

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **NEW REPORT CALLS FOR CRITICAL SUPPORT IN CANADA'S AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY**

*Nanaimo, BC, March 28, 2025* — Small Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA) has released its Scale Up Report, highlighting critical gaps in resources for Canada's agri-food industry. In the wake of new U.S. tariffs on Canadian goods, small food and beverage businesses face increasing challenges and need stronger regional infrastructure to succeed.

"Food processors already juggle slim margins, complex regulatory requirements, and interprovincial trade barriers - tariffs add an extra layer of uncertainty," says Candice Appleby, SSFPA's Executive Director.

The Scale Up Report stems from SSFPA's Scale Up Support Program, a 2022 training initiative designed to identify gaps in existing programs and services for small-scale food processors. Key challenges identified by participants included access to funding, scaling production, and regulatory compliance.

"Many small food business owners struggle to find time to network, build industry connections, or develop the financial and operational skills needed to scale," says Stephen Evans, SSFPA's *Venture-Capital Ready* Interim Program Manager.

"Understanding topics like finance, exporting, and food safety can be overwhelming, especially for those learning on their own."

To address these challenges, SSFPA has identified ten crucial infrastructure improvements that must be made to adequately support small food businesses:

1. Centralized funding platform.
2. Equipment acquisition grants.
3. Financial literacy education.
4. Food science programs.
5. Sales and marketing training.
6. Food safety education.
7. Cost reduction programs.
8. Export assistance resources.
9. Labour attraction and retention.
10. Co-packing assistance training.

While federal support is vital to improve infrastructure, SSFPA isn't waiting to take action. This spring, they will launch their *Agrifood Enterprise Management System (AEMS)*—a groundbreaking platform designed to streamline food business operations.

"AEMS is set to revolutionize food business management," says Evans. "It combines smart software with interactive resources and expert connections to provide comprehensive business support, whether you're just starting out or scaling up." AEMS includes an Interactive Food Business Planner, Food Production Planner, Food Safety Planner, Inventory Management, Food Business Management, and Resource Library.

With AEMS, SSFPA is committed to empowering small food processors and ensuring they have the tools needed to thrive in an evolving industry. The organization will continue its work to strengthen the sector and advocate for critical support in the months ahead.

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*Since 2002, Small Scale Food Processor Association has championed small and medium-sized food processors in Canada. We support entrepreneurs starting and scaling their businesses, and ensure our members have the tools and resources they need to thrive in a competitive global market. For more information on SSFPA membership and access to AEMS, please visit <https://ssfpa.net/>*