

National Circle Newsletter

For Indigenous Agriculture & Food

NEWS

UPDATE



Growing Together: The Launch of Our Annual Indigenous Field Day



On August 7, 2024, the NCIAF proudly hosted its First Annual Indigenous Field Day, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to supporting and advancing Indigenous agriculture. The event brought together members from various Indigenous communities for a day of learning and networking. Attendees participated in an insightful tour of the Indian Head Research Farm, where they gained valuable knowledge on sustainable farming practices and agricultural innovations. The day continued with a visit to 4C Farms at Cowessess First Nation, led by our ReconciliAG Advisor, Terry Lerat. His inspiring story of transforming 135 acres into a thriving 6,000-acre operation, which now includes a cattle operation with 185 head of cattle, resonated deeply with participants, igniting discussions on the potential for similar successes in their own communities.

This event is the first of what will become an annual tradition, fostering connections and sharing knowledge that empowers Indigenous communities to explore and expand their roles in agriculture. We are excited to continue building on the success of this inaugural event, and we look forward to many more years of collaboration, growth, and celebration of Indigenous agricultural achievements.

[Click here to view photos from the event.](#)

NCIAF Leadership Attends the Annual International Agricultural Conference Canada



Photo from Toronto Botanical Edwards Garden

On August 16-17, 2024, Kallie Wood, President and CEO, along with Chris McKee, Senior VP of Business Development, represented the NCIAF at the Annual International Agricultural Conference Canada (IACC24) held at the Toronto Botanical Edwards Garden. The conference gathered global agricultural stakeholders to engage in discussions on sustainable farming practices, agricultural technology, global food security, and the impact of climate change on agriculture.

Kallie and Chris joined industry leaders, policymakers, and researchers in exploring strategies that can drive positive change, promote economic growth, and enhance rural livelihoods. As we continue to build partnerships and exchange knowledge on a global scale, events like IACC24 are vital in shaping the future of Indigenous agriculture and contributing to the development of resilient, sustainable systems for generations to come.

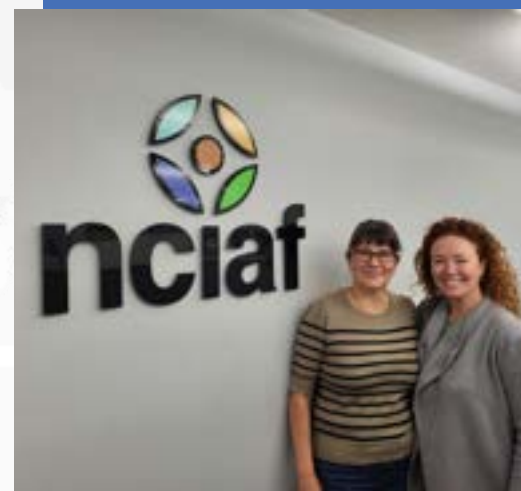
Entrepreneur Spotlight: Felicia Dewar's Inspiring Journey with Miskamasowin Foods

We are thrilled to share the success story of Felicia Dewar, the first entrepreneur the NCIAF had the privilege of working with. Back in March, Felicia sat down with our team to discuss her vision of expanding her fry bread and bannock mix Miskamasowin Foods Inc., business beyond Alberta. She dreamed of moving her operations out of her home and creating job opportunities for single mothers like herself.

Since that initial consultation, our team has been dedicated to helping Felicia achieve her goals. We connected her with the Government of Alberta Food Process Development Centre and explored various options to support her growth. Felicia stopped by our office to share her incredible progress. She has successfully moved production to a federally regulated facility, which will allow her to export her products, and her pre-printed labels are ready thanks to the amazing food science team. Even more exciting, Co-op now offers her products across Western Canada!

Felicia's journey is a powerful testament to the impact of perseverance, community, and the right support network. We couldn't be more proud of her accomplishments and can't wait to see Miskamasowin Foods on grocery store shelves across Turtle Island!

[Check out Miskamasowin Foods Inc.](#)



Felicia Dewar and Business Specialist Michelle Sandercock at the NCIAF office.

Success Stories Across Canada

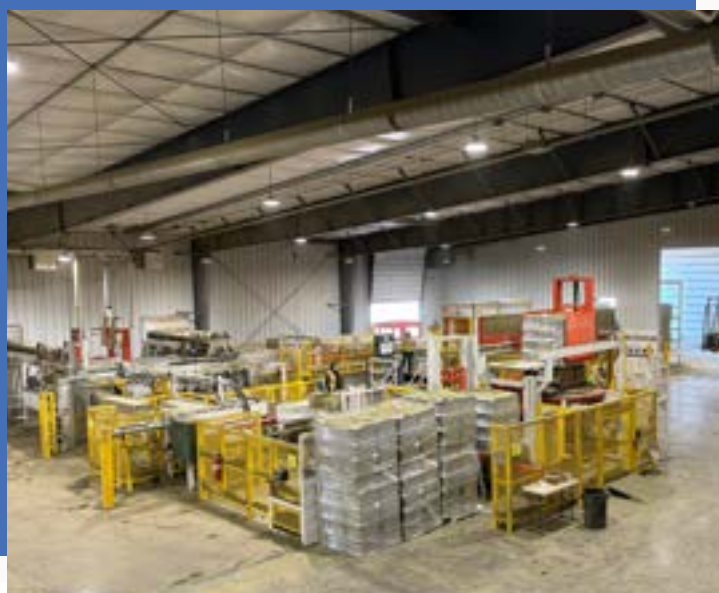
Kainai Forage Surpasses 50,000 Metric Tonnes in Historic First Cut Harvest

The NCIAF had the privilege of visiting Kainai Forage and witnessing firsthand their extraordinary achievements in agriculture. On July 26, 2024, Kainai Forage proudly announced a historic milestone: harvesting and storing over 51,000 metric tonnes of premium exportable Timothy Hay during their first cut. This remarkable accomplishment not only surpasses last year's record by 11,000 metric tonnes but also underscores the success of the business model adopted in 2019, which has fueled significant year-over-year growth.

Makiinima, Chief Roy Fox of the Kainai/Blood Tribe, celebrated this achievement, stating, "Our vision to regain our agricultural roots is clearly working." The operation's success is a testament to the dedication of the community, the strategic partnerships with Indigena Capital, and the effective implementation of modern agricultural practices. Kainai Forage's journey from producing 15,000 metric tonnes in 2018 to over 50,000 metric tonnes in just the first cut of 2024 is a powerful example of how strategic investments and community-driven efforts can lead to monumental success.



Blood Tribe Forage Processing Plant



Inside the processing plant

Kainai Forage is now poised to build on this momentum with their upcoming second cut harvest and future expansion plans in 2025. Their achievements not only reflect the Kainai/Blood Tribe's commitment to agricultural excellence and economic independence but also serve as an inspiration to other Indigenous communities striving to reclaim and enhance their agricultural heritage.

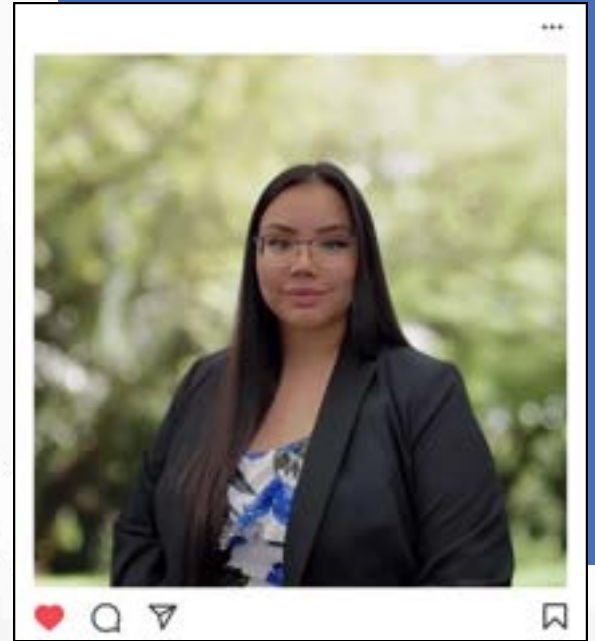
[Check out Kainai Forage.](#)

Supporting Indigenous Futures: Get to Know Our Student Intern

By: Justice Acoose | Communications Specialist

Tianna-Lee George-Peepetch, our Student Intern, has been a valuable addition to the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food since January. Tianna-Lee has played a key role in various projects, including the design and implementation of our newly launched newsletter. Her enthusiasm and commitment to supporting Indigenous businesses are evident in every task she undertakes. From engaging in community outreach to learning and sharing insights about Indigenous cultures, Tianna-Lee's dedication and passion contribute significantly to advancing the NCIAF's mission and fostering a supportive environment for Indigenous participation in agriculture.

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



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

My name is Tianna-Lee, and I'm a Saulteaux woman from Zagime Anishinabek. I'm a mother to a three-year-old named Blake and a full-time student entering my third year of business administration. I joined the NCIAF as a Student Intern in January of this year, and since then, I've worked on various projects—most notably, designing and implementing our newly launched newsletter. I also assist our Capacity and Reconciliation Specialist.

2. What inspired you to join the NCIAF?

Our President & CEO Kallie Wood and everything that the NCIAF is striving to achieve. It was the perfect learning opportunity to work with Kallie and the team. NCIAF's mission and values aligned with my own which is to increase Indigenous participation across all sectors. I aim to see Indigenous people thrive, have successful businesses, and reclaim our place at the economic table.

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

The best part has been the environment, the team, and meeting different nations from across Canada. As someone who has lived in the city my whole life, I am on a journey to rediscover my cultural identity. This role allows me to learn how to best support Indigenous businesses while also deepening my understanding of Indigenous cultures.

Words that Inspire *Highlights* from our community



Feedback from our Indigenous Field Day!

"I loved to hear different stories and experiences from everyone on the floor. Everyone was so happy to share and discuss. Terry! An amazing man, amazing story, amazing lessons! The overall tour and schedule - fantastic flow and content covered!"

"Enjoyed the tours and hearing from the researchers and Terry. Networking was nice, too!"

"Impressive work Terry is doing with 4C Farms. The day was well planned and on time."

"I enjoyed meeting the NCIAF staff, and Terry Lerat. Having a chance to participate and talk about Canola 101. The organization has a lot of potential... I liked meeting Justice and Tianna. They are so enthusiastic."

"Was very well done and kept me interested in all topics! Loved seeing all the improvements that Cowessess has accomplished! Thank you!"

"It was a well planned day, I really enjoyed it!"

"All around blown away by the day - you should be proud!"



CDAP

Canada Digital Adoption Program

Tailored Coaching to Elevate Your Indigenous Business

Attention Indigenous business owners across Canada: if you have at least one employee and are looking to elevate your business through digital tools, you could be eligible for the Canada Digital Adoption Program. The program offers reimbursement of up to \$2,400 for program expenses.

CDAP is designed to provide personalized guidance and actionable strategies to enhance your digital presence and attract more customers. Whether you want to fine-tune your social media strategy, master digital advertising, or streamline an online booking system, expert coaching is available to help you succeed.

Don't miss your chance to gain valuable insights and support for your business! Contact Betina Borova at betina.borova@torontomu.ca for any questions. The deadline to apply is September 30 - to take advantage of this opportunity, [pre-screening](#) is required.



Event Highlights

Cow-Calf Management Tour - Beef Farmers of Ontario

Sep 6-7

Location: Brantford, ON

Indigenomics SHE Conference, Sep 23-24

Location: Winnipeg, MB

Global First Nations Carbon Summit, Sep 24

Location: Regina, SK

Reclaiming Our Future Annual Conference Sep 26-27

Location: Winnipeg, MB

Economic Partnership Summit, Oct 2

Location: Lloydminster, SK



Featured Partner

HERE IS OUR FEATURED
PARTNER OF THE MONTH



The NCIAF will be proof that this generation of Agriculture can be where Indigenous and non-indigenous partners not only find pathways to success but implement and execute them. The future will always belong to those who see the possibilities before they become obvious; we look forward to partnering on one of those possibilities with NCIAF.

Kristjan Hebert, Hebert Group President



Stay Informed



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