



# BRIEFING NOTE: Food and Agriculture Goals

## Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

March 2022

### GOAL IN EGCCRA:

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#14 (b): The government's goal with regard to food is "to develop a Provincial food strategy for enhanced awareness of, improved access to and increased production of local food to achieve 20% consumption of local food by 2030."

### OUR ANALYSIS OF THE GOAL:

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We applaud this goal; however, the timeline is longer than should be necessary. In particular, we look forward to the development of a Provincial food strategy. We hope it will support municipalities and include such actions as the implementation of a healthy school food program, and other institutional procurement measures, as well as supports for farmers to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Additionally, we recommend that the Province build on the recommendations of HRM's municipal food strategy, JustFOOD, currently in development.

### ACHIEVING THE GOAL:

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A Provincial Food Strategy must include the following:

1. Institutional procurement. Farmers and local agriculture can be supported through institutional procurement. The school food program is a prime example and model of how this works. Investing in a universal healthy school food program, sourced through local producers, would improve child and youth nutrition, while also boosting local economies and infrastructure. Provincial investment will also ensure access to value-added funding through a federal cost shared Universal Healthy School Food Program. The projected Social Return on Investment (SROI) is \$3.00 to \$10.00 for every \$1.00 invested.

## ACHIEVING THE GOAL CONTINUED:

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2. Additional procurement changes involving provincial institutions, such as hospital settings, could be established as a next step. This would further support farmers and those involved in local agriculture initiatives.

3. Farmers need to be supported in making a shift to the most environmentally friendly/least GHG emitting farming methods possible. Farmers for Climate Solutions has produced a set of policy recommendations which Nova Scotia should adopt. These policies can be viewed in more detail by visiting [farmersforclimatesolutions.ca](http://farmersforclimatesolutions.ca). At a high-level, they include:

- a. Encouraging on-farm renewable energy generation, fuel switching and building retrofits
- b. Providing incentives for climate-friendly farming such as reduced fertilizer use, holistic grazing, cover cropping and carbon sequestration
- c. Helping innovative farmers mentor other farmers
- d. Create incentives for farmers who reduce climate risk
- e. Support new and young farmers

4. Invest in development of a network of local food hubs, building on the success of the Cape Breton Food Hub and The Station Food Hub. Halifax currently lacks a food hub to support producers from across the province to store, process, and distribute their products more efficiently in the Halifax area.

5. Dedicate staff time and resources to align the Provincial Food Strategy with the JustFOOD Action Plan and other regional food initiatives currently underway, such as the actions of the Island Food Network in Cape Breton and the Kings County Community Food Council.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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- In 2008, 13 per cent of the money spent on food went back to local food producers. This increased to 15 per cent by 2016. Based on these achievements and resulting positive impacts, 20 per cent is within reach of the above target date.
- By establishing goals, Nova Scotia has been moving in a positive direction. However, the Province must now recommit to the goals above and to enacting mechanisms toward their fulfillment
- In the face of a climate crisis, we must ensure an increase in resilience and self-reliance in our food system. Additionally, we must reduce GHG emissions coming from the food system.
- Food security exists when everyone has access to affordable, healthy, safe food available through localized, community-driven, responsive food systems that are socially just and can be sustained for generations to come. Ongoing and significant progress in this area is vital. The above goals are proxies for a robust local food system and community food security.
- Nova Scotia is well positioned to increase food security and resilience by supporting local producers; investing in increased processing, storage and distribution capacity; enabling locally based market innovation; and addressing inequities in food access that are threatening human and economic health.

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