CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

Understanding Industry Needs:

Feedback on Novel Ingredient Regulation

Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN) – May 2025

OVERVIEW

To better understand industry experiences and identify ways to improve Canada's approach to regulating novel food ingredients, the Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN) conducted a bilingual pulse poll from May 5th to May 12th, 2025. The survey was shared on YODL, CFIN's digital platform, to draw on the collective experience of our network of 7,000 members —the country's fastest growing and most engaged communities.

Companies developing a wide range of low-risk novel ingredients and food products responded to the pulse poll, offering firsthand insight into the regulatory barriers that slow innovation. Their feedback highlights where improvements to Health Canada's guidance and processes could help give Canadian companies a competitive advantage in bringing safe, innovative products to market more efficiently.

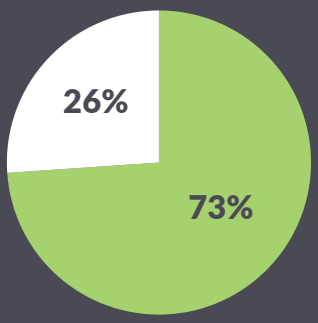
POLL DETAILS

Duration:
7 days

Channels:
YODL, member eblast, and LinkedIn

Languages:
English and French

Total Responses:



respondents indicated they are developing novel ingredients/products

respondents indicated they are not currently working on novel ingredients

Participants who answered "Yes" were invited to describe:

- Their innovation
- Why they believe it should be fast-tracked
- Their current experience engaging with Health Canada

HEALTH CANADA POLL RESULTS

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

Strong Appetite for Innovation: Over **73% of respondents are actively developing novel products or ingredients,** many of which aim to enhance sustainability, nutrition, or functionality in the food system.

Rapid Growth in Future-Focused Categories: Companies are advancing a wide range of novel food innovations—from plant-based proteins to cell-cultivated meat and dairy. This growing community of novel food innovators **highlighted the need for clear, updated guidance** from Health Canada and its regulatory partners.

Pressure to Accelerate: Respondents stressed that they're **working on products designed to meet urgent public needs**—from child nutrition to climate-resilient ingredients—and feel these solutions need to reach the market without unnecessary delay.

Mixed Experiences with Health Canada: While some respondents value the guidance provided, many expressed frustrations with **lengthy approval timelines** (often extending 6-12 months) and **lack of perceived agility** in supporting innovation.

Clearer Guidelines Required: Respondents overwhelmingly asked for **transparency, more efficient pathways**, and **prioritization of products with public health, trade, or innovation significance.**

CONCLUSION

This pulse poll highlights both the pace of innovation in Canada's food sector and the appetite for a more agile regulatory environment that helps bring ideas to market. As a neutral and trusted food industry convener, CFIN's mission is to facilitate an active dialogue between Health Canada and the innovation community —work made possible through the reach and connectivity of YODL—to ensure that regulation keeps pace with emerging opportunities without compromising safety or public trust.

HEALTH CANADA POLL RESULTS