



SSFPA News

The SSFPA is now bilingual: Bonjour – SSFPA content will now be available in French! In order to best cater to all Canadian entrepreneurs, the SSFPA will now be offering resources in French. We are in the process of updating our websites so that all resources will be available in both English and French. Check out our women's site and use the button in the menu to translate the website into french. As part of this initiative, there is also a new option to subscribe to receive the newsletter in your inbox in French.



Industry Highlights

New focus on ESG; ESG Regulations have Increased by 155% Over the Past Decade:

Environmental Social Governance, aka ESG, is a method for running your business that recommends taking environmental issues, social issues, and corporate governance issues into account.

- *Environmental* issues may include corporate climate policies, energy use, waste, pollution, natural resource conservation, and treatment of animals. ESG considerations can also help evaluate any environmental risks a company might face and how the company is managing those risks.
- *Social* aspects look at the company's relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Does it hold suppliers to its own ESG standards? Does the company donate a percentage of its profits to the local community or encourage employees to perform volunteer work there? Do workplace conditions reflect a high regard for employees' health and safety? Or does the company take unethical advantage of its customers?
- *Governance* standards ensure a company uses accurate and transparent accounting methods, pursues integrity and diversity in selecting leadership, and is accountable to shareholders.

According to Reporting Exchange, ESG regulations have increase 155% over the past 10 years. Reporting Exchange has also mapped out over 1,700 reporting indicators across a variety of jurisdictions. Check out our Food for Thought section to learn about ways a small business can incorporate ESG!

President's Corner

Monthly musings from SSFPA President Pam Baxter

Truth and Trust. I just finished reading *Off The Record* by Peter Mansbridge, the retired anchor of CBC TV's The National nightly newscast. He recounted some of his meaningful experiences and interviews. At the end of the book he talked about truth and trust, and how critical it is for journalists and politicians to be truthful and to be trustworthy.

Those concepts apply to farmers and processors, too. I sum it up as "integrity". It has to do with safe growing practices, safe ingredients, safe manufacturing ("Good Manufacturing Practices" aka GMPs), proper labelling, etc. And it goes beyond that. There is shipping and delivering. I remember delivering an order to a grocery store – the receiver started to count my product to see if it matched the invoice. I told her my reputation would be toast if I ever cheated a buyer! And there is guaranteeing your product, even if the customer is wrong. Traceability comes into play in this instance. And paying your bills, even if it hurts. Integrity from A to Z.

Which brings me to the Small Scale Food Processor Association. We have an excellent reputation! Why: truth, trust, and integrity. When we have a contract with a provincial or federal government department, we fulfill it entirely, from deliverables to accounting. And it's good! Other groups and even a foreign government, Trinidad and Tobago, have approached us to do work for them. Our 350 members notice. Others notice, too. That's why we are still in the game; integrity and hard work!



Food for Thought

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

Implementing ESG as a Small Business: As discussed in the Industry Highlights, ESG practices are playing an important part in what customers are purchasing and investing in. As a small business, it can seem difficult to begin implementing ESG concepts into your own business; a huge chunk of the literature dedicated to ESG is tailored towards large businesses. However, ESG is becoming attractive for both customers and investors alike. Here are some questions to ask yourself to evaluate areas of your business related to ESG:

- Can my packaging be greener?
- Does my staff reflect a diverse workforce?
- Is the wage I pay considered a living wage?
- Is my supply chain robust against sudden regulatory or environmental changes?

ESG is important for a variety of reasons: companies with a net-positive impact are more attractive to customers, investors, and potential employees. Making switches like digital receipts or compostable packaging can slim the margins, saving a company money. And, as regulations in food process constantly change and tighten, being a business that follows ESG practices puts you in a better position to adapt. Many food businesses already implements components of ESG – if you do, begin recording them!

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](#).

Catalina Dudka - Caramoomel Products Inc.

When Catalina took over her parent's business in the 90s, she felt like she was "thrown off the deep end." The company, Caramoomel, makes gourmet spreads using farm-sourced ingredients, such as apple caramel butter and raspberry chocolate caramel spread. Catalina says that one of the most challenging times for the business was in 2008, when the financial crisis knocked out over 60% of her business. After being forced to pivot, Catalina tried a variety of revenue streams, and found that retail, where customers could try samples, worked best for her. She also accessed business and marketing tools through the Women's Enterprise Centre. Catalina says these collaborative spaces, created through Community Futures and the SSFPA, are valuable because they allow for "women trading value for value." Due to family issues and COVID-19, Catalina made the difficult decision to close Caramoomel in 2020.

