscoalition.org/>).

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