



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOOD FORWARD 2026 Launches Three-City National Summit Series Connecting Canada's Food, Agriculture, Ocean and Innovation Leaders

St. John's, Ottawa and Mississauga gatherings will connect industry, government, producers, investors, researchers and communities around innovation, trade, commercialization and stronger food systems.

MISSISSAUGA, ON — September 14, 2026 — As Canada navigates growing pressures and opportunities across food security, trade, technology, climate resilience and global competitiveness, **FOOD FORWARD 2026** will convene leaders from across the country through a three-city national summit series this fall.

The 2026 circuit begins with **FOOD FORWARD Atlantic in St. John's on September 23**, followed by **FOOD FORWARD on the Hill at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on October 6**, and culminates with the flagship **FOOD FORWARD Summit at The International Centre in Mississauga on October 8**.

FOOD FORWARD connects leaders across **agriculture, aquaculture, food and beverage, agribusiness, technology, oceans, investment, research, government and community organizations** — bringing together parts of the food system that do not always share the same room.

"Our food system is deeply interconnected, but the conversations shaping it are often fragmented," said **Mehnaz Tabassum, CEO of FOOD FORWARD and NL Eats Community Outreach Inc.** "FOOD FORWARD was built to bridge those gaps — connecting producers with innovators, research with commercialization, policy with industry, and Canadian ideas with new markets and opportunities. The goal is not

simply to have another conversation about the future of food, but to create the relationships that help move it forward.”

From Atlantic Innovation to National Competitiveness

FOOD FORWARD Atlantic, held in partnership with **Canada’s Ocean Supercluster**, will bring together leaders across Atlantic Canada’s agriculture, aquaculture, innovation and supply-chain ecosystem, with a focus on export readiness, green and blue economy partnerships and new market development.

In Ottawa, **FOOD FORWARD on the Hill**, in partnership with the **Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI)** and the **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)**, will convene senior public- and private-sector leaders for an invitation-only gathering focused on aligning food-system innovation with Canada’s global priorities and strengthening market competitiveness.

The series culminates in Mississauga with FOOD FORWARD’s flagship national summit, featuring **keynotes, workshops, the Innovation Expo, startup programming and opportunities for B2B connection and collaboration.**

Across the series, discussions will examine issues shaping Canada’s food economy — including **artificial intelligence, food security, agriculture and aquaculture innovation, Indigenous food sovereignty, global trade, investment, commercialization, supply chains and climate resilience.**

Moving Beyond Conversation

FOOD FORWARD is designed around a simple premise: the future of Canada’s food system will depend not only on new ideas, but on the ability to connect those ideas with the **people, capital, markets, policy and partnerships needed to put them into action.**

The platform brings producers and entrepreneurs alongside corporations, investors, policymakers, researchers, buyers, community leaders and international delegates — creating opportunities to move from discussion toward partnerships, pilots, market access and commercialization.

FOOD FORWARD is co-organized by **NL Eats Community Outreach Inc & CogniCo AI Consulting.**, extending a broader commitment to building more connected, innovative and accessible food systems.

MEDIA INVITATION

Journalists and media organizations are invited to attend and cover FOOD FORWARD 2026.

Interview opportunities are available with speakers, industry leaders, producers, innovators, researchers, investors and participating organizations across the three-city series.

FOOD FORWARD Atlantic

September 23, 2026 | Holiday Inn St. John's Conference Centre, St. John's, NL

FOOD FORWARD on the Hill

October 6, 2026 | National Arts Centre, Ottawa, ON

FOOD FORWARD Summit

October 8, 2026 | The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga, ON

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