



SSFPA News

Check out our new Resource Bank! As part of the VC Ready program, the SSFPA has developed a Resource Bank that contains resources related to all aspects of starting and scaling a food business.

Wondering about how to qualify for a business loan, execute proper food safety planning, take stunning photos of your food product, and more? Using the Resource Bank, you can filter resources by location, topic, free vs. paid, and much more. Currently, there are over 200 resources accessible in the bank, and additional resources being added on a regular basis.

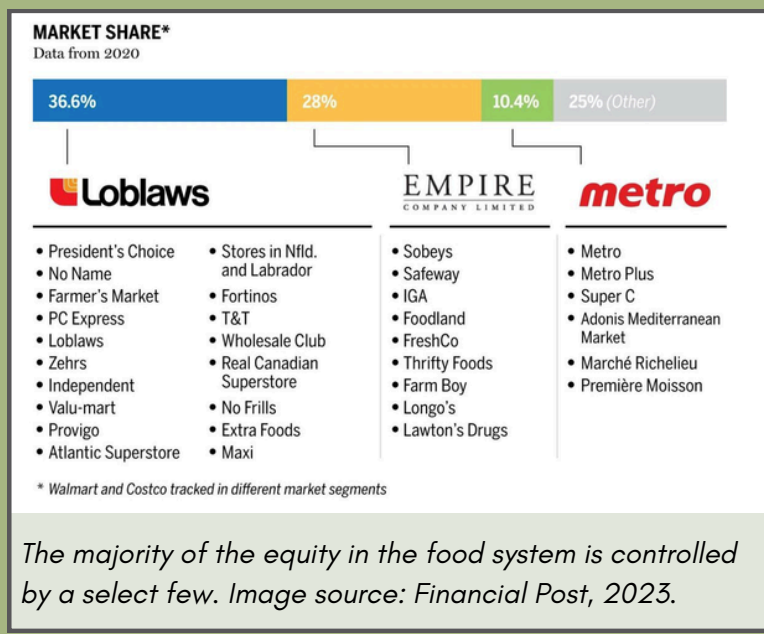
Check out the Resource Bank [here](#).



Venture-Capital Ready: Finding the “Missing Middle”

From Project Manager Sandy Mark

During the SSFPA's twenty years of helping Canadian food processors start and grow their businesses, one thing has become abundantly clear: there is a stark lack of available resources for small and medium-sized food businesses (SMEs). Simultaneously, equity in the food system has become consolidated in the hands of a select few corporate giants. Specifically, a lack of regional infrastructure (processing facilities, storage facilities, distribution chains, etc.) makes it extremely difficult for small food businesses to scale. This infrastructure gap is called the "Missing Middle."



The majority of the equity in the food system is controlled by a select few. Image source: Financial Post, 2023.

Helping women founders grow their businesses through the VC Ready program has renewed the SSFPA's focus on addressing this issue. In April 2024, the SSFPA and the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute co-hosted the webinar "The Missing Middle: Policy Interventions on Regional Food Systems." We recruited keynote speaker Kent Mullinix, the Director of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, to speak to his experience researching this issue.



The SSFPA team during its 2019 Consultation Event, to discuss policy solutions to infrastructure gaps affecting food processors.

To learn more about the Missing Middle, check out the SSFPA's Policy Brief, which details specific recommendations to bolster regional food infrastructure to better support food SMEs. And, keep an eye out - we plan to release further research on this important issue.

Community Highlight

Highlighting the members and partners of the SSFPA

This month, the SSFPA is highlighting member **Chef Pola Culinary Inc.**

After 25 years of experience in the food and hospitality industry as a chef and bakery owner, in 2014 Pola and her husband launched Chef Pola Culinary Inc., which helps companies launch and distribute natural and functional foods into the Canadian market.

Passionate about health and clean eating, in 2019 Pola launched her own brand, Chef Pola's Granola. Her granola is low-glycemic and vegan, gluten-free, and contains no processed sugars. Says Pola, "I carefully chose every ingredient to ensure the end result is nutritious, balanced, and easy on the teeth with no added sugar."

Chef Pola's Granola can be found in select retail stores across BC, and [online](#).

[Check out Chef Pola Culinary Inc. here.](#)



The Scoop

Monthly musings from the SSFPA Executive

Food and Connections. This past week my husband John and I hosted a family from Finland, a couple and their three teenage offspring. From a common ancestor born in 1852, one member of that first family emigrated to Canada and one member spent some time in Canada prospecting for silver and gold and then went back to farming in Finland. John descended from Rosa (b. 1880) who stayed in Canada. The visiting Finnish family descended from Rosa's brother Oskar (b. 1887) who resumed farming in Finland.

Eight years ago, John and I visited the large Finnish family in Finland. We met parents, aunts and uncles, brothers, cousins and kids. More than half are still farming. We were grandly hosted in three homes. They made Finnish food, including moose. You see how I remember the food and camaraderie?

Now, we returned the favour for our honoured guests - food, camaraderie and sightseeing. I don't really know what could be considered a Canadian dish, but we surely knew how to source local food. BC-raised chicken and pork and a local butcher supplied the meat. Farmers' markets provided all salad ingredients plus pies; a local bakery provided more desserts. Frozen local berries with BC whipped cream rounded out the offerings. We were gratified to see they chomped it all up! Isn't that what we, members of SSFPA, are all about? Growing and making delicious food, and offering it to grateful consumers. I think that is why we are in business (besides trying to make a profit!).



Late 1950s. Rosa ran a speakeasy in Sudbury, Ontario. Her husband Victor had a taxi stand. Their granddaughter Norma (John's mother) was a model for Simpson's catalogue and a salesgirl at the perfume counter.

- Pam Baxter, SSFPA President

