



# The Wâwiyiyaw

National Circle Newsletter For Indigenous Agriculture & Food

NEWS

UPDATE

## Honouring Truth and Reconciliation Through Food, Land, and Relationships

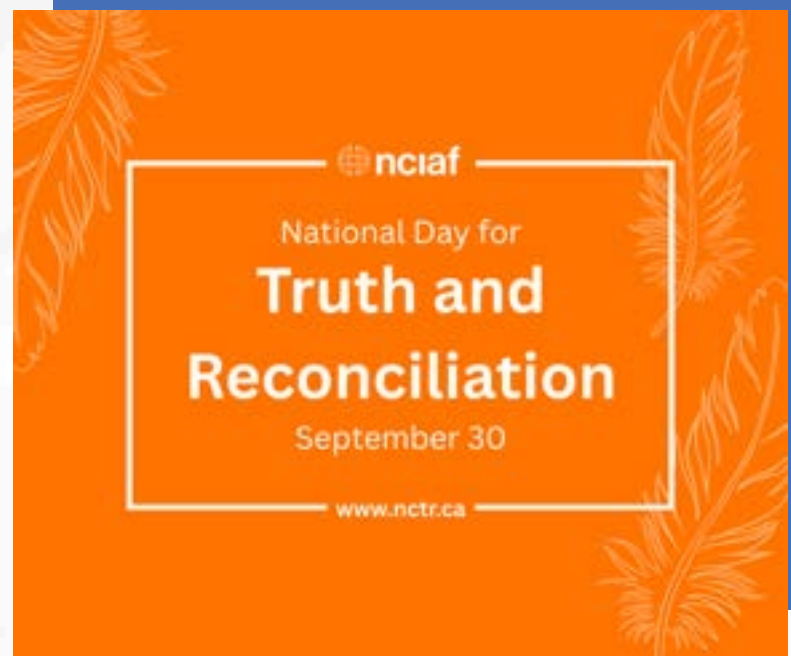
September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a time for all Canadians to pause, reflect, and honour the Survivors of residential schools, their families, and the generations affected by these lasting impacts. It is also a time to remember those children who never returned home.

At the NCI AF, reconciliation is woven into the heart of our mission. We believe that food, land, and community are powerful pathways to healing and rebuilding. Agriculture is not only about growing crops or raising livestock—it is about strengthening identity, restoring traditional practices, and creating opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to thrive.

This day calls on each of us to do more than remember. It asks us to act. For the NCI AF, action means supporting Indigenous communities as they reclaim food sovereignty, amplifying Indigenous leadership in agriculture, and fostering partnerships that honour traditional knowledge alongside modern innovation. By working together, we can cultivate a future that reflects both truth and reconciliation.

We encourage everyone to take this day to learn, listen, and reflect on the role we each play in reconciliation. Whether it is through educating ourselves, supporting Indigenous farmers and food producers, or finding ways to collaborate with communities in your region, every action contributes to building a more inclusive and respectful future for Canadian agriculture.

On National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, let us commit ourselves to walking the path of reconciliation—together.



*Photo: Orange graphic with feathers on the left and right side; text reads "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation September 30"*





*Photo: Tianna Peepeetch, Michael Burechailo, and Jordyn Lovas standing in the Ochapowace Garden.*

## Summer Student Reflections with the NCIAF

As summer draws to a close, our team of summer students at the NCIAF is reflecting on the opportunities, challenges, and growth that defined their experience. Each of them came into this role with different backgrounds and goals, and together they shared in a season filled with learning, collaboration, and meaningful contributions.

### **Jordyn Lovas – Capacity Development Associate**

For Jordyn, the highlight of the summer was meeting individuals from many Nations and communities and seeing firsthand the unique ways people reclaim and continue agricultural practices. One of her proudest accomplishments was developing bison-themed learning and activity sheets for children, blending her creativity with her passion as a future educator.

She shared that the NCIAF's collaborative culture made a lasting impression: "The supportive and collaborative atmosphere here has shown me just how important workplace culture is." While creative freedom was exciting, Jordyn admitted it was also more challenging than expected—but through teamwork, she found ways to refine her ideas and bring them to life.



*Photo: Jordyn Lovas.*

### **Michael Burechailo – Business Development Associate**

Michael's summer was defined by opportunities to connect with communities and put classroom knowledge into practice. He reflected that the highlight was helping communities grow and bringing their ideas to life, whether through garden initiatives, filming projects, or research.

Among his proudest moments was the Ochapowace garden project, which came together in just one day despite tight timelines, and contributing to the NCIAF's Web Hub development. He noted that one of the most valuable lessons was "using the skills and knowledge from school and being able to apply it to [my] job." Adjusting to the fast pace of a growing organization was challenging but ultimately rewarding.



*Photo: Michael Burechailo.*

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# Summer Student Reflections with the NCI AF - Con't

## Tianna Peepeetch – Business Development Associate

Returning for a second summer, Tianna valued being entrusted with projects that allowed her to connect with communities and apply her education in real time. She highlighted the chance to create beginner-friendly agriculture guides on container gardening, harvesting, and beekeeping—resources she hopes will inspire others the way agriculture has inspired her own journey.

Reflecting on the summer, Tianna noted: “Small and mighty teams can accomplish great things through collaboration, perseverance, and determination.” She found inspiration in seeing communities with just a handful of people launch gardens, greenhouses, and food security initiatives. While an injury and illness were personal challenges, she emphasized how important resilience and teamwork were in overcoming them.



*Photo: Tianna Peepeetch.*

## Looking Ahead

Across their reflections, a common theme shines through: growth through collaboration and community connection. From hands-on projects to creative resource development, from fast-paced initiatives to deep cultural learning, this summer provided opportunities to build skills, share knowledge, and support Indigenous food systems in meaningful ways.

Each of them brought unique strengths and perspectives to our team, and their contributions made a meaningful difference to the work we do. We wish them the very best as they continue their education journeys and explore new opportunities. Their passion, creativity, and dedication will carry them far, and we look forward to the possibility of welcoming them back to the NCI AF in the future.

## Exploring Food Sovereignty Across Manitoba: Building Relationships, Building Change

Over the past several months, Wendy Carnegie has been building meaningful connections and exploring Indigenous-led foodways across Manitoba — from the north to the south. At the heart of her work is relationship-building; fostering trust between communities, funding partners, and governments. These efforts are opening new pathways for important conversations about sustainable funding and the creation of strong, self-determined food systems.

Wendy has seen firsthand how Indigenous communities are navigating a patchwork of funding opportunities. While there are many programs available, they do not always align, which can lead to partially funded projects, added burdens for applicants, or even initiatives that never get off the ground. She has also witnessed how traditional funding models often focus on narrow measures of success defined by funders, rather than the holistic outcomes that communities value.



*Photo: Bison in front of a fence.*

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# Exploring Food Sovereignty Across Manitoba: Building Relationships, Building Change - Con't

Through countless conversations — often over a cup of coffee — Wendy has worked alongside funding partners to explore ways of shifting toward a more holistic, collaborative, and community-driven approach to funding. Early pilot projects are showing promise, with funders collaborating from the start to reduce barriers and better support communities in achieving their visions.

Her work has also taken her into communities across the province. In January, she visited Sapotawayak Cree Nation, where the community recently acquired a Growcer Unit. Discussions focused on integrating the technology into education and school food programs, while also connecting with funding partners to cover the remaining costs to bring the system fully online.



*Photo: Man standing with bison in front of a fence.*

In February, Wendy traveled north with Manitoba Agriculture staff, the National Index on Agri-Food Performance, and a provincial apiarist to visit Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN). There, she learned firsthand from dedicated local harvesters, toured the school's food initiatives — including honey production — and joined students for land-based learning activities such as exploring traplines and setting snares. These experiences deepened her appreciation for the resilience and commitment to food sovereignty in NCN.

In March, she joined with Farm Credit Canada, Manitoba Agriculture, and the Buffalo Culture Collective to help explore the creation of a nation-to-nation bison knowledge learning circle. With leadership and guidance from community partners, this initiative has grown quickly, with virtual

learning events, in-person gatherings at Bird Tail Sioux First Nation, and an upcoming two-day event with Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Community members are leading the way, and Wendy continues to walk alongside them in this important work of rematriating the bison.

Visits throughout the spring and summer, including to Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation and communities across northern Manitoba, have given Wendy the privilege of witnessing the strength and vision of local food leaders. These visits have also created opportunities for funders to see projects in action — leading to tangible investments such as improved water infrastructure for bison herds.

In June, Senior Vice President Chris McKee joined Wendy and the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative on a four-day northern Manitoba tour. Together, they visited projects like Grow North in Leaf Rapids, the NCN Country Food Program, and the Food for All Program in Fox Lake Cree Nation. Again and again, Wendy was inspired by the resilience of northern communities and their dedication to building strong, self-determined food systems.

Through her work, Wendy Carnegie continues to embody the NCIAP's values of reciprocity, collaboration, and respect. By fostering partnerships between communities and funders, she is helping to shape new approaches that reduce burdens, support holistic outcomes, and ensure the strength of Indigenous food systems for generations to come.



# Ingenuity of the North: Inspirational Stories From the Yukon and North West Territories



*Photo: Trondek Farm, with tables and canopies on the left, and buildings on the right.*

In August, the NCIAF had the privilege of attending the [Yukon Food Security Network Conference: Diversifying Food Systems](#) in Dawson City. The gathering brought together Indigenous leaders, food producers, educators, and community members from across the North to share knowledge, celebrate innovation, and strengthen networks in the spirit of food sovereignty. We were welcomed into an environment of generosity, story sharing, and collaboration. Each community we met with offered a glimpse into the strength and resilience that defines Indigenous food systems in the Yukon.

The conference delivered inspirational panels sharing stories of success. We met Diane and her team from Happy's Landing Fish Camp, who shared her experience of teaching youth the traditional practices of netting fish on the Peel River, filleting and smoking it for her community. Her longest serving employee, her grandson Bo, is the firekeeper and started when he was 4 years old gathering wood. The team at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm were excellent hosts and demonstrated the incredible possibilities of growing food in the North. Pigs, goats, rabbits, chickens, turkey, and quail provide protein for the community and has been a project that began out of necessity, as salmon stocks in the Yukon River have been depleted. The farm also boasts numerous gardens and greenhouses showcases how Indigenous-led agriculture can provide fresh, healthy food for community while creating pathways for future generations.

In Mayo, the Community Garden offered another example of the Na-Cho Nyäk Dun community resilience. Through collective gardening, this project not only provides food security but also reconnects families with the land and strengthens intergenerational ties. At the Ihdzí' Community Centre, the space provides a commercial kitchen for local businesses to utilize and we witnessed how food can bring people together in the heart of a community with a jam workshop. From harvest celebrations to shared meals, the centre is a space where cultural continuity and community well-being are nourished side by side. Knowledge of medicines was also a central theme of the conference.



*Photo: (Left to Right) Emily, community youth, and Diane.*

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# Ingenuity of the North: Inspirational Stories From the Yukon and North West Territories - Con't



Photo: (Right) Cherish Fairclough leading a group of participants on a medicinal plant walk.

Cherish Fairclough, a licensed Community Herbalist, guided participants on a medicinal plant walk, reconnecting us with the healing plants of the land and their traditional uses. Similarly, Amy Grenier of the Ta'an Kwach'an Council First Nation led a tea blending workshop, weaving cultural teachings into practical skills that inspire both health and entrepreneurship.

For the NCIAF, these moments were a reminder that food sovereignty is not only about food production but also about cultural survival, education, and the joy of community. We are deeply grateful for the warm welcome, the powerful stories, and the relationships formed during our time in Dawson City.

As we look ahead, the NCIAF is committed to walking alongside these communities and many others across the North in their journeys of farming, harvesting, and reclaiming food systems. The Yukon stories affirm that when we nourish one another, we nourish nations.

## Youth Leadership Shines at Sioux Valley's Buffalo and Grasslands Gathering

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN) hosted a powerful three-day event in August entitled *atanka k'a phezi akhiptan wounspe: oyatepi k'a ina makoo'e un thantanhan*, meaning "Buffalo and Grass Sharing Lessons: For the Benefit of Nations and Mother Earth" in the Dakota language. Centered on the buffalo, the event highlighted its deep connection to grasslands, soil, youth, and technology.

The gathering opened with an inspiring keynote from Leroy Little Bear on the intersections of Western science and Indigenous knowledge. That same day, the SVDN Youth Warriors were honoured with ribbon skirts and shirts in recognition of their leadership and dedication to planting 1,000 trees and establishing the community's fruit orchard. Youth also showcased their land-based water projects and shared how they worked with cutting-edge geophysics technology to monitor soil health, grasslands, and orchard trees. The day concluded with a workshop demonstrating how wildflower seedlings are planted using a biodegradable poly cover and irrigation system as part of SVDN's seed bank initiative.



Photo: (Back L to R) Leroy Little Bear, Chief Vincent Tacan, Chris McKee, Amethyst First Rider, and Kallie Wood.

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# Youth Leadership Shines at Sioux Valley's Buffalo and Grasslands Gathering



*Photo: Several buffalo, along with a white buffalo calf, in a field.*

Day two was filled with hands-on learning. Youth and participants took part in workshops on seed collection, the role of bison in building healthy soils, land and community healing, and innovation in buffalo management. These sessions provided a dynamic mix of traditional teachings and modern practices.

The final day was dedicated to the buffalo harvest—a sacred and meaningful experience that the NCIAF was honoured to witness and take part in. In a particularly moving moment, wildfire evacuees who had never experienced a buffalo harvest were welcomed into the community. The harvest was held as part of the community fun day, which also featured youth activities, soup and Bannock using the fresh buffalo meat, and a concert.

Looking around at the 289 people who attended the event, reconciliation was in action—the coming together of Indigenous knowledge and Western science, alongside both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, learning and sharing together.

The event builds on the momentum of last year's inaugural summer event, Food, Agriculture, Climate Change, and Traditional Synergies (FACTS) Camp, showing once again the strength, innovation, and resilience of SVDN's youth. Their commitment to protecting the land, water, and buffalo is inspiring, and we cannot wait to see where their leadership takes them next.

## Shape the Future of Food at the 2025 Food Leadership Summit

Canada's agriculture and food sectors contribute over \$150 billion to our national GDP<sup>1</sup> — and the world is watching. As Indigenous food leaders, producers, and innovators, we are not just part of this industry — we are the future of it. The NCIAF is proud to share details about the upcoming Food Leadership Summit, hosted by GLOBE Series, taking place October 7–8, 2025, in Calgary, Alberta. This annual event brings together leaders across agri-food, policy, and business to accelerate a more competitive, secure, and resilient food system for all.

This is more than a conference. It's a call to action. By coming together, we can align our strengths, share knowledge, and create future-ready solutions that support healthy land, strong supply chains, Indigenous food sovereignty, and adaptable workforces. Learn more and register: [www.globeseries.com](http://www.globeseries.com)

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture meet to discuss Canada-United States trading relationship](#)

# Empowering Indigenous Growth Through Business & Food Sovereignty

Emily Nanne is a Métis consultant and relationship builder focused on supporting start-ups, scaling businesses, and community-driven projects in Canada's agri-food sector. She specializes in initiatives that strengthen local food systems, with a focus on Northern, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Through her work with the NCI AF, Emily is passionate about creating opportunities that connect Indigenous food producers, jobseekers, and entrepreneurs to meaningful roles in the growing agri-food economy. Away from work, she finds joy in the simple things: caring for her children and horses, tending to her garden, cooking for her family, and spending as much time as possible out in the bush, no matter the season.



*Photo: (Back left) Emily's husband, Emily, her oldest son, (front left) and Emily's youngest son.*

## ***Can you share a bit about your background and what led you to your current role as Indigenous Engagement and Program Consultant with NCI AF?***

I was born and raised in the Upper Ottawa Valley, where my Métis family settled after leaving Treaty 6 territory. My father grew up immersed in traditional Métis culture, practicing self-sustainability—a legacy passed down through generations. This heritage gave me hands-on experience in farming, harvesting, food preservation, and a deep appreciation for sovereign foods.

Beyond my work in food systems, I share my cultural connections through music as a multi-instrumentalist, a passion passed down from my ancestors. Today, I own and operate my own consulting business, working with partners across Canada to strengthen food systems, foster Indigenous-led initiatives, and develop strategies that create both economic and social impact. My path to the NCI AF feels like a natural continuation of this work, sharing knowledge, building relationships, and driving meaningful change in the agri-food industry.

## ***What inspired you to join the NCI AF?***

My work with the NCI AF is a natural fit with both my personal values and professional experience. Growing up in a Métis family deeply connected to the land, I learned early on that food is more than sustenance—it's culture, sovereignty, and resilience. The NCI AF's mission reflects my commitment to strengthening Indigenous food systems through relationships, trust, and practical action.

"Rooted in Relationships. Driven by Purpose." isn't just by business' tagline—it's how I approach every project. Being part of the NCI AF allows me to help create space for Indigenous voices, knowledge, and leadership to guide the future of agriculture and food in Canada.

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# Empowering Indigenous Growth Through Business & Food Sovereignty - Con't

## *What have you found to be the best part about working with the NCIAC so far?*

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role has been supporting Northern Ontario through the NCIAC's collaboration with CareersNOW!. This partnership helps connect Indigenous jobseekers with opportunities in the agri-food sector—a field that is vital to the region's future. I have a deep love for Northern Ontario for many reasons, and, over the past four years, have had the privilege of working alongside communities, producers, and organizations to strengthen local food systems. Seeing the tangible impact of this work, and knowing it contributes to long-term community resilience, is deeply meaningful to me.

## *From Story to Table: Emily's Zucchini Salsa*

As we celebrate Emily Nanne's journey in our Employee Spotlight, she's also sharing a taste of home with us. Her Zucchini Salsa recipe is a perfect way to enjoy fresh garden produce—simple, vibrant, and full of flavour. Give it a try in your own kitchen and share it with us on social media!



*Photo: A pair of hands holding three zucchinis.*

### Ingredients

- 10 cups grated zucchini
- 3 cups chopped onions
- 2 green peppers, chopped
- 2 red peppers, chopped
- 5 Tbsp coarse salt
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 Tbsp cumin
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp dry mustard
- 1 ½ cups white vinegar
- 1–4 Tbsp crushed red pepper (1 for mild, 4 for very spicy)
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp coarse black pepper
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 6 cups ground tomatoes
- 3 Tbsp cornstarch

### Instructions

1. In a large bowl, combine zucchini, onions, green and red peppers, and salt. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
2. The next day, rinse well, drain, and squeeze out excess liquid.
3. Place the drained vegetable mixture in a large stockpot. Stir in garlic, cumin, brown sugar, mustard, vinegar, crushed red pepper, nutmeg, black pepper, turmeric, and tomatoes.
4. Bring the mixture to a boil. Remove 1 cup of liquid and let it cool. Stir in cornstarch until smooth (no lumps) and return to the pot. Repeat if a thicker consistency is desired.
5. Return to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes.
6. Ladle hot salsa into sterilized jars, seal, and process as desired for long-term storage.



## 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 Food & Farm Festival - Sept 23-25, 2025

Location: Batoche, SK

### Food Leadership Summit - Oct 7-8, 2025

Location: Calgary, AB

### 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.

### NL Young Farmers 2025 Leadership Summit- Oct 17-18, 2025

Location: Clarendville, NL

### Rezolution Summit - Oct 27-28, 2025

Location: Vancouver, BC

## Indigenous Ag Summit

**Tickets available now!**

We are excited to welcome you back for the 12th Annual Indigenous Agriculture Summit (IAS), presented by FCC and co-hosted by the NCIAF, 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](#)**

**Website:** [nciaf.ca](http://nciaf.ca)

**Address:** Atoskewin Business Center  
Regina SK S4S 7K3

**Phone:** 306-559-6098

**Stay Informed**



**Indigenous Ag Summit**  
PRESENTED BY *fcc*

**November 27 - 28, 2025**  
Regina, SK

**Event Highlights**

- Pipe ceremony
- Panel discussions
- Youth presentations
- Breakout sessions
- Networking

**BUY TICKETS NOW!**

Please reach out to [info@nciaf.ca](mailto:info@nciaf.ca) if you would like to list an event.