



## SSFPA News

**Learn to Earn Webinar Series:** The SSFPA Learn to Earn series is a webinar series on breaking down hot topics in a quick, easy-to-digest format. Whether you join live or watch the recordings, Learn to Earn is a great way to have updated information on relevant tools, services, softwares, and more. Each webinar is only 30 minutes and features a Q&A with questions from SSFPA members.

- Check out the most recent [Learn to Earn with Canada Post](#).

**AGM Meeting Date Announced:** The SSFPA has announced the date for the 2022 Annual General Meeting as May 17th. Starting at 6:00 Pacific time, the AGM will review current initiatives, as well as the strategy for the upcoming year. If you are an SSFPA member, keep an eye on your inbox for the invitation link. Pictured is a photo from the very first electronic AGM, held in 2004!



## Industry Highlights

**The Investment Agriculture Fund launches the Food Processing Growth Fund:** The Food Processing Growth Fund is a three-year, up to \$20M, program funded by the Government of BC through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) and delivered by IAF. Part of the fund will specifically cater to small processors. The purpose of the fund is to help entrepreneurs in four specific areas of business: facility upgrades, technology upgrades, R&D, and employee training. Eligible processors must reside in BC and must have been in business for at least two years. The fund is expected to become active this summer; click [here](#) for more information.

**The Government of Ontario launches the Agri-Food Energy Cost Saving Initiative:** The Agri-Food Energy Cost Savings Initiative is a new cost-share initiative to help food processors lower their energy costs through supporting facility upgrades, new equipment, and new technology. Under this initiative, applicants can receive up to 20% cost share for eligible costs, to a maximum of \$300,000, per business. Eligibility processors must reside in Ontario, and applications are open until June 5th, 2023. Click [here](#) for more information.

## President's Corner

*Monthly musings from SSFPA President Pam Baxter*

Dreams and practicalities; what led you to grow what you grow, and make what you make? Did you discover the wonders of elderberry, or chia, or sprouts, or nuts, or spices, or fermentation, and on and on? Did you look for a product on the shelves and discover it wasn't there? Did your Grandma have a fantastic cultural recipe? Did you come up with a special food for a loved one on a special diet? Did you inherit a family farm? Did you live in a certain place, and look to the sea or land for ideas to make your mark, earn a living?

The Small Scale Food Processor Association encourages the dreams of our 350 members by addressing the practicalities. At a recent strategic planning meeting, the Board boiled the services and benefits down to a couple of powerful statements. "SSFPA helps you make money! SSFPA helps you save money!" While we haven't got this into a statement yet, the list-serve is like a self-help group - we all help each other. I'm struck by the generosity of our members!



I remember years ago my favourite one-stop wholesaler in Vancouver, Louie's Cash and Carry, closed. They had supplied tray paper, sample cups, rubber gloves, bags, aprons, bins, cleaning products and so much more. I was up a creek and appealed to the membership for help. Recommendations flooded in, and I found a nearby business Enterprise Paper that had all the stuff I needed.

I had my dream, and it was constrained by practicalities. I really don't think I could have made it without the services, benefits and individual help provided by SSFPA and its members. How about you?

## Food for Thought

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

May is mental health awareness month! As busy entrepreneurs, it can be hard to slow down; but constantly being on the go and problem solving can quickly lead to burnout and negatively affect your mental health. Taking care of your mental health is a long-term investment in yourself and your future. Here are some small ways to boost your mood when you are stressed and improve your mental health:

- Move your body - get outside and breathe fresh air
- Write down your accomplishments - it is important to recognize your own success
- Call a loved one



The Government of Canada has mental health resources that are easy to access if you are struggling. Click [here](#) for more information.

## 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](#).*

### Dyana Biagi - Aji Gourmet Products

Moving to a new country can be tough, but Dyana Biagi brought a little piece of home with her when she moved to Canada from Colombia. She brought along her recipe for Aji, a spicy South American sauce that quickly became a hit at parent get-togethers and ultimately led to the founding of Aji Gourmet Products. Today, Aji Gourmet Products sells chili sauces and mixes available at retailers across British Columbia and Alberta, as well as online. Dyana's family has been an integral part of the business, with both her daughter and son continuing to be active in the company. Says Dyana, "Our product is innovative because we are the only chunky chili sauces out there, gluten, sugar, soy, and nut free. We are all-natural and still have a shelf-stable product. We have fought to keep our prices competitive, while keeping our products clean, using the best ingredients, healthy, without sacrificing quality."

