Ontario Food Technology Pilot — Project Descriptions

GUELPH, ON, MARCH 16, 2026 — Funding from the second intake of CFIN's Ontario Food Technology Pilot will support 11 innovative foodtech projects with transformative potential for Ontario's food sector. Below is a summary of each project, along with quotes from the funded companies.

Project Lead: ALT TEX Inc. (Kitchener, ON)

Project Title: Food to Fabric Fermentation Technology

Funding: $99,975

ALT TEX is a Canadian clean technology company tackling food waste by turning it into sustainable, high-value materials. Through this project, ALT TEX is building the infrastructure and partnerships needed to transform food loss from farms, processors, and municipalities into usable industrial inputs rather than landfill waste. By integrating directly into existing food supply chains, the company diverts large volumes of carbohydrate-rich waste that currently drive greenhouse gas emissions and disposal costs. This project advances a scalable model for food waste valorization, creating measurable economic and environmental benefits for the agri-food sector and positioning Canada as a leader in circular, low-carbon innovation.

Project Lead: AuX Labs (Toronto, ON)

Project Title: Fermentation Casein that Achieves Parity Pricing with Animal Dairy

Funding: $100,000

AuX Labs is scaling up production of fermented caseins to 50,000L fermentation scale and delivering a pilot manufacturing batch of casein to customers for dairy applications including cheese, yogurt, and ice cream. This project extends pilot manufacturing to support a new CPG partnership developing next-generation dairy products. The work entails consumer research, product development and testing, brand development, pilot manufacturing of finished goods, and a successful market test.

"Most alternatives today ask people to accept trade-offs in taste, texture, or functionality. Our approach focuses on performance first. At AuX Labs, we can scale responsibly, at a price point that also makes sense for wider adoption."

— Ted Jin, Founder & CEO, AuX Labs

Project Lead: Cheffer Technologies Inc. (Cobourg, ON)

Project Title: AI-Enabled Foodservice Supply Chain Synchronization System in Southern Ontario

Funding: $99,646

Cheffer is developing an AI-enabled supply chain synchronization system for the hospitality sector in southern Ontario. The platform creates a shared, real-time view of purchasing, pricing, and contract performance across operators, distributors, and manufacturers. The system detects off-contract orders, price variances, and potential shortfalls, providing early warnings and recommended actions. Cheffer will lead this project in collaboration with a leading hotel group, manufacturer, and two distributors in southern Ontario to validate the technology in live operating environments.

"With CFIN's support, Cheffer is setting a new standard for foodservice supply chain coordination. By bringing operators, distributors, and manufacturers together through real-time AI-powered synchronization, we are driving efficiency, reducing waste, and building a more resilient food ecosystem in Southern Ontario and beyond."

— Milton Calderon Donefer, Co-Founder & CEO, Cheffer Technologies

Project Lead: Chocovate Labs Inc. (Oshawa, ON)

Project Title: Scaling Cocoa-Free Chocolate: Finalizing Pilot-Ready Formulation for Commercialization

Funding: $100,000

Chocovate Labs is advancing its proprietary cocoa-free chocolate formulation from pilot-validated TRL 6 to commercial TRL 8. The project will optimize fat and emulsifier systems to improve snap and temper behavior, conduct pilot-scale trials on industrial equipment, and validate shelf-life and sensory performance. The result will be a stable, ready-to-commercialize

chocolate ingredient that uses no cocoa or palm oil and can run on existing chocolate lines without capital change. This project positions Ontario and Canada as leaders in climate-resilient ingredient innovation and provides manufacturers with a drop-in, cost-stable alternative to volatile cocoa supply chains.

"Chocolate manufacturers are under real pressure right now. Cocoa prices remain volatile, and supply chains are unpredictable. This project allows us to take our cocoa-free formulation from the lab into pilot-scale production so manufacturers can test a stable, scalable alternative. We're excited to help build a more resilient future for chocolate."

— Brittany Charlton , Founder & CEO, Chocovate Labs

Project Lead: Circulr Inc. (Toronto, ON)

Project Title: Large Scale Packaging Reuse

Funding: $100,000

Circulr is a reusable packaging system enabler that has operated local grocery packaging reuse systems for over 5 years. The next evolution of their system is a large-scale, cross-category packaging reuse program built for major global brands and national retailers. In an industry-funded feasibility study, Circulr has already gathered partners and scoped the parameters for such a program. This project covers the design phase: creating prototype packaging and testing hypotheses from the feasibility study that lead into the execution phase. They have identified areas for the rollout as well as areas of potential integration with other major reuse systems, including work they are supporting in the Reuse City Canada Project. The food program aims to launch in Ottawa in 2027, deploying reusable glass jars and plastic tubs into both new and existing reusable packaging systems.

"Developing scalable, long-lasting, and effective reusable packaging systems requires innovative work to be completed alongside leaders across retailers, producers, packaging suppliers, and organizations like CFIN. This funding will enable Circulr to introduce new, standardized, and reusable food packaging to the market through our partners. It is through this work that we will be able to reduce massive amounts of waste, create more local jobs, and make the food packaging system in Canada stronger and more sustainable"

— Tyler De Sousa, Co-Founder, Circulr

Project Lead: GreenVeil Packaging Inc. (Ottawa, ON)

Project Title: Pilot Demonstration of Ultra-Biodegradable, Antimicrobial Fruit Blister Trays

Funding: $100,000

GreenVeil Packaging Inc. is an Ontario-based cleantech materials company developing ultra-biodegradable and antimicrobial biocomposites for food and agriculture. This project will advance GreenVeil's technology from pilot validation toward pre-commercial readiness, focusing on fruit blister trays designed to replace single-use plastic packaging used by greenhouse and produce growers. Using locally sourced natural materials, we will validate durability, antimicrobial performance, and controlled biodegradation in greenhouse and retail environments, supporting scale-up and manufacturing readiness for market launch.

"Following years of lab-based development using Ontario-sourced materials, CFIN's support enables us to transition from advanced research to pilot manufacturing and real-world deployment."

— Ali Maleki, Founder and CEO, GreenVeil Packaging Inc.

Project Lead: HalalMeals Ready Foods Ltd. (Scarborough, ON)

Project Title: AI-Powered Healthy Meal Plans and Demand Insights for Foodservice and Retail

Funding: $86,624

HalalMeals is developing an AI-powered nutrition coach that delivers personalized, culturally sensitive dietary guidance for individuals following halal diets. The system uses a Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) architecture combining user health data with trusted nutritional and halal-specific sources. The project will build and pilot a conversational assistant that interprets meal logs, health metrics, and religious dietary laws to provide safe, evidence-based nutrition advice. By analyzing anonymized user data, the platform will also generate aggregated insights for foodservice and retail partners, identifying which healthy ready-made meals best match local consumer goals.

"This support from CFIN accelerates our development of an AI-driven health tool specifically designed for the halal market. Our goal is to move beyond generic nutrition apps by building a coach that understands the intersection of health data and cultural dietary requirements. By leveraging AI, we want to empower our users to hit their wellness targets with precision, evidence-based guidance, and zero guesswork."

— **Mohammad Sheikh, Co-Founder & CEO, HalalMeals Ready Foods**

Project Lead: Harvest Systems Inc. (Hamilton, ON)

Project Title: Fryer-Based Harvest System with Ventilation Air Duct Heating Within a Restaurant Environment

Funding: $94,972

Harvest Systems focuses on repurposing waste heat from gas-fired commercial kitchen appliances to offset electricity and gas usage. After successfully demonstrating its technology through a partnership with Pizza Pizza, this project focuses on a duct heater add-on that repurposes waste heat from gas-fired fryers to temper make-up ventilation air. The add-on will be developed at McMaster University's gas-fired fryer test facility and deployed for a six-month demonstration pilot at a partner restaurant. This project will demonstrate a new application of waste heat recovery that allows restaurants to improve operational efficiency, offset utility costs, and reduce GHG emissions.

"We are excited to demonstrate the make up air duct heater as the newest add-on to the Harvest Platform. By using waste heat from ovens and fryers to temper ventilation air, this technology will help restaurants reduce utility costs and greenhouse gas emissions. As an early stage company, CFIN's Ontario Food Technology Pilot program makes it possible to run real-world pilots that validate savings and accelerate commercialization."

— **James Cotton, CEO, Harvest Systems**

Project Lead: Myo Palate Corporation (Toronto, ON)

Project Title: Next-Generation Hybrid Protein: Integrating Cultivated Pork Fat with Mushroom-Based Ingredients at Pilot Scale

Funding: $99,250

This collaborative project between Myo Palate and Maia Farms will develop Canada's first hybrid cultivated meat product by integrating fat-enriched cultivated pork with mushroom-based protein ingredients. The project will create pilot prototypes of a hybrid ground pork product with superior sensory quality and nutritional value compared to plant-only alternatives while maintaining cost efficiency and scalability. Through combinatorial testing, the project will

optimize blending ratios, moisture content, and processing parameters to achieve authentic pork flavor and texture. Success will accelerate commercialization timelines for both partners and position Ontario at the forefront of cultivated meat innovation.

"We're excited to partner with Maia Farms to develop Canada's first hybrid cultivated meat product. This project positions Ontario as a leader in next-generation protein by combining two complementary Canadian companies to solve the taste and cost challenges that have held the industry back."

— Frank Yu, Co-Founder Myo Palate

"Fat is flavour, and consumers shouldn't have to choose between taste and sustainability. By pairing our mushroom protein with cultivated pork fat, we're working on delivering a meat-like experience the world has been waiting for. We're excited to work with our partner at Myo Palate and CFIN to bring this next-generation innovation to Canada."

— Gavin Schneider, CEO and Co-Founder, Maia Farms

Project Lead: Smooth Commerce (Toronto, ON)

Project Title: Connected Dining: Loyalty Integration Pilot

Funding: $80,000

Smooth Commerce is piloting a unified, experiential loyalty program that bridges digital ordering and in-restaurant experiences, integrating its loyalty engine with OpenTable to increase customer acquisition, visit frequency, and revenue for restaurant partners.

"This initiative builds on our existing loyalty and off-premise digital ordering platform by extending it into the full dine-in experience. By connecting reservations, in-restaurant engagement, and off-premise loyalty into a single ecosystem, something that has historically been difficult for restaurants to achieve, we're helping operators recognize and reward guests wherever and however they choose to engage. With support from CFIN, this pilot represents an important step toward giving restaurants greater control over guest relationships and long-term customer value."

— Roberto Sarjoo, President, Smooth Commerce

Project Lead: Tewari De-Ox Systems Inc. (Richmond Hill, ON)

Project Title: DNA Sequencing Confirming the Food Safety Attributes of Patented Zero-OxTech Packaged Retail-Ready Portion Meat Cuts

Funding: $100,000

Tewari De-Ox Systems has invented and patented Zero OxTech®, a meat preservation technology that retains naturally occurring enzymes and increases shelf life by 10X the industry maximum while reducing food waste to less than 0.01%. The technology offers meat packers, exporters, and retailers a 120+ day shelf life for retail-ready cuts. Currently at TRL 7, this project will perform fundamental DNA sequencing research on pathogenic growth in Zero-OxTech® packaged meats to confirm the food safety attributes needed to advance to TRL 9 and support commercial food safety claims.

"Winning the Ontario Food Technology Pilot Program is a strong validation of our mission at Tewari De-Ox Systems. With Zero-OxTech®, we are rethinking shelf-life as a biochemical control challenge. We're honored by this recognition because it reinforces what we've believed from the start: solving shelf-life requires understanding the biology of food, not just improving packaging. This milestone accelerates our work with partners and early adopters as we scale the technology."

— Dr. Gaurav Tewari, Founder, Tewari De-Ox Systems