

Organic Science Cluster II

Partners in Organic Innovation: A Conversation with Mike Fata, CEO and Co-Founder of Manitoba Harvest

Manitoba Harvest is partnering with Drs. Laura Telford and Alphonsus Utioh on Organic Science Cluster II (OSCII) Research [Activity E.50: Identifying and overcoming limiting factors to organic food processing in Canada](#). For more information on this project, please read our interview with Dr. Telford or visit <http://www.dal.ca/oacc>.

Can you give a brief overview of Manitoba Harvest?

[Manitoba Harvest Hemp Foods](#) (Manitoba Harvest) is the world's largest hemp food manufacturer to grow, make, and sell our own line of hemp food products.

As a [B Corp Certified](#) company, we educate on the health and environmental benefits of hemp, manufacturer high quality hemp food products, and strive to support sustainability in all that we do. Founded in 1998, our company is now 100+ team members strong and offers products to over 7,000 retailers across North America.

The majority of our products are manufactured at our Winnipeg-based state of the art [BRC certified](#) facility. Products include Hemp Hearts (raw shelled hemp seeds), Hemp Heart Bites, Hemp Pro protein powders, Hemp Bliss Organic Hemp Beverage and hemp oil.

How did Manitoba Harvest become involved in Organic Science Cluster II and how did you help to shape the research?

The Food Development Centre (FDC) is a long time valued partner. Back when we first started the company in 1998, we did not have facilities and adequate resources. We turned to FDC as a "one-stop shop" for research, product development and even pilot manufacturing. Alphonsus Utioh in particular was instrumental in helping us get our products commercialized, thereby setting the company up for dynamic growth. Working together again with Alphonsus and his team to expand the hemp foods industry is a smart business decision.

How are you participating and contributing to Organic Science Cluster II?

Manitoba Harvest is excited to be collaborating with Laura Telford and Alphonsus Utioh on ongoing hemp foods research. Our partnership includes financial support and



providing raw product. Our team, both executives and members of our Quality department, are eagerly offering advice and expertise where needed as well. We look forward to ongoing participation.

What excites you the most about the research?

At Manitoba Harvest we strive to be leaders within the industry, especially when it comes to product development. We poll consumers and listen to our customer needs when considering new products. Consumers and customers are becoming more and more health conscious and asking for additional organic offerings. This research will assist in producing more organic products to appeal to those healthy consumers.

How do you think this research will impact your work, as well as other organic growers?

Like Steve Jobs stated, "innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." The heart and soul of our company is quality and innovation. This research activity is a valued part of our commitment to innovate. As a vertically integrated company, we are closely connected to organic producers and to organic consumers. We consider ourselves part of the organic community and see this research helping to expand the overall organic community.

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