

## PROTEINMB PARTNERSHIP FORUM WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

[ProteinMB](#) is focused on facilitating protein industry growth through value chain collaboration, providing representation and advocacy for the sector, measuring sustainability performance, supporting research and knowledge translation, and industry promotion and marketing. ProteinMB engages with the protein sector across 10 strategic areas outlined in the [Manitoba Protein Advantage Strategy \(MPAS\) action plan](#).

The objective of the 2025 ProteinMB Partnership Forum was to share and celebrate 2024-2025 accomplishments and identify priorities for the industry and ProteinMB that align with the MPAAF for the 2025-2026 year.

### ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

ProteinMB held an annual Partnership Forum on April 11, 2025, at the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters office in Winnipeg with a corresponding survey to gain additional insights. Attendance at the forum included ~70 diverse representatives from Manitoba's protein sector from industry, government, academia, and financial institutions. This document provides a summary of feedback received from the forum.

### WHAT WE HEARD

Feedback was received on issues and opportunities in the protein sector that require industry collaboration and ProteinMB facilitation. The focus of the forum was to collect ideas on potential Roundtable topics and project-specific Working Groups. This included ProteinMB facilitated Roundtables and Working Groups, as well as externally facilitated collaborations for ProteinMB participation.

# PROTEINMB ROUNDTABLE PRIORITIES

The primary function of ProteinMB Roundtables is to bring sector participants together around key areas of the protein strategy or specific topics. These gatherings aim to enhance information sharing, identify challenges and opportunities, and foster collaboration.

## *Externally Facilitated Roundtables:*

- Participants suggested that ProteinMB should engage in several externally led initiatives, including:
- Assiniboine College Soil Health Network
- Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef
- Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops
- Environmental Standards Association Steering Committee for Agriculture
- Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) Soil Health
- Manitoba Association of Watersheds
- Soil Conservation Council of Canada

## *ProteinMB Facilitated Roundtables:*

Participants suggested the following topics as opportunities for ProteinMB facilitated Roundtables:

### **Asset Maps**

Participants in the forum shared that an Asset Map Roundtable would be beneficial to discover who is developing and maintaining Asset Maps and to determine if there an opportunity for improved collaboration in this area. A Roundtable could help assess needs and coordinate efforts around Asset Maps.

### **Bank Sustainability Valuation**

A need was expressed to explore who is currently incentivizing best management practices, the protection of ecosystem goods and services, and the use of natural infrastructure. Forum participants recommended that a Roundtable on this topic would help consolidate efforts and share best practices.

### **Business Landscape Supports**

Participants recommended a Roundtable to identify and clarify the financial supports available to businesses in Manitoba. By bringing together key organizations, this Roundtable will help map out who is providing what, making it easier to translate and share knowledge about funding resources and supports across the ProteinMB ecosystem.

### **Biodiversity & Green House Gas (GHG) Emissions**

Roundtables for Biodiversity and GHG emissions were proposed to focus on best practices, available incentives, and existing measurement tools related to biodiversity improvement and carbon/GHG emission reduction strategies.

### **Commodity Group Measurement, Monitoring & Verification (MMV)**

Participants identified an opportunity to facilitate commodity groups to discuss MMV initiatives, how sustainability is defined across the value chain, and what supports are in place for their members.

### **Market Intelligence**

Participants recommended a Roundtable initiative to share who is doing what in the space of Market Intelligence. The opportunity would improve awareness of current efforts, uncover gaps or overlaps, and identify areas where

collaboration could strengthen insights, reduce duplication, and maximize the value of Market Intelligence for businesses and organizations across Manitoba.

## Marketing MMV

Forum participants highlighted the value of a Roundtable focused on Marketing MMV. This would allow the sector to better understand who is doing what in MMV, how to effectively market these efforts, what language is being used, and how to access markets for sustainably produced protein.

## New Technology & Tools

A Roundtable on new and emerging technologies in Manitoba's protein sector was proposed. This would help organizations stay informed about innovations that could enhance operations. It would also provide an opportunity for participants to share their own developments or technology wish lists. The Roundtable could facilitate collaboration efforts around co-packing, training, and R&D.

## Reconciliation

Participants suggested the idea for a ProteinMB facilitated Reconciliation Roundtable. The Roundtable would explore how organizations are incorporating reconciliation practices within their operations, and how industry can advance this work in a meaningful and respectful way.

Finance/Investment

# PROTEINMB WORKING GROUP PRIORITIES

Working Groups are action oriented and formed to address specific issues or opportunities through collaborative projects aligned with the MPAAF.

## Externally Facilitated Working Groups

Participants suggested that ProteinMB should engage in several externally led initiatives, including:

- Career Pathways Initiative
- Centre for Agri-Food Benchmarking Agri-Science Project
- KAP Labour Taskforce
- Made-in-Manitoba (CME)
- Vision Quest

## ProteinMB Facilitated Working Groups

Participants suggested that the following opportunities could benefit from ProteinMB facilitated collaboration:

### Indicator Matrix

A proposed Working Group to maintain and update the MMV Indicator Matrix was raised during the Forum. This tool would help inform the sector of evolving sustainability indicators and their corresponding resources, research, and policies. This would support transparency and alignment across the value chain.

### Navigating Research Partnerships

Navigating Research Partnerships was a Working Group suggestion brought forward by participants. There was a strong desire for support and guidance to help individuals and organizations build and maintain effective research partnerships. Participants emphasized the need for accessible resources, mentorship opportunities, understanding IP rights, and practical tools to successfully initiate and navigate collaborative research relationships.

## **Protein Ecosystem Mapping & Outreach**

Participants recommended forming a working group to conduct a deep dive into the ProteinMB Associates ecosystem. The group would work to better understand the broader protein ecosystem, identify gaps and opportunities, and develop a targeted outreach and engagement plan to grow the Associate base and opportunity for CME membership.

## **Voice & Hub**

Forum participants expressed the need for ProteinMB to act as both a voice and hub for all things related to sustainable protein in Manitoba. ProteinMB should listen to and amplify the sector's voice. The ProteinMB website should serve as a trusted, go-to resource, featuring an associate database, funding opportunities, business insights, research strategies, and MPA Action Framework updates. a stronger farm to table province.

## **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2025–2026**

Associates provided the following input that does not meet the definitions of Roundtables or Working Groups but could benefit from ecosystem collaboration.

## **Co-Packers in Manitoba**

Participants highlighted a lack of available co-packers as well as limited visibility into existing infrastructure capabilities. This gap makes it difficult for businesses to scale production, access specialized equipment, or find the right partners to meet their needs. A centralized forum or platform could help address these challenges by improving connection, transparency, and collaboration across the sector.

## **Discovery Meetings**

Increase proactive outreach to companies and individuals within the sustainable protein ecosystem. Discovery meetings can serve as a platform to identify shared interests, uncover collaboration opportunities, and strengthen relationships across the sector. Expanding these efforts will help connect underrepresented players and foster a more cohesive innovation network.

## **Engage in Sioux Valley Grasslands Project**

Sioux Valley Grasslands Project was identified in alignment with MPAAF. This initiative supports sustainable land use and biodiversity conservation while promoting economic opportunities for local producers. Forum feedback emphasized the importance of respectful engagement with Indigenous communities and aligning conservation goals with agricultural productivity.

## **Feedback Tracker**

Creating a feedback tracker would provide a structured way to gather insights from Associates on key issues such as funding processes, processing times, diversity equity and inclusion considerations, and overall ease of access and use. This information could help inform funders and decision-makers, leading to more responsive and effective programming.

## **Funding and Support Awareness**

Broaden initiatives to map out and communicate available funding, grant, and support programs relevant to sustainable protein development. Improving sector-wide awareness and accessibility to these resources will empower ecosystem, especially early-stage ventures and small producers, to take full advantage of growth and innovation opportunities.

## **Letter to Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding Approval Process**

Collaboration on a letter to the CFIA would help clearly communicate the barriers posed by the current approval process for novel feed. This correspondence would highlight challenges and seek ways to streamline or improve the process to support innovation and industry growth.

## **MPAAF Tracking**

There is an opportunity to improve knowledge transfer and better identify who is doing what in relation to the MPAAF. Participants expressed a need for greater clarity and coordination across initiatives, as current efforts are often siloed or duplicative. Enhancing transparency and communication would support more strategic collaboration and maximize the impact of collective efforts.

## **Policy and Advocacy**

Opportunity for additional efforts in the policy and infrastructure space was identified. Participants identified the power of a collective voice what could articulate and drive change in trade, policy barriers, and infrastructure advocacy.

## **Pathways Services Promotion**

There is an opportunity to better promote the various pathways services available across Manitoba and at the federal level. By linking these services on a central website, we could increase awareness and accessibility, helping businesses and the ecosystem more easily navigate available supports.

## **Protein Assessment In Vitro**

Engaging researchers to discuss a new in vitro protein analysis method is essential to understand existing roadblocks to its adoption. This connection would help identify solutions to facilitate wider use of this innovative technology in protein assessment.

## **Regulatory Sandbox**

Associates identified the opportunity to foster innovation by providing a controlled environment for testing new regulatory approaches and products.

## **Role in Primary Agriculture**

Participants highlighted the importance of clarifying and communicating ProteinMB's strategic role in primary agriculture. It was shared that defining this role in relation to other organizations and industry ecosystem is important. Pursuing meaningful partnerships in the primary agriculture space will help strengthen the foundation of the sustainable protein value chain and align priorities across sectors.

## **Scope Federal Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Sessions**

Scoping FPT information sessions hosted by government bodies would enable a coordinated approach to data gathering through Forums. This would ensure that information and concerns from Associates are effectively submitted and represented.

## **Sector-Wide Inclusion**

Ensure comprehensive representation of all voices within the sector, particularly primary producers and processor, across events, programs, and initiatives. Inclusive engagement strategies will ensure that the perspectives and needs of key contributors are heard, acknowledged, and integrated into sector planning and decision-making.

## University of Saskatchewan Land-Based Indigenous Education

There is interest in exploring the University of Saskatchewan Land-Based Indigenous Education program. Better understanding of this initiative is needed regarding its structure, outcomes, and impact. This would help inform how a similar program could be encouraged or adapted locally to support Indigenous-led education and community development.

### 3-Tier Investable Opportunities List

Developing a 3-tier list of investable business opportunities—categorized as small, medium, and large—would support government efforts to attract investors. This curated list would provide visibility into businesses seeking investment and help align them with appropriate funding and partnership opportunities.

## NEXT STEPS

Thank you to everyone who participated in ProteinMB's second annual Partnership Forum. Your input will shape ProteinMB's collaborative efforts over the coming year. Stay connected by becoming a ProteinMB Associate and subscribing to our monthly e-newsletter for updates and engagement opportunities.

## QUESTIONS

Please contact ProteinMB at [info@proteinmb.ca](mailto:info@proteinmb.ca) with any questions about this report.



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