



## Schedule "B"

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### Board President Report

Submitted by Carmen Wakeling

This past year has been a year of change, not only for SSFPA, but for the small-scale food processors we serve across Canada.

As food entrepreneurs, we know that change is rarely easy. Rising costs, evolving regulations, workforce challenges, and access to capital continue to test the resilience of businesses at every stage of growth. Yet time and again, I am inspired by the creativity, determination, and perseverance of the entrepreneurs who keep moving forward despite these challenges.

As both a food processor and the Board President, I understand the realities of building a business in this sector. I also understand the value of having a community that understands those realities. Associations like the SSFPA play an important role because they bring people together. They create opportunities to learn from one another, share experiences, access resources, and build connections that would be difficult to create alone.

One of the strongest lessons this year has reinforced is that success is rarely achieved in isolation. It comes through collaboration, partnerships, mentorship, and a willingness to support one another. Whether through our programs, events, advocacy efforts, or the relationships formed between members, SSFPA continues to foster a community where businesses can grow stronger together.

This year, we continued investing in practical resources for entrepreneurs while also laying important groundwork for the future. We strengthened partnerships, expanded opportunities for businesses seeking growth capital, celebrated member achievements, and continued elevating the voices of small-scale food processors in conversations that matter.

Canada's food system depends on more than farms and grocery stores. Between those two points are thousands of entrepreneurs transforming ingredients into products that nourish communities, create jobs, drive innovation, and strengthen local economies. Their contribution is significant, and their voices deserve to be heard.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to our members, partners, volunteers, and supporters for being part of this work. Most importantly, thank you to the entrepreneurs who show up every day to build businesses that feed their communities and contribute to Canada's food future.

You are not alone. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected, and more resilient sector.