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Food & Beverage Market Place, 2017 (17th edition)

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Food and Beverage Market Place 2017 is a hefty (15.5 lbs) three volume set covering over 43,000 manufacturing and service companies in the food and beverage industry in the USA and Canada. Volume 1 lists manufacturers of food items, beverages, ingredients and packaged goods, with relevant details such as key executives, estimated sales and number of employees provided in the individual corporate profiles. Volume 2 lists providers of manufacturing equipment and services along with expanded company profiles. Volume 3 deals with firms in the supply chain, including brokers, distributors and wholesalers, importers and exporters, transportation firms and warehouses.

As in any annual publication, company information is prone to change after it is printed. I did a spot-check and found listings for one service company with multiple locations (all of which were correct), but the parent company was incorrectly stated. At the same time, the entry for that parent company listed the subsidiary firms accurately. It is very good that the print edition comes with three months of free access to the online, updated and searchable version on the publisher's website.

The set features multiple indexes including brand name, geography (US state or Canadian province) and product (or service) category.

Additionally, Volume 1 includes indexes for ethnic food type (from African to West Indian) and parent company, while Volume 3 provides separate indexing for brokers, export/import companies, transportation firms, warehouses and wholesalers and distributors. There is both a consolidated index to all of the brands and one for all of the companies from the entire set in this third volume.

The company listings are presented in three columns, with bold typeface used judiciously for corporate names. The running headers make it easy to navigate the various sections of each volume but I would have liked section tabs that stick out.

Grey House Publishing is a well-regarded producer of reference works. This directory is based in part on a superseded title that used to be published by Thomas Publishing, the venerable source of industrial directories. This Grey House publication is vastly superior in content coverage to that older title.

While there are online directories of companies in the food and beverage industry, none are as comprehensive or detailed in their coverage of American and Canadian companies as the *Food & Beverage Market Place*. Readers may judge for themselves by browsing the company directories at industry websites such as: *Food Manufacturing* (www.foodmanufacturing.com/company-directory/), *Food Ingredients First* (www.foodingredientsfirst.com/Supplier-By-Ingredient.html), *Go Food Industry* (www.gofoodindustry.com/directory/) and *The Food World* (www.thefoodworld.com/).

The three volumes can be purchased individually or as a set at a 30 per cent discount. Even with the discount, the price for the set may put it out of reach for many libraries. The individual volumes, however, are a worthwhile addition to many libraries for the valuable content.

This reference work is suitable for an academic audience, especially business school students and faculty who are looking for information on privately held firms in the food and beverage industry. It is also very relevant for any entrepreneur or professional in the food service business who needs to establish industry contacts.

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