

# SASKATCHEWAN **Agri-Value Forum** **& Networking 2024**



Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel  
& Online

**April 30 & May 1, 2024**



## Message from the Honourable Daniel Vandal

*Minister for Prairies Economic Development Canada, Government of Canada*



Welcome everyone to the 2024 Saskatchewan Agri-Value Forum and Networking event.

The Government of Canada, through PrairiesCan, is proud to support this important event. Saskatchewan is an agricultural powerhouse and is meeting the world's food needs through sustainable agricultural practices and world class value-added innovation. This Forum brings together leaders in the agri-food industry to learn from each other and build partnerships. It plays an important role in accelerating economic growth on the Prairies and in ensuring we continue to prosper as world leaders in the agri-food economy.

I would like to thank and congratulate everyone involved in planning this event and wish you all a productive time!

.....

Bienvenue à tous au Forum et événement de réseautage sur la valeur agricole de la Saskatchewan 2024.

Le gouvernement du Canada, par l'intermédiaire de PrairiesCan, est fier de soutenir cet événement important. La Saskatchewan est une puissance agricole et répond aux besoins alimentaires mondiaux grâce à des pratiques agricoles durables et à une innovation à valeur ajoutée de classe mondiale. Ce Forum rassemble des leaders de l'industrie agroalimentaire pour apprendre les uns des autres et bâtir des partenariats. Il joue un rôle important en accélérant la croissance économique dans les Prairies et en garantissant que nous continuons à prospérer en tant que leaders mondiaux de l'économie agroalimentaire.

Je tiens à remercier et féliciter toutes les personnes impliquées dans la planification de cet événement et je vous souhaite à tous un moment productif!

**Daniel Vandal**

*Minister for Prairies Economic Development Canada*



**Message from the Honourable David Marit,**  
*Minister of Agriculture, Government of Saskatchewan*



Welcome to the 2024 Agri-Value Forum and Networking Event.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I am pleased to welcome you to the 10th annual Agri-Value Forum. This event has become a showcase of the sustainable growth in the Saskatchewan value-added sector and an opportunity to connect with industry members. Our 2024 program features local and international leaders who will discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the agri-value industry today.

Growing the value-added sector is a priority for the Government of Saskatchewan; our Growth Plan features a target of increasing value-added revenue in the province to \$10 billion by 2030. Investing in events like the Agri-Value Forum and programs such as the Saskatchewan Lean Improvements in Manufacturing program (SLIM) and the Product Development Program encourage further capital investment and innovation into this rapidly growing sector.

Value-added processing has grown to an estimated \$7.5 billion in 2023. We are on the verge of additional growth as many new value-added agriculture projects get underway in Saskatchewan such as increased canola, pulse and meat processing. This momentum is an excellent indicator of the progress we are making toward achieving our economic goals and we look forward to seeing the increased growth and opportunities that lie ahead for the sector.

I hope those in attendance enjoy making new connections and gaining relevant knowledge. This event supports continued industry growth, and we sincerely appreciate your participation.

**David Marit**  
*Minister of Agriculture*



**Message from the Honourable Jeremy Harrison,**

*Minister of Trade and Export Development, Government of Saskatchewan*



The Government of Saskatchewan is honoured to host yet another Agri-Value Forum aimed at strengthening our province’s value-added sector. The knowledge-sharing taking place today will be invaluable in moving this industry forward to ensure it creates even more jobs for Saskatchewan people.

In the decade since this event was first launched, we have seen some remarkable growth in the agri-value industry in Saskatchewan. Today, there are over 300 food processors in the province, with more than 5,000 people employed within this sector. Our stable business environment, competitive incentives, and personalized support have led to a host of opportunities both for investors from outside the province, as well as for local producers looking to gain traction in international markets.

Saskatchewan has become an attractive investment destination for businesses from around the world, as well as those looking to expand here at home. With the resources and an ecosystem creating more opportunities than ever before, we are growing Saskatchewan’s reputation as a major player in the global value-added market.

Our recently announced Securing the Next Decade of Growth: Saskatchewan's Investment Attraction Strategy and investSK.ca website aim to attract even more investment into the province, which will also help to grow our exports and build a stronger economy.

With a record \$20.2 billion in agri-food exports in 2023, our efforts to connect the world to Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan to the world continue to support this growing sector.

We hope this event will provide you with the resources you need to grow your business, further building on the momentum we have created in our value-added sector.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, thank you for attending this event. I wish attendees all the best for a successful conference.

**Jeremy Harrison**

*Minister of Trade and Export Development*



## CONFERENCE AGENDA

APRIL 30, 2024

- 8:00 am      **Registration & Coffee**
- 8:45 am      **Opening Remarks**
- 9:00 am      **What Does the World Want? 2024 Food Industry Trends**
- **Clint Smith** (Account Manager, Govt & Trade Division, Euromonitor International)
  - **Miri Eliyahu** (Senior Research Analyst, Euromonitor International)
- 10:00 am     **Networking Break**
- 10:30 am     **Uncovering Food Emotions with Neuroscience**
- **Mario Ubiali** (Founder & CEO, Thimus)
- 11:15 am     **Lessons Learned from Scaling International Start-ups**
- **David Swintosky** (Managing Director, Dunning Capital)
- 11:45 am     **Lunch break**
- .....
- 12:55 pm     **Welcome back**
- 1:00 pm      **Panel: Scaling in Saskatchewan**
- **Moderator: Jennifer Stelzer** (Directory of Policy, Strategy and Analytics, PrairiesCan)
  - **Shannon Sears** (President & CEO, Bioriginal)
  - **Austin Calladine** (Co-founder, Sweet Nutrition)
  - **Elyce Simpson Fraser** (President & CEO, Simpson Seeds)
- 2:00 pm      **Networking Break**
- 2:30 pm      **Partnering for Success: Indigenous Involvement in Value Added Agriculture**
- **Moderator: Kallie Wood** (President & CEO, National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food (NCIAF))
  - **AJ Bird** (Chief Hunter & VP Business Development, Tatanka Oyate Holdings)
  - **Jamie Bakos** (President & CEO, Titan Clean Energy Projects)
- 3:15 pm      **Keynote: Next-Gen Agrifood Solutions for a Changing World**
- **Christine Gould** (Founder, Thought for Food)
- 5:00 pm      **Industry Networking Reception**  
Top of the Inn, Sheraton Cavalier Saskatoon Hotel
- .....

## **WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**MAY 1, 2024**

**8:00 am – 11:30 am**

### **Performance Marketing**

**Derrick Swanson, OpenSail**

This informative and interactive workshop will provide a high-level orientation on performance marketing. Topics will include lead generation for your sales team, driving revenue for ecommerce, budget management and influencer marketing 101 with information for both B2B and B2C businesses. Attendees will take part in interactive sessions with performance marketing experts to answer company-specific questions.

### **Transformation Leadership Program**

**Christy Michalak, NGen**

**Dan Shunk, Arizona State University**

NGen, Canada's Global Innovation Cluster for Advanced Manufacturing, will lead businesses through a portion of its Transformation Leadership Program. Focusing on topics such as understanding global influences and rapid change, building a strategic plan, and the new technologies of Industry 4.0, NGen will introduce world-class practices and invite participants to benchmark your company (anonymously) vs. world-class manufacturers.

### **HR Strategies for Saskatchewan Employers**

**Kevin Elder, Food Processing Skills Canada**

This interactive workshop will introduce attendees to essential hiring resources, tools to navigate immigration pathways, and provide an update of Saskatchewan's current labour force. This session will be of benefit for small and medium companies with or without dedicated HR personnel. Attendees will take part in interactive table discussions to highlight their key challenges and find out where solutions may exist.





## Organizing Committee

Ernest Heapy, Prairies Economic Development Canada  
David Rorstad, Prairies Economic Development Canada  
Amanda Sampson, Innovation Saskatchewan  
Matthew Hayduk, Innovation Saskatchewan  
Justin Redekop, Ministry of Trade and Export Development  
Ron Kehrig, Ministry of Trade and Export Development  
Leslie Geddie, Ministry of Agriculture  
Giovanni Wright, Ministry of Agriculture  
Ward Read, Ministry of Agriculture  
Ron Monette, Ministry of Agriculture  
Godwin Pon, Ministry of Agriculture  
Chase Dobson, Ministry of Agriculture  
Amy Carruthers, Ag-West Bio  
Joanne Baczuk, Prairie Food Link

**Thank you to our organizers and sponsors:**



Prairies Economic  
Development Canada

Développement économique  
Canada pour les Prairies



For further information or to leave a suggestion for next year's event, please visit  
[www.SaskAgriValue.com](http://www.SaskAgriValue.com)









## Mario Ubiali

*Thimus, Brescia, Italy*

Founder and CEO of Thimus, Mario is an entrepreneur who has over 20 years of experience in innovative companies, globally scaling from startup to SME.

He created Thimus in 2016 and has brought to this venture his passion for innovation, the desire to impact the future of food systems and a love for the intersection between cultural studies and hard science.

Today, Thimus is increasingly becoming a recognized force in food tech through T-Box: a portable, robust, and scalable SAAS platform which measures the electrical activity of the brain and therefore the neurophysiological response to the experience. (Also featured in Netflix's recent docuseries You Are What You Eat).



## David Swintosky

*Dunning Capital, Raleigh, NC*

David has 17 years of professional experience in providing business and financial consulting services. His background includes mergers and acquisitions, capital advisory services, initial public offerings and secondary offerings of debt and equity, private debt and equity transactions, restructuring, corporate development, business strategy, financial audits, and internal financial controls evaluation.

Prior to forming Dunning Capital, David operated a financial consulting practice, worked in the Corporate Finance and the Entrepreneurial Services Groups of Ernst & Young LLC in Raleigh, NC, and held positions with Price Waterhouse, LLP and Concours, Inc., both located in Milwaukee, WI.

David holds a BBA in Finance and Accounting from Wisconsin State University at Oshkosh. He is a member of the Turnaround Management Association, Association for Corporate Growth, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and the NC Association of CPAs. In 2006, David was recognized as one of the 40 most influential young business professionals in the Triangle market.





## Shannon Sears

*Bioriginal, Saskatoon, SK*

Shannon Sears is President & Chief Executive Officer of the Bioriginal Group of Companies. He joined the company in 2021 as the 106th employee in Saskatoon with 140 globally. Today Bioriginal employs over 300.

The Bioriginal Group operates eight manufacturing facilities located in four countries on two continents supported by 19 warehouses around the globe. Saskatoon is its headquarters with regional offices in California (US), Rotterdam (NL) and Yokohama (JP).

A native Nova Scotian, Shannon graduated from Saint Francis Xavier University before starting a career in manufacturing. His career included General Manager of one of the world's largest manufacturers of locomotive batteries, and founder of Stenek Corporation which grew to be Canada's leading distributor of general merchandise supplying National Grocery and Pharmacy Retailers.

Shannon also serves on the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre in Saskatoon.



## Austin Calladine

*Sweet Nutrition, Saskatoon, SK*

As the Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer of Sweet Nutrition, Austin has played a pivotal role in shaping the company's identity and market presence since its inception. With a passion for nutrition and a keen understanding of consumer preferences, Austin has been instrumental in driving Sweet Nutrition's growth trajectory, turning it into a household name in the health-conscious community.

Sweet Nutrition is a pioneering force in the realm of guilt-free indulgence. For nearly six years, we've been on a mission to redefine the way people snack, offering a delicious alternative to traditional treats without compromising on taste or quality.

Based in the heart of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Sweet Nutrition has become synonymous with wholesome ingredients, innovative recipes, and a commitment to healthier living.





## Elyce Simpson Fraser

*Simpson Seeds, Moose Jaw, SK*

Elyce attended College and University in Lethbridge where she obtained her Marketing Diploma.

She joined the company in 2004 after working in the Agriculture Canada Soft Wheat breeding program. She is also part of the third generation of family members working in the company.

She successfully transitioned to the role of CEO in July 2021 after the family completed succession planning of the family business which specialized in pulse exports and is expanding into pulse ingredients.



## Jennifer Stelzer

*Prairies Economic Development Canada, Saskatoon, SK*

Jennifer Stelzer is the Director of Policy, Strategy and Analytics for Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan), where she works as part of the PrairiesCan leadership team to maximize opportunities in the Prairie economy. Prior to assuming this role in 2022, Jennifer was the Manager of Innovation, holding investment-focused roles at PrairiesCan (and Western Economic Diversification) since 2008.

Jennifer is a career Government of Canada public servant, having worked for four diverse departments over the last 26 years including Canada Revenue Agency, the Correctional Service of Canada and Service Canada in human resources and social funding program roles. Jennifer truly enjoys informing and leveraging federal government tools to support Saskatchewan industry and community partners to stimulate economic growth here on the Prairies. A good day is one where she can walk away knowing that she's helped make a difference for Saskatchewan businesses and people. Born and raised on a grain farm in Dodsland, Saskatchewan, she is keenly aware of the need to build on our backbone industries to create value added opportunities in all areas of the province.





## Kallie Wood

*National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food (NCIAF), Regina, SK*

Kallie Wood is the President and CEO of NCIAF and is a proud member of Carry the Kettle Nakoda Nation located on Treaty Four Territory in Saskatchewan. Kallie was formerly the Senior Indigenous Advisor for the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Saskatchewan.

She holds a Master of Leadership and Management studies degree and is a life-long learner with 35-years of experience in leadership roles with experience in organizational change, strategic planning, and program delivery with extensive experience in relationship building, reconciliation, and education. Kallie also sits on several Board of Governors across the nation, sharing a voice for Indigenous engagement and building relationships.

Kallie is excited about the journey in supporting First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples in sustainable agriculture and food opportunities through listening, learning, and implementing change. She has received numerous awards for her time commitment to reconciliation, most recently awarded as one of the 22 most empowered and influential women internationally in 2023. She is a recognized and sought after keynote speaker and Indigenous Advisor on Indigenous issues.



## AJ Bird

*Tatanka Oyate Holdings, Wahpeton Dakota Nation, SK*

AJ is a climate solutions entrepreneur in biogas (landfill and anaerobic digesters), modular clean water technology, clean energy finance for Indigenous projects, IoT (the Internet of Things) for energy measurement, and nature based carbon projects with expertise in Indigenous partnerships and voluntary carbon offsets. She is a former Toronto Police Officer who dovetailed her hostage negotiator training into formal executive business negotiation certificates along

with a decisive manner to identify and harness the win-win for business opportunities and partnerships. She is frequently asked to present on Indigenous partnerships and benefits in the carbon sector in Canada and also at the international level.

AJ is a Treaty 8 Indian and a member of the Deninu K'ue First Nation from the Northwest Territories. Her role as the Chief Hunter and Vice President of Business Development for Tatanka Oyate Holdings, a wholly owned Wahpeton Dakota Nation corporation, is embraced as she goes out to hunt for opportunities for the nation's benefit and prosperity with a particular emphasis on the climate solutions sector.





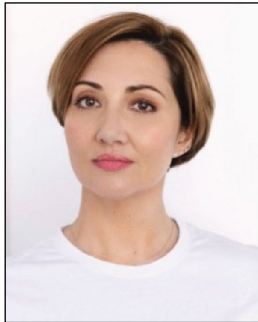
## Jamie Bakos

*Titan Clean Energy Projects, Craik, SK*

Jamie Bakos is an Environmental Engineer and specialist in clean technology. He has provided leadership in delivering clean technology projects in Canada and internationally for more than 25 years.

A native of Saskatoon, Jamie is committed to promoting the sustainable use of agricultural waste residues and urban waste biomass in renewable energy and bio-products applications.

Jamie co-founded Titan Clean Energy Projects in 2008, and is responsible for corporate communications, business development, and corporate strategy.



## Christine Gould

*Thought for Food, Basel, Switzerland*

Christine Gould is the founder of Thought For Food, a globally-recognized agri-food innovation movement and community that spans 180+ countries; has incubated and accelerated 100+ science-and-technology-based startups which have gone on to raise over \$300 million in venture capital; and has worked extensively with organizations that include the United Nations, the Rockefeller Foundation, Cargill, Google, and DHL, among many others.

In her previous roles, Christine led external affairs, public policy, and corporate affairs functions for a leading multinational (Syngenta), unicorn-level startups (Indigo Ag), fast-growing scale-ups (Cibo, Invaio), think tanks (Pew Initiative on Food & Biotechnology) and industry associations (CropLife International).

She helped to design and establish the world's first open-licensing platform for patented vegetable traits while working at Syngenta, which eventually led to a shift in the sharing and use of beneficial intellectual property assets across the plant breeding industry.

Her work has been featured in MIT Tech Review, BBC, and The Economist - and Forbes recently named her as one of the "Top 10 Women in Synthetic Biology for Food."

Christine is the author of "The Change-makers Guide to Feeding the Planet," the producer of two feature-length docu-films about next-gen agri-food-tech solutions, and has spearheaded global events on five continents that have earned awards for sustainability and impact from the United Nations Environment Programmer and Fast Company.









## Derrick Swanson

*OpenSail, Saskatoon, SK*

Since founding OpenSail in 2014, Derrick has made it his mission to assemble a team of the best digital marketers the world has to offer - recruiting only those who have what it takes to constantly compete on their clients' behalf.

Derrick is committed to fostering a company culture and in-house standard of excellence, which leads his team to success after success. As a result of their dedication to excellence, OpenSail has helped companies expand and scale their operations across Canada, North America, and into Europe.



## Kevin Elder

*Food Processing Skills Canada, Ottawa, ON*

Kevin Elder is Project Manager, Labour Market Information, Food Processing Skills Canada. He joined Food Processing Skills Canada in 2017.

Kevin studied International Development at the University of Calgary and went on to live and work all over the globe. His introduction to food and beverage processing was working as a Vapour Heat Treatment Facility Manager at a mango plant in Australia.

Kevin is a big sports fan. He grew up in Alberta and California but spent a lot of time in Saskatchewan and learned to water ski on Buffalo Pound Lake. He lives in Ottawa with his wife and son.

***Thank you to our workshop partners!***



## Looking for assistance with your value-added product?

Contact the Government of Saskatchewan  
Ministry of Agriculture, Value-Added Unit

3085 Albert Street, Regina  
3830 Thatcher Ave, Saskatoon

Email inquiries: [agrivalue@gov.sk.ca](mailto:agrivalue@gov.sk.ca)

The **Government of Saskatchewan** prioritizes enabling economic growth and diversification in the province's added-value agriculture sector, and co-ordinates these efforts in several ways.

The Ministry of Agriculture's Value-Added Unit works to advance this sector in collaboration with industry, other ministries and stakeholders. It provides a range of services, such as:

- Assisting existing and new agri-businesses with business competitiveness issues, including path-finding for infrastructure challenges;
- Assisting companies with market development issues and access to ministry programming, such as the Product Development Program and Saskatchewan Lean Improvements in Manufacturing (SLIM);
- Connecting agri-value businesses to Saskatchewan's research sector;
- Making connections with other agri-businesses and potential investors;
- Taking a collaborative approach in advancing international interests in Saskatchewan's value-added sector; and
- Providing industry insight.

The unit is focused on supporting sector competitiveness, research and research commercialization, investment attraction, and trade and market development. It collaborates closely with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Trade and Export Development (TED) to enable new or increased investment and fostering trade to increase exports.

The strategic goals of TED are to increase the value of Saskatchewan's exports by promoting and developing opportunities for its exporters, to increase private capital investment in Saskatchewan by connecting investors with opportunities, and to establish the province as "The Place to Do Business" within Canada and around the world by enhancing and promoting Saskatchewan's competitive advantage.

TED is focused on supporting economic growth to generate wealth and opportunity in Saskatchewan. The ministry is responsible for:

- Facilitating a co-ordinated cross-government approach to attract investment and grow export markets, and leading foreign investment attraction efforts in value-added agriculture;
- Fostering and supporting a competitive business environment;
- Facilitating trade; and
- Strengthening Saskatchewan's international relations.



**Ag-West Bio** is Saskatchewan's bioscience industry association. The company works as a catalyst for developing partnerships and industry growth in the bioeconomy through investments, aiding strategic alliances, and providing business planning support, regulatory advice, and communications. Funding for Ag-West Bio by the Government of Canada and Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

**Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan)** is the federal department that works to diversify the economy across the Canadian Prairies. PrairiesCan leads in building a strong, competitive Canadian economy by supporting business, innovation and community economic development unique to Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.

**Innovation Saskatchewan** is the Government of Saskatchewan's operating agency responsible for implementing the province's innovation priorities. Its primary responsibilities are to:

- Manage and administer the government's research funding contracts with the province's post-secondary institutions and research organizations;
- Support the growing advanced technology sector in Saskatchewan;
- Engage with industry, researchers, universities, entrepreneurs and other government ministries to co-ordinate and promote economic growth through innovation and commercialization of new technologies.
- Provide recommendations and advise the provincial government regarding its policies and direction in the areas of research and development, science and technology; and
- To create, encourage, and facilitate business opportunities in the Saskatchewan technology sector through the development and operation of technology parks, making Saskatchewan a destination hub for research and innovation activity.

