



SSFPA News



WAGE Celebrates 5 Years: This December is Women and Gender Equality Canada's (WAGE) 5 year anniversary. The SSFPA is grateful for WAGE's support of the SSFPA Women's Initiative, and their commitment to closing the gender gap in Canada. [Read about WAGE's milestone moments over the last 5 years here.](#)

Venture-Capital Ready: Forming Relationships with Investors

From Project Manager Sandy Mark

The SSFPA is delivering the Venture-Capital Ready program to train women food business founders to prepare themselves to present their business to investors. This is bringing up a variety of questions, in addition to the technical questions to program is designed to ask.

One underlying question relates to what the relationship between the investor and the founder should look like. The founder is eager to grow her business and has months, sometimes years of investment of body and soul in creating and nurturing their business idea. Engaging with an investor means "giving up" a piece of that business to a new person or investment entity. This can feel very risky, and in fact, it can be very risky if the investor has ownership over the business's intellectual property, or the investor pressures the founder to make decisions they are not comfortable with.



On the other hand, the investor is also risking their own money on a business. Although they will spend time and resources to do a really deep dive looking at the business plan, the team, the current operations, and the market potential of the business, putting their money to work, especially in an early stage investment (which most of our founders require) holds considerable risk for the investor as well—she could lose all of that money if the business fails!



Both parties will work to identify, mitigate, and overcome the "hard" risks that emerge through the mutual due diligence process. Fundamentally, it is important for the founder to realize that she is not only receiving financial support to help her move towards her business goals and aspirations, but that the goals and aspirations of the investor are also in play. After all the exploration of the business and its potential to flourish and a deal is struck, it is important that both parties understand that they

share common aspirations and that they are "in this together" and a positive, open working relationship is established.

Community Highlight

Highlighting the members and partners of the SSFPA

This month, the SSFPA is highlighting member **Noorish Foods**.

Noorish foods is a line of adaptogenic hot chocolate, tea and spiced honey blends. Adaptogens are plants, roots, or herbs that help our bodies naturally manage stress, anxiety, fatigue, and more.

Founder Sheniz Wilkie's advice to other food processors is "In the depth of complexity, strive for the most simplistic path to achieving your goals. Life is meant to be enjoyed, so choose your path with your quality of life at the forefront of your decision-making. When you're not loving your path, redefine it so you can fall back in love with your mission again."

You can purchase Noorish products online or at select stores across Alberta. [Check out Noorish products here.](#)



The Scoop

Monthly musings from the SSFPA Executive

Ultra-processed food. Finally, I finished the book by British author Chris Van Tulleken, M.D. He studies the food industry and how it affects human health. His well-researched book *Ultra-Processed People: Why We Can't Stop Eating Food That Isn't Food* took a while to absorb (haha).

Dr.Tulleken describes the conundrum facing consumers – should they eat inexpensive ultra-processed food (fast-food restaurants, boxed cereals, candy bars), or can they afford the cost and time to buy and prepare their own food. This is not just a personal issue, it affects disadvantaged people horribly.

Industrial food producers seek to make food that tastes good, looks good, feels right in the mouth, stays fresh for maybe years, doesn't attract bugs, and is inexpensive. They answer to shareholders. Making money is their motive – sales people have targets to reach, volume buying can reap discounts for retailers, and the retailers are determined to make a profit as well.

Raw plants like wheat and soy, and raw meat like pork and chicken do not stay in their original form. They are separated into their parts – for instance milk will be separated into proteins, whey, fat, lactose, minerals and more. These parts can be dried or treated to be stable. They are then easier to work with, and can be combined in any number of ways with additives such that they resemble food. There are additives that mimic the taste and feel of cream, eggs, and milk. Chemists have loved those challenges.



The problems – Micronutrients are stripped out. Some additives have been shown to disrupt the gut microbiome and cause inflammation and gut diseases. Some additives have been shown to cause cancer or fertility problems or birth defects. In fact, too many people, with a diet high in ultra-processed food, are now living with obesity while at the same time they are malnourished.

The facts are: real food costs more; and we, who have a shortage of time, must prepare it ourselves. Or, we can buy real food made by small scale food processors, such as our members. Most of our members are growing or making food of a quality they could not originally find in stores. Our members are filling a gap – healthy food can be available – just look for it, and be prepared to pay for the reliable quality.

I hope you have a happy and healthy 2024! – Pam Baxter, SSFPA President

