



The Wâwiyiyaw

National Circle Newsletter For Indigenous Agriculture & Food
November 2025

NEWS

UPDATE



Honouring Indigenous Veterans Day & Remembrance Day

This November, the NCIAF joins communities across the country in honouring the courage, service, and sacrifice of Indigenous Veterans and all who have served in times of war, conflict, and peace.

On November 8 — Indigenous Veterans Day — we pay tribute to the thousands of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis men and women who answered the call to serve, often overcoming discrimination and systemic barriers to do so. Though First Nations people were exempt from conscription during the First World War, an estimated 4,000 Indigenous men — nearly one in three able-bodied men — volunteered to fight, with approximately 300 losing their lives. During the Second World War, more than 3,000 Indigenous people enlisted, and many others supported the war effort from home through donations and community initiatives.

Just a few days later, on November 11 — Remembrance Day — we stand in solemn reflection with all Canadians to honour those who gave their lives in service to peace and freedom. Yet for many Indigenous Veterans, the battle did not end when they returned home. Despite their sacrifice, they often faced systemic inequities — from being denied land and veterans' benefits to losing their Indian status under the Indian Act. Their courage, both on the battlefield and in their fight for recognition, stands as a powerful reminder of resilience and justice.

As we pause to remember, we also honour the stories that connect generations — stories of courage carried through families, communities, and Nations. Many Indigenous Veterans returned from service to continue giving back through leadership, advocacy, and stewardship of the land — values that continue to guide our work today in building sustainable, self-determined food systems for Indigenous peoples.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all Veterans and their families. May we never forget their sacrifice, and may their legacy continue to inspire strength, unity, and hope for generations to come.



Photo: A hand holding a poppy.

Sharing Indigenous Perspectives on Food System Resilience at the Food Leadership Summit 2025

On October 7–8, NCIAF President and CEO Kallie Wood joined industry leaders at the Food Leadership Summit 2025 in Calgary, Alberta. The Summit brought together key voices from across Canada's agriculture and food systems to engage in bold, solutions-focused discussions around strengthening the sector's future. Through plenaries, roundtables, and working sessions, participants explored how collaboration can drive meaningful, lasting change across the food value chain.

Kallie took the main stage alongside Keith Currie, President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and Jerry Bos, President of Bosconic Farms Ltd., for a roundtable titled "What Does a Competitive, Resilient, Secure Agriculture and Food Future Look Like?" In this spark talk session, speakers reflected on what these concepts mean in practice and how they can be realized through shared leadership and innovation.

Kallie brought forward an Indigenous lens, emphasizing that resilience and food security are deeply rooted in relationships—with the land, with community, and with traditional knowledge. Her participation highlighted the importance of Indigenous leadership in shaping a more inclusive, competitive, and sustainable future for Canada's agriculture and food systems.

NCIAF Participates in Canadian Federation of Agriculture Hill Day 2025

On October 28, Kallie Wood, President and CEO, and Chris McKee, Senior Vice President of Business Development, represented the NCIAF in Ottawa at Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) Hill Day 2025. The annual event brings together policymakers, industry representatives, and agricultural organizations to discuss priorities that strengthen Canada's agriculture sector.

Throughout the day, Kallie and CFA President Keith Currie connected with Members of Parliament to emphasize the importance of policies that support labour, investment, and sustainable growth in Canadian agriculture. Chris McKee also helped highlight the vital role of a strong labour force and smart growth strategies in realizing the sector's full potential.

The day concluded with a well-attended evening reception that brought together stakeholders and political leaders from across the country—showcasing a united commitment to building a strong, resilient, and competitive future for Canada's agriculture and food systems.



Photo: (Left to right) Kallie Wood, Chris McKee, Keith Currie, and Alan Kruszel.

Reimagining Resilience: Indigenous Leadership at the Arrell Food Summit in Guelph



Photo: Emily Nanne (left) and Kallie Wood (right) on stage during their fireside chat at the Arrell Food Summit.

At this year's Arrell Food Summit, the theme Resilience Reimagined: Redefining Food Systems for a Changed World encouraged participants to look critically at what resilience really means — and who defines it. Kallie Wood, our President and CEO, joined Emily Nanne, Program Consultant, in a fireside conversation exploring how traditional knowledge and food sovereignty practices are reshaping Canada's approach to food systems.

Their discussion highlighted a key truth: self-determination removes the burdens that externally designed "solutions" often create. When communities have to conform to rigid funding rules, prescriptive technologies, or short-term programs, capacity is drained and innovation is limited. But when Indigenous communities lead — defining their own priorities, timelines, and measures of success — the result is stronger relationships, restored trust, and more sustainable outcomes.

The morning sessions set a powerful tone, featuring transparent discussions among government and economic experts from Mexico, the U.S., and Canada on the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) and its food system implications. Devita Davison of Feeding America stood out with her passionate and grounded reflections on why self-determination in food systems works across scales and contexts.

Throughout the day, it became clear that resilience cannot be prescribed — it must be co-created. As Emily noted, when communities closest to the land and food systems are empowered to lead, the benefits extend far beyond the local level. The Arrell Food Summit reminded everyone that the path to food system transformation begins with relationships — with land, with community, and with purpose. The NCIAC's work continues to demonstrate that self-determined, community-driven approaches are the foundation of a truly resilient food future.

NCIAF and CAHRC Sign MOU to Advance Reconciliation and Indigenous Agriculture

The NCIAC and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen collaboration and advance reconciliation within Canada's agriculture and food sectors. Through this agreement, both organizations will work together to promote knowledge exchange, capacity building, and inclusive growth across the industry. The partnership aims to support Indigenous participation and leadership in agriculture while fostering sustainable, community-led development that honours Indigenous values, lands, and traditions.

This partnership builds on CAHRC's ongoing commitment to advancing equity and inclusion in agriculture, including its National Women in Agriculture and Agri-Food Network Project supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Together, NCIAC and CAHRC will continue to build bridges between Indigenous communities and agriculture stakeholders to create a more inclusive and sustainable future for the sector.



From Lake to Plate: Celebrating Indigenous Wild Rice with the Mistickokat Family

Celebrate the rich flavours of Indigenous cuisine with a hearty wild rice dish while discovering the story behind the hands that grow it. This month, we're excited to share a Wild Rice and Mushroom Pilaf recipe from Canadian Food Focus, a simple yet flavorful dish that brings together earthy mushrooms, crunchy walnuts, and tender wild rice.

But the story of wild rice is about more than just cooking—it's about people, land, and tradition. Our new YouTube video highlights the Mistickokat family from Northern Saskatchewan, whose multigenerational work in Indigenous wild rice farming exemplifies dedication, family cooperation, and sustainable food practices. From planting to harvesting, their journey offers a glimpse into the heart of Indigenous agriculture in Canada.

We invite you to watch their inspiring story and connect with the roots of this iconic Canadian grain. [Watch the video here](#) and see how tradition, culture, and community come together in every step of the wild rice harvest.

We're also honoured to share that Alex and Mikwan Mistickokat will be joining us as guest speakers at this year's Indigenous Agriculture Summit, where they'll share their experiences in wild rice harvesting and the importance of passing traditional knowledge from one generation to the next. Their story is a living example of how Indigenous foodways continue to grow and thrive through family, community, and connection to the land.



Photo: Alex Mistickokat (Left) and Mikwan Mistickokat (right).

Wild Rice and Mushroom Pilaf

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup uncooked wild rice
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1 Tbsp canola oil, divided
- 1 cup whole mushrooms, wiped clean and quartered
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed
- 1/2 of a medium red bell pepper, thinly sliced (about 1/4 cup / 60 mL)
- 1/4 tsp poultry seasoning
- 1/2 tsp coarsely ground black pepper

Instructions

1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. Meanwhile, heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add walnuts and cook 2–3 minutes or until fragrant, stirring frequently. Set aside on a separate plate.
3. Using the same skillet, add 2 tsp (10 mL) of the canola oil, swirling to coat the bottom. Add mushrooms and onion and cook 2 minutes. Add corn, bell peppers, and poultry seasoning; sauté for 5 minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Remove from heat and cover to keep warm.
4. Drain rice, shaking off excess liquid, and add to the mushroom mixture. Stir in walnuts and black pepper. Drizzle the remaining 1 tsp (5 mL) oil over all and toss gently.

Recipe courtesy of Canadian Food Focus

Funding Opportunities: Investing in Indigenous Agriculture and Food Futures

The Blanket Fund Reconciliation Action Grants

The Downie Wenjack Fund (DWF), in partnership with Canadian Tire Corporation, continues its commitment to supporting Indigenous Peoples and communities through Oshki Wupoowane | The Blanket Fund.

The Reconciliation Action Grants provide \$1,500–\$15,000 to support Indigenous-led cultural, artistic, and educational activities that strengthen cultural revitalization, elevate Indigenous languages and traditions, and foster understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Applications are open from **September 11 to December 10, 2025**, with successful applicants notified in March 2026. Indigenous educators, artists, Elders, youth, and community leaders are encouraged to apply.

Learn more and apply at downiewenjack.ca/The-Blanket-Fund/action or contact fund@downiewenjack.ca.

Creating, Knowing and Sharing: The Arts and Cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples

This program supports Indigenous individuals and groups, Indigenous-led arts organizations and arts/cultural sector development organizations that foster a vital and resilient Indigenous arts ecosystem. Creating, Knowing and Sharing acknowledges the cultural sovereignty of Indigenous peoples and respects the concept of First Nations, Inuit and Métis self-determination.

The Creating, Knowing and Sharing: The Arts and Cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples program supports activities in 3 broad areas:

- Creating provides support for research and the production and creation of new works of art.
- Knowing provides support for the retention, maintenance, innovation and transmittal of cultural knowledge and creative practice. This includes contemporary and historical critical discourse, arts/cultural training and initiatives that seek to pass cultural knowledge to younger generations through artistic practice, and the renewal and maintenance of customary art practices.
- Sharing provides support for the dissemination, exhibition, presentation and distribution of works of art by First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, which enrich and engage communities in Canada and abroad.

The Short-term Projects is the grant that is up to 100K with a closing date of **November 26, 2025**.

Learn more and apply: [Creating, Knowing and Sharing: The Arts and Cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples](#)

AgriDiversity Program

The AgriDiversity Program is a \$5-million initiative under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership designed to create a more inclusive and representative agricultural sector in Canada.

This program supports projects that help Indigenous Peoples and other underrepresented and marginalized groups — including women, youth, persons with disabilities, racialized persons, visible minorities, 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and official language minority communities — fully participate and thrive in the agriculture and agri-food sector.

Funding is available for initiatives that:

- Build leadership, entrepreneurial, and business skills
- Promote careers and opportunities in agriculture
- Support training and mentorship for Indigenous and marginalized participants
- Strengthen sector diversity by encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing

Applications are open from **March 6, 2023, to September 30, 2027** (or until funds are fully committed). The program concludes on March 31, 2028.

Learn more: agriculture.canada.ca/en/programs/agridiversity

Events We're Attending

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

Indigenous Ag Summit, presented by FCC - Nov 27-28, 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.

Indigenous Agriculture Conference - Nov 18-20, 2025

Location: Kamloops, BC

Intertribal Gathering 2025 - Nov 17-19, 2025

Location: Vancouver, BC

International Conference on Forestry Food and Sustainable Agriculture - Nov 27-28, 2025

Location: Toronto, ON

7th Global Conference on Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestries & Food - Dec 5-7, 2025

Location: Montreal, QC

Indigenous Ag Summit

Tickets available until November 7, 2025!

We are excited to welcome you back for the 12th Annual Indigenous Agriculture Summit (IAS), presented by FCC and co-hosted by the NCI AF, taking place November 2025 in Regina, Saskatchewan.

The IAS is a two-day conference dedicated to exploring opportunities in Indigenous agriculture and food. Each day, participants will gain knowledge, resources, and inspiration to strengthen food security, build community resilience, and foster sustainability through agriculture.

From small-scale to large-scale operations, the IAS offers valuable insights to spark new ideas and approaches that meet the diverse needs of Indigenous communities.

The program is designed to highlight shared successes, best practices, leadership development, and economic opportunities, while fostering meaningful connections across Nations and industries.

As an added benefit, your summit registration includes access to the wider Canadian Western Agribition grounds during the event.

Stay informed on updates and registration details here: [Indigenous Agriculture Summit](#)

Featured Quote

Here is our featured quote of the month:

Bayer is excited to be a partner with NCI AF. Their role as visionaries, architects and catalysts for Indigenous agriculture and food is both inspiring and adds tangible value. Our connection to NCI AF has helped Bayer colleagues start to learn about, unlearn concepts about, and explore relationships within, Indigenous agriculture. The past and future of Indigenous agriculture and food is critically important, and we are grateful to be connected to NCI AF.

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Stay Informed



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