



## The Qualifirst Group Celebrates 50 Years of Excellence ringing Canadians the Finest Gourmet Products From Around the World

**Toronto, Ontario (Summer, 2007)** - Fifty years ago, a young couple moved to Canada from France and started a small fine foods company in Vancouver. Far-Met Manufacturers and Importers, owned and operated by the husband-wife team of Michel and Nicole Farges, introduced gourmet food products to Western Canada, beginning in 1957. Today, five decades later, their son Yves has built upon the pioneering efforts of his parents and expanded the once small business into The Qualifirst Group, Canada's premier provider of high-quality gourmet food products with national distribution from coast to coast. "I have clear memories of riding cases of Portuguese sardines as they slid down a ramp into the basement warehouse as a boy," remembers Yves Farges. "That humble beginning was the start of my lifelong appreciation for quality product."

Today, The Qualifirst Group provides high quality gourmet products to chefs at over 1,500 restaurants, to buyers at more than 1,000 retail outlets and to hundreds of specialty food stores across Canada. It's a giant leap from the early days, when as fine food pioneers operating on a much smaller scale, Michel and Nicole Farges were the first to import foie gras from Rougie, wine vinegars from France, small bottles of wine for the luxurious dining cars of CP Rail and CN Rail, and introduced Lindt and Toblerone chocolate into Western Canada.

Initially, son Yves studied nuclear physics and engineering at university, trading stocks on the Vancouver Exchange and surveying mineral claims in the Yukon. But in the early 1980s, Yves Farges rediscovered his roots. He founded Qualifirst Foods Ltd. with offices in Toronto and Montreal, and returned to Vancouver in 1999 to purchase Far-Met from his parents upon their retirement. Today, The Qualifirst Group operations include Far-Met, Qualifirst Foods Ltd. (Les Aliments Qualifirst) and the online gourmet food site [www.epicureal.com](http://www.epicureal.com).

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Yves Farges is proud of Qualifirst's many "firsts" including introducing Perrier, popularizing vintage sherry vinegars from Spain, and bringing Michel Cluizel Chocolate to Canada. "Innovation means being a leader, insisting on qualitative standards in every product. Our products have to satisfy me and a lot of strict standards before being distributed," he says.

Yves Farges continues to travel the globe, steadfast in scouting out the best products, visiting manufacturers to get the inside story on ingredients, and keeping up with the latest food trends – and the latest trends in marketing. Fifty years after the company's humble beginnings, The Qualifirst Group delved into the brave new world of online shopping. At [www.epicureal.com](http://www.epicureal.com), consumers can find hundreds of gourmet and quality fine food products they can purchase from their desktop. The recent introduction of Royal Command, Qualifirst's own line of gourmet products that meet the same high quality standards as other well-known brands hand-selected by Yves Farges, bring many of the finest food products into the mainstream marketplace.

Since 1957, the hallmark of Far-Met, and the mission of Qualifirst, has been a dedication to supplying quality fine foods that are the leaders in their categories to retail shops and the kitchens of Canada's finest restaurants and home cooks. "My parents led the way and in keeping with family tradition, The Qualifirst Group will continue to source the "best of the best" gourmet products and fine food ingredients from all over the world, to satisfy Canada's top chefs and provide Canadians with ingredients to make meals memorable," he adds.

For more information about The Qualifirst Group and for a list of products distributed nationally by the company, visit [www.epicureal.com](http://www.epicureal.com).

-30-

To arrange an interview with Yves Farges, or to request review samples of Qualifirst products available on [www.epicureal.com](http://www.epicureal.com), contact:

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