

Here are four tidbits to digest on the last Friday in January:

How on track do you think Maple Leaf Foods CEO Michael McCain is with his plan to move hog processing from Saskatoon to Brandon?

Earlier this month, more egg ended up on the face of the Maple Leaf top official when it was revealed that immigrant workers from China, who had arrived in Brandon to work at Maple Leaf, had paid immigration consultants about \$10,000 each for the privilege of working there.

Considering the wages at a packing plant, it could take years for workers to pay this back. McCain has said Maple Leaf will offer help, but the Manitoba NDP government must now be looking with concern at Maple Leaf's plan to have a massive immigration influx so it can operate its huge Brandon kill plant on two shifts. No government wants to be seen as encouraging a modern form of serfdom.

No wonder Saskatchewan hog producers have so little faith in McCain's two-shift plan for Brandon and want to build their own plant to replace the apparently doomed Maple Leaf/Mitchell's facility on 11th Street.



Last week in this space I wrote about an entrepreneur from Vancouver, Steve Kummer, who was counting on making a splash at the huge Western Retail Lumber Association trade show held at Saskatoon Prairieland each January.

Kummer, owner of Basemate Ladder Levelling Systems Inc., pulled out the stops last week to get buyers from hardware and lumber companies to notice his products so he could land a distribution deal. He hired three models from the local SHE Modelling Agency and was a prominent part of the Holland Imports booth.

The Holland people were so

impressed that they were the ones to sign up Kummer and the Basemate ladder leveller to a distribution deal. For Kummer and his company, it was mission accomplished in Saskatoon. The product should be in a hardware store near you in about three months.

"We love Saskatoon and cannot thank everyone enough who pulled out all the stops to help make us feel at home," Kummer wrote. "We look forward to returning next year for the showcase."



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On Thursday, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc. president and CEO Bill Doyle was talking to investment analysts on how 2007 could be a banner year for potash sales and prices, putting his company in position for another record year.

He said the Chinese will be taking note of supply concerns after a flood last fall at a potash mine in Russia. Now there's news that Mosaic in

Esterhazy is facing renewed flooding problems, although the influx of water is in an area previously mined.

Saskatchewan mines, with their multi billion dollar output, are surrounded by ancient seas. Whether it's uranium mines up north in the Athabasca basin or down south where the potash mines exist, mining engineers always have to be aware of the high pressure water-bearing formations that surround them.



Spending time at the national symposium on best practices in aboriginal business, one can certainly leave more positive about the future.

Much has been made about "Canada's New Government" having ignored the Kelowna Accord signed in the dying days of Prime Minister Paul Martin's tenure. However, neither Assembly of First Nations Chief Phil Fontaine nor Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Lawrence Joseph were about to knock the fed-