# Summary & Discussion Guide

**A guide to go along with Everybody Eats: A Discussion Paper on Food Security in Newfoundland and Labrador**

November 2015

Food First NL

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was written by two organizations:

**Food First NL**, is a provincial non-profit group that started in 1998 as the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador. Food First NL actively promotes comprehensive, community-based solutions to ensure access to adequate, healthy food for all. Learn more at **www.foodfirstnl.ca**

**Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association (NLPHA)** is a provincial non-profit, advocacy group. The NLPHA promotes the conditions that support the health and wellbeing of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Learn more at **www.nlpha.ca**

# INTRODUCTION

This paper has information about food security in Newfoundland and Labrador, and is meant to get people thinking about food security and the food system in our province. This is a summary of the full discussion paper, Everybody Eats, which is online at www.foodfirstnl.ca

At the end of this Discussion Guide are questions about food security in order to start a discussion about this issue. These questions can be answered by individuals or groups, and the answers can be sent to Food First NL.

For more information, or to get involved, contact Food First NL at info@foodfirstnl.ca or call 709-237-4126

# WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

The words food security mean that everybody is able to get enough healthy food to be healthy and active. For everybody to get enough healthy food, we need a food system that works well.

The food system is made up of five parts. These parts cover everything from making food (production) to taking care of the waste (disposal).

The picture below shows the five parts of the food system.

When all the parts of the food system are working well together, we have food security. A food system that is working well does a few very important things:

- It protects the land, water, and air so we can keep producing food.
- It supports people and businesses to make enough money to keep working in the food system.
- It makes sure that everyone is able to get enough healthy food.

# Healthy Food For All

PHOTO CREDIT: TIM WALSH, MUN BOTANICAL GARDEN

# WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT FOOD SECURITY?

When there are problems in one part of the food system, it can affect other parts of the system. This can cause changes in the cost of food, how fresh our food is, or how much food is in our grocery stores. The examples below show how problems in the food system can impact people's access to enough healthy food:

### PRODUCTION

A drought in Alberta can make it more expensive for farmers to buy feed for their cattle. This can mean that we pay more money for beef at the grocery store.

### ACCESS

Work layoffs can mean people do not have money to buy enough of the healthy food they need. This can mean that people use food banks or get food from family and friends.

### CONSUMPTION

Many kids may not learn how to prepare healthy meals at school or at home. This can mean that kids may not have the skills to eat healthy, and may be more likely to eat processed, less-healthy food.

### DISTRIBUTION

Food is often delivered to our communities by road, water, or air. Winter storms can delay ferries and trucks that bring food to the province. This can mean that there is less food at the grocery store.

### DISPOSAL

Many households throw away their kitchen scraps into the garbage. A lot of these kitchen scraps could be composted. It costs the household or town money to remove garbage. By not composting, garbage removal is more expensive.

Problems in the food system can have an effect on people's ability to get enough healthy food and to have food security.

Many people do not have enough money to buy the food they need, an important element of food security. Last year, one million people in Canada had to use food banks to get food. Not having enough food can be bad for people's health.

- Both children and adults are sick more often when they do not eat enough healthy food.
- When people don't have enough food, they sometimes can't work or do other activities. This can make their health even worse.

# FOOD SECURITY IN NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Newfoundland & Labrador
## GETS A LOT OF FOOD FROM OUTSIDE THE PROVINCE

We get 90% of our vegetables from outside of the province. Because of this, we only have enough fresh vegetables for two or three days if there is a problem with the delivery of food. We also make a lot of fishery food products, but we send 80% of these products outside of the province. This helps people have jobs and businesses make money, but it means there is less food from the fishery for the people in the province.

## FARMING HAS CHANGED
in Newfoundland & Labrador

There are less farmers and less land is being used for farming. Our farmers are getting older and there are not many young people becoming farmers. The cost of buying land and growing food is high. Most of the animal feed and fertilizer used on farms in Newfoundland and Labrador comes from outside the province.

Newfoundlanders & Labradorians have
## LESS ACCESS TO HEALTHIER FOOD

Our province has a lot of communities that are spread out. Only 16% of communities in the province have a grocery store. Many people buy food at corner stores or drive to nearby towns to go to the grocery store. For every 10,000 people in our province, there are 14 fast food stores, 8 corner stores, 4 gas stations with stores, and 3 grocery stores.

Newfoundland & Labrador has
## MANY FOOD TRADITIONS

In Newfoundland and Labrador, we come together with our family and friends to eat and celebrate with food. We also have a long tradition of getting our food from the land and sea. We fish and hunt, grow food in our gardens, and pick berries. Having access to wild food in the future ensures food security. Changes in climate has made it harder to access wild food in some communities in the province.

Newfoundlanders & Labradorians

# EAT LESS VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

These facts show that it is easier for people in NL to get unhealthy food than to get healthy food. It isn't surprising then, that people in NL are eating less fruits and vegetables, which affects our health.

NL has the highest number of people with obesity and diabetes in Canada.

# HOW DO WE IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY?

Everybody has a role to play in the food system. There are four main groups that can have an effect on our food system in Newfoundland and Labrador:

## PUBLIC SECTOR

The public sector means all levels of government. The public sector takes care of services like health care, education, and transportation.

This sector makes policies and runs programs in all parts of the food system.

## COMMUNITY SECTOR

The community sector means local groups and organizations. It can also mean provincial networks.

This sector has local food programs that help people get enough healthy food.

## PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector means all businesses working in the food system.

The private sector has a big role in the food system. They are involved in making food and getting it to our plates.

## CITIZENS

All of us have a role in the food system.

The food we eat has an effect on the food system and our own health.

There are many groups who are working to make sure everybody in our province has enough healthy food. When groups work together they can make our food system stronger now and for future generations.

PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN BROWN

# CONCLUSION

There has been a lot of work done to make food security stronger in NL. But there is opportunity for more to be done. We need to concentrate on the everyday needs around food security, but we also need long-term solutions.

There is more interest in food security in Newfoundland and Labrador, and the time is right for all sectors to work together to achieve food security and create a healthy food system.

Be a part of this provincial dialogue on food security in Newfoundland and Labrador. Attend a regional forum in your area, or host a conversation with your family, friends, or co-workers using this discussion guide. To learn more visit **www.foodfirstnl.ca**

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Food security is a big issue for all people in Newfoundland and Labrador. You can discuss food security and help plan for the future of food in the province.

Use the following questions to have a conversation at home, with friends, or at your workplace about food security.

# SEND IN YOUR FEEDBACK

Your voice is important and we want to hear it.

You can send your answers to the discusssion questions above to Food First NL by emailing this completed form to info@foodfirstnl.ca, faxing them to 709-237-4231, or mailing them to 44 Torbay Rd. Suite 110, St. John's, NL, A1A 2G4.

If you'd like to host a conversation with your colleagues, friends, or family, please contact us at info@foodfirstnl.ca or call 709-237-4126 for assistance.

All of the information submitted to these questions will be used in inform discussions and planning at a Provincial Assembly in 2016. The information will also be used to inform future work on food security in Newfoundland and Labrador.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**(1) If you had a magic wand and could change food in Newfoundland and Labrador – how would you change it? What would it look like?**

**(2) What do you believe is our greatest strength for improving food security in Newfoundland and Labrador?**

**(3) What do you see as the greatest challenge we face in achieving food security in Newfoundland and Labrador?**

**(4) What is the most important thing that needs to be done to improve food security in Newfoundland and Labrador?**

**(5) What food security initiatives/programs are happening in your area/sector? Please provide contact information for any programs listed.**

# NOTES

This summary and discussion guide has been developed by Food First NL and the NL Public Health Association. It is the accompanying document for Everybody Eats: A Discussion Paper on Food Security in Newfoundland and Labrador.

These documents are intended to spark a provincial discussion on food security in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Be a part of the conversation by attending a regional forum, or by hosting a discussion with your family, friends, or coworkers.

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