



# LOCAL FOOD & BEVERAGES STRATEGY





## Local Food and Beverages Strategy

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A portrait of Margaret Johnson, the Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, smiling. She is wearing a blue and white patterned top and blue earrings. The portrait is set within a circular frame with an orange border.

# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

There is a growing interest for locally produced food and beverages and now, more than ever, New Brunswickers want to know where their food and beverages come from and how they are processed. The continued strengthening of New Brunswick's food system is central to the development, growth and sustainability of the local food and beverages sectors.

The sectors - which consist of agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries, as well as value added agri-food, seafood and beverage products - are rich with opportunities for new entrants, existing participants, and Indigenous communities. At the same time, Canadians' growing trust in food and beverages produced in Canada versus imported food is setting the stage for growth in these areas. This became increasingly apparent with the emergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The *2021-2025 Local Food and Beverages Strategy* will benefit the agriculture, agri-food and seafood sectors across the province. The aim is to strengthen New Brunswick's food system and improve food self-sufficiency through three core pillars: Grow NB, Buy NB and Feed NB. Work under these pillars will enable our province to produce and process more of our own food and beverages so that we can decrease our reliance on imports from outside the province, and the country.

This local food and beverages strategy was created, and will be implemented and measured, in a collaborative manner through a multi-departmental committee that includes government, representatives from the food and beverages sector and Indigenous community representatives. This will ensure that we have the necessary expertise and engagement to continue making informed decisions that will support the future of the local food and beverages sectors.

We are committed to ensuring continued dialogue with all our partners as we work toward a common goal of strengthening our food system and supporting our local farmers, producers, processors and manufacturers.

## **MARGARET JOHNSON**

**Minister of Agriculture,  
Aquaculture and Fisheries**





## PREFACE

The New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all of the food and beverages sector stakeholders and Indigenous participants who shared innovative ideas and priorities that helped guide this strategy’s development.

We would also like to thank the Indigenous partners, non-governmental organizations and provincial and federal government agencies listed below that took part in working groups that helped to shape and finalize the *2021-2025 Local Food and Beverages Strategy (LFBS)*.

### INDIGENOUS PARTNERS

Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI)

North Shore Micmac District Council

Natoaganeg Community Food Centre

**Representatives from:**

Tobique First Nation

Woodstock First Nation

St. Mary’s First Nation

Eel River Bar First Nation

Eel Ground First Nation

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Food for All NB

Agricultural Alliance of NB

National Farmers Union in NB

### PROVINCIAL & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

NB Department of Aboriginal Affairs

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Alcool NB Liquor Corporation

Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (Social Development)

NB Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Indigenous Services Canada

Opportunities New Brunswick

NB Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training & Labour

NB Public Health

Service New Brunswick

NB Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture

## Definitions

**LOCAL FOOD** is defined as (1) food produced, harvested or fished in New Brunswick. (2) food and beverages made in New Brunswick if they include ingredients produced or harvested in New Brunswick.

**MARKET READY** and **MARKET READINESS** means that the food and beverage industry have business knowledge and skills to understand market capacity, consumer demand, pricing and certifications needed to operate successfully.

**HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY** is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.





## INTRODUCTION

New Brunswick's agriculture and seafood industries deliver more than 50 commodities to local and export markets. They also independently employ over 17,000 New Brunswickers<sup>1</sup> in primary production and processing and are a significant contributor to Indigenous, rural and coastal communities and their economies.

The continued growth and strengthening of New Brunswick's food system from local to export markets is central to the development, growth and sustainability of the local food and beverages sector. There is a growing interest in and demand for locally produced food and beverages, and the sector, which consists of agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries, as well as value added agri-food, seafood and beverage products, is rich with opportunities for new entrants, and existing participants. At the same time, Canadians' growing trust in food produced in Canada versus imported food is setting the stage for a prime growth environment with a wealth of sector-related opportunities.

NB's food and beverages sector also offers a unique opportunity for NB First Nations. Indigenous food-related knowledge and values have been accumulated over thousands of years. This knowledge of the land, environment and traditional foods is fundamental to the livelihood and cultural identities of Indigenous people. Many of the foods, such as wild berries, shellfish, fish, wild game, birds, and fiddleheads and other plant species, have been hunted, gathered, fished and traded by Indigenous people for hundreds of centuries. Engaging Indigenous people and their communities to participate in local food initiatives will enhance the strength and vibrancy of food economies in a way that protects the health of the environment and supports sustainable traditional harvesting opportunities for the benefit of all New Brunswickers.

NB's local food and beverages sector faces challenges, including barriers to markets, lack of infrastructure, relatively short growing seasons and climate change. One thing we know is that New Brunswick's food supply chain is resilient; however, we must act to mitigate the risks that

impact food accessibility, affordability, and overall growth and sustainability in NB.

Recently, COVID-19 has shone a light on our food system and its resiliency. Ultimately, this has resulted in the growth of new industry partnerships and collaborations as well as enhanced federal and provincial government support. The pandemic has placed a spotlight on both access to food and supporting local producers. As a result, a growing consumer interest and demand for locally produced food and beverages has been established. More than ever, New Brunswickers want to know where their food was grown and processed and want to continue to support the local food and beverages sector. There is no better time to unite the efforts of industry and government to work together to foster the growth and development of NB's food system. This is central to strengthening the sustainability and profitability of the local food and beverages sector and ensuring a strong and secure future.

New Brunswick's Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries (DAAF) is seizing that potential with the development of the *2021-2025 Local Food and Beverages Strategy (LFBS)*. The LFBS is the result of the collaborative work, ideas and input from Indigenous communities, industry stakeholders, and other government partners from all over the province who have worked together to develop the best possible strategy for New Brunswickers.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0489-01 Labour statistics consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA), by job category and industry





# 2016-2019 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

## Food

NB households spend approximately \$2.4 billion on food each year.<sup>2</sup> Much of that food is produced outside of the province. Although NB benefits from impressive export sales of \$531 million generated from agri-food and \$1.74 billion in seafood manufacturing (2019),<sup>3</sup> improving the purchase and support of locally produced food and beverages can contribute to GDP growth through import substitution. We would all benefit from opportunities to replace the food and beverages we import from other jurisdictions with New Brunswick grown and produced food and beverages.

NB's agriculture sector generated \$872 million in farm cash receipts in 2019<sup>4</sup>, while the aquaculture and fisheries sectors brought in around \$730 million (2018)<sup>5</sup> in primary revenues. The agriculture and agri-food sector consists of approximately 9,215 full-year equivalent jobs,<sup>6</sup> 2,255 farms of varying sizes<sup>7</sup> and 147 processing plants.<sup>8</sup> The marine sector consists of over 718 aquaculture licensed operations and 106 active processing plants and generate an estimated 7,895 full-year equivalent jobs<sup>9</sup> in primary and processing activities.

In 2020, DAAF updated its food self-sufficiency model (with 2018 statistics)<sup>10</sup> which extrapolates national food consumption data for NB consumers and combines it with annual agriculture and seafood production data to provide an estimate of NB's ability to feed itself. Although this is only an approximation, since many NB commodities are processed elsewhere before re-entering the province as finished food products, it remains a useful tool in determining where efforts should be placed in our food production system.

NB's supply vastly outpaces demand within the province for the commodities that we export and have a competitive advantage in producing. These commodities have extremely

high self-sufficiency ratios: potatoes (1,887%), wild blueberries (1,821%), seafood (931%), maple syrup (624%) and cranberries (417%). NB is overall self-sufficient in dairy products, chicken, turkey and eggs due to the supply management quota system. These products make up a significant portion of our diet.

Excluding potatoes, NB is far from self-sufficient in the production of vegetables (7%), as well as fruit (32%), beef and veal (45%), pork (22%) and grains and oilseeds (64%), partly due to climatic limitations on our growing season and partly because of NB's reliance upon cheaper imports. These numbers would suggest there is an opportunity to grow the volumes produced in these primary sectors and move them towards local markets and processing.

## Beverages

New Brunswick boasts strong alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage sectors. NB's alcoholic beverages include beer, craft beer, craft wine and spirits. In 2019, the alcoholic beverage manufacturing sector (breweries, wineries and distilleries) contributed \$71.5 million to the provincial GDP.<sup>11</sup> There is also a wide variety of non-alcoholic beverages produced in the province including bottled water, carbonated soft drinks, fruit and vegetable juices, and tea and coffee.

Over the last 10 years, NB has seen a significant increase in the number of producers and an accelerated pace of development in the alcoholic beverage sector. It now employs over 600 people in 48 different NB communities with 15 licensed cottage wineries, 59 microbreweries, 7 cideries, 3 meaderies and 16 distilleries. In addition, wine and beer are now readily available in grocery stores in the province.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0125-01 Detailed food spending, Canada, regions and provinces AND Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0228-01 Dwelling characteristics and household equipment at time of interview, Canada, regions and provinces

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. CATSNET Analytics (August 2020)

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0045-01 Farm cash receipts, annual (x 1,000)

<sup>5</sup> Department of Fisheries and Oceans (2018). Zonal Interchange File [database]. Ottawa and NB DAAF

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0489-01 Labour statistics consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA), by job category and industry

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0403-01 Farms classified by farm type

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 33-10-0222-01 Canadian Business Counts, with employees, December 2019

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0489-01 Labour statistics consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA), by job category and industry.

<sup>10</sup> NB DAAF Model, using data from Statistics Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada & NB DAAF Specialists.

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0402-01 Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices, by industry, provinces and territories (x 1,000,000)

<sup>12</sup> NB CAPA (March 2020)



# PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The 2021-2025 LFBS will work to strengthen NB's food system and improve food self-sufficiency through three core pillars: **Grow NB, Buy NB and Feed NB**. This will enable NB to produce and process more of our own food so that we can decrease our reliance on imports from outside the province and the country.

Each of the pillars will include goals and actions that have been developed in response to priorities identified during the engagement process.

## GROW NB

Grow NB will strengthen New Brunswick's food system through improved support and focused programs to strengthen and grow our agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors, including a special focus on Indigenous participants and their communities.

Grow NB will also work to "grow" our labour force to ensure that we have what is required to secure the long-term sustainability of our province's food industry.

## BUY NB

Buy NB will work with industry stakeholders, participants and Indigenous communities to develop initiatives and collaborative marketing efforts that will improve the marketability, visibility, awareness and demand of local products. In addition, initiatives will be developed to increase retail market access for local food and beverages in the province.

Buy NB will also work to increase opportunities for local food and beverages companies in the procurement of local food into provincial public institutions.

## FEED NB

Feed NB will encourage the growth of home and community gardens and collaborate with charitable organizations and communities to enhance the use of healthy local food in community programs and initiatives.

The LFBS's implementation and measurement will be led by the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries through a multi-departmental committee that includes industry stakeholders and Indigenous community representatives. The committee will carry out the strategy through a series of action plans that will be developed annually. To demonstrate that our efforts are having the desired impact, action plans will have performance measures that will be monitored and reported on, on an annual basis. This will ensure that we have the necessary information to continue making informed decisions for the future of the local food and beverages sector.

The LFBS forms a significant part of the overall DAAF mandate and focused actions to improve food self-sufficiency in NB.











# GROW NB

## WHY?

The NB Food Self-Sufficiency Model has identified that vegetables (excluding potatoes) and fruit represent the largest gap between what the province produces and consumes at approximately 7% and 32% self-sufficiency respectively in 2018. These gaps represent opportunities for growth for new entrants, existing producers and Indigenous participants.

The growth of partnerships and regional networks, as well as the sharing of new sector technologies and research have been identified as ways to catapult the NB food system forward to achieve its full potential. There is also a need to expand opportunities that better support the sectors' ability for farmers, producers and processors to train and grow their labour force to ensure they will have what is required to secure the long-term sustainability of our province's food industry.

The average age of New Brunswick's farmers is 56.<sup>13</sup> Although there are strong supports in place to help farmers advance their succession plans and to support the entry of new farmers, there is a need to inspire the next generation to grow their interest in agriculture career paths for the sustainability and vibrancy of New Brunswick's food and beverages sector. This holds equally true for the province's marine sectors of aquaculture, fisheries and processing.

## YEAR 1: PERFORMANCE MEASURES



# of additional acres of fruit and vegetable production.



% increase in vegetable production.



# of abattoir expansions.



# of schools and students participating in education initiatives focused on DAAF sectors.



# of training sessions/webinars held.

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0442-01 Farm operators classified by number of operators per farm and age.

# WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE & HOW WE ARE GOING TO ACHIEVE IT

## YEAR 1: GOALS & ACTIONS

### GOAL 1

Support food and beverages sector participants to grow and expand in New Brunswick.

#### HOW?

- Increase the number of acres of field-grown vegetable and fruit production in NB.
- Investigate new production methods for controlled environment farming and work with Opportunities New Brunswick (ONB) to attract new entrants into NB and explore these opportunities with Indigenous communities.
- Work with existing abattoirs to expand facilities in order to accommodate increased demand for local meat.
- Analyze infrastructure gaps within the food and beverages continuum and explore cooperative and community wholesale models.
- Support opportunities for local food and beverages stakeholders and Indigenous participants to network and collaborate to improve regional collaborations and develop business partnerships that facilitate the growth and expansion of the sector.

### GOAL 2

Implement collaborative policies and programs to support Indigenous participation in the growth of the local food and beverages sector.

#### HOW?

- Create an Indigenous Agriculture Development Program.
- Work with Indigenous partners and organizations to develop a series of webinars tailored for Indigenous communities interested in participating in the food and beverages sector.

### GOAL 3

Focusing on youth, educate New Brunswickers about the local food systems and provide opportunities for training and employment in the agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

#### HOW?

- In collaboration with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL), support agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries education and experiential learning opportunities in schools and community initiatives to better promote career opportunities and support the labour needs of the sectors through the Future NB – Future Wabanaki – Avenir NB Movement.
- In collaboration with EECD and Indigenous communities, explore opportunities to connect classrooms with community resources and educational material focused on Indigenous ancestral foodways.
- Work with PETL to identify gaps in training and build relevant tools to address gaps.





# BUY NB

## WHY?

Research suggests that even a small shift in consumer purchasing habits towards local food and beverages products would reduce need for imports, enhance local employment opportunities and increase economic activity in the province.<sup>14</sup> As a result, there is a clear advantage to improving the visibility and promotion of NB local food & beverages. There has been a noticeable growth of interest and demand for NB products by New Brunswickers during the global COVID-19 pandemic, and this has resulted in the need to enhance the sector's ability to increase promotion, diversify sales channels and adapt its business models. It has also highlighted the need to work collaboratively towards increasing visibility and awareness of local and Indigenous food products to facilitate increased demand from NB consumers.

Local food and beverages can also provide a way for restaurants and culinary tourism suppliers to connect with guests by providing a taste of local delicacies or for grocery stores and local businesses to illustrate their commitment to their local communities and farmers. There is also a growing movement in Canada of new and strengthened procurement programs and policies to increase the amount of healthy, local and sustainable food served in public institutions. This would redirect institutions' funding for food into local economies and strengthen local food systems. On an annual basis, millions of dollars are spent on food for publicly funded facilities including hospitals, long-term care facilities, universities, school cafeterias, etc.<sup>15</sup>

## YEAR 1: PERFORMANCE MEASURES



# of ecommerce platforms built to facilitate online sales.



# of new certifications (e.g. CanadaGAP® Certified industry participants).



# of collaborative local NB promotional campaigns.



# of times the local food exemption was leveraged by departments or school districts.

<sup>14</sup> Shuman, Michael H. (2017) *Prosperity Through Self-Reliance: The Economic Value of Import Replacement in Atlantic Canada & How to Achieve it*. Chart 10: Impact of 10% Shift in Atlantic Canada. Retrieved from: <http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/M-Shuman-Maritimes-IMPLAN-Leakage-Report.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Food Secure Canada. (ND) *Webinar Description: Local Food Procurement in the Broader Public Sector*. Retrieved from: <https://foodsecurecanada.org/resources-news/webinars-podcasts/webinar-local-food-procurement-broader-public-sector>

# WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE & HOW WE ARE GOING TO ACHIEVE IT

## YEAR 1: GOALS & ACTIONS

### GOAL 1

**Support the market readiness of NB Food and Beverage producers, processors and distributors to strengthen their access to local market opportunities.**

#### HOW?

- Develop promotions and initiatives to increase the presence of local food and beverages in retail, food service and food tourism opportunities.
- Support the development of ecommerce platforms, collaborative promotional opportunities, and other tools to increase market access.
- Address barriers and support food and beverages sector participants that want to obtain various certification requirements (e.g. Canada Gap Certification).

### GOAL 2

**Ensure that NB Food and Beverage market ready products are easily identifiable and support increased awareness and demand for local and Indigenous food products.**

#### HOW?

- Establish an NB Branding Committee of industry stakeholders and Indigenous participants that will develop a trusted approach to define, brand and strengthen the visibility of NB's local food and beverages.
- Create a promotional strategy and initiatives that build awareness, demand and a strong reputation for NB's local food and beverages sector.
- Establish a provincial Indigenous working group to identify strategies to strengthen the visibility, availability and local markets for Indigenous food products.

### GOAL 3

**Identify opportunities for government institutions to increase their purchase of NB local food and beverages.**

#### HOW?

- Work with other departments to promote and bring awareness of GNB's Local Food Procurement programs, policies and events such as GNB Policy AD-1709.
- Work with other departments to implement Service New Brunswick's NB First Procurement Policy, which requires GNB Parts 1 and 2 and Regional Health Authorities to procure goods, services and construction services from NB suppliers where possible and legally permissible ([www.gnb.ca/nbfirst](http://www.gnb.ca/nbfirst)).
- Promote the use of the local food exemption permitted under Regulation 2014-93 of the *Procurement Act*, which enables GNB to purchase food produced in NB directly from an NB supplier rather than issuing an open competitive process, up to \$366,200.





# FEED NB

## WHY?

Evidence demonstrates that household food insecurity is tied to income and racial inequality and other socio-cultural and economic factors that limit the purchasing power of roughly 93,000 New Brunswickers. Approximately 8.9% of NB households<sup>16</sup> and 31% of Indigenous communities in Atlantic Canada are severely or moderately food insecure and have limited access to local food and its associated health benefits.<sup>17</sup>

Poverty and food security are being worked on by the NB Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation and Public Health NB; however, the LFBS aims to align government support and collaborate with charitable organizations and communities to enhance the use of healthy local food in school food programs, charitable events, food banks, community food centers and bulk buying clubs. While supporting the use of local food in these programs, it is acknowledged that efforts should be made to carefully balance food affordability with the profitability of farmers, harvesters, producers and processors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has focused attention on local food production, leading to a surge of people interested in growing their own food and participation in community gardens. There are positive associations between gardening and health outcomes, such as a decrease in depression and anxiety, stress, mood disturbance, and body mass index as well as an increase in quality of life, sense of community and physical activity levels.<sup>18</sup>

## YEAR 1: PERFORMANCE MEASURES



# of communities and groups that use local food in their fundraising efforts.



# of New Brunswickers that form a local NB garden network and participate in associated activities.



# of projects developed for cold/freezer storage, meat processing and controlled environment farming.

<sup>16</sup> PROOF: Food Insecurity Policy Research. (2020) *Household Food Insecurity in Canada*. Retrieved from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Household-Food-Insecurity-in-Canada-2017-2018-Full-Reportpdf.pdf>  
<sup>17</sup> First Nations Food, Nutrition, and Environment Study: [http://www.fnfnes.ca/docs/Report-ATLANTIC\\_ENG.pdf#page=45](http://www.fnfnes.ca/docs/Report-ATLANTIC_ENG.pdf#page=45)  
<sup>18</sup> Soga M., Caston K., Yamaura Y. (2017) Gardening is beneficial for health: A meta-analysis. *Prev Med Rep.* 5:92-99.  
Thompson R. (2018) Gardening for health: a regular dose of gardening. *Clin Med (Lond).* 18(3): 201-2015.

# WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE & HOW WE ARE GOING TO ACHIEVE IT

## YEAR 1: GOALS & ACTIONS

### GOAL 1

**Support the use of healthy local food via organizations and initiatives that aim to improve physical and economic access to food for all New Brunswickers, particularly those with food insecurity.**

#### HOW?

- Identify organizations and associated initiatives with the capacity and interest to incorporate healthy local foods into their programming.

### GOAL 2

**Enhance access for Indigenous communities to culturally significant and traditional foodways as well as other healthy local food.**

#### HOW?

- Work with Indigenous communities to identify cold/freezer storage needs and coordinate sources of funding.
- Support initiatives that enhance the use of traditional foods through community gardens, controlled indoor growing and meat processing.
- Work to enhance local cuisine and catering services in Indigenous communities with traditional healthy foods and efforts to promote these services within and outside of the community.

### GOAL 3

**Improve access of NB communities, including Indigenous communities, to networks and supportive tools to learn how to grow their own food.**

#### HOW?

- Work collaboratively with partners to build capacity and resources to strengthen community food security through education, training and instructional material to support home and community gardening efforts.





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