

2018

Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op
Membership Guidelines, Policies and Procedures





Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-operative Ltd! Being a member of the Food Hub connects you to a community of people building a stronger local food economy, either by producing or consuming food produced here in Cape Breton. Together, through this co-op, consumers and producers can create change and develop a fair and sustainable food system.

As a member of the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op, we hope that you take the time to read over our policies and procedures before signing up. We want to make sure that we are all in agreement and working together to make this co-operative a lasting and effective entity in Cape Breton. For the Food Hub to succeed, we need the strong support and guidance of all members. Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions, concerns or comments. Our email address is admin@pancapebretonfoodhub.ca and our phone number is 902-577-3260.

Our Goal

The purpose of the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-operative Ltd is to make it really easy to get products from local producers into the hands of local consumers.

Our Mission Statement: *The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-operative Ltd. will provide the leadership to ensure a responsive, efficient distribution linkage between local food producers and consumers at all levels. This will create a more sustainable food system and will increase the number of producers and their profitability and viability while improving access to high-quality local food across the region.*

Our Vision: *A healthy food economy that supports a growing diversity of producers on the land and the sea on Cape Breton Island.*



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Services and General Conditions

Services:

The Pan Cape Breton Local Food Hub Co-operative Ltd has been established to work within the geographic scope of Cape Breton Island, providing linkages between producers and consumers in order to create an easy way for local foods to be marketed and consumed locally. The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op is structured as a multi-stakeholder non-profit co-op. As a multi-stakeholder entity, the Food Hub provides the following services for our members:

For Producer Members, The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op provides the platform for producers to post the products that they have for sale each week, on the web site that is available for consumer members. The Food Hub receives consumer orders, sends a report of orders to the producers, and arranges the pick-up and delivery of products between members of the co-op. The co-op also collects payments from the consumers weekly and sends payment to the producers every two weeks. Producer members will be featured in the profile section of our website and also in our newsletter if we are provided information about the operation.

For Consumer Members, The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op provides an online catalogue that is updated weekly with available food products. Information about how and where the products are produced and producer profiles are also on the website. We receive consumer orders, accept payment online, and arrange for food to be delivered to a pick-up location. We also provide opportunities for social engagement and education.

For Restaurant and Retail Members, The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op provides an online catalogue and also one-on-one help in finding products and determining availability as it fits with your offerings. We provide a one-point access for local foods and allow you to pay one invoice to the Food Hub for all weekly purchases. We arrange delivery to your business address. We also provide marketing in the form of window stickers for your establishment, mention on our social media and newsletters, and you will be featured on a page on our website. The Food Hub can also provide assistance with special events sourcing.

For Supporting Members and corporate sponsors, The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op provides an opportunity for you or your business to learn more about local foods and engage in the local food economy. As a member, you will receive our weekly newsletter as well as invitations to all our social and educational events. Corporate sponsors receive benefits according to level of sponsorship.

General Conditions:

The essential business of the co-operative is to provide a platform for consumer and producer members to meet. Never does the co-operative have title to any of the products. The products that go through our distribution system are owned either by the producer, or by the consumer who purchases the product.



The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op allows consumer members to order directly from producers. Our software records and documents all orders. If any issues arise with a product, the Food Hub will be able to instantly trace the product directly to the supplier.

Any customer complaints should be referred to the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op immediately, by way of the on-line forum found on our website. The co-op will work diligently to rectify issues and to resolve any disputes between consumer and producer members.

Each year the co-operative will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) where we will provide members with a yearly report, and our annual financial statements. At this meeting we will elect members to our Board of Directors, and receive your input to make any major changes to the operation of our co-op. Each member has one vote; it is important for all members to attend the AGM.

We have a weekly order cycle, so please be aware of the days and times of this cycle so that you can purchase or post and prepare your products in a timely manner. If you have an emergency and either are not able to fill your orders for producers or are not able to pick up your orders for consumers, please call us immediately at 902-577-3260.



Membership Guidelines

Qualifications for Membership:

The board of directors, at its sole discretion, may admit as a new member of the Co-operative a person who has:

a. Completed and signed a membership application, or signed up online, agreeing to support the vision and mission of the co-operative, and

b. Paid the annual fee of fifty (\$50) dollars.

(The membership fee is not refundable and not transferable.)

c. In order to maintain their membership in the co-operative, consumer members must place at least two orders per calendar year to keep their membership status active. Producer members must post inventory at least once per calendar year.



Common Terms

We ask that food producers identify the practices used to create their products. The following terms are some of the most commonly used, and we ask our consumer members to become familiar with these:

Local – For the purposes of the Food Hub, local means Cape Breton only.

Organic Certified – To become certified organic, producers and processors must meet the requirements set out in the Canadian Organic Standard, including applying to a CFIA Accredited Certification Body, showing complete traceability of their products and being inspected by an independent third party.

Organically Grown – Organically grown refers to a method of agricultural production which does not permit the use of synthetic fertilizers, synthetic pesticides or genetically modified organisms.

Antibiotic Free – Animals must not receive antibiotics at any point in their life – from birth to death, including nursing or pregnant females.

Grass Fed – Refers to livestock that have been raised on pasture and not confined to a feedlot/grain-fed system.

Free Range – Free range animals are generally un-caged, often with access to the outdoors.

Non GMO – Non-GMO products are non-genetically modified and are bred naturally without the use of genetic modification/engineering techniques.

Heritage Breeds – Traditional breeds of animals that were raised for food in the past, but their numbers dwindled during the rise of industrial agriculture.

Pastured – Pasturing is a traditional farming technique where animals are raised on pasture rather than being fattened on a feedlot or in a confined facility.

Chemical Free – For the purpose of labelling in the Food Hub, “chemical free” refers to no commercial chemicals being applied to foods.

Transition to Organic – Means that the producer is transitioning away from commercial pesticides and fertilizers and is in the process of transitioning to more organic practices.



Producer Members

Basic Procedures:

Producers are the heart of the Cape Breton Food Hub. We value your work and want to be able to serve you to make marketing and distributing your products easier and more efficient.

As a member of the Cape Breton Food Hub you will benefit from:

- Access to our website, where you will be able to post your profile and list all of your items for sale for our consumer members to order.
- Our marketing services which include direct marketing, newsletters, social media, etc.
- A schedule for weekly pick-ups at a location as close to you as possible.
- An order-form each week of the products that our consumers ordered.
- Producers will be provided with a window sticker using the Food Hub logo.
- Opportunities to plan production with other Food Hub members.
- Payments that cover all of your sales through the Food Hub, sent to you by cheque bi-weekly.

As a member of the Cape Breton Food Hub you are expected to:

- Pay a \$50 yearly membership fee at the time of signing up.
- Create a profile of your operation for the website.
- Create a membership account and list all items that you will have for sale during the year.
- Update these items according to what you have available each week.
- Process orders by weighing and packaging each order separately.
- Label your products so that our volunteers can identify them.
- Pack all orders in cardboard boxes tightly so that there is as little air space as possible.
- Label all boxes clearly with the labels available to print from our software.
- Deliver orders to the drop-off location at the designated time, and if the pick-up is missed, call the coordinator immediately to make other arrangements.

Products must meet the following standards:

- All products must be of the freshest and best quality possible, harvested as close to the pick-up time as possible.
- Vegetables must be whole and unwashed, unless coming from a GAP-certified farm.
- All value-added products must have a packaged on date, an ingredient list, as well as your name, address, phone number, and nutritional information.
- All meat and seafood must be processed in a provincially-licensed facility, and kept frozen in compliance with the food safety regulations of Nova Scotia.
- All meat and seafood must be boxed separate from other products and must have "Keep Frozen" written on the box.



Detailed Procedures

We ask our producer members to post products with the Food Hub as often as possible, although we understand that it won't be possible to have product each week for some producers. A minimum of once per year is appreciated (and required).

Your profile is important for our website; please make sure that you provide it on the website along with a picture. These profiles are what help our consumers to know you and to differentiate you from other producers.

Producers may add products onto the website at any time and may adjust quantities during the order cycle. However, consumers will start purchasing products on Friday so if your products are not listed they will not be able to access them. You cannot make adjustments to product that has already sold.

Producers will be sent orders via email every **Monday**, and will need to have these orders processed and delivered to the nearest trucking drop-off site at a pre-determined time each **Wednesday**. We will let you know the time and location of the drop-off nearest to you.

Orders will be coming in from restaurants, retail stores and household consumers who will have one of several locations where they pick-up their orders. You will need to pack orders destined for each location separately. Labels for each location are available to print from our software.

The Food Hub will forward payment to you twice per month by cheque.

Product Guidelines

All products sold through the Cape Breton Food Hub Co-op must meet provincial food safety regulations. If you have questions regarding the regulations surrounding your product please phone Nova Scotia food safety specialist, Sean O'Toole, at 902-563-5747.

The co-operative reserves the right to refuse to accept delivery of products that were not ordered by consumers, or which have been spoiled, contaminated or are not in compliance with food safety regulations.

Meat and fish that is sold through the Food Hub must be frozen.

All meat, produce, honey and maple syrup must be grown in Cape Breton. Seafood must be fished in Nova Scotia. Value-added products must be produced in Cape Breton, with local or imported raw ingredients.

Any producer who is helping other producers to list product or is representing other farms must explicitly list the farm of origin for each product.



Product Packaging

All orders must be packed separately for customers, preferably in food-grade plastic bags. These packages must be placed in boxes before drop-off to the trucking drop-off location.

Please ensure that each box has a label on the outside with the destination information (for example, "Food Hub Sydney," or "Flavor Restaurant"), in addition to the name of your operation and any special instructions, such as "Keep Frozen". Labels are available through our software and are easy to print and tape to boxes.

Use boxes that are the best size for the order, and make sure there is as little space as possible around the products. Please do not send boxes that are mostly empty if possible.

Boxes can often be obtained for free at Nova Scotia Liquor Commission stores or at grocery stores. If your boxes do not have covers (as is the case with banana boxes), you can use an additional box over the top as a cover.

Sometimes the temperature-controlled trucks get too cold for sensitive vegetables. Please ensure that things like tomatoes have newspaper around them to protect them from the cold.

For frozen or refrigerated products please ensure that "Keep Frozen" or "Keep Refrigerated" is marked on the box. **Please note**, in some cases the boxes you are using have these stamps on them from their original purpose. If you have boxes that have these terms stamped on them please use a marker to eliminate that stamp.

All value-added products must have a packaged-on date, an ingredient list, as well as your name, address, phone number and nutritional information.

Product Pricing

We want to ensure that our consumer members are provided fair prices and that our producer members are making a fair profit from their sales. We ask producer members to sell product to the Food Hub at a wholesale price, while ensuring that prices reflect production practices. If you are producing using organic and or free-range practices that should be reflected in the price. You will receive the full price that you set for your products on the website, and the Food Hub will add a mark-up to consumers to sustain the operations of the Food Hub, such as delivery, staff and maintaining the website.

The mark-up that consumers pay is 25% of the price you set, and 12% for restaurants and retailers.

Pricing Resources

There are several resources available to help with pricing. One is the Acorn organic price tracker which you can access online at www.organicpricetracker.ca. Another is your fellow farmers. If you are in doubt and can't find another source, ask and we will try to assist you.



Consumer Members

Basic Guidelines

Consumer households are key to the operation of the Food Hub. Our aim is to create a simple, fast and efficient way for consumers to access a wide range of local foods.

As a member of the Cape Breton Food Hub you will benefit from:

- The ability to order directly from this website and pay through its check-out portal.
- Your orders will be collected, packaged and delivered to a convenient drop-off location.
- You will receive bi-weekly newsletters with producer profiles, news and recipes.
- You will be invited to all of our social events and educational opportunities.
- You will receive a window clinger with our Food Hub logo.
- Feeling good about supporting your local producers and community!
- You pay the price that you see on the website. A mark-up of 25% has been added to cover the cost of trucking and other operations.

As a member of the Cape Breton Food Hub you are expected to:

- Pay a \$50 yearly membership fee.
- Try to order what groceries you can through the Food Hub each week.
- Pick up orders at the specified time each week and try not to be late.
- Wash all vegetables and fruit before eating.
- Ensure that orders are taken home promptly and not left unrefrigerated in your vehicle.
- Bring back your box each week to use it to fill your order.
- Provide feedback to help the producers improve their products and the Food Hub to improve its operations.

Consumer Guidelines

We aim to create a connection between producers and consumers through the Food Hub. Please, take the time to read the producer profiles and learn more about your producers and the way in which they produce their wares. The terms that are used to describe products may be found on page 6 of this guide.

To ensure the stability of the Food Hub we ask that you try to order as much as possible from the Food Hub each week. Our projections are based on consumers spending \$50/week, but we understand that some weeks you may order more while other weeks it may not be possible to order that volume.

Ordering Procedures

When you become a member of the Food Hub you will be able to become a member online. Go to pancapebretonfoodhub.ca and follow the log-in procedure. We can help if you have any trouble.



Please check our website for information about our distribution centers or “pick-up locations” and select the one closest to you. We will need a minimum number of consumers at each distribution location to make our shipments feasible.

Each week the order cycle will open on Friday at noon. You are able to place orders until 2:00 PM Monday, and can pay for your order online or when you pick up at your distribution center.

Orders are to be picked up between 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM on Thursday. If for some reason you are unable to pick up your orders at the designated time, please call us as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements. Orders that are not picked up will be donated to a local food bank, soup kitchen or volunteers.



Restaurant and Retail Members

Basic Guidelines

Restaurants and retail stores have a major role to play in the Cape Breton Food Hub project. We want to help you to market and sell local foods, in order to enhance Cape Breton's culinary offerings that feature the very best and freshest foods from our land and sea.

As a member of the Cape Breton Food Hub you will benefit from:

- Access to our website so that you can read producer profiles and order items through the hub.
- Deliveries of food orders right to your establishment.
- Convenient aggregated invoices and payments to the Food Hub.
- Our marketing services which include newsletters, social media, etc.
- Members will be provided a window sticker displaying the Food Hub logo.
- Direct access to the coordinator for menu and ingredient consultations.
- Help finding local products on your wish list.
- A way to connect directly with our island food producers to work toward getting the products you need produced for you.

As a member of the Cape Breton Food Hub you are expected to:

- Pay a \$50 yearly membership fee at the time of signing up.
- Be committed to local procurement, through the Food Hub.
- Have a range of offerings that are compatible with food availability in Cape Breton.
- Be willing to sit down with the Food Hub coordinator and plan for your local procurement.
- Display our Food Hub logo in a visible location.
- Be willing to be showcased in local food shows or featured in newsletters.
- Make sure that you have received all the ordered items when your order is delivered. If you are missing items, or if you have a quality control issue please contact us right away at admin@pancapebretonfoodhub.ca or at 902-577-3260.
- Provide a main contact person that the co-op will be able to phone with order inquiries and to discuss new products.

Restaurant/Retail Detailed Guidelines

Please provide the Food Hub with a short description of your business and a picture. These will be featured on the website. Also please let the Food Hub know your Facebook, Instagram and Twitter handles so that we can cross-promote via these platforms.

The Food Hub will continue to work with you to find and integrate local foods into your offerings. Please feel free to contact Alicia at any time at 902 -577-3260.



When you become a member of the Food Hub you will be given a login to our website. Go to pancapebretonfoodhub.ca and follow the login procedure there.

Orders can be placed on the website or directly through the Food Hub coordinator. The coordinator will work to minimize ordering by securing weekly repeat orders where possible.

Deliveries will be made on Thursday or Friday of each week depending on where you are located. Please notify the Food Hub immediately if you are missing items or receive items you did not order.

Invoices will be provided to you by the Food Hub for all products you order through the hub, on a bi-weekly basis. Please forward payment to the Food Hub by cheque to: PO Box 849 Baddeck, NS, B0E 1B0.



Board of Directors Guidelines

(a) The board of directors shall consist of ten directors who shall be elected for a term of two years. The maximum number of consecutive terms a director may serve is four.

(b) The directors shall meet as often as the business of the Co-operative may require but not less than once per quarter. A quorum shall consist of four directors.

(c) The membership shall meet at the AGM and elect board representatives. A quorum at the AGM consists of twenty-five (25) members.

(c) If a vacancy occurs in the board of directors, the directors may appoint a member to fill that vacancy until the next annual meeting when the members shall hold an election to complete the term of vacancy.

(d) Eligibility for election to the board of directors:

1. agrees with objectives of the cooperative;
2. accepts leadership position when requested;
3. supports the Co-operative wherever possible;
4. is a member of the Co-operative.

(e) The board of directors shall consist of a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of four (4) Consumer Members.

(f) The board of directors shall consist of a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of four (4) Producer Members.

(g) The board of directors shall consist of a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of two (2) Restaurant Members or Retail Members.

(h) The board of directors shall consist of a maximum of two (2) ex-officio members representing municipal or other government and related organizations such as the federation of agriculture.