



THREE FOODTECH STARTUPS RECEIVE \$294K FROM THE CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

The Innovation Booster funding will help the Canadian companies accelerate food safety, processing, and emissions-reduction projects

GUELPH, ON, JULY 9, 2024 — The [Canadian Food Innovation Network \(CFIN\)](#) is awarding \$294,497 to three foodtech projects through the organization's [Innovation Booster Program](#). Industry will match these funds, resulting in a total of \$588,992 in funding across the three projects.

The Innovation Booster funding recipients are:

Project Lead: [Bliq Photonics](#) (Quebec)

Project Title: Coagulation Measurement Probe for the Cheese Industry

Funding: \$99,992

Bliq Photonics is proposing a significant advancement for the Canadian dairy industry in cheese manufacturing with a non-contact optical probe designed to monitor cheese production in real-time. Combining advancements in optics, electronics, and software development, this innovative project will allow cheese dairies to better control production processes to optimize production time, yield, and cheese quality.

Project Lead: [Harvest Systems Inc.](#) (Ontario)

Project Title: Fryer-based HARVEST System with Ventilation Air Duct Heating Within a Restaurant Environment

Funding: \$98,588

Harvest Systems technology collects and recycles waste heat to improve operational efficiency in restaurants and cut greenhouse gas emissions. This project will expand their innovative water-heating HARVEST platform with a new focus on repurposing waste heat from gas-fired fryers to warm incoming ventilation air in restaurants. This fuel-less heating system, developed

as a duct heater add-on, replaces traditional electric or gas-fired make-up air heaters, reducing both utility costs and GHG emissions. Developed and tested at McMaster University's gas-fired fryer test facility, the project will undergo a six-month pilot demonstration at a partner restaurant within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Project Lead: [AgricUltra Advancements Inc.](#) (Ontario)

Project Title: Advancing Food Safety and Shelf Life with MetaRail UV Sterilization

Funding: \$95,917

AgricUltra Advancements is striving to eradicate foodborne pathogens and extend produce shelf-life with their MetaRail™ Deep-UV based technology. By integrating multiple channels of Deep-UV into post-harvest food processing, the project ensures enhanced produce freshness and shelf stability and continual, non-invasive sterilization on production lines. Featuring durable and energy-efficient UV-A, UV-B, and UV-C LED-based light platforms, this innovative approach maintains a sanitized end-of-shift environment, meeting laboratory food safety standards while improving production efficiency.

CFIN's Innovation Booster provides funding and support to SMEs to help them accelerate product development, overcome innovation hurdles, and validate market fit. During this tenth round of Innovation Booster funding, CFIN received 47 applications from across the country. In total, 50 Canadian foodtech companies have received \$4,277,968 from this program since 2021.

Across all programs, CFIN has awarded more than \$19.9M to 74 Canadian foodtech projects.

QUOTES

"These three innovative projects illustrate CFIN's support for novel solutions capable of transforming every level of the food value chain. Canadian foodtech startups are leading the way in creating safer food for consumers and delivering gains in operational efficiency to restaurants and manufacturers, all while finding ways to ensure the long-term sustainability of our food system."

– Dana McCauley

CEO, Canadian Food Innovation Network

“Ensuring the sustainability of Canada’s food supply chain is essential and the viability of the sector relies on our industry’s ability to produce, process, store and ship final food products to Canadians. The latest recipients of the Innovation Booster Challenge are tackling complex supply chain challenges and finding innovative solutions to everyday problems. From the deployment of drones for machinery inspection, to software testing companies’ food waste life cycles, these recipients are creating opportunities for long-term sustainability and growth in this important economic sector.”

– The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne

Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

“Canadian food processors are always innovating and adopting new technologies to improve their processes. From breakthroughs in cheese manufacturing to advances in energy efficiency and food safety, these projects are proof of Canada’s position as a leader in foodtech.”

– The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay

Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in Canada

"Artisanal cheese producers will achieve greater control over input variability, while larger volume cheese producers can integrate the technology to boost productivity and automate industrial processes. Therefore, the entire Canadian dairy industry will benefit from integrating this innovation."

– Mathieu Champagne

Chief Financial Officer, Bliq Photonics

“We are delighted to have the opportunity to demonstrate our make-up air duct heater as the newest addition to the Harvest platform, which leverages the ability of the Harvest Platform to harvest waste heat from cooking appliances, such as ovens and fryers, to temper make-up ventilation air using waste heat, resulting in lower operating costs and reduced emissions. With the support of programs, such as the CFIN Innovation Booster, the transition of Canadian university research to commercial enterprises is made more possible.”

– James Cotton

CEO, Harvest Systems Inc.

“Our understanding of how UV triggers specific pathways and effects ranging from plant tissue repair mechanisms, tissue hardening to pathogens, reproductive termination of microorganisms through to triggering programmed cell death have now been matched with the recent surge in new innovations in technology, enabling the creation of advanced solutions to age old problems but with less energy and no use of toxic chemicals. Through the application of multiple, discrete Deep-UV Wavelengths, it is now possible to treat many diverse threats/vectors from a single platform solution.”

– Emil Breza

President, AgricUltra Advancements Inc.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Innovation Booster provides flexible and rapid support to Small or Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as they address food innovation challenges or technical hurdles that have created barriers to achieving their commercialization goals.

The Innovation Booster is administered by CFIN, which is supported by the Government of Canada’s [Strategic Innovation Fund](#).

ABOUT THE CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

The Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN) is a national organization that’s stimulating transformative and transferrable innovation within the Canadian food sector. With over 5,000 members and counting, CFIN has built the fastest growing and most engaged food business community in the country and their members come from across the globe, representing all parts of the food value chain. [CFIN’s free membership](#) includes access to exclusive funding programs, five Regional Innovation Directors, and [YODL](#).

CFIN was established in 2021 and is supported by Government of Canada’s Strategic Innovation Fund and Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

[Innovation Booster](#)

[CFIN Membership](#)

[CFIN Media Page](#)

[CFIN Media Kit](#)

MEDIA CONTACT

Jamil A. Karim

Communications Director

Canadian Food Innovation Network

Jamil@cfin-rcia.ca