



YOU HAVE PROJECTS THAT TRANSFORM?

WE OFFER YOU A UNIQUE WINDOW INTO THE FOOD INDUSTRY.

The Food Processing Council of Quebec (CTAQ) and its partners wish to recognize the efforts of companies that demonstrate outstanding innovation and creativity during the course of their current activities within the agri-food industry. With this purpose in mind, they are launching the 2026 edition of the Food Innovation Awards contest, including the categories:

PRODUCTS | PACKAGING | TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCTIVITY

The jury will recognize the most innovative projects in each category.

The evaluation will be carried out confidentially by professionals representing or revolving around the agri-food industry.

Submit your innovation project and you could have your efforts, investments and leadership acknowledged by your peers and the general population.

All the details of the contest are described in this document:

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OUR PARTNERS



WHAT IS INNOVATION?

For the present contest, innovation means:

- ✓ To create, develop and apply new forms of knowledge;
- ✓ To develop and integrate new processes, new technologies;
- ✓ To develop and market new or improved products that have an innovative aspect.

Innovation stems from an idea and acquires value for the company at the marketing or implementation stage, thereby increasing productivity and/or generating profits all while considering the customer's experience.

The innovation must address a need or challenge within the industry.

Examples of ineligible projects: A new product without distinctive added value compared to what already exists on the market. A change in packaging or the integration of an existing technology without genuine innovation.

ADMISSIBILITY CRITERIA

Any company in Canada's food sector – in its broadest sense – can register an innovation project.

Companies wishing to submit their application must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The research, elaboration and development of the innovation project must have been carried out in Canada.
- The company must comply with all food safety standards.
- The innovation project must have been **developed OR launched between October 1st, 2025 and September 30th, 2026**, except for projects in the "Technology & Productivity*" category, that could have been developed or launched between October 1st, 2024 and September 30th, 2026.

**A technology & productivity project can be submitted two years in a row as long as it respects all admissibility criteria and that it has not yet won.*

CATEGORIES

1. PRODUCTS Category

New or improved products or product lines intended for human consumption are eligible for this category.

The jury will be responsible for distributing the products across the various subcategories. A product may not be present in more than one subcategory. The jury reserves the right to change the subcategory of a product during the evaluation process, depending on the submissions received.

**A product must have an innovative aspect to be eligible.*

2. PACKAGING Category

All new or recast packaging (single or line) designed for food products are eligible.


The projects could be submitted individually or jointly (ex.: processor / agency) by:

- Food processors
- Packaging manufacturers
- Graphic designers
- Marketing, advertisement, or public relations agencies

**A packaging must have an innovative aspect to be eligible.*

3. TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCTIVITY Category*

The winner of this category will receive a \$5,000 award.

This category is presented by the  .

The eligible types of projects in the technology category are:

Development of Smart Products and Processes aimed at development and innovation in the following areas:

- Health, nutrition, and wellness benefits;
- New robotic applications to increase productivity, food safety, and worker safety;
- Artificial intelligence (AI), sensors, machine learning, and big data to improve

efficiency.

Food Ecosystem Sustainability aimed at development and innovation in the following areas:

- Reduction of food waste;
- Greater value recovery;
- Circularity and upcycling;
- Eco-friendly and smart packaging;
- More efficient use of inputs, including energy, water, and carbon.

Building Agile and Secure Supply Chains aimed at development and innovation in the following areas:

- Logistics and supply chain;
- Consumer and customer satisfaction analysis;
- Food safety;
- Food security;
- Internet of Things and other digital applications related to food production chains;
- Blockchain and traceability.

**Food product development initiatives, such as the development or iteration of a new brand or product formulation within an existing category (e.g., a new protein bar), are not eligible in this category.*

PRIZES

Category	Products	Packaging	Technology & Productivity
Number of possible winners	12	1	1

For the finalists:

In addition to having the possibility of using the mention and the "Finalist" logo of the 2026 CTAQ Food Innovation Awards (visual subject to CTAQ approval), each finalist company:

- Will have one (1) free admission to the [2026 Marketing Event](#) including the conferences, private cocktail and Gala Dinner,
- Will be invited to a private cocktail held before the 2026 Marketing Event's Gala Dinner with the contest's partners and where buyers of the big distribution chains will also be invited,
- Will have the possibility to buy tickets for its guests to attend the Gala Dinner including the private cocktail.

For the winners:

In addition to having the possibility to use the mention and the "Winner" logo of the 2026 CTAQ Food Innovation Awards (visual subject to CTAQ approval), the winning companies will also be offered numerous opportunities for visibility with the prize's partners, including in particular:

- Discovery of your innovative project at CTAQ and industry events,
- Sending of the list of winning products to box-lunch services,
- Sharing in the CTAQ and industry newsletters and magazines,
- Publication in the CTAQ and industry media / website,
- And others (detailed list to come).

PRIZES FROM OUR PARTNERS

Innovation is the main driving force of the agri-food industry and the 2026 contest partners wish to recognize the efforts of food or related companies that demonstrate outstanding innovation and creativity in the course of their current activities.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP PRIZE

As a major partner of the contest, the National Bank of Canada will give the Entrepreneurship Prize to the company who will best answer the following question:

“Briefly describe how you foster the entrepreneurial spirit within your company by encouraging your employees to realize their ideas.”

You can choose if you want to participate. The winning company will be chosen by a jury formed by the National Bank among all the entries received for the contest’s 2026 edition.



INNOVATIVE COMPANY PRIZE

As a major partner of the contest, the Desjardins Movement will give the Innovative Company Prize to the company who represents a strong creative potential and who reinvents itself constantly.

You do not need to fill in another document. The winning company will be chosen by a jury formed by Desjardins among all the entries received for the contest’s 2026 edition.



PRODUCTIVITY PRIZE

As a major partner of the contest, Investissement Québec will award the Productivity Prize to the company which has demonstrated an increase in productivity through the implementation of a new technology or an innovative process to accelerate its growth. The project must have been initiated in the last two years.

You can choose if you want to participate. The winning company will be chosen by a jury formed by Investissement Québec among all the entries received for the 2026 Food Innovation Award contest.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The jury, made up of professionals who represent or revolve around the food industry, will meet in October 2026 to assess the projects entered in the competition.

All innovative projects are evaluated according to criteria specific to each category, in a fair and equitable manner, regardless of the size of the company.

To be a finalist, the submitted innovation project must obtain a minimum of 70%, meaning 70 points out of a maximum of 100 (or 59.5 points out of a maximum of 85 for the sub-categories "Distilled alcohols" and "Fermented alcoholic drinks"). The highest cumulative score will determine the winner.

RESPECT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The members of the jury will ensure that all the elements related to this competition and transmitted by the companies, in particular the files, information and data contained therein, are treated under the strictest confidentiality. Application files will be destroyed after the awards ceremony.

ENTRY FEE

Number of employees	Entry fee (+ tax)
Less than 20	\$275
20 to 49	\$525
50 and more	\$1 525

PAYMENT

The entry fee is payable online at https://conseiltaq.com/event/prix_innovation_en_alimentation_2026

The payment must be received **before 11:59PM on Thursday, September 24th, 2026.**

GENERAL RULES

1. No document, sample or other item transmitted as part of the contest will be returned to the participating company. All documents submitted when entering the competition will be destroyed by shredding after the prizes have been awarded.
2. The organizers reserve the right to reject incomplete registration files, which do not meet the required conditions, have not been written in a clear and legible manner or have not been deposited at the place and / or before the deadline indicated in this document.
3. The jury reserves the right to reassign a file entered in one category to another appropriate category, as well as for the subcategories of the "New or improved products" category.
4. The decisions of the jury are final and the obtained scores are not shared.
5. The organizers reserve the right to use or allow the use of the names of finalists and winners without payment of fees or royalties, for the sole purpose of promoting the contest.
6. The participating company must sign the declaration by virtue of which it releases the organizers and all persons and organizations involved in the competition from any liability.
7. The organizers and the jury will treat confidentially all documents relating to an innovation project presented within the framework of this competition.
9. The registration fees are non-refundable.

PREPARATION OF THE CONTEST ENTRY

- Registration forms will be sent to you after your official registration at https://conseiltaq.com/event/prix_innovation_en_alimentation_2026.
 - The complete file of your application must include:
 - ✓ The duly completed registration form
 - ✓ A copy of your certificate in Hygiene and food safety for projects registered in the New or improved products category (for alcohols, your certificate from the RACJ)
 - ✓ Proof of online payment (either by credit card or bank transfer or check, in the name of CTAQ, covering the cost of registration)
 - ✓ Your company logo, on transparent background, PNG format
 - ✓ A high resolution, Web format, picture of your innovative product/packaging/technology
 - You must send your file, by email, to concours@conseiltaq.com **before 11:59PM on Thursday, September 24th, 2026.**
 - All applicants will receive an acknowledgment of receipt by email within days of receipt of their registration form.
 - Please note that all registered applicants will be required to provide sufficient product/packaging samples for all jury members (if applicable). The sample delivery date and quantities needed will be communicated to them at the end of September once the page detailing the different formats of the product is received.
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QUESTIONS

concours@conseiltaq.com

450 349-1521

ANNEX

EVALUATION CRITERIA NEW OR IMPROVED PRODUCTS

- The proposed projects will be evaluated according to the following seven (7) major categories of criteria.
- The innovation project will be rated only on the criteria that apply.
- A minimum score of 70% is required to be a finalist.

<p>Level and quality of innovation Describe the innovative aspect of the product and how it stands out from the competition.</p>	35 points
<p>Difficulty level Describe what effort was required to create and develop the product.</p>	15 points
<p>Nutritional profile* Describe the nutritional profile of the product and compare it to the competition.</p>	15 points
<p>Sustainable development Describe how the innovation is eco-responsible and brings about an improvement in terms of sustainable development.</p>	10 points
<p>Potential for success in the grocery store or food service Describe the process for bringing your product to market, target markets, retail price and reception.</p>	10 points
<p>Canadian Sourcing Describe your efforts to source Canadian ingredients.</p>	5 points
<p>Practicality Describe how the innovation improves the use of the product.</p>	5 points
<p>Pleasure and taste Describe what characterizes your product in terms of texture, taste and consumer appeal.</p>	5 points

* Not applicable for the sub-categories "Distilled alcohols" and "Fermented alcoholic drinks".

EVALUATION CRITERIA PACKAGING

- The proposed projects will be evaluated according to the following six (6) major categories of criteria.
- A minimum score of 70% is required to be a finalist.

<p>Degree and quality of innovation Describe the innovative aspect of the packaging and how it stands out from the competition. Describe the technical challenges you faced and the solutions that were implemented.</p>	<p>30 points</p>
<p>Impact on the product-packaging combination Describe how the packaging innovation extends or preserves the product's shelf life and integrity.</p>	<p>15 points</p>
<p>Consumer experience Define the innovative aspect of the use of the product: handling, format, ease of opening and closing, handling during transport. What improvements have you made to minimize losses and reduce waste?</p>	<p>20 points</p>
<p>Communication Describe the message you wanted to convey through your packaging, as well as your strategy for ensuring its uniqueness within its category. Marketing approach. Graphic design (clarity of information including the nutrition facts table, claims, ingredients, compliance with standards and best practices), overall visual impact, and originality.</p>	<p>10 points</p>
<p>Reduction of Environmental Footprint Eco-design, materials used, end-of-life management, recyclability, packaging-to-product ratio, and environmental impact.</p>	<p>25 points</p>

EVALUATION CRITERIA TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCTIVITY

- The proposed projects will be evaluated according to the following four (4) major categories of criteria.
- A minimum score of 70% is required to be a finalist.

<p>Context Describe the issue that led to the development of the project, the objectives and/or goals pursued.</p>	<p>10 points</p>
<p>Innovation description Describe your project in detail, the innovative aspects, how they allow you to differentiate yourself, your investments.</p>	<p>25 points</p>
<p>Technology transfer associated with the project Technology transfers, external resources used (if applicable) and the advantages/disadvantages of each. (The benefits for the food industry are quantified, identified and credible.)</p>	<p>15 points</p>
<p>Expected and/or obtained results The company presents its innovation's market position and unique value proposition. Competitors, their strengths, and how the solution compares are highlighted. Direct benefits for the company, such as new jobs, revenue, intellectual property, partnerships, customers, etc., are identified and quantified.</p>	<p>50 points</p>