

# THE HIDDEN INDUSTRY

*The Story of Canada's Natural Sugar Source*



## SNOWBALL COOKIES\*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup butter softened
- 1/4 cup granulated Roger's sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 1/2 cup powdered sugar

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 325 F.
- Beat butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy.
- Mix in vanilla, flour, pecans and chocolate chips until crumbly.
- Roll into 1" balls and bake for 16-18 minutes.
- Cool, then roll cookies in the powdered sugar.

It's something that everyone has in their kitchen – a staple ingredient that brings life to your desserts, sweetness to your coffee, a golden colour to your baking, and the fluffiness to your bread. And yet, despite the importance of this ingredient to our everyday lives, its origins often go unnoticed.

So where does sugar come from? While most people associate sucrose with sugar cane plants and warm-weather countries, Canada is also a proud producer of this sweet product. But being in the North means our sugar isn't grown from cane. Instead, it comes from the root of a special plant: the sugar beet.

This white, tear-shaped root weighs between 3-5 pounds and is refined into granulated sugar, icing sugar, molasses, and beet pulp – a high-fiber livestock feed. Currently, there is only one sugar beet refinery in the entire country, and this location proudly provides the only source of 100% Canadian sugar products.

Located in Taber, AB, 200 Canadian farm families supply the refinery with approximately 900,000 tonnes of sugar beets every year. This results in 125,000 tonnes of sugar for our store shelves - and while this may seem like an astronomical number, it actually only accounts for 8-10% of Canada's total sugar consumption.

The remaining 90% is brought in as raw cane sugar from South American countries, and is then refined in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. However, despite Alberta having a smaller market share, the province's sugar beet industry is proud to provide over 2000 jobs, \$50 million in labor income, and nearly \$250 million in economic contribution.

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But these numbers also have the opportunity to grow, as the demand for sugar beets is ever increasing. In fact, Alberta Sugar Beet Growers (ASBG) is investigating alternative uses for the plant, including plant-based proteins, renewable fuels,

and biopolymers. And cities such as Toronto even use sugar beet juice for de-icing their roads in the winter!

Pursuing these options would allow the number of acres grown in Canada to increase - and this is especially exciting as Alberta and Ontario offers a prime climate for sugar beets!

Sugar beets thrive when there are hot days, cool nights, and access to water - which is perfectly provided throughout the southern part of the province.

In Alberta, all sugar beets are grown using irrigation, which allows farmers to precisely control the amount of water the crop receives. This alone can be a challenging task as sugar beets require approximately 20" of water throughout their growing season of May to October.

However, each grower continuously puts in the effort to ensure they are producing a top-quality -- and because of this, sugar products grown in Canada have been verified as sustainably produced at the FSA Silver Level!

If you would like to support your local sugar beet farmer, just look for Roger's Sugar in your grocery store. If the black factory stamp begins with '22,' that means the sugar was grown by farm families in Canada -- something we can all be proud of!



Sugar beet harvest in Bow Island, AB.