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## ***RutgersX* Food Business Accelerator Announces Speakers and Panelists for November Conference**

### **New Jersey Lieutenant Governor among the Honored Speakers**

New Brunswick, NJ – *RutgersX*, the food accelerator of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center, today announced the speakers and panelists for the *RutgersX* Accelerating Food Entrepreneurs Conference, which will be held on Monday, November 16, at the Rutgers University College Avenue Student Center in New Brunswick, NJ.

**New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Kim Guadagno, New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher, and Rutgers’ Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development Christopher Molloy** will welcome the attendees to the conference.

“We have assembled panels of leading national and international investors from the venture, angel, and strategic investment communities as well as leaders in the food industry for our first-ever *RutgersX* Accelerator Conference,” said Lou Cooperhouse, founder of *RutgersX* and director of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center. “These speakers will complement an outstanding cohort of nine food industry entrepreneurs who will be providing pitch presentations, resulting in a unique experience for participants.”

Attendees at the *RutgersX* Accelerator Conference will include potential investors, strategic partners, customers, and fellow food industry entrepreneurs, along with students interested in entrepreneurship.

“We are very excited about the launch of *RutgersX* and what this conference signifies for the future of the food industry and entrepreneurial opportunities in the region,” Cooperhouse said.

The morning agenda includes “A Conversation with Food Industry Leaders,” featuring a discussion with **Judith Spires**, president and CEO, AG Supermarket Holdings, and **Ron Tanner**, vice president for the Specialty Food Association.

**Judith Spires** oversees a portfolio of gourmet and contemporary markets in the New York and Washington D.C, metropolitan areas operating under the Kings and Balducci’s

banners. She chairs both the New Jersey Food Council and the Academy of Food Marketing at Saint Joseph's University. She is on the executive board of the Food Marketing Institute and a trustee of LaSalle University.

**Ron Tanner** manages philanthropy, government, and industry relations for the Specialty Food Association, which operates the Fancy Food Shows® and publishes *Specialty Food Magazine*. His presentation will focus on today's trends in specialty foods and will highlight the Specialty Food Association's research on the state of the industry and trends they have seen at the Fancy Food Shows.

The afternoon agenda includes an "Investor Roundtable" with leading international experts who will discuss the factors that investors look for in a startup or established food business. President and CEO of the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA) **Kirstie Chadwick** will start off the panel with a presentation on the fundamentals of raising funding from angel, venture capital and crowdfunding sources. Other panelists include **Shen Tong**, founder and managing director of FOOD-X; **John Dutton**, operating partner at Arlon Group; **Nadav Berger**, co-founder and CEO of FoodLab Capital; and **Jeff George**, vice president, research & development, Americas, for Campbell Soup Company.

**Kirstie Chadwick** leads InBIA, a non-profit organization and thought leader and global advocate for incubators, accelerators, educational institutions and regional economic development stakeholders focused on building entrepreneurial-driven economic ecosystems. The association currently serves over 2,200 members across 60 countries.

**Shen Tong** founded FOOD-X in New York City in 2014 with SOSV, a multi-stage long-term fund, of which he is an investment partner. FOOD-X is the first international business accelerator program focused on launching food-related ventures with a \$250 million multi-stage fund.

**John Dutton** is a well-known global executive in prepared foods and has been associated with Arlon's investments in food and agriculture businesses since 2011. He currently serves on the Board of HMR Foods Holding LP, a leading manufacturer of refrigerated home meal replacements and refrigerated and frozen ready-to-eat foods, and was previously president and CEO Bakkavor USA Inc., an international provider of fresh prepared foods and produce.

**Nadav Berger** leads FoodLab Capital, an Israeli investment house that focuses on enabling breakthrough technologies in the medical food, functional food, and food technology sectors. FoodLab Capital also provides management services and enables unique food innovations to develop into successful products found on the shelves.

**Jeff George** is vice president research and development, Americas, for Campbell Soup Company. In this role, he oversees the Americas Simple Meals & Beverages R&D Team, which

is responsible for commercializing innovation and development across the three core categories of Soup & Broth, Meals & Sauces, and Beverages.

In addition to speakers and panelists, each of the nine *RutgersX* food companies will make pitch presentations in front of the audience of potential funders, strategic partners, customers and fellow food entrepreneurs. 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. For more information on the *RutgersX* Accelerator Program and *RutgersX* – Accelerating Food Entrepreneurs Conference, including information on registration and sponsorships, visit [x.rutgers.edu](http://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 International Business Innovation Association (InBIA) and an “Agricultural Innovation Center Demonstration Program” by the USDA. It has also been recognized by the InBIA 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](http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu).

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