

UAE's New Agricultural Smart City: Solving International Food Insecurity and Welcoming Canadian Expertise

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The United Arab Emirates marks its Golden Jubilee this year - and while we are proud of our many accomplishments over the last 50 years, we always have our eye on the future.

From being home to the world's most sustainable city, where people move around in self-driving pod cars - to building an authentic Mars city in our desert - (while developing an actual one on the red planet within 100 years) - to our firefighters using jetpacks and robotic surgeons performing operations, we are always looking forward.

We are now building a new futuristic city where clean high-tech meets global food demands. Food Tech Valley will be an integrated modern city that develops alternative proteins - creates drought resistant crops and uses 3D technology and robots to help sustain food production, create superfoods and provide answers to global food challenges.

Our Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum launched this city just over a month ago to serve as a global destination - where we welcome Canadian researchers, entrepreneurs, start-ups and industry experts to lead us into the future of the food industry.

Food Tech Valley will use cutting edge farming technologies and research – from vertical farming to bioengineering and aquaculture to hydroponics to produce over 300 varieties of crops.

This will triple UAE's food production, accelerate our self-sufficiency to produce fresh food, while improving our nutrition, and reduce food waste.

Food Tech Valley has been established in partnership with our Ministry of Food and Water Security, which will help us achieve our National Food Security Strategy objectives. This strategy not only aims to secure our food sustainability, but also includes providing access to safe, nutritious and sufficient year round food, throughout the world.

Said in another way, we are not only looking to produce enough food, and decrease food waste - we are focused on the consumption of nutritious food, and look forward to Canadian contributions in this area.

We welcome Canadian food industry experts, entrepreneurs, researchers and academics to help us advance our R&D agenda to produce cultivated foods - alternative and lab produced foods, contribute research proposals, and new ideas in this field.

Food Tech Valley will also be a dynamic economic zone, which is particularly significant considering that the size of the AgTech market is projected to grow from \$13.5 billion to \$22 billion over the next four years.

With one third of the world living within a four hour flight of the UAE, and this connectivity reaching more than 3.2 billion consumers in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East - with a collective GDP of

more than \$60 trillion in emerging markets alone - the world is at your fingertips when you have a presence in the UAE.

Another important opportunity - for Canadian farmers, and those working in the agricultural and agri-tech sector to easily reach global markets is through EXPO Dubai.

From this coming October 1st for six months (until March 31st, 2022), the UAE will host the World's Fair - where Canada will join more than 190 other participating countries to showcase Canadian business & investment, research, academic and cultural sectors, among others.

I invite you to take advantage of the EXPO programming - which includes opportunities for the Agrifood & Agri-tech sectors, such as Gulfood in February, which offers a variety of outreach & promotional activities for this sector.

We look forward to working in collaboration with knowledgeable Canadian partners in the agricultural sector to further enhance our national food security strategy - not only for the UAE, but in support of a sustainable, healthy, equitable and prosperous future for the next generation of our global community.