

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



VISION

The leader in advancing Saskatchewan's agri-food industry.

MISSION

To provide expertise and services enabling our agri-food industry to develop new products and market opportunities through innovative processing technologies and training.



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



2021 was a year of change and adaptation that places the Food Centre in an excellent position to tackle the challenges and generate opportunities for the Saskatchewan food industry.

Of all the changes, there are three I would like to highlight. Firstly, we have added some new members to the board who bring new perspectives and ideas from areas of the food industry we lacked on our board. Secondly, we commenced the construction of the Advanced Food Ingredient Centre that will add important and cutting-edge fermentation technology to the province, and lastly, the Board closed the year with the hiring of Dr. Mehmet Tulbek to take over as the new president of the Food Centre starting 2022.

The increasing uncertainty and challenges that people face today are creating significant opportunities for Saskatchewan's food industry. The rationalization of manufacturing invites opportunity for value-added products and value-added processing to occur in Saskatchewan. The excellent and talented staff of the Food Centre are an essential resource in achieving the objective of expanding the value-added processing capacity and capabilities of the province. Working with all from the very small processor all the way up to multinationals, the staff have demonstrated a level of professionalism and strategic tactfulness at all levels.

I am confident that the Food Centre is positioned strategically and has invested wisely to take advantage of coming opportunities. We are delighted to welcome Dr. Mehmet Tulbek to lead us, to inform us, and guide our organization and industry forward.

I would like to close with a whole-hearted thank you to Mr. Dan Prefontaine, without whom the Agri-Food Innovation Centre would not have happened. The Food Centre today is the materialization of Dan's vision, or maybe better stated, at a milestone on the road to the full ideation of his vision. We see further today because we stand on the backs of giants, and Dan is a giant among us. ●

JASON SKOTHEIM

Board of Directors

Jason Skotheim -- Chairman, Horizon Pet Nutrition

Alister Muir -- Saskatchewan Food and Ingredient Processors Association

Blair Knippel -- T Base 4 Investments Corp.

Brian Sim -- Agri-Business Consultant

Bryan Kosteroski -- Agriculture Council of SK

Godwin Pon -- Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Jennifer Evancio -- Avena Foods

John Côté -- Black Fox Farm & Distillery

Matthew Bennett -- Ingredion Inc.

Pat Pitka -- Genome Prairie

Phyllis Shand -- University of Saskatchewan

Sav Bellissimo -- Federated Co-operatives Limited

Members

Alister Muir -- President, Saskatchewan Food and Ingredient Processors Association

Greg Fowler -- Vice-President, Finance and Resources, University of Saskatchewan

Paul Johnson -- Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Board Advisor

Morgan Brown -- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

** Listing of Board of Directors, Members and Board Advisor is current at time of printing.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Year 2021 has been an interesting year to say the least! Globally and locally, the food processing industry has experienced challenges in navigating growth opportunities, labour shortages and fluctuation in supply availability or cost increases. Through all these changes, the agri-food industry has continued to be a shining star for Canada's economy. For the Food Centre it has meant unprecedented growth with our incubation facility fully occupied, increase in new entrepreneurs entering the space and a steep rise in the demand for innovations in the plant based food sector.

Change is sometimes unexpected, but in the long-run creates opportunities and the chance to grow our industry to something greater than it was before.

For me, a decision to make 2021 my last year to serve as president of the Food Centre was difficult. Personally, I have always welcomed change and looked forward to spurring on new ideas that encourage growth. Since inception, the Food Centre was tasked with being a leader in the food industry, exploring new ideas, encouraging, supporting and driving the expansion of the food processing industry in Saskatchewan. Over the past 21 years I believe the Food Centre has achieved that title - Industry Leader, through its great team of people and a "get it done" approach.

The Food Centre is a recognized as a leader in innovation for the plant based food industry while ensuring that products we grow in Saskatchewan transform into value added opportunities for the food and ingredient sector. Our leading development and application work in pulses has put Saskatchewan on the map as a go to place for innovation.

The Centre lives up to its role as a one-stop shop for incubation of new ideas and commercialization of new products for the industry. Our pilot plant and development labs, first opened in 1999, have been a key component of this achievement in providing a top-notch food processing facility, particularly for meat, along with multitudes of processing options to ensure that our clients are processing food safely with high quality. We have assisted numerous companies in developing and implementing food safety systems to ensure our clients can meet the rigorous requirements to reach and develop new markets. Since inception, the Centre has developed and processed over 1,000 new products, and I have tasted them all - one of the benefits of the job.

I am proud of what the Food Centre has achieved. I have had the great privilege of meeting so many wonderful clients that have allowed me to be a small part of their journey. Deep down I feel there is so much opportunity for our industry and much more to do.

It is difficult to express in words my thanks to all the people who have guided and supported me and the Food Centre over the past 21 years. Without you, we could have never achieved the success enjoyed today. I was honoured to work with great individuals on our board of directors who supported the vision and was willing to wander into uncharted territory. My deep respect and appreciation to the funding agencies for all their support over the years that were a mainstay to our growth. Their investment will benefit the food and ingredient processing sector for many years. To our team at the Food Centre, past and present, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for all your support over the past 21 years. It has been a wonderful rewarding experience. Finally thank you to everyone for allowing me to be the steward of this project over the past two decades, it has been great fun and I wish the Centre all the best in the future. ●

DAN PREFONTAINE

INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Food Centre's vision to be "the leader in advancing Saskatchewan's agri-food industry" will shine bright as we expand our capabilities with traditional, biomass and precision fermentation technologies to utilize co-products and by-product streams in creating high value and novel food products with improved nutritional and functionality aspects. As we start to build the fermentation ecosystem in Canada we will be creating cutting edge technologies and sustainable processing solutions for the industry which will assist the ongoing growth of the agri-food sector in Saskatchewan. Fermentation and bioengineering will be the future food technology frontiers for the global food industry and we are looking forward to providing the leadership, expertise and services to hold steadfast in our mission of "enabling our agri-food industry to develop market opportunities through innovative products, processing technology and training".

I am honored and privileged to serve as the new president of the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre. The Food Centre has always been an integral part of the agri-food sector in the Province of Saskatchewan.

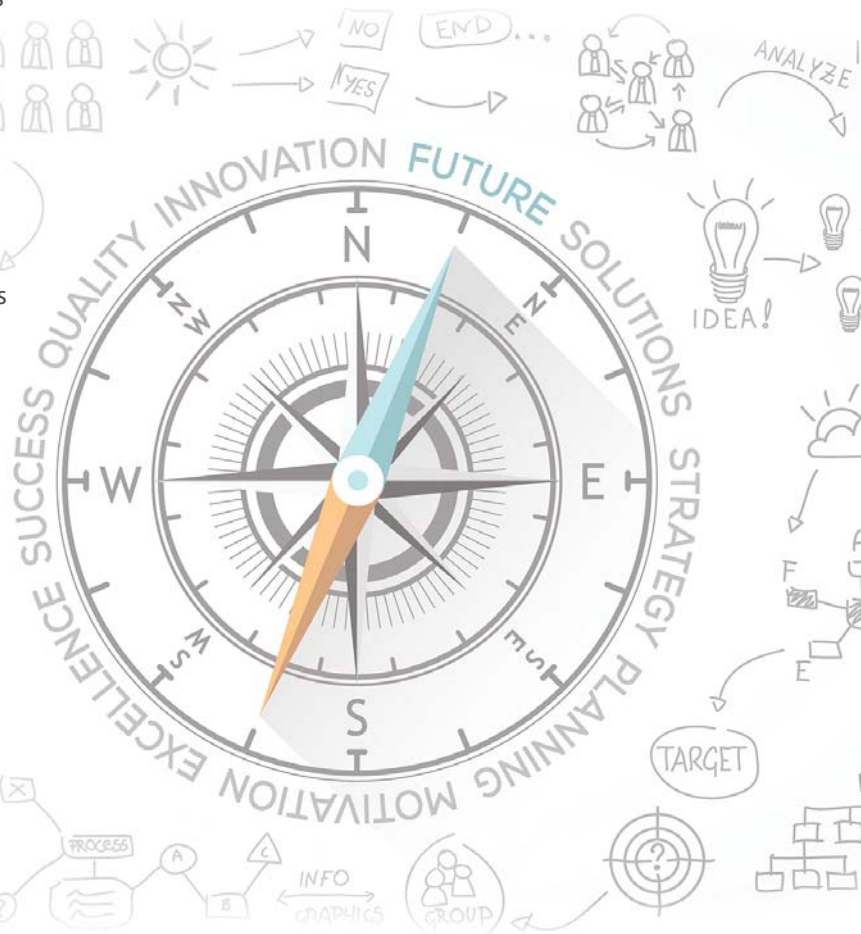
I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors for their support and confidence and would like extend a heartfelt thanks to the Food Centre staff for their continuous support during my transition as I take the helm. ●

DR. MEHMET TULBEK

Since its inception in 1997 the Food Centre assisted numerous individuals, companies and organizations by creating, connecting, collaborating and commercializing in the global marketplace.

I have sat on the Board of Directors prior to becoming President of the Food Centre and had the opportunity to know first hand the range of expertise the Centre offers to industry to help identify their needs and provide solutions. As we experience the new chapter of the global food marketplace, with emphasis on plant-based food products, Saskatchewan will be much more important for the future of the global agri-food supply chain, innovation and food security.

As the new leader of the Food Centre, I look forward to leading the organization into the future by continuing the momentum established by former President Mr. Dan Prefontaine over the last two decades.



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

- Assisted 24 women entrepreneurs with their food business start-up and growth through 2 virtual AWESOME Accelerator Program
- Redesign of the Food Centre's website
- Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan announced \$2.3 million investment towards the expansion of the Agri-Food Innovation Centre
- Food Centre hosted Protein Industries Canada to make an announcement to advance fermentation processing in Western Canada.
- Virtual plant-based extrusion workshop attracted over 250 international registrants.
- AWESOME Recognition Awards Videos were released to celebrate a number of women business owners in the food industry
- Several Food Centre clients launched new products in 2021 - extruded pulse-based snacks, vegan meat products, egg-based breakfast bars and pulse tofu
- Global Agri-Food Advancement Partnership (GAAP) was launched to support agri-food start-up companies. Food Centre is a founding partner in this initiative alongside Ag-West Bio, The Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) and Innovation Place
- Food Centre hosted a successful virtual Industry Day for Saskatchewan Meat Plants

Since 1997, the Food Centre has provided services to approximately 410 clients in the development and manufacturing of over 1,000 products for the marketplace.

The Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc. (Food Centre) is a leader in providing expertise and resources to assist businesses in identifying and capturing opportunities in the agri-food sector. Our knowledge in the booming plant-based sector is helping to advance the use of Saskatchewan grown ingredients in new and innovative food products.

We service a diverse group of clients, from entrepreneurs to established businesses, and from around the globe. The Food Centre's range of expertise and service offering enables clients to develop a food product, manufacture and package all in one location. Access to the Food Centre's technologies and facilities help take out some of the risk in scaling up production to supply larger markets.

Year 2021 was very busy year with a flurry of activities, even when faced with the challenges of COVID-19.

.... 2021 highlights continued next page

Expertise

product development
interim processing
pulse innovation
plant-based protein
ingredient validation
process development
skills development
packaging and labelling
regulations
industry training
and more!!

Facilities

incubation suites
pilot plant
R&D and commercial extrusion suite
innovation suite for mini scale-up
food development suite
chemistry and microbiology labs
ingredient innovation suite



Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan Invest Into the Expansion of the Agri-Food Innovation Centre

The Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan announced a \$2.3 million investment into the expansion of the Agri-Food Innovation Centre in May. The first phase of the expansion had added 12,200 square feet of additional incubation suites, storage and extrusion commercialization suite. The second phase expansion is expected to be completed in 2022 and will include a maintenance shop and a separate facility for food and industrial (non-food) processing, the Advanced Food Ingredient Centre.

Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit said of the investment, "The expansion of the Food Centre reflects not only the growth of our value-added food and beverage processing sector in Saskatchewan, but also the Food Centre's reputation for excellence and innovation. Saskatchewan is uniquely positioned to help meet the growing global consumer demand for agri-food products. Our government's commitment to the Food Centre expansion supports the growth of our value-added industry and encourages the commercialization of new ideas, processes and products." ●

Advanced Food Ingredient Centre

The Advanced Food Ingredient Centre (AFIC2) will support the development and commercialization of new functional ingredients from Saskatchewan grown crops. This is the first phase of the project to grow out the opportunity that will expand the development of new ingredients utilizing Saskatchewan crops and to introduce new technologies to the agri-processing and manufacturing sectors. The Food Centre is leading the way in bringing this new innovative capacity to the province and the sector.

**fermentation and bioengineering expertise
development of new functional ingredients**

As one of the pivotal technologies to be housed in AFIC2, fermentation will enable the development of new ingredients that may advance functionality or create additional health benefits to consumers. This established technology will enable the development and commercialization of new ingredients, which can utilize western Canada's supply of plant-based materials. These new innovations will have wide applications in food and ingredient products.

AFIC2 will house two new incubator suites specializing in submerged and solid state Fermentation coupled with down stream processing and purification for plant based food ingredients. Clients, entrepreneurs and researchers accessing the facilities will have access to over 10,000 liters of submerged fermentation capacity supported with down stream post fermentation drying and separation technologies. The facility will also house R&D capacity solid-state fermentation to further the development of new technologies in this emerging field.

Two support labs adjoined to the facility will provide project support and bench top development capabilities through small-scale fermentation capacity for project start up. The labs will also supply the necessary technologies to support new development and in process product quality control and analysis. ●





New Partnership To Advance Fermentation Processing In Western Canada

The Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre (Food Centre), the University of Saskatchewan, the Global Agri-Food Advancement Partnership (GAAP) and Ag-West Bio are combining expertise to create a new fermentation and training program at the Food Centre. The project will build capacity in Canada's plant-based ingredient and food ecosystem by marrying the addition of new technology with a skills development and training program.

Funded by Protein Industries Canada, this project will develop and leverage emerging fermentation technology to produce novel plant-based ingredients, food and feed products for Canadians and international markets. Fermentation is a method of processing that is considered more sustainable and offers a higher profit margin than many processing methods previously used by these sectors.

The project will be launched in 2022 and start to build the fermentation ecosystem by attracting and training the right talent for Canada's small to medium sized plant-based food sector. The program will support collaborative innovation,

expertise and skill development between small and medium-sized enterprises and the consortium, enabling the commercialization of new technology while attracting and fostering a pipeline of future talent for Canada's plant-based ingredient and food ecosystem.



The project will build on the previous support from Western Diversification and the Government of Saskatchewan to support the construction of a new facility to support the development of new ingredients using advanced technology. The PIC funding will provide for the addition of senior scientists and engineers to build out the Food Centre's capacity in fermentation technology and the development of an advanced ingredient processing initiative. ●





Agri-Food Business Incubator

GAAP is a collaboration between Ag-West Bio, the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS), the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre (Food Centre), Innovation Place, and private sector partners.

GAAP is designed to provide a soft landing for early stage technology and rapid growth stage companies within all areas of agriculture and food, and from anywhere in the world. The Food Centre is excited to be part of this partnership to support innovation in agri-food. Companies accessing GAAP will be able to leverage the Food Centre's technical expertise, regulatory navigation, scale-up and commercialization programs. ●

Industry Pathway

The Food Centre presents a commercialization pathway for entrepreneurs and agri-businesses launching their food products or expanding their markets. We provide vital pathfinding information to the industry through our networks and collaborations. If you have questions about the food industry, we have the answers or can connect you to someone who can help.

On a daily basis, the Food Centre staff fields an estimated 100 inquiries and consultations from industry across all programs. These consultations are in the forms of telephone, emails and virtual meetings. Due to the COVID pandemic in 2021, virtual meetings became an important and successful approach in initial project discussions and keeping clients updated on projects. The Food Centre provided an average of 80- 90 virtual meetings on a weekly basis across the departments.

In 2021, the Food Centre worked with approximately 116 clients in product development, processing, extrusion and ingredients as compared to 93 in 2020. There was an increased number of clients utilizing multiple services in

2021. Clients are realizing the advantage of bringing projects to the Food Centre - innovative development and manufacturing options in one location. ●

New Product Innovations in Plant Based Foods

Product development activity has seen the busiest year so far. In 2021, the Food Centre worked on development of over 120 prototypes and completed several market ready products, which included vegan jerky, plant based milk, vegan meat products (burgers, ground beef, jerky, nuggets, fish), vegan cheese, beverages, fruit snack, sauces and dressing, keto snacks, breakfast cereal, extruded snacks, mustard, sparkling beverages, granola/protein bars.

Prototype development activity in 2021 has been fueled by increased interest in plant-based proteins in the area of vegetarian meats. The Food Centre is recognized globally for its capability in this area. All departments work jointly in these projects to create new ingredients for use as meat replacers for clients pursuing the vegetarian/vegan market. The Food Centre had several clients launch vegan products into the market in 2021, in the form of ground "meat" and whole muscle "meat" products.



Large image: Product Innovation Suite for test scale up of formulations
Small image top: Extrusion R&D testing formulations for HMMA
Small image bottom: feeding peas into the air classification unit

Food Centre assisted several clients with accessing industry funding such as the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's Product2Market funding and the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP)'s funding assistance for product and technical challenges. ●

The Right Ingredients

The Food Centre's work in ingredients has also attracted local and global clients in valorizing products from a range of sources such as fruits, vegetables, grains, fermented ingredients and pulses. Vegetarian meat products and healthy extruded snacks using pulse ingredients have seen an increase in 2021. The ingredients department helps clients to understand the role of processing and its effect on ingredient functionality and nutritional properties in the vegan sector.

Approximately 24 clients worked with the Ingredient Team to develop new ingredients, understand the functionality of novel ingredients and fractionation of specialty pulses. Many of these companies are seeking to enter into the marketplace as protein-ingredients and several are considered start-up.

Initial work in the Ingredient Program provides a solid foundation for further development work in extrusion and unique food applications in product development. ●

The Right Technology

The Food Centre's expertise in extrusion is unique to Saskatchewan and attracts clients from all over the world. Clients are seeing the value of our diverse services and facility, which offers R&D of concept to extrusion manufacturing and packaging in one location. In 2021, the Food Centre worked with approximately 44 clients in the development of breakfast cereal, high protein extruded snacks, and high moisture meat analogues for numerous vegan meat projects.

We are continuing our work in the area of protein utilization including using canola, hemp, pulses (primarily pea, lentil, faba, chickpea), insect protein (primarily crickets), sunflower, alfalfa, and algae as well as meat-derived proteins such as dairy and egg. We will continue our work in developing meat alternatives for use in consumer foods and disseminating knowledge on the process for producing these types of products using technologies such as high moisture extrusion and texturization of plant proteins. ●



Plant-Based Foods and Growth in Fermentation for Alternative Protein Production

Driven by a growing population and consumers who are making more sustainable, health conscious food choices, analysts forecast the market for plant-based protein and alternative meat to reach a whopping \$85 billion U.S. dollars by 2030.

Plant-based diets traditionally were only popular among vegans and vegetarians, but are now gaining traction among a wider segment of consumers. The Food Centre realizes the tremendous opportunities for Saskatchewan agriculture in the plant-based foods sector. Saskatchewan is recognized worldwide for the quality of its crops. It only makes sense to transform quality crops into quality food products. Saskatchewan is the largest exporter of lentils and dried peas and a significant producer of chickpeas. Pulses in general are gaining ground domestically because consumers that demand gluten-free or vegetarian foods can eat pulses. Over the past several years, we have assisted many clients to launch plant-based food products, such as roasted pea snacks, extruded puffs, vegan jerky, ground “beef” and protein curls.

The Food Centre has been working with high moisture meat analogues (HMMA) for over a decade. Our ideation and creativity in food applications has drawn the attention of fortune 500 companies. Our biggest “complaint” is that “it tastes too much like meat”. Not a bad complaint to have.

As we expand our capabilities with the Advanced Food Ingredients Centre (AFIC2), fermentation technology will be an important technology for the Food Centre, which will help our clients, commercialize new products. In addition to traditional fermented products, such as beer, wine, yoghurt, etc., fermentation is currently being used to produce plant-based and/or cultivated products. For plant-based meat, eggs, and dairy products, the Food Centre will implement traditional fermentation to improve the taste, texture, digestibility and nutrients, whereas biomass and precision fermentation technologies will be combined with plant-based ingredients to make better plant-based meat.

Like plant-based meat, fermentation-derived proteins will be important ingredients. Products such as mycelium, microalgae, microorganisms and fermented plant proteins sustaining the sensory experiences and the improved nutritional aspects will be produced and commercialized by utilizing feedstocks, which are low cost industrial and/or agricultural side streams. ●



Processing Options for Industry to Cater Markets Around the Globe

Between the Food Centre’s two processing facilities, the Agri-Food Innovation Centre and the Pilot Plant on the University of Saskatchewan campus, clients have access to several hundreds of pieces of equipment to manufacture a variety of food products and at different volumes.

The Food Centre has maintained the Pilot Plant’s inspection and certification annually to allow industry to scale up production to test market their products. The Food Centre has been successful in utilizing the Pilot Plant to support much of the industry over the past 20 plus years. The short-term processing options enables clients to manufacture on demand without investment in equipment or facility. Our many certifications and recognitions allow clients to access new and export markets.

The Food Centre’s Agri-Food Innovation Centre (AFIC) Incubator on Schuyler Street is utilized for high volume processing in order for clients to distribute to major retailers or larger markets. AFIC currently houses 7 incubator suites including the Extrusion Commercial Manufacturing Suite.



diverse-flexible equipment (280+ pieces!)
many certifications to access global markets

The Extrusion Manufacturing Suite houses the commercial extrusion line and auxiliary equipment for further baking and seasoning of extruded products. This suite has been utilized in the manufacturing of extruded snacks, breakfast cereals, TVP and HMMA.

We have successfully maintained CFIA inspection and BRC certification for 2021. Our suites at AFIC are occupied by several tenants in the meat, fruits and vegetables and oat based products industry. The Food Centre is an industry leader in bringing new or advanced technology to Saskatchewan's agri-food sector.

In 2021, approximately 44 clients have utilized both facilities, each processing one or more products. ●

The Agri-Food Innovation Centre's new pickling and bottling lines have been utilized for the production of a variety of

condiments, relish, pickled cucumbers and vegetables.

The bottling line process can produce approximately 10,000 jars of jams per day and has increased the utilization of Saskatchewan grown fruits and vegetables in value-added products.

Certifications and Recognitions

HACCP Recognized
CFIA Inspected
Organic Certified
FDA approved
BRC Certified
HALAL Licensed
Kosher

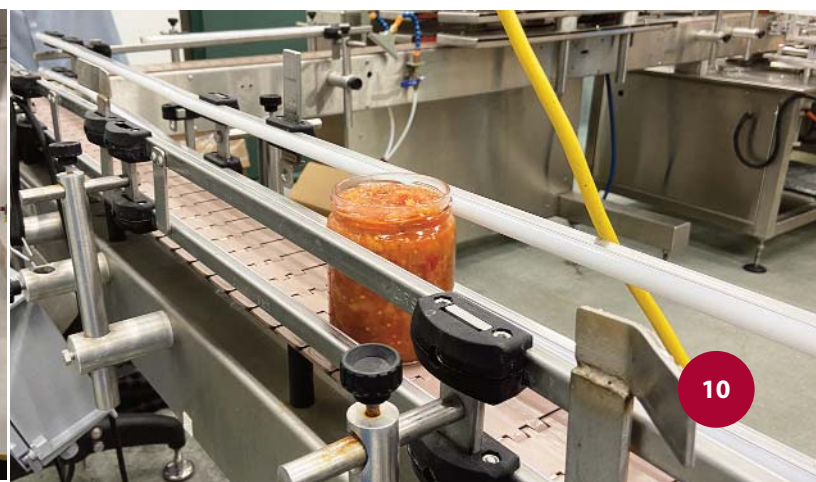
Types of Products Manufactured

bacon	egg protein snacks
jerry	pulse based extruded snacks
dry spice packaging	jam
filipino meats	salsa
hemp butter	wheat snacks
cherry filling/spread	vegan "meat" products
pretzels	falafel balls
kimchi	hummus
horseradish	pickles and baby carrots
pork ribs	grain snacks
vegan food products	nutrition bars
pickled chickpeas	tofu
baby snacks	dumplings

image: Extrusion Manufacturing Suite at AFIC



image: Bottling line at the Pilot Plant



Food Safety Training Reach Expanded Through Virtual Options

COVID-19 pandemic has changed our training delivery to the industry, maybe even for the better. Depending on the subject matter, the reach of webinars has reached processors who otherwise may not have been able to attend a seminar in-person.

In 2021, two webinars, Industry Day for Saskatchewan Meat Plants and Safe Food Handling and COVID Protocols were delivered virtually. Two others were delivered in conjunction with the AWESOME Program - Common Food Safety Obstacles for New Food Businesses and So You Want to Start a Food Business?

As processors are spread out across the prairie province, transitioning to virtual training or hybrid training is more important than ever even with the easing of COVID-19 health regulations in the province and around the world.

The challenge for Saskatchewan companies especially in rural areas that deal in regulatory programming as part of their export strategy, is the capacity to keep current on regulatory changes regarding food safety. For most part, the expertise within its companies for regulatory matters is limited as they

primarily focus on manufacturing or production. Information regarding regulatory compliance in food safety or training of employees and staff is often not an easy task.

To address these issues the Food Centre offers online programming to provide "ease of access" for companies based in rural Saskatchewan in the form of our online HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) and Food Safety Training as well as our Good Manufacturing Practices online training. Both online training provides food manufacturers in rural Saskatchewan to be trained in food safety and increase skills for employees to support industry growth.

Redesign of GMPSONline.ca

The redesign of our online GMP training was completed in Spring 2021 to provide users with a more user-friendly experience and better accessibility. This is a free training site for Saskatchewan processors and saw considerable uptake in 2021.

The Food Centre continues to play a leading role in assisting companies in developing and implementing food safety programming, providing industry training and guidance to the industry to support food safety programming compliance. The focus of the program is to provide education to the industry and with implementation, assessment, training and maintenance for new and existing food safety and quality systems. •



FREE VIRTUAL
Industry Day for
Saskatchewan Meat Plants
Tuesday, March 16, 2021

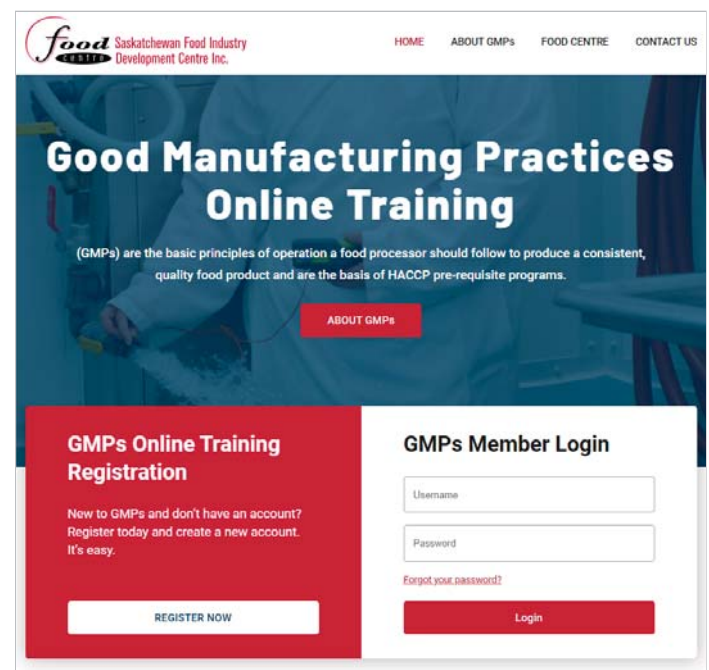
TOPICS:
Government Funding Programs
Animal Handling and Facility Design
Sanitation Tips and Recommendations
Labelling Information (Safe Food For Canadians Regulations)
Meat Cutting and Marketing

Virtually 12:30 pm to 5:30 pm

Pre-registration is required by March 11, 2021
(306) 933-7555 or vmenzies@foodcentre.sk.ca

ZOOM information to join the virtual event will be emailed to participants.

presented by **food** Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc.



Good Manufacturing Practices Online Training

(GMPs) are the basic principles of operation a food processor should follow to produce a consistent, quality food product and are the basis of HACCP pre-requisite programs.

ABOUT GMPs

GMPs Online Training Registration

New to GMPs and don't have an account?
Register today and create a new account.
It's easy.

REGISTER NOW

GMPs Member Login

Username
Password

[Forgot your password?](#)

Login

Supporting Women Who Own Food Manufacturing Companies In The Prairie Provinces

Women in agri-business face a particularly unique and difficult path. The intersection of gender-related socio-economic barriers, manufacturing intricacies, food security dynamics, and the rigor of entrepreneurship creates subtle and obvious obstacles for women in food processing. The Food Centre's AWESOME Program works to alleviate these obstacles for each client and all women in agri-business and food processing.

AWESOME's services are available to women in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and currently serves over 250

women-owned, Canadian brands.

The AWESOME Program had

many great successes and will apply for another multi-year contract

through the Government of Canada's second round of the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund in 2022.



2021 Program Highlights

The **Awesome Achievement Awards** aims to recognize and celebrate women-owned businesses in food and manufacturing in the Canadian Prairies. In 2021, AWESOME recognized 10 companies for their success and excellence in their food and beverage business in Canada. Each recipient received an opportunity to record a podcast with AWESOME to share their entrepreneurial story.

AWESOME Virtual Accelerator is a 10 week program focused on sales development for women entrepreneurs with emerging food and beverage product businesses. The Accelerator accepted 24 founders between two cohorts (March 2021 and September 2021) by providing 16 sessions of educational content and two practical pitch events. Founders also received the opportunity to develop a promotional video for their own uses. These videos are posted on the Food Centre's YouTube page as well as AWESOME's website. Each founder also received three mentors, who provide four hours of mentorship over six months, following the completing of the curriculum. This worked out to 72 mentor matches. Special thank you to FCC for their continuous sponsorship support in the Virtual Accelerator.

Cohort 3 and 4 will start up in 2022. The Accelerator continues to utilize several industry organizations and private businesses to contribute to the educational content and coaching (mentorship) needs.

The **AWESOME conferences** are designed to provide a half-day of educational content to members, showcase member knowledge and connect attendees to professional services. Due to pandemic as well as the membership spanning across over 30 communities, all of the conferences have been held virtually. Two conferences were held in 2021 with each conference receiving a strong turnout of 60 attendees. The conferences hosted several guest speakers from industry, experts from food and beverage as well as experienced entrepreneurs and members of the AWESOME program to share their knowledge and first-hand experience on the topic. The themes for the conferences were "Starting a Food Business", held in November and "Food Product Marketing", held in June.

An in-person conference is in the works for November 2022, featuring panel discussions, workshops, and a tradeshow. The conference will conclude with an evening celebration and the AWESOME Achievement Awards ceremony. ●



Cohort 1 winner: Amy Kaban of Parkerview Brews | Cohort 2 winner: Christine Friesen of Bordertown Milling

COLLABORATION IS KEY TO INDUSTRY SUCCESS

The Food Centre is fortunate and grateful for the many partnerships we have created over the years. Our diverse network in all sectors of the food and ingredient industry allows the Food Centre to harness the strengths and abilities of other organizations to provide strategic direction for diversifying Saskatchewan's agri-food industry. We truly appreciate the collaborations and their support.

Support for Special Programming

The Food Centre's ability to service the industry enhanced by special programs to meet current industry demands. In 2021, we were very pleased to have the financial support of Prairies Economic Development Canada, (PrairiesCan), Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) for several unique programming and service delivery.

PrairiesCan provides support for the AWESOME Program, targeted to advance and grow women-owned businesses in the food processing sector through specific business development services.

NRC-IRAP and the Ministry's Product2Market program has made it possible for small to medium sized companies to access expertise for new product and process development.

Founding Partners



Thank you to the federal and provincial governments, industry organizations and private companies for their financial support towards the Agri-Food Innovation Centre. All support is greatly appreciated and helps to create new value-added opportunities for the agriculture industry in Saskatchewan.



SaskBarley Development Commission

Saskatchewan Egg Producers

CanMar Grain Products Ltd.

Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan

InfraReady Products Ltd.

Ag-West Bio Inc.

Cherry Insurance

LPL Management

Ledcor Group

MGM Specialty Livestock

Boreal Berry Bar Inc.

Triad Power

Excel Refrigeration Ltd.

Ace Plumbing & Heating Inc.

Food Centre Staff

The Food Centre team consists of over 50 full-time and part-time staff who are working to grow the agri-food industry in Saskatchewan. Our expertise is diverse but our goal is the same – providing the industry with the best service possible.

** Staff listing is current at time of printing*

Mehmet Tulbek -- President

Dan Prefontaine -- Director, Special Projects and Past President

Valerie Menzies -- Administrative Assistant

Carmen Ly -- Communications Director

Glenna Long -- Accountant

Emma Laing -- Program Facilitator

Product Development

Sara Lui -- Director, New Product Innovation

Cathy Querimit -- Senior PD Specialist

Shirley Cabrera -- PD Specialist

Breann Squires -- PD Assistant

Maryam Rafati -- PD Assistant

Amelia Rivera -- PD Assistant

Extrusion

Satinder Gill -- Manager, Extrusion R&D

Dellaney Konieczny -- Manager, Extrusion Ingredients & Commercialization

Matthew Marcotte -- Extrusion Specialist

Nenita Sanchez -- Extrusion Production Assistant

Chetan Ahuja -- Extrusion Operator

Ingredient Innovation

Ricky Lam -- Manager & Scientist

Hayley Kumitch -- Research Associate

YanRan Tang -- Research Associate

Holly Rempel -- Lab Technician

Mark Dyck -- Ingredient Assistant

Fermentation Program

Mahesh Sivakumar -- Senior Food Process Engineer

Pooba Ganeshan -- Principal Scientist

Siyang Shen -- Junior Scientist

Food Safety & Skills Development

Erin Hiebert -- Manager

Elmer Peralta -- Food Safety Specialist

Agri-Food Innovation Centre Processing

Greg Hamilton -- Operations Manager

Arran Hamilton -- Plant Supervisor

Joel Montelibano -- Food Safety & Quality Assurance Coord.

Glen Sanchez -- Shipper & Receiver

Barry Motilag -- Maintenance Supervisor

John Wilkinson -- Maintenance Assistant

Patrick Campbell -- Maintenance Assistant

Blair Charters -- Maintenance Assistant

Pilot Plant Processing

Scott Irvine -- Pilot Plant Manager

Nolan Langer -- Assistant Plant Manager and HACCP Coord.

Michael Suru -- Maintenance

Sue Waldner -- Production Supervisor

Jennifer Pasaje -- Lead Operator

FC Food Inspection

Vince Neiser -- Manager

AWESOME Program

Shenuka Wickramasinghe -- Program Manager

Carly Beckman -- Program Coordinator

Brynn Krysa -- Marketing Specialist





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Audited 2021 Financial Statements

Financial statements are available upon request by contacting the Food Centre.
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