

Ontario Growing Agri-Food Sector in the North*Provincial investment will boost northern economy and food security***NEWS**

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SUDBURY – The Ontario government is providing more than \$1.8 million through the [Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation](#) (NOHFC) to 10 agri-food projects in the North. This investment will boost local food production, create jobs and stimulate expansion and diversification in the northern agri-food sector.

“The agri-food industry continues to have a crucial role in supporting the health and prosperity of our northern communities,” said Greg Rickford, Minister of Northern Development. “Our government is committed to expanding access to fresh, locally-produced food, and we are proud to help agri-food businesses become a cornerstone of the Northern Ontario economy.”

NOHFC funding will go to the following projects:

- \$645,400 for Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Association to install tile drainage on 1,168 acres, which will increase arable land and crop yields
- \$395,400 for Don Poulin Potatoes Inc. to boost their packing capacity, storage space and efficiency to meet the current market demand, help small farmers by providing warehouse access and supply larger markets in Sudbury
- \$200,000 for Marquee Farms to build a 3,200 sq. ft.- controlled environment agriculture facility in Sundridge and buy equipment to grow herbs and leafy greens sustainably year-round that will help address local demand and improve food safety, security and autonomy
- \$200,000 for Martin Agri Services to provide leading-edge equipment and field services currently unavailable on Manitoulin Island and improve on-farm production, efficiency and crop yield, while reducing the carbon footprint of the local agriculture sector
- \$193,638 to Borderlands Farm in Neebing to build the only wool mill of its kind in the North, construct a storage building and buy equipment to produce fresh lamb, wool products and garlic year-round
- \$131,130 to Milford Bay Trout Farm Inc. to build a new processing facility in Parry Sound, with equipment that will increase production capacity to meet high demand, supply new markets and develop unique smoked trout products

- \$30,130 for Lely Center Temiskaming – a robotic farming equipment retailer – to build their own facility and workshop for parts and repairs
- \$20,082 for Sweet North Bakery in Thunder Bay to expand production capacity by purchasing new equipment and renovating a newly leased property
- \$15,000 for Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance (NOFIA) to support the Northern Ontario Ag Conference 2023 in Sudbury
- \$11,709 for Eat The Fish – a wild-caught fish processor in Shuniah – for new equipment and interior upgrades that will expand efficiency and processing volume through automation.

“Northern Ontario’s economy has benefitted mining and forestry and we are proactively seeking out opportunities to bring agriculture back as an economic driver as well,” said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. “Strategic investments such as these will help the agri-food sector strengthen its roots in the North. This is just one of many actions our government has taken to expand our sector’s opportunities to grow, innovate and find new markets.”

The NOHFC promotes economic prosperity across Northern Ontario by providing financial assistance to projects—big and small, rural and urban—that stimulate growth, job creation and skills development. Since June 2018, the NOHFC has invested more than \$608 million in 5,070 projects in Northern Ontario, leveraging more than \$1.93 billion in investment and creating or sustaining over 8,100 jobs.

Quick Facts

- In 2021, the Ontario government launched [new and improved NOHFC programs](#) that support more projects in rural northern communities and make it easier for more people and businesses to apply. The programs target existing and emerging markets, provide more work opportunities for Indigenous people and address the skilled labour shortage in the North.

Additional Resources

- The [NOHFC](#), [Northern Development Offices](#) and [Small Business Enterprise Centres](#) are available to support northern communities, businesses and other stakeholders in identifying economic development opportunities and assist in accessing government funding programs.

Quotes

“With NOHFC’s support, we can purchase the equipment and supplies needed to improve the viability and efficiency of our farm and launch a new wool venture that will enhance our sheep operation and provide a service to other farmers and

producers in Northwestern Ontario who currently have to ship their fibre out of the region for processing,” said Bryan Barlow of Borderlands Farm. “This initiative is only possible because of NOHFC’s funding, and we are grateful for their support to date.”

“NOHFC’s support is helping us purchase specialized equipment that will increase fish processing efficiency, refrigeration capacity, raw material utilization and fish processing volume,” said Paul Drombolis, Owner of Eat the Fish. “The automation of filleting operations will also allow more fish to be purchased from regional harvesters, which will improve our competitiveness, create jobs in processing and improve consumer access to regionally sourced wild fish.”

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