



## CANADIAN FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK AWARDS \$645K TO SEVEN SOUTHERN ONTARIO FOODTECH COMPANIES

*The Ontario Food Technology Pilot funding, provided in part through FedDev Ontario, will help early-stage foodtech companies validate and commercialize new digital, AI, and processing technologies that improve food sector productivity and competitiveness.*

GUELPH, ON, January 27, 2026 — The [Canadian Food Innovation Network \(CFIN\)](#) is awarding \$645,285 to seven southern Ontario-based startups through the first intake of the Ontario Food Technology Pilot program. Delivered by CFIN and funded in part by the Government of Canada through the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#) (FedDev Ontario), the program helps early-stage companies validate and demonstrate new technologies that address post-farmgate challenges in the food supply chain.

Industry partners will match the federal investment, bringing total project value to nearly \$1.3 million. The selected pilots demonstrate how southern Ontario innovators are applying AI, automation, biotechnology, and advanced processing systems to modernize production and strengthen competitiveness throughout one of the province's most vital industries.

**The Ontario Food Technology Pilot funding recipients are:**

**Project Lead:** [Jitto](#) (Toronto, ON)

**Project Title:** AI-Powered Pricing Automation Pilot for the Ontario Food Sector

**Funding:** \$100,000

**Project Summary:** Jitto is validating an AI-powered system that can automatically read, clean, and structure supplier price lists—a task that is still slow and error-prone for most food distributors. The project will test the accuracy, reliability, and workflow fit of this automated

data-processing pipeline, showing how machine learning and generative AI can reduce manual admin work and improve pricing operations for Ontario distributors.

**Project Lead:** [Biofect Innovations Inc. \(Toronto, ON\)](#)

**Project Title:** Innovating Reduced-Sugar CPG Formulations with Brazzein for Better Flavour and Nutrition

**Funding:** \$99,999

**Project Summary:** Biofect Innovations is developing Brazzein, a natural, high-intensity sweet protein produced through precision fermentation, to enable the next generation of low-carb product formulations. This project will refine Brazzein into commercially viable formats and validate its performance in real food and beverage applications through pilot prototypes and industry collaboration. Biofect will also distribute ingredient samples to manufacturers to support formulation testing. The objective is to generate the sensory, nutritional, and technical data required for scale-up and broader market adoption.

**Project Lead:** [Gastronomous Technologies Inc. \(Oakville, ON\)](#)

**Project Title:** ChronoGrill Lite

**Funding:** \$97,658

**Project Summary:** Gastronomous is piloting ChronoGrill Lite, a modular version of its automated cooking system engineered for small and mid-sized restaurant operators. The project will demonstrate how affordable automation can improve speed, consistency, and food safety while reducing labour intensity and energy use. Results from the pilot will guide market expansion across Ontario's quick-service and institutional food sectors.

**Project Lead:** [TRUELY Foods \(Mississauga, ON\)](#)

**Project Title:** Building Canadian Co-Manufacturing Capacity for Alternative Proteins

**Funding:** \$99,959

**Project Summary:** TRUELY Foods is establishing Canada's first dedicated manufacturing line for high-protein dairy cereals. Currently, there is no facility in the country capable of producing these specific products, forcing Canadian companies to rely on U.S. manufacturers. This project establishes the necessary production capacity here in Canada. By moving manufacturing domestically, TRUELY will improve product quality, secure a stable supply chain, and create new value for the Canadian dairy sector.

**Project Lead:** [Otolabs Inc.](#) (Mississauga, ON)

**Project Title:** Otolabs QuickByte

**Funding:** \$95,250

**Project Summary:** Otolabs is piloting QuickByte, a compact, fully automated food-service kiosk that prepares hot, personalized meals in under two minutes. It gives food providers a staff-free, zero-construction way to deliver reliable service at high-traffic institutions that lack full kitchen capacity—hospitals, universities, and transit sites—the very places people need it most. Most importantly, the model lets one central prep kitchen serve many micro-kitchens, extending reach without adding kitchens or frontline staff—making fresh, affordable meals more available to patients, students, and night-shift workers across Ontario. This project will refine the multi-ingredient dispensing system, enclosure, and power setup, and roll out QuickByte IQ, an AI-enabled smart-stocking tool that predicts demand and enables dynamic pricing to cut food waste and helps prevent stock-outs.

**Project Lead:** [Sustainable Biosecurity Solutions](#) (Hamilton, ON)

**Project Title:** First-of-Its-Kind Heat-Free Ozone Knife Sanitation for Reliable, Sustainable Pathogen Control

**Funding:** \$91,319

**Project Summary:** Sustainable Bio Security (SBS) is testing a heat-free ozone knife sanitization system for meat and food processors. The system aims to provide quick, reliable sanitation without hot water or chlorine, helping facilities cut downtime and operating costs while boosting food safety. The pilot will assess the system under daily production conditions and gather the necessary data to support regulatory approval and commercial deployment.

**Project Lead:** [Mindlab Inc.](#) (Markham, ON)

**Project Title:** Next-Gen Food Labeling: Dynamic Nutrition & Health Insights via QR Codes

**Funding:** \$61,100

**Project Summary:** Mindlab is piloting IntRest, a patent-pending AI-powered platform that automates food labeling by extracting ingredient data, calculating nutrition values, and applying regional diet and allergen standards. IntRest uses advanced AI algorithms—supported by reliable food composition databases such as USDA, CNF, and other international standards—to ensure accuracy and regulatory alignment. Through direct POS integrations and automated ingredient analysis, IntRest keeps nutrition, allergen, and health labels continuously updated with no manual effort. This pilot will be conducted with POS and packaged-food partners across southern Ontario to validate system performance, support industry adoption, and accelerate commercialization in Canada and international markets.

## QUOTES

“Southern Ontario has rapidly evolved into a hub for Canadian food innovators. It’s home to an impressive diversity of foodtech companies bringing serious solutions to the table. The Ontario Food Technology Pilot gives these entrepreneurs a way to prove their technology works in commercial settings, build partnerships, and move one step closer to market. It’s also helping accelerate tech adoption in Ontario’s largest manufacturing subsector, strengthening regional competitiveness and setting the stage for long-term economic growth.”

— **Dana McCauley, CEO, Canadian Food Innovation Network**

“Southern Ontario’s foodtech sector is constantly innovating to turn great ideas into real commercial solutions. When entrepreneurs have the tools to validate and scale new technologies, they strengthen our supply chains, boost productivity, and create good jobs. Today’s investments show how AI, automation, and advanced processing can transform one of Ontario’s most important industries and help position Canada as a global leader in food innovation.”

— **The Honourable Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario**

“Price list data gathering and processing is one of the most overlooked bottlenecks in food distribution. This project allows us to prove how AI can remove hours of manual work from

daily operations, reduce pricing errors, and help distributors focus on serving their customers more efficiently. We see this as foundational digital infrastructure for a more resilient Ontario food system."

– **Mani Siddiqui,**

**Founder, Jitto**

"As front-of-package sugar labels approach, brands are under pressure to reformulate without losing flavour. This project allows us to demonstrate how Brazzein can help manufacturers cut sugar while still delivering products consumers love."

– **Ralph Christian Delos Santos, PhD**

**Cofounder & CEO, Biofect Innovations**

"We are very excited to be developing a pilot for a high-efficiency, high-speed flame grill, that will revolutionize our customers' operations by improving speed of service, delivering unmatched consistency and reducing energy costs."

– **Kevork Sevadjian**

**CEO, Gastronomous Technologies Inc.**

"We are proud to fill a critical gap in Canada's food manufacturing ecosystem. Until now, producing high-protein dairy cereal domestically wasn't possible. This investment changes that, creating production capacity that allows us to innovate and scale right here at home."

– **Eoin Carroll,**

**Cofounder, TRUELY Foods**

"Late at night in a hospital, delivery apps and restaurants are closed and you need a real meal. Imagine a fresh burrito, shawarma, or curry bowl—hot in under two minutes—personalized to your taste to ±10 g. That's what our micro-kitchens bring on demand to places a full kitchen can't."

– **Eeshaan Patil,**

**Cofounder & CEO, Otolabs**

“This project is about proving the system works where it matters most: on the floor, during real production. Processors are responsible for keeping food safe while keeping lines moving. We’re building a knife sanitation option that does not create condensation, reduces breakdowns, and delivers reliable pathogen control with zero residues.”

– **Chris DeBoer,**

**Director of Supply and Business Development, Sustainable Bio Security**

“Restaurants and food businesses face significant challenges in keeping nutrition, allergen, and health information accurate and compliant. These updates are often slow, manual, and expensive. IntRest automates this entire process using advanced AI algorithms and trusted data sources like USDA and CNF to ensure reliable labeling. With our POS integrations, we can keep menu and product information always up to date. This CFIN pilot enables us to demonstrate real-world impact in Ontario and bring smart, automated food labeling to the broader industry.”

– **Fatemeh Kazemi,**

**Founder & CEO of Mindlab Inc.**

#### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The **Ontario Food Technology Pilot** provides non-repayable funding to help early-stage companies validate and demonstrate innovative food technologies developed in southern Ontario. By supporting in-market pilot projects across processing, foodservice, retail, and distribution, the program reduces cost and risk, accelerates commercialization, and strengthens industry collaboration around high-impact, post-farmgate innovations.

Eligible projects are led by Ontario-based foodtech businesses with under \$5 million in annual revenue and advance technologies at Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 6–9. The program supports pilot projects that align with CFIN’s national innovation priorities, including food manufacturing technology, digital supply chains, packaging, circularity, and foodservice innovation.

#### 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. Since 2021, CFIN has awarded more than \$22,301,276 (matched by \$25,138,939 in industry investment) to 122 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.

With 7,500 members and counting, CFIN has built the fastest growing and most engaged food business community in the country and our 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 Response Fund and Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program.

## **ABOUT FEDDEV ONTARIO**

Since 2009, the Government of Canada, through [FedDev Ontario](#), has worked to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation, growth and job creation in Canada's most populous region. The Agency has delivered impressive results, which can be seen in southern Ontario businesses that are creating innovative technologies, improving productivity, growing revenues, creating jobs, and in the economic advancement of communities across the region. Learn more about the impact the Agency is having in southern Ontario by exploring our [investment profiles](#), our [Southern Ontario Spotlight](#), and FedDev Ontario's [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

[Ontario Food Technology Pilot](#)

[CFIN Membership](#)

[CFIN Media Page](#)

[CFIN Media Kit](#)

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