

Strengthening Atlantic Canada's plant-based food and ingredient ecosystem

Charlottetown, P.E.I. —Today, Protein Industries Canada announced a new project to grow the plant-based foods ecosystem in Atlantic Canada. The project will see the Eastern Canada Oilseed Development Alliance (ECODA) work with Dalhousie University and the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) to explore and quantify the value of plant-protein food and ingredients in the Atlantic Region, while also increasing awareness about the sector.

“The government firmly believes in Canada’s plant-based food and ingredient ecosystem,” said the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. “Through the Protein Industries Supercluster, we are supporting projects from coast to coast to coast, and by partnering with ECODA, Dalhousie University and UPEI for this project, we will help the industry grow and prosper in Atlantic Canada for years to come.”

“As Canadians and people around the world start eating more plant-based foods and ingredients, our Government is supporting this fast-growing industry in the Atlantic region to harness the global potential. With this project, we will see expansion of opportunities for plant-based crops and ingredients while helping to create a strong industry across Canada,” said the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Plant-based food and ingredients is one of the largest growth sectors that global agriculture has experienced in the last decade. The global market demand is projected to reach \$250 billion CDN by 2035. Protein Industries Canada, along with the national ecosystem, have developed a plan for Canada to have the sector valued at \$25 billion by 2035. This project is key to developing a strong national sector by developing regional ecosystems and connecting them to the larger industry.

“When people think about plant protein, their first thoughts is usually the Prairies – with images of fields of canola, wheat, peas and lentils,” CEO of Protein Industries Canada Bill Greuel said. “But Canada’s agrifood sector is truly national in scope – from the farmers and ingredient processors in the Prairies, to the food manufacturers in British Columbia, Ontario and Québec. Now with this project, we are strengthening the plant-based ecosystem of Atlantic Canada – connecting the value chain from coast-to-coast, and further strengthening Canada’s position as a global leader in plant-based food and ingredients.”

The \$350,000 project will lay the groundwork for the future development of the Atlantic sector, by focusing on opportunities to increase economic return, improve diversity and sustainability, and increase the production of plant-based crops and ingredient processing in Atlantic Canada. The project partners will work with communities and businesses, including Indigenous-led, to determine challenges in the plant-protein sector and build networks in the supply chain, leading to an increased understanding of value-added opportunities for the plant-protein ecosystem coast-to-coast. The project will do this through three main areas of work: asset mapping, value chain analysis and food system literacy and awareness about careers in agri-food. This foundational work will lead to increased production, processing, and adding value to pulses, oilseeds, and grains in the Atlantic region, and further exploration into plant-protein value chain opportunities.

“Over the past decade, ECODA has served an important role in convening partnerships among academic institutions, researchers, and industry to enhance innovation in agricultural crop supply chains,” said

Rory Francis, ECODA President. “This project will identify and align regional partners that are essential to accelerating economic impact for plant protein production and added-value in Atlantic Canada.”

“We will need all our bright minds working together to drive success in addressing the global demand for food security and plant-based proteins,” said David Gray, Faculty of Agriculture at Dalhousie University’s Dean and Campus Principal. “This collaboration with Protein Industries Canada, ECODA and with our colleagues at UPEI will go a long way to fortify our plant-based ecosystem in Atlantic Canada.”

“The University of Prince Edward Island is pleased to contribute to the development of the plant-based protein sector in Atlantic Canada,” said Dr. Kathy Gottschall-Pass, University of Prince Edward Island’s Interim Vice-President Academic and Research. “With the ongoing growth in the world’s population, access to sustainable sources of high-quality protein is essential, and expansion of the sector in this region will further strengthen that access.”

Protein Industries Canada is one of Canada’s five innovation Superclusters. As an industry-led organization, Protein Industries Canada works to position Canada as a global source of high-quality plant-based food, feed and ingredients. Over the past three years, Protein Industries Canada has co-invested into 40 projects with more than \$451 million committed to advancing Canada’s plant-based foods sector through investment into projects focused on research and development of new plant-based ingredients and food and to build capacity within the ecosystem. This is Protein Industries Canada’s first co-investment into Atlantic Canada.

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About Eastern Canada Oilseed Development Alliance (ECODA)

Established in 2009, the Eastern Canada Oilseeds Development Alliance (ECODA) is a private, non-profit based in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. By facilitating oilseed supply chain partnerships to drive innovation, manage risk, and capitalize on economic value, ECODA benefits oilseed growers, processors, and exporters in Eastern Canada. This work contributes to Canada’s ability to maintain and strengthen our global market share for soybeans, canola, other oilseeds and related plant protein, oils, and value-added products.

About Dalhousie University

At the core of Dalhousie’s research and innovation are world-leading researchers working in labs, studios and in the field. Building on our legacy of ground-breaking research and outstanding scholarship,

we are focused on providing a unique, interactive and collaborative environment that supports our researchers to achieve excellence.

About the University of Prince Edward Island

The University of Prince Edward Island is committed to assisting students reach their full potential in both the classroom and community. With an excellent reputation for academic excellence and research innovation, UPEI offers a wide range of programs and degrees to undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. Home to Canada Research Chairs, a UNESCO Chair, endowed and sponsored research chairs, and 3M National Teaching Fellows, UPEI offers its students access to exceptional faculty, researchers, and staff. Students come from local, regional, national, and international locations to study and learn at UPEI, the only degree-granting institution in the province. UPEI is proud to be a key contributor to the growth and prosperity of Prince Edward Island, the Atlantic region, and Canada.