



## FIVE CANADIAN STARTUPS RECEIVE \$1.1M TO PILOT ADVANCED FOODTECH SOLUTIONS

*The Canadian Food Innovation Network funding will help companies across Canada validate emerging tools in automation, packaging, food rescue, restaurant tech, and digital manufacturing*

GUELPH, ON, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 — The [Canadian Food Innovation Network \(CFIN\)](#) is awarding \$1,177,496 to five foodtech startups through its [Foodtech Next Program](#). These projects aim to demonstrate how new technologies perform under real operational conditions and assess their potential for broader adoption and commercialization throughout the food sector. Industry partners will match the funding, bringing total investment to \$2,354,992.

The 2025 Foodtech Next funding recipients are:

**Project Lead:** [FoodPM, a division of UDP Software Inc.](#) (British Columbia)

**Project Title:** Piloting Sub-Vertical Manufacturing Software for Agile Canadian Food Processors

**Pilot Partner:** The Fritter House

**Funding:** \$249,999

UDP Software Inc. is piloting FoodPM, an AI-powered platform designed to digitize and optimize food processing operations. At its core is an intelligent manufacturing resource planning engine that works alongside a customizable learning system to improve inventory control, production scheduling, workforce training, and regulatory compliance—key pain points across the sector.

Built specifically for Canada's food processors, FoodPM also integrates CRM, food safety documentation, HR and payroll, and end-to-end supply chain tools. This pilot will demonstrate the platform's ability to boost productivity, reduce food waste, improve labor utilization, and support ESG and EDI compliance—positioning FoodPM as a smart operating system for the next generation of Canadian food manufacturers.

**Project Lead:** [Gastronomous Technologies Inc.](#) (Ontario)

**Project Title:** Project Ghost - Beta Pilot Test

**Pilot Partner:** A large national QSR chain

**Funding:** \$249,706

Gastronomous is piloting the Ghost Beta Test to improve the reliability and functionality of its latest autonomous beverage makeline across multiple operational settings. The project will demonstrate upgrades in mechanical design, integration of high-performance materials, and optimization of embedded systems communication—key to ensuring consistent performance in commercial environments.

Through five distinct pilot tests, Gastronomous will validate machine reliability as the core metric for commercial readiness. The project aims to prove the system's strength and functionality at scale, laying the groundwork for an initial customer rollout in early 2027.

**Project Lead:** [Knead Technologies](#) (Alberta)

**Project Title:** Matching Modules for Optimized Food Rescue

**Pilot Partner:** Leftovers Foundation, BluPlanet Recycling Inc., and Metro Food Rescue

**Funding:** \$248,675

Knead Technologies is piloting Matching Modules, a suite of features designed to streamline food rescue logistics by addressing inefficiencies in the donor-recipient matching process. The project will test three key tools: On-Demand Route Optimization for real-time scheduling and driver assignment, AI-Powered SmartMatch for intelligent match suggestions based on food type and availability, and a Food Rescue Marketplace that enables one-time donations for immediate pickup.

By validating these features in operational environments, Knead aims to increase food recovery efficiency, enable data-driven decision-making, and expand flexible donation options. The project supports Knead's path to commercialization and broader adoption across the food sector.

**Project Lead:** [Freshr Sustainable Technologies](#) (Nova Scotia)

**Project Title:** Integrating FreshrPack Roll at Salmon Processing Plant

**Pilot Partner:** Cooke Aquaculture

**Funding:** \$232,861

Freshr Sustainable Technologies is collaborating with Cooke Aquaculture to pilot FreshrPack, an antibacterial coating solution that is applied on film packaging to extend the shelf life of fresh proteins by 15–30%. Made with naturally derived anti-bacterial components, FreshrPack slows down bacterial growth, reduces chemical spoilage and improves water retention.

The testing will involve integration of FreshrPack-coated skin packaging film rolls into Cooke's salmon packaging operations. The project will demonstrate how sustainable, high-performance packaging can reduce food waste in large-scale seafood processing.

**Project Lead:** [uDesign Solutions Inc.](#) (Ontario)

**Project Title:** Next-Generation Pick-and-Place Automation for Dairy Packaging with Adaptive AI Software

**Pilot Partner:** Laiterie de l'Outaouais

**Funding:** \$196,254

uDesign Solutions is developing a next-generation crate packing system to automate the final stage of the bottling line at Laiterie de l'Outaouais. The system is engineered for high adaptability, capable of handling multiple bottle sizes and crate configurations with minimal changeover. Its flexible design eliminates the need for manual adjustments or retooling, streamlining operations and reducing downtime.

Built with smart technology at its core, the system integrates advanced sensors, intuitive controls, and modular components to ensure precise, efficient handling across production runs. AI capabilities will play a supporting role enabling real-time performance optimization, predictive maintenance, inventory tracking, and detailed production analytics. Operators will benefit from a live dashboard with system health insights, output data, and proactive alerts, helping maximize uptime and productivity.

This project aims to deliver a scalable automation solution tailored to the unique demands of the dairy and beverage industry. By combining robust mechanical engineering with intelligent software features, it sets the stage for broader adoption across Canadian and U.S. packaging facilities.

Across all funding programs, CFIN has awarded more than \$22,656,999 (matched by \$25,884,111 in industry investment) to 108 Canadian foodtech projects that derisk new technologies that will make the food sector more competitive. CFIN-funded companies have generated \$90 million in economic impact and created over 355 jobs and co-op placements. Our funding recipients have attracted more than \$82 million in follow on investment.

## **QUOTES**

“These five projects demonstrate Food 4.0 in action—industry-led innovation that is reshaping how food is processed, packaged, and shared. Whether through AI-driven automation, compostable packaging, or digital food waste mitigation platforms, each solution tackles real-world challenges with tremendous potential to scale. CFIN is proud to support such visionary companies that are driving the transformative change Canada’s food sector needs to stay globally competitive.”

– **Dana McCauley**

**CEO, Canadian Food Innovation Network**

“The Government of Canada is proud to support Canada’s food technology innovators through the Foodtech Next program. By investing in the development and commercialization of cutting-edge agri-food solutions, we are strengthening Canada’s food supply chain, supporting sustainable economic growth, and creating high-quality jobs for Canadians. This funding will help ensure that Canada remains at the forefront of global food innovation.”

– **The Honourable Melanie Joly**

**Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions**

“Early investments in Canadian foodtech are vital to driving innovation and keeping the sector competitive. By supporting cutting-edge pilot projects like these, we’re positioning the sector for continued growth and long-term success.”

– **The Honourable Heath MacDonald**

**Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food**

“At UDP Software Inc., we are thrilled to be building FoodPM into a world-class food manufacturing ERP. Canada’s food processors face unique challenges in productivity, compliance, and labour, and our vision is to equip them with intelligent tools that not only solve today’s problems but also position them for the future. This pilot represents an exciting step toward redefining how Canadian manufacturers harness data, automation, and AI to drive efficiency, reduce waste, and remain globally competitive.”

– **Terry Ridyard**

**COO, UDP Software Inc.**

“Gastronomous is proud to partner with CFIN again to bring another innovative automation solution to the QSR space. We are helping our customers provide consistent quality with improved speed of service while reducing repetitive tasks for staff so they can focus on improving guest experience.”

– **Kevork Sevadjian**

**CEO, Gastronomous Technologies Inc.**

“We’re thrilled to receive this support from CFIN to advance our Matching Modules pilot. Our goal has always been to make food rescue more efficient and scalable, we’re creating practical solutions for our partners on the ground. This project is an important step toward reducing food waste and ensuring more food makes it to the people who need it most.”

– **Lourdes Juan**

**CEO & Co-Founder, Knead Technologies**

“Early results indicate that FreshrPack can be integrated into existing packaging lines without any changes to workflow, capital expenditure, or staffing. We are grateful for the Foodtech Next funding from the Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN), which made this important collaboration with a major global salmon processor possible.”

– **Mina Mekhail**

**CEO & Founder, Freshr Sustainable Technologies**

“Canada’s food production sector is growing fast, and the best way to keep up with that demand is through smart, scalable automation. By combining proven mechanical systems with the latest in AI-driven optimization, we can build production lines that are not only faster, but also more efficient and less wasteful.”

– **Christopher Falconi**

**President, uDesign Solutions Inc.**

**[ABOUT THE PROGRAM](#)**

**Foodtech Next** is a unique funding opportunity for early-stage Canadian technology firms who seek to be part of, or sell to, the wider food industry. The program allows companies to demonstrate and pilot their innovation in operational environments to prove their solutions and validate the return on investment for the food sector. The overarching goal of Foodtech Next is to accelerate the commercialization of Canadian innovation by generating first demonstration opportunities.

To date, 18 projects have secured over \$4.2M in funding through Foodtech Next. In addition to the funding, the program creates supportive innovation communities around each company to help their project succeed and move their business to scale readiness.

The program 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. CFIN has over 7,000 members from across the food value chain—including manufacturers, processors, distributors, operators, tech companies, funders, and innovators—and connects the Canadian food ecosystem to fresh insights, ideas, and technologies to grow their business and increase their innovation capacity. [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.

### **RELEVANT LINKS**

[Foodtech Next Program Page](#)

[CFIN Membership](#)

[CFIN Media Page](#)

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