

-----Original Message-----

From: noreply@northumberlandcounty.ca <noreply@northumberlandcounty.ca> On Behalf Of Biola Oluwajuyigbe
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2025 8:30 AM
To: Mather, Maddison <matherm@northumberland.ca>
Subject: Support for OAFVC - Essential for Local Innovation

CAUTION: External E-Mail

I have attached a letter outlining my strong support for the Ontario Agri-Food Venture Centre (OAFVC) and its critical role in fostering food innovation and economic growth.

As the founder of HealX Foods, I can attest that the OAFVC has been instrumental in the success of our Cauliflower Fries, a first-of-its-kind product in North America now sold in over five provinces. The center has provided us with essential resources, including specialized facilities, regulatory guidance, and cost-effective production capabilities—support that is difficult, if not impossible, to find elsewhere.

Any reduction in OAFVC funding or potential closure would have severe consequences, including production disruptions, increased operational costs, and a loss of innovation within the local agri-food sector. Beyond our business, many other food entrepreneurs rely on the OAFVC to bring their ideas to market, making it a crucial asset for economic development in Northumberland.

I respectfully urge the county to continue supporting the OAFVC and would be happy to discuss this further or provide additional details if needed. I have attached a former letter of support Sincerely Biola Oluwajuyigbe CEO HealX Foods



██████████
OAFVC 216 Purdy Rd
info@healxfoods.com
www.healxfoods.com

Dear Mrs. Deborah Bingham,
Northumberland County
555 Courthouse Road
Cobourg, ON K9A 5J6

Support for OAFVC - Essential for Local Innovation and Economic Growth

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to express my strong support for the Ontario Agri-Food Venture Centre (OAFVC) as the county considers potential areas for budget savings with the OAFVC under evaluation.

As a producer of HealX Foods' Cauliflower Fries in the center, I can confidently say that the OAFVC has been instrumental in our business's success. This innovative product—the first of its kind in North America—is now sold in over five provinces across Canada, representing a significant milestone for us and contributing to the local economy and the agri-food innovation landscape.

From the early development stages to scaling production, the OAFVC has provided unparalleled support in areas that would have posed major challenges for a small, growing business like ours. This support includes:

1. **Access to Specialized Facilities:** The OAFVC offers unique equipment and resources tailored for food product development and production. Their expert guidance has been crucial in navigating the specific needs of our manufacturing process for Cauliflower Fries, something that would have been prohibitively expensive or unavailable elsewhere.
2. **Technical and Regulatory Expertise:** The OAFVC has been a key partner in helping us comply with complex food safety and regulatory requirements necessary to bring an innovative product like ours to market.
3. **Cost-Effective Production Scalability:** The center's cost structure has allowed us to scale responsibly, grow our brand, and expand our presence across Canada without incurring the heavy overhead typically associated with owning and maintaining large production facilities.

If funding for the OAFVC is reduced or if the center is closed, the impact on our

business and others like us will be profound, some of which are named below

- **Disruption to Production:** We rely on the OAFVC's infrastructure and expertise to maintain consistent quality and volume. A reduction in services would threaten our ability to meet growing demand.
- **Increased Costs:** Without access to the OAFVC, we would face significant financial burdens in replicating the facilities or finding alternatives.
- **Loss of Innovation:** The OAFVC fosters a unique ecosystem for small food businesses to innovate and thrive. Its closure would stifle the entrepreneurial spirit in our region and beyond.

Beyond our business, the OAFVC is a vital community resource that supports local food producers, creates jobs, and drives economic growth. It exemplifies the kind of forward-thinking investment that positions Northumberland as a hub for agri-food innovation.

I respectfully urge the county to prioritize continued funding and support for the OAFVC. Its value to businesses, the local economy, and the broader agri-food ecosystem cannot be overstated.

Thank you for considering the perspectives of local businesses in this important discussion. I would be happy to provide further details about the impact of the OAFVC on our business or to participate in any public discussions regarding this matter.

Warm regards,
Biola Oluwajuyigbe
CEO HealX Foods