

Arctic Gardens®

PREPARED VEGETABLES TRAINING BROCHURE





WHY US?

Rooted in North America since 1987 and nurtured by both the generosity of our earth and the energizing effects of our winters, Arctic Gardens offers quality products of incomparable freshness inspired by the principles of northern agriculture. Thanks to our proven preservation and freezing methods, our vegetables retain all their abundant taste and nutrition throughout the year. Ever respectful of our land and our growers, we pay daily tribute to the know-how and dedication of the north.

Arctic Gardens is a key brand of the Nortera product portfolio. Nortera sells frozen and canned vegetables, and legumes in both Retail and Foodservice categories in North America.

In addition to producing major private label distributor and retail brands, Nortera also markets its own brands. With 117,000 acres harvested each year, Nortera is a leading processor of canned and frozen vegetable products in Canada and

the United States, partnering with over 600+ reputable agriculture partners, employing about 3500 dedicated employees, using the state-of-the-art technology available and guaranteeing food products of superior quality that meet the highest North American customer standards and consumer expectations. Nortera is committed to processing high quality and safe canned and frozen vegetable products in our federally registered food facilities.

Food safety and quality are of top importance to Nortera and the company is strongly dedicated to achieving customer satisfaction through continuous improvement process, best industry practice and management review of the processing activities.



To preserve the trust, well-being and reputations of our customers, brands, employees and shareholders, Nortera's Food Quality mission is to ensure that we meet our customer quality and food safety expectations and respect the applicable regulatory requirements. This is accomplished through:

-  **Continuously improving our quality systems and processes**
-  **Providing timely responses to customer requests**
-  **Performing internal and external audits of our processes and those of our suppliers**
-  **Staying abreast of government food safety legislation**
-  **Sharing best practices**
-  **Providing up to date training to our employees**
-  **Having opening communication with other departments within the company, with our suppliers, and with our customers.**

Our priorities are to guarantee food product safety, improve food product quality and guarantee a top customer service level while optimizing our production costs. Our commitments are to follow our sustainable development policy, continue the efforts in research and development, meet our customer expectations and respect the applicable regulatory requirements.

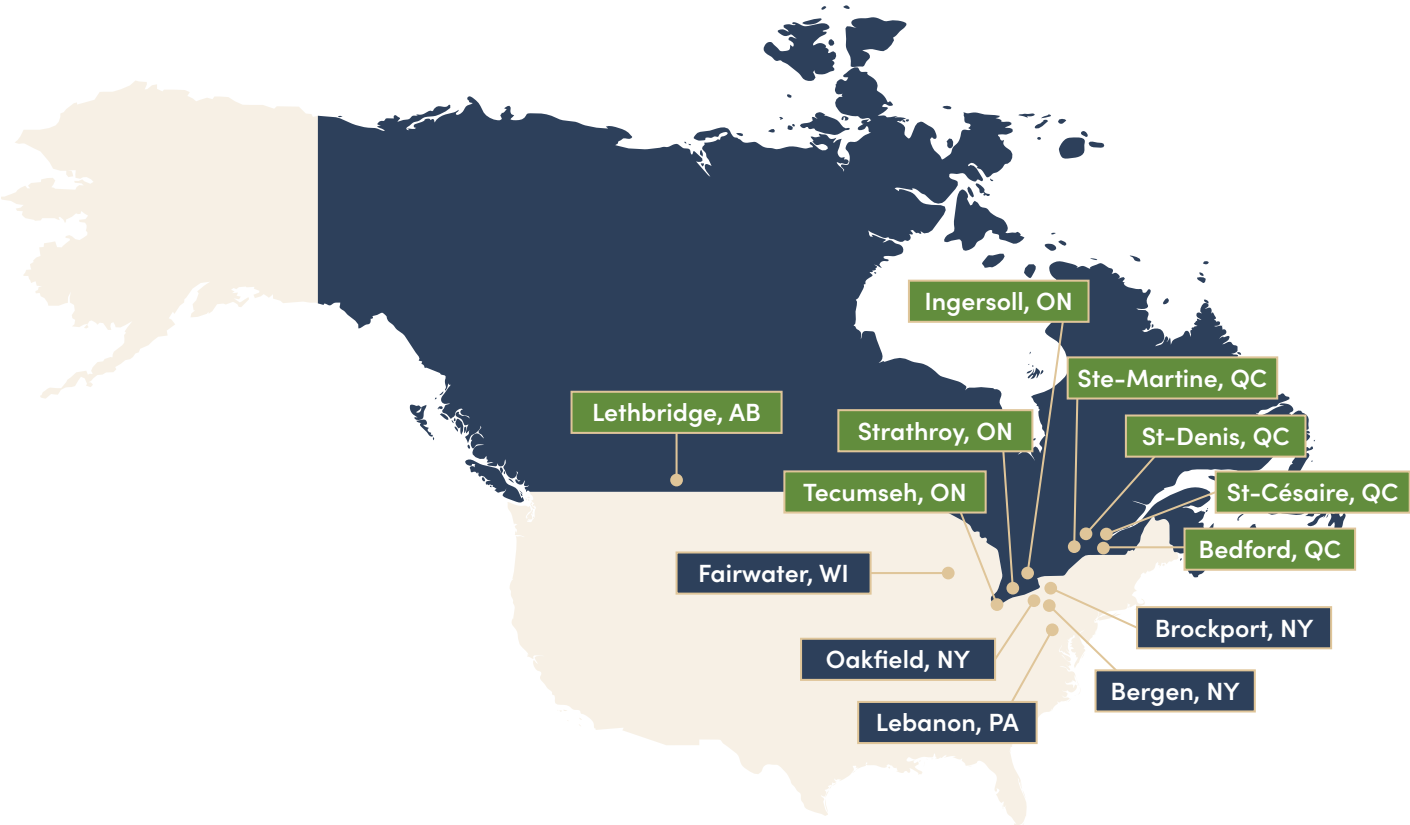
Our mission ensures we meet the requirements of international GFSI Standards (BRC, FSSC 22000, SQF, etc.), set annual measurable food safety and quality objectives, validate the effectiveness of our food safety and quality systems, report performance to the Nortera's Board of Directors and continuously review our systems with changes in products, processes, technology and regulatory environment. We expect all of our valued employees and management personnel to support and communicate this policy to ensure that our food safety and quality requirements are properly met.



NORTH AMERICAN PLANTS AND REGIONS

Growing crops in close proximity to freezing facilities ensures vegetables of maximum freshness. Since vegetables only travel a short distance from field to plant, they are frozen within a few hours after harvest, capturing freshness at its peak.

Having multiple geographic growing areas helps minimize the potential effects of severe weather on crops and provides better, consistent supply.



CANADA

UNITED STATES



WHERE DOES NORTERA GROW VEGETABLES?



ONTARIO REGION

35,000 acres

208 contracts with farmers

Our own team of experts in agriculture

Third-party harvesting equipment and operations

QUEBEC REGION

28,000 acres

277 contracts with farmers

Our own team of experts in agriculture

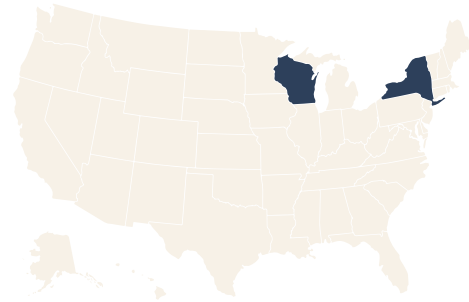
Both internal and third-party agricultural operations

WESTERN CANADA

8,000 acres

21 contracts with farmers

In house harvesting operations:
owner of 5 peas and 3 corn harvesters



WISCONSIN REGION

18,000 acres

63 contracts with farmers

Our own team of experts in agriculture

Both internal and third-party agricultural operations

NEW YORK REGION

28,000 acres

95 contracts with farmers

Third-party agricultural harvest and transport operations



KEY TAKEAWAYS

-  117,000 Acres Harvested
-  600+ Producers
-  5 Agricultural zones
-  13 Processing Plants in North America

This data is based on 2023 agreements. These numbers can slightly vary from year to year.*

HARVEST SEASON

PLANTING AND HARVEST SCHEDULE									
PRODUCTION	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Peas	PLANTING		HARVEST						
Beans		PLANTING		HARVEST					
Sweet corn		PLANTING		HARVEST					
Carrots	PLANTING	PLANTING					HARVEST		
Squash		PLANTING					HARVEST		
Celery	PLANTING Green house	PLANTING Field				HARVEST			
Parsnips		PLANTING					HARVEST		
Turnips		PLANTING					HARVEST		
Brussels sprouts	PLANTING						HARVEST		
Cauliflower			PLANTING			HARVEST			
Onions		PLANTING				HARVEST			
Broccoli		PLANTING		HARVEST					
Potatoes		PLANTING				HARVEST			



FROZEN GRADING

USDA STANDARDS FOR CORE, REGULATED VEGETABLES

ELEMENT TO CONSIDER	GRADE A	GRADE B	GRADE C
FLAVOR	Very good, free from objectionable flavor	Good, free from objectionable flavor	Normal, free from objectionable flavor
ODOR	Very good, free from objectionable odor	Good, free from objectionable odor	Normal, free from objectionable odor
COLOR	Uniform, bright and characteristic	Reasonably uniform	Lacks uniformity
TENDERNESS/MATURITY	Tender	Reasonably tender	Softer texture
DEFECT	Practically free from defects	Fairly free from defects	Reasonably exempt from defects

INTERNAL STANDARDS FOR NON-CORE, NON-REGULATED VEGETABLES

ATTRIBUTES	FLAVOR – COLOR – ODOR – TENDERNESS/MATURITY – DEFECTS
INTERNAL CRITERIA	<p>Limits are defined on these attributes based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our historic knowledge and experience in grading all vegetables - Harvesting capabilities of the non-regulated raw product - Production capabilities of our equipment and facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supplier abilities if it is a purchased product - Customer expectations with regards to the quality of the product





FREEZING PROCESS

KEY TAKEAWAY

We control the process from seed to delivery



*Applicable depending on the products



Watch the frozen vegetable production process in video



TRACEABILITY PROCESS



Watch the product traceability process in video



ADVANTAGES OF PREPARED VEGETABLES



QUALITY

Harvested at peak quality & freshness

Non GMO seeds

No additives or preservatives

No glazing

Traceability



OPERATOR

Labor cost savings

Saves time / quick preparation

Stable pricing

Long shelf life

No waste



PARTNER

North American production

Diverse agricultural zones

Strong ESG program

Best in Class Agricultural Team

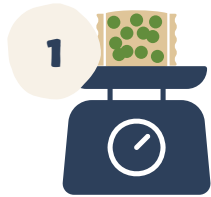


STEPS TO FOLLOW FOR FROZEN PRODUCT COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

! IMPORTANT

Following protocol yields best results for a comparative assessment

- ▶ We are available to do competitive cuttings
- ▶ Organization is key!
- ▶ Protocol to follow to get significant results



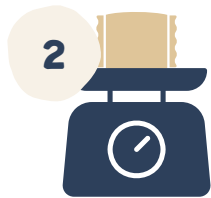
1

WEIGHT WITH BAG



6

VOLUME OF WATER AFTER COOKING



2

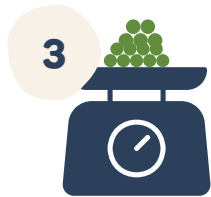
WEIGHT OF BAG



7

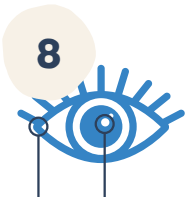
PERCENTAGE OF WATER LOSS

$$\left(\frac{\text{Net weight before cooking} - \text{Net weight after cooking}}{\text{Net weight before cooking}} \right) \times 100 = \text{Percentage of water loss}$$



3

NET WEIGHT OF PRODUCT BEFORE COOKING



8

VISUAL



4

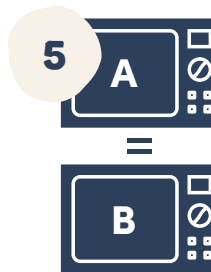
VISUAL INSPECTION OF PRODUCT

Remove imperfections or non-conforming products from the lot.



9

TASTE



5

COOKING METHOD

Cooking methods must be identical for two products, as well as cooking time and serving sizes.










FROZEN VEGETABLE APPLICATIONS

Frozen vegetables are the most economical, time-saving and practical option for operators. With good preparation and storage practices, the results are similar to cooking with fresh vegetables.

RECOMMENDED COOKING METHODS* AND STORAGE FOR FROZEN VEGETABLES

* For 17.63 OZ of product

COOKING METHODS		STORAGE		
OPTIMAL METHODS	 COMBI OVEN	Steam Mode 212°F 3-8 min	 STORAGE METHOD	Freezer between -18 °F and 0 °F
	 STIR FRY / SAUTÉ	Stir-Fry until 212°F, between 4-12 min depending on cuts and texture	 SHELF LIFE	Between 18 to 24 months
	 MICROWAVE	Cook between 6-9 min depending on cut and texture	 UNUSED PORTIONS	Store in a freezer
NOT IDEAL	 BOILING	~2-4 min depending on cut and texture. Water should not stop boiling! Avoid too many vegetables at a time		

! IMPORTANT

- Recommended Cooking methods: steam or stir-fry on high heat
- Use only what you need and store the rest immediately
- All our frozen vegetables are blanched however, they cannot be used “as is” i.e. directly from freezer to plate. They have to be cooked thoroughly before usage
- Cook vegetables to a minimum temperature of 165°F or until desired texture is reached
- Never let vegetables thaw



IN SUMMARY

Nortera is the largest processor of canned and frozen vegetables in North America, with 13 facilities. Not only are we experts in frozen and canned technologies but we also offer high quality products while maintaining strict environmental standards. Arctic Gardens is our main national brand under which most of our products are sold in Canada and in the USA.

Sustainability and corporate social responsibility are at the forefront of why and how we do business. From water reduction and recycling practices to reduced pesticide use, Nortera continues to nurture the planet we live on by leveraging its power as a force for good.

We are strongly dedicated to contributing to the well-being of society by giving it access to the richness of vegetables and this is why we are invested in sustainable and diversified agriculture. The traceability of our products as well as our meticulous production processes ensure the consumers obtain delicious and healthy vegetables and legumes.



Arctic Gardens®



Contact name

Phone number

Email

arcticgardensfoodservice.com

