

Local poultry processor recognized for food safety

T & R Sargent Farms Ltd., a local poultry processor, was recognized yesterday for being the first company in Canada to be certified in a new food safety program.

Provincial Minister of Agriculture and Food Steve Peters presented the first Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) Advantage certificate to Sargent Farms yesterday morning.

HACCP Advantage is a science-based food safety system designed for small and medium-sized food processors.

Its focus is on hazard identification and prevention.

Sargent Farms is the first provinciallylicenced primary processor in Canada to achieve this standard of food safety.

"What's so important today is Sargent Farms agreed to be the catalyst to move this (HACCP) forward. It has to start somewhere," said Mr. Peters. "This is the first not just in Ontario, but all over Canada."

He said HACCP will serve as a model that will be looked at all across Canada.

"We can't rest on the laurels of today's announcement. We need to get the message out that HACCP Advantage works."

He added the program isn't expensive to implement, and its benefits are numerous — most notably, safer food.

"The engine that feeds the province is the food industry. What keeps it driving in the province is people like the Sargents," Mr. Peters said, referring to Tom and Bob



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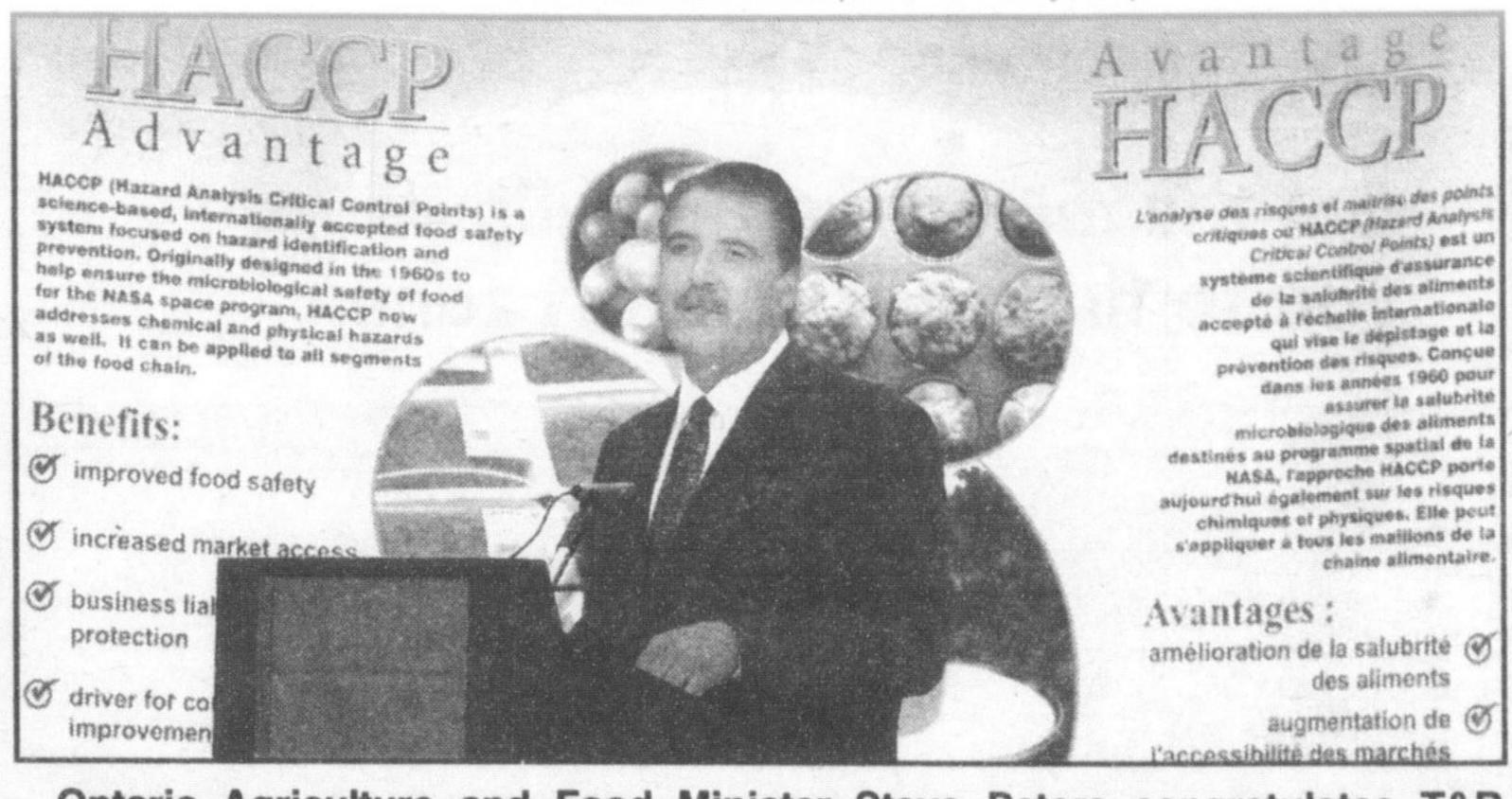
Sargent, president and vice-president of the company.

Pat Johnson of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food said Sargent Farms volunteered to be "guinea pigs" to test the new standards program that led to yesterday's certification.

The HACCP Advantage was originally designed in the 1960s to help ensure the microbiological safety of food for the NASA space program.

Minister Steve Peters (right) presents a HACCP certificate T&R Sargent Farms vicepresident Sargent as company president Sargent Roy and John (left), auditor of t h Canadian General Standards Board, look on.





Ontario Agriculture and Food Minister Steve Peters congratulates T&R Sargent Farms yesterday.

