



NC FOOD INNOVATION LAB

Background Information

The North Carolina Food Innovation Lab is a state-of-the-art facility assisting food companies and entrepreneurs in creating the plant-based foods of tomorrow.

Equipped with the latest technology, the strength of North Carolina agriculture and some of the smartest minds in food science, the North Carolina Food Innovation Lab takes promising plant-based product ideas from seed to supermarket.

The North Carolina Food Innovation Lab is catalyzed by a core group of partners and agencies committed to supporting and growing North Carolina's food manufacturing economy. They include:

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
NC State University
North Carolina Department of Commerce
Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
North Carolina Research Campus

Learn more at [NCFIL.org](https://www.ncfil.org).

Select Quotes for Media

N.C. General Assembly Members

“Our farmers only make 10 percent of a food item by the time it's in the market – the other part is all processing. This commitment by the state shows that we are confident we can reclaim some of the other 90 percent of the process to keep at home – creating jobs here in North Carolina instead of shipping them out of state.”

N.C. Representative Linda Johnson (R-Cabarrus)

“We can do more around food processing. We haven't even scratched the surface in terms of the economic development that can occur there. What we're doing here at the North Carolina Research Campus can absolutely take our largest industry in North Carolina to a whole new level – and that is going to directly help rural North Carolina because that's where we grow the food.”

N.C. Senator Paul Newton (R-Cabarrus, Union)

“Knowing that we already produce the majority of the fruits and vegetables on the east coast here in North Carolina, and we're the third most diversified state when it comes to growing crops, and also knowing that we ship out over 80 percent somewhere else to be processed, this is a win-win situation. This is going to create jobs which is going to create revenue not only for the State but for the municipalities and counties in which these plants are located.”

N.C. Senator Brent Jackson (R-Duplin, Johnston, Sampson)

Golden LEAF Foundation

“Golden LEAF provided a \$2.2 million grant to purchase equipment for this state-of-the-art facility because it will be a valuable asset to our state’s farmers, the agriculture industry, and food manufacturers. We look forward to seeing the food manufacturing industry grow and generate new jobs for our workers. We also want to see our farmers and rural communities thrive as this facility helps create new markets for their products.”

Golden LEAF Foundation President Scott T. Hamilton

NC Food Innovation Lab Partners

“Agriculture drives North Carolina’s economy, and this initiative can help build on this strength to broaden the economic impact. Through our partnerships and the work of this innovation center, we can capture more value for what we grow and can add new food manufacturing and agricultural jobs to the state for generations to come. We think this is a defining moment for North Carolina’s agricultural future.”

N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Troxler

“North Carolina has all the right assets: a strong agricultural product base, abundant natural resources, universities creating a highly trained workforce, ideal proximity to large populations and ports, and strong partnerships. We are well-positioned to grow food manufacturing – from seed to supermarket.”

NC State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean Richard Linton

“We’re excited about this partnership and the impact it will have in growing new jobs and economies across the state. Our strong base of food processing companies should experience growth as they get help staying ahead of consumer trends. NCFIL takes the very best of what our state has to offer – crops, world-class research and workforce – and provides a one-stop-shop for developing and testing new ideas, with an accelerated path to market.”

Secretary of Commerce Anthony M. Copeland

“The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina is committed to attracting new food and beverage manufacturing enterprises to the state and supporting the expansion of existing ones, particularly those that use local crops in their final products. By helping both startups and large established companies more rapidly test and launch new plant-based products, the NC Food Innovation Lab will directly support business growth and the creation of new jobs.”

“The lab gives us, the state’s business recruiters, an additional way to persuade plant-based food manufacturers to establish operations in North Carolina. We’re already known globally for excellence in meat production and processing. The Food Innovation Lab will speed North Carolina’s rise to the leading-edge of plant-based food production.”

EDPNC board Chairman Frank E. Emory Jr

“The North Carolina Food Innovation Lab represents a new chapter for the North Carolina Research Campus. It creates a pathway from scientific research to new and more nutritious food products from our state’s food processing, food manufacturing and food packaging enterprises that help grow our economy. It creates expanded uses for our farmer’s agricultural crops as well as new business opportunities for our state’s rural agricultural communities.”

NCRC Lead Mission Support Executive and President of Castle & Cooke NC Mark Spitzer

NC Food Innovation Lab Leadership

“This center will provide unique food processing capabilities for both entrepreneurial and established companies to more rapidly launch new consumer products. It will also serve as a unique real-time food processing facility to validate new processes and equipment being developed. We’re focused on plant-based foods and innovation in that space because it’s a space that’s growing very rapidly with more emphasis in new and better products coming out from plant-based materials.”

N.C. Food Innovation Lab Executive Director Bill Aimutis

Kannapolis Mayor

“We are so excited because we know that we’ve been doing world-class research at the North Carolina Research Campus. But then the opportunity is you’ve got to take that research and turn it into something that’s viable in the marketplace and that’s what this innovation lab is going to do.”

Kannapolis Mayor Darrell Hinnant