

Good morning all.

Welcome to Phase 3 Ontario. Assuming you're comfortable, get out there and enjoy what the city has to offer, even indoors.

Let's all keep trying to support our local businesses as we come out the other side of the pandemic. While stock markets are at all-time highs, many of Canada's small businesses certainly aren't feeling the same. They'll need our support for quite some time to come.

As mentioned above the stock markets continue to reach new highs on both sides of the border. Supportive central banks, and what is expected to be very strong consumer demand for this, that and everything, has people optimistic about economic growth as we move forward.

How often do you root through your fridge or cupboard and notice that things that have crested their "best before" date? As a money guy I often shake my head at the waste. But almost with certainty I end up just chucking things into the garbage. What a waste, literally and figuratively.

Our office has been supporters of the Ottawa Food Bank and we learned that even these groups don't accept many products that are near or close to their "best before" dates. If the products haven't gone bad certainly there would be someone who would benefit from eating them, no?

Turns out this "best before" thing is somewhat of a scam. There is very little regulation about what it actually means. The capitalistic side of me thinks that companies incorporate these dates to ensure consumers simply come back and buy a newer/fresher products.

In this article from [VOX](#) they dig deeper on the issue. Turns out I should be looking for more than just a "date" on the product. The terms "best before" and "use by" are often used on products. In my mind I've always thought of them interchangeably.

Companies may use "best before" to indicate that the product is at its peak taste before a certain date. After that date things may not be quite as fresh, but not necessarily bad. Whereas "use by" is more of an indicator that you might not want to have this after this date (read: deli meat).

Ok so I've learned something about food and packaging. But the fact is there is not much standardization on this topic. And as much as I'm not a huge proponent of regulations, when it's tied to food and food safety perhaps it's not a bad idea (at least a little bit anyways).

Circling back to food banks, if there's a better understanding/comfort that foods that have passed their "best before" date are still good and edible we'd certainly be able to help feed more of those in need. From the article:

"... changing the way we allow food to be donated and distributed through food banks and other means. That requires a shift in how we think. If everyone is eating food past its "freshness" date — understanding that the

food is perfectly safe but may not be at its absolute peak condition — then there will be less hesitancy about giving that food away, and less fear about the possibility of facing legal repercussions. That could have a huge impact on hunger and food insecurity in the US. “If everyone acknowledges that those foods are fine to eat, and everyone’s eating them, it’s not like, ‘Past-dated food is only for people who can’t afford food,’” Broad Leib said. “No, we should all be eating that.”

This article speaks to the U.S., I’d be curious if anyone knows what regulations if any Canada has on the topic.

Now go dig into your fridge and have some old yogurt/yoghurt. Or at least smell it to see if it’s edible.

Enjoy the weekend.

Sincerely,

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