



NIFTEM-K Hosts India–Canada Roundtable on Pulse Protein Innovation, Value Addition and Strategic Partnerships

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National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli (NIFTEM-K), an Institute of National Importance, under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, organised a Roundtable Conference on “Pulse Protein Innovation, Value Addition and Strategic Partnerships” on 13 October 2026. The conference brought together senior government representatives, academic leaders, industry associations and research organisations from India and Canada to strengthen bilateral cooperation in pulse protein innovation, food processing, research and sustainable nutrition.

The conference was attended by Mr. Ken Cheveldayoff, Hon’ble Minister of Advanced Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Canada, along with David Anderson, Managing Director, Government of Saskatchewan, and Harish Vaidyanathan, Senior Trade Officer, Saskatchewan India Office. The University of Saskatchewan (USask) delegation included Dr. Baljit Singh, Vice-President (Research); Dr. Trevor Crowe, Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Studies); Dr. Ajay Dalai, Professor; and Dr. Supratim Ghosh, Professor.

Industry and research organisations were represented by Greg Cherewyk, President, Pulse Canada; Julianne Curran, Vice-President (Market Innovation), Pulse Canada; Carl Potts, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers; Leanne Fischbuch, Executive Director, Alberta Pulse Growers; Bob Behari, CEO, Enviroway; and Prachi Kaul, Director, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute. Representatives of Indian organisations and industry, including Nutrition International, Nutricircle, India Pulses and Grains Association, ICAR–Indian Institute of Pulses Research, Kanpur, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Diet Foods, Good Food Institute India and IIT Delhi, also participated in the discussions.

In his address, Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff highlighted the importance of India–Saskatchewan relations and the value of personal connections in strengthening ties between India and Canada. He underlined the opportunities for closer cooperation in higher education, research, innovation and academic exchange, noting the potential for institutions and industry to work together on shared priorities.



Dr. Harinder Singh Oberoi, Director, NIFTEM-K, emphasised the importance of translating the points mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding between NIFTEM-K and the University of Saskatchewan into tangible outcomes. He stated that the partnership should move beyond the agreement to a clear, time-bound programme of action that delivers meaningful benefits for both countries. He expressed his gratitude to all the stakeholders and expressed satisfaction about the significant progress made during the short period of about seven months after the MoU was signed. He highlighted the goal of working towards establishing the joint Centre of Excellence at NIFTEM-K within the next year, supported by a practical roadmap, defined milestones and institutional coordination.

The discussions also recognised key challenges in pulse processing and protein ingredient development. These include ensuring consistency in raw materials and ingredients, managing process energy requirements and energy use, optimising processing conditions, and preserving or improving the functional properties of pulse proteins. Participants also highlighted the importance of addressing texture-related challenges and developing fit-for-purpose pulse-based ingredients that can support value addition and the development of innovative food products.

Dr. Oberoi further stressed that the partners should identify priority research areas and agree on an actionable plan for the first two years. Potential areas of collaboration include pulse protein extraction and processing, value addition, development of innovative and nutritious food products, joint research projects and publications, joint PhD degree programme, student and faculty exchanges, training programmes, and collaborative research funding. He also highlighted the importance of industry participation to help translate research into scalable technologies, commercial products and wider market opportunities.



Dr. Baljit Singh while expressing satisfaction over the progress made by both the University of Saskatchewan (USask) and NIFTEM-K mentioned that USask has identified PhD students who will do part of their research work at NIFTEM-K. He also stated that a collaborative project entitled “ Sustainable health innovation in fortification (lentils) for SDG 2.2 (end all forms of malnutrition), has been submitted by USask in collaboration with NIFTEM-K and other international partners for funding by Government of Canada. The roundtable coordinated by Dr. Baljit Singh provided a platform for academic and industry stakeholders to discuss research collaboration, capacity building, technology development and commercialisation. Participants explored opportunities to develop value-added pulse-based foods, strengthen links between researchers and businesses, and address emerging needs in sustainable and plant-based nutrition. The discussions also focused on creating a coordinated framework through which research priorities, expertise and facilities in India and Canada can complement each other.

The conference forms part of the broader effort to advance the joint Centre of Excellence, with NIFTEM-K and the University of Saskatchewan serving as co-chairs of the initiative, as stated in the conference background. The proposed collaboration is intended to bring together academic expertise, government support and industry engagement to advance pulse protein innovation and strengthen research and educational links between the two countries.

The roundtable concluded with an emphasis on converting the discussions into defined priorities, responsibilities and timelines. The proposed roadmap and two-year research priorities are expected to provide a foundation for sustained institutional cooperation and measurable progress in pulse protein research, value addition and innovation, further strengthening India-Canada academic, scientific and industry partnerships.

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