



## SSFPA News

### SSFPA Launches National

**Webinar with CAPI:** To highlight the findings in the [SSFPA Policy Brief](#), the SSFPA has partnered with the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) to host a webinar "Facilitating Food Processing Start-Up and Scale-Up."

The webinar will focus on the positive impact small processors make on their local economies, despite the challenges they face.

Recommendations will specifically address the barriers faced by women and other equity-deserving groups within the sector. The webinar will take place on Thursday, July 14, at 12:00 eastern time. To learn more and register, click [here](#).

## FACILITATING FOOD PROCESSING START-UP & SCALE-UP



SMALL SCALE  
FOOD PROCESSOR  
ASSOCIATION



CAPI  
THE CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD  
POLICY INSTITUTE

THURSDAY, JULY 14TH, 2022 | 12 - 1:30 PM (ET)



## Industry Highlights

### New Funding Available for BC Businesses:

Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) has announced their Business Scale-up and Productivity program; applications are open until July 27, 2022.

Businesses in the program will receive interest-free, repayable funding, and preference is given to applications focused on value-added processing, value-added agritech, and clean resources/technology. PacifiCan is looking to strengthen British Columbia's presence in the above sectors through supporting businesses producing innovative goods and services. This funding is only applicable to businesses operating in British Columbia. To learn more and submit an expression of interest, click [here](#).



## President's Corner

*Monthly musings from SSFPA President Pam Baxter*

What was your first job in the food business? Was that your inspiration to jump into the fray as an owner?

My first job in the food business was as a line-worker at a Canada Packers chicken factory in Winnipeg when I was a university student. Nineteen. I kept that job full and part-time for two years. Looking back, I see three strong themes – the physical job itself, the people, and food safety. That's three columns!



Starting with Food Safety. I was impressed even then. The chickens were stunned and killed within seconds of being put on a line. Within minutes they were being processed by a long line of skilled workers, women and men. Then they were ejected into a series of ice-water tanks to be washed and cooled. Then graded and packed in ice and whisked off to cold storage. They were out the door to buyers quick as a wink. We did 10,000 chickens per day.

Every day we got clean new lab-coat style smocks. We wore hair nets. There was a full-time veterinarian who was always on the scene, taking samples and testing. There were two full-time inspectors plus workers on the line examining every single chicken and its guts, and pulling off any with spotty liver, speckled skin, certain abrasions, and a myriad of other conditions.

When the processing shift ended the night staff came on. Three or four cleaners would hose down and clean the entire factory over the next eight hours. It would be dry and pristine when we returned in the morning.

We workers were treated quite well and respectfully. It was an honest job with decent pay. And, if anyone was caught being mean to a live chicken, that person was fired immediately. If any worker was acting in gross way to other workers – out the door. I was never put off eating chicken!

## Affirmation Station

*Each month, we will be posting something new to remind food processors how incredible their tenacity and work ethic are, even in the face of incredible challenges.*

This month, we asked SSFPA members, "What is the most important thing the SSFPA has done for you?" We have compiled some of our favourite quotes below. The goal of the SSFPA is to uplift and support food entrepreneurs – we have your back!

### "The SSFPA always has my back!"

**"Networking and connecting us with others regarding industry opportunities, sourcing materials, advice on suppliers and some collaboration."**

**"Moral support is probably the most important thing that the SSFPA association has done for us. It has no monetary value but is so important."**

## Stories of Innovation

*Each month, we choose one of our Stories of Innovation entries to highlight the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of our members. To access our full catalog, click [here](#).*

### Laura Virginillo - Modern General Food Group

Originally starting as a bakery and restaurant, Laura Virginillo had to pivot her business model when the pandemic hit. "I wanted to make sure I was staying true to what I wanted to do – recipe development, product development, and larger-scale manufacturing, so that a broader audience could enjoy these specialty foods." After a move from BC to Ontario, Laura's focus has been on scaling up her production and developing products that blend innovative food creation with classic recipes. "I want to maintain people's history with food, people's heritage. How do we change for today and still hold traditions?" Her business, Modern General Food Group, focuses on wholesale to stores across Canada; offerings include crustini, a variety of specialty jams and jellies, simple syrups, and spice blends. When it comes to innovation and growing a business, Laura's best tip is to never give up. "Every step, no matter how small or even if seems like two steps back, will eventually get you to your goal." As she scales up, Laura's goal is to help her customers come together around her food. "The feeling of accomplishment comes when something I developed and put into a container is bought by a customer and they want to share it with family and friends."

To check out Modern General Food Group, click [here](#).

