

INTERNATIONAL *Women's Day* PANEL



Masoumeh Bejaei, Ph.D., Research Scientist, Summerland Research and Development Centre, Science and Technology Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Masoumeh Bejaei leads a cross-disciplinary research program in sensory evaluation and consumer research at AAFC. Her program supports AAFC's mandates and priorities, and addresses the department's science missions by leading research to evaluate Canadian consumer support for various strategies to increase tree fruit resilience to climate change, contributing to the development of integrated solutions to improve production management and best practices guidelines, conducting research to identify strategies for the application of edible insects and reduction of food waste, and leading research to advance the application of novel technologies to automate product sorting and quality assessment.

Masoumeh earned her M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at the University of British Columbia. During her postdoctoral research, she investigated the effects of including black soldier fly larvae in laying hen diets on egg quality and sensory characteristics. She has contributed to interdepartmental projects with Health Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Canadian Space Agency. Masoumeh is a member of AAFC Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).



Amy Bowen, PhD, Director - Consumer, Sensory & Market Insights, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

Amy Bowen is the Director of Consumer, Sensory and Market Insights at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. Her research uses sensory and consumer science to understand the drivers that impact consumer preference, choice and adoption of horticultural products and technologies. She leads a group of industry experts with extensive knowledge of horticultural products, value chains and consumer markets to support research and innovation by providing multidisciplinary solutions from concept design and testing to finished product evaluations for fresh, processed or packaged horticultural commodities and technologies.

Amy has a PhD in Biological Sciences with a specialization in Plant Science, Oenology and Viticulture from Brock University, a BSc. Honours in Molecular Biology and Genetics from the University of Guelph and is a Certified Sommelier. She sits on the Scientific Advisory Panel of the Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology and the Innovation Steering Committee of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association.



Melanie Budicky, VP, Research, Development and Regulatory, Giraffe Foods

As an Operations, Quality Assurance and Research and Development Executive, Melanie has broad and deep experience in the food industry across a diverse range of products. Her experience spans the lifecycle of product management of innovation, development, realization and execution. Working across a range of product platforms and business units, she demonstrates strong business impact through developing and deploying standards, policies and management systems to clearly define expectations, increase capability and enhance compliance. e.g. Quality Management Systems, Product Specifications, (Stage and Gate), Risk assessment methodology.

Melanie's passion and commitment is the development of people, process and technologies to bring consumer winning food products of the highest quality to market safely and efficiently.

Melanie aligns food safety policies and programs across business units, build great teams, engage manufacturing operations network to drive change and continuous improvement, manage organizational change and to build and implement foundational quality management systems.



Annie Whangbo, UBC Food Science Student and CIFST Student Committee Chair

Annie Whangbo is a 5th year student studying food science at the University of British Columbia. She is volunteering as Chair of the CIFST Student Committee, helping to foster an online community of Canadian food science students so they can express their creative endeavors in a positive environment.

As a panelist for this year's CIFST International Women's Day event, Annie will share her experiences of what it is like to be a leader as a woman and her observations from recent internships in the food industry and academia.

MODERATOR



Lavina Gully, Regional Innovation Director – BC/Yukon, Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN)

Lavina is the BC Regional Innovation Director for the Canadian Food Innovation Network (CFIN). CFIN is a national, member-based organization that's stimulating innovation across Canada's food sector. She draws upon her hands-on industry and manufacturing experience to help businesses achieve their innovation goals. Prior to joining CFIN, Lavina worked as a food scientist and product developer and has launched numerous new products in bakery, soup, beverages, plant-based nutrition and meat alternatives. She loves the multi-disciplinary aspect of R&D, and started her career immersed in ingredient functionality, process engineering, quality systems, packaging and scale-up before moving onto exploring the fuzzy front-end of consumer research.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and a Master of Food Science from the University of British Columbia, and is also proud to serve on the board of CIFST.