
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Food Business Refresh Program helps Kelowna small business adapt

KELOWNA – Small B.C. food businesses are accessing customized training, coaching, business planning and implementation support through the Food Business Refresh Program, and the results are being served in Kelowna.

Queen B Kettle Korn is a family-owned popcorn company based in Kelowna that started in 2002. Its products are crafted using non-genetically modified organism (GMO) popcorn and gluten-free ingredients, which can be found in many grocery stores, retailers and at markets throughout B.C. For Johanna Faccini and her family, COVID-19 presented a series of new challenges that forced their small business to adapt.

“For years, I’ve been making celebration-worthy popcorn with quality ingredients and selling it year-round in several Okanagan stores, and through hotels and fruit stands in the summer,” Faccini said. “In 2019, I moved into a shared space with a non-competing food processor who had to close due to the pandemic. Sales dropped due to the COVID-19 market impact, and now being the lone tenant, it got overwhelming trying to decide the best way to stay in business.”

In partnership with the Small-Scale Food Processing Association and Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Food Business Refresh Program is a \$650,000 cost-shared program helping local businesses find new opportunities and pivot from markets disrupted by COVID-19. Launched in October 2020, the program helps participants access mentorship services like business coaching and food industry expertise, along with implementation support to help small businesses adapt to the changing conditions of the pandemic.

“The Refresh Program coaches, information, expert advice and resources are exceptional,” Faccini said. “The program helped me identify my strengths and understand how I can take advantage of my installed capacity, brand and market trends to increase sales. To accomplish this, I learned that I need to develop a marketing strategy and promotional materials to increase visibility. This will help lead to more sales locally and assist in attracting distributors and wholesalers outside the Okanagan Valley.”

Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, said, “Throughout the pandemic, farmers, fishers and food and beverage processors have shown incredible resilience by adapting their businesses to keep communities fed, employed and safe. I’m proud of the local success stories we’re seeing through the Food Business Refresh Program as businesses develop new ways for people to enjoy made-in-B.C. food that helps strengthen our food security and our local economies.”

This funding is part of B.C.’s \$10-billion COVID-19 response, which includes StrongerBC: BC’s Economic Recovery Plan that protects people’s health and livelihoods while supporting

businesses and communities.

Quick Facts:

- Since the program launched in October 2020, more than 70 small businesses have benefited from the Refresh Program.
- The Province has invested approximately \$550,000 through the Food Business Refresh Program to strengthen small businesses in B.C., with an additional \$100,000 provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada.
- B.C.'s food and beverage processing industry has almost 3,000 establishments and is the second-largest manufacturing sector in the province.
- In 2019, sales were up \$700 million to a record \$10.5 billion.
- In 2019, there were 35,700 food and beverage processing jobs in B.C.

Learn More:

For more information about Queen B Kettle Korn, visit: <http://queenbpopcorn.ca>

For more information about the Food Business Refresh Program, visit: <https://www.foodbusinessrefresh.ca/>

For more information about StrongerBC, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/>

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