



SSFPA News

SSFPA Announces Inclusive Venture Capital Initiative: The SSFPA has announced funding from the national Women Entrepreneurship Strategy's (WES) Inclusive Venture Capital Initiative. The purpose of this program is to increase women/intersectional entrepreneurs' access to the financing, talent, networks, and expertise they need to start up, scale up, and access new markets.

For entrepreneurs interested in how to benefit from this program:

- This program is a training program to help prepare you and your business for outside investment, and includes scale-up training, investment readiness training, one on one coaching, and the opportunity to pitch to investors that are being primed to understand the value-added food business space.
- Applications for this program will commence in early May 2023. Applicants will apply online; the SSFPA and our partners across Canada will announce when the application form is live.
- For more information, contact Wl@ssfpa.net

**Women
Entrepreneurship
Strategy**



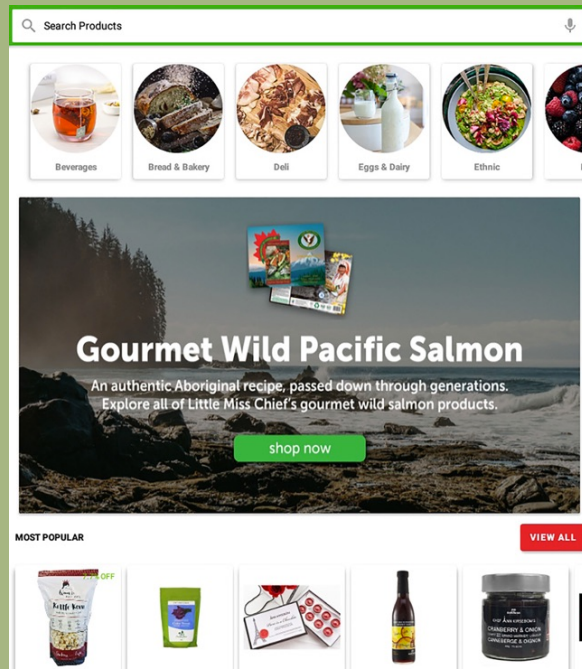
SSFPA Learn to Earn Webinar Series:

- The March Learn to Earn webinar on GS1 is available to watch [here](#).
- The April edition will be with Canada Post to discuss shipping for small businesses and making the most of your shipping discount. It will be on April 12th at 12:30 pacific time. Join live [here](#).



Buy BC Food & Drink: The [Buy BC Food & Drink](#) marketplace is an e-commerce platform where vendors can create their own storefront to sell their products. Not only is this service convenient for established businesses, but it is also a great option for new businesses who may not have the time and resources to create a complete website for themselves. Buy BC Food & Drink has both retail and wholesale options, and comes with personalized vendor management to help vendors get the most out of their storefront.

For consumers, it is a one stop shop for interesting, healthy food, made right in BC! Alongside vendors, there are also fun recipes and vendor blogs that show off innovative ways to use the products found on the site. There is also an [app](#) for those that prefer to shop mobile!



President's Corner

Monthly musings from SSFPA President Pam Baxter

Food Allergies. Health Canada estimates that food allergies affect as many as 6% of young children and 3-4% of adults in westernized countries like Canada. This matters to us growers and processors! We don't ever want to hear that a child has had anaphylactic shock after eating our products!

So what are these risky foods? The 8 most common food allergies are milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans. My daughter has celiac disease, and I surely am jumpy about what is in food! And my son gets a big reaction from eating crustaceans such as shrimp. My husband gets a reaction from eating cherries. Nothing fazes me, though.

Over the years, Health Canada has set limits, such as parts per million, of allergens allowed in food. For instance, 20 ppm of gluten is deemed safe enough for people with celiac disease. It is mandatory now to declare allergens - and no hiding behind names such as "malt". If there is a risk of cross contamination, such as using equipment to process both gluten and non-gluten food, then the label must declare "may contain".



For a small business to become third-party certified as "gluten free", it is very expensive, every year. If you are not willing to make this investment, and if you follow all the protocols, a former executive director of the Canadian Celiac Association assured me that food may be declared "gluten free". To prove it, request from the supplier the specifications of all the ingredients that you use. Be totally strict about your Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). And you can test. Integrity from top to bottom is what we like! Right?

Food for Thought

A space for posting insights for food processors, ranging from business tips to words of affirmation!

Labels and barcodes work hand in hand to make sure your product is able to be sold. There are many requirements for not only a well-made label, but also a label that meets provincial and federal requirements. For an overview on labeling, check our [blog post](#).

Barcodes are just as important. If you are looking to sell your product in a retail store, you will need a barcode. GS1 is one of the largest organizations that provides unique barcodes that can be used globally. There are various requirements in order to obtain a GS1 barcode - it can get confusing! The SSFPA did a webinar with GS1 to answer common questions and conundrums - watch it [here](#).



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](#).

Afke Zonderland- Okanagan Rawesome

After moving to the Okanagan region and developing a passion for the outdoors, Afke Zonderland wanted a snack that didn't compromise on taste or nutritional value. Add in the ancient practice of dehydration, and you have Okanagan Rawesome crackers. Says Zonderland, "There are hardly any crackers on the market based in vegetables, with no dairy, no grains, and that are really dense in nutrients. That's a big innovation in itself, but on the other hand, it's like we've gone back to the past. This (dehydration) was the way of life in Canada back thousands of years ago when people dried their harvest to survive the long winters. So, is it 'innovation'? Of course. But it's really ancient." Today, Okanagan Rawesome's product line has expanded to include crisps and dips that are available in-store in BC and Alberta, as well as online. Their crisps are made with dehydrated flax, sprouts, and a variety of vegetables for different flavours.

