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Rutgers Food Innovation Center Launches *RutgersX* Accelerator Program
First Cohort of Accelerator Companies to Pitch at November Conference

New Brunswick, NJ -- The Rutgers Food Innovation Center (FIC) announced today the launch of *RutgersX*, the first business accelerator program at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Business accelerators provide a cohort of entrepreneurial companies with a mentoring team that brings professional expertise, and a venue in which they can “pitch” their business to a community of angel and venture investors, strategic partners, and retail and foodservice customers. The first cohort of companies will be “pitch presenters” at the *RutgersX* – Accelerating Food Entrepreneurs Conference on November 16, 2015, in New Brunswick.

The *RutgersX* Accelerator Program was made possible by funding received from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in the fall of 2014. The Rutgers FIC was a national winner of the SBA’s first program designed to create or enhance business accelerators. The accelerator was the only award recipient in New Jersey, and one of only 50 winners nationwide from over 800 applicants.

“We are very excited about our new *RutgersX* Accelerator Program,” said Lou Cooperhouse, founder of *RutgersX* and director of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center. “In our inaugural program, we have developed an accelerator for fast-growing food companies that have been part of our Rutgers FIC client and partner network for the past several years. Given the tremendous interest we have in *RutgersX*, and our New Brunswick location that makes this an easy commute from the tri-state area, we are confident that our 2015 conference will be a sold-out event, and will be continued in 2016 and beyond. We are already making plans to expand our program and include other industry sectors in future years.”

Margaret Brennan-Tonetta, Rutgers’ associate vice president for economic development, said that Cooperhouse has “an expanded vision for the FIC and its role as a catalyst for growth in our state’s food industry.” She added, “We anticipate that *RutgersX* will create a cluster of investment capital for the food industry and provide new opportunities to bring new food products to market.”

The *RutgersX* – Accelerating Food Entrepreneurs Conference will be held during Global Entrepreneurship Week, on Monday, November 16, 2015, at the Rutgers College Avenue Student Center in New Brunswick. At the event, each food company will have a chance to make pitch presentations in front of an audience of potential funders, strategic partners, customers and fellow food entrepreneurs. The agenda will also include panel discussions with food industry leaders, conversations with successful entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, and remarks from state and national government leaders. There will be a unique opportunity for industry networking throughout the day along with interactive exhibits during lunchtime. Cost to attend the conference is \$149 per person until November 1, and \$199 per person after November 1.

For more information on the *RutgersX* Accelerator Program and *RutgersX* – Accelerating Food Entrepreneurs Conference, including information on registration and sponsorships, visit x.rutgers.edu.

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About Rutgers Food Innovation Center (FIC):

The Rutgers Food Innovation Center (FIC), based in Bridgeton, NJ, is a food business incubation and economic development accelerator program of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and has been named as “Incubator of the Year” by the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) and an “Agricultural Innovation Center Demonstration Program” by the USDA. It has also been recognized by the NBIA as a “Soft Landings” program focused on international business attraction and knowledge transfer, and it is the only Soft Landings program in the world that focuses on the food and agribusiness sector. For more information visit: foodinnovation.rutgers.edu.

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