

MANITOBA  
INDIGENOUS  
AND NORTHERN  
RELATIONS



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# Northern Healthy Foods Initiative



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## Introduction

### THIS REPORT DESCRIBES THE NORTHERN HEALTHY FOODS INITIATIVE (NHFI) PROGRAMMING TO MARCH 31, 2017.

Food security is a critical issue that many northern Manitoba communities face. In these communities, it is often difficult to access healthy foods at a reasonable cost. Northerners face a significant economic disadvantage because of the high cost of buying healthy foods versus the lower cost of unhealthy, more economical food choices. In the past, northerners sustained themselves through traditional diets. However, their diets are increasingly dominated by foods that are low in nutrients. The introduction of these foods and the loss of traditional practices has negatively impacted food consumption in the north, and has caused many northerners to lose their skills and knowledge of harvesting traditional foods.

When we develop the capacity in the north to achieve local food self-sufficiency through food production and harvesting, we increase people's access to healthier food choices and physical activity. This increased access reduces negative health outcomes associated with foods that are low in nutrients and also lowers the rates of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases. As a result, NHFI programming has important implications for other critical policy areas, such as health care.

**Targeted long-term impacts are healthy food systems that are culturally relevant and improved health and well-being.**

**NHFI's strategic priorities are:**

- ▶ to strengthen strategic partnerships and collaborative efforts to support local food production and access. Partnerships are intended to increase community access to resources and opportunities, build on community development efforts, facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences and reflect the uniqueness of communities.
- ▶ to enhance support for local efforts, including strengthening community-led approaches that reflect cultural values.

## History

In 2003, the Manitoba government conducted a study on the high costs of northern food prices. In August 2004, the Northern Food Prices Report was publicly distributed ([www.gov.mb.ca/ana/food\\_prices/2003\\_northern\\_food\\_prices\\_report.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/food_prices/2003_northern_food_prices_report.pdf)). The report identified seven options for addressing the high cost of food in northern Manitoba. NHFI's primary focus is on community-driven projects in remote northern communities that lack all-weather road access. NHFI concentrates on local food self-sufficiency projects like:

- ▶ vegetable gardens
- ▶ fruit production
- ▶ smaller backyard greenhouse and poultry operations
- ▶ learning events such as cooking classes, how to start your own garden and nutrition awareness
- ▶ school programming
- ▶ projects that help to revitalize the traditional hunting and gathering culture

## Vision

Our vision is for people to define their own food systems to access healthy foods in northern Manitoba.



## Goals and Objectives

The following goals, with several related objectives, are intended to provide a roadmap towards improving food security in the north:

### GOAL:

#### to increase food security efforts at the community level

##### Objectives:

- ▶ provide support for access to food through local food production and other means
- ▶ strengthen the role of community food champions in program delivery
- ▶ create and support opportunities for communities to share, learn and work together
- ▶ strengthen planning and assessment processes and tools ex: community sustainability assessments and community action plans to meet the needs of communities, partners and NHFI

### GOAL:

#### to strengthen community-led development

##### Objectives:

- ▶ develop and implement a community-led approach that reflects cultural values
- ▶ provide support to strengthen and sustain the role of community food champions
- ▶ create and support opportunities for partners to share, learn and work together
- ▶ strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes and tools to meet the needs of communities, partners and NHFI
- ▶



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles underpin the work of NHFI, no matter what the dynamic and shifting objectives of the program are within the northern food security context. NHFI strives to incorporate these principles in all aspects of programming:

- ▶ youth involvement
  - We recognize the need to involve youth.
- ▶ intergenerational mentorship and learning
  - We value intergenerational learning and sharing.
- ▶ knowledge sharing
  - We provide opportunities for informal and formal information sharing.
- ▶ community-led
  - We ensure programs are planned and implemented in a way that is respectful of and driven by communities.
- ▶ collaboration
  - We recognize the value of working together and make time to build respectful relationships.
- ▶ culturally relevant values
  - We look at our work through an Indigenous lens and recognize the value of local knowledge.



## Organizational Structure

NHFI is a provincial initiative, administered by Manitoba Indigenous and Northern Relations. Guidance is provided by a management committee, with representatives from:

- ▶ Manitoba Agriculture
- ▶ Manitoba Sustainable Development
- ▶ Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living
- ▶ Manitoba Education and Training
- ▶ Manitoba Indigenous and Northern Relations

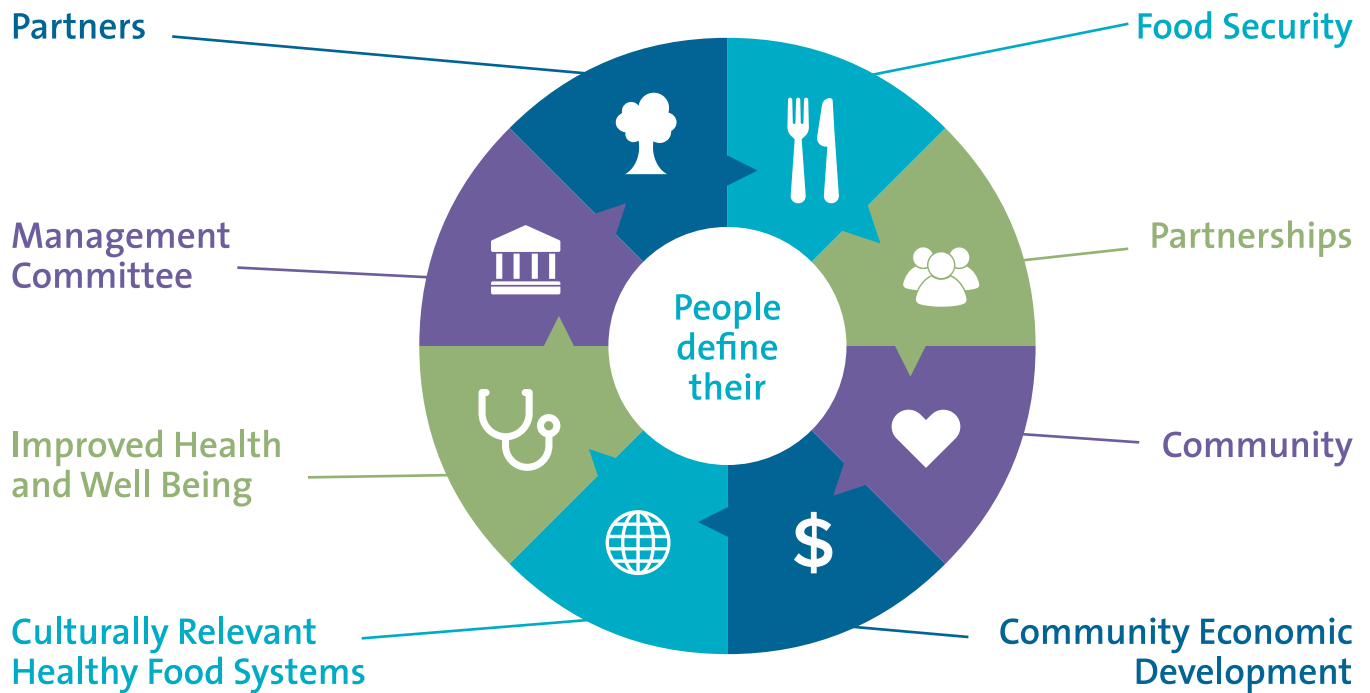
NHFI is delivered using the two following methods:

1. Annual programming is delivered by community-based organizations that have become the primary vehicle for supporting activities at the community level. The communities that are assigned to these organizations can be found in the NHFI Boundary Map at the end of this report. The delivery organizations, known as NHFI Partners, are as follows:
  - ▶ Frontier School Division
  - ▶ Northern Association of Community Councils
  - ▶ Bayline Regional Roundtable
  - ▶ Food Matters Manitoba
  - ▶ Four Arrows Regional Health Authority
2. Special projects are funded on a project-specific basis.



*“My goodness, you sure made the community happy, the community garden is doing so well. I believe half of the community has taken their share of the produce from it, and really want to help next year.” – Unknown*

NORTHERN HEALTHY FOODS INITIATIVE (NHFI) SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL ENCOMPASSES ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:



*“We’ve grown so much more food this year and the youth who were hired for the summer have helped a huge amount. They are learning lots and enjoying the gardening work. I’ve actually been able to take some time off this summer, and not get tired out from our big garden expansion! It is good to see our youth so involved!”*

– Trina, Community Health Representative Barren Lands First Nation



## Vital Partnerships

Partnerships and collaborative efforts are integral to the success of the Initiative. From the inter-departmental management committee to the broad spectrum of community-based organizations that deliver programming, NHFI operates in a team environment, where relationships are a critical success factor. NHFI forms partnerships and links with non-government organizations as well. Examples of these include:

- ▶ Tides Canada Foundation
- ▶ Keewatin Tribal Council
- ▶ Perimeter Aviation Ltd.
- ▶ Via Rail
- ▶ Health in Common
- ▶ Thomas Sill Foundation
- ▶ Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seeds
- ▶ Harvest Moon Society
- ▶ Regional health authorities serving northern Manitoba
- ▶ Green Action Centre
- ▶ Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba

Examples of governmental partnerships include:

- ▶ Affordable Food in Remote Manitoba
- ▶ All Aboard: Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy
- ▶ Healthy Together Now
- ▶ Manitoba Agriculture food production expertise
- ▶ Government of Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health (FNIH)

In 2016-17, it is estimated that, at the community level, as many as 40 salaried employees and 85 volunteers have worked on helping with NHFI programs. This is in addition to the over 6,200 hours that provincial staff have contributed, as well as the endless hours and miles realized by the five NHFI partners and special project proponents that support eligible communities.

Annually, NHFI benefits from the help of many volunteers. Examples of these volunteers include:

- ▶ individual and business donations of material like chicken wire, or labour to install the fence that protects the chickens from predators
- ▶ teachers donating many hours of extracurricular activities, such as in Cross Lake with the school chicken club or community food security planning
- ▶ youth serving meals at events and conducting gardening tours
- ▶ Elders passing on valuable traditional knowledge
- ▶ community residents growing their own food and sharing advice with their neighbours
- ▶ council members committed to healthy communities that prepare garden plots for Elders and plant fruit trees
- ▶ community champions who build smokehouses or chicken coops and greenhouses on their own time
- ▶ volunteers who spend endless hours preparing funding applications and reports to support these activities
- ▶ a community resident who developed a seed saving booklet for his community
- ▶ residents who volunteer their time and gas to deliver country foods to those unable to find transportation
- ▶ a community nurse, who in collaboration with a local teacher, operates the school greenhouse
- ▶ parents who take on teaching roles at food preservation classes
- ▶ people who volunteer to take youth out on the land to learn about harvesting traditional foods

Another important partnership is with the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture and Community Collaborative (NMFCCC). In 2012-13, Heifer International Canada (HIC) partnered with NHFI on a pilot to fund five projects that focused on food security and related community economic development. The projects included:

- ▶ a small greenhouse in York Landing
- ▶ a traditional foods program in O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (OPCN)
- ▶ a school gardening program at Wapanohk Community School in Thompson
- ▶ a beekeeping operation in three communities on the western side of the province
- ▶ support for youth involvement in gardening at the Churchill River Nursery in Leaf Rapids



Based on this successful pilot partnership with NHFI and the outcomes, HIC successfully cultivated the NMFCCC, which is hosted by Tides Canada Foundation. NHFI, along with other members of the collaborative, provides funds and expertise to improve population health and foster a sense of hope and strength in northern Manitobans. They achieve this goal by supporting community-led, local food initiatives that involve community economic development.

The collaborative has funded over 50 projects to date, covering a wide variety of activities including:

- ▶ greenhouses
- ▶ gardens
- ▶ poultry
- ▶ beekeeping
- ▶ fish composting
- ▶ cooking classes
- ▶ food buying and producer co-ops

Gardening projects like the Barren Lands Youth Garden Project have seen some important successes with their programming that aims to teach youth food skills, help build leadership and self-confidence, and strengthen family and community connections. The greenhouse and community garden program in Barrows is another example of conventional food production where the ultimate goal of the project is to increase the availability of fresh, healthy local foods and the capacity of local people to grow and prepare healthy foods. Other examples include the re-invigoration of the commercial fishing industry in Garden Hill and Wasagamack First Nations and a fish composting station in Dawson Bay that will see fish waste used to make compost with eventual plans to sell the product.

The collaborative also focuses support on traditional food projects that encourage both adults and youth to return to the land to learn the art of hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering. One example of this work is the Mathias Colomb Community Freezer Project. This project supports the development of a program that will store traditional foods, currently harvested by locals, for community residents. In the Sayisi Dene First Nation, the community has also been trying to reclaim their culture and food traditions since their relocation to Churchill in the mid 1960's. Students and Elders are working together to learn and re-learn wild harvesting and food preparation techniques.

Some very innovative projects have also been supported to diversify food production and increase access to healthy foods. One of the innovative projects involve beekeeping operations, which are intended to contribute to safe and sustainable food systems in Barrows, Meadow Portage and Spence Lake. This work is also focused on supporting those communities in creating local market opportunities with honey and bees wax. The Bayline Food Buying Co-op is another of the collaborative's innovative projects, where food is purchased in bulk and then shipped along the railway to the communities that do not have access to a local grocery store. More information on the collaborative's projects can be found on the NMFCCC website: <http://www.nmfccc.ca/>.

NHFI also works closely with Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (HSAL) on the Affordable Food in Remote Manitoba (AFFIRM) program. AFFIRM is a retail subsidy program that works with retailers in targeted communities to reduce the price of milk, infant formula, fresh vegetables and fruit. This partnership is intended to support the work of getting healthy foods to the north by addressing the more immediate needs for access to healthy, affordable and nutritious food.

## Results and Highlights

### 2014-15 RESULTS

Reporting indicated the following NHFI accomplishments:

- ▶ Approximately 232,751 pounds of food harvested from an estimated 975 gardens.
- ▶ An estimated 268 capacity-building events taught approximately 3,000 participants about how to produce, harvest and prepare these foods.
- ▶ 46 greenhouses were supported and active.
- ▶ 3,675 pounds of fruit was picked.
- ▶ 10,000 eggs were collected and 6,173 pounds of poultry were processed.
- ▶ 1,120 pounds of honey was harvested.
- ▶ 11 traditional foods projects saw approximately 21,976 pounds of food coming from the land.

*“If one child becomes a gardener you cannot measure the social impact: crime, health, mental wellness, physical activity and nutrition.”* – Participant at 2010 Veggie Adventures Curriculum Workshop

### 2015-16 RESULTS

Reporting indicated that:

- ▶ Approximately 228,277 pounds of vegetables were grown by 1,519 gardeners in 1,258 gardens and 47 greenhouses.
- ▶ An estimated 1,938 pounds of fruit and 3,922 pounds of honey were harvested.
- ▶ Poultry production realized approximately 4,042 pounds of poultry raised for consumption.
- ▶ An estimated 171 capacity-building events helped to build skills and knowledge for over 3,200 participants.
- ▶ 19 traditional foods projects realized an estimated 28,222 pounds of country foods.
- ▶ Collaboration with other stakeholders has resulted in access to over 1.2 million dollars in other funds to support and complement activities.
- ▶ In-kind support from stakeholders has been valued at approximately \$585,900.

### 2016-17 RESULTS

Reporting indicated that:

- ▶ Approximately 487,534 pounds of healthy food was harvested that includes poultry, honey, vegetables and fruit, as well as traditional food such as fish and goose meat.
- ▶ An estimated 202 capacity building events were delivered to over 2,800 participants that included a wide range of activities, such as:
  - gardening and food preservation
  - greenhouse operations
  - on-the-land training
- ▶ Collaboration with stakeholders has resulted in access to over \$700,000 in additional funds that supported activities, with in-kind contributions totalling \$134,100.

## Annual Programming

### FRONTIER SCHOOL DIVISION (FSD)

#### Annual Partnership Support:

FSD serves 41 schools (6,600 students) in northern Manitoba. Food security projects operated from the Leaf Rapids Education Centre include two greenhouses, gardening initiatives and building local food production capacity. FSD supported communities are located around the Leaf Rapids area. However, curriculum implementation and growing support is provided to many schools throughout Manitoba.

Project goals include spreading gardening knowledge, building program sustainability, and increasing nutritional awareness. They do this by engaging youth, educators and community members in hands-on skill building events, virtual broadcasts and implementation of the Our Learning Garden Curriculum.

The schools and communities that are supported receive training, materials and equipment. Greenhouse operations in Leaf Rapids supply the neighboring communities with bedding plants and the Churchill River Nursery provides space for learning, growing and harvesting of fruit and vegetables.



In addition to providing plants and the harvest, FSD also deploys their Leaf Rapids gardening team to the surrounding communities to provide assistance and workshops on various topics, including:

- ▶ composting
- ▶ cutting ground
- ▶ transplanting
- ▶ general greenhouse requirements
- ▶ planting

#### Special Project Support:

Special projects supported to date include the development of the Our Learning Garden Curriculum. The curriculum is designed to:

- ▶ teach all core subject areas from kindergarten to grade 12
- ▶ incorporate character education and sustainable development education
- ▶ be directional and manageable in the classroom

Cross curriculum lesson plans meet provincial educational outcomes in science, math, language arts and health. Interdisciplinary and cross-curricular learning increases students' motivation and level of engagement. Lessons are project-based with a start and end, and include a kit and teaching material. Lessons encourage creative thinking processes that will enhance the student's education and encourage lifelong learning.

*“NHFI has, and continues to offer northern communities the opportunity to grow not only gardens but to grow their knowledge, their well being and their linkage to the land and what it offers the people.” – Leaf Rapids resident*

## NORTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS (NACC)

### Annual Partnership Support:

NACC works in 23 communities on food security projects ranging from:

- ▶ apiaries
- ▶ greenhouse and gardening initiatives
- ▶ local food production capacity development
- ▶ food preservation
- ▶ composting



NACC's communities are geographically concentrated along the southern border of the NHFI eligibility boundary. Their goals are to:

- ▶ increase local food production
- ▶ develop partnerships and food security networks
- ▶ promote food accessibility and healthy eating through the introduction of food preservation and preparation methods
- ▶ create an understanding of local and Indigenous food production

NACC meets these goals by developing relationships and empowering community members to be food self-sufficient by helping to develop orchards, apiaries, broadening the scope of vegetables in the community gardens and generally encouraging the gardening activity in their communities. NACC has built networks through partnering with FSD and other food security groups in Manitoba and continues to focus on strengthening their networks on an ongoing basis. They build capacity by providing hands on training directly at the community level through workshops on preservation and processing. They also work with local community members who are familiar with traditional foods and provide opportunities for knowledge sharing.

Over the last several years, NACC has delivered many workshops covering topics such as:

- ▶ fruit and plant care
- ▶ seed saving and composting
- ▶ food preservation (including meat and fish canning)
- ▶ Food Safe 1 Certificate Course
- ▶ harvesting wild food
- ▶ beekeeping
- ▶ greenhouse operations
- ▶ herb and basic gardening

Equipment and materials provided to communities include:

- ▶ seeds
- ▶ pruning
- ▶ preservation supplies
- ▶ recipes
- ▶ greenhouses
- ▶ fruit care
- ▶ seed starting resources
- ▶ gardening equipment
- ▶ soil testing kits
- ▶ predator deterrent
- ▶ compost pails
- ▶ vermicomposting bins
- ▶ fruit trees



### Special Project Support:

Funds were provided for Fish Smoking Workshops to over 70 participants in three communities. These workshops increased the participants' practical knowledge about safe food handling, cleaning and filleting fish, preparing brine and using a smoker. These projects were further supported through the creation of fish smoking infrastructure and were an excellent way to share traditional knowledge among the participants.

Northern gardening kick-off events were hosted in Barrows and Pelican Rapids. These events provided an opportunity to increase NHFI awareness and to kick start the gardening season. The gardening kick-off events were intended to build community and to ensure that people are aware of the potential for localizing food systems in their own communities.

NACC supported the Granville Lake gardening project in an effort to increase the availability of healthy, nutritious food. NACC also supported the project to reduce the pressure on residents of having to travel out of this very remote community for groceries by boat, plane or snowmobile.

## BAYLINE REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE (BRRT)

### Annual Partnership Support:

BRRT works in 12 communities on a range of food security projects, including:

- ▶ greenhouse and gardening initiatives
- ▶ building local food production capacity
- ▶ co-operative development

Bayline communities are geographically concentrated, primarily along the Bayline rail line that extends from The Pas to Churchill.

The BRRT goals are:

- ▶ to increase local food production
- ▶ to promote food accessibility
- ▶ to promote healthy eating through gardening, poultry and traditional foods and medicines

BRRT realizes these goals by:

- ▶ promoting and supporting poultry and fruit production
- ▶ increasing community food skills
- ▶ extending the growing season through greenhouse development
- ▶ engaging schools in local food production

The BRRT has re-engaged youth in traditional foods programming and is working with local community members to explore a co-operative to ship fresh and healthy foods at lower costs to the Bayline communities.

Many workshops have been delivered in BRRT assigned communities, covering topics like:

- ▶ poultry
- ▶ cooking classes
- ▶ food preservation
- ▶ greenhouses
- ▶ pest control
- ▶ traditional foods including preparing wild meat

The communities also receive support for equipment and materials, including:

- ▶ seeds
- ▶ recipes
- ▶ gardening equipment
- ▶ composting and preservation resources
- ▶ fruit trees
- ▶ chicken feed
- ▶ chicks

### Special Project Support:

The Nutrition Education project aim was to provide a space and educational platform to impart nutritional knowledge and food safety habits to youth and adults. BRRT was also supported to host community visits to the Northern Sun Farm Co-op in southern Manitoba. The project created an opportunity to learn about environmentally sustainable technologies and living practices and promote engagement in food production activities.

Fruit production has been established through the special project funding, which saw to the planting of fruit trees and berry plants in 11 communities in an effort to increase community access to fresh and healthy food choices while serving to reinforce food self sufficiency.

The BRRT was funded to create a traditional foods and medicine booklet entitled Muskgege: Carol's Traditional Medicines that gathered information and outlined harvesting of traditional foods and medicines in the north.

Bayline communities have also benefitted from additional winter road equipment and delivery support, while the most recent special project funding was targeted at building a storage facility to house the materials and equipment used to deliver food security programming.

## FOOD MATTERS MANITOBA (FMM)

### Annual Partnership Support:

FMM works in 17 communities on food security projects such as:

- ▶ backyard poultry production
- ▶ greenhouse and gardening initiatives
- ▶ traditional foods education, distribution and celebration

FMM's communities are geographically dispersed throughout the northern part of Manitoba, from as far south as Misipawistik Cree Nation to as far north as Sayisi Dene First Nation. While most FMM communities are accessible by road, there are some that are winter road and fly-in access only, which poses unique challenges for community visits, transportation of equipment and supplies.

FMM meets their goals through the following activities:

- ▶ developing relationships with communities
- ▶ building capacity through support for increased gardening activity in schools and backyards
- ▶ providing support for the development of beekeeping and poultry operations
- ▶ building soil
- ▶ extending growing seasons through the use of greenhouses
- ▶ increasing community skills around fruit care, food preservation and traditional foods

They recognize the importance of celebrating and sharing success as part of the road to food security in northern Manitoba. They work to achieve this through co-ordination of youth exchanges between northern communities and by gathering community members together to create opportunities for them to learn from each other.

FMM has worked to deliver NHFI programming by providing expertise, guidance and infrastructure for a variety of food security-related projects. Additionally, FMM provides communities with a host of skill development workshops ranging from gardening and composting to fishing and food preservation. To complement these workshops, FMM also provides communities with the necessary supplies and infrastructure to build food security, including:

- ▶ seeds
- ▶ greenhouses
- ▶ tillers
- ▶ poultry equipment
- ▶ bedding plants

#### Special Project Support:

Special projects have funded winter road equipment and delivery to support remote communities with their food projects. Project supplies must be shipped via the winter road network as access to these communities is cost prohibitive any other time of the year. Financial support has also been provided for the Shamattawa Horticulture Therapy Project. The project seeks to meet the needs and challenges of this remote community, and focuses on youth at risk by implementing horticultural, plant and nature-related activities.

Funding has been provided to host five Growing Local Food Security Conferences, with sessions that include:

- ▶ Food Sovereignty and the Green Economy
- ▶ The Role of Traditional Foods in the North
- ▶ Gardening 101 and 201
- ▶ Root Cellars Rock



In partnership with FNHI funding was provided to support the three Sharing Our Food Stories events, held in conjunction with the Growing Local Food Security Conferences. The events focused on youth engagement in food security initiatives and traditional foods. FMM also hosted a youth exchange at the 2014 event that welcomed 16 Indigenous youth from ten different communities, and gave them an opportunity to learn from one another, engage with new ideas and reinforce basic gardening skills.

FMM was also supported to deliver traditional food programming that focuses on fishing, hunting and trapping. The work was further supplemented with support for a research project, specifically designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current and future potential of harvesting traditional foods.

In addition, FMM co-hosted a learning exchange in OPCN that provided an opportunity to learn about the Ithinto Mechisowin Program (IMP). IMP was developed in response to a community need to return to more traditional ways, including increasing access to healthy, traditional foods. The exchange also included a visit to the Nelson House Country Foods Program.



## FOUR ARROWS REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY (FARHA)

### Annual Partnership Support:

FARHA works in six communities on a range of food security projects, including:

- ▶ greenhouse and gardening initiatives
- ▶ local food production capacity development
- ▶ poultry-raising
- ▶ traditional foods

FARHA's communities are geographically concentrated in the Island Lake area on the east side of the province. All six communities are remote access only by winter roads or air transportation.

Their goals are to increase local food production and food literacy. FARHA seeks to meet these goals by:

- ▶ increasing the number of gardeners in their region
- ▶ diversifying the vegetables and fruit grown
- ▶ extending growing seasons through greenhouses

FARHA also has worked to achieve these goals by increasing the number of training and learning opportunities for community members and strengthening local networks to work together to address food insecurity in the north.

*“As an educator, raising chickens is the best thing I have ever done with my students.” – Andrea, teacher at D.R Hamilton School in Cross Lake and third year chicken-raiser*



FARHA has provided a wide variety of programming, equipment and materials over the years. Examples include:

- ▶ vegetable seeds
- ▶ materials for greenhouse repairs
- ▶ seed potatoes
- ▶ berry plants
- ▶ garden tools
- ▶ seed starting equipment
- ▶ chicken feed and equipment (watering trays, electric fencing, feeders, heat lamps, wire)

Workshops provided include:

- ▶ greenhouses
- ▶ basic gardening
- ▶ soil development
- ▶ tiller maintenance and care
- ▶ raising poultry

### Special Project Support:

Special projects delivered include winter road equipment and delivery that procures and ships required food security supplies for the growing and harvesting season. Supplies provided included:

- ▶ basic garden equipment
- ▶ organic material to improve the soil
- ▶ poultry supplies including feed and fencing
- ▶ a shipping container intended for secure onsite storage

Communities supported by these funds include:

- ▶ Garden Hill First Nation
- ▶ St. Theresa Point First Nation
- ▶ Red Sucker Lake First Nation
- ▶ Wasagamack First Nation

The Indigenous Food Sovereignty Summit, hosted by FARHA, was designed to be a nation-to-nation gathering of the five First Nations (Dene, Dakota, Cree, Ojibwe, and Oji-Cree). The Summit was held in Winnipeg on June 21, 22 and 23, 2016. Over 120 people attended the event, with 38 nations represented. The food served and celebrated was from each of the five First Nations. The Summit was one of the first of its kind in Canada for Indigenous nations to gather and learn from each other's stories, practices and traditions, related specifically to food. The Summit was a nation-to-nation dialogue led by Indigenous peoples.

FARHA also delivered the Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program in their communities, which realized the purchase of 224 freezers for families living in these Island Lake communities. Freezers are used to store local wild foods, which are frequently available in a large amount at one time, and then not available for some time afterwards. The freezers are also used to store the fall garden harvest. In addition, winter roads provide an opportunity to bulk buy foods that are stored in freezers.

## Other Special Projects

### GROW NORTH WORKSHOPS

The Grow North Workshops have been a hallmark event for NHFI partners since inception. When these workshops were decentralized in 2013, it allowed for direct collaboration with educators and community food champions in their local community, tailoring activities and topics to the specific needs and interests of each region or community. The newly decentralized workshops target many of the assigned NHFI communities and assist to kick-start the growing season.

In 2013, 220 participants representing eight communities attended the workshops hosted by NACC, BRRT, FSD and FMM. Topics included northern greenhouses, seed starting, soil amendments, composting and raised beds.

The 2014 Grow North Workshops were delivered using the same regional approach and saw over 400 participants representing 43 communities. Topics included:

- ▶ food preservation
- ▶ vermicomposting
- ▶ crop rotation
- ▶ beekeeping
- ▶ commercial fishing
- ▶ traditional trapping
- ▶ hunting
- ▶ gardening
- ▶ greenhouse development

The continued success of these regionalized workshops was amplified in 2015. That year, the workshops saw approximately 560 participants, representing roughly 37 communities, and offering workshops on a variety of topics, including:

- ▶ substance abuse
- ▶ traditional medicines and foods
- ▶ food safety handling
- ▶ trapping
- ▶ poultry production
- ▶ fish preparation for smoking
- ▶ traditional dancing and music
- ▶ a hands-on gardening session

- ▶ raising chickens (care and maintenance)
- ▶ social enterprise and community economic development
- ▶ fruit trees and orchard planting

In 2016, Grow North Workshops were held in Dawson Bay, Thicket Portage, Gods Lake Narrows, Cormorant, Nelson House and Leaf Rapids. Over 100 participants learned about a range of topics, such as:

- ▶ greenhouses
- ▶ beekeeping
- ▶ poultry production
- ▶ food handling certification
- ▶ gardening
- ▶ Indigenous agricultural methods
- ▶ cover systems

## NORTHERN HARVEST FORUM

FMM, in partnership with BRRT, hosted the first Northern Harvest Forum in Thompson in October 2007. Participants learned about raising chickens and traditional methods of preserving wild meat and also participated in a session on mobilizing communities. The 2008 forum, also held in Thompson, focused on supporting local food self sufficiency education and bringing important stakeholders together. This forum provided the opportunity to strengthen capacity and networks to address food security issues.

Through a partnership with Manitoba Agriculture and NHFI partners, the Northern Harvest Forum was hosted in October 2011 in The Pas, Manitoba. Sessions included:

- ▶ backyard composting
- ▶ healthy cooking demonstration
- ▶ community strategic planning
- ▶ food preservation
- ▶ fruit crop production
- ▶ gardening basics

## COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

The following projects provided an opportunity to increase access to healthy foods, improve employment opportunities, enhance knowledge and skills, nurture individual and community pride, self reliance and leadership, and build great community capacity.

- ▶ Aki Energy Inc. supported a healthy foods project in Garden Hill, with goals to create employment and increase access to affordable healthy foods. Activities included:
  - the incorporation of Meechim Inc.
  - the development of a market garden (including greenhouse operation)
  - the development of a community scale poultry operation
  - establishment of a healthy food market
- ▶ The Bayline Food Buying Co-op has been developed to serve communities on the Bayline, including Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei and Ilford/War Lake First Nation. The co-operative is community-managed and responds to the needs of residents for increased access to healthy foods.
- ▶ Wasake Fishing in Wasagamack seeks to reinvigorate the fishery by starting a winter fishing program for local use, trading to neighbouring communities as well as sales into other parts of the province.
- ▶ Opaskwayak Cree Nation LED Plant Factory pilot used LED technology to produce healthy local food that generated income and employment, contributing to a healthier local economy.
- ▶ The Barrows Community Council is operating a business from the greenhouse by selling vegetable seedlings to neighboring communities and local residents as well as trading volunteer labour for vegetables.

- ▶ The Northern Association of Community Councils is assisting two communities to develop fish composting stations, which are creating an opportunity to sell compost for use in gardens and addressing fish waste.
- ▶ Garden Hill Wabung Fishing Co-operative is working towards increasing sustainable livelihoods by:
  - improving the fish processing facilities
  - improving local food security, through an increase in the amount of locally available fish
  - contributing to the provincial local food system, by providing consumers access to good Manitoba fish from a known origin
- ▶ Peguis Food, Heritage and Culture Horticulture Program is based on eight acres of land that in 2014 produced more than 12,000 lbs of potatoes for the local community. The program also provided support to home gardeners in tilling and preparing beds, providing technical support and a place for gardeners to hone their skills.
- ▶ Food Matters Manitoba was supported to explore community food security social enterprises projects in the north. Two potential projects have been determined that include a healthy food market and an indoor LED growing system.
- ▶ Neginan Food Producers Co-op in Poplar River is seeking to establish a local food production co-operative that:
  - builds on and sustains food security efforts
  - leads to greater community engagement
- ▶ Tommy Thomas Memorial Health Complex and Community Care’s IMP is supporting community economic development and the local subsistence economy. Activities include:
  - youth training opportunities
  - creating employment
  - support to the local fishery
  - a country foods program
  - promoting healthy eating

## VIDEOS AND DOCUMENTARIES

Support has been provided for the production of videos and documentaries that provide opportunity to share in project successes and provide educational opportunities. Such projects included Vitality Gardening, which was a 13-week television series that highlighted gardening in the north, and teaches gardening skills as a way to battle diabetes and chronic disease related to poor diet and lack of exercise. The series was rated at the top of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network in the first season.

The “NMFCCC Stories of Action: Video Documentation of Inspiring Community Food Projects in Manitoba’s North” showcases five community projects and is intended to provide the opportunity to illustrate their positive experiences and motivate others. “Mother Nature’s Pantry: Food from the Forest” is an educational video seeking to increase awareness and harvesting of natural traditional foods found in the boreal forest. “And this is my Garden” by Growing Local Productions is an educational documentary film about the Mel Johnson School gardening project. It was stimulated by the FSD Our Learning Garden Curriculum (formerly Veggie Adventures). This project received acknowledgment from the David Suzuki Foundation and FSD representatives were invited to speak at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

*“I didn’t know one potato could make sixteen, that’s how much I found in my hill”*

– Gods Lake Narrows Youth



## SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Projects funded that support school programming included the following:

- ▶ Annual funding was provided to the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba for northern school nourishment programs. As a result of the program, there was a decrease in student hunger, tardiness and disruptive behavior, and increases were realized in student attendance and academic effort.
- ▶ The Wapanohk School Outdoor Learning Space is a school garden and learning space designed to give children and adults access to barrier-free food production space. The program included skill development supports that empowered participants to be successful in gardening.
- ▶ The Thompson Zoo Boreal Farmers Project was funded for five years. It provided hands-on learning to school age children on the importance of healthy eating and food security. The project also hosted raised beds gardens for community residents and a tool lending program.

## INCREASED ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

Support was provided to individual communities and organizations to increase access to healthy food. These communities and organizations included God’s Lake First Nation Poultry Production, which helped to enhance the poultry raising operations in God’s Lake. It also included the Churchill Healthy Food Initiative, which supported a community garden, cooking and preserving classes, a community kitchen and local school nourishment programming. And a partnership with the Provincial Healthy Together Now program created the opportunity to increase the geographic reach of NHFI, by working with northern regional health authorities to support:

- ▶ community gardening
- ▶ youth cooking classes
- ▶ fruit production
- ▶ women’s wellness gatherings
- ▶ preservation workshops
- ▶ school breakfast programs
- ▶ nutritional awareness campaigns

Community-centred garden programs were supported in Opaskwayak and Poplar River First Nations that provided practical gardening skills and an opportunity to learn about improving individual health outcomes through healthy eating. Eight obsolete grow chambers were also acquired from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. These chambers made it possible to build four new greenhouses in Bunibonibee Cree Nation.

*“What kind of lettuce did you give us, these lettuces are scaring us, they are so big!*

*– Home Care Worker, Bunibonibee Cree Nation*



*“In the beginning Grow North was an idea, a concept. With diligent digging and painstaking political pandering, it has grown into something quite tangible! We have the support of our Town Council (a feat in itself) and full co-operation of the school and town employees. There has been a great deal accomplished with very little initially invested.”*

– Tilson, Greenhouse Technician

## FOOD SECURITY POLICY INITIATIVES

Food security policy work was supported through participation in the Canada Public Policy Forum roundtables, focused on northern Canada and Iqaluit. The roundtables concluded that to find a long-term solution to food insecurity, all organizations and governments must not only collaborate, but must also engage communities to ensure that the people most affected are directly involved in finding solutions. The Swampy Cree Tribal Council Northern Multi-Jurisdictional Review and Round Table enabled four additional communities to participate in discussions about regional health issues.

## REVOLVING LOAN FREEZER PURCHASE PROGRAM

To date, the Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program has enabled 23 communities to purchase 499 freezers. This micro-loan program targets low income families who are loaned money to purchase energy efficient freezers that allow them to preserve food harvested from the land, and to buy food in bulk. It is often useful for these families to buy food in bulk, because there is a lack of grocery stores in their communities and the communities cannot always be accessed by road. Recipients pay back the cost of the freezer over time, allowing other families to participate in the program.

## EXPO MILAN 2015

NHFI's proposal to Best Sustainable Development Practices, Expo 2015 in Milan, Italy, resulted in a 4th place ranking in the category of: Food Consumption Patterns: Diet, Environment, Society, Economy and Health. NHFI received this ranking out of more than 250 world-wide applicants. This competition was part of the Feeding Knowledge program, with the objective of identifying priorities and key issues to address low levels of food security.

## Financial Information

PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS (2004/05 - 2010/11)							
Description	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Programming	179,000	179,000	179,000	449,000	584,800	584,800	584,800
Other Province of Manitoba Funding Contributions	0	0	93,200	125,000	115,000	100,000	50,000
<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>179,000</b>	<b>179,000</b>	<b>272,200</b>	<b>574,000</b>	<b>699,800</b>	<b>684,800</b>	<b>634,800</b>

PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS (2011/12 - 2016/17)						
Description	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Programming	584,800	584,800	584,800	1,246,800	1,246,800	1,246,800
Other Province of Manitoba Funding Contributions	100,000	111,000	59,000	59,000	50,000	50,000
<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>684,800</b>	<b>695,800</b>	<b>643,800</b>	<b>1,305,800</b>	<b>1,296,800</b>	<b>1,296,800</b>

## Other Province of Manitoba Funding Contributions:

### 2006/07

Infrastructure and Transportation Partnership to install commercial refrigeration units at St. Theresa Point, Red Sucker Lake and Garden Hill First Nations	\$93,200
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### 2007/08

Manitoba Climate Change Action Fund	\$75,000
Health and Healthy Living	\$50,000

### 2008/09

Manitoba Climate Change Action Fund	\$75,000
Health and Healthy Living	\$40,000

### 2009/10

Manitoba Climate Change Action Fund	\$75,000
Health and Healthy Living	\$25,000

### 2010/11

Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors	\$50,000
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### 2011/12

Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs	\$50,000
Budgeting for Outcomes	\$50,000

### 2012/13

Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs	\$50,000
Conservation and Water Stewardship	\$25,000
Housing and Community Development Education (Aboriginal Education Directorate)	\$27,000
	\$ 9,000

### 2013/14

Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs	\$50,000
Education (Aboriginal Education Directorate)	\$9,000

### 2014/15

Health, Healthy Living and Seniors Education (Aboriginal Education Directorate)	\$50,000
	\$9,000

### 2015/16

Health, Healthy Living and Seniors	\$50,000
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### 2016/17

Health, Seniors and Active Living	\$50,000
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ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS HAVE ACCESSED ADDITIONAL FUNDING AND PROVIDED IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (2004/05 - 2010/11)							
Description	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Partnership In-kind Contributions	68,700	59,600	65,200	193,600	114,900	184,000	255,900
Partner Funding from other Sources	106,000	53,500	95,400	253,400	273,500	429,600	186,300

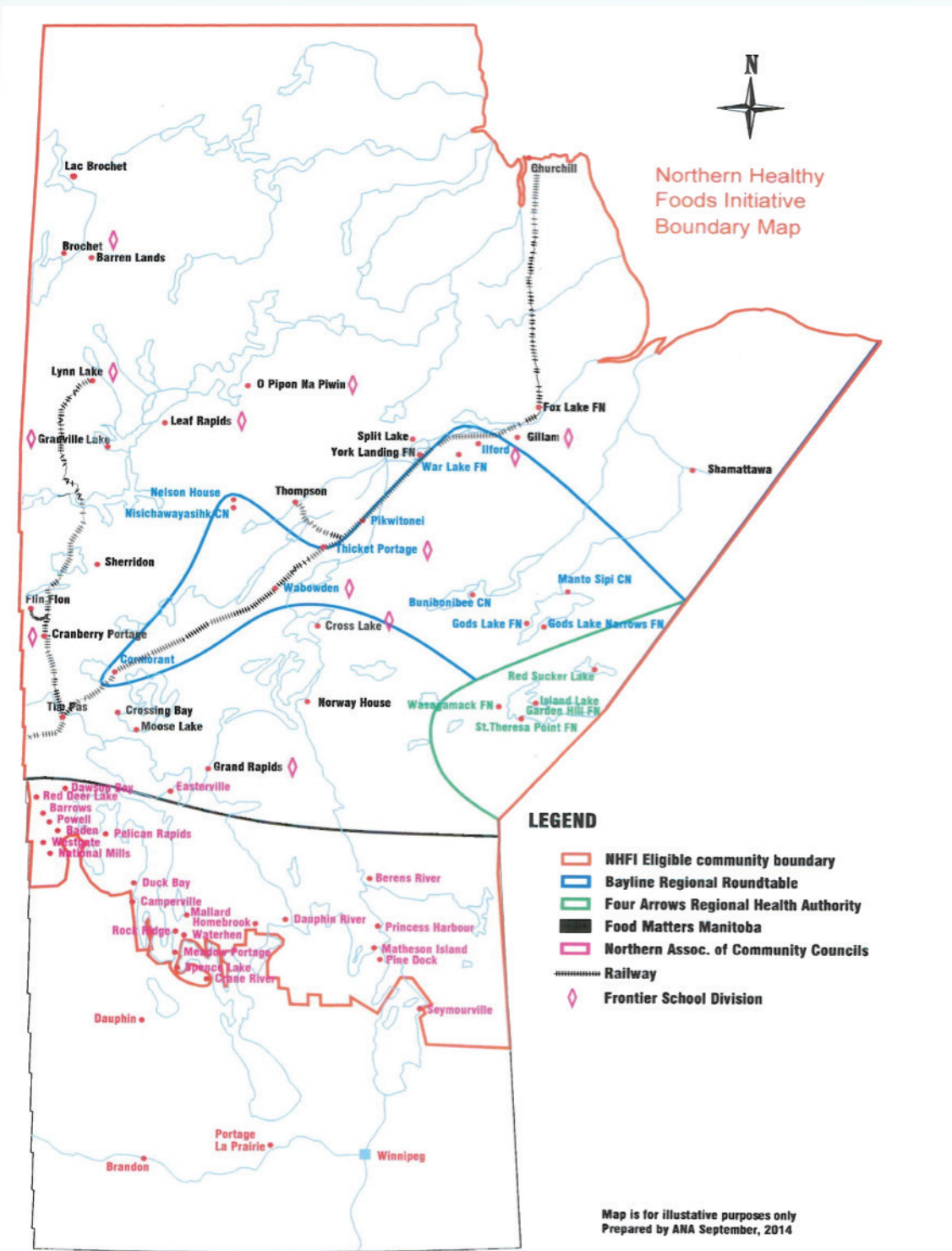
ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS HAVE ACCESSED ADDITIONAL FUNDING AND PROVIDED IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS (2011/12 - 2016/17)						
Description	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Partnership In-kind Contributions	301,300	243,500	189,500	470,900	585,900	134,100
Partner Funding from other Sources	429,400	400,300	611,800	926,400	1,193,487	700,839

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

### Indigenous and Northern Relations

Northern Healthy Foods Initiative  
 Box 20 – 59 Elizabeth Drive  
 Thompson, MB R8N 1X4

Website: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/imr/ir/major-initiatives/nhfi/index.html>





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