

**One of a Kind Plant-Based Food Pilot Plant Opens its Doors at NC Research Campus***NC Food Innovation Lab Positioned to Drive NC's Food Manufacturing Industry*

KANNAPOLIS, N. C. — The NC Food Innovation Lab (NCFIL) officially launches on Thursday, November 14, 2019 with a ribbon cutting, facility tour and open house celebration. NCFIL is a 16,000 sq. ft. plant-based food processing and product development facility located on the 350-acre NC Research Campus in Kannapolis, NC. Media coverage is invited.

This pilot-scale facility, complete with state-of-the-art equipment, will serve as a catalyst for plant-based food research and food manufacturing. NC Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler states, “I foresee NCFIL doing for food manufacturing what the North Carolina Biotechnology Center has done to grow and promote our state’s biotechnology industry.” NCFIL’s distinct focus on plant-based food science teamed with economic development efforts makes this food innovation lab like no other. On the cutting edge of processing technologies, NCFIL will meet the needs of a variety of clients and their innovative products, benefitting the entire food industry.

NCFIL is ready to serve its local, regional and global community—including growth-phase entrepreneurs, established food companies, venture capitalists and accelerators. “NCFIL’s strength is in its versatility—this facility will succeed with a wide variety of customers with unique needs and objectives,” explains Dr. Bill Aimutis, executive director, NCFIL. “We’ll be able to support start-up companies working to get new products to market; established companies seeking to expand product lines; and equipment manufacturers looking to demonstrate new equipment capability.”

North Carolina is the perfect environment for food manufacturing innovation, especially considering the state’s rich history of converting agricultural resources into value-added products. North Carolina's agriculture and agribusinesses already account for \$91.8 billion of the state’s annual GDP and 17 percent of all jobs. NC farmers grow 90+ crops in over 400 different soil types – and the state is a top 10 producer in 19 commodities. NCFIL will support the development of value-added food products made from NC-grown crops.

In 2014, the General Assembly commissioned an economic feasibility study to evaluate food manufacturing’s potential in North Carolina. The study predicted that in less than 10 years, food manufacturing could contribute an additional 38,000 jobs and \$10.3 billion boost to the state income annually, if key recommendations were realized. In 2015, Governor Pat McCrory formed a Food Manufacturing Task Force with 35 thought leaders representing various aspects of North Carolina’s food

system to investigate how NC could seek economic opportunities in this area. NCFIL was one of the key recommendations of these leaders.

From its inception, partnership has been a cornerstone of NCFIL. NCFIL partners include:

- NC State University, provides food science and food manufacturing expertise
- North Carolina Research Campus, brings synergy of disciplines
- NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, promotes NC products, provides business services, and ensures food safety
- Economic Development Partnership of NC, provides corporate and entrepreneurial resources
- NC General Assembly, invested in construction, marketing, and sustaining of facility
- Golden LEAF Foundation, awarded grant for state-of-the-art equipment

Commissioner Troxler will begin the Ribbon Cutting at 12:45 pm. More than 300+ stakeholders, partners and invested parties are expected to attend to celebrate the promise this facility holds for food manufacturing and product development in North Carolina. The following community and business leaders may share comments:

- Commissioner Steve Troxler, North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- Dean Richard H. Linton, NC State College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
- Lieutenant Governor Dan Forest, State of North Carolina
- Kenny Flowers, NC Department of Commerce
- Senator Brent Jackson, NC General Assembly
- Senator Paul Newton, NC General Assembly
- Representative Linda Johnson, NC General Assembly
- Mr. Frank Emory, Jr., Economic Development Partnership of NC
- Mr. Scott T. Hamilton, Golden LEAF Foundation
- Dr. K.P. Sandeep, NC State College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
- Dr. Bill Aimutis, NC Food Innovation Lab

**Location** NCFIL on NC Research Campus, 150 N Research Campus Drive, Kannapolis, NC 28081

- Driving Directions: <https://bit.ly/2NqiCba>
- Directions to NCFIL Open House: Please follow directional signs for parking.
- On-site contact for print/digital/TV: **Megan Bame, 704.798.5178; [mweddin@ncsu.edu](mailto:mweddin@ncsu.edu)**

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### ***About NC Food Innovation Lab***

The NC Food Innovation Lab is a 16,000 sq. ft. plant-based food processing and product development facility located on the 350-acre NC Research Campus in Kannapolis, NC. It operates under Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP) regulatory guidelines and strict food manufacturing safety practices, in addition to Total Quality Management Programs. NCFIL offers a range of customizable services, including product research and development; pilot plant production; training and workshops; and food industry consulting to serve a global community of growth-phase entrepreneurs, established food companies, venture capitalists and accelerators.