

# Press Release

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**For immediate release**

## **Start-ups disrupting the food system**

***Fourteen companies showcase how zero waste and regenerative practices can create the food companies of the future***

**Guelph, Ont., December 3, 2020** – On December 3, 2020, fourteen companies in Guelph-Wellington showcased how they grow and make food sustainably—with zero waste—in a Dragons’ Den style virtual pitch competition, in front of 70 food industry leaders from across Canada including local politicians, government representatives, investors, retailers and distributors.

The companies were taking part in [R-Purpose MICRO](#), a 12-week intensive training program to help early-stage food and beverage companies embed purpose and circularity\* in their businesses. This program, developed and delivered by Provision Coalition, Canada’s leading food and beverage sustainability experts, was funded by Guelph-Wellington’s [Our Food Future](#) initiative, which is working to become Canada’s first circular food economy.

Cher Mereweather, the CEO of Provision Coalition said, “We recognize that one way to help accelerate a purpose-driven, sustainable, and circular food economy is to work with large companies, but we also recognize the disruptive power of the start-up. We are proud to enable smaller, micro-sized food companies to embed purpose, sustainability and circularity at the heart of their business models when they are still small, so that they can grow faster and make more of an impact, with zero waste and a regenerative mindset already in their DNA”.

The panel of expert judges commended all companies for the quality of their pitches and for the innovative ways they were each using circularity to fast-track their growth. The judging panel was comprised of Barbara Swartzentruber, Smart Cites Office, City of Guelph; Marcia Woods, Founder of FreshSpoke; Sheri Evans, Local Development Manager, Sobeys; and Evan Clark, Vice Chair of Golden Triangle Angel Network.

Evan Clark, Vice Chair of Golden Triangle Angel Network said, “I have been judging pitch companies for many years and was thrilled to see the diversity and commitment to circularity coming from these companies. An important part of the future of a more sustainable Canadian food economy was on show here today”.

Barb Swartzentruber, Executive Director of the Smart Cities Office, City of Guelph added that, "Our Food Future is grounded in community and collaboration to drive system level change. Today's demonstration highlights the benefit business collaborations have in the creation on a circular food economy. The companies involved in R-Purpose MICRO are contributing to Our Food Future's goal of creating 50 new businesses and collaborations by 2025."

This graduating cohort of R-Purpose MICRO includes [A Friendlier Company](#), [Althaea Herb Farm](#), BioForm Functional Foods, Blue Sky Beef, [The Elora Farmers' Market](#), [Fan/Joy](#), 5<sup>th</sup> Bean, [GR365N Limited](#), [Taste Detours](#), [The Grain Revolution](#), [Troll Bridge Creek Inc.](#), [The Urban Orchardist](#), [Urban Stalk](#), and [Well Baked Box](#). These businesses cover everything from healthy dessert boxes, reusable take out containers to culinary and life skills programs for youth and families.

Three start-ups were selected for special mention, and [Well Baked Box](#) was elected as the judge and audience's choice. All of these companies are located in the City of Guelph or Wellington County and their participation has been 100% funded by Our Food Future.

### **About Provision Coalition Inc and R-Purpose MICRO**

Provision Coalition are food and beverage industry sustainability experts. Their team works across North America helping food and beverage companies to grow their businesses in a way that generates more profit while benefiting people and planet. Provision is led by Cher Mereweather, who has two decades of experience in food industry sustainability. R-Purpose Micro is a fast-growing initiative led by Provision that will empower and enable 50 more food start-ups from across Canada in the next few months. For more information and to register for R-Purpose MICRO click [here](#).

### **About Our Food Future**

Inspired by the planet's natural cycles, a circular food economy reimagines and regenerates the systems that feed us, eliminating waste, sharing economic prosperity, and nourishing our communities. In Guelph-Wellington, we are working to build Canada's first tech-enabled circular food economy that will achieve a 50% increase in access to affordable nutritious food, 50 new circular economy businesses and collaborations, and a 50% increase in circular economic benefits by unlocking the value of waste.

\*A circular food business is a for-profit, not-for-profit, or social enterprise whose actions contribute to systemic change towards a circular food economy through the development of new business models, technologies, products or services that design waste out of our food system, reduce emissions, expand access to affordable and nutritious food, and regenerate natural systems.

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