

The Wâwiyiyaw

National Circle Newsletter For Indigenous Agriculture & Food

Honouring Red Dress Day: A Tribute to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

On May 5th, communities across the country came together to honour Red Dress Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). This significant day serves as a powerful reminder of the lives lost, the families left behind, and the continued fight for justice and healing.

At the NCIACF, we stand in solidarity with all Indigenous communities, recognizing the deep impact that this tragedy has on families, communities, and cultures. Red Dress Day is an opportunity to reflect on the resilience and strength of Indigenous women, while also acknowledging the challenges they face in society.

Red Dress Day is symbolized by the presence of red dresses—often displayed in public spaces, homes, and community centers—representing the missing and the stolen. These powerful displays serve as a poignant symbol of the absence of these women, while also bringing attention to the urgent need for action to address the systemic issues that contribute to the violence and multiple disappearances. As an organization committed to Indigenous agriculture and food sovereignty, we recognize the interconnectedness of land, culture, and the wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples. The violence and injustices faced by Indigenous women are deeply tied to the history of colonialism, loss of land, and the disruption of cultural practices. We support Red Dress Day as it aligns with our mission to uplift and empower Indigenous communities in every way we can.

Red Dress Day is not just a day of remembrance—it's a call to action. The work to prevent further violence, to support families in their healing, and to seek justice is ongoing. As we honour the lives of those lost, we also commit ourselves to a future where Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit individuals are safe, protected, and valued.

NEWS
UPDATE 

Global Collaboration in Indigenous Agriculture: NCIAF Welcomes Australian Churchill Fellow

The NCIAF was honoured to recently welcome Tracy Sullivan, an accomplished cattle veterinarian from Australia and Winston Churchill Fellow, during her visit to Canada as part of her international research journey.

Tracy's Fellowship project focuses on exploring systems and structures that support sustainable Indigenous beef production. Her research has taken her through New Zealand, the United States, and Canada, with a particular interest in:

- Paddock-to-plate vertically integrated meat systems
- Indigenous branding that reflects culture and identity
- Joint ventures between Indigenous producers and non-Indigenous corporations to advance ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) outcomes.

During her time in Canada, Tracy met with NCIAF President and CEO Kallie Wood to discuss shared challenges and opportunities in Indigenous agriculture across continents. The conversation highlighted deep alignment between the Australian Aboriginal beef sector and the vision laid out in the NCIAF's Case for Support, especially in advancing Indigenous food sovereignty and sustainable economic development.



The NCIAF extends our warmest thanks to Tracy for visiting and for the engaging exchange of knowledge and vision. We are proud to support international collaboration that strengthens Indigenous food systems around the world.

Find out more about Dr. Tracy Sullivan and her project [here](#)!

Join Us at the 2025 Food Leadership Summit: Uniting Canada's Agri-Food Value Chain

The [2025 Food Leadership Summit](#), taking place October 7–8 at the BMO Centre in Calgary, will bring together leaders from across Canada's agri-food value chain under the theme Uniting Canada's Agri-Food Value Chain. Focusing on growing economic competitiveness, enriching communities, and cultivating a healthy planet, the Summit will highlight Canadian leadership while driving action toward a more secure, sustainable, and innovative food system. Key topics will include investment, workforce development, food accessibility, climate resilience, and cross-sector collaboration.

As an Indigenous-led organization, the NCIAF is proud to support this national gathering that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and innovation. The Summit offers a vital opportunity to elevate Indigenous voices, foster interprovincial partnerships, and align on a made-in-Canada vision for the future of food. Join us in shaping a resilient food system from seed to fork—and beyond.

[Register now for the event!](#)

What's Keeping Us Busy - An April Overview



Strategy Planning Session | Regina, SK — The NCI AF team gathered for a strategic planning session to chart a clear and impactful path forward. Rooted in “the Indigenous way,” the NCI AF is committed to advancing sustainable agriculture and food systems that honour traditional knowledge while promoting economic empowerment, environmental stewardship, and food sovereignty. The strategy outlines key pillars for success, including knowledge-sharing, youth education, community infrastructure, reconciliation partnerships, and biodiversity protection. By taking a holistic and forward-looking approach, the NCI AF aims to build a resilient, inclusive model that supports Indigenous communities today and for the next hundred years.

As the NCI AF continues to grow, this strategic vision will serve as a guiding framework to ensure our work remains grounded in Indigenous values while addressing the evolving needs of communities across Canada. Our commitment to collaboration, innovation, and cultural preservation will be central to driving meaningful change in the agriculture and food sectors. With a focus on long-term impact, we aim to inspire and empower the next generation of Indigenous producers, entrepreneurs, and leaders. Together, we are planting the seeds for a thriving, self-determined future in Indigenous agriculture and food.

Fuel, Food, Fertilizer Global Summit | Regina, SK — The NCI AF attended the Fuel, Food, Fertilizer Global Summit held in Regina, SK. This vital gathering brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and community voices to explore the intersection of energy, agriculture, and sustainability.

Our team engaged in meaningful discussions about the importance of Indigenous leadership in shaping resilient food systems and advancing agricultural innovation. We’re grateful for the opportunity to share our perspective and strengthen connections supporting Indigenous food sovereignty.



Aggie Days | Calgary, AB — From April 9-13, President and CEO Kallie Wood along with Senior Vice President Chris McKee spent an incredible week at The Calgary Stampede Aggie Days, celebrating 40 years of agricultural education and engagement! With over 50,000 students passing through the gates, the energy and enthusiasm for learning about farming, livestock, and the vital role of agriculture were truly inspiring.

The NCI AF was honoured to spend a morning touring the grounds, connecting with the passionate teams behind this impactful event.

We’re excited to build a meaningful partnership with the Calgary Stampede that supports Indigenous youth and fosters inclusive growth in Canada’s agriculture and agri-food sectors.





Growing Together: A Collaborative Launch of Nourishing Nations

The Capacity Development team hosted the third Advisory Circle meeting this month, which was an important milestone for the NCI AF. It marked the beginning of a new chapter with the launch of our first program under the National Indigenous Agriculture Programs (NIAP) - the Nourishing Nations Empowering Generations program. This initial gathering was intentionally informal, designed to be an open space for dialogue, reflection, and shared understanding of program direction as we begin to bring this customized youth-focused initiative to life.

The meeting served as an opportunity to ground the program in the values and voices of our Advisory Circle members. It allowed us to share the inspiration behind the program—rooted in the community-driven One Tomato Project—and demonstrate how we've adapted the original concept into something tailored to each participating Indigenous community. Nourishing Nations is about more than growing plants; it's about planting the seeds of food sovereignty, cultural reconnection, and lifelong learning for Indigenous youth.

Through our discussion, we introduced the structure of the grow guide, outlining the flexible timeline and learning modules designed to be tailored by each community. This guide is intended as a foundation, with the understanding that it will grow and evolve with the input of teachers, Elders, knowledge keepers, and local leaders. The team emphasized that cultural teachings are meant to be added locally, respecting the uniqueness of each Nation's traditions and practices.

The meeting set the tone for thoughtful collaboration as the Advisory Circle reviews the guide and provides feedback from their unique perspectives. We are grateful for the wisdom, experience and guidance of our Advisory Circle that is essential to ensure this program is meaningful, respectful, and impactful.



Events We're Attending

Stay connected with us at events we are attending! We're excited to engage with communities and support Indigenous agriculture.

Forward Summit West - May 14-15, 2025

Location: Calgary, AB

2025 Americas Agriculture & Food Security Forum - June 15-17, 2025

Location: Kananaskis, AB

Food Leadership Summit - Oct 7-8, 2025

Location: Calgary, AB

Indigenous Ag Summit, presented by FCC - Nov 2025

Location: Regina, SK

Events We're Sharing

While we won't be attending these events, we encourage you to explore opportunities to learn and network.

Central Business Forum - Jun 5, 2025

Location: Toronto, ON

Ag in Motion - Jul 15-17, 2025

Location: Langham, SK

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show - Sep 9-11, 2025

Location: Woodstock, ON

Program Opportunity

Feast Fellowship, Sovereign Seeds

Sovereign Seeds has announced the **Feast Fellowship**, a brand-new 8-month virtual program designed to support 2SLGBTQI+ Indigenous farmers in strengthening their agricultural business skills! This initiative, part of their Cultural Food and Agriculture Entrepreneurship Program, is open to Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ farmers across Canada who are looking to start or scale a for-profit farm business.

Application Period: EXTENDED TO June 13, 2025

Program Dates: June 2025 - January 2026

To learn more, check out the [Sovereign Seeds website](https://www.sovereignseeds.org).

For any questions, contact their Manager of Cultural Food Entrepreneurship at sonia@sovereignseeds.org.



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

Website: nci af.ca

Address: Atoskewin Business Center
Regina SK S4S 7K3

Phone: 306-559-6098

Stay Informed

