

National Circle Newsletter

For Indigenous Agriculture & Food

NEWS

UPDATE



NCIAF hosts International Pitch Competition at Historic USDA Trade Mission in Vancouver

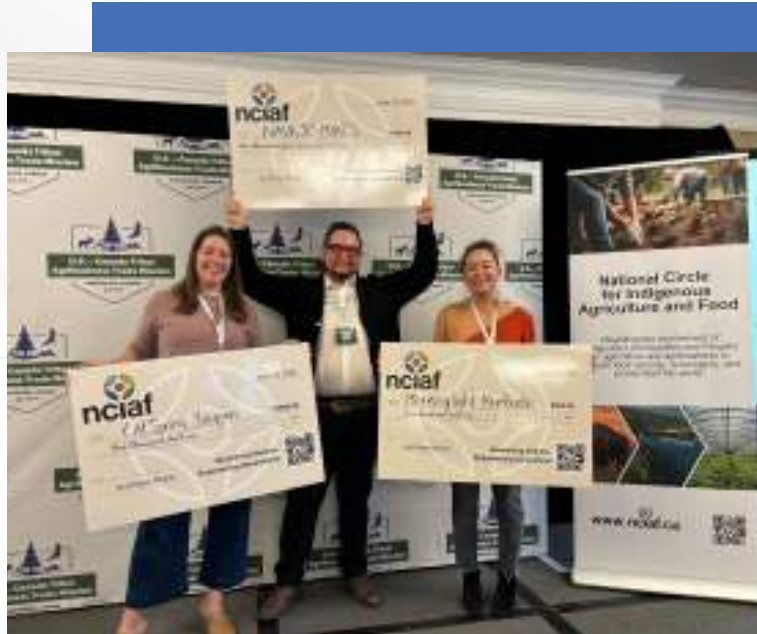
The National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food (NCIAF) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently hosted an Indigenous Pitch Competition during a landmark agribusiness trade mission in Vancouver, British Columbia. This event, held from June 17-20, was the first USDA mission of its kind to specifically showcase tribal agribusiness products. Indigenous entrepreneurs from across Turtle Island presented their innovative food businesses to a distinguished panel of judges, including Eric Woods of [Branding and Buzzing](#), Ben Jacobs of [Tocabe](#), and Chris McKee of [NCIAF](#) as well as guest judges Lt. Governor of Minnesota Peggy Flanagan, and Alexis Taylor, Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

Before the competition, participants attended a pitch development workshop provided by NCIAF, which helped refine their presentations.

The competition was fierce, and the judges faced a tough decision. Ultimately, [Navajo Mike's](#) clinched the top spot, with [CatSpring Yaupon](#) taking second place, and [Morning Light Kombucha](#) coming in third. Navajo Mike's exceptional pitch earned not only the top prize but also an exclusive Brand Review and Coaching package with Branding and Buzzing.

The event not only celebrated the entrepreneurial spirit within Indigenous agribusinesses but also revitalized traditional trade networks among Native Nations, highlighting the resilience and ingenuity of Indigenous communities in agribusiness.

[Read full article](#)



Pitch Winners L-R: Abianne Miller Falla of CatSpring Yaupon, Michael John of Navajo Mike's, Melinda Williamson of Morning Light Kombucha.



International Farm Management Association Conference: Connecting Cultures Through Agriculture

July 4, 2024, Regina, Saskatchewan. At the beginning of the month, the NCIAF team had the honor of hosting the [NextGens](#) delegation of international students from Sweden, the United States, New Zealand, Ukraine, and Kahkewistahaw First Nation. The visit included a warm welcome with lunch and an Indigenous Agriculture-inspired trivia icebreaker, followed by a presentation about our organization.

The delegation toured the First Nations University, learning about its history and architecture, with stops at the atrium, the First Nations Veterans Memorial Tipi, and the CFNU Radio station. Will Yuzicapi, CFNU Radio Host, shared insights about the station's beginnings and plans for future growth.



Guests invited to plant celery in Ochapowace Kehteyak Community Garden

The group visited the Ochapowace Kehteyak Community Garden, where, despite being in the hospital, Kehteyak member Errol Kinistino blessed the tour with a prayer via phone call. They also heard from another Kehteyak member, Val Kinistino, and enjoyed a performance by Tristian Isaac, a media arts and performance student, and a fancy dance performance by Julie Paul, celebrating her 50 years of dancing. Elders from Ochapowace shared the significance of the community garden and their plans for expansion to provide free food for community members.

This visit provided the delegation with a profound understanding of the community's efforts in sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the International Farm Management Association Next Gen Tour Delegation for this enriching experience, highlighting the importance of cross-cultural exchange and international collaboration in advancing Indigenous agriculture.

[Check out the photos from the event!](#)

NCIAF's First Ag in Motion: Making a Lasting Impression

July 16, 2024, Discovery Farm Langham SK - Ag in Motion 2024 offered a profound blend of inspiration and productivity for the NCIAF team. Business Specialist Kate Fraser, ReconciliAG Advisor Terry Lerat, Student Intern Tianna Peepeetch, and Communications Specialist Justice Acoose engaged in valuable dialogues and forged significant connections with leaders in Indigenous agriculture. The NCIAF had the honor of taking part in Farm Credit Canada's Indigenous VIP Tour, where Terry Lerat contributed as a panelist on the Indigenous Producer Panel on behalf of NCIAF and 4C Farms. The discussions, featuring insights from Warren Many Grey Horses of GH Farms Inc. and Darryl McElroy of Fresh Hemp Foods, emphasized the importance of securing fair market value for land leases and reinvesting in Indigenous farming ventures to promote self-reliance and economic resilience.

The panel highlighted critical strategies for empowering Indigenous agricultural initiatives, including the need for educational programs such as Agriculture in the Classroom to inspire young people and cultivate a new generation of Indigenous agronomists and farmers. Terry Lerat's emphasis on leveraging First Nations' significant farmland holdings to build independent and thriving agricultural operations underscored the potential for economic growth and self-sufficiency. The insights gained will enhance The National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food's mission to promote and strengthen Indigenous agricultural practices, advancing our commitment to empowering communities and ensuring sustainable growth.



Saulteaux First Nation Tipi
Proudly Displayed at Ag In Motion

Success Stories Across Canada

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation FACTS Camp: Revitalizing Tradition and Culture

The NCIAF is very proud to contribute and attend the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN) FACTS Camp, organized by SVDN Land Manager Adam Subject, a proud Anishinaabe Saugeen Ojibway First Nation Band Member who relocated to SVDN, where his wife is from. He has since become an inspirational figure in the community.

The camp took place July 22-25, where attendees took part in setting up tipi's, experiencing a traditional buffalo harvest, and engaged in various educational activities that highlighted the importance of sustainability and Indigenous culture.

[Read the full article here](#)



Attendees assist in the traditional raising of a tipi

Supporting a Path for Success: Get to Know Our Executive Administrative Assistant

By: *Tianna George-Peepeetch, NCI AF Student Intern*

Tamara Machiskinic, our Executive Administrative Assistant has been an integral part of the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food since the beginning. Tamara laid the groundwork for our office operations, ensuring a smooth and efficient environment. Her dedication and passion for organizing and coordinating logistics have been crucial in supporting the NCI AF's mission and daily operations. From ordering furniture and setting up the office to handling meetings, schedules, and ensuring smooth day to day operations. Tamara continues to support and enhance operations every day with dedication and passion.

To help you get to know her better, we sat down with Tamara for a brief Q&A. Here are her responses:



1. Tell us a little about yourself and your position within the NCI AF?

My name is Tamara, I am the Executive Assistant at NCI AF. As a proud mother of two vibrant boys, Maddox (7) and Maxwell (2), my life is filled with energy and joy. I'm proud of my diverse heritage, with a mix of Vietnamese, Chinese, and First Nation Cree roots. My mother's Aboriginal ancestry and father's Asian background have shaped my unique identity. Growing up in Vancouver, I cherished our annual summer trips to Regina, with a special highlight being our stops in the beautiful Okanagan Valley along the way. These travels allowed me to connect with my roots and experience the rich cultural heritage of my family's diverse backgrounds.

2. What inspired you to join the NCI AF?

I have a long history in sales, administration and customer service. I've always been passionate about helping others. After the birth of my second son, and the announcement of unmarked graves, I sought a career shift that would allow me to make a more meaningful impact. This journey led me to join the NCI AF team, where I can utilize my skills to make a positive difference in the lives of others, aligning with my personal values and aspirations.

3. What have you found to be the best part of working with the NCI AF so far?

The NCI AF aligns with my values and allows me to make a positive impact within Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. It's my way of honoring my mother's legacy while I pursue meaningful and impactful work, which is very special to me.

Words that Inspire

Highlights from our community



"With winning the NCI AF Pitch Competition, our business has been able to boost our marketing campaigns and help promote our products across Canada. With the event we were introduced to amazing people and businesses!"

-Michael John, Founder of [Navajo Mike's](#) & 1st Place Pitch Winner

"The entire NCI AF team were incredibly encouraging and thoughtful in their support. They really put themselves in our position as founders and created resources that were helpful to the many different stages and products of our companies."

-Abianne Miller Falla, Founder of [CatSpring Yaupon](#) & 2nd Place Pitch Winner



"Amazing opportunities exist to listen and learn about different perspectives of agriculture and land stewardship right here within our province... During the afternoon spent with NCI AF, we were able to learn about agriculture & food sovereignty. The partnership between NCI AF and the Ochapowace nation created a physical space for community members of all ages to come together and invest time in experimenting and learning from each other- just like we had the opportunity to do."

-Amy Carruthers, Program Development Manager [Ag-West Bio](#)

"It's been nothing but a pleasure working closely with the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food. It has been just incredible [the] things we've been able to do here in the last three or four days. I think we've been able to capture a real good blend of the abilities that NCI AF can contribute to community."

-Adam Subject, Lands Manager [Sioux Valley Dakota Nation](#)



"I found the most valuable takeaway was seeing the whole process. We started with learning about how NCI AF can help facilitate agricultural economic development through planning and strategic work, and then we were able to see an outcome of this with our time at the market garden at Ochapowace First Nation. It was helpful to see the entire picture to better understand the important role that NCI AF fills in facilitating economic development within different communities."

-Eric Micheels, Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources - [University of Saskatchewan](#)



Event highlights

Indigenous Field Day at IHARF Aug 7

Location: Indian Head, SK

Annual International Agricultural Conference Aug 16 - 17, 2024

Location: Toronto, ON

Cando Economic Development Youth Summit Aug 19 - 23, 2024

Location: Grey Eagle Resort TsuuT'ina Nation, AB

Canadian Beef Industry Conference Aug 19 - 24, 2024

Location: Saskatoon, SK

Stay Informed



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Featured Partner

HERE IS OUR FEATURED
PARTNER OF THE MONTH



"The launch of the NCI AF is a critical step towards placing Indigenous knowledge at the center of Canada's Agriculture and Food future...The Circle provides a much-needed platform to deepen collaboration and knowledge-sharing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. By building relationships and sharing business knowledge, we can work together to address barriers within the Canadian food value chain."

Justine Hendricks, FCC President and CEO

