

The Canadian Food Innovation Network's

FOODTECH FRONTIER

du Réseau canadien d'innovation en alimentaire

MEET THE INNOVATORS 2026

CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword 3

Cohort at a Glance 4

From Halifax to the World: Dispension's Big Year 5

Key Trends 7

Meet the Innovators 9

Sponsors 50

FOREWORD

Food business productivity is not just a headline on Canada's business pages right now. It is a crucial aspect of discussions about national security, trade strategy, and consumer affordability. Our food sector contributes over $145 billion to Canada's GDP and supports more than two million jobs in the post farm gate supply chain. Few sectors touch as many Canadian lives, or matter as much to our quality of life and prosperity.

This year has put all of us under real strain. Trade disruption and the erosion of a once-stable relationship with our largest trading partner have highlighted the severity of something we've been saying for a while: Canada's food supply chain is strong at the farm gate and weak in the middle. Too much of the processing that turns raw commodities into finished food happens outside our borders, which means every tariff and every shock lands harder here than it should. Grocery prices are up roughly 22 per cent since 2022, nearly double broader inflation, and the Bank of Canada has pointed to import costs as the main driver.

It's time to get serious about food sovereignty. A recent KPMG assessment put it bluntly: Canada does not have an independent food supply chain and that has real consequences for how much control we have over what we grow, what we process, and what we pay for it. Ottawa's National Food Security Strategy, launched this June, is a direct response to that reality, offering support for small and mid-sized processors and a new agri-food project-finance fund. It's a serious commitment, and CFIN will help make sure it delivers benefits and supports that work toward this strategy's success. We've spent years building the connections and infrastructure this sector needed, and we intend to keep leading the charge until that commitment turns into meaningful and successful automation and technology adoption across the industry.



Here's where things stand: in the first half of 2026 alone, CFIN tracked $62.7 million in disclosed Canadian foodtech funding across 47 deals, with the vast majority landing in three domains: manufacturing technology, food safety and traceability, and next-generation ingredients. That's the infrastructure layer of our food system, the part that rarely makes headlines but is exactly where Canadian innovation needs to focus.

Worrisomely, not one Canadian-led round was valued at Series A or beyond in the first half of 2026. Our domestic funds are active and capable at the very earliest stages, but the larger rounds that enable a company to scale are rare and increasingly led from outside Canada.

We're also seeing what maturity looks like for successful Canadian automations. This year alone, Relocalize broke ground on Canada's first autonomous dark factory. Appetronix, which builds fully autonomous robotic kitchens, acquired Vancouver-based ingredient dispensing company Cibotica in the sector's first notable domestic consolidation. Gastronomous's ChronoGrill, an autonomous char broiler, went live at the University of Guelph and in California with a regional burger chain. And Dispension expanded its self-serve vending robots to new venues in Los Angeles and Denver. All four were part of last year's Foodtech Frontier cohort.

These are not pilots anymore. These have proven their concepts and are scaling commercially, and yet despite this pool of great home-grown innovators, Canada ranks just 15th among the top 20 countries for robotics adoption, meaning the very market these companies call home has little structural pull toward adopting what they're building.

This is the gap CFIN means to close. Since 2021, we've funded and validated new technologies, and connected them to food businesses who need to modernize so that we can transform Canada's food sector.

The companies profiled in this report are proof of that model at work, not a highlight reel. They are evidence that Canadian foodtech is maturing past pilot projects and gaining commercial traction the rest of the world is starting to notice.

Where this movement goes next depends on how seriously we take this moment, as an industry and as a country. I think we're ready for it.



Dana McCauley
CEO, Canadian Food Innovation Network

COHORT AT A GLANCE

40 companies. 5 regions. 1 cohort shaping the future of Canadian foodtech.

40 COMPANIES

5 CFIN REGIONS REPRESENTED

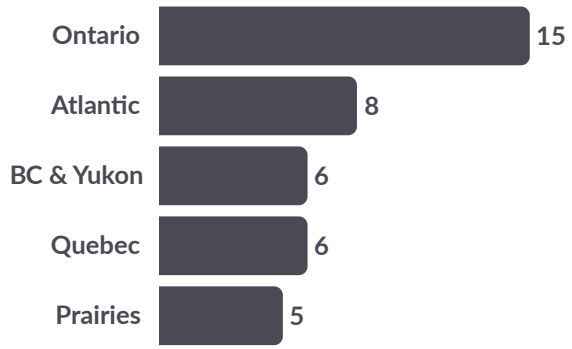
$6.4M AVERAGE PLANNED RAISE/COMPANY

$28M ON R&D EXPENDITURES

81% PROJECTED SALES GROWTH NEXT YEAR

NATIONAL

INNOVATION KNOWS NO BORDERS.



GROWING

THE NEXT WAVE IS ALREADY BEING FUNDED.

The 2026 cohort is entering its next phase of growth. Companies are planning an average raise of **$6.4 million**, up from **$5.1 million last year** — an increase of approximately **26%**.

AVERAGE PLANNED RAISE PER COMPANY

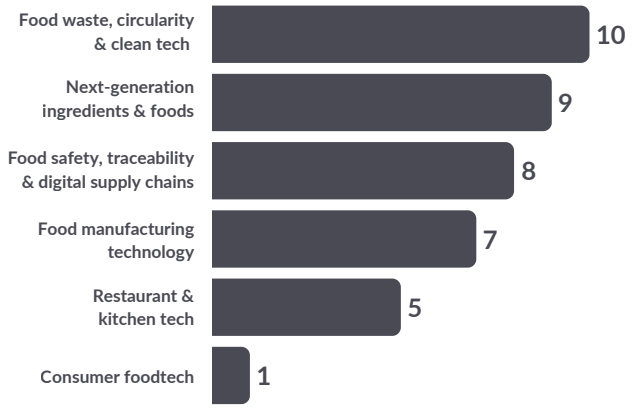


20 COMPANIES ACTIVELY RAISING OR PLANNING A RAISE WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

The cohort isn't just growing — its growth trajectory is accelerating. Companies recorded **27% sales growth between 2023 and 2025** and collectively project **81% growth over the next year.**

DIVERSE

From next-generation ingredients to smarter food manufacturing and more resilient supply chains, this year's cohort reflects the breadth of Canada's foodtech ecosystem.



WHEN ARE THEY RAISING?



BUILT TO SCALE BEYOND CANADA



65%

OF SALES COME FROM EXPORTS

FROM HALIFAX TO THE WORLD: DISPENSION'S BIG YEAR

Dispension made the inaugural Foodtech Frontier list on the strength of its self-serve vending robots, a high-tech vending machine equipped with age-verification, massive vibrant screens, and a robotic can-opening system. The company first launched with early adopters Scotiabank Centre in Halifax and Avenir Centre in Moncton during the 2024-25 season, then landed the technology at Dodger Stadium the following year under a formal agreement with Levy Restaurants.

Dispension was one of two 2025 Foodtech Frontier companies to receive funding from Redstick Ventures, part of $200,000 in awards Redstick made to that year's cohort. For CEO and founder Corey Yantha, the investment didmore than provide capital.

"Redstick Ventures was an immediate believer in our vision, and identified Dispension as an exciting, emerging Canadian foodtech company," Yantha says. "Their support and investment created meaningful momentum for our business, generated tremendous industry buzz, helped open doors internationally, and attracted additional investor interest."

"We backed Dispension early because the technology worked and the team knew how to execute," said Cam Crowder, general partner, Redstick Ventures. "Watching them expand their footprint in Dodger Stadium has been a good test of that thesis."

> *"We backed Dispension early because the technology worked and the team knew how to execute."*
>
> **—Cam Crowder, General Partner, Redstick Ventures**

redstick

The Dodgers test

Dispension's relationship with Dodger Stadium began with a trial during the 2022 MLB All-Star Week. In 2026, that relationship came full circle, as Dispension entered into a formal, revenue-sharing partnership with Levy Restaurants, making Dodger Stadium the first professional venue to launch self-serve vending robots in the U.S. market.

According to Dispension, the two self-serve units at Dodger Stadium have served 7,613 beverages to 5,602 guests over a 50-game stretch during the 2026 season, generating more than $165,000 USD in sales. At a basket size 6 per cent above the stadium average, the robots are producing the highest revenue per square foot in the building, with peak throughput hitting 85 units per hour and transactions taking under 45 seconds.

Dispension reports strong engagement across all age groups, with the highest adoption rates among guests aged 21 to 34, while those over 50 still account for a notable 15 per cent of all interactions. Since its launch, the technology has received a satisfaction rating of 4.7 out of 5 from guests, with a 17 per cent return-customer rate, including a 94-year-old fan who came back twice, and the deployment drew over 20 million views on social media platforms.

FROM HALIFAX TO THE WORLD: DISPENSION'S BIG YEAR

What's next

Yantha credits Redstick's investment with fueling the next stage of growth as Dispension's commercial momentum continues to accelerate. The company now has contracts signed for 25 units across a growing roster of high-profile sports, entertainment, and hospitality destinations.

Three units have been deployed at Empower Field at Mile High, home of the Denver Broncos, marking the first NFL and Aramark deployment. Dispension's footprint also includes Dodger Stadium, home of the back-to-back World Series champions, the Los Angeles Dodgers; Thomas & Mack Center at the University of Nevada Las Vegas; Mary Brown's Centre in Newfoundland; Merivale Bowling Centre in Ottawa; and three golf courses across Las Vegas and Colorado.

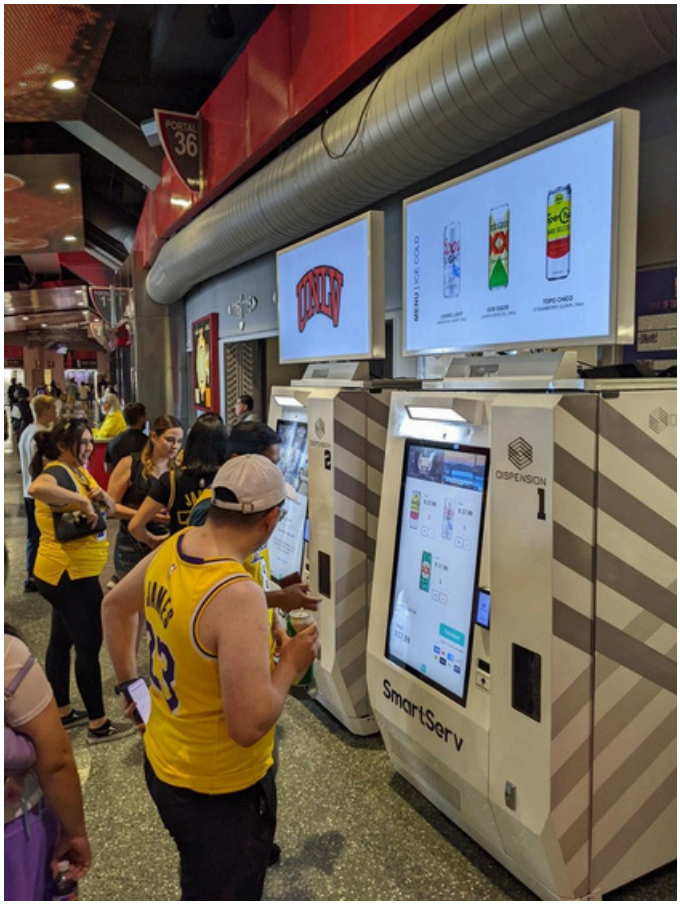
Upcoming installations include four units at Ball Arena in Denver with Legends Global and Kroenke Sports and Entertainment, two units at Shoreline Amphitheatre in Silicon Valley with Live Nation, four units at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles with Levy and AEG, and one unit at Lee Canyon Ski Resort in Las Vegas.

Together, these deployments demonstrate the robot's versatility across professional sports, live entertainment, golf, bowling, and hospitality environments, while providing strong validation of the platform's scalability and growing market demand.

"Redstick's investment was a catalyst for our next phase of growth, but beyond the capital, Redstick Ventures has been a true partner, providing strategic guidance, industry connections, and active support that have helped accelerate our growth, attract additional investment, and expand our reach," Yantha says.

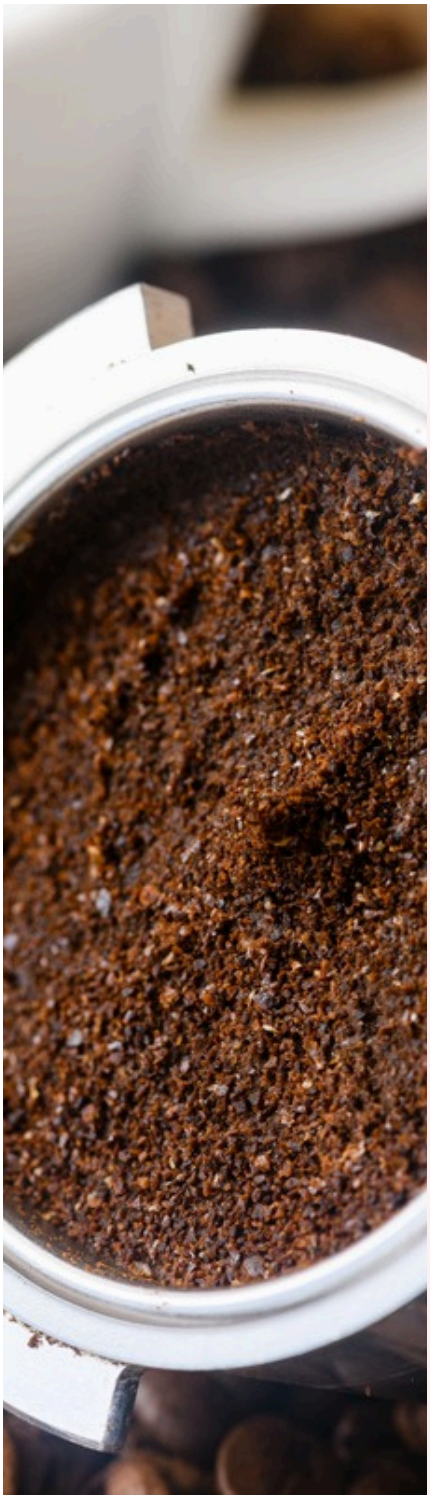
The next test for Dispension will be maintaining its pace of deployment as it builds 50 new units and prepares to ramp up production even further. Equally important will be how broadly those units are deployed beyond professional sports, across casinos, hotels, golf courses, ski resorts, and other hospitality environments where the company sees significant growth potential.





NBA Summer League, Thomas & Mack Center, Las Vegas 2026

KEY TRENDS



The Automation Inflection

Canadian food automation is moving past proof-of-concept and into consolidation and scale. Gastronomous's autonomous char broiler now runs in national QSR chains across Canada and the U.S., and Appetronix operates a fully autonomous robotic kitchen at a commercial airport that processed roughly 5,000 orders in its first hundred days, just two examples of a shift from piloting technology to actually running it commercially. Financing is shifting too: Relocalize's first autonomous "dark factory" is partly backed by a royalty agreement, the kind of deal that only gets extended once a lender is confident in real revenue, not a projection.

What makes this worth watching is the mismatch underneath it. Canada ranks near the bottom of leading economies for domestic robotics adoption, even as some of the companies building that technology are Canadian. Ottawa's new National Food Security Strategy is aimed at closing that gap, with real capital now earmarked for processing capacity and equipment upgrades. Whether that money moves the needle or Canadian automation keeps scaling mostly by finding customers abroad, is the open question for the next year.

Sovereignty as Strategy

Canada grows an enormous amount of food and processes surprisingly little of it here, a gap that mattered less when trade was stable and matters a great deal now. A number of this year's companies are solving ordinary business problems, like pricing inefficiencies or volatile ingredient costs, in ways that build domestic capability instead of relying on imports. Jitto digitizes Canada's wholesale produce trade, replacing a domestic inefficiency with a domestic fix, while Rfine Biomass substitutes a domestic waste stream for a cocoa supply chain under real global strain.

Federal policy is now built around encouraging exactly that shift. Ottawa's National Food Security Strategy commits money to processing and financing support, faster regulatory approvals, and expanded domestic production, aimed at letting Canada grow and process more of what it currently imports. None of this settles how much of what Canada grows it will ever process at home, but the direction is no longer in question.

KEY TRENDS

Precision Over Volume

A different kind of maturity is showing up in food safety and quality this year, one built less on new machines and more on new information. SmartSkin's sensor-equipped digital twins catch container damage as it happens, before it becomes a recall. Cooldat routes produce based on how much shelf life a specific pallet actually has left, instead of the conservative, worst-case date that gets stamped on every shipment in a lane. Soralink flags equipment failure before it happens rather than servicing machinery on a fixed schedule regardless of its condition. Bioeureka cuts pathogen test turnaround from days to minutes. In each case, the shift is the same: replacing a broad, reactive process with a narrow, predictive one.

This is a quieter story than automation replacing labour, but arguably a more foundational one. These companies aren't removing people from a task, they're removing the lag between when a problem exists and when someone finds out about it. That lag is where waste, recalls, and spoiled inventory actually come from, and closing it is a different kind of technology bet than robotics: less capital-intensive, faster to deploy, and arguably easier for a mid-sized Canadian processor to adopt than a full automation retrofit. If the automation trend is about who can afford to rebuild, this one is about who can afford not to know.



MEET THE INNOVATORS

Appetronix 10
Bioeureka™ 11
CanDry Technologies 12
Chinova Bioworks 13
Crush Dynamics 14
Curry Fresh 15
DeepSight 16
Dispension 17
Enhanced Medical Nutrition 18
Food Cycle Science 19
Freshr Technologies 20
Gastronomous 21
Infusd Nutrition 22
Innodal 23
JITTO 24
Kitchen Hub 25
Launch Bioindustries 26
Lite-1 27
Local Line 29
Mabel Systems 30
Maia Farms 30
Meerv Inc. 31
mode40 32
NS/TX Industries 33
Relocalize 34
Renaissance BioScience 35
Revo Bio Chem 36
RFINE Biomass 37
Rubra 38
SmartSkin Technologies 39
Soralink 40
Sustainable Bioproduct Innovations 41
Synergia BiotechSystems 42
Terra Bioindustries 43
Tewari De-Ox Systems 44
Tracktile 45
Truffle Systems 46
Twish Technologies 47
U Technology 48
uDesign Solutions 49

APPETRONIX

Cooking made-to-order meals with zero on-site staff, one airport pizza kitchen at a time

Category

Kitchen & restaurant technology

Location

Toronto, Ontario

Next raise

$10,000,000 Seed, expected within 6 months

Appetronix builds fully autonomous robotic kitchens that cook made-to-order meals with zero on-site employees, designed for high-traffic locations like airports, stadiums, and other venues with a steady flow of customers throughout the day.

The problem

Commercial food service is under pressure on multiple fronts: labour shortages, rising operating costs, inconsistent food quality from location to location, and real limits on how quickly a restaurant concept can scale without adding more staff at every new site.

The solution

Appetronix's robotic kitchens use automation and AI to prepare meals from order to pickup without on-site kitchen staff, aiming for consistent quality across locations while keeping labour and operating costs down. The company positions the format as well suited to high-traffic locations, airports, stadiums, and similar venues where customers are present throughout the day, whatever meal they're looking for. In partnership with Donatos Pizza, Appetronix launched what it describes as one of the world's first fully autonomous robotic pizza kitchens at John Glenn Columbus International Airport in Ohio.

Traction

Within its first 100 days of operation, the Donatos Pizza kitchen at Columbus airport processed approximately 5,000 customer orders, with a strong reorder rate that Appetronix points to as evidence of consumer acceptance and repeat demand.

BIOEUREKA™

Using AI to read a microscope slide and confirm a pathogen test in minutes, not days

Category

Food safety and traceability

Location

Quebec/Ontario

Next raise

$2,000,000 Seed, expected in 6 to 12 months

Bioeureka™ develops rapid diagnostic technologies for microbiology and biological testing, led by AIMO, an AI-powered platform for identifying microorganisms from microscope images, alongside MicroSelect, a culture consumable, and DETRHO, an in-development rapid test for blood phenotyping.

The problem

A single food product can require more than 70 pathogen tests across its lifecycle, spanning supply, processing, manufacturing, packaging, and distribution. Traditional microbiology methods for running those tests tend to be slow, manual, and expensive, and they leave plenty of room for human error along the way. Every delay in getting a result holds up batch release, ties up inventory that's waiting on clearance, and raises the odds of waste or a recall slipping through. That pressure only builds as regulatory and traceability requirements, like HACCP and ISO standards, keep tightening.

The solution

The workflow behind Bioeureka's platform is simple: a colony grows less than 12 hours, gets photographed through an ordinary microscope, and AIMO's AI identifies what's in the image within minutes, no reference lab, no shipping samples out, no waiting days for a callback. A compliance report generates automatically once the result is in. Paired with MicroSelect, Bioeureka's own culture media built to make pre-selection easier, the company estimates the combination trims diagnostic time by three-quarters, cuts consumable use by more than half, and brings testing costs down by roughly 40 per cent compared to conventional methods. Every result comes with a traceability log built in, so food safety and quality teams can show proof of compliance without a separate paperwork step.

Traction

Bioeureka™ has a strong group of industrial customers, commercial contracts, and active pilots that the company expects to drive future growth.

CANDRY TECHNOLOGIES

A low-temperature drying process, plus a facility to test it before buying the equipment

Category

Food manufacturing technology

Location

Coquitlam, BC

Next raise

$500,000 Pre-Seed, currently in progress

CanDry Technologies has developed GentleDry, a patented low-temperature food dehydration technology built to preserve a product's taste, appearance, and nutritional value while keeping energy use in check.

The problem

Drying food well and drying it at scale have historically been at odds. Heat-based drying does the job but takes a real toll on what makes a product good in the first place, its color fades, its flavour dulls, and its nutritional value drops the longer it sits under heat. Freeze drying sidesteps a lot of that damage, but it's slow, expensive, and eats up a lot of energy to run. Vacuum microwave systems try to split the difference, though they bring their own headaches: a high price tag, a learning curve to operate, and limited ability to handle different kinds of products. None of it lines up well with where the market is actually heading, toward premium, clean-label, minimally processed food, which needs a drying process that doesn't force manufacturers to sacrifice quality for volume or cost for consistency.

The solution

GentleDry uses a low-temperature process designed to hold onto a food's natural qualities through drying rather than cooking them out, while managing energy use more carefully than conventional thermal methods. To lower the barrier to trying it, CanDry also runs a commercial toll drying facility, letting food manufacturers evaluate, validate, and even commercialize new products without buying their own equipment first. As a customer's production volumes grow, they can move from that shared facility into purchasing or leasing their own GentleDry systems, giving companies a practical, lower-risk path from early product development into full commercial manufacturing.

Traction

CanDry has built strong commercial traction through its toll manufacturing services, working with customers across the food and pet food sectors that range from early-stage companies to established commercial brands.

CHINOVA BIOWORKS

Upcycling white mushroom stumps into a clean-label defence against spoilage

Category

Food waste and circularity / NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Fredericton, New Brunswick

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

Chinova Bioworks upcycles white mushroom stems into functional ingredients for the food, beverage, and cosmetics industries, operating a GMP-certified facility in Charlottetown, PEI, and serving customers globally.

The problem

Manufacturers deal with spoilage and waste from two different directions, according to Chinova. On the shelf, microbial spoilage from yeast, mold, and bacteria contributes to more than $50 billion in avoidable food waste in Canada each year, and the synthetic preservatives long used to prevent it, like potassium sorbate, are increasingly rejected by clean-label consumers. Natural alternatives often require high dosages and can alter a product's taste, colour, or aroma. Further upstream, mushroom growers discard large volumes of nutrient-dense stems in the course of normal production, waste that Chinova sees as raw material rather than a byproduct to dispose of.

The solution

Chinova's core product, Chiber™. Chiber™ is a natural mushroom extract fiber upcycled from the stems of white button mushrooms. This fiber helps improve quality, freshness and shelf-life, which promotes sustainability and reduced food waste. Chiber is an effective broad-spectrum antimicrobial that can inhibit the growth of bacteria, yeast and mold in a variety of food and beverage products. Chiber™ is also tasteless, odorless, allergen-free, and organic certified.

The company also produces MycoKleer, a mushroom-derived fining and clarifying agent for beverages.

Traction

Chinova says it sells Chiber to multinational food and beverage brands and has built distribution partnerships across North America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia to support that growth.

CRUSH DYNAMICS

Turning winemaking's discarded "crush" into ingredients that improve taste, nutrition and texture while reducing total sugar, sodium, and other expensive ingredients.

Category

Food waste and circularity / NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Summerland, BC

Next raise

$3,000,000 Series A, expected in 6 to 12 months

Crush Dynamics is an ingredient technology company commercializing a patented, FDA GRAS-certified platform that transforms pressed grape skins and seeds through their patented fermentation process into multifunctional ingredients.

The problem

Food manufacturers face a familiar set of formulation trade-offs: cutting ultra processed ingredients as well as sugar or sodium often means sacrificing taste. Reducing ultra processed starches and gums can compromise texture. Consumer demand clean-label leaves formulators with fewer cost-effective tools available for extending shelf life or masking bitterness. Meeting consumer demand for healthier, simpler ingredient lists while keeping products affordable to produce is a persistent challenge across categories.

The solution

Crush Dynamics applies a patented fermentation process, rooted in traditional fermentation practices to unlock and transform naturally occurring polyphenols, fibers and amino acids in pressed grapes. This proprietary technology enables these activated compounds to bind with other molecules in the food matrix, creating a multifunctional ingredient that enhances flavour, improve texture, and naturally extend shelf life. The company's customers confirm formulations with Crush Dynamics eliminate bitterness and metallic notes, creating a cleaner, more balanced taste, while also enabling simultaneous reductions in sodium, sweeteners, and texturizers elsewhere in a formulation. That approach lets food producers deliver healthier, more cost-effective formulations, and support a more natural, clean-label food system, without relying on the layered additives conventional approaches often require.

Traction

Crush Dynamics has repeat customers, active prospects, and pilot partners, and has been declared a "breakthrough" ingredient innovation by one of the largest food producers on the planet. Crush Dynamics is focusing its go-to-market efforts on three food categories: sauce and condiments, ready to drink beverages, dry RTM's, chocolate and confectionary, and "next generation" high protein. The company supports customers with formulation guides, reference designs, and application development expertise as part of what it calls a full solution.

The Company now has production facilities in the US and is working on expanding its production footprint internationally.

CURRY FRESH

A turmeric-based twist on high-pressure processing that keeps food fresh in the fridge for a year, while retaining its taste, texture and nutritional value.

Category

Food manufacturing technology

Location

Ontario

Next raise

$500,000 Seed, expected within 6 months

Curry Fresh licenses TAPS (Turmeric Assisted Pressure Sterilization), a patented food preservation technology (US patent -12714128 B2) the company describes as the first high-pressure sterilization process in the world, to food manufacturers. As a substitute for turmeric, we use curcumin powder which is colorless, odorless, and tasteless.

The problem

Food spoilage is a persistent, costly problem for the industry, with the company pointing to losses of around 20 per cent at the supermarket level and an estimated $4 trillion in food wasted globally each year, waste that carries real environmental costs on top of the economic ones. At the same time, much of what's readily available to consumers falls into the ultra-processed category, food that Curry Fresh says contributes to a range of health concerns across the population.

The solution

TAPS pairs an antioxidant-based process aided with high-pressure processing, an established food safety method, to sterilize food in a way that doesn't rely on heat, chemicals, or freezing to do it. The result is foods that are safe in a refrigerator for more than a year and still taste, look, and are as nutritious as the way it did was on day one.

Because the process works on the same kinds of products already dominating store shelves, manufacturers can apply it to food people are already buying, just without the additives or heat treatment those products normally depend on to stay shelf-stable. The company sees room to extend the same approach into raw meats and beverages, Pet foods and Baby foods, and believes it could eventually move a large share of food currently kept frozen into the refrigerated aisle instead, cutting the energy that freezing requires.

Traction

Curry Fresh now has more 100 SKUs that are market ready with several more under R&D. As proof of concept since 2018, we have sold our products worth $1.2 million at the US grocery stores and the farmers' markets.

DEEPSIGHT

Keeping critical frontline expertise on the floor, even when experienced workers leave

Category

Digital supply chain

Location

Montreal, Quebec

Next raise

$5,000,000 Series A, expected in more than a year

DeepSight is an AI-powered knowledge platform that helps manufacturers capture, standardize, and share frontline expertise, making it accessible where work happens through tablets, mobile devices, screens, or smart glasses.

The problem

Manufacturers are losing critical know-how faster than they can replace it, driven by retirements, turnover, hiring challenges, and increasingly complex operations. Too much expertise still lives with a small number of experienced employees, slowing training, increasing the risk of errors, and leaving operations dependent on key people. For food processors, that means slower upskilling, greater variability between teams and shifts, and less resilience when experienced workers are unavailable or leave.

The solution

DeepSight captures know-how directly from experienced workers as they perform tasks, then uses AI to turn that expertise into interactive, step-by-step guides enriched with video, images, and 3D content. Teams can access the guidance on mobile devices, tablets, computers, or smart glasses. Unlike paper procedures, static documents, or traditional document management systems, DeepSight is designed for use at the workstation—so knowledge is not only documented, but actually used in the flow of work.

A central management console tracks procedure usage and competency development, giving managers visibility into adoption and skill gaps. The result is less dependence on key employees, faster training, more consistent execution, and stronger day-to-day operational performance.

Traction

DeepSight has more than 30 paying customers, with a strong presence in food processing, manufacturing, and aerospace. In addition to commercial deployments, the company is running targeted pilots with large manufacturers to validate new use cases and works with a network of strategic and innovation partners as it expands across Canada and internationally.

DISPENSION

Serving ice-cold beer through a robot in under a minute, cracked open and compliant.

Category

Kitchen & restaurant technology

Location

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Next raise

$5,000,000 Series A, currently in progress

Dispension makes self-serve vending kiosks that deliver ice-cold, opened canned beer and ready-to-drink beverages to stadiums, arenas, and entertainment venues in under 45 seconds.

The problem

Stadiums and arenas struggle with a familiar set of service problems: slow-moving lines, crowded concourses, and narrow windows to actually sell to a captive crowd, all of which cost operators sales and leave guests frustrated. Chronic labour shortages and high staffing costs make it worse, especially given the added compliance burden of serving age-restricted products like alcohol.

The solution

The kiosks verify a guest's ID through several layers of scanning and facial recognition, handle payments automatically, and use Dispension's patented OpnServ system to open the can itself, without requiring a staff member present. That removes the need for a staffed checkpoint at either end of the transaction while still meeting the compliance standards alcohol service requires. Dispension says the system is built to catch sophisticated fake IDs that simpler checks might miss, and that the combination of speed, automation, and compliance lets venues handle more customers during peak periods without adding staff or capital investment, at no upfront cost to the operator.

Traction

Dispension now has contracts for 25 units across a growing roster of sports, entertainment, and hospitality venues, including Dodger Stadium, Empower Field at Mile High, Thomas & Mack Center at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Mary Brown's Centre in Newfoundland, Merivale Bowling Centre in Ottawa, and several golf courses across Las Vegas and Colorado, with additional installations planned at venues including Ball Arena, Shoreline Amphitheatre, and Crypto.com Arena.

ENHANCED MEDICAL NUTRITION

A regulated, physician-delivered nutrition program built for the metabolic demands of surgery

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Toronto, Ontario

Next raise

$10,000,000 Series B, expected over a year from now

Enhanced Medical Nutrition (EMN) develops medical nutrition products designed to help patients prepare for and recover from surgery, critical illness, and support muscle health, delivered as powders taken as a drink or administered via tube feeding. Their products are regulated by Health Canada and the FDA.

The problem

Nutrition is a commonly overlooked risk factor in surgical care. Malnourished surgical patients are three times more likely to experience complications and five times more likely to die than well-nourished patients. Forty-four percent of orthopaedic surgery patients are already sarcopenic, having lost meaningful muscle mass to aging, before they even enter the operating room. Surgery places a metabolic demand on the body comparable to running a marathon, yet most patients go into it with no nutritional preparation at all.

EMN frames the core issue as one of infrastructure rather than awareness: surgeons don't have time to act as nutrition counsellors, dietetic resources are scarce in orthopaedic practices, and patients are often left piecing together unreliable information on their own. The result is patients entering surgery metabolically unprepared, leading to slower, more complicated recoveries and downstream costs like extended hospital stays and readmissions.

The solution

ENROUTE is a four-week perioperative nutrition program that pairs two products, ENROUTE BUILD, a patented protein blend fortified with creatine, vitamin D, and calcium, and ENROUTE PREPARE, a preoperative carbohydrate designed to mitigate hyperglycemia and replace older fasting protocols, along with a patented shaker bottle and a patient education booklet. Both core products carry Health Canada NHP licensing and FDA Medical Food status.

ENROUTE's positioning addresses gaps that exist across the current landscape: standalone amino acid supplements offer incomplete protein profiles with no clinical guidance, large hospital-nutrition suppliers move through slow procurement channels without a standardized surgical protocol, and general consumer supplements carry little regulatory backing. EMN describes ENROUTE as the leading clinically validated, end-to-end program of its kind, combining formulation, regulatory status, and direct delivery to the patient through their surgeon.

Traction

EMN says ENROUTE has supported more than 50,000 patients since launching in 2020, with more than 800 surgeons across Canada and the United States. EMN has supported more than 23,300 patients in the past 12 months alone.

FOOD CYCLE SCIENCE

The future of food waste.

Category

Food waste and circularity

Location

Ottawa, Ontario

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

Food Cycle Science (FCS) develops FoodCycler, food waste recycling technology designed to process organic waste where it's generated, whether that's a home kitchen, a restaurant, or a hotel back-of-house.

The problem

Organic waste is one of the harder waste streams to deal with: it's bulky, wet, smelly, and draws pests. Without access to composting or curbside organics pickup, households and businesses are often stuck storing scraps until collection or sending them straight to landfill – creating operational headaches and contributing to the costs and emissions associated with transporting and managing organic waste.

For commercial operators, the challenge is compounded by infrastructure requirements. Many existing processing systems are built for large-scale use and depend on plumbing or three-phase power, putting them out of reach for restaurants, hotels, and institutions generating waste at a mid-size scale.

The solution

The FoodCycler household line, which includes the Eco 3 and Eco 5 models, uses the company's proprietary VortechTM technology to process food scraps, reducing their volume by up to 90 per cent and leaving behind a dry, shelf-stable by-product in a matter of hours, all with one-button operation.

The company is now bringing that same approach to commercial kitchens with the FC-75, a compact commercial unit designed to process food waste at the source. Built to handle up to 75 litres of food waste daily, it serves restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, and other businesses where food waste is generated, with no water hookup or major installation needed.
The FC-75 is designed to fill a market gap between countertop systems and large commercial processing systems that can require significant infrastructure It gives mid-scale operators a way to process food waste on-site, with a dry output and simpler setup than traditional industrial systems require.,

Traction

FoodCycler products are sold in over 30 countries, through direct-to-consumer channels, retail partners and international distributors. In Canada, FCS also works with more than 200 municipalities through its municipal programs, expanding access of FoodCycler's food waste technology to communities across the country.

FRESHR TECHNOLOGIES

FreshrPack® coating that helps ordinary packaging keep fish fresh longer

Category

Packaging / Food waste and circularity

Location

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Freshr Sustainable Technologies is a food technology company developing active packaging solutions designed to extend the shelf life of fresh proteins, starting with fresh fish, aiming to reduce food waste.

The problem

Fresh, high-value proteins are highly perishable, and that fragility leads to real losses at every stage, processing, transportation, retail, and inside consumers' own homes. Those losses cost producers and retailers money while also driving unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and wasting the resources that went into producing the food in the first place. Current preservation methods often mean accepting shorter distribution windows, paying for costly cold-chain management, or relying on food additives that don't always sit well with consumer preferences.

The solution

At the core of Freshr is FreshrPack® coating, which actively manages the microenvironment inside the package. Built from naturally derived ingredients, it works within existing packaging formats to slow spoilage and preserve quality — without being applied to the food itself. The technology will come in formats processors already use, rollstock, bags, and liners, so a company can adopt it without swapping out equipment or changing how its line runs. This keeps proteins fresher for longer without touching the food itself or adding anything to it, which in turn helps suppliers waste less, move more product before it turns, ship to farther markets, and run a more adaptable supply chain overall. A 15 to 30 per cent longer shelf life adds up to real gains in reduced waste, profitability, and carbon footprint for the customers who use it.

Traction

Freshr has built commercial relationships with organizations across Canada, the United States, Japan, and Europe, and is currently engaged in pilot programs, technical evaluations, and joint development work with global packaging manufacturers, protein processors, and retailers to validate FreshrPack®'s performance in real-world commercial environments.

GASTRONOMOUS

Taking the line cook out of the grill station without asking restaurants to rebuild around it

Category

Kitchen & restaurant technology

Location

Oakville, Ontario

Next raise

$10,000,000 Series A, expected in 6 to 12 months

Gastronomous designs and manufactures autonomous kitchen equipment for commercial and quick-service restaurants, built to retrofit into existing kitchens rather than requiring operators to redesign around it.

The problem

The quick-service restaurant industry is running on a labour model that's breaking down: understaffing has become chronic, annual turnover regularly tops 100 per cent, and wages keep climbing, all while the grill station, arguably the toughest and most skill-dependent job in the kitchen, still depends on a trained cook getting through every rush. That dependency has real costs.

Cook quality and doneness vary by shift and location, manual temperature checks leave room for food safety gaps, over- and undercooking drives avoidable waste, and the grill often becomes the bottleneck that caps how much a restaurant can sell during peak hours. Training a replacement takes weeks, even as labour, food, energy, and rent costs squeeze margins from every direction. Older char broiler equipment hasn't closed this gap, since it still relies on a person to physically load, watch, flip, and judge when food is done.

The solution

Gastronomous describes ChronoGrill as the world's first fully autonomous open-flame char broiler. Sensors, thermal probes, machine vision, and AI-driven logic work together to cook, flip, probe, and eject food without a line cook standing over it, and the grill cleans its own surface between cooks. Built to drop into a kitchen's existing footprint, it stays connected for remote diagnostics, predictive maintenance, and ongoing performance tracking. Gastronomous says ChronoGrill is the only autonomous char broiler proven in national QSR chains in both Canada and the United States, distinguishing it from newer robotics entrants built for lower-volume settings like cafés and airports rather than the throughput and sanitation demands of a live QSR line. In deployment, the company reports ChronoGrill boosts speed of service by up to 50 per cent or more, and saves $2,000 to $4,000 per unit each month by reducing labour, training, cleaning, food waste, and energy costs.

Traction

ChronoGrill is in market and generating revenue, with Gastronomous reporting strong purchase orders from QSR customers and deployments expanding into other customer segments.

INFUSD NUTRITION

Making hard-to-formulate nutrients soluble and stable

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

Infusd Nutrition is an ingredient transformation technology company enabling the next generation of functional food, beverage, and wellness products. Their groundbreaking technology improves the solubility, stability, bioavailability and sensory profiles of hundreds of notoriously difficult-to-formulate ingredients.

The problem

Some of the world's most in-demand nutrients are the hardest to formulate. Poor solubility, instability, unpleasant taste, and other processing constraints limits what manufacturers could bring to market.

The solution

Infusd's proprietary mechanical processing technology turns notoriously difficult ingredients into water soluble, shelf-stable and clean label solutions. This is a first of its kind approach and allows nutrients that once resisted water entirely to now be dissolved at high concentrations, without compromising on flavour.

Infusd's technology has opened the door to thousands of new product formulation opportunities and has quickly become the solutions center for the world's best brands.

Traction

Infusd has been rapidly growing, working with more than 100 global companies on innovative projects and developing strategic partnerships with industry leaders like Symrise. Their recent expansion into a 60,000 sq foot manufacturing facility has expanded their ability to support customers through all stages of production and positions them to be at the forefront of the next generation health & wellness innovation.

INNODAL

The next generation of precision antimicrobials, protecting food without compromise.

Category

Food safety and traceability

Location

Longueuil, Quebec

Next raise

$5,000,000 Seed; currently in progress

Innodal produces bacteriocins, protective cultures, and other natural antimicrobials aimed at giving the food processing industry with effective, easy-to-integrate protection.

The problem

Listeria monocytogenes contamination is one of the food industry's most serious challenges, made worse by extremely strict tolerance standards and the bacteria's ability to persist in processing environments, hiding in hard-to-reach areas, resisting certain conditions, and reappearing despite cleaning and control protocols already in place.

For companies, a positive result can mean costly recalls, major product and packaging losses, operational disruptions, and lasting damage to brand reputation, beyond the public health and consumer trust issues at stake.

The solution

INNEO is Innodal's anti-Listeria solution, described by the company as highly effective, built from a naturally occurring protein called a bacteriocin. Unlike traditional chemical preservatives, INNEO targets only harmful pathogens like Listeria monocytogenes, leaving the beneficial microbes naturally present in food unaffected. After application, it breaks down into natural amino acids, leaving no residue and no impact on a product's taste, colour, or texture.

Because of how it works, INNEO qualifies as a processing aid rather than an additive, meaning it doesn't need to appear on a product's ingredient label. It's the first bacteriocin-based solution approved by Health Canada, and it also holds FDA certification in the United States, a non-objection letter from USDA-FSIS, and approvals in Chile, Hungary, and Poland.

Mindful of the costs involved in modifying a manufacturing process, Innodal also developed three application methods designed to be simple to implement: automatic or manual spraying, soaking baths, and in-mass application.

Traction

INNEO has been adopted by well-known players across the seafood, ready-to-eat, frozen vegetable, processed fruit, and dairy segments, among others.

JITTO

Rebuilding produce distribution to run on data, automation, and technology.

Category

Digital supply chain

Location

Etobicoke, Ontario

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

Jitto is rebuilding produce distribution to run on data, automation, and technology, instead of the inefficient manual labour and outdated systems the industry runs on today. Jitto is a produce distributor that is using AI to solve its own pricing problem.

The problem

Canada's wholesale produce trade still runs largely on analog communication: pricing exchanged through PDFs, text messages, and phone calls between thousands of fragmented buyers and suppliers. Without a way to compare prices across suppliers, small and mid-sized buyers, grocery stores, rural retailers, and foodservice operators risk overpaying and ordering inefficiently, while suppliers lose hours each day fielding manual pricing inquiries instead of scaling their business. This fragmentation contributes to a $2.4 billion annual waste problem in Canada's produce sector, as the absence of centralized pricing data leaves both sides unable to forecast accurately, leading to overproduction, spoilage, and shrinking margins.

The solution

Jitto's platform converts unstructured supplier price lists, whether sent as PDFs, emails, photos, or WhatsApp messages, into structured, comparable data, letting buyers compare prices across suppliers and place orders faster. A price list that takes a person 3 to 4 hours to transcribe and encode by hand, Jitto reads in seconds.

Unlike general procurement platforms, Jitto is purpose-built for the messy formats produce sup pliers actually use and the complexity of Canada's roughly $16 billion wholesale produce mar ket. Because Jitto runs a real produce distribution business out of the Ontario Food Terminal, it sees pricing data and understands buying decisions the way no outside software company can. That combination, real operational expertise plus SKU-level pricing data by supplier in near real time, is what Jitto is building into a standalone data product, a Canadian Produce Pricing Index. That dataset is valuable well beyond Jitto's own buyers, for benchmarking, market research, and supply-chain analytics across the whole produce ecosystem.

Traction

Jitto serves more than 150 wholesale buyers across Ontario, including grocery stores, rural retail ers, and foodservice operators, processing pricing data from major suppliers at the Ontario Food Terminal. Its AI extraction accuracy exceeds 95 per cent on trained formats, handling thousands of SKUs across multiple supplier categories.

KITCHEN HUB

Bringing food hall variety to landlords and restaurant brands at a fraction of the space and cost

Category

Kitchen and restaurant technology

Location

Toronto, Ontario

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

Kitchen Hub digitizes, automates, and operates multi-restaurant food amenities, functioning as a foodtech, proptech, and services company built around multi-brand food environments.

The problem

Kitchen Hub removes the financial and logistical hurdles of opening new restaurant locations. By condensing multiple brands into a tiny, tech-driven food footprint, it gives operators a cheaper way to expand while letting customers combine orders from different brands into one ticket.

The solution

Kitchen Hub's "pocket food hall" format uses proprietary digital ordering technology to bring several restaurant brands into a shared footprint roughly a tenth the size, and a tenth the cost, of a conventional food hall, the company says. That model has attracted brands including Shake Shack, Wingstop, Pai Northern Thai, and Mandy's Salads, giving them a lower-cost way to open new locations while reaching customers through Kitchen Hub's digital ordering platform.

For customers, Kitchen Hub enables a single order across multiple brands, placed online or in-store, with one checkout and one pickup. As both operator and partner to its restaurant brands, the company says its visibility into real-time kitchen operations powers a technology stack that gives customers, couriers, and restaurant partners more accurate order timing and greater transparency throughout fulfillment. Kitchen Hub is also developing fulfillment automation designed to move orders from kitchen to customer or courier without human handoff, aimed at improving speed and consistency across the order lifecycle.

For landlords, Kitchen Hub converts underused real estate into a multi-brand food amenity without requiring the property owner to individually source, lease, and manage several restaurant tenants. Kitchen Hub says it acts as a single point of contact for the entire food offering, taking on the restaurant relationships, technology, and day-to-day operations itself so landlords gain food hall variety at a fraction of the space and cost of a conventional build-out.

Traction

Kitchen Hub has partnerships with 18 restaurant operations companies, the company says, including MTY Group, Foodtastic Group, Shake Shack Canada, Wingstop Canada, Mandy's Salads, and Gusto Group. Its business spans three paying stakeholder groups: landlord partners, restaurant partners, and customers. Its landlord partners include First Capital Realty (part of KingSett Capital), Peterson Development, Hines, and Manulife & AIMCo.

LAUNCH BIOINDUSTRIES

Turning dairy waste into compostable plastic through fermentation

Category

Food waste and circularity

Location

Mississauga, Ontario

Next raise

$4,000,000 Seed, expected in 8-12 months.

Launch Bioindustries has built a biomanufacturing platform that converts organic side streams from food and beverage processing into polyhydroxyalkanoates, or PHA, a compostable, bio-based polymer that can replace petroleum-derived plastics in packaging and other applications.

The problem

Food and beverage manufacturers generate large volumes of organic byproducts that still hold real value, but most of them get treated as waste rather than a resource. Dairy processing is a clear example: lactose-rich permeate is genuinely difficult to deal with, since its organic load pushes up everything from wastewater treatment needs to hauling, energy, and disposal costs, plus the emissions tied to all of it.

The usual ways of managing this material, treating it, disposing of it, spreading it on land, or routing it into low-value uses, might shrink the waste pile, but they leave most of its economic potential untapped. At the same time, food companies face a separate pressure entirely: cutting their reliance on petroleum-based plastics, driven by Extended Producer Responsibility rules, tightening environmental regulation, and customers who increasingly expect more sustainable packaging.

The solution

Launch's platform feeds carbon rich streams such as yeast waste and dairy side streams such as lactose-rich permeates to engineered microbial strains, which ferment it into PHA resin, a process finished off with downstream purification. That resin can then run through the same compounding and processing methods the plastics industry already uses, so it doesn't require new manufacturing infrastructure to adopt.

What sets Launch apart is what it starts with. Most PHA producers rely on refined sugars, oils, or food-grade feedstocks, inputs that push up production costs and work against the very circularity the material is supposed to represent. Launch built its strains and processes around industrial organic waste instead, which keeps feedstock costs down while giving a genuinely low-value material somewhere useful to go.

For food processors, that means a higher-value outlet for byproducts they're already generating, plus a material that can stand in for conventional plastic in select applications, easing waste-management pressure while opening a real path toward more sustainable packaging.

Traction

Launch has demonstrated strong customer traction through several paid projects that validate demand for the platform.

LITE-1

Growing food dyes from microbes instead of petroleum

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/ beverage

Location

Vancouver, BC

Next raise

$5,000,000 Seed, currently in progress

Lite-1 is a Canadian-owned biomanufacturing startup developing microbial colourants as an alternative to synthetic dyes, with a focus on eliminating synthetic dyes from the food supply while also serving cosmetics and textiles.

The problem

Synthetic colourants carry a heavy cost on both ends of their life cycle. Making them relies on chemical processes that demand significant energy and resources, and the coloured wastewater left behind has been linked to serious biodiversity loss, along with deaths and disease in the areas affected by it. In food specifically, the concern runs deeper: artificial dyes have been linked to hyperactivity, behavioural changes, allergic reactions, and, in some studies, increased cancer risk.

Regulators are starting to respond. Following the FDA's 2025 ban on Red Dye No. 3 and California's ban on six synthetic dyes in schools, food multinationals are actively looking for alternatives that meet both clean-label expectations and real performance standards. The trouble is that clean alternatives haven't caught up: heat and pH swings can break them down, getting consistent results at scale is difficult, and working them into a formulation often creates new problems of its own.

The solution

Lite-1 grows its colourants biologically instead of synthesizing them chemically, aiming for something that performs reliably at scale across food, cosmetics, and textile applications without the drawbacks of either synthetic dyes or the natural alternatives that have struggled to compete with them. In lab-scale testing, the company says its colourants have held up well, and several major food industry players have already reached out directly, interested in adapting the technology to their own production.

Traction

Lite-1 is currently running twelve textile and ink pilots across North America, Europe, and Asia, work that has led to its first paid contract this year and ongoing contract negotiations with several other prospective customers ahead of a planned product launch. On the food side, the company says multiple major food conglomerates have expressed strong interest in its colourants and are eager to test manufacturing processes and performance ahead of formal regulatory clearance.

LOCAL LINE

Replacing spreadsheets and phone calls with one platform for buying local food at scale

Category

Digital supply chain

Location

Kitchener, Ontario

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

Local Line is a direct-from-farm procurement platform that helps grocery retailers, restaurants, healthcare organizations, distributors, and food service operators buy from local and regional suppliers at scale.

The problem

Buying from local and regional food producers is far more complicated than buying from a large distributor. A single grocery retailer or foodservice organization might need to coordinate with hundreds of independent suppliers, each with its own ordering process, pricing format, delivery schedule, invoicing method, and certification requirements. Demand for local sourcing keeps growing, driven by consumers, governments, and sustainability initiatives, but the procurement systems most organizations rely on were never built to manage thousands of small, independent producers at once.

The solution

Local Line replaces fragmented, manual workflows, email, spreadsheets, phone calls, PDFs, and disconnected portals, with a single platform covering supplier onboarding, catalog management, ordering, compliance, invoicing, payments, reporting, and traceability. Buyers can onboard new suppliers, standardize product information, automate ordering and payments, monitor compliance, and get full visibility across their supplier network without juggling separate systems for each one. This operational simplicity lets organizations source more locally, improve supply chain transparency, and reduce administrative costs, while giving producers a more direct path to reach large commercial customers.

Traction

Local Line is a commercial-stage software company serving enterprise grocery retailers, restaurants, distributors, institutions, and thousands of food producers, with customers using the platform to manage direct procurement across 14 countries.

MABEL SYSTEMS

Connecting seafood operations from dock to box with real-time data

Category

Digital supply chain

Location

Atlantic

Next raise

Open to strategic investment opportunities

Mabel Systems builds practical technology for seafood companies, replacing paper-based workflows with real-time information from receiving through shipping.

The problem

Seafood companies need to show where their products came from, how they were handled, and what happened to them along the way. Customers and regulators expect that information to be accurate and easy to find. Many still rely on paper, spreadsheets, or separate systems because available software often doesn't fit the way they operate. That makes it harder to see what's happening across an operation, answer questions from customers or regulators, and keep up with changing requirements. Staff also spend valuable time writing down information, searching for records, and entering the same details more than once.

The solution

Mabel combines software with handheld scanners, industrial tablets, barcode labels, and integrated scales to capture information as work happens. Built around how seafood companies already operate, the system connects receiving, grading, inventory, packing, shipping, and traceability. This reduces manual work and gives teams a clearer picture of their product and processes. Information collected for traceability also helps them make day-to-day decisions and respond quickly to customer and regulatory requests.

MAIA FARMS

Turning oyster mushrooms into multi-purpose ingredients for everything from soups to pet food

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Vancouver, BC

Next raise

$30,000,000 Series A, expected in more than a year

Maia Farms develops food ingredients from oyster mushroom fruiting bodies and Canadian peas, helping food manufacturers improve nutrition, functionality, yield, and product performance.

The problem

Food manufacturers are under constant pressure to improve nutrition, control costs, simplify formulations, and still deliver the taste and texture consumers expect, while existing options often force trade-offs between those goals. Animal proteins can carry cost and supply risk, some plant proteins can introduce flavour or texture challenges, and conventional additives may solve a functional problem without contributing meaningful nutritional value. Even a promising ingredient can stall before reaching commercial scale, a separate hurdle many food innovators face regardless of how well a product performs in early testing.

The solution

Maia Farms' core ingredient, FORMS™, is a textured ingredient made from oyster mushroom fruiting bodies and Canadian peas. It's joined by FLOUR™ and ULTRA™, finely milled mushroom ingredients designed to improve texture, moisture retention, viscosity, emulsification, and savoury depth. Rather than solving one narrow problem the way a single-function additive does, Maia's ingredients are designed to layer several benefits into one formulation at once: protein, fibre, improved yield, moisture management, and texture, across products ranging from soups and sauces to meat blends, bakery goods, and pet food. FORMS™ hydrates to roughly 2.5 to 3 times its dry weight, helping deliver satisfying texture while improving yield and reducing preparation requirements.

Maia also works directly alongside customers' R&D, culinary, and operations teams, recommending inclusion rates, running trials, and troubleshooting formulations, support designed to help ingredients move successfully from bench testing toward commercial production.

Traction

Maia Farms has moved from technology development into commercial sales, distribution, and multinational product trials. The company has also moved into a new Vancouver headquarters with a fully operational lab for mycelium research and an innovation kitchen dedicated to ingredient applications, customer trials, and product development across a growing range of categories.

MEERV INC.

Turning cold-chain temperature data into real-time routing decisions before produce goes bad

Category

Food safety and traceability

Location

Trois-Rivières, Quebec

Next raise

CAD $2,500,000 Seed, currently in progress

Cooldat, developed by Meerv Inc., is a cold-chain analytics platform that uses RFID AIoT sensors, data analytics, and biological validation to improve food safety, traceability, and shelf-life management for perishables.

The problem

Perishable food loses value by the hour, but most cold chains can't act on that fast enough for it to matter. Refrigerated trucks and sensors track temperature well, but nobody turns that data into a decision about what to actually do with a given shipment. A pallet that's degrading faster than expected still gets routed the same way as one that's holding up fine, on a fixed plan set in advance, rather than being redirected based on how much usable life it actually has left. By the time a shipment arrives, it may already be past the point of being sellable.

Cooldat points to several costs that stack up as a result. Fruit and vegetables make up an estimated 45 per cent of Canada's household food waste, by the company's count. Freshness also gets mispriced industry-wide: growers typically set one conservative best-before date built around the weakest-performing shipping lane, which quietly punishes lanes that are actually running well and turns their unused shelf life into markdown inventory for retailers instead. And because spoilage costs get absorbed somewhere in the system, they ultimately show up in what consumers pay for. Produce, meat, deli, bakery and dairy categories of perishables can also be routed intelligently based on shelf life being set by the producer with the reality of each shipping lane and each destination.

Food banks add another wrinkle: they report that fresh produce is their hardest category to source, and the donations they do receive tend to arrive last-minute, making their re-distribution logistics even more challenging.

The solution

Cooldat's system, DS-SLA (Destination-Specific Shelf-Life Allocation), pulls from two different data sources to route each shipment individually rather than on a fixed schedule. Refrigerated trucks stream continuous air temperature data, while a small sample of mailable sensor tags, roughly 0.1 per cent of packages, rides along with shipments the whole way, including stops a truck's own sensors never reach: the retail case, a customer's car, a home fridge. Those tags get mailed or sent back afterward, feeding the model real information about what a given temperature reading actually means for a specific perishable and route.

The system translates that exposure into what the company calls "abuse-days," a running estimate of how much usable life is left in a pallet, and routes accordingly. Fresher product heads to farther, higher-value stores, while anything degrading faster gets redirected to nearby markets, markdown, or food banks while it's still good. The key difference between Cooldat and systems that only monitor conditions is that rather than calibrating every shipment to its weakest link, Cooldat provides evidence that food quality managers need to set genuinely longer shelf life for strong lanes. Meerv has demonstrated that Cooldat lifts margins, cuts waste, and makes it possible to plan fresh donations ahead of time rather than relying on last-minute surplus.

Meerv integrates Cooldat with its sustainable item-level identity platform, which makes it possible to print visual and radio-frequency identifiers onto food packages.

Traction

Meerv has partnerships with packaging and label converters that are key suppliers in the food industry and is running active pilots with major food producers and grocery chains. Meerv has posted strong annual sales growth over the past three year.

MODE40

Building a single source of truth for food manufacturers drowning in disconnected data

Category

Food manufacturing technology

Location

Steinbach, Manitoba

Next raise

$2,000,000 Seed; expected over a year from now

mode40 builds AI-powered manufacturing software that connects plant-floor systems, business data, and operational workflows for food, beverage, and industrial companies into a single source of truth.

The problem

Food and beverage manufacturers face constant pressure to improve productivity, yield, traceability, and profitability, but fragmented systems and manual processes get in the way. Too many plant-floor decisions still rely on spreadsheets, emails, institutional memory, and reports that lag behind what's actually happening on the line, making it hard to catch where value is slipping or act quickly when something goes wrong. Most enterprise software wasn't built to close that gap. ERP systems, MES platforms, dashboards, and point solutions are generally good at storing and showing data, but stop short of turning it into something manufacturers can act on, leaving the burden of data quality, integration, and adoption on the manufacturer's own shoulders.

The solution

Singularity, mode40's enterprise intelligence platform, connects production, quality, inventory, scheduling, maintenance, and business-system data through a practitioner-led Semantic Layer that creates a trusted operational foundation. It applies workflow and agentic intelligence to turn that context into better decisions, recommended actions, and automation. Rather than handing off software, mode40 stays engaged as a full-service partner through implementation and beyond, refining Singularity with each manufacturer until it delivers measurable results. The platform integrates securely with existing systems, supports data sovereignty and on-premise deployment where required, and adapts to how each operation works rather than forcing manufacturers into a one-size-fits-all system.

mode40 has built paid customer engagements and strategic implementation partnerships with Canadian food and beverage manufacturers, working directly on problems like fragmented plant-floor data, manual reporting, yield loss, scheduling complexity, and traceability gaps.

NS/TX INDUSTRIES

Building whole cuts of plant-based salmon and meat that extrusion can't replicate

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Toronto, Ontario

Next raise

$15,000,000 Series A, expected in 6 to 12 months

NS/TX Industries, has developed a patented manufacturing platform for whole-cut plant-based seafood and meat, including salmon fillets, steaks, ribs, and pork belly, built to replicate the texture, marbling, and structure of real meat far beyond what traditional extrusion methods can achieve.

The problem

Global protein demand keeps climbing, and conventional meat and seafood production carries a heavy environmental cost, straining water and land use, contributing to emissions, and putting pressure on biodiversity and the resilience of the food system overall. Plant-based alternatives are one answer, but they haven't caught on the way many expected, largely because they still don't taste, cook, or feel like the real thing. NS/TX Industries points to the underlying cause: the manufacturing methods behind most plant-based products were designed for uniform items like burgers, nuggets, and sausages, not for cuts with the kind of internal structure, muscle alignment, and fat marbling found in a salmon fillet, a steak, or a rack of ribs. Without a way to replicate that structure, foodservice operators, retailers, and consumers are left with few plant-based options that actually work as a centre-of-plate replacement.

The solution

NS/TX Industries built a platform around an entirely different process: freezing ingredients in a controlled, directional way to form a scaffold, then infusing that scaffold with proteins, fats, flavours, and other functional ingredients before finishing it at low temperature. The company says this approach produces clean-label products with realistic appearance, texture, flaking, flavour delivery, and cooking performance, while preserving protein functionality throughout.

The platform is designed to work across protein categories: seafood, pork, and beef can all run through the same core infrastructure, with only the scaffold geometry and formulation changing between them, which cuts down the time and cost of bringing each new product to market. Salmon is already in commercial production, and the company is expanding into pork and other proteins while developing a planned V2 semi-continuous platform, aimed at more than quadrupling throughput while improving automation, consistency, and yield.

Traction

NS/TX Industries has moved from lab development into commercial manufacturing at its 28,000-square-foot Toronto facility, with its whole-cut salmon products purchased by more than 100 customer accounts and showing strong repeat order growth, evidence, the company says, of consistent product quality and market fit.

RELOCALIZE

Reinventing cold-chain supply networks with autonomous micro-factories

Category

Food manufacturing technology

Location

Montreal, Quebec

Next raise

$40,000,000 Series A, currently in progress

Relocalize builds and operates autonomous micro-factories that manufacture high-volume products, starting with packaged ice and water-based cold packs, at customers' distribution and fulfillment centres. By moving production closer to where products are needed, the company aims to simplify supply chains and reduce unnecessary transportation.

The problem

Food, pharmaceutical and other temperature-controlled supply networks still rely heavily on large, centralized production facilities. Products may be manufactured or conditioned hundreds of kilometres from where they are ultimately needed, creating transportation, storage and handling requirements throughout the supply chain. For products like packaged ice and cold packs, where much of the product is water, this can mean transporting and storing large volumes of frozen water instead of producing it closer to the point of use. This adds emissions and exposure to disruptions in labour, fuel and capacity. Local production can address these challenges, but traditionally requires significant capital, specialized expertise and enough demand to justify a dedicated facility.

The solution

Relocalize's answer is a compact, autonomous “RELO” micro-factory that produces, freezes, packages and palletizes products. Deployed at the customer's distribution centre, RELO replaces centralized production and long-distance transportation with distributed, hyperlocal manufacturing. The model can cut transportation emissions by approximately 90% while improving supply resilience. Relocalize owns and operates each micro-factory under long-term agreements, allowing customers to benefit without buying, staffing or operating the equipment themselves. Packaged ice is the technology's first commercial application, with water-based cold packs now extending the model into food delivery, pharmaceutical and other cold-chain applications.

Traction

Relocalize has moved from pilot to commercial-scale production. Its Plant City, Florida micro-factory is producing Party Cubes for Winn-Dixie and scaling across the retailer's network. The facility has also generated its first royalty payment. In September 2026, CVW Sustainable Royalties completed its $4 million funding commitment for Relocalize's first two commercial facilities. Relocalize is now advancing development of its Montreal cold-pack micro-factory, with cold packs already being produced and tested for food and pharmaceutical cold-chain applications.

RENAISSANCE BIOSCIENCE

Engineering yeast strains to cut contaminants and turn food waste into new ingredients

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Vancouver, BC

Next raise

$5,000,000 Series A, currently in progress

Renaissance BioScience is a yeast bioengineering company that develops functional yeast strains for food and beverage, agriculture, and health applications, built on a biobank of more than 700 wild and non-conventional strains alongside precision engineering capabilities.

The problem

Consumers and regulators keep moving the bar on what "healthy" and "clean-label" mean, but the food industry often lacks affordable bio-based tools to actually meet that bar. Two challenges sit underneath this pressure. First, many food products have off-notes and antinutritional compounds baked into how they're made. Second, food production generates enormous volumes of waste, fruit and dairy byproducts among them, that mostly get discarded or sold cheaply, even though a growing push toward circularity means that waste increasingly needs a better home.

The solution

Renaissance uses yeast strains, either selected from its biobank or purpose-engineered, to tackle both problems. Certain strains naturally produce enzymes that break down the compounds behind off-flavours and reduced nutrition, work the company has previously turned into a commercial product. Its research has also identified wild yeast strains for cutting antinutritional compounds in plant-based products.

On the waste side, Renaissance is developing a precision fermentation platform that converts low-value byproducts like fruit and dairy waste into high-value natural ingredients, flavours, pigments, antioxidants, and preservatives, turning a disposal cost into premium ingredients that manufacturers can actually sell.

Traction

Renaissance has built a global B2B customer base spanning commercial licensees, co-development partners, and pilot collaborators.

REVO BIO CHEM

Turning fermentation byproducts into functional ingredients

Category

Food waste and circularity

Location

Calgary, Alberta

Next raise

$10,000,000 Seed, currently in progress

Revo Bio Chem develops yeast-derived ingredients for foodtech, natural health, wellness, and agri-food applications, extracting native compounds from fermentation biomass or engineering yeast for targeted compound production.

The problem

Foodtech and adjacent industries need functional ingredients they can count on, but too many of the current options are tied to a single growing season, a specific animal source, a narrow set of suppliers, or manufacturing processes expensive enough to limit who can compete. Meanwhile, an entirely different industry is sitting on an overlooked resource: breweries and ethanol plants produce large amounts of yeast biomass as part of their normal operations, and that biomass carries genuinely valuable compounds inside it. Most of it still ends up treated as a low-value leftover rather than something worth extracting.

The solution

Revo extracts native compounds including beta-glucan, trehalose, and squalene from biomass that fermentation facilities already produce, while also engineering yeast to produce targeted compounds for extraction. This turns what was previously discarded or undervalued into ingredients usable in functional foods, dietary supplements, cosmetics, agricultural applications, and other formulations, as commercial opportunities and regulatory requirements evolve.

Rather than building new infrastructure, the company runs this process through fermentation facilities that already exist, converting breweries and ethanol plants into bio-refineries, cutting out the cost and time of standing up new production sites or securing additional farmland.

Revo frames this as a model with benefits on multiple sides: extra revenue for the fermentation partners it works with, a domestically produced ingredient supply, and a more traceable, resilient source of functional ingredients for the companies that use them.

Traction

Revo has completed industrial-scale fermentation validation with a large contract manufacturer, demonstrating that its engineered yeast can operate under commercial fermentation conditions without materially disrupting its partner's core process. Independent analytical testing confirmed production of a target compound in the engineered-yeast samples.

RFINE BIOMASS

Upcycling spent coffee grounds into KAFFIKA® Cocoa Extender to reduce manufacturers' dependency on cocoa.

Category

Food waste and circularity

Location

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

RFINE Biomass is a Canadian clean-tech company that upcycles spent coffee grounds into KAFFIKA® Cocoa Extender, a patent-pending ingredient that enables up to 60% substitution of cocoa powder in a recipe, with no reformulation.

The problem

RFINE addresses two major problems in the food industry. Cocoa supply is under real strain, facing climate impacts, growing demand, unstable pricing, deforestation, and labour concerns across its supply chain, leaving food manufacturers exposed to higher costs, volatility, and shortages. At the same time, a global food byproduct is underutilized. The world drinks an estimated 2.25 billion cups of coffee a day, leaving behind roughly 11 million tonnes of spent coffee grounds annually, most of it is landfilled and releasing methane as it breaks down, with little scalable way for producers to put it to use.

The solution

RFINE collects spent coffee grounds from industrial producers at the source, then transforms them into KAFFIKA® Cocoa Extender; a fine, gluten-free ingredient that retains its natural fat content. KAFFIKA® is used in bakery, confectionery, and beverage applications that require cocoa powder. RFINE says KAFFIKA® Cocoa Extender helps manufacturers strengthen supply resilience while bringing down both cost and environmental impact, combining an abundant feedstock, a high cocoa-substitution rate, lower cost, and measurable carbon benefits. The company says KAFFIKA® stands apart from other cocoa alternatives, which are typically only able to address one or two of these benefits at once.

Traction

RFINE has offtake service contracts with two large North American generators of spent coffee grounds, with a verified carbon credit protocol active for material diverted from landfill, and says it has a strong pipeline to secure more volume. KAFFIKA® has moved through product validation with ingredient distributors, food manufacturers, and industry partners, and the company has signed its first early adopter customers, with commercial sales growing as production scales. RFINE was a winner of the MassChallenge Switzerland 2026 Sustainable Food Challenge, one of 11 selected from 889 applicants and named the most commercially ready cocoa-extender. Selected by global food companies including Mars, Givaudan, Tate & Lyle/Ingredion, and LDC, engagement RFINE says, has validated strong global demand driven by cocoa price volatility and supply pressure.

RUBRA

Growing essential nutrients like taurine and ARA in a single microalgae ingredient

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Toronto, Ontario

Next raise

$1,500,000 Pre-Seed, expected within 6 months

Rubra is developing a fermentation-based ingredient platform designed to replace animal- and petroleum-derived nutrients in food and feed, starting with pet food and eventually expanding toward human nutrition, including infant formula.

The problem

Global food security depends on more than protein alone. Nutrients like taurine, arachidonic acid (ARA), and EPA are still sourced mainly through animal, marine, and petroleum-based supply chains, and all three are growing shakier under pressure from climate change, geopolitical tension, disease outbreaks, and shrinking natural resources.

The stakes are highest in human nutrition, where these compounds do some of their most critical work: ARA and EPA are staples of infant formula because of their role in brain and eye development, and taurine shows up throughout infant nutrition and specialized medical products. A disruption anywhere in that supply chain doesn't stay contained, it ripples out to manufacturers, healthcare providers, and the families who depend on these products.

The solution

Rubra's illuminated fermentation platform grows several of these nutrients at once, using fermentation and photosynthesis together to produce taurine, ARA, EPA, and complete protein within a single microalgae ingredient, rather than sourcing each one separately. Consolidating production this way strengthens supply resilience, cuts reliance on animal and petroleum inputs, and reduces the platform's overall environmental footprint compared to the fragmented alternative.

Rubra is de-risking commercialization by starting in pet food before expanding into human nutrition, using that market to prove the platform out before moving into functional foods and, eventually, infant nutrition.

Traction

The company was selected as one of three global winners of the Mars Petcare Next Generation Pet Food Program for its novel ingredient technology, leading to an ongoing collaboration with Mars Petcare to evaluate the ingredient for future applications.

Rubra is also part of the MassChallenge Switzerland 2026 accelerator, working with global food and ingredient companies to accelerate commercialization. ALT-PRO Advantage is the consumer pet food brand developed by the company, with products sold in more than 260 retail locations across Canada, generating market validation, customer insight, and recurring revenue.

SMARTSKIN TECHNOLOGIES

Giving food manufacturers a digital twin to catch container damage before it costs them and prevent defects in packaged goods.

Category

Food manufacturing technology

Location

Fredericton, New Brunswick

Next raise

$60,000,000 Series A, expected over a year from now

SmartSkin helps food, beverage, and pharmaceutical manufacturers protect product quality on the production line by tracking the physical forces their containers experience during manufacturing.

The problem

Downtime, damaged containers, and spoiled products are common costs on manufacturing lines, alongside sealing and food safety issues that can turn into customer complaints. Large capital projects add another layer of difficulty, with long lead times for commissioning new lines or launching new products. Underlying much of this, according to SmartSkin, is a lack of visibility into the physical forces, like pressure, shock, and vibration, that containers experience during manufacturing.

The solution

SmartSkin's patented digital twin technology travels through a manufacturing line in place of a real container, using sensors to capture real-time data on the pressure, shock, tilt, spin, scuffing, and vertical load a container experiences during filling, packaging, and transport. That data lets manufacturers pinpoint exactly what's causing damage or stress to their containers, and use that insight to commission new lines, introduce new products, or optimize container handling faster. For the large food, beverage, and pharmaceutical plants using it, the solution is built into a defined process for protecting product quality, one that results in better productivity, less unplanned downtime, less product waste and broken glass, and improved safety on the line.

Traction

The SmartSkin Solution has now been deployed at more than 200 facilities in over 36 countries, spanning some of the largest food, beverage, and pharmaceutical manufacturers in the world.

SORALINK

Predicting equipment failures before they happen, without sending data outside Canada

Category

Food manufacturing technology

Location

Brossard, Quebec

Next raise

$1,000,000 Seed, expected within 6 months

Soralink provides AI-driven predictive maintenance for food processors and grocery distributors, using proprietary industrial-grade sensors to detect equipment problems before they cause downtime, spoilage, or safety incidents.

The problem

Food processors and grocery distributors lose millions of dollars a year to unplanned equipment failures: spoiled inventory, missed deliveries, line stoppages, and injuries caused by malfunctioning machinery. The standard fix, servicing equipment at fixed intervals whether it needs it or not, ends up wasting effort on machines that are running fine while still missing the ones actually headed for a breakdown.

Predictive maintenance solves that timing problem, but for many Canadian food sector customers, the tools built to do it come with a catch: most send operational data to U.S.-based cloud infrastructure, raising a data sovereignty concern. Tier-1 grocery distributors and other security-sensitive manufacturers can't accept their operational data passing through U.S. cloud providers subject to the U.S. CLOUD Act. Soralink says the result is that adoption stalls out precisely among the customers who stand to benefit the most.

The solution

Soralink pairs industrial-grade sensors, built specifically for harsh, washdown food processing environments, with an AI platform that watches for warning signs in vibration, temperature, and sound before they turn into downtime, spoilage, or a safety incident. Rather than routing that data to an outside cloud, Soralink processes it on-site, at the edge, removing the sovereignty trade-off that keeps other predictive maintenance tools out of reach for security-sensitive customers. The company points to that combination, built for the food sector specifically, running inference locally, and keeping data fully on-premise, as what sets it apart, proven so far in Quebec processing and distribution facilities.

Traction

Soralink has 12 active paying customers spanning small and medium food processors and large grocery distribution operations in Quebec, with zero customer churn and a growing pipeline of interest that the company points to as evidence of strong product-market fit.

SUSTAINABLE BIOPRODUCT INNOVATIONS

A chia-based fat replacer built for Canada's new front-of-package labelling rules

Sustainable Bioproduct Innovations (SBI) develops clean-label, plant-based ingredients for the food industry, led by its flagship product, 0Fat, a natural fat replacer made from mucilaginous seeds like chia that's designed to reduce saturated fat while preserving texture and mouthfeel.

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

New Westminster, BC

Next raise

$500,000 Pre-Seed, currently in progress

The problem

Food manufacturers are under growing pressure to cut saturated fat, calories, and other nutrients of concern, all while keeping the taste, texture, and shelf stability consumers expect. Front-of-package nutrition labelling is accelerating that pressure. In Mexico, the company notes, the rollout of front-of-package labelling reportedly pushed more than 40 per cent of food companies to reformulate their products, and similar measures are active or emerging in Canada, the United States, Chile, and the European Union. Canada's own 2026 front-of-package labelling requirements add particular urgency for products high in saturated fat.

Fat does more work in a product than most people realize. Beyond calories, it shapes how something feels in the mouth, how it holds together, how moist it stays, and how flavour comes through, so simply removing it often leaves behind something dry, unstable, or just less enjoyable to eat. Existing fat replacers tend to fall short in one way or another: limited to a narrow set of applications, built around ingredients manufacturers would rather avoid, or requiring costly changes to how a product is made.

The solution

0Fat is a plant-based fat replacer built from chia mucilage, konjac, and psyllium. Together they form a gel-like system that holds water well and behaves enough like real fat to stand in for conventional oils and solid fats in both texture and mouthfeel. Manufacturers can use it to cut calories and saturated fat while adding dietary fibre across products like baked goods, sauces, dressings, frozen meals, meat products, and dairy alternatives.

SBI describes 0Fat as holding GRAS (Generally Regarded as Safe) status, fully natural, and built to drop into a manufacturer's existing production process without disruption, using water as its only processing aid. A proprietary spray-drying step converts the chia-based gel into a shelf-stable powder that stores and ships easily on standard equipment, sidestepping the need for cold-chain logistics entirely. The resulting product is dense enough that a single skid of 0Fat can do the job of roughly 100 skids of conventional fat, a meaningful cut to storage and shipping complexity.

Traction

SBI has a growing list of paying clients along with a pipeline of additional companies currently in discussion or bench trial stages.

SYNERGIA BIOTECHSYSTEMS

Growing natural blue food coloring from cyanobacteria instead of petroleum

Category

NextGen ingredients and food/beverage

Location

Calgary, Alberta

Next raise

$3,000,000 Seed, currently in progress

Synergia Biotech produces phycocyanin, a natural blue pigment derived from cyanobacteria, as a scalable alternative to synthetic blue dyes for food, beverage, cosmetics, and nutraceutical applications.

The problem

Blue is the hardest color to source naturally, and while pressure is mounting on synthetic, petroleum-based dyes from regulators and consumers alike, viable natural blue options haven't kept pace with that demand. Current methods for producing phycocyanin, the natural blue pigment most often used as an alternative, are heavy on resources: water, energy, and land all get consumed at levels that make the end product harder to price competitively or produce at real scale.

The solution

Synergia's answer starts with how the pigment is made. A patented, solvent-free extraction process, combined with proprietary cultivation technology, produces a notably purer phycocyanin than competing methods, at a cost the company says undercuts them significantly. A closed-loop system captures carbon and recycles waste streams back into production, bringing water use down by roughly 97 per cent compared with conventional approaches. Beyond its color, phycocyanin also functions as a bioactive protein-pigment with antioxidant properties, giving manufacturers something conventional dyes can't: added nutritional value alongside the color itself.

Traction

Synergia has secured 10 Material Transfer Agreements for product trials, seven with food and beverage companies and three with cosmetics companies, along with a memorandum of understanding with a global ingredient distributor.

TERRA BIOINDUSTRIES

Turning leftover brewing grain into protein, fibre, and flavour ingredients

Category

Food waste and circularity

Location

Toronto, Ontario

Next raise

$4,250,000 Seed, expected within 6 months

Terra Bioindustries works with agrifood partners to convert their byproducts into ingredients for food and beverage manufacturers, currently upcycling local Canadian brewers' spent grain into four products: TERRA Protina, TERRA Fibra, TERRA Malt, and TERRA Choc.

The problem

Barley left over from brewing beer, known as brewers' spent grain, is nutrient-dense but spoils quickly, and most of what breweries produce doesn't go far: it's typically either paid to be hauled away or sold cheaply as animal feed, since few upcycling attempts have managed to turn it into something more financially worthwhile. Terra set out to change that math, building a platform around ingredients the market already wants, rather than trying to force demand for a byproduct nobody was asking for.

The solution

Terra's process begins with wet spent grain, stabilizing it right away so it skips the energy-heavy drying step most upcycling methods depend on. From there, a custom blend of off-the-shelf enzymes breaks the grain down into its sugars, proteins, and fibre, and each of those components goes through its own finishing process to bring out its best qualities.

The result is four ingredients: TERRA Protina, a protein concentrate suited to baked goods and grain-based recipes; TERRA Fibra, a dietary fibre used to boost nutrition in food and pet care products; TERRA Malt, which the company describes as the first-ever spent grain syrup, adding colour and flavour to sauces and beverages; and TERRA Choc, a more flavorful protein stream that helps enhance cocoa flavours. Terra deliberately chose equipment and inputs that let the platform run in most existing production facilities, even alongside a supplier's own operations, and the company is now extending the same underlying process to other types of spent grain, opening a path to ingredients beyond its current barley-based lineup.

Traction

Terra has a public partnership with Anheuser-Busch InBev through its 100+ Accelerator 2026 program, collecting and upcycling spent grain from one of AB InBev's breweries and supplying the resulting ingredients to AB InBev and other companies in the accelerator, including several large multinationals. The company also has public partnerships with Great Western Brewery and 9Mile Brewery, which supply spent grain and are trialling TERRA Malt in both non-alcoholic and traditional beer, along with a number of paid pilot projects with large companies dedicating production runs to their R&D needs.

TEWARI DE-OX SYSTEMS

Extending fresh meat's shelf life from days to months by eliminating oxygen entirely

Category

Food waste and circularity

Location

Richmond Hill, Ontario

Next raise

$2,250,000 Seed, currently in progress

Tewari De-Ox Systems, winner of the Canada Food Innovation Network's FoodTech Frontier 2026, developed Zero-OxTech®. This patented system extends the refrigerated shelf life of retail-ready meat cuts from about a week to 120 days, without chemicals, freezing, or gas flushing.

The problem

Oxygen is the root cause of fresh meat deterioration. It drives oxidation, discoloration, off-flavours, nutrient loss, and microbial growth. Even trace oxygen shortens the window before meat must be marked down or discarded. Together these cost the supply chain billions of dollars every year in waste, markdowns, recalls, and lost shelf time. Existing methods include vacuum packaging, shrink bags, modified atmosphere packaging, and conventional oxygen scavengers. All of them reduce oxygen only partway, which caps retail-ready shelf life at roughly 3 to 21 days. As a result, processors must cut and pack close to retail markets, which inflates labour, transportation, and inventory costs. Exporters must ship bulk primals that are reopened and repacked at destination.

The solution

Zero-OxTech creates an absolute zero-oxygen environment around the product, at 0 parts per million (ppm). In this environment, it harnesses the meat's own natural enzymes to provide colour stability and delay microbial growth. The system combines proprietary oxygen-control sachets, specialized barrier films, and a patented process that fits into existing packing lines without major capital investment.

In a 2025 commercial validation, case-ready beef kept pathogens within safe limits and aerobic plate counts low through 120 days. Conventional shrink-bag controls spoiled by day 30. Mississippi State University confirmed that PVC-overwrapped steaks stored in Zero-OxTech mother bags kept acceptable retail colour after up to four weeks of storage. This validated Zero-OxTech for domestic, country-wide retail applications.

This performance enables centralized, CFIA-supervised processing for both country-wide domestic distribution and long-haul export. It reduces retail shrink from conventional 10% to less than 0.1%, freight emissions, and waste, with estimated savings of US$3 billion annually in Canada alone.

Traction

Tewari holds a $1 million purchase order and has completed successful commercial pilots. These include a trial with a major retailer that wanted to shift from in-store cutting to centralized cutting. In addition to FoodTech Frontier 2026, the company won Meat & Livestock Australia's Global Innovation Challenge. It is now scaling across North American and international markets for beef, pork, and other proteins.

TRACKTILE

Letting food manufacturers manage operations by talking to an AI instead of typing into it

Category

Food safety and traceability / Digital supply chain

Location

Charlottetown, PEI

Tracktile is an AI-powered operations platform for food and beverage manufacturers, built to cut down on manual data entry and give teams full visibility into inventory, supply chain, purchasing, orders, and production from a single system.

The problem

Food and beverage manufacturers want to spend their time making great products, not chasing down information or manually re-entering data across disconnected systems. Compliance and audits add another layer of friction, pulling staff away from higher-value work just to prove a plant is operating the way it should. As manufacturers try to bring on larger accounts or scale operations, that manual overhead becomes a real constraint, not just an inconvenience, but something that actively slows growth.

The solution

Instead of navigating menus or filling out forms, Tracktile lets people on the floor simply talk to it (by voice, text, a photo or a short video) and the system handles the rest. Behind that interface, the platform pulls everything from inventory counts to purchase orders into one place, flags what needs attention and suggests what to do about it before a manager has to go looking. Because the system is built to be reconfigured rather than replaced, it keeps pace as a processor's operations change, whether that means new product lines, new sites or larger accounts. Most plants are live within weeks rather than months, and customers typically see a significant return within their first year.

Traction

Tracktile has more than 80 customers across four countries, with a growing pipeline of new business.

TRUFFLE SYSTEMS

One connected system for ordering, kitchen fulfillment, and pickup, without ripping out what operators already run

Category

Kitchen & restaurant technology

Location

Edmonton, Alberta

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

Truffle Systems offers an end-to-end restaurant technology platform, point of sale, digital ordering, kitchen display systems, self-service kiosks, micro markets, and its GoBox smart food pickup lockers, built on an open API that lets operators add capabilities without replacing the systems they already use.

The problem

Orders now come in from every direction at once: in-person POS, online ordering, and third-party delivery apps like Uber Eats and DoorDash, all converging on the same kitchen and the same pickup counter. Staff end up spending their shift sorting out which order came from where instead of preparing food, and guests wait longer every time a new ordering channel gets added. The strain is worst in high-volume, spiky-demand settings, like theme parks, water parks, family entertainment centres, campus dining halls, and cloud kitchens, where demand can surge and drop within minutes, far faster than legacy POS or ordering systems were built to handle. The result is long wait times, mixed-up orders, burned-out staff, and rising labour costs cutting into already thin margins.

The solution

Truffle unifies ordering, kitchen fulfillment, and pickup or delivery into one connected system, automating the final handoff through GoBox smart food lockers so guests and drivers can collect orders on their own. The platform's Cloud POS runs entirely in-browser and works offline, meaning it operates on iPads, Android tablets, laptops, and touchscreens without special hardware or app downloads, while folding in orders from Uber Eats, DoorDash, and Grubhub right alongside orders placed in-house. Where legacy POS systems typically require proprietary hardware and a full rip-and-replace install, and standalone locker or kiosk vendors solve pickup while leaving ordering and kitchen management disconnected, Truffle is built to be uncoupled: operators keep the POS or ordering system they already run and add only the pieces they need. Truffle says operators using the platform have optimized labor and cut wait times to zero, while increasing repeat orders and throughput.

Traction

Truffle Systems has 500 customers across Canada, the United States, and Australia, spanning quick service and table service restaurants, hotels, cloud kitchens, pizzerias, campus dining, libraries, and entertainment venues.

TWISH TECHNOLOGIES

Turning scattered grocery orders into bulk buying power for Canadian families

Category

Consumer apps and services

Location

Alexandria, Ontario

Next raise

$5,000,000 Seed, expected within 6 months

Twish Cart is an online group grocery platform that pools individual household orders into coordinated, volume-based purchases, aiming to unlock wholesale-level pricing for families while giving suppliers a clearer, more predictable channel to sell through.

The problem

Canada's food system has a timing problem: vendors have to commit to buying, making, or storing inventory long before they know what customers will actually buy. The demand is real, but it's spread thin across thousands of individual shoppers making separate decisions at separate times, too scattered for any single vendor to spot a pattern early enough to act on it. Without that visibility, procurement becomes a guess, pricing can't reflect real volume, and the business ends up carrying the risk: unsold stock, cash sitting idle, markdowns, and waste that smaller agrifood businesses, with the least room to absorb it, feel the most.

The solution

Twish Cart's patent-pending, AI-powered platform gathers that scattered demand back together before it's too late to matter. Families join time-limited "Cart Pools" and commit to only what they need, while the platform groups requests by product, location, and price sensitivity and tracks how close each pool is to a volume that unlocks better pricing. Once a pool hits its threshold, the platform handles payment and coordinates one consolidated order instead of many small ones. Vendors, meanwhile, set their own minimum volumes and can see real, committed demand before they ever allocate inventory. This arrangement can bring grocery costs down for families by as much as 80 per cent compared to shopping individually, while giving vendors a level of demand visibility they wouldn't otherwise have.

Traction

Twish Cart has more than 9,300 active users across 32 cities in Ontario and Quebec, with 27 active vendors, has distributed over 19 tonnes of food, reports a 95 per cent consumer satisfaction rate, and delivers an average $5,700 in food-cost savings for a family of four.

U TECHNOLOGY

LED technology that helps fresh produce last longer — no chemicals, just light.

Category

Cleantech / Food waste and circularity

Location

Calgary, Alberta

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

U Technology is a Canadian engineering and LED lighting company developing **3GT BrightHarvest™**, a patented light-based technology designed to extend the post-harvest life of fresh produce. The technology has applications across the food supply chain—from post-harvest storage and distribution to grocery displays.

The problem

Roughly one-third of the world's food is lost or wasted across the supply chain and at the consumer level. Beyond the economic cost, food loss and waste is responsible for an estimated 8–10% of global greenhouse-gas emissions.

Fresh produce is particularly vulnerable because deterioration continues after harvest. Refrigeration, humidity management and packaging can slow this process, but conventional lighting used in grocery displays and cold-storage environments is designed primarily for visibility and merchandising—not post-harvest preservation.

The solution

3GT BrightHarvest™ turns light into part of the preservation system.

Using patented LED technology, BrightHarvest is engineered to interact with photosynthetically active produce after harvest rather than simply illuminate it. Research and testing have demonstrated the potential to slow moisture loss, preserve nutritional quality and delay deterioration—extending shelf life by **more than 40% in tested applications.**

The technology requires **no chemical treatment** and is designed to integrate with existing refrigerated environments, creating the potential for a relatively simple intervention at multiple points across the food supply chain. No chemicals. Just light.

Traction

U Technology is currently conducting commercial validation of 3GT BrightHarvest with a major Canadian grocery chain, building on years of research and development in post-harvest lighting.

The current work is evaluating the technology under real-world retail conditions, including its impact on produce shelf life, quality and waste. Early observations from the commercial pilot have been encouraging, while data collection and validation remain underway.

If commercial validation confirms the results demonstrated through earlier research and testing, 3GT BrightHarvest has the potential to scale across grocery locations.

UDESIGN SOLUTIONS

Retrofitting automation into food plants without ripping out what's already there

Category

Food manufacturing technology

Location

Ottawa, Ontario

Next raise

None planned in upcoming year

uDesign Solutions is a Canadian design and product development firm that builds custom automation for small and medium-sized food manufacturers, engineering systems that integrate with a plant's existing equipment rather than replacing it.

The problem

Most automation solutions are built for large facilities with the capital to match, leaving small and medium-sized food manufacturers with few realistic options. Tearing out and rebuilding a production line costs more than most smaller operations can absorb, and the disruption alone can be enough to rule it out, so many processors end up stuck relying on manual labour, which caps throughput and limits how much they can grow.

The solution

uDesign designs each system around a customer's existing process rather than offering standardized equipment or requiring a full line replacement. That retrofit-first approach clears specific bottlenecks without scrapping equipment a manufacturer has already paid for, making advanced automation realistic for processors who don't have the budget or floor space for a large-scale project. An optional add-on, the uDesign Smart Line platform, layers non-invasive production monitoring on top of these systems, giving manufacturers ongoing visibility into performance and helping them fine-tune operations over time.

Traction

uDesign is building momentum through a combination of secured projects, repeat business, and a growing pipeline of new work.

SPONSORS

NATIONAL THOUGHT LEADERSHIP PARTNER

bdc

WESTERN REGION SPONSOR

MLT AIKINS

WESTERN CANADA'S LAW FIRM

SCALING SUCCESS AWARD SPONSOR

RBC X MC

CANADIAN
FOOD INNOVATION
NETWORK

