









10 YEARS

EMILI EST. 2016

# 10 YEARS

EMILI EST. 2016

## 2016

EMILI is founded by industry and academic leaders with a common goal of growing the economy with a specific focus on advancing agtech in the Prairies.

## 2017

"EMILI leaders bullish on Manitoba initiative," says a Winnipeg Free Press article pointing to EMILI's focus on commercialization strategies and skills training around AI and machine-learning.


BUSINESS

EMILI leaders bullish on Manitoba initi

## 2018

EMILI collaborates with Protein Industries Canada on projects to advance digital agriculture in the Prairies as part of the federal government's $950 million Innovation Superclusters Program.



## 2019

Western Economic Diversification Canada announces funding for the University of Winnipeg to partner with EMILI to promote machine learning and grow the digital agriculture industry in Manitoba.



## 2020

EMILI's first Agriculture Enlightened conference is virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 384 people attend the conference online to hear from leaders in the digital agriculture sector.






**2021**

EMILI launches the Data Initiative in partnership with Protein Industries Canada to strengthen the data ecosystem, exploring topics such as data ownership, privacy, and interoperability.



**2022**

Thanks to investments from government and industry, EMILI launches Innovation Farms in Grosse Isle. This is Manitoba's first full-scale innovation farm focused on grain and oilseed production.




**2023**

EMILI's first Innovation Farms Field Day tour takes place July 27, 2023. Since then, EMILI has welcomed over 1,800 people on tours to increase understanding and adoption of agtech.



**2024**

EMILI officially opens Innovation Farms Centre, an 8,500 square foot space that increases opportunities to analyze farm data, and demonstrate and test technology solutions.




**2025**

EMILI expands its capacity with the opening of a second Innovation Farms site in MacGregor to demonstrate innovative technologies on more Manitoba crops, including potatoes.



**2026**

EMILI is a founder of the AIVA Network alongside Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and the Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN). This initiative expands the validation model EMILI developed at Innovation Farms.





# Driving agriculture innovation

## Innovation

Head to pages 7-12 for stories highlighting EMILI's commitment to advancing innovation adoption in Canada.

## Partnership

Turn to pages 13-18 to learn how EMILI collaborates with producers, industry, investors, and innovators to drive agriculture innovation.

## Engagement

Flip to pages 19-26 to read how EMILI increases skills and knowledge during field tours, webinars, and Canada's agtech conference, Agriculture Enlightened.

***Canadian agriculture can lead the world through transformative innovation.***

Since 2016, EMILI has shown an unwavering commitment to driving agriculture innovation, collaborating with hundreds of partners to accelerate Canada's growth as a leader in digital agriculture. As you flip through this booklet, you will see diverse examples of how this work helps Canadian farmers and innovators remain productive, competitive, and resilient.

Canada has a vital role to play in making the world a safer, more prosperous, and more sustainable place – and agriculture is at the heart of it.  We see this firsthand as we test and demonstrate technology and production practices across more than 15,000 acres at our two Innovation Farms sites here in Manitoba.

When EMILI co-founded the AIVA Network earlier this year alongside FCC and WHIN, we expanded our ability to provide a national lens on how technology works across Canada's diverse agricultural regions.

These technologies have tremendous potential, but lasting success depends on ensuring they solve real challenges on the farm. Thanks to support from industry, producers, and government, EMILI is able to serve as a trusted bridge between innovation and on-farm application.

Working together, we can accelerate adoption, foster meaningful collaboration, and ensure Canadian producers benefit from practical solutions that drive productivity, sustainability, and long-term growth far into the future.



Thank you for your ongoing support,

Jacqueline Keena



*Greg Stewart, CEO of Geco Strategic Weed Management, demonstrating technology at EMILI's Innovation Farms, Grosse Isle site (Photo credit: EMILI).*



*Cellar Insights CEO Terry Sydoryk installing sensors at EMILI's Innovation Farms MacGregor site (Photo credit: EMILI).*

# FROM OUR INBOX

Here is a selection of feedback we've received from the innovators we work with.

**Third-party validation**
"In spring 2023 we were experimenting on three farms in Alberta. Now, we're on over 180 farms. The work we did over at Innovation Farms allowed us to do the validation of our detection and prediction using EMILI's drones and staff on the ground, so we got third-party validation, which is even better."
*Greg Stewart, Geco Strategic Weed Management*

**Innovation key to success**
"Innovation is key to the future success of this industry, so when I heard about what EMILI was doing, testing and validating technology at Innovation Farms, I knew it was something I wanted to contribute to in the potato industry."
*Sheldon Wiebe, J.P. Wiebe Ltd.*

**Developing solutions for farmers**
"Working with EMILI's Innovation Farms has allowed us to enhance the GrainTracker platform and develop solutions specifically designed to meet the needs of farmers."
*Ellery Burton, Alterra Innovation*

**An ideal proving ground**
"Partnering with EMILI and Innovation Farms provides the ideal proving ground for OpticAg. With their leadership in smart farming and digital ag, we're able to accelerate field validation of both our unified AI platform and OpticAg Basics to prove how connected, AI-powered decisions can drive profitability and reduce friction for farms across the Prairies."
*Marco Hunstad, OpticAg*

**Bringing the sector together**
"EMILI does a great job of bringing multiple players in the industry, in the sector, together; funders, researchers, professional advisors like ourselves, collaborators, and farm owners to test their technology at scale and learn from each other."
*Nicolas Joubert, MLT Aikins*

**Demonstrating economic benefits**
"We have collaborated with researchers around the world, but have not yet had a solid field research partner in Canada for field trials. EMILI can provide us with the research partnership to demonstrate the economic benefits of the Seed Control Unit (SCU) for Canadian farmers."
*Dean Mayerle, Redekop Manufacturing*

**Testing in real-world conditions**
"Our partnership with Innovation Farms has been crucial in developing and testing Crop Sentry. Testing in real-world conditions, alongside Innovation Farms' expertise in collecting precise ground truth data, is accelerating our AI/ML model development and unlocking real-time insights that will empower farmers to make data-driven decisions, optimize resource use, and ultimately enhance crop resilience and yield outcomes."
*Lysa Porth, Agi3 and AIRM Consulting*

**Tuning new capabilities**
"The opportunity to work with a grower in a real operation for developing and tuning our new capabilities is hugely beneficial."
*Terry Sydoryk, Cellar Insights*

**Derisking agtech on real farms**
"As many of us know in this industry, the number one challenge that farmers face is that they only have one chance a year, one crop. So the ability to actually be able to do that testing on-farm, to derisk, that element for farmers to really be able to tell them that it works and that they can take that risk is what really differentiates the work that's done here at EMILI, and that's why FCC is so proud to be involved."
*Justine Hendricks, FCC*

**EMILI's support has been instrumental**
"The chance to use EMILI's facilities to test this technology and provide us with performance metrics has been instrumental. The ability to capture and share drone images, the variation of crop types, and the flexibility of working with the farmer during the busy harvest season has been extremely helpful in validating the product."
*Connor Entz, BranValt*

**Supporting sustainable, data-driven crop protection**
"Partnering with EMILI and accessing Innovation Farms enables us to validate and refine drone-based fungicide applications under real Prairie conditions. This collaboration accelerates the adoption of precision agriculture tools that support sustainable, data-driven crop protection."
*Kevin Falk, Corteva Agriscience*

EMILI INNOVATION FARMS

POWERED BY AgExpert

Since launching Innovation Farms powered by AgExpert in 2022, EMILI has seen technology evolve and reshape the industry, allowing producers and others working in agriculture to make data-based decisions that increase productivity, sustainability, and profitability.

**EMILI works with innovative equipment manufacturers** including BranValt, Duck Foot Parts Inc., Elmer's Manufacturing, John Deere, and MacDon to test and validate technology and production practices in their mission to make agriculture more efficient, and producers' jobs easier.

**EMILI collaborates with researchers** such as Corteva Agriscience to understand if fungicides applied by spray drone deliver similar efficacy compared with ground-based application. One of EMILI's first projects was with University of Winnipeg researchers to develop a public database of plant and weed images to train machine learning models for Prairie-centric crop management.

**EMILI tests, validates, and demonstrates on-farm hardware and software solutions** such as FCC AgExpert Field, Agi3 Crop Sentry, Alterra Innovation Grain Tracker, BASF xarvio® FIELD MANAGER, Cellar Insights Smart Storage, Crop Intelligence Farming Ultra, Geco Strategic Weed Management AI Tool, GrainFox Sinoa, OpticAg Connected Farm, Picketa Systems LENS™, and TerraWave Inventory Management.

**EMILI also supports student researchers**, such as the University of Toronto's Aerospace Team. While student researchers worked on a FINCH mission satellite in Toronto, five fields on Innovation Farms in Grosse Isle were being tracked by an EnMAP hyperspectral satellite mission.

**Drones are a popular technology demonstration during EMILI field tours. Producers look to drones for everything from field mapping to pesticide application.**

Conducting more than 30 flights over eight fields in a given year, EMILI uses a drone to collect data otherwise invisible to the human eye such as vegetative indices that indicate the health of crops for Agi3's Crop Sentry System, and collecting images of 12 pea varieties for the National Research Council of Canada and the University of Winnipeg's machine learning algorithm project.

When applied to the machine learning algorithms being developed at EMILI's Innovation Farms, the data EMILI collects powers technology to inform decision-making that could potentially increase crop yields, expedite crop breeding, and optimize input application.

While conducting trials on EMILI's Innovation Farms, Corteva Agriscience Research Scientist Dr. Kevin Falk is developing a research methodology for using spray drones for small plot trials, and assessing how well Corteva crop protection products perform when applied by drones compared to conventional methods such as tractor-mounted sprayers.

"Drones offer flexibility, whether that be for imaging fields or to spray products more sustainably and in trickier areas," said EMILI Innovation Farms Manager Leanne Koroscil. "Drones also empower farmers to make more informed management decisions by adding them as a tool to their toolkit."




## 2022

EMILI announces the launch of Innovation Farms powered by AgExpert. The first site is in Grosse Isle with five projects.



## 2023

EMILI undertakes 10 projects, and begins hosting field days such as partnering with Fertilizer Canada to host Manitoba 4R Day,




## 2024

EMILI increases to 20 Innovation Farms projects, and celebrates Innovation Farms Centre grand opening with Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew attending.




## 2025

More than 800 people tour Innovation Farms including agriculture ministers from across Canada. EMILI undertakes 25 projects and launches a second Innovation Farms site in MacGregor.



## 2026

Canada's Minister of AI and Digital Innovation visits EMILI's Innovation Farms to see AI powered agtech in action. Of the 30+ projects taking place on Innovation Farms in 2026, one-third involve AI.



> **For innovation to truly bolster the agriculture sector and drive greater economic growth, we have to help proven technologies reach scale.**
>
> JACQUELINE KEENA, EMILI CEO

*Farmer Sheldon Wiebe and Innovation Farms Manager Leanne Koroscil during a demonstration of Autonomous Pivot (Photo credit: EMILI).*

# EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF AI-POWERED AGTECH

AI is a powerful, multi-purpose technology that has the potential to hyperoptimize on-farm activities to a more precise level than ever to help farmers reduce costs, manage data, and increase productivity.

"AI can be a valuable tool to optimize decision making," said EMILI Innovation Farms Manager Leanne Koroscil. "As data quality improves and AI platforms continue to evolve, the value they can deliver to farmers will only increase. But realizing that potential requires ongoing testing, greater data literacy, and building the trust and confidence farmers need to integrate these tools into their operations."

By deploying technology in fully-operational Manitoba farm settings, EMILI is able to validate what works and provide innovators with feedback on areas of improvement.

"Ground truthing the technology is critically important to ensure it is solving a problem for farmers and providing accurate data insights," said Koroscil. "AI models don't always get it right. Our team spends hours in the field counting weed populations, checking soil moisture levels, evaluating environmental conditions, and collecting agronomic measurements to provide boots-on-the-ground validation of what works and what doesn't."

Of the 30+ equipment and technologies being demonstrated and tested on EMILI's Innovation Farms in 2026, a third involve AI.

Potatoes are a significant crop in Manitoba where



*EMILI summer student Cole Ives collects data to validate the Agi3 CropSentry System (Photo credit: EMILI).*

potato fields make up 17.8 per cent of Canada's potato acreage. In 2023, the province exported $711 million worth of potatoes and potato products.

Early disease detection is especially important in potato crops, which are prone to black dot and early blight. One technology that addresses this is the BioScout Airborne Spore Monitoring System. It uses AI to autonomously track airborne fungal spores in real time, helping to identify disease risk before symptoms are visible at EMILI's Innovation Farms MacGregor site.

About 100 kilometres away, at EMILI's Innovation Farms Grosse Isle site, AI-powered technology is deployed in a number of crops including wheat, oat, barley, corn, soybeans, peas, and canola in order to demonstrate what better data, automation, and precision systems can do on the farm.

EMILI's team spends hours counting weed populations, checking soil moisture levels, evaluating environmental conditions, and collecting agronomic measurements on technologies such as Miraterra Technology's AI companion, Geco Strategic Weed Management's AI software, Optic Ag's Connected Farm Platform, Agi3's Crop Sentry System, and more.

Deploying technology in fully-operational farm settings allows EMILI to provide innovators with insight into what works and feedback on areas of improvement.

**INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT**



## Increasing investment to help Canadian agtech scale

From 2021-2023, EMILI's Emergence Grants funded over 220k toward emerging technologies by prairie innovators such as Alterra Innovations, GrainFox, InputsPro, Taproot Research, Tactica Interactive, TheoryMesh, and Ukkö Robotics. This funding opened doors for small-to-medium organizations and increased the capacity of agtech startups and scale-ups in the province.



# Increasing agtech *adoption*

By deploying technology in fully-operational Manitoba farm settings, EMILI is able to validate what works and provide innovators with feedback to iterate and scale.




## Increasing *harvest efficiency*

Ahead of 2026 harvest, EMILI outfitted a MacDon W155 swather and a John Deere X9 combine with **Duck Foot®** paddle tines to evaluate the impact on header loss and harvest efficiency. The crop data that EMILI provides allows the Canadian company to put a dollar amount to what the paddle tines can do for producers.

## Demonstrating *return-on-investment*

During 2025 harvest, EMILI found that the **Elmer's Manufacturing** HIVE Motherbin increased labour flexibility, increased the ease and speed of loading trucks with grain, and ultimately allowed harvest to be completed faster. In most crop types, the HIVE Motherbin reduced the amount of time the combine spent idling.




## From three farms to 180 *in seven countries*

Over four seasons on EMILI's Innovation Farms, **Geco Strategic Weed Management** has experimented with different use cases to better understand how its AI software can help farmers and agronomists make crop decisions. In 2023, it was tested on three farms in Western Canada. It is now used on 180+ farms in seven countries.



## Advancing prototypes to *commercial scale*

Ahead of the 2025 growing season, a team from **BranValt** met up in the shop at EMILI's Innovation Farms Centre to install a prototype of a split frame concave on a John Deere X9 combine. They wanted to see how the prototype operated in real-world conditions throughout the growing season, to validate its ability to make concave transitions faster and easier between crop types, ultimately saving time and money for the farmer. The season was a success, and the X9 Split Frame MAD Concave was commercially available in time for the 2026 harvest season.



## Scaling AI-powered *storage technology*

After demonstrating remote monitoring of potato health spoilage sensors in storage bins at EMILI's Innovation Farms MacGregor site, Canadian agtech company **Cellar Insights** gained significant investment with an oversubscribed seed round to scale AI-powered potato storage technology.

AIVA NETWORK

EMILI is proud to be a founder of the Agriculture, Innovation, Validation, and Adoption (AIVA) Network, alongside Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and the Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN).

The May 2026 announcement of the launch of the AIVA Network increases EMILI's ability to bring proven agtech solutions to market and derisk technology adoption.

By expanding on the success of the validation model developed on EMILI's Innovation Farms, combined with WHIN's farmer adoption model, and FCC's investment in the Canadian agriculture and food industry, AIVA is well-positioned to, as their mission states, "champion Canada to be a global leader in agtech innovation".

"EMILI is committed to expanding Canada's place as a global leader in transformative innovation," said EMILI CEO Jacqueline Keena when the initiative was announced. "Ensuring that agtech has a clear pathway to be tested, scaled, and adopted across Canada is a big task, with significant opportunity for increased efficiency and productivity in agriculture. That's why we are proud to partner with FCC and WHIN to launch AIVA."

EMILI's Innovation Farms is one of four AIVA validation hubs across Canada. In addition to EMILI's Innovation Farms, located in Manitoba, AIVA has partnerships with Olds College with sites in Alberta and Saskatchewan, Area X.O in Ottawa, Ontario, and Innovation Farms Ontario, near Bothwell, Ontario.



In collaboration with other AIVA validation sites, EMILI is evaluating technology developed by AgExpert, Corteva Agriscience, Geco Strategic Weed Management, Miraterra, Picketa Systems, and VeriGrain during the 2026 season.

"AIVA's ability to collaborate and gather data across the country will expand our understanding of the impact of the cutting-edge technologies we are testing and validating on EMILI's Innovation Farms as well as introducing us to technology being tested on other sites," said EMILI Innovation Farms Manager Leanne Koroscil.

**AgExpert Field and Accounting Software**
EMILI is collecting plant tissue and soil samples to create a framework for a sustainability regional benchmarking model.

**Corteva Agriscience Spray Drone Trials**
Corteva Agriscience is conducting trials on EMILI's Innovation Farms and fields across Canada to research fungicide and herbicide applications using a spray drone.

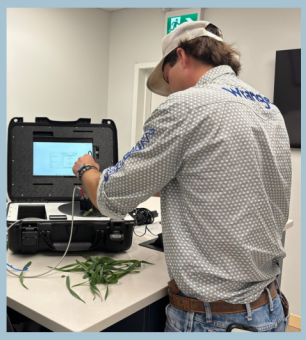
**Geco Strategic Weed Management AI Tool**
EMILI is working with Geco Strategic Weed Management to assess the performance of farm management software for practices (such as spraying and seeding) paired with their predictive AI software for proactive weed management.

**Miraterra Platform**
EMILI is evaluating the quality of Miraterra's AI companion's analysis based on seasonal prompts.

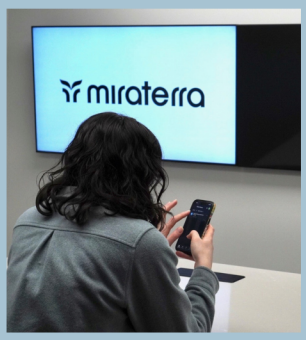
**Picketa Systems LENS™**
EMILI is testing the Picketa Systems LENS™ tissue scanner which provides in-field plant tissue nutrient analysis as an alternative to lab submissions for faster fertilizer decisions..

**VeriGrain AccuSampler™**
EMILI is using the VeriGrain AccuSampler™ to collect samples of soybeans and corn. Bar codes on the sample labels create a digital record to better understand grain quality.










## Proven tech for Canadian farmers. A clear path for innovators

AIVA is a Canada-wide network that partners with Canadian farmers and innovation farms to extensively test early-stage and market-ready agtech. We provide standardized testing protocols to help farmers pilot technology and use their feedback to guide agtech development and adoption nationwide.

Multi-regional trials allow AIVA to gather broader datasets from across diverse geographic regions. This enables agtech innovators to validate and continually develop their product, while identifying the best solutions for specific Canadian farming operations. Learn more at **aivanetwork.ca**.



> **Canada is full of smart ideas—it just needs the right setup to help them grow, scale, and actually stick.**
>
> AT A DIGITAL CROSSROADS (MAY 2026)

*EMILI tests and validates technology during seeding at EMILI's Innovation Farms Grosse Isle site (Photo credit: EMILI).*

# PARTNERING TO DRIVE AGRICULTURE INNOVATION

Canada's agriculture and food sector is rapidly embracing digital technologies, from artificial intelligence and precision agriculture to data-driven decision-making. Yet the conversations shaping policy have often remained fragmented, with limited opportunities for leaders across industry, government, research, and technology to work together on shared priorities.

EMILI and the **Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI)** are working together to address this gap.

**The Digital Agri-Food Policy Forum,** formed in 2026, is a national initiative designed to bring together diverse voices to identify practical, policy-focused solutions to accelerate digital agriculture in Canada.

A joint submission to **Canada's AI strategy consultations** in 2025 highlights the strategic importance of agriculture and agri-food, not only in its historic role underpinning Canada's economy and food security, but also in its expanding contribution as an engine of innovation, resilience, and sustainability for the broader economy.

***The Future is Digital*** report, which published in 2025, explores how public policy could better support the development and adoption of digital agriculture technologies.

***At a Digital Crossroads***, which published in 2026, expands the scope of the 2025 report to identify how gains in primary production will only translate into stronger performance if they are matched by increased digital capacity in processing and throughout the broader supply chain.



*EMILI Board Chair Ray Bouchard (left) at provincial water strategy announcement on November 8, 2022 (Photo credit: EMILI).*

# Working together to manage water sustainably

In April 2021, the Government of Manitoba provided EMILI with a grant to establish a Water Strategy Fund to enable stakeholder engagement, conduct research into best practices in other jurisdictions, and launch strategic water projects to accelerate and inform the government's creation of a new provincial water management strategy.

EMILI's connections to government, industry, academia and non-profit organizations across Manitoba and the Prairies, allowed us to tap into a broad range of perspectives around water usage, water-related issues and the potential application of intelligent technologies.

To guide EMILI's work, the Province and EMILI jointly appointed an oversight committee with representatives from government, business, industry, and the Winnipeg-based International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Strategic water projects included creating a customized, predictive water supply/demand tool for Manitoba powered by AI, completing a comprehensive study on opportunities for increased water conservation and efficiency in Manitoba, and analyzing the potential ROI of increasing provincial irrigation capacity.

**INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT**



## Bringing proven technology to market

The opportunity to forge and strengthen connections with investors and innovators has been instrumental in helping the entrepreneurs EMILI works with scale their business. EMILI's connections to agtech-related VC funds and the support we provide innovators attracted over **$27 million** in private sector investment from 2024-2026.

Scan the QR code to learn how EMILI helps bring technology to market.



# Cross-sector *collaboration*

As an industry-led non-profit, EMILI sees firsthand the importance of cross-industry collaboration to empower people with digital skills, support startups to grow in the Prairies, and accelerate Canada's growth as a leader in digital agriculture.



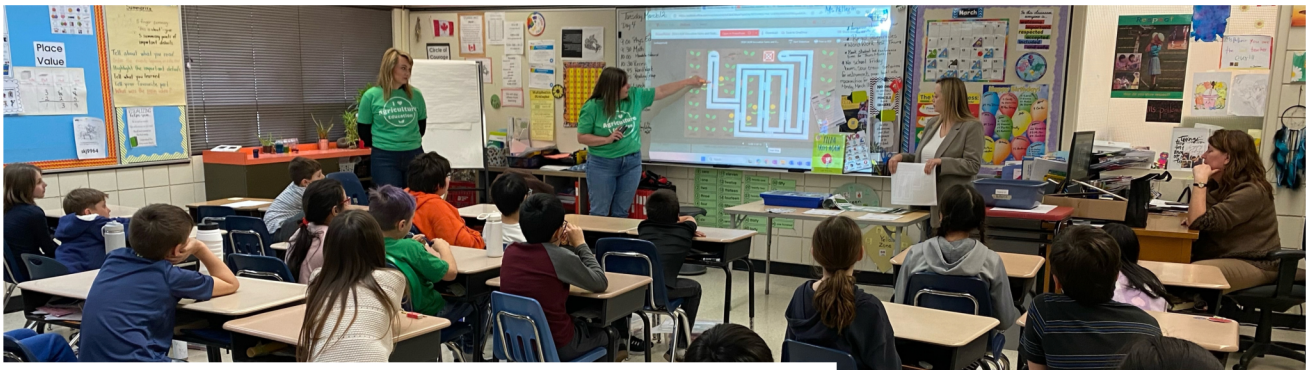

## Demonstrating AI to *drive productivity*

In July 2026, the Honourable Evan Solomon, **Canada's Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation** visited EMILI's Innovation Farms for firsthand demonstrations of AI innovation in action.

As a member of **Manitoba's Premier's Business and Jobs Council**, EMILI CEO Jacqueline Keena provides recommendations on how Manitoba can best utilize AI to drive productivity in key industries, like agriculture.

## Strengthening data *transparency*

EMILI has been an **Ag Data Transparent** supporting member since 2022. Many of the technology providers that EMILI works with are ADT certified, including FCC AgExpert, Agi3, GrainFox, Metos Canada, and John Deere.




## Increasing skills in *digital agriculture*

Each year EMILI visits Manitoba classrooms as part of **Agriculture in the Classroom**'s Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month.

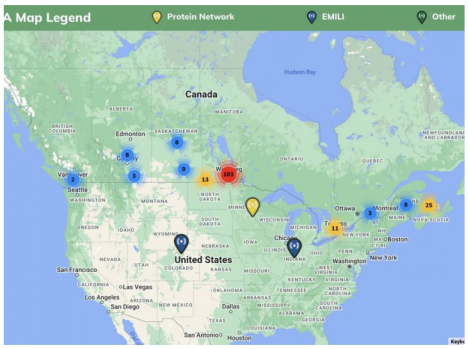
In 2022, EMILI partnered with **Palette Skills** in a pilot project to develop the Digital Agriculture Specialist program to address skills gaps. In 2025, the program expanded to **Assiniboine College** in Manitoba, benefitting Manitobans with diverse skills interested in upskilling to agricultural positions, as well as the industry and economy.



## Strengthening *cybersecurity*

EMILI played a leading role in a project led by **CSKA (Community Safety Knowledge Alliance) Canada** focused on strengthening the cybersecurity readiness of the Canadian agri-food system. This research improves understanding of the evolving cybersecurity landscape of Canada's food value chain; identifies key vulnerabilities and threats; and explores policy, regulatory, and standardization considerations related to cybersecurity preparedness and resilience.

## Accessing *expertise*




EMILI partnered with the late Dr. Jim House and Dr. Erin Goldberg, from the University of Manitoba in 2023 to develop the **Canadian Agri-Food Asset Map**. This interactive map increases access to digital agriculture expertise. The tool was designed to foster connections and expand knowledge and expertise across the agri-food industry.

Agriculture Enlightened
CANADA'S AGTECH CONFERENCE
EMILI

Since 2020, EMILI's annual conference has brought together a diverse stakeholder group including agri-food and technology experts, industry leaders, producers, decision-makers, researchers, and students from across the Prairies.

In 2020, 384 people connected virtually to hear from leading voices in digital agriculture including Tim Hore, Martin Scanlon, and Rob Saik discussing innovation and talent; Erin Romeo, Kristal Allen, and Danielle Graff diving into what it takes to establish and scale agtech; and Tom Greaves, Bill Greuel, Ryan Bracken, and Kolby Nichol sharing protein innovation success stories.

In 2021, EMILI expanded on this success with another dynamic series of virtual panels with industry leaders such as Darcy Herauf, Mirjana Prica, Shane Thomas, and Myrna Grahn exploring topics such as scaling startups, bringing AI to life, how data drives digital agriculture, and meeting skills and talent demands.

Attendees at EMILI's 2022 Agriculture Enlightened Conference were the first to hear about the launch of Innovation Farms powered by AgExpert thanks to a multi-year investment from government and industry to expand technology and education initiatives in the agri-food sector. The conference kicked off with a candid discussion on the history and future of Canadian agriculture led by J.P. Gervais and Fred Wall. Later in the day, EMILI's Dan Lussier moderated a panel on cybersecurity with Marty Fisher, Janos Botschner, and Ritesh Kotak, providing an inside look at a real-life cybersecurity incident and steps taken to improve cybersecurity readiness.

EMILI's 2023 Agriculture Enlightened Conference explored the changing landscape of agriculture in the AI era. Attendees gained fresh insights on innovation farms, AI, raising agtech capital, and the future workforce. Highlights included industry leaders Jennifer Flanagan, Katherine Cherewyk, Mairead Matthews, and Brenna Mahoney discussing how vital it is to engage students in digital agriculture career pathways.

In 2024. Agriculture Enlightened brought innovative startups, producers, investors, lawyers, and business leaders together to talk about unlocking Canada's innovation and productivity paradigm, building economic prosperity in Western Canada, and strengthening communication with farmers around agricultural data.

The day kicked off with opening remarks from Manitoba's Minister of Agriculture, Ron Kostyshyn who spoke to the importance of "working together for the betterment of agriculture." Collaboration was also a key theme for panelists Susanne Cork, Felippe Karp, Joe Dales, and Leanne Koroscil in a discussion on the importance of testing and validating agtech to benefit growers.

A highlight of EMILI's 2025 conference was a panel that foreshadowed the announcement of the AIVA Network, co-founded by EMILI, FCC, and WHIN in early 2026. Farm Credit Canada's Graeme Millen moderated a vibrant discussion with Rebecca Franklin from EMILI, and Jason Tennenhouse and Johnny Park from WHIN on ways to validate agriculture innovation to foster adoption.



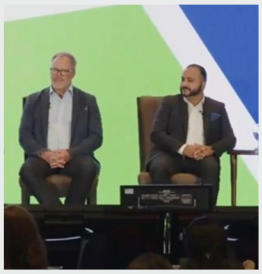
## 2020

384 people attended EMILI's first Agriculture Enlightened conference, which was fully virtual due to the pandemic.



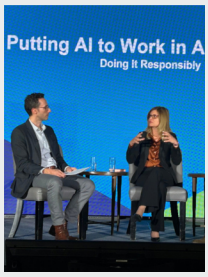
## 2021

EMILI invited panelists to record live in-studio for EMILI's second virtual conference.



## 2022

Over 225 attendees joined EMILI at Fairmont Winnipeg to explore topics such as equipping agriculture to manage risks.




## 2023

26 expert panelists shared perspectives on agtech innovation including responsible use of AI, raising agtech capital, the future workforce, and more.




## 2024

Over Agriculture Enlightened's first five years, more than 1,250 people heard from over 120 expert speakers exploring ways to drive agriculture innovation.




## 2025

Expert speakers included Bram Strain and Gary Mar sharing insight into Canada's evolving global trade environment.



*A camera collects images of field peas to complement machine learning algorithms to better differentiate pea plants from weeds (Photo credit: EMILI).*

# GROWING DIGITAL AGRICULTURE IN MANITOBA

EMILI celebrated its 10th anniversary during EMILI Field Day on Wednesday, July 15, 2026.




*Dr. Doug Eyolfson, Member of Parliament for Winnipeg West (Photo credit: EMILI).*

The event brought together close to 150 attendees from across Manitoba, Canada, and abroad to celebrate 10 years of innovation and collaboration in agtech including Dr. Doug Eyolfson who represented PrairiesCan to announce ongoing federal support for EMILI.

PrairiesCan is a longstanding supporter of EMILI's work. Their early investment in growing digital agriculture enabled one of EMILI's first digital agriculture projects on what later became EMILI's first Innovation Farms site.



*L to R: Dr. Christopher Henry, The Honourable Jim Carr, Dr. Annette Trimbee, The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Dr. Christopher Bidinosti (Photo credit: EMILI).*

In 2019, Minister Navdeep Bains, then Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, travelled to Winnipeg, to announce funding for the University of Winnipeg (UW) to work in partnership with EMILI to grow the digital agriculture industry in Manitoba. The goal was to create a publicly accessible database of labelled images of plants and weeds in order to train machine learning models for Prairie-centric plant phenotyping, disease assessment, and weed management. This project led to a collaboration between EMILI, UW, and the National Research Council of Canada to better differentiate pea plants from weeds.



*EMILI's Innovation Farms Manager Leanne Koroscil presents to producers during Producer Day with Bushel Plus Harvest Academy (Photo credit: EMILI).*

# Producer Day highlights new ways to optimize harvest

Producers only get one chance at harvest, and to get the most possible yield from their crop their combine needs to be calibrated just right.

This is what brought close to 50 producers, from across Manitoba and as far as Quebec, to EMILI's Innovation Farms for EMILI's 2025 Producer Day Harvest Academy with Bushel Plus (now BranValt). Attendees learned how to calibrate various combines to reduce yield loss during harvest.

Having three types of combines available at the event ensured that all producers were able to get the most out of the information that was shared.

Marcel Kringe, founder and CEO of BranValt, and Tyson Sanderson, product specialist at BranValt, walked attendees through the inner workings of several parts of the combine, including the header, threshing system and cleaning system, and how to calibrate these systems to capture more yield during harvest.

"This was a fantastic opportunity for local producers to learn about reducing harvest losses and optimizing their combine calibrations," said Leanne Koroscil, EMILI's Innovation Farms manager.

**INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT**



## Collaborating to increase skills and knowledge

Members of the Manitoba Digital Agriculture Table visited EMILI's Innovation Farms in May 2026 to hear presentations on EMILI's Innovation Farms, Protein Manitoba, TerraByte, and the Manitoba Consortium for Digital Agriculture (MCDA). Since launching the Table in 2020, EMILI has engaged over 600 industry, academia, and other members to share opportunities, discuss issues, and increase digital agriculture expertise. Scan the QR code to learn more and get involved.




# Community *engagement*

EMILI brings people together on field tours, an annual conference, and active participation in community events to increase understanding and education around new technologies and innovative production practices.

## Sharing stories of agtech *innovation*

EMILI took part in a panel discussion during Manitoba Ag Days 2025 alongside MLT Aikins and Rutherford Farms. Despite a blast of Prairie winter weather, there was lots of energy on the floor and opportunities to connect with EMILI partners and friends from across the ecosystem.



THE GLOBE AND MAIL

REPORT ON BUSINESS

PRAIRIE EDITION • MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2024 • GLOBEANDMAIL.COM

Ontario teachers face constraints on some drugs by insurance plan

CHRIS HANNAY
CLARE O'HARA
SUSAN KRASHINSKY ROBERTSON

Ontario teachers with certain chronic conditions are being told that they can only get their medications from their insurance plan's in-house pharmacy – a move the plan says saves money, but some pharmacists say inappropriately restricts patient choice.

The arrangement from the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) is an example of patient steering, which has drawn renewed attention since an exclusivity deal between Mamaille and Shoppers Drug Mart brought the practice into the spotlight earlier this year.

The Ontario College of Pharmacists, which is the provincial regulator for pharmacies, is set to discuss the OTIP deal at its July 8 board meeting as part of an effort to push back on patient restrictions and what are known as preferred pharmacy networks (PPNs).

The meeting was originally scheduled for June 10, but was delayed because of a controversy involving a board member's participation in a lawsuit against Shoppers.

≡ OTIP, B5

AGRICULTURE

8/4/26, 8:47 AM The Globe and Mail (Prairie Edition)

Tensions with First Nations threaten to delay nuclear waste solution

MATTHEW McCLEARN

How TD's acquisiti at the table with th

STEFANIE MAROTTA
BANKING REPORTER
NEW YORK

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

REPORT ON BUSINESS

PRAIRIE EDITION • MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2026 • GLOBEANDMAIL.COM

AGRICULTURE

The hot new commodity in farming

Food producers are hungry for fresh technology to boost productivity, but investors are reluctant to bet on the sector

OLIVIA GRANDY

Westjet labour dispute is really a proxy battle between Carney and unions

STEVEN TUFTS

Toronto-based pet-food maker considers IPO, next phase of expansion

SUSAN KRASHINSKY ROBERTSON
RETAILING REPORTER

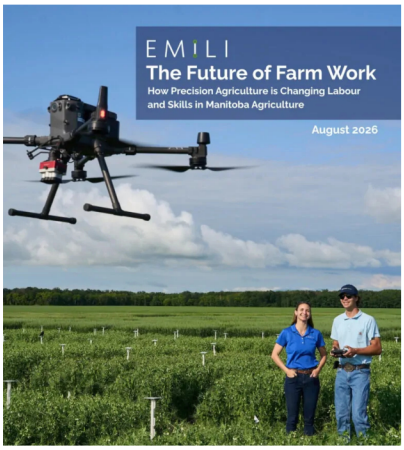
## Agtech receives *national coverage*

EMILI's work has been featured twice on the cover of the Globe and Mail's business pages. When the Globe and Mail reached out for a story on AI in agriculture in 2026, the reporter said, "While doing research for this story this afternoon, I came across all the work your team at EMILI is doing. Your team seems like exactly who I should be speaking to for this story."




## Sharing knowledge and *hands-on learning*

Producers, agronomists, and field advisors gathered at EMILI's Innovation Farms in 2026 for **EMILI Agronomy Day: Weathering Change**. This event included sessions on weather, insurance, and soil health. Leaders in the industry shared practical production insights and information on how digital agriculture tools can help mitigate risk in the field.




## Exploring technology *& farm work*

Technology is changing how farm work is planned, performed, and managed across Manitoba. *The Future of Farm Work: How Precision Agriculture is Changing Labour and Skills in Manitoba Agriculture* examines what these changes mean for provincial workforce development, technology adoption, and rural communities.



## Building the *ecosystem*

EMILI was honoured to be awarded the Ecosystem Builder Award at the 2026 DARE Innovation Awards. The award recognizes EMILI's dedication to growing and supporting Manitoba's innovation ecosystem.




This profile is part of EMILI's **This is Agriculture** series. Since 2023, EMILI has profiled more than 35 diverse career paths across the digital agriculture sector.

# LEADING THE WAY TO DRIVE AGRICULTURE INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

Ray Bouchard has worked in the agriculture industry for 46 years in a career that included 27 years with Enns Brothers and a decade of strategic expertise and guidance as EMILI's board chair.

### Q What was your first job in the agriculture or agri-food sector?

I had a chance when I was in my teens to work for a couple of farm operators. I did everything there from working as a truck driver to operating a combine. I still remember the long hours and working well into the night with floodlights loading grain because you needed to get the crop off. It gave me an early understanding of the challenges producers face putting a crop in and taking it off.

### Q What brought you to your leadership role?

After about 19 years working in the agriculture manufacturing and distribution sectors, I had the opportunity to join Enns Brothers in 1999. I've spent 27 years with Enns Brothers. I joined them as a partner and general manager in their Portage la Prairie operation, and from there I moved into sales management, and then ultimately worked my way into the CEO role about 11 years ago. I'll be retiring from my role as CEO in October 2026.

### Q What is an interesting thing happening in agriculture right now?

Tools are now in the marketplace to inform where you plant your crop, where you space it, what depth you put it into, how you monitor it, how you finance it, and how you insure it. The ability for an individual farmer to operate and manage their farm at a plant level is the biggest opportunity for the industry going forward. With that focus, farmers will be more productive, profitable and sustainable.



### Q What makes you passionate about your work?

There is always something new, and there is always opportunity. For me, it was never an eight-to-five role or responsibility. It was around engaging with more people, more relationships, networking. Quite often I would see individuals who had lots of thoughts about what was wrong, but nobody ever spent a lot of time talking about how can we fix this. And so, very early on, I thought, "Well, if I can find a way to participate in and do that, then I think there's value to that."

### Q Why do you think digital agriculture is important now more than ever?

The term "digital agriculture" is really just about the modernization of agriculture and the use of new tools and technologies. It's important today because the cost structure and the ability to run profitable, sustainable organizations has really changed over the last number of years, and unless you're prepared, and unless you integrate and adopt new technologies and new ways of doing business, I think you'll get left behind. You risk no longer being relevant and potentially losing your business.

### Q What does success look like over the next ten years?

Success, from our perspective, would be the continued buildout of the AIVA Network that touches all sectors of agriculture; from broad acre crops into livestock, into fruits and vegetables. I think there's a vision to do that, but it'll take a little bit of time.
I think the broader inclusion of all sectors of agriculture into the AIVA Network, the buildout of the partnership and within that attracting international investment into Canada, will be another key measure of success.

# FAST FACTS

EMILI is an industry-led non-profit that works collaboratively with producers, industry, investors, and innovators to grow a sustainable and economically resilient digital agriculture industry.

EMILI launched Innovation Farms powered by AgExpert in on a 5,500-acre seed farm in Grosse Isle, Manitoba in 2022 to provide innovators across industry and academia with access to leading-edge equipment, technology, and production practices to increase productivity, sustainability, and profitability across the agriculture and agri-food sector.

In July 2024, EMILI launched a second Innovation Farms site on a 10,000-acre farm that grows potatoes and other crops in MacGregor, Manitoba.



**15,500+**

acres of farmland on two sites to test and validate agriculture technology. (2025-2026)



**2,132+**

people participated in tours, training, and panel discussions. (2023-2026)



**1,500+**

people attended EMILI's annual Agriculture Enlightened Conference. (2020-2025)



**91,967**

youth gained digital agriculture skills through the Explore Project. (2021-2023)



**600+**

people engaged in 24 Digital Agriculture Tables. (2020-2026)



**500+**

participants took part in online and in-person data literacy training. (2024-2025)



**200+**

industry-academia partnerships formed.

(2021-2024)



**75+**

Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) jobs created.

(2024-2026)



**160+**

small and medium enterprises assisted.

(2024-2026)



**$27m**

incremental private sector investment attracted.
(2024-2026)



**$7.3m**

in business sales resulting from commercialization or adoption.
(2024-2026)



**92+**

innovative projects testing and validating agtech on Innovation Farms.
(2022-2026)

- EMILI was founded in 2016 by community leaders with a common goal of growing the economy with a specific focus on advancing agtech in the Prairies.
- EMILI is based in Manitoba, with projects and partnerships that span the country.
- EMILI supports projects and people working to develop and increase the adoption of innovative technologies.

# 10 YEARS

EMILI EST. 2016

**2016**

EMILI's Founding Board, (including Ray Bouchard, Dr. Annette Trimbee, Paul Vogt, Sandy Riley and Bob Silver) shared expertise, resources, and knowledge to bring EMILI to life.



**2017**

Jacqueline Keena joined EMILI. She worked with the Board to formalize EMILI's direction, and began forging partnerships to advance machine learning in Manitoba.



**2018**

EMILI hosted Protein Industry Canada's first conference. This experience planted the seed for EMILI to host its own Agriculture Enlightened conference a few years later.



**2019**

EMILI worked with University of Winnipeg researchers to develop a publicly accessible database of labelled images of plants and weeds for training machine learning models



**2020**

EMILI collaborated with MI-AP to launch the Manitoba Digital Agriculture Table fostering a network across industry and academia to advance digital agriculture.






**2021**

EMILI received a grant to accelerate and inform the Government of Manitoba's creation of a new provincial water management strategy.



**2022**

EMILI co-hosted the Food's Future webinar series in collaboration with CityAge. From 2021 to 2023, this series engaged 6,039 people from 752 organizations and more than 45 countries.



**2023**

EMILI launched its longstanding "This is Agriculture" series. The first story highlighted the different paths FCC's Janelle Wells and Bryan Prystupa took to their careers with AgExpert.




**2024**

EMILI launched a free data literacy program to equip farmers and others working along the value chain with foundational knowledge and data governance skills related to agriculture data.




**2025**

EMILI collaborated with the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute to co-write a report on ways public policy can support the development and adoption of digital agriculture technologies,




**2026**

The Globe and Mail visited Innovation Farms for the second time, featuring EMILI in an article highlighting the importance of advancing digital agriculture in Canada.



EMILI is an industry-led non-profit that works collaboratively with producers, industry, investors, and innovators to grow a sustainable and economically resilient digital agriculture industry.

Working together we can advance innovation adoption across Canada, drive innovation through collaborative partnerships, and increase understanding of new technologies and innovative production practices.

*This document was prepared by EMILI (Enterprise Machine Intelligence & Learning Initiative). Printed October 2026*

EMILI

**Driving Agriculture Innovation**

Visit our website at www.emili.ca to learn more about EMILI's work to increase productivity, sustainability, and profitability across the agriculture and agri-food sector.