



## Global Agri-Food Advancement Partnership launched to support agri-food start-up companies

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*Saskatoon, Saskatchewan:* Saskatchewan agri-value start-ups have a new support system to help them succeed: the Global Agri-Food Advancement Partnership (GAAP) is beginning its work of assisting start-ups and growing the agri-food industry in Western Canada.

The partnership came about because the founding partners – Ag-West Bio, the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) at the University of Saskatchewan, Innovation Place and the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre (Food Centre) – recognized that there was a gap in the innovation pipeline.

Almost all the elements were already in place in the region to create a world-class agri-food innovation cluster, but agri-food start-ups have unique challenges: along with the usual issues faced by most start-ups, they often need highly specialized equipment and staff, have high upfront costs, and face a long road to market entry and revenue generation. This is where the GAAP fits.

Interim CEO, Jay Robinson, believes the GAAP is unique. “We have not found another organization that provides what we are proposing. GAAP is not just an accelerator; it is not just funding, and it is not just an incubator. It is a combination of all these things, and more.”

The GAAP targets two types of companies:

- Early-stage companies working on promising, disruptive technologies in the early stages of development (post proof of concept) with application in agriculture, food, or food processing.
- Domestic and international clients looking to establish a presence in Western Canada will find a soft-landing at the GAAP. It will allow them to access the North American marketplace with lower entry costs, reduced capital expenditure, tailored concierge services, and an expedited path to market.

Companies within this new partnership can enjoy the following benefits:

- **Access to GAAP facilities for up to 3 to 4 years.** This includes greenhouses, laboratories and offices at Innovation Place, GIFS’ Omics and Precision Agriculture Laboratory (OPAL) to support plant breeding, post-harvest technologies, and drone, imaging and sensor technologies, and the Food Centre’s expertise and incubation suites.
- **Access to significant investment** from GAAP (upwards of \$1M with support from partners) to qualifying companies, to allow them to focus on technology progression and market adoption.
- **Access to commercial-volume scale-up opportunities** for early-stage and rapid growth stage companies as they encounter the hurdles of mass production, or the daunting task of financing their own build.
- **Access to mentorship** from experts in business development, regulatory pathway, product development, fundraising, marketing, logistics, exporting, and more. Entrepreneurs can also access training on specialized equipment. All this will help companies avoid costly mistakes, expediting the path to market and lowering capital requirements.

GAAP is pleased to be working with investors from the private industry and is ecstatic regarding the recently announced support of \$1.5 million from Prairies Economic Development Canada.

GAAP will attract new talent, create new jobs, and increase international partnerships. A stronger ecosystem will support start-up companies as they develop tools to tackle global challenges of our day, such as food security and climate change.

**GAAP founding partners quotes:**

“The GAAP will draw on the expertise in the agri-food community – and the extensive network that those experts have developed across the country and around the globe – to support a whole new generation of agri-food companies in Saskatchewan.”

- *Karen Churchill (PhD), President and CEO, Ag-West Bio Inc.*

“The collaborative partners that are involved in GAAP are uniquely positioned to provide the right resources for start-ups and create a clearer pathway to commercialization success. At the Food Centre, our strong capabilities in transforming ingredients to a CPG [Consumer Packaged Goods] product will be a key factor in this pathway.”

- *Dan Prefontaine, President, Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc.*

“The GAAP partnership recognizes the opportunity that innovation in agriculture offers global economies and is committed to seeing Canada lead the world in advancing agtech by addressing real structural challenges in agriculture and food. We are ready to work with diverse stakeholders across Canada’s economy because agriculture is one sector that has the capacity to address various global challenges including food security and climate change, on a massive scale.”

- *Steven Webb (PhD), CEO, Global Institute for Food Security.*

“Innovation Place is extremely proud to be a founding partner of GAAP, serving as an excellent example of how we can leverage our specialized infrastructure and unique environment to act as a bridge between academia, industry and government.”

- *Brent Sukenik, Acting President and CEO, Innovation Place*

Following page: About GAAP’s founding partners

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*About the Founding Partners:*

**Ag-West Bio** is Saskatchewan's bioscience industry association. A catalyst for industry growth, the company's goal is to move research to market and grow biobusiness in the province. Ag-West Bio supports commercialization of technologies in the areas of sustainable crop production, value-added food processing, health, environment and bioproducts. The company aids strategic alliances, provides support for early-stage businesses, disseminates industry information, and hosts events to create connections and build community. Ag-West Bio is a not-for-profit, member-based organization. Funding is provided by the Government of Canada and Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP). [agwest.sk.ca](http://agwest.sk.ca)

**The Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc. (Food Centre)** is recognized globally as a key innovator in the food industry. The Food Centre works with local and international agri-businesses in ideation, prototyping and manufacturing of food and beverage products, specializing in the utilization of plant-based protein. The Centre's expertise in product development, novel ingredient validation and application, extrusion and processing provides a one-stop-shop for industry to transform ingredients to innovative commercial products. [foodcentre.sk.ca](http://foodcentre.sk.ca)

**The Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS)** works with partners to discover, develop and deliver innovative solutions for the production of globally sustainable food. Founded by Nutrien, the Government of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan (USask), GIFS is agriculture's innovation catalyst, connecting the agri-food ecosystem, advancing innovation and bridging the gap to commercialization to deliver resilient and sustainable food security for all stakeholders. [gifs.ca](http://gifs.ca)

**Innovation Place** operates world-class technology parks adjacent to the universities in Saskatoon and Regina. By providing a supportive environment for start-ups and early-stage tech companies, we help grow Saskatchewan's vibrant tech sector. Our collaborative community helps emerging and established tech companies thrive through flexible space and supportive partnerships. We are home to some of the most innovative companies in the country, with close to 150 tenants choosing to build and grow at our parks. [innovationplace.com](http://innovationplace.com)