



**FOOD AND
BEVERAGE
ONTARIO**

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FOOD AND BEVERAGE ONTARIO IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESS

Year in Review

Advocacy. Impact. Results.

Highlighting Food and Beverage
Ontario's Success

May 2025

Welcome

The past year has tested the strength and resiliency of Ontario's food and beverage processing sector in profound ways.

The proposed U.S. tariffs, which dominated much of our collective attention, have underscored the critical importance of strong industry advocacy.

Our sector continues to demonstrate remarkable adaptability—whether through investing in new technologies, expanding into emerging markets, or developing more sustainable and efficient production practices. The creativity and determination of Ontario's food and beverage manufacturers reaffirm what we know to be true—we are a critical sector for Ontarians and we continue to rise above challenges.

Food and Beverage Ontario has worked tirelessly this year to ensure your voice was heard—whether at Queen's Park, in Ottawa or in Washington. Together, we have worked closely with government and industry partners on U.S. tariffs as well as to advance key priorities related to labour recruitment and retention, investment attraction and productivity, reducing the regulatory burden, and supply chain resilience. These efforts will help ensure a strong future for the industry.

This Year in Review highlights our achievements and outlines the path ahead. Thank you for your continued dedication and partnership. We look forward to building on this momentum as we navigate the year to come—stronger and united.



Michael Burrows

Chair | Food and Beverage Ontario



Chris Conway

CEO | Food and Beverage Ontario

Effective Advocacy

Co-Chairing the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Business & Trade Leadership Coalition

FBO's CEO Chris Conway co-chairs the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Business and Trade Leadership Coalition which unites leaders from key trade-dependent sectors to tackle the challenges posed by rising international protectionism and the threat of U.S. tariffs. In February, Chris Conway traveled to Washington as part of Premier Doug Ford's delegation.

The delegation participated in an event hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a reception at the Library of Congress, hosted by Senator Kevin Cramer, (Republican North Dakota) and also attended by provincial Premiers.



Photo Above : FBO's CEO Chris Conway and James Scongack, Executive Vice President of Bruce Power — Co-Chairs of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) — Ontario Business & Trade Leadership Coalition alongside Premier Doug Ford and OCC CEO Daniel Tisch. Photo taken in Washington, DC

Canada-US Relations Working Group

FBO is part of the Food and Beverage Canada (FBC) Canada-US Relations Working Group which meets weekly. FBO has significant overlap in membership with the FBC Board of Directors and is very engaged nationally on the U.S. tariffs file. The Working Group focuses on intelligence sharing, assessing the impact of potential tariffs on different sectors, and developing recommendations for federal and provincial governments to support industry competitiveness amid evolving trade dynamics with the U.S.

In January, FBO hosted an Investment Attraction and Productivity Stakeholder Consultation with over 100 members in attendance. FBC's CEO Kristina

Farrell and FBO's CEO Chris Conway provided introductory remarks. Thank you to FBO Director Doug Alexander for being the host and moderator and to our speakers who included Tom Rosser, ADM, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) as well as Ross Prusakowski, Deputy Chief Economist, Export Development Canada (EDC).

Among the topics discussed at the session were the potential impacts of U.S. tariffs. FBO met with AAFC ADM Rosser again the following day at a member processing facility to further discuss the potential impact of U.S. tariffs. In March, FBO held a webinar entitled, "Navigating Uncertainty: The Impact of US Tariffs on Ontario's Food & Beverage Industry."



The webinar featured FBO Director Doug Alexander and Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, and BDC's Chief Economist, Pierre Cl  roux provided an Economic Outlook—Trends and Insights for Food & Beverage Entrepreneurs. This session was followed by a discussion between FBO Director Doug Alexander and The Food Professor, Dr. Sylvain Charlebois entitled, "Trump Tariffs & Global Food Trade: The Art of the Meal Deal."



FBO works closely with Food and Beverage Canada (FBC) on issues of national importance. **Photo above :** FBC Board of Directors

Advocacy Priorities

While the tariffs file has been a top priority for FBO in recent months, we continue to work on other issues of importance to the sector. This includes calls to reduce the regulatory burden on our members. FBO also works very closely with Food and Beverage Canada on issues of national importance and is well-represented on the FBC Board of Directors.

- ✓ Continuing to monitor relevant labour disruptions and advocating for a rapid resolution alongside aligned industry groups such as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Food and Beverage Canada.
- ✓ Ministerial engagement on issues of relevance for the industry with Ontario Ministry Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development Minister David Piccini, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness Minister Trevor Jones and Premier Doug Ford.
- ✓ Advocating for changes to the federal Plastic Packaging proposals and requesting improvements to the Ontario Blue Box program including reducing regulatory burden, alignment with all levels of government, and lowering costs.
- ✓ Participating in the Ontario Pre-Budget Consultations. Our submission this year expressed concerns about the potential impact of U.S. tariffs, the need to address ongoing labour shortages, continued support for the Grow Ontario Plan which benefits our sector and finally ensuring we have supply chain stability, and an end to constant labour disruptions.
- ✓ Requesting a repeal of Greenwashing Provisions in Bill C-59 (Competition Act Amendments). In coordination with FBC, we are requesting changes to this legislation. As currently written, Bill C-59 will dissuade sustainability investments, penalize companies promoting government-aligned initiatives, and expose businesses to frivolous legal actions.
- ✓ Successful and ongoing advocacy on Bill 185 regarding buffer zones between new housing developments and existing food and beverage processing facilities.
- ✓ Extending the compliance deadline and adopting a discretionary enforcement period to focus on education rather than penalties for Front of Pack Labelling. These measures should be applied universally to ensure fairness and maintain competitiveness for businesses of all sizes.
- ✓ Requesting changes to the new Ontario Consumer Protection Act. The Act as currently written does not recognize the unique attributes of our sector as it pertains to consumers.
- ✓ Participating in consultations on the Ontario Immigration Nominee Program.
- ✓ Federal, Provincial, Territorial engagement through Food and Beverage Canada and OMAFA as well as in-person participation at the FPT meetings.
- ✓ Advocacy related to amendments on Regulation 440 for fruit and vegetable processing.

Events

- Food Plastics & Packaging Consultations
- Inclusive Leadership Forum
- Investment Attraction & Productivity Consultation
- Town Hall & Golf Tournament
- Member Holiday Social
- Export Roundtable
- Annual Conference



Listen to the Food and Beverage Processor Forum podcasts here.

Podcasts

- Advocacy 101: Empowering Ontario's Food and Beverage Processing Industry
- Cybersecurity in the Food and Beverage Processing Industry: Part 1
- Cybersecurity in the Food and Beverage Processing Industry: Part 2
- From Scurvy to Food Security: In Conversation with Doug Alexander and the Food Professor
- Navigating Uncertainty: The Impact of U.S. Tariffs on Ontario's Food & Beverage Industry
- How AI Vision Is Looking To Transform Food Manufacturing

Webinars

- Finding Alternative Suppliers in Response to New Tariff Realities
- Navigating Uncertainty: The Impact of US Tariffs on Ontario's Food & Beverage Industry with Sylvain Charlebois and Pierre Cleroux
- From Crisis to Opportunity: Overcoming 2025's F&B Manufacturing Challenges
- From Tariff Threats to Triumph: Mastering Amazon US for Canadian Food & Beverage
- Key markets for strategic trade diversification
- Running your business in 2025: Building resilience in a changing world
- Future-Proof Your Food Supply Chain: Key Strategies for Safety, Compliance & Traceability
- Cutting Wastewater Costs: Strategies for Reducing Surcharges and Boosting Efficiency
- Turn Demand Planning into Your Secret Weapon: Join Our Upcoming Webinar!
- Optimizing Shutdowns for Safety, Reliability, and Peak Performance
- Digital Transformation for Processors: Strategies for a Competitive Edge

- Making Things Work: Research and Innovation Supports for Manufacturers at Fanshawe College
- Membrane Retrofits To Reduce Wastewater Surcharges
- A new world: How the U.S. election could impact trade
- Top 3 Manufacturing KPIs for Food & Beverage Manufacturers
- International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) PLUS—Food & Feed
- Unlock tomorrow's business trends to fast-track your growth
- AI-Assisted Efficiency for Food & Beverage Processing and Distribution
- Unlock the potential of surplus food!
- Navigating interest rates to get your business thriving
- AG Energy Co-op Webinar: Natural Gas / Electricity Options to Help Reduce Your Energy Bills
- Enhancing Guidance for Food Allergen Management in Canada including a Risk-based Approach for the Application of Precautionary Allergen Labelling

CareersNOW! Jobseeker Participant Demographics

As of March 2025

62% newcomers	57.1% are < 29 years old	49.5% identify as women
39.5% identify as South Asian/East Indian	33.5% identify as a visible minority	32.4% identify as Black
5.9% indicate disability	4.2% identify as Indigenous	

As a result of participating in CareersNOW!

96.6% I have a better understanding of the importance of the food & beverage processing industry.

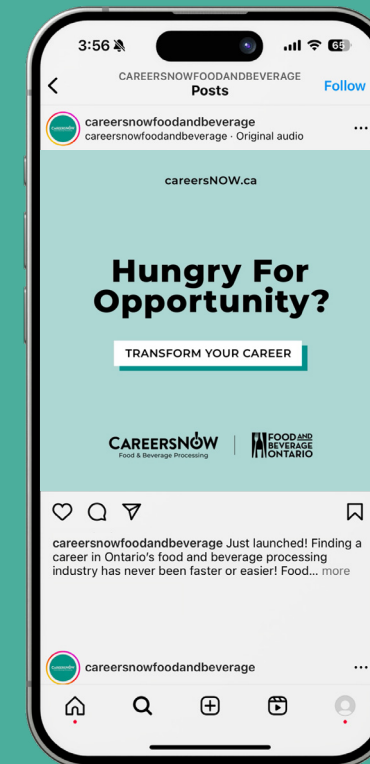
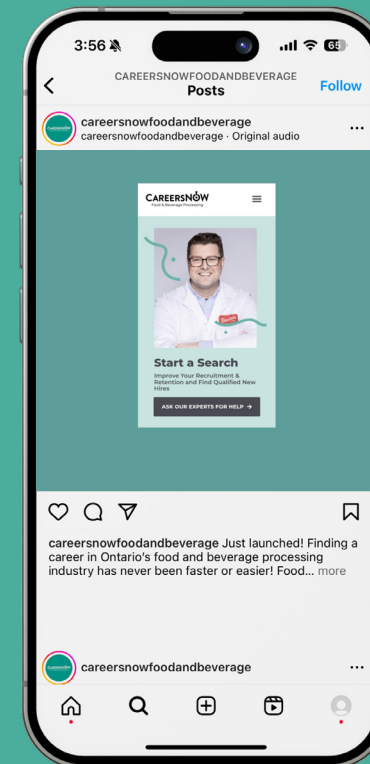
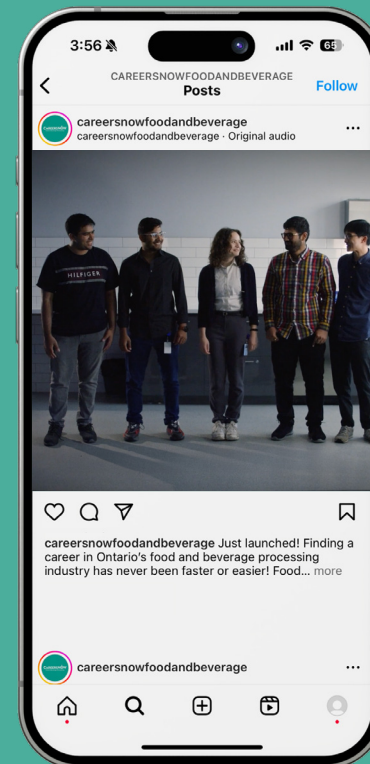
91.5% I have a better understanding of career opportunities in the industry.

72.4% I am better informed about how to apply for jobs in the industry.

86.7% I have developed skills that will make me more attractive to employers.

87.9% I am more likely to consider working in the industry.

73% I have access to more job opportunities.



CareersNOW! Jobseeker Marketing Campaign



now!



Thank you to Minister Piccini and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development for the support of CareersNOW! through the Skills Development Fund.



There are more than 8,700 jobseekers and students engaged in CareersNOW! and 500+ Ontario businesses participating through job postings, job fairs, and showcasing themselves as top employers.

Photo Above : FBO CEO Chris Conway and CareersNOW! Program Director Isabel Dopta with Minister David Piccini.

CAREERSNOW
Food & Beverage Processing

CAREERSNOW.CA



CareersNOW! is Food and Beverage Ontario's workforce development initiative that is connecting jobseekers and students with employers for rewarding careers in Ontario's food and beverage processing industry.

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Thank you for joining Food and Beverage Ontario.

Stay connected with FBO for latest updates on industry issues and upcoming events.

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takes you**

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