

OUR LATEST MEDIA RELEASE



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OCIF invests in AgSphere to drive growth and innovation in Canada's agriculture sector

(Calgary, Alta.) – The Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) will invest up to \$2.75 million over five years to support and establish AgSphere, a hub designed to advance agrifood innovation across Canada by serving as a central ecosystem merging agriculture, technology and food.

With global demand for food and fuel intensifying, AgSphere aims to increase innovation, technology adoption, attract investment and address a workforce shortage in the agriculture industry. The hub will link Western Canada's agricultural expertise with Calgary's strengths in technology, energy and access to capital and talent.

"Calgary and Alberta have deep roots in agriculture, and that legacy continues to drive innovation today. As we experience a growing population, AgSphere will help innovators and entrepreneurs continue tackling global food and energy challenges with creative 'made-in-Calgary' solutions," said Calgary Mayor Jeromy Farkas.

To strengthen Canada's agricultural competitiveness, the hub will connect producers, startups, investors and partners, including founding partners AdFarm, the Calgary Stampede, Olds College and OCIF. Temporarily housed at Stampede Park, the initiative will include an innovation and education centre, event space, Canada-wide producer network and career platform.

OCIF's investment in AgSphere will look to support 75 companies and train 450 individuals over five years, including students and the reskilling of professionals. The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) estimates that by 2030, Canada's agriculture sector will face a workforce shortage of more than 100,000 workers — a 15 per cent increase from 2023.

"AgSphere is about helping create a collaborative, connected and united agriculture ecosystem where innovation, ideas and new technologies can thrive," said Brad Parry, President and CEO, Calgary Economic Development and CEO, Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund. "This investment strengthens our agriculture sector, drives economic growth and is another step forward in positioning Calgary as the innovation capital of Canada."

[Calgary's Innovation Strategy](#) is a bold roadmap to make our city Canada's innovation capital by building sector-specific innovation nodes and funding networks across the city. Successful implementation of the strategy is expected to add 187,000 jobs and contribute over \$28 billion to Calgary's economy by 2034.

Calgary is emerging as a centre of excellence in value-added food processing, protein development, controlled-environment agriculture and energy innovation. In 2024, the agribusiness sector contributed \$13.5 billion to Alberta's GDP and employed more than 76,000 people, according to Statistics Canada.

According to Farm Credit Canada's [Innovation Investment Report](#), every dollar invested in agriculture knowledge generation yields an estimated \$10 to \$20 return — reinforcing the high-impact nature of OCIF's support.

QUOTES

"On a global level, Canadian farms are already the very best at efficiency, leveraging technology, sustainability, and Canada's brand is highly trusted for delivering quality and safety. However, in a very competitive world, Canada needs to continue to build on that advantage and also become the global leader of ag and food innovation. That is the focus of AgSphere."

- Chris Paterson, Executive Director, AgSphere

"AgSphere is coming at a critical time, as farmers are looking for ways to enhance their operations. We need initiatives like AgSphere so that this ecosystem can rise to the challenge of meeting farmers' needs well into the future. From right here in Western Canada, we are perfectly positioned to create a Canadian impact and attract international talent, companies and capital to drive the sector forward."

- Ben Graham, President, AdFarm

"We are proud to welcome AgSphere to Stampede Park, where agriculture, community and innovation meet every day. Agriculture has been at the heart of the Stampede for more than a century, bringing producers, innovators and consumers together throughout the year in ways that support jobs, investment and collaboration. The hub strengthens this impact by supporting training, education and pathways into Canada's growing agribusiness sector, and highlights Canadian agriculture's role on the world stage."

- Joel Cowley, CEO, Calgary Stampede

"AgSphere is a natural fit for Olds College, building on our shared commitment to support best practices and innovation in the agriculture industry. Collaboration is our way forward to drive meaningful impact and future success. By uniting our College's agricultural and educational strengths with Calgary's growing innovation ecosystem, this hub will accelerate new

technologies, attract investment and help build the skilled workforce our industry needs for the future.”

- Todd Ormann, Vice President External Relationships & Research, Olds College of Agriculture & Technology

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ABOUT OPPORTUNITY CALGARY INVESTMENT FUND

The Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) was created as a wholly owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary in 2018 to build economic resilience. OCIF finds, fuels and fosters high potential opportunities in emerging sectors that will help make Calgary the innovation capital of Canada.

Since inception, OCIF has spurred over \$1.1 billion in economic activity, a 12x return on funding committed while supporting over 1,000 companies and creating nearly 3,700 jobs for Calgarians.

Learn more about how OCIF is fueling Calgary’s future at www.opportunitycalgary.com.

ABOUT AGSPHERE

[AgSphere](http://www.agsphere.ca), an agri-food innovation hub, is a leading driver for Canada's innovation ecosystem. Located in the heart of the Prairies, we connect producers, startups, researchers, investors, mentors and industry networks to build a shared advantage: bridging regional assets and global opportunity.

We welcome partners, sponsors and mentors who share our vision of accelerating agricultural innovation. Whether through funding, in-kind expertise or hands-on mentorship, your support empowers producers, students, and entrepreneurs to transform ideas into real-world impact.

Stay connected with AgSphere to discover new programs, events and collaborative opportunities that strengthen Canada's position as a global leader in ag innovation. Visit www.agsphere.ca for more information.