



SSFPA News

February is Black History Month! This year, the 2024 theme for Black History Month is: “Black Excellence: A Heritage to Celebrate; a Future to Build.” This theme celebrates the rich past and present contributions and accomplishments of Black people in Canada, while aspiring to embrace new opportunities for the future. Here are some ways to learn more:

- [Learn about significant events in Black history in Canada](#)
- [Read about the impact of organizations led by Black women in Canada](#)
- [For Black entrepreneurs, check out this resource guide for Black entrepreneurs in Canada](#)
- [Access the Government of Canada’s digital toolkit to help you share Black History Month on your social media channels](#)



Venture-Capital Ready: Pitch Party

From Project Manager Sandy Mark

The culmination of the first cohort of VC Ready is here: the Pitch Party! Eight businesses presented their pitches to an audience of coaches, investors, and partners. This was a valuable opportunity for each entrepreneur to gain feedback on their pitch, and practice answering questions about their business on the fly. Check out each business and visit their website for more information:



- [Save da Sea](#) is a plant-based seafood brand that provides a delicious and environmentally friendly alternative to fish.



- [Oomé](#) is an ethically sourced, locally produced line of flavoured tofu.



- [Solenzi](#) offers Italian-inspired, value-added foods, such as protein enriched pasta, vegetable antipasto, and fresh sauces.



- [Split Rail Brewing Company](#) produces small-batch beer and soda in Ontario using hand-picked ingredients from their local community.



- [Smithereens Mushroom Inc.](#) grows mushrooms for both cooking and medicinal uses. They have innovative offerings such as spice blends and mushroom extracts.



- [Cat's Creamery Corp.](#) makes buttermilk ice cream with fun flavours like Saskatoon Berry and Cherry Cheesecake.



- [Origin Gluten-Free Bakery](#) is a 100% gluten-free bakery serving up baked goods like bread, pastries, and desserts.



- [Wild Folk](#) is a line of botanical non-alcoholic cocktails that come in recognizable flavours like Sparkling Negroni and Bee's Knees.

Community Highlight

Highlighting the members and partners of the SSFPA

This month, the SSFPA is highlighting partner the **Fair Finance Fund**.

The Fair Finance Fund is a non-profit social finance fund that provides loans and mentorship services to food processors and farms located in Ontario. They partner with investors to provide opportunities for investors to use their capital to build local food systems and support local processors and growers. The Fair Finance Fund is a partner for the SSFPA's VC Ready program.

With loans of up to \$200,000.00, applicants reap benefits such as no hidden fees, character-based lending, and flexible repayment options. Many of these options are not available through traditional banks or lenders. Their application process allows for one-on-one coaching to help answer questions and review key documents.

[Check out the Fair Finance Fund here.](#)



The Scoop

Monthly musings from the SSFPA Executive

Board of Directors. Being a board member of an organization is rewarding! When you care about your own business, and you know that the general success of other food businesses will uplift everyone, and you can see that strong cohesive messages and actions make success for all more likely – then you are primed to become a board member. If you are from a background that is Indigenous, new Canadian, and other minorities (even women, or older people) that have historically had less importance with financial institutions and stores, and you want to advocate for them, then you are primed!

Consider the personal benefits, the advantages, of being a board member of the Small Scale Food Processor Association, as well as the altruistic benefits. You will meet great people! You will be listened to. That's good for your business, too.

You learn about the “big picture” – what is happening in your province and across Canada. The Board is in constant contact with Provincial ministries, Federal Ministries, and industry associations. Seeing the big picture is an advantage!

You are one of the first to hear about new programs, and you can apply right away. That's an advantage!

Sometimes newspapers and magazines come calling – you may be asked to do the interview. That's an advantage!

By volunteering your time and brain to the SSFPA, you help uplift all small and medium processors and growers. AND there is benefit to you personally and to your business. That's an advantage! Take the plunge – become a board member – you will be glad you did!

–Pam Baxter, SSFPA President

If you are interested in becoming an SSFPA Board Member, please contact pambaxter@shaw.ca



Some of the first Board Members in 2004

