



Protein Highway™

Network for plant-based protein innovation

October 2021

Welcome to the Protein Highway Quarterly Newsletter!

The [Protein Highway™](#) is an initiative to enhance cross-border collaboration among entrepreneurs, researchers, and end users across the Canadian Prairies and U.S. Midwest-Great Plains region.

The mission is to support and facilitate bilateral, precompetitive initiatives that unite industry, academia, and government in advancing the North American plant protein sector.

The *Protein Highway Newsletter* will be published quarterly. If you or someone you know would like to be added, contact us at proteinhwy@gmail.com.



[Learn more about the Protein Highway.](#)



[Become a Member of the Protein Highway!](#)

The Protein Highway has three affordable levels of membership—individual, corporate and student. Members can participate in exclusive events, join an Action Team, and stay apprised of the latest intelligence on alternative proteins in the United States and Canada. Learn more and [apply now!](#)

Spotlights

Oct 14 Roundtable on Sustainable Protein

We continue to make progress to identify regional strengths around the theme of “*Sustainable protein from crops- securing the supply*”. B Pam Ismail, Director of the [PPIC](#) at the University of Minnesota, has been contacting researchers, associations and institutions to develop the ‘whole farm’ model system of annual crops (legumes, oilseeds and cereals) rich in protein to meet the growing global demand for protein. One outcome of the outreach is the submission of a region-wide proposal to the [USDA SAS](#) funding program. We are also linking to existing and planned Initiatives where there are shared goals and outcomes.

If you did not receive an invitation to the Roundtable and would like to participate, [contact us.](#)

Strategic Planning Update

The Protein Highway has served as a connector for and facilitator of US- Canada plant protein initiatives for nearly five years. We’ve grown from a small group of enthusiasts to a non-profit based in Minnesota with Board leadership on both sides of the border.

A subset of the Protein Highway Board is developing a near-term (1-yr) and medium-term (3-5 yr) strategic plan. Three overarching themes were identified to guide our activities going forward:

- Maintain and expand the Protein Highway brand and infrastructure
- Facilitate and develop relationships within and among research and corporate partners

- Encourage development of plant proteins in the Protein Highway region

We welcome your feedback and participation in this process and suggestions for activities to support progress within these themes- please email christina.connelly@international.gc.ca if you would like to provide input.

While we refine our focus, we will continue to keep you – the Protein Highway community – aware of resources, opportunities and contacts across the region’s protein value chain.

Ask a Protein Industry Expert—Natural Products Canada

The Protein Highway Initiative functions because of the active engagement of the plant protein continuum. **David Gauthier**, Vice President- Commercialization, shares his insights on commercializing plant protein innovation... and a couple of favourite menu items.



David Gauthier, PhD, MBA
Vice President, Commercialization
[Natural Products Canada](#)

- **What is your role at Natural Products Canada?**
 - I am the Vice President Commercialization at Natural Products Canada (NPC). I work with the NPC team to identify and support promising early-stage companies who are developing biologically based solutions in a broad range of sectors, including: food production and value-added agriculture; health, nutrition and wellness; bioproducts and sustainability; animal health and nutrition; and water and waste treatment. I am responsible for the delivery of a suite of commercialization programs that offer non-repayable contributions to eligible companies and research institutions to overcome market hurdles, achieve growth milestones, and become more attractive to investors and partners.

- **Tell us about the path that brought you to your current position.**
 - After receiving my PhD (Plant Biology) and MBA degrees, I held various management roles in private industry, venture capital, federal government research funding programs, economic development, management consulting, and not-for profit sectors. Working at the interface between scientific discovery and commercialization of new technologies has been the central theme of my career, with a special focus on early-stage investment for innovative companies. I am fortunate that NPC allows me to use all of my prior experiences every day.

- **What is the biggest challenge facing the alternative proteins industry today?**
 - There are many, but competition for investment capital to prove out the potential of new alternative protein product is intense. It can take years and millions of dollars to produce a commercially viable product and then tens or hundreds of millions of dollars to scale up the manufacture of these products to meet market demand and desired price points. NPC helps companies in the earlier stages of development to demonstrate their potential and we have recently created Natural Products Canada Ventures, a \$50 M early-stage venture fund that can provide investment capital for early stages of commercialization. In conjunction with the insights, advice and resources of our extensive network, we are hopeful that these efforts will position our clients to secure the capital they need to recognize the full potential of their innovations.

- **Do you have a favorite plant-based food and/or restaurant?**
 - My daughter has introduced me to some alternatives over the past two years and has a killer vegan brownie recipe! She also introduced us to a local vegan restaurant in Saskatoon called Gud Eats where I had my first Beyond Burger a few years back before it was widely available elsewhere.

EVENTS

AOCS- Plant Protein Science and Technology Forum Oct 12-14 (Virtual)

Due to the global rise in COVID-19 cases and the spread of the Delta variant, AOCS is transitioning to a fully online [Plant Protein Science and Technology Forum](https://plantprotein.aocs.org/), taking place October 12–14, 2021.

<https://plantprotein.aocs.org/>

Alternative Protein Virtual Pitch Event – November 16 and 23

The Protein Highway is delighted to be partnering with Natural Products Canada, Protein Industries Canada, and BioAlberta to deliver a series of virtual pitch events featuring Canadian alternative protein companies. These events are specifically designed for investors. Entrepreneurs will deliver a short pitch on their business strategy and opportunity for investment, and answer questions from an investor panel and the audience.

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1D-hl362TR-W9kPCHFrDhw



[PPIC](#) has several short courses and meetings planned:

- ◆ Protein Basics Short Course - December 6-7, 2021 Annual
- ◆ Research Spotlight Meeting - December 8, 2021
- ◆ "Plant Protein Products Commercialization" from March 17-18, 2022.

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