

# Annual **2025** Report



## **VISION**

Leading the evolution of Saskatchewan's agri-food industry.

## **MISSION**

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

Audited 2025 financial statements are available upon request by contacting the Food Centre. Please direct all inquiries to [info@foodcentre.sk.ca](mailto:info@foodcentre.sk.ca) or (306) 933-7555.

**Create  
Connect  
Collaborate  
Commercialize**



# Chairman's Message

Sav Bellissimo



***“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.” - Winston Churchill***

As we reflect on 2025, this quote resonates strongly with the journey of the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre (Food Centre), the agriculture and food sectors in Saskatchewan, and our province's resilience.

This past year was marked by uncertainty across global markets, including tariff uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, shifting consumer expectations, and ongoing pressure on food manufacturing and trade systems. As we navigate these challenges, the Food Centre continues to demonstrate the research, manufacturing, innovation, determination, and entrepreneurial spirit that define our province.

At the Food Centre, we believe that periods of disruption also present opportunities for transformation. Saskatchewan is uniquely positioned to lead the next generation of agricultural and bioeconomic growth through value-added processing, food innovation, biotechnology, precision fermentation, and sustainable ingredient development.

This year also underscored the growing importance of food security, resilient supply chains, and sustainable production systems. Saskatchewan's world-class agriculture, rich natural resources, research excellence, and growing innovation ecosystem position the province as a global leader in the emerging bioeconomy.

In 2025, the Food Centre remained focused on helping the industry adapt, innovate, and grow. We continued to expand our capabilities in food processing, ingredient innovation, extrusion technologies, fermentation, co-product utilization, and bioeconomy development to support companies, from startups and scale-ups to established processors and global innovators.

The Food Centre strengthened its programming to support entrepreneurs and emerging companies, including the continued growth of the FEAD initiative and forged new collaborative partnerships in Canada and internationally.

Under the leadership of Dr. Mehmet Tulbek, the organization continues to build momentum while maintaining a strong financial and operational position. The Board is highly optimistic about the Food Centre's future direction and its growing role in supporting Saskatchewan's innovation economy.

As we look ahead, we recognize that challenges will continue to evolve. So will the opportunities. Global demand for sustainable food systems, innovative ingredients, value-added agriculture, and bio-based manufacturing continues to accelerate, and Saskatchewan is exceptionally well-positioned to meet this demand.

The Food Centre is committed to leading, collaborating, and innovating to support Saskatchewan's agriculture, food, and biotech sectors. With resilience, vision, and ongoing partnership, we are confident in the opportunities ahead for our province and our industry.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend our sincere appreciation to our past Chair, Blair Knippel, whose steady leadership and commitment – through 3 years as Board Chair and 4 years as a Board Member - were instrumental in guiding the Food Centre through a period of significant growth and transition. We also recognize the valuable contributions of outgoing Board Members Godwin Pon from the Ministry of Agriculture and Phyllis Shand from the University of Saskatchewan.

Our achievements this year would not be possible without the dedication of Dr. Tulbek and the hardworking Food Centre team, the guidance of our Board of Directors, the trust of our industry clients, and the ongoing support of our federal and provincial partners. Together, we are strengthening Saskatchewan's food manufacturing ecosystem and creating economic opportunities for producers, processors, entrepreneurs, and communities across the province. ●



# President's Message

Dr. Mehmet Tulbek

***“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” — Helen Keller***

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre (Food Centre), I am pleased to share our 2025 Annual Report and to reflect on another year of growth, resilience, and innovation.

The past year has continued to pose significant global and domestic challenges for the agriculture, food, and biotechnology sectors. Ongoing geopolitical uncertainty, evolving trade environments, rising manufacturing and transformation costs, supply chain volatility, inflationary pressures, and cautious investment markets have continued to influence food businesses across North America and beyond. At the same time, rapidly changing consumer expectations and rising demand for sustainable, functional, and value-added food products have accelerated industry transformation.

Despite these headwinds, the Food Centre continued to expand its impact and to strengthen its role as a leading organization in innovation and commercialization, supporting Canada's agri-food and bioeconomy sectors.

Throughout 2025, the Food Centre delivered high-quality contract research, product development, scale-up manufacturing, and incubation services to startups, entrepreneurs, SMEs, and multinational companies. Our multidisciplinary team remained focused on helping clients navigate uncertainty and identify new opportunities for growth, innovation, and commercialization.

One of the highlights of the year was the continued growth and national impact of our FEAD (Female Entrepreneurs in Agri-Food Development) Program. Since its inception, FEAD has become one of Canada's leading initiatives, supporting more than 2,700 women entrepreneurs in the agri-food and bio-based industries. The program expanded its reach through mentorship, training, networking, and acceleration support, with a strong focus on rural, Indigenous, newcomer, and early-stage entrepreneurs. We are proud of the growing number of businesses launched, partnerships formed, and investment opportunities created through this initiative.

The Food Centre also continued advancing innovation programs in fermentation, bioengineering, value-added ingredient development, sustainable processing, and co-product utilization. During the year, we expanded our activities in fermentation, biomanufacturing, downstream processing, spray drying, ingredient functionality, and biomass valorization. These initiatives are positioning

Saskatchewan to play a larger role in the emerging global bioeconomy and in next-generation food manufacturing. Our Advanced Food Ingredients Centre continued to gain momentum as we welcomed new clients and collaborative projects focused on ingredient innovation, scale-up processing, and advanced manufacturing technologies. We are investing in infrastructure, equipment, and scientific capabilities to strengthen our support for commercialization pathways from concept through pilot to market readiness.

We also observed growing opportunities for Canadian-made and Canadian-sourced food products as global supply chains continue to evolve. Consumer demand for high-protein foods, meat and dairy foods, plant-based products, fermented ingredients, functional foods, sustainable packaging, clean-label products, and food-as-medicine solutions continues to create exciting opportunities for Saskatchewan processors and innovators. Cross-functional collaboration remained a key priority throughout the year. By combining expertise in research, processing, engineering, product development, regulatory support, and commercialization, the Food Centre continued to deliver streamlined, efficient solutions tailored to clients' and the industry's needs.

As we look to the future, we remain optimistic about Saskatchewan's potential to become a global leader in value-added agriculture, food innovation, precision fermentation, and biomanufacturing. Saskatchewan's strengths in agricultural production, scientific expertise, entrepreneurial spirit, and natural resources provide a solid foundation for continued growth and innovation.

In closing, I would like to thank our exceptional staff for their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to excellence. I would also like to thank our clients, collaborators, the Board of Directors, and our funding partners for their continued confidence and support.

We are especially grateful to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, Prairies Economic Development Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Protein Industries Canada, and many other partners for their continued support of innovation and growth within Saskatchewan's agri-food ecosystem.

Together, we are helping to shape a stronger, more sustainable, and more innovative future for Saskatchewan, Canada, and the global food industry. ●

# Our Role in Canada's Food Innovation Ecosystem

## Food and Biotech Innovator of Canada

660 Clients Serviced | Over 1,400 product developed and manufactured

The Food Centre's commercialization services are designed to eliminate the barriers that prevent innovative food concepts from reaching consumers. Our integrated approach spans the full product lifecycle, from ideation to commercialization support for market entry.

## 2025 Highlights

Defining moments that shaped and enhanced our year.

### 4 Partnerships Announced

- Food Centre signed MOU with Bioenterprise to become Canada's food & agri-tech engine partner
- Nurasa and Food Centre partner to expand market opportunities
- Cultivator and Food Centre to support Saskatchewan Agtech and Foodtech startups
- 9 Mile Legacy Brewings LGCY: Innovation Hub and Food Centre partner to strengthen and support beverage and fermentation innovation

### 190+ Clients Serviced

### Funding Received

- Food Centre received funding from Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan) to purchase equipment and complete renovations to increase co-packing capabilities and incubation space for the value-added agriculture sector in the Prairies.

### 6 Webinars Hosted

- Hosted six expert-led webinars to advance agri-food innovation. Topics include: biotech commercialization, pulse-based snacking, canola meal bioproducts, pea opportunities, Israeli start-up scale-up support, and front-of-pack labelling.

### VIP TOURS

- Members of the Legislative Assembly
- Honourable Warren Kaeding, Minister of Trade and Development and Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan
- New University of Saskatchewan President, Dr. Vincent Bruni-Bossio and CFO, Deidre (Dee) Henne

# Year in Review

DRIVING AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION

## Advancing Food Innovation

Entrepreneurs in the food industry continue to demonstrate remarkable innovation and resilience, meeting shifting consumer expectations with new, sustainable, and market-ready products. At the Food Centre, our cross-functional model remains a cornerstone of how we accelerate innovation and support companies from concept development to commercialization. We are pleased to collaborate with a diverse group from food processing companies, commodity groups, to research and academic institutions to develop innovative new products, processes and technologies.

In 2025, the Food Centre worked with approximately 64 clients, supporting the development of different products ranging from sauces to protein bars. Several of these products launched in the marketplace, contributing to a thriving agri-food ecosystem and economic activity.

Plant-based innovation remained strong in 2025, even as growth in plant-based meats moderated due to ongoing challenges with taste, texture, and price parity. Consumer interest shifted toward cleaner labels, minimally processed ingredients, functional foods and a wider range of protein sources. Innovation expanded across plant-based seafood, eggs, and dairy, with cheese and frozen desserts showing notable momentum. Non-dairy beverages (oat, soy, and almond) continued to hold a solid place in mainstream consumption. Throughout the year, the Food Centre supported several companies to explore opportunities in this evolving space.

Building on Saskatchewan's crop diversity, we advanced work on plant proteins, meat alternatives, and non-dairy analogs, further positioning the province as a leader in sustainable, next-generation food solutions. The food industry outlook for 2026 points to a period of strong growth, rapid transformation, and intensified consumer expectations, driven by health, sustainability, affordability, and technology.

**We're proud to have successfully supported approximately 64 clients in bringing many of these developments to completion.**

- Breakfast cereal
- Mushroom broth
- Barley crackers
- Vanilla bean paste
- Proyein/granola-type/fruit bars
- Sports nutrition shot & powder
- Faba bean protein applications
- Coffee creamer
- Beef jerky
- Dry seasoning mix
- Kombucha
- Seabuckthorn products

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

*Smart Sip is a calorie-friendly, fibre-rich coconut oil powdered creamer that was designed to help people reach their goals. Ashlyn worked with the Food Centre to create a recipe using the ingredients and the exact nutrition profile that she wanted to be able to offer to people who are looking for delicious creaminess without the guilt. "I am grateful to the Food Centre who did the research & development, gluten, lactose and shelf-life testing to create the exact product that I envisioned." After development, Smart Sip was able to use the Food Centre's Pilot Plant facility to package their creamers and test the market.*

Ashlyn Newlove | Mission Nutrition Inc., Cowichan, B.C  
[www.smartsipcreamco.com](http://www.smartsipcreamco.com)





# Year in Review

DRIVING AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION

## Accelerating Client Growth and Market Reach

A new product launch is always exciting and filled with anticipation. That excitement is balanced by confidence, knowing the Food Centre's services and facilities are available to help clients bring their products to market. With over 400 pieces of equipment across three facilities, the Food Centre supports agri-businesses seeking food processing solutions and scale-up opportunities.

The Food Centre provides scale-up processing through our 3 facilities – Pilot Plant, Agri-Food Innovation Centre (AFIC) and the Advanced Food Ingredients Centre (AFIC2), depending on the product and capacity required.

In 2025, the Food Centre collaborated with approximately 190 clients across all departments, primarily from Saskatchewan, but also from across Canada and around the globe.

The market outlook for extruded high-protein snacks remain strong, driven by global demand for healthier, protein rich, plant-forward snacking options. The Food Centre is in the perfect position to assist clients in capturing this opportunity. The Food Centre's innovation with extrusion technology, from R&D to retail, enables improved texture, flavour and protein functionality.

Product labelling and ingredient selection were major areas of focus in 2025, as food manufacturers worked to reformulate for cleaner-label products and comply with new nutrition labelling regulations for prepackaged foods, specifically front-of-package (FOP) nutrition symbol on products high in saturated fat, sugars, or sodium. Navigating these requirements can be complex, and the Food Centre team provided specialized technical support to more than 110 clients seeking guidance on labelling compliance and/or ingredient optimization.

190 Clients Serviced

64 Product Development Clients

66 Manufacturing Clients

70+ Prospective Client Forms Received

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

*"Working with the Saskatchewan Food Centre was instrumental in launching our Meat Bar, Superfood Steak Bar, and Beauty Booster Bar with the help of the PDP program. We hit the ground running expanding into Vancouver and Toronto while reaching other national retailers in between. Now, as we focus on scaling efficiently, their continued support in innovation and process development is invaluable. My daughter Soleil and I are deeply grateful to the team for helping us grow sustainably and intentionally."*

Chelsey Parker | The Meat Bar, Saskatoon, SK  
[www.themeatbar.ca](http://www.themeatbar.ca)





# Year in Review

DRIVING AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION

**We're proud to have successfully supported clients in bringing many of these products to market.**

- Nigerian sauce
- Bannock mix
- Hot sauce
- Packaging pet supplements
- Smoothie Dry Mix
- Salsa
- Pizza/BBQ/Pasta sauce
- Alpiste
- Filipino wieners
- Pie filling, spreads
- Spicy jams
- Bacon
- Hummus
- Gourmet mustards
- Pet food
- Toddler snacks
- Dry coffee creamer
- Jerky (elk, beef, bison)
- Granola bars
- Functional meat bar
- Dry donut mix
- Sugar free coffee beverage
- Syrup
- Lechon sauce
- Flavoured flax seed
- Caesar mix
- Texturized vegetable protein
- Cereal
- Dry soup mix
- High protein extruded snacks
- Egg snacks
- Oat milk powder

## Food Safety Training to Support Industry Growth

Food safety training is an important and often overlooked business activity. Depending on the where a company plans to market their product, specific certifications or verifications may be required. In 2025, the Food Safety team conducted many internal audits for manufacturers to ensure compliance and delivered several 2 Day HACCP training sessions to help industry remain competitive.

The Food Centre's ongoing commitment to supporting Saskatchewan food processors is also reflected in our online training programs, including Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

[www.GMPsOnline.ca](http://www.GMPsOnline.ca) | [www.HACCPonline.ca](http://www.HACCPonline.ca)

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

*"Having access to the team and expertise at the Food Centre has been excellent for Atare Foods. From product development to scaling of our West African sauces, the Food Centre has been a great partner for our current products and future expansion plans. We are very thankful for the support we have received so far."*

Shakirat Edoho | Atare Foods, Regina, SK  
[www.atarefoods.com](http://www.atarefoods.com)





# Year in Review

DRIVING AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION

## Fermentation Transforming Industry Landscape

In recent years, the food industry has undergone a significant transformation, with consumers prioritizing sustainable sourcing, nutritional quality, and health benefits. As demand for minimally processed foods with fewer chemical preservatives grows, fermentation has emerged as a viable solution to meet these evolving preferences.

With its advanced fermentation capabilities, the Food Centre is offering invaluable support to startups, SMEs, and established businesses aiming to develop and commercialize fermented products. Through unique processing technologies, research collaborations, and sustainability initiatives, the Advanced Food Ingredients Centre will help position Canada as a leader in fermentation innovation - one that meets the demands of today's evolving market while unlocking new possibilities for food, beverage, and industrial applications.

In 2025, the Food Centre provided support to 22 clients with fermentation and bioengineering projects. Interest in fermentation continues to grow, with a steady influx of inquiries from potential clients across Canada and internationally, spanning both small- and large-scale fermentation needs.



## 3D Printing the Future of Food

One of the most exciting emerging technologies shaping the future of product development is 3D food printing. 3D printing allows food ingredients - such as pulse purées, plant proteins, starches, and even dairy or egg-based formulations - to be extruded layer by layer into precise shapes and textures. This technology opens the door to new possibilities in nutrition, personalization, sustainability, and product design.

With Saskatchewan's strength in pulses, plant proteins, and value-added agriculture, 3D food printing represents a powerful opportunity to transform local ingredients into next-generation food products. As this technology evolves, it will create new pathways for entrepreneurs, researchers, and manufacturers to innovate and compete globally.

*Image: Specially fermented food ingredients combined with plant-based materials to create a 3D-printed salmon prototype, showcasing the possibilities of future food innovation*





# Year in Review

DRIVING AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION

## PDP Product Development Program

### FUNDING TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

OPEN TO SASKATCHEWAN-BASED COMPANIES



Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership



Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc.

Saskatchewan

Canada

Since its launch in May 2023, the Product Development Program (PDP) has approved a total of 60 projects that drive innovation in Saskatchewan’s agri-food sector through new product development, technology and process evaluation and pre-commercial testing.

Delivered under the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership, the program supports the development of novel value-added products and processes that significantly enhance the value of Canadian agriculture products in Saskatchewan. The Food Centre administers this program on behalf of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture. The 2025 program intake was strong with 68 total inquiries, resulting in 26 approved projects, each accessing up to \$20,000 per project.

*“The PDP provided Jam’Bucha Kombucha with more than financial support—it provided confidence. Through the program, our small-batch vision evolved into a retail-ready operation, grounded in low sugar, bold flavour, and real ingredients. The experience affirmed our conviction to stand behind the quality of our product and move forward with clarity into the Saskatchewan marketplace.”*

*Carvil Richards, Jam’Bucha Kombucha - Saskatoon, SK*



*“The PDP was and continues to be essential to complete the necessary groundwork on developing our value-added chickpea beverage. Working with 9-Mile Legacy Brewing Co. has been such an exciting endeavor as we collaborate to create a unique product that we didn’t even know was possible.”*

*Marion Ausmus, Ausmus Farms - Leader, SK*





# Year in Review

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS IN AGRI-FOOD DEVELOPMENT

Top Image: Capital on the Menu Live Pitch Event

## Empowering Women in Agri-Food

Female Entrepreneurs in Agri-Food Development (FEAD) is a federally recognized program funded through ISED-WES Programming. FEAD's reach is national and encompasses British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, as well as Yukon and Northwest Territories. FEAD takes on a strategic focus toward engagement in the following demographics: First Nations, Inuit and Metis, Rural, U39, Immigrant and Newcomer.

2025 was a busy year for the FEAD Program. Podcasts, digital learning library, and delivery of 24 webinars were just some of the initiatives delivered.

Accelerators and Pitch Programming saw approximately 50 entrepreneurs participate in sessions focused on branding, financial management, recipe development, and retail readiness.

Other events and initiatives include:

- Table Talk East and West
- Advancing Women Conference
- Future of Food Luncheon
- Home-based Food Business Session
- Saskatoon Startup Week activities
- Ecosystem engagement and participation through partnership with SREDA, Prairie Food Link, Ag-West Bio, Co-Labs, and Women's Business Hub, to name a few

Image: Capital on the Menu Live Pitch Event



## FEAD's Impact



# Strong Industry Engagement

## WEBINARS, TRAINING AND COLLABORATIONS

The Food Centre continues to collaborate with industry experts and partners to deliver specialized programming and webinars that reflect the rapidly evolving needs of the agri-food sector.

In 2025, our commitment to industry engagement remained strong. We expanded our webinar offerings, contributed presentations at key conferences, and maintained an active presence at sector-wide events. These efforts strengthened connections with professionals and stakeholders across the value chain, reinforcing the Food Centre's position as a trusted leader in food innovation and commercialization.

The Food Centre participated in numerous conferences and events throughout 2025, including: AgriValue Forum, Indigenous Business Gathering, Pulse Ingredient Workshop, Bridge2Food Conference, Palette Skills Group and more.

Webinars presented include: Pre-seed to Commercialization; Exploring Opportunities for Canadian Pulses; and Front of Panel Labelling.

celebrate  
**WORLD PULSES DAY**  
FEBRUARY 10, 2025

**PULSES IN  
SNACK INNOVATION**



**SPEAKER**

Dr. Mehmet Tulbek, President  
Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre

Saskatchewan

food Saskatchewan Food Industry  
Development Centre Inc.

WEBINAR

**INDUSTRY DAY  
FOR MEAT PROCESSORS**

**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS AND CONSTRUCTION INNOVATION**

February 24, 2025 @ 10AM - 3:30PM CST-SK



**WEBINAR**  
**Supporting Scale-Up and  
Commercialization for Israeli  
Start-Ups in North America**

▶ May 28 @ 8 AM (SK-CST) / 5 PM (IST)



Dr. Mehmet Tulbek  
President

Dr. Dorit Rozner  
CTO

food Saskatchewan Food Industry  
Development Centre Inc.

The Kitchen  
FoodTech Hub

by Shaus

UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

food Saskatchewan Food Industry  
Development Centre Inc.

March 6, 2025 | 10 AM CST-SK

Webinar

**Beyond Feed**

**Bioproduct Innovations with Canola Meal**

**WITH DR. BISHNU ACHARYA, PH.D., P.ENG.**



# Year in Review

PARTNERSHIPS HELP DRIVE INNOVATION

## Building Strategic Partnerships

In 2025, Food Centre forged industry partnerships from around the world to leverage collective expertise to drive innovation and strategic growth in Saskatchewan's agri-food sector. There were many collaborations to celebrate.

Saskatchewan's beverage industry will reap the benefits of the Food Centre's unique partnership with **9 Mile Legacy Brewing Co's LGCY: Innovation Hub**. LGCY: Innovation Hub is a fermentation-forward brewing facility that will help Food Centre clients commercialize their beverage products. With significant growth in the non-alcoholic and functional beverage segment, this partnership will be vital for industry growth.

Creating more opportunities for Saskatchewan's agtech and foodtech industry entrepreneurs was the driving motivation behind the partnership between the Food Centre and **Cultivator powered by Conexus**. This collaboration will make it easier for founders to navigate the ecosystem through leveraged support, programming and expertise. Both organizations share a focus on Saskatchewan innovation, whether it be through cultivating companies or supporting value-added opportunities in the food industry.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with **Bioenterprise** to become a partner in Canada's food and ag-tech engine. The new partnership will connect food-focused entrepreneurs from across Canada to the Food Centre's development, scale-up, manufacturing and commercialization programs.

Food Centre also signed a MOU with **Nurasa**, a wholly owned company of Temasek and a leading organization in sustainable nutrition development in Asia. The collaboration between Nurasa and the Food Centre will support agri-food companies by facilitating cross-border commercialization, with each organization acting as a gateway for market entry – Canada providing access to North America, and Singapore serving as a gateway to Asia.

Image: Laura Mock, Director of Cultivator and Mehmet Tubek, President of the Food Centre at the Media Event



Image (middle): Mehmet Tubek, President of the Food Centre and Shawn Moen, CEO and Co-Founder of 9 Mile Legacy Brewing

Image (bottom): Attendees participating in a live sensory of newly developed beverages at the event.



Image: MLAs at the Innovation Tour

## Global Biotech Week with Sneak Peek Event

Sneak Peek of our fermentation facility is fast becoming an annual event, as part of Ag-West Bio Global Biotech Week in Saskatchewan activities. Food Centre showcased the innovative technologies for ingredient manufacturing and fermentation offering filtration, separation, drying, and converting bio and plant materials to meet the demand for clean label, natural products.

We look forward to exploring the innovative opportunities of using fermentation, bioengineering, and downstream processing technologies to develop and commercialize food ingredients from all over the world.

## Members of the Legislative Assembly Tour Saskatchewan's Innovation Hub

The Food Centre was honoured to partner with Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS), Global Agri-Food Advancement Partnership (GAAP) and Ag-West Bio to bring Members of the Legislative Assembly to tour Saskatchewan's Biotechnology Hub. MLA's received a guided tour to explore how Saskatchewan institutions are accelerating crop and livestock breeding to deliver improved varieties faster to farmers and consumers. They saw how cutting-edge facilities design, build, test, and deliver novel food and agri-tech products.

Image: MLAs Tour AFIC2



## Supporting Saskatchewan Food Banks

The Food Centre is proud to partner with Regina Food Bank to package over 30,000 dry soup mixes and pancake mixes for distribution to their clients during the 2025 Christmas season. Collaborations like this are important to the Food Centre because they allow us to use our expertise and facilities to support community food security, reduce barriers to nutritious food, and contribute to a stronger, more resilient provincial food system.

Image (top): Global Biotech Week with Sneak Peek of AFIC2  
Image (bottom): Packaging dry soup mix for Regina Food Bank





# Year in Review

SPECIAL SUPPORT AND VIP TOURS

Image: Prairies Economic Development Canada Funding Announcement at GIFS

## Funding to Strengthen Capacity

The Food Centre was honoured to be among the recipients of Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan) funding announced at a media event hosted by the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS). The Food Centre received \$420,000 to support equipment purchases and facility renovations that will expand our co-packing capabilities and increase incubation space for emerging agri-food businesses.

## Indigenous Engagement & Opportunities

The Food Centre is committed to supporting Indigenous participation in Canada's agri-food and value-added sectors. In 2025, we continued to build meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities, organizations, and entrepreneurs, creating pathways for greater involvement in food processing and business development. Through our FEAD Program, we provided customized support to help Indigenous founders strengthen their skills, advance product ideas, and grow sustainable food businesses.

Images: (bottom) Minister Kaeding tour; (right) University of Saskatchewan President, Dr. Vince-Bossio and CFO, Deidre (Dee) Henne tour; (bottom right) Food Centre and FEAD team at Indigenous Business Gathering event

## VIP TOURS

- **Honourable Warren Kaeding, Minister of Trade and Export Development and Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan**
- **Lentils.org Farm Tour - welcomed 30+ guests**
- **Innovate UK group - identify collaboration opportunities between the two countries. This visit was all about shared priorities, the Canadian innovation landscape and complementary capabilities specifically in engineering biology.**
- **New University of Saskatchewan President, Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio and CFO, Deidre (Dee) Henne**





# Our Team

DRIVING AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION

Mehmet Tulbek - President  
 Greg Hamilton - VP of Operations (AFIC & AFIC2)  
 Ugbana Akumute - Admin, Executive Assistant & Data Analyst  
 Carmen Ly - Communications Director  
 Glenna Long - Finance Manager  
 Dana Reimer - Finance Assistant  
 Emily Nickel - Business Development Specialist  
 Maria Hounjet - Director, Crop Science, Product Development & Ingredient Innovation

## Product Development & Ingredient Innovation

Cathy Querimit - PD Program Lead  
 Anula Perera - Food Scientist  
 Danielle Osowsky - PD Specialist  
 Justin Chisholm - PD Technician  
 Pinar Senturk - 3D Food Printing Associate  
 Amelia Rivera - PD Assistant  
 Hanh Tran - Laboratory Technician  
 Sarah Hogarth - Laboratory Technician  
 Damien Moss - Processing Technician

## Processing & Extrusion (AFIC)

Matthew Marcotte - Extrusion R&D Manager  
 Cara Wandler - Extrusion Technologist  
 Kiran Vincent - Extrusion Operator  
 Ken Melchkart - Production Supervisor  
 Elmer Peralta - Production Supervisor  
 Nenita Sanchez - FSQA Assistant  
 Dan Turchyn - Shipper & Receiver  
 Chester Ugali - Shipper & Receiver  
 Patrick Campbell - Maintenance Assistant  
 Simon Li - Maintenance Assistant  
 Floyd Sookocheff - Maintenance Assistant  
 Chris Krauss - Maintenance Assistant  
 Kevin Braithwaite - Maintenance Assistant

## Food Safety & Skills Development

Hadis Tavakoli - Program Lead

**With over 70 full-time and part-time staff, the Food Centre brings together a diverse team of specialists working toward a common purpose - strengthening Saskatchewan's agri-food industry. No matter the role, our focus is to provide outstanding support to our clients and helping them bring innovative food products to market.**

## Pilot Plant

Scott Irvine - Manager  
 Nolan Langer - Assistant Manager & HACCP Coordinator  
 Sue Waldner - Production Supervisor  
 Jennifer Pasaje - Lead Operator  
 Michael Suru - Maintenance

## Fermentation & Bioengineering (AFIC2)

Pooba Ganeshan - Principal Scientist (Fermentation)  
 Brandon McLellan - Lead Fermentation Technologist  
 Aastha Arora - Junior Scientist  
 YanRan Tang - Research Associate  
 Prava Dhalsamant - Food Process Engineer  
 Vish Kumar - Food Scientist  
 Mark Dyck - Process Specialist

## Food Crop Quality Program

Mo Ait Kassou - Crop Quality Technician  
 Vijaya Jadhav - Crop Quality Technician  
 Zebadiah Hughes - Crop Quality Technician  
 Huy Au - Crop Quality Technician

## FC Food Inspection

Vince Neiser - Manager

## FEAD Canada

Nafisa Mahabub - Operation & Program Coordinator  
 Lindsay Toth - Member & Marketing Coordinator

\* Staff listing is current at time of printing

# Board of Directors Funding Partners

DRIVING AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION

## Board of Directors

We want to extend our deep gratitude to our Board of Directors, whose unique professional expertise, valuable skillsets, and unwavering dedication continue to drive the growth of the agri-food industry in Saskatchewan. Their contributions are instrumental in shaping a thriving future for the Food Centre and our sector.

Sav Bellissimo (Chair) - Independent Consultant

Bryan Kosteroski (Vice-Chair) - Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan

Rick Green (Secretary) - RCG Innovations Inc.

Pat Pitka - Genome Prairie

Matthew Bennet - Rise Advisors LLC

Regan Schmidt - University of Saskatchewan

Shannon Sears - Bioriginal Food & Science Corp.

Kendra Meier - HPS Food & Ingredients

Elyce Simpson Fraser - Simpson Seeds

Austin Calladine - Sweet Nutrition Company

Amy Standish - Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

### ADVISOR

Morgan Brown - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

### MEMBERS

William Greuel - Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Deidre (Dee) Henne - University of Saskatchewan

**Special thank you to past Chair, Blair Knippel, who served on the Board from 2017-2022 and as Chair from 2022 to 2025. Blair's leadership was instrumental in guiding the Food Centre through a period of significant growth and transition.**

## FUNDING PARTNERS

We are grateful for the financial support of Prairies Economic Development Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Government of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program, Pulse Canada and Saskatchewan Pulse Growers. Their contributions have enabled the continued operation of the Food Centre and development of unique programs that provide valuable funding, insights and resources to the industry.

- **Product Development Program**
- **NRC - Industrial Research Assistant Program**
- **Female Entrepreneurs in Agri-Food Development**
- **Pulse Quality Program**



*Image: New Crop Quality Lab*

### Pulse Quality Program

Funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, the Pulse Quality Program identifies optimal management practices for pulse crops grown in Western Canada. It also supports the development of pulse-based ingredients and products by building a robust database on pulse composition, functionality, and nutrition. This resource provides valuable insights for growers, agronomists, breeders, buyers, and end users to make informed decisions.

With renewed funding, the Food Centre renovated its classroom (pictured above) to support expanded activities (pictured above). As the program evolves, scope will include food-grade crops such as barley, oats, flaxseed, mustard and potentially forage seeds like sainfoin and alfalfa.



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122 Buckle Avenue  
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**Agri-Food Innovation Centre (AFIC)**  
2335 Schuyler Street  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan CANADA



**Pilot Plant**  
52 Innovation Boulevard  
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