

**Submission to the Office of Climate Change,
Energy Efficiency, and Emissions Trading**

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Feedback on:

***Responding to Climate Change
In Newfoundland & Labrador***

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Submitted by the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador



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The Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador (FSN) would like to acknowledge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's efforts in addressing issues of climate change in our province through the creation of the Office of Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, and Emissions Trading. The discussion paper *Responding to Climate Change in Newfoundland and Labrador* addresses many of the impacts of climate change and the ways in which our province can plan for adaptation. We congratulate the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in developing this very important discussion paper, and believe that potential impacts of climate on food security and our food supply needs to be included in the resulting provincial Climate Change Action Plan.

FSN is a provincial, non-profit organization started in 1998 in response to growing concerns of hunger and poverty in the province. FSN's mission is to actively promote comprehensive, community-based solutions to ensure physical and economic access to adequate and healthy food for all. FSN's 6 priority areas are drawn from recommendations identified at the 2007 provincial Food Security Assembly:

- a. Enhancing communication and information-sharing among organizations that promote food security;
- b. Increasing knowledge and public awareness about food security;
- c. Building inter-sectoral partnerships related to enhancing food security;
- d. Acting as a catalyst for comprehensive and community-based solutions to food security;
- e. Focusing on vulnerable populations; and
- f. Developing a research base to inform our work.

Food Security in Newfoundland and Labrador

Food Security means that all people, at all times, have physical & economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods produced in an environmentally sustainable and socially just manner. At the core of food security is access to healthy foods and optimal nutrition for all. Food access is intrinsically linked to food supply, and thus food security is dependent on a healthy and sustainable food system.

Newfoundland and Labrador currently relies greatly on outside food sources, having only approximately 10% of vegetables available through major wholesalers produced within the province. This dependence on outside food sources leaves our province with a predicted 2-3 day supply of fresh vegetables in the event of a crisis that disrupts this supply system¹. The majority of red meat products are also currently imported into the province. The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture has indicated that only an estimated 5% of beef products are being produced locally, and the sheep population in the province has decreased from 100,000 animals pre-confederation to a low of 4,000 currently. We are also facing an aging population of farmers and a decreasing number of active farms in the province.

These factors highlight a few of the challenges that we are currently facing in the province related to food insecurity.

¹ Wholesale and Other Opportunities in the Vegetables Industry of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Natural Resources, Forestry, and AgriFoods, May: 2007.

Climate Change and Food Security

Climate change has major implications on local food production and global food supply through impacting agriculture, aquaculture, and wild food harvesting. Droughts and floods can greatly impact farmers' ability to produce vegetables and raise livestock, rising ocean temperatures and ocean acidification can affect the fisheries ability to produce fish products, and changes in sea ice can directly impact hunters' ability to harvest wild foods such as caribou and seal on the North Coast of Labrador.

It has been estimated that world food production will decrease by 10% for every 1°C increase in average global temperature. Beyond this, it has been indicated that the recent reduction in global food supply is greatly due to changes in climate such as increasing global temperatures. This decreased food supply due to changes in climate, coupled with an increasing global population will have impacts on the local food system. Such changes could impact the food supply for Newfoundland and Labrador through limiting access to and increasing cost of imported food.

Increased Food Security through Climate Change Action Planning

It is important that the Provincial Government consider the risks to the food supply posed by climate change, and research how the province can adapt to face this challenge. FSN encourages the Office of Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, and Emissions Trading to make food security and the impacts of climate change on local food supply a priority area for research and monitoring through the Climate Change Action Plan. Increasing local food production, preserving agricultural land, and completing research and feasibility studies are all approaches to adapt to the impacts of climate change on food supply.

The Provincial Government can help the province adapt to this impact by adopting policies that encourage and support local food production, and by completing research and feasibility studies on the potential benefits and challenges of rising temperatures for food production in our province. This research should include a focus on how agricultural producers can adapt to changes in climate through piloting new techniques and crops, as well as how changes in the ocean ecosystem will affect fisheries and hunting and how we can adapt to these changes.

Importance of Multi-Sectoral Partnerships in Developing a Climate Change Action Plan

Food security and climate change are complex issues that need to be addressed through strong collaboration and a multi-sectoral approach to ensure that sustainable solutions are developed. FSN encourages the Office of Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, and Emissions Trading to continue to engage a wide range of government departments and community stakeholders in developing the Climate Change Action Plan. Specific collaborators may include the provincial Departments of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Health and Community Services, Natural Resources, and Environment and Conservation, as well as key community organizations.

FSN would like to thank the Office of Climate Change, Energy Efficiency, and Emissions Trading for this opportunity to submit feedback on the discussion paper *Responding to Climate Change in Newfoundland and Labrador*, and we look forward to hearing more about the Provincial Government's plan to address Climate Change and Food Security in our province.