

CPMA's Produce Innovation Initiative Roadmap

The produce industry operates within a unique and competitive global marketplace comprised of growing, storing, selling, transporting, and merchandising highly perishable fresh products. The sector is in a continuous state of change as it strives to innovate in the face of ever more complicated industry demands and evolving consumer expectations. Innovations focused on supply chain efficiencies, logistics, packaging, waste reduction and climate change must consider the daily hurdles of production issues, food safety, environment (soil, water etc.), labour, complex regulatory scenarios, and fluctuating energy pressures. In response to these realities, our industry continues to make significant strides in Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Precision Agriculture, Big Data and the Internet of Things. What is currently lacking, is a communal resource where those looking to innovate can connect with the “disruptors” who are creating or repurposing the solutions of the future.

CPMA's main role in the innovation space is to provide members with an awareness of innovation relevant to industry and to facilitate opportunities for connection between innovators and those wishing to implement innovative solutions in their respective operations. Taking CPMA's competitive and diverse membership into consideration, a phased, full food system approach to innovation was initiated in early 2021. Three Phases have been identified and these will be evaluated on an ongoing basis as the CPMA Innovation Initiative progresses.

The 3 Phases of the CPMA Innovation Roadmap

Phase 1: Catalyst for Connectivity and Information Sharing (i.e. providing opportunities for connection) (Launched: Early 2021)

(a) CPMA Innovation Working Group (IWG) (Launched: April 2021)

About the IWG:

- membership of the IWG is diverse and includes CPMA member representatives from across the food system.
- defines Innovation as: *... the process of generating new ideas, conducting R&D, and improving operations and products to deliver increased value to the supply chain and consumers. It requires an awareness of where the future of the Canadian industry is headed including promotion of a culture accepting of new ideas and an openness to change.*
- has identified four overarching innovation themes (i.e. Collaboration (internal & external); Industry Knowledge; Business Practices; Funding) and to date has taken a Think Tank approach to these.
- has identified a number of broad innovation “buckets”:
 - o priority areas for consideration include: Corporate Social Responsibility; Food Waste; Capital Funding; Labour Efficiencies; Packaging Reduction; Social Justice; Water; Broadband; Carbon; Food Loss; Food Safety; Food Security; and Traceability.
- will work to focus these “buckets” to potentially feed specific innovation areas/areas for innovation into other aspects of the Roadmap.
- will work to streamline the focus of these broad “buckets” and establish an agenda of priorities.

(b) CPMA Innovation Website (Launched: April 2021; Enhancements: March 31, 2022)

(i) Public Innovation Hub

The public facing Innovation Hub was established to foster a collaborative setting to support innovation and disruptive technologies for the long-term viability of the industry.

The goal of the Innovation Hub is to provide a platform where both CPMA members and non-members can connect regarding newly available and/or emerging innovations and innovative technologies to enable sector growth and new business opportunities.

See: <https://produceinnovationhub.com>

(ii) Members Only Innovation Resources

The members only section of the CPMA website provides members with additional details and opportunities for connection in areas of specific interest. Initially it will include information on funding opportunities, innovation incubators / research organizations, case studies, an article repository and more to come.

(c) CPMA Innovation Community (Launch: March 31, 2022)

- As is the case with other CPMA Communities, the Innovation Community is an opt-in resource available exclusively to CPMA members.

- The Innovation Community provides current information related to a wide range of innovation topics and events to members on an ongoing, ad hoc basis.

(d) CPMA Innovation Podcasts and/or Webinars (Launch: 2022)

- Innovation Podcasts and/or Webinars will be launched in 2022.

- Innovation topics and schedules will be provided to CPMA members well in advance of these events.

(e) CPMA Convention and Trade Show Innovation Zone (April 25 to 27, 2023)

- The CPMA 2023 Convention and Trade Show will include the inaugural CPMA Innovation Zone.

- Innovation at the 2023 Convention will include:

- Innovation Zone Spaces (for companies)
- Innovation Poster Areas (for academia and researchers)
- Innovation Learning Lounge

Phase 2: Establishing Solution-Focused Innovation Partnerships (i.e. establishing linkages/lines of connectivity with others in the innovation space e.g. other innovation hubs, innovation funders, etc.) (Launch: Mid-2022)

CPMA is currently assembling a list of potential Innovation Partners (e.g. innovation hubs; incubators; funders; academia/researchers; other industry associations; etc.) covering a variety of potential areas of

interest to CPMA members. CPMA will be reaching out to potential Innovation Partners as areas of focus are further defined through the IWG, revamped Think Tanks or other approaches.

Phase 3: Identifying Potential Innovation Projects (i.e. food system projects where it makes sense for CPMA to take a more active role.) (Launch: Following implementation of Phases 1 and 2)

CPMA's potential role as an innovation project lead/solution provider will be evaluated by staff on a project-specific basis. As an industry association with a membership spanning the supply chain, any projects we take the lead on must have significant impact on the membership as a whole.

NOTE: Each Phase and related timelines will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis and adjusted as warranted.

For additional information, you are invited to contact:

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