



## SSFPA News

**Looking to grow your food business? Attend an info session for the SSFPA's latest project:** The SSFPA is excited to share with members our upcoming new project, Venture Capital Ready: Investment Training for Women Entrepreneurs. This is an exciting new training program for women/intersectional entrepreneurs looking to scale their businesses with venture capital investment. Program Manager and SSFPA founder Sandy Mark will be hosting a webinar to help SSFPA members learn more about this project. This webinar will be held on Tuesday, September 19, at 12:00 eastern. Use this [link](#) to sign up and attend. To apply for the program directly, click [here](#).



**Venture-Capital Ready**  
Investment Training for Women Entrepreneurs

**Comprendre le Capital de Risque**  
Formation à l'investissement pour les Femmes Entrepreneurs

## Industry Highlights

### Progress, not perfection; Canada can still do more for women entrepreneurs:

According to the Women Business Enterprise Council of Canada (WBE Canada), the number of women-owned businesses in Canada continues to rise, despite a lack of specified support. Just in BC alone, there are 74 certified women-owned businesses, which accounts for approximately 12% of women-owned businesses across Canada. While the growth of women-owned businesses is encouraging, support infrastructure is still not sufficient, especially compared with our sister to the south. "In the United States, if you're looking to build a business and export, there is quite an emphasis on being minority- or women-owned," said Dionne Laslo-Baker, founder and CEO of Victoria-based DeeBee's Organics. Additionally, many large US corporations have quotas for orders from minority-founded businesses, which can help small businesses gain contracts and drive sales. For Canada, the key to supporting women-owned businesses will be implementing supplier diversity, as the US has done, says WBE Canada President Siliva Pencak. "So the suppliers who want to do business with government in the U.S. have to have a 25 per cent spend with diverse businesses, which is an incredible commitment because that creates lots of opportunities for small businesses," said Pencak.

While support in Canada can still be bolstered, women entrepreneurs can still take advantage of existing supports, such as:

- Check out the recipients of the WES Inclusive Venture Capital Initiative, who are all organizations that have created programs specifically to benefit women entrepreneurs. The SSFPA's new Venture-Capital Ready program is a receipt of this initiative!
- Check out the Women's Entrepreneurship fund, which provides loans of up to \$50,000 to new businesses founded by women.
- The Scotiabank Women's Initiative not only provides financing and investment options, but also offers education and support to women-owned small businesses.

## President's Corner

*Monthly musings from SSFPA President Pam Baxter*

This and That. Lately I have been preoccupied by the topic of nutrition. I've started a book by Chris Van Tulleken, a British physician and scientist, called *Ultra-Processed People*. It's about ultra-processed food – such as cheese spread, French fries, boxed breakfast cereals, carbonated drinks, candy bars, margarine, etc. These are made with ingredients most would not have in their kitchen cupboards. I looked at the ingredients for the sour cream in our fridge – there are five ingredients I don't have. They are thickeners, emulsifiers, preservatives and additives for flavour. Did you know you can make your own? All you need is cream, lemon juice and whole milk and let it sit for 24 hours. Nutrition labels on ultra-processed food don't tell the whole story. What about all the micro-nutrients that are missing that you would normally get in food you made yourself?

Tomatoes – my three bushes are bountiful this year! What to do? We made chili. Tonight my husband will make spaghetti sauce. I gave lots away. I learned to drizzle oil and salt on a whole dish-worth of cherry tomatoes and roast them in the oven at high heat. Delicious!



And finally, one of Peter Gzowski's favourite jokes. He was the popular CBC radio host of "Morningside". A tourist couple were taking a train across Canada. The endless prairies disoriented them. At a stop, the husband got off to ask a conductor where they were. "Saskatoon, Saskatchewan" was the answer. Seated again, his wife asked him where they were. "I don't know, they don't speak English here."

## Food for Thought

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

**Asking for help is a strength!** Entrepreneurs are scrappy, persevering, and self-reliant. While it is important to be able to figure things out, asking for help is also an undervalued strength! The phrase "your network is your net worth" may be overplayed, but the sentiment still rings true. Especially for the food industry, starting and running a business can be daunting: figuring out production, food safety, tracking and traceability, labelling – the list goes on. It is impossible to be an expert in each of these areas – so lean on your peers! Joining peer support groups is a great way to meet other business owners and exchange questions and support. For SSFPA members, the Listserv is a great way to poll our over 300 members for advice or expertise.



## 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](#).*

### Gillian Watt - BC's Best Raw Pet Food

The importance your diet plays into your overall wellness is not just important for us – it is also important for our furry companions! With many modern diets for cats and dogs causing digestive issues, it was important for Gillian to create a product that is full of wholesome, natural ingredients. Gillian partners with farms in BC that raise organic, grass-fed beef and poultry, which are the base of her raw-food pet diets. Says Gillian, "These ingredients help them stay healthy and at the same time keep local pet food dollars in our communities, and reward producers who are raising grass-fed proteins, and/or utilizing regenerative agriculture practices." When asked what her biggest piece of advice would be for someone looking to start a food processing business, Gillian's advice centered around building your network. "Don't be scared...Make sure to find great mentors who can help you through the learning stage and learning curves."

