



FROZEN FOOD
FOUNDATION

2025

Annual Report

Dear colleagues and partners,

In 2025, the Frozen Food Foundation advanced its mission to support research and education that improves and benefits the broader frozen food industry, while grounding every initiative in scientific excellence and transparency, and aligning our goals with those of the American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI). Throughout the year, we focused our efforts on three pillars—food safety, nutrition and sustainability—and we deepened our impact through extramural grant research and collaborations with key experts and partners.

I'm especially proud that, new this year, we partnered with Women in Food Safety to sponsor the [COOL Women in Leadership program](#), expanding opportunities for emerging leaders across our field. These efforts reflect our commitment to advance science, strengthen the frozen food supply chain, and foster a more resilient and inclusive industry.

Thank you to our members, researchers, and supporters who made this progress possible. I invite you to explore the highlights in this report and to join us in continuing to elevate frozen foods as a safe, nutritious, sustainable and accessible choice for all.

With appreciation,

Sanjay Gummalla, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Frozen Food Foundation

Sanjay Gummalla



Research and Training Programs

The Foundation fosters scientific research and drives industry education and consumer awareness in fields such as food safety, nutrition, and sustainability. Through strong partnerships within the research community, the Foundation identifies opportunities and collaborates to address the critical issues relevant to the frozen food industry.



Food Safety

The Foundation led and supported projects in 2025 that further drive food safety best practices in the frozen food industry while remaining rooted in science. Highlights from 2025 include:

Listeria monocytogenes Workshop

Thirteen Foundation Scientific Advisory Committee members and other experts presented at our *Listeria monocytogenes* workshop held in conjunction with AFFI's Food Safety Consortium. The event showcased expertise from sanitation to root cause analysis procedures and whole genome sequencing, all aimed at *Listeria* prevention and control. The workshop was attended by more than 70 food safety professionals, including AFFI members and technology partners. The Foundation also supported the convening of experts to speak about scientific developments at the 2025 International Association for Food Protection annual meeting.



Enteric Viruses – A Seminal Scientific Contribution

The Foundation funded the facilitation of a 13-member expert panel which culminated in a seminal review paper entitled 'Detection of foodborne viruses in berries- State of science and future considerations,' published in *Food Control*. In this paper, the authors deliberated the technical and practical issues related to currently available hepatitis A and norovirus detection methods and called for realignment of resources towards enhanced risk management approaches across berry growing and processing to mitigate the flow of contaminated products in the global supply chain.

Further supporting berry supply chain safety, the Foundation is building upon its initial launch of *EViews*, a real-time enteric virus risk management system that was commercially implemented in the berry supply chain. Eight berry companies, representing the largest operations in the frozen berry supply chain, enrolled to participate in *EViews* in 2025.

The Foundation anticipates further enhancement of *EViews* in 2026 to include other pathogens such as *Cyclospora* and *Listeria monocytogenes* to address these risks in produce supply chains. By laying down this path for *EViews* implementation, the Foundation and the frozen berry segment continue to demonstrate a leadership role across the global produce sector.



Research and Training Programs

Nutrition

The Foundation is invested in research to help drive further understanding of frozen food's role in promoting nutrition access.



Frozen Food in SNAP

Findings emerge from an [exploratory study](#) the Foundation funded with South Dakota State University to assess the role of frozen foods in providing year-round nutrition for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and understand frozen produce shopping habits among SNAP-eligible consumers.

Building upon an initial manuscript published last year on the sociodemographic factors associated with purchasing frozen produce, a second manuscript was recently accepted by the journal, *Current Developments in Nutrition*. Entitled "[Frozen Fruit and Vegetable Perceptions and Usage among a Multistate Sample of SNAP-Ed and EFNEP Participants](#)," this manuscript identified that SNAP-Ed/EFNEP-participating adults are a key consumer demographic for frozen foods due to their financial and food waste benefits. However, the paper identified that misconceptions persist regarding the nutrition of frozen produce. This work was also presented at the [NUTRITION 2025](#) meeting, hosted by the American Society of Nutrition.

Cold Chain Infrastructure in Hunger Relief Efforts

The Foundation is working on a research proposal entitled "Quantifying Freezer Capacity in Local Hunger Relief Organization" to better understand current cold chain infrastructure and its capabilities to provide access to nutritious frozen foods.

The Foundation is pursuing research to assess frozen food safety, affordability, accessibility, and nutrition. The Foundation's efforts are closely tied to understanding the practical role frozen foods can have in the American diet, identifying and emphasizing their positive attributes such as quality, nutrition and their potential to reduce food waste. AFFI's Nutrition Subcommittee is exploring nutrition research opportunities to continue keeping pace with the needs of the industry. In fact, the Foundation has called for and been reviewing proposals in support of these goals and we anticipate these projects to be initiated in 2026.



Sustainability



In 2025, the Foundation fostered industry development in sustainability and decarbonization.

Frozen Foods and Food Waste Reduction

The Foundation partnered with ReFED, a leading food waste non-profit, to elevate the role of frozen foods in reducing food waste at its 2025 annual meeting and hosted a group of food waste experts to engage in this topic. In November, ReFED hosted a webinar entitled ‘[Ice Out Food Waste: Leveraging the power of freezing to reduce wasted food](#),’ which was attended by approximately 150 waste advocates and consumer influencers. The Foundation will continue to foster this relationship in support of AFFI’s strategic priority focused on the perception of frozen foods.

In addition, the Foundation is working with experts and industry members to develop food loss and waste guidance for frozen food operations. This work is expected to be published in 2026.

Frozen Food Safety and Frozen Storage Temperatures

The Foundation tapped key food safety experts to develop a white paper on frozen food safety and cold chain temperature. The review paper is intended to inform industry and stakeholders about the safety of frozen foods as they consider potential changes to the standard temperature set point of frozen food storage and distribution.

Supplier Leadership on Climate Training (Guidehouse)

The Foundation continued its partnership with third-party consulting group Guidehouse to support industry decarbonization training. The Supplier Leadership on Climate Transition training program assists AFFI members in understanding the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions protocols, particularly measurement of Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and setting targets. More than 16 AFFI members participated in 2024 and 2025.

Product Carbon Footprint (HowGood)

The Foundation partnered with third-party consulting group HowGood to launch training to understand and develop a Product Carbon Footprint for various frozen foods. The tool was used by several AFFI members undertaking the Guidehouse training.



Research Grants

In a year marked by changes, the Foundation found ways to continue collaborations with its partners on other funded projects. It also continues to identify and apply for multiple competitive research grants in support of the scientific and technical needs of the frozen food industry.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) (\$799,997 for 3 years) (Funded)

A comprehensive approach to mitigate long-standing challenges in public health risks of human enteric viruses on produce (Emory University, University of Delaware)

In the second year of this research grant, experts visited AFFI member farms and facilities in the frozen berry supply chain.

- Nature's Touch Frozen Foods
- Washington Red Raspberry Commission – Enfield Farms, Rader Farms, and Maberry Farms produce

Center for Produce Safety Collaboration (\$82,646 for 1 year – Foundation contributed \$25,000) (Funded)

Development of a screening assay for hepatitis A virus which correlates to infectivity.

USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative (\$3.6 million for 4 years) (Pre-proposal)

Modernizing risk management approaches for enteric viral safety, climate change resilience, and profitability in the global berry supply chain.



2025 Frozen Food Foundation Freezing Research Award



The Frozen Food Foundation presented Dr. Anderson S. Sant'Ana with the Freezing Research Award. This award is presented in conjunction with the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) and specifically recognizes individuals or organizations whose research contributes to the continued enhancement of food quality and safety through freezing.

Dr. Sant'Ana, Assistant Professor in Food Microbiology at the Department of Food Science, Faculty of Food Engineering, University of Campinas, Brazil has developed predictive modeling tools to assess the survival of pathogens, and his work has improved our understanding of microbial safety in frozen foods.



Partnerships

The Frozen Food Foundation continues to foster strong relationships with and engage key stakeholders in the nutrition, food safety and education arena. The Foundation is involved with outreach efforts and provides financial support to the following organizations:



Women in Food Safety



In 2025, the Foundation initiated a partnership with Women in Food Safety (WIFS) as a silver level sponsor which includes a \$2500 travel and education scholarship for the COOL Women in Leadership program. In addition, the Foundation's contribution will allow our members to disseminate pertinent food safety information through the WIFS mobile app and expand the network of food safety information and professionals in the industry. We expect the FFF-WIFS partnership to open new opportunities for AFFI members and expand the scope of our collaboration in the years to come.



Portion Balance Coalition



A multisector working group, facilitated through Georgetown University, published the *Power of Portions* report which detailed how portion balance is an important tool in supporting public health.



Partnership for Food Safety Education



Supports the development and promotion of effective education programs to reduce foodborne illness risk for consumers.



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Make a Donation



Individuals and organizations interested in making a donation to the Frozen Food Foundation can visit www.affi.org/FFFoundation or contact Dr. Sanjay Gummalla at sgummalla@affi.com. All are welcome to contribute and donations are tax exempt.



2025 Contributions

The Frozen Food Foundation received more than \$25,000 in generous contributions in 2025. The Foundation would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their support in 2025.

\$1,000 - \$2,500

Thomas & Marianna Madden
ArdoVLM
Lamb Weston
The Pictsweet Company
Simplot Company
Ajinomoto Foods North America
Nortera
Conagra Brands
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Sanjay Gummalla

\$400-\$750

McCain Foods USA
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Palermo Villa
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The J.M. Smucker Co.
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William Bolthouse Farms

Yupi Foods

Zentis North America

