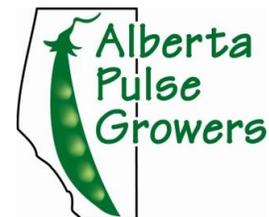


**Program Description for
Letters of Intent
“Quality Food for Health”
Research and Innovation Funding Program**

Brought to you by:



1. Program Description

1.1 Purpose

The Quality Food for Health research and innovation program is designed to provide significant opportunities for Alberta's food and agriculture industry and to create world-leading food and health research and innovation that can improve the long-term health benefits for Alberta's population.

Alberta Innovates Bio Solutions (AI Bio) along with Alberta Innovates Health Solutions (AIHS), Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency (ALMA), Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund (ACIDF), Alberta Canola Producers Commission (ACPC), Alberta Milk, and Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) also known as "The Funders" will invest at least \$4.0 million to support research and innovation in the area of "Quality Food for Health".

1.2 Participating Funding Partners and Their Mandates

AI Bio is pleased to launch this targeted call in collaboration with the above funders. Each of these funders will fund projects on a project by project basis depending upon the mandate of their organization. All of the funders are aligned with the overarching objectives of the program, but may also have specific areas of interest.

AI Bio, through this program and other initiatives, is committed to stimulating growth and diversification of Alberta's agriculture, forest, and life sciences sectors, and contributing to the economic, environmental, and social outcomes for Albertans. AI Bio has five strategic priority areas: Value Chain Sustainability, Advancing the Bioeconomy, Quality Food for Health, Industry Challenges and Emerging Opportunities, and Prion and Protein Misfolding Diseases. This targeted call falls under the Quality Food for Health umbrella. There is intent to contribute to the well-being of Albertans through continuing to support research that will lead to the development of healthy ingredients and food products as well as food safety. www.albertainnovates.ca/bio

AIHS supports research and innovation activities to improve the health and wellbeing of Albertans and create, through innovation, health related social and economic benefits for Albertans. It provides leadership for Alberta's health research and innovation enterprise by directing, coordinating, reviewing, funding and supporting research and innovation. The framework document - "Alberta Health Research Innovation Strategy" sets out Alberta's health research agenda for the coming decade to improve the health of Albertans and emphasizes the priorities of "Wellness at every age" and "Innovative Health Services Delivery". www.albertainnovates.ca/health

ALMA stimulates new thinking, new ideas, and new approaches, as it works with their industry partners to enhance the reputation, competitiveness and profitability of Alberta's livestock and meat industry. Currently ALMA funds innovative projects that identify health benefits of meat and livestock products and that increase consumer acceptance

through research, research translation, marketing, commercialization, consumer education and leadership. ALMA is interested in innovative, multi-disciplinary projects that support and contribute to the development, discovery and the education of healthy attributes of meat and livestock products. www.alma.alberta.ca

In addition to the “Areas of Interest” on page 5 of this document, ALMA is interested in:

1. Research and innovation projects that identify and promote the healthy attributes of meat and livestock products. This may include benefits of bioactive compounds of meat and livestock products on human health and chronic disease.
2. Knowledge on the nutritional value of meat and livestock products that supports evidence-based changes in policy and defining and setting of standards.
3. Development and commercialization of new meat and livestock products that improve the quality and enhance the consumer acceptance.
4. Encourage the consumption of Alberta-based meats through consumer education.

The **Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund Ltd.** (ACIDF) works with Alberta’s crop industry organizations to support crop-related industry development and research. The ACIDF priorities in this call-for-proposal are for food and food product-related work that will yield measurable results within the project lifespan. ACIDF will consider a wide range of projects, from applied sciences through product development that incorporate crop-based products and ingredients from Alberta sources. Industry involvement and investment will be key selection criteria. The highest priority will go to those proposals with a strong market focus that increase the competitiveness of Alberta farmers within the theme of “Quality Food for Health.” www.acidf.ca

The **Alberta Canola Producers Commission’s** mandate is to increase the long term profitability of Alberta canola growers. To achieve this, the Commission is involved in programs and projects that increase the demand for canola by increasing the knowledge of the nutritional benefits of canola oil to human health and wellness. To achieve this, the Commission is interested in focused, evidence based research determining the human health and wellness benefits of canola oil. www.canola.ab.ca

The **Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (APG)** represents the 4,700 pea, bean, lentil, and chickpea growers in the province. Pulses are known for their health benefits, but for increased consumption by North American, European and Chinese consumers, pulses need to be incorporated into traditional food products as flours and or fractions. APGs priorities in this call for proposals are for projects that relate to: finding short term and long term solutions to the flavour concerns associated with field pea flours and fractions; development of convenient, tasty, and economic pulse containing food products that could be commercialized; applications and characterization of pea starch fractions. Projects that demonstrate industry involvement (in the form of cash and in-kind contributions) from companies that can help to commercialize research results will be given the highest priority. www.pulse.ab.ca

Alberta Milk represents the 595 dairy producers in the province in areas of production management, environment, transportation, policy development and marketing & nutrition communications. The fundamental role of Alberta Milk is to provide Alberta's dairy producers with the tools and market signals to produce the required volume of high quality milk on a timely basis to meet the needs of Alberta's dairy processors and consumers. To achieve this, Alberta Milk develops and implements programs targeted at dairy producers along with initiatives that ensure health professionals and consumers understand the important role of dairy products in human health. Alberta Milk's interest in this call for proposals is for projects that relate to the natural and enhanced health benefits of dairy foods. www.albertamilk.com

1.3 Background

AI Bio and the funding partners have identified food and health as a strategic priority.

The focus on food and health is in response to:

- Increasing opportunities in the agricultural sector to compete in the market place with Alberta's high quality ingredients and healthy foods that confer increased health benefits. Growing concerns regarding nutrition and diet related health trends (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, etc.), and costs to society such as reduced productivity, and rising health care costs.

The targeted call for "Quality Food and Health" is a direct result of the innovation framework released in July, 2008 "Making the Food-Health Connection, an Alberta Framework for Innovation" (MFHC).

MFHC was developed by the former Alberta Life Sciences Institute (ALSI) in collaboration with Advanced Education and Technology, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, former Alberta Science Research Authority (ASRA), and former Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI). Both ALSI and AARI are heritage organizations of AI Bio.

MFHC articulates the role that food and nutrition play in the health of a population, and recognizes the opportunities that exist to strengthen the Alberta economy through production of food products with heightened nutritional value.

Consumer trends indicate that consumers are embracing healthier lifestyles, and are becoming more demanding in their desire for food products that are healthy, but also meet their taste and ingredient expectations. Increasingly consumers are using nutritional facts to make their purchasing decisions, and are looking for foods that improve their health and well-being.

There is also a significant opportunity for Alberta based companies to be ingredient providers to food production companies that may be located in Alberta or elsewhere in the world.

Investment in food and health research and in the food and health innovation system has been identified as critical in knowledge creation, knowledge translation, and in the commercialization of healthy food products.

1.4 Objectives

This research and innovation program is designed to:

- Support both conceptual and applied research in the area of food and health, within a company facility, within a public institution, and/or a combination of the two.
- Accelerate research that will lead to the introduction of new innovative, competitive healthy food products, ingredients, beverages, and supplements into the Canadian and global market place;
- Research to support reformulations of existing commonly consumed foods to improve the healthfulness of these products (improved nutrient profile, increased fibre, etc) or to comply with new health guidelines or regulations. For example, sodium reduction guidelines, reduction of trans fats, etc.
- Take advantage of innovative food processing or packaging technologies
- Assist in overcoming regulatory hurdles through research, i.e. developing health claims
- Encourage the consumption of healthier foods by consumers.

Key long-term outcomes for this program are improved competitiveness for Alberta's food and agricultural industries; improved sustainability of the health care system through a focus on food and health and its role in prevention of chronic diseases; and an efficient lab-to-industry innovation pipeline that results in the development of new, Alberta-based healthy food products.

Areas of interest include:

1. Research and innovation that increases knowledge about traits and attributes in crops, livestock, food products, and ingredients that benefit human health, and result in the development of healthy food products. Preference will be given to

those projects that will result in a reduction of chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, cancer, and lead to improvements in gut health.

Some examples are:

- a) Characterizing and improving potential health benefits and nutritional quality of food and ingredients. This would include all commodity groups, e.g. meat, milk, canola, pulses, crops, etc.
 - b) Innovative food processing and packaging technologies that contributes to food safety, and the nutritional value and taste of food.
 - c) Research and innovation that would support businesses in developing affordable healthier foods, as well as ingredients, beverages, supplements, and foods that support special dietary needs.
 - d) Research and innovation that would improve the sensory attributes of healthy foods (taste, texture, etc.).
2. Research and innovation that increases the knowledge about the health benefits of ingredients and food products, with an emphasis on those food products produced in Alberta. This could include clinical trials; work that would meet the requirement of regulations or recommended guidelines; work to support certification; and/or label development.
3. Knowledge about consumer attitudes towards food and health, how these attitudes impact consumer food choices and purchases, and how this information may be used to encourage the food industry in developing healthier foods choices. Some examples are:
- a) Studies that lead to the understanding of consumer food and health values, and understanding the motivation for healthy/unhealthy food choices.
 - b) Exploration of effective strategies that would lead consumers to make healthier food choices (e.g. marketing healthy foods to children and youth).
 - c) Research and innovation in health promotion and improvement of chronic disease (e.g. how to influence or develop programs that support population-wide healthier food choices?).

The following items are beyond the scope of the program:

- Scale up of new technologies
- Marketing activities
- Commercialization activities

1.5 Guiding Principles:

- **Aligned:** Letters of Intent (LOIs) should be aligned with the program purpose and objectives.
- **Rigor and Due Diligence:** LOIs will be evaluated by pre-established criteria by the Funders.
- **Collaboration:** LOIs should identify opportunities for effective collaboration to ensure best use of resources, highly qualified personnel and infrastructure. Ideally, project teams should include the appropriate expertise in all aspects of the project.
- **Leveraging:** LOIs should identify opportunities to maximize project financing through leveraging and industry engagement. Some of the funders may require matching funds.
- **Knowledge translation:** The proposed research and innovation must clearly demonstrate how the research knowledge will be translated into practice, policies, products, or programs. LOIs should clearly identify knowledge translation activities and collaboration with either commercial or program delivery partners. Preference may be given to those projects demonstrating a potential to be transformative for the industry and or lead to commercialization.
- **Competitive Solutions/Jurisdictional Advantage:** Investments will be made in projects that provide a competitive or jurisdictional advantage to Alberta and demonstrates opportunities through advancing innovation in quality food for health.

1.6 Process and Deadlines

Grants will be typically up to a maximum of \$500,000, in total, for up to 3 years, for eligible expenses. However, large initiatives such as clinical trials may require additional funds. The applicant must contribute a portion of the project costs, whether it is in the form of in-kind contributions, direct costs, indirect costs, salaries of principle investigators, and others. Projects will be completed by January 2015.

LOIs are invited from organizations wishing to participate in the program. On-line forms can be found at the AI Bio website at www.albertainnovates.ca/bio/funding. Each LOI must be submitted through the on-line system by **June 10, 2:00 p.m., MDT**. LOIs will be reviewed and assessed for alignment with the program purpose and objectives. Notification of decisions will be provided to all applicants by **July 4, 2011**.

Applicants who submitted successful LOIs will then be invited to submit a full proposal which will be due **August 19, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. MDT**. The full proposal will undergo an evaluation using pre-established measurement criteria.

2.0 Timelines for Project Submission

LOIs are invited from organizations wishing to participate in the program.

The following steps and deadlines are planned:

- **May 11, 2011:** Program announcement.
- **June 10, 2011, 2:00 p.m. MDT:** Deadline for LOI submission, using the guidelines in Section 2.1.
- **June 10 – July 3, 2011:** Review of the LOIs submitted and identification of the projects for which full proposals will be requested.
- **July 4, 2011:** Request for submission of full proposals.
- **August 19, 2011, 2:00 p.m. MDT:** **Deadline for** submission of full proposals.
- **August 19 – October 10, 2011:** Due diligence process completed.
- **After October 11, 2011:** All applicants notified of funding decisions.

2.1 Guidelines for Submission of Expressions of Interest

- **Format:** LOI submissions are to be made through the on-line forms. The Funders will maintain the confidentiality of the material submitted. All materials must be received by AI Bio by **June 10, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. MDT.**
- **Form:** The LOI form can be found at the AI Bio Website at www.albertainnovates.ca/bio under Funding Programs.

2.2 Eligible Applicants

- Expected applicants include qualified researchers or a team of researchers within private industry, academic institutions, provincial and federal research centres, and non-profit research establishments. The research must have a strong Alberta connection, with preference given to those projects that include an Albertan researcher.

2.3 Eligible Expenses

Category	Eligible
Personnel – Project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional manpower required to deliver program outcomes, at usual annual salary rates. • Time for specific activities on the project for project team members and consultants may be acceptable as in-kind contribution. • Salaries of ongoing employees of an institution are not eligible.

Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to project sites • Travel to present or discuss project with stakeholders • Travel for information dissemination purposes
Capital Assets/Equipment	2. Equipment directly required for the project, as specified in the program description documents, up to 15% of the overall project costs.
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of supplies directly required for the project
Communication, Dissemination, Linkage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of communicating to knowledge partners, funders, etc. • Cost of publishing if appropriate.
Overhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect overhead is not an allowable expense. • Incremental administrative expenses, directly required to achieve project outcomes are eligible.

2.4 Funding Sources

Applicants are encouraged to obtain other sources of financial and/or in-kind support for the project from groups, organizations or companies that are likely to benefit from the results of the proposed research and innovation. Information should be provided in the application form on other sources of support, including those applied to or otherwise contacted for assistance.

The Funders will require written confirmation of partner contributions in support of full proposals. Upon completion of the project, the applicant is required to provide confirmation of receipt of partner contributions, including details of the contribution (e.g. copy of cheque or deposit slip).

2.5 Progress Reports and Financial Reporting

If successful in obtaining funding, the Funders will require the applicant to submit progress and financial report every 6 months as per the schedule contained in the contract to the Funders. A final report will be required within three months of completion of the project.

2.6 Intellectual Property Principles

Intellectual property owned by the applicant must be managed by the applicant.

2.7 Confidentiality

The Funders are committed to keeping application details confidential, and are subject to the protection and disclosure provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. External experts who act as reviewers must sign a confidentiality agreement.

Personal information is collected pursuant to Section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act as it relates directly to and is necessary for the Alberta Quality Food for Health program. Should you have any questions about the collection of this information, you may contact Ms. Joan Unger, Director, AI Bio at 780-422-5737.

2.8 Letter of Intent Evaluation Criteria

LOIs will be evaluated using the following mandatory administrative criteria and if the LOI does not meet all the criteria, no further rating will be conducted.

Mandatory Administrative Criteria	Yes	No
LOI is received on-time		
LOI is complete as per the on-line LOI template		
LOI is submitted by an eligible applicant		
The project fits within the program purpose and areas of interest.		

LOIs meeting all of the mandatory criteria will then be evaluated using the following:

No.	Desired Criteria	Max Score
1	Project Overview, Objectives and Deliverables are clearly stated and achievable. The project design will lead to the desired outcomes and deliverables.	40
2	Specific economic, social, and/or environmental benefits to the food and/or agricultural industry, consumers and Alberta, are clearly described, and the project has the support of benefactors.	20
3	The Budget is reasonable and has leveraging from other sources, including cash or in-kind from industry or other funding organizations.	20
4	Project Team members are committed and there is evidence of collaboration. The organization has the capacity (resources and infrastructure) to ensure the success of the project.	20
	Total Score (Maximum 100)	100

LOIs of interest to any of the funders will be invited to submit a full application.

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