

The Wâwiyiyaw

National Circle Newsletter For Indigenous Agriculture & Food

NEWS

UPDATE

CWA Indigenous Ag Summit: Empowering Communities Through Indigenous Agriculture



The NCIAF was honoured to attend this year's Indigenous Agriculture Summit (IAS), a pivotal event focused on strengthening food security, community resilience, and sustainability within Indigenous Agriculture. Hosted at Canadian Western Agribition (CWA) in Regina, Saskatchewan, and presented by FCC, IAS once again proved to be an invaluable gathering for Canada's Indigenous agricultural leaders.

This year's summit offered participants a wealth of knowledge, resources, and ideas for advancing Indigenous agricultural practices. Sessions covered topics from fostering resilience and self-sufficiency to strategies for building sustainable food systems.

Attendees were inspired by success stories shared by leaders in Indigenous agriculture. The event featured insights into leadership, community building, and economic partnerships, offering attendees a framework for creating impactful agricultural initiatives. IAS provided a unique networking space, fostering connections that will continue to fuel innovative food initiatives in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

The NCIAF had the opportunity to share our story at the event and is proud to announce that we will be **co-hosting next year's IAS** in partnership with CWA. This exciting collaboration reflects our commitment to strengthening Indigenous agricultural practices and creating opportunities to support sustainable food sovereignty. We look forward to building on this year's successes and contributing to an even more impactful event in 2025.

Participating in IAS 2024 has reinforced the NCIAF's dedication to advancing Indigenous agriculture and food systems. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the event's success and inspired the work ahead. Together, we are building a sustainable, resilient future grounded in the wisdom and traditions of Indigenous agriculture.

We look forward to hosting IAS 2025 as we continue this important journey.



Aquaculture is Agriculture: A Celebration of Blue Food Farming in Canada



On November 26, the NCIAF hosted an event in Ottawa, ON, in partnership with the [Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance](#), the [Coalition of First Nations for Finfish Stewardship](#), and the [Canadian Federation of Agriculture](#), entitled “Aquaculture is Agriculture: A Celebration of Blue Food Farming in Canada”. This event brought together Indigenous leaders in aquaculture, farmers, industry representatives, politicians and policymakers to honour the integral role of aquaculture within Canada’s agricultural landscape.

The event’s objective was clear: to reinforce aquaculture is agriculture and highlight the vital contributions aquaculture brings to Indigenous communities.

First Nations, as the first environmental stewards of these lands and waters, have long practiced sustainable fish farming and fishing techniques rooted in respect for the environment. These traditions continue to thrive today, ensuring aquaculture remains vital to economic stability and is a reliable source of safe, healthy food for Canada and the world.

By amplifying Indigenous voices and showcasing sustainable aquaculture practices, the event underscored the critical role of Indigenous-led blue food systems in addressing global food security challenges. Attendees left inspired by the opportunities for collaboration between First Nations and industry partners to advance environmental stewardship and food sovereignty. Together, we are working to ensure that Canada’s aquaculture industry continues to honor its roots while paving the way for a sustainable future.

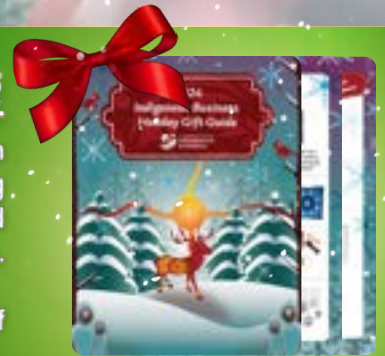
CELEBRATE THE SEASON

Holiday Gift Guide Featuring Indigenous Vendors and Young Entrepreneurs

CCIB's 2024 Indigenous Business Holiday Gift Guide

This holiday season, support Indigenous entrepreneurship with the 2024 Indigenous Business Holiday Gift Guide, featuring unique, handcrafted, and culturally-inspired gifts from Certified Indigenous Businesses.

Find the perfect gifts while contributing to the growth of Indigenous communities.



Downie-Wenjack Fund Holiday Gift Guide

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE
MOVING RECONCILIATION FORWARD

As the holidays approach, take Reconciliation by shopping the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund's Holiday Gift Guide, featuring Indigenous-owned businesses. From HBC's iconic Point Blankets supporting Oshki Wupoowane to thoughtful gifts for every budget, this guide offers meaningful options for everyone on your list.

Futurpreneur Holiday Shopping Guide

Futurpreneur's Holiday Shopping Guide, presented by BDC and PayPal, is a digital catalog featuring 185 businesses led by diverse entrepreneurs across Canada, including 6 Indigenous-owned businesses. This initiative supports young entrepreneurs by showcasing their products and services during the holiday season through vibrant marketplaces in seven Canadian cities.



**ONTARIO
FIRST
NATIONS
GIFT BOX**

Ontario First Nations Gift Box

Celebrate the holidays with the Ontario First Nations Gift Box, a collaboration between FNAFO and Shop First Nations, featuring handcrafted items from Indigenous businesses across Ontario.

Each purchase supports Indigenous entrepreneurs and funds the 4H Scholarship Award, empowering youth to pursue agricultural education while sharing the creativity and traditions of First Nations communities.



Board Member Spotlight: Celebrating Leadership and Vision at the NCIAF

Shaun Soonias is a member of Red Pheasant Cree Nation, a signatory of Treaty 6 located south of Battleford, Saskatchewan. As Vice-President, Indigenous Relations at FCC, his focus is on activities that will enable reconciliation, economic development for Indigenous communities, including increasing participation in and access to capital for primary production through the agri-food and agribusiness value chains. Shaun also builds intersections for growth, understanding, learning, employment, partnership, research and knowledge dissemination between government, industry, non-profits, academia and Indigenous stakeholders through FCC's national network of partners and industry stakeholders.



Tell us a little about your history in agriculture and how your history impacts the strengths you bring to the board.

My journey in finance and agriculture began in 2019 when I joined FCC to lead Indigenous Relations. Prior to that, I spent much of my career working in social development, with and for Indigenous Peoples and communities across all orders of government, non-profits, academia. It was later in my career that I transitioned into economic development, first leading Indigenous employment and economic development partnerships with the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority and then the Saskatchewan Indigenous Economic Development Network. It was here that I began to understand the untapped relationships, knowledge, financing, and opportunity that Indigenous agriculture and food represents.

What inspired you to join the NCIAF board?

The NCIAF is very special to me as FCC is the founding partner and led the development and incorporation of the NCIAF until President & CEO Kallie Wood joined the organization in January 2024. I formally joined the founding board at this time and we have since added some great leaders to provide high level support and governance to the NCIAF.

What is one key takeaway you've learned about the NCIAF during your time on the board?

As the NCIAF has continues to develop partnerships around service-in-kind, secondments, financial support and creating intersections within the broader sector to grow, understand, and begin their own reconciliation journey, I continue to be amazed at how Indigenous and mainstream agriculture stakeholders are collaborating and opening their spaces to each other to support the success of Indigenous agriculture and food businesses.

What OUR COMMUNITY SAYS ABOUT US

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“[Bioenterprise Canada is] excited to continue building on this momentum and advancing impactful strategies together for the future of our sector!”

- Bioenterprise Canada

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“The NCIAF is truly paving the way for meaningful Reconciliation in the agriculture industry. Their dedication to fostering difficult yet essential conversations ensures that Indigenous voices are not only heard but respected. Keep paving the way, NCIAF!”

-Community Ally

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“This partnership [between The Hebert Group and NCIAF] is a great opportunity to work together with Indigenous youth in agriculture to help with the labour gap we currently face and to bring generations of knowledge together to benefit our industry.”

**-Kristjan Hebert
President of Hebert Group**

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Featured Quote

HERE IS OUR FEATURED
QUOTE OF THE MONTH

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“I look forward to working with the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food to break down the barriers that exist to ensure a strong future for Indigenous Peoples in the agricultural sector.”

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

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ANNOUNCING

nciaf

WO ININA 2025



Event Highlights

[wo inina 2025 - February 12, 2024](#)

Location: Ottawa, ON

We are thrilled to invite you **Wo Inina 2025: Listen Learn Act**, a transformative event celebrating Indigenous food sovereignty, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. This event is designed to amplify success stories from communities across Canada, foster positive dialogue and knowledge sharing all with the goal of advancing Indigenous food sovereignty and cultural preservation. Wo Inina will bring together a diverse audience of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities; Indigenous agribusinesses, entrepreneurs, food producers, and organizations; along with government, academia, non-profits, and leaders from the agricultural and food industries.

Please reach out to info@nciaf.ca if you would like to list an event.

Stay Informed



Website: nciaf.ca

Address: Atoskewin Business Center

Regina, SK S4S 7K3

Phone: 306-559-6098

Funding Opportunities

Local Food Infrastructure Fund (Large Projects Stream) will open in January 2025 for projects \$150,000 to \$500,000.
[More info.](#)

Contact us to find out how the NCI AF can fill the requirement of project partner on your application.