



Food Security Network of Newfoundland & Labrador 2009-2010 Annual Report



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Year in Review

This past year has witnessed unprecedented growth in interest and activity related to food security in Newfoundland and Labrador. Groups across the province are starting community gardens, community kitchens, community freezers, community greenhouses, bulk buying clubs, and the list goes on. In the past few years alone, this province has seen a growth in farmers' markets from nearly none to 10 full- and part-season markets.

The amount of commitment that our communities have shown to addressing food security issues – including increasing access to healthy foods, increasing basic food skills, supporting local food production and encouraging farm-direct marketing – is phenomenal.

The Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador (FSN) has been actively working to support and encourage this growth by providing tools, resources, and networking opportunities to community groups across the province.

Over the past year, FSN has undergone an organizational review to clarify its role in supporting food security work in Newfoundland and Labrador, has introduced several new initiatives and resources for organizations and individuals across the province, has piloted a new approach for engaging communities in developing comprehensive community-driven food security action plans, and has continued to build relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders and organizations along the way.

This Annual Report highlights some of the key activities that FSN has embarked upon over the period of March 2009 - March 2010. Some of the great successes of this year include:

- NiKigijavut Hopedalimi: Our Food in Hopedale Project
- Monthly E-News Updates
- Provincial Food Security Teleconference Series
- Food Security Initiative Inventory
- Province-wide World Food Day celebrations and events

About Food Security

What is Food Security?

Food Security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods that are produced in an environmentally sustainable and socially just manner.

Food Security also means that the people who produce our food are able to earn a decent living wage by growing, catching, producing, processing, transporting, retailing, and serving food.

Importance of a Sustainable, Healthy Food System

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.

The food system includes the production, processing, distribution, marketing, and consumption of food, including:

- Farmers, Fishers, Hunters, & other food producers
- Food processors
- Food wholesalers & warehouses
- Transportation system: boats, trucks, planes, trains
- Food Sellers: grocery stores, farmers' markets, bakeries, farm stands
- Institutions: hospitals, universities, prisons, schools
- Political & Economic: governments, policies, taxes
- Cooks, Primary food providers, Breastfeeding mothers
- Everyone who eats!

A healthy, sustainable food system is one that is centered on the health of the population at large; one that does not compromise the land, air, or water now or for future generations; and one that provides the people working in the food system a living wage in a healthy working environment.

Food Security Network of NL

About Us

The Food Security Network of Newfoundland & Labrador (FSN) is a provincial non-profit organization with a network of over 500 organizations and individuals from across the province. FSN was founded in 1998 in response to growing concerns of hunger and poverty in the province.

Our Vision is a province where all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

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 Five Key Priority Areas, which were identified by participants at the 2007 Provincial Food Security Assembly, are:

1. Enhancing communication & information-sharing among organizations that promote food security;
2. Increasing knowledge & public awareness of food security;
3. Building inter-sectoral partnerships to enhance food security;
4. Acting as a catalyst for comprehensive & community-based food security solutions;
5. Developing a research base to inform our work.

Our Member Groups

FSN consists of a diverse and powerful membership with a wide range of interests in food security. Our member organizations include representatives from:

- Community-based initiatives
- Provincial and National Organizations
- Health Professionals
- Researchers and Educators
- Food Producers and Industry Representatives
- All levels of Government

NiKigijavut Hopedalimi: Our Food in Hopedale

Background of Project

In the fall of 2009, FSN received funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) to complete a Community-led Food Assessment in Hopedale, Labrador. This project, entitled NiKigijavut Hopedalimi (“Our Food in Hopedale”), engaged the community of Hopedale in every stage of completing the food assessment.

The NiKigijavut Hopedalimi project developed community-driven, concrete, achievable solutions to ensure increased physical and economic access to adequate and healthy food for the community of Hopedale.

Community-led Food Assessment Model

A community-led food assessment is a participatory and collaborative process that engages community members in examining their local food-related issues and resources in order to develop a community food security action and evaluation plan. Key stages of the process include:

1. **Environmental Scan** reviews the current state of food security in a community through examining health, economic, environmental, and social indicators.
2. **Asset-Gap Analysis** reviews existing food security related programs in the community to determine what is working, what is not, and what is needed.
3. **Community Priority Setting** engages the community in identifying what issues are priorities for action based on the environmental scan and asset-gap analysis.
4. **Community Action Planning** engages the community in developing a concrete action plan to address the priorities set by the community.

Project Partners

This project engaged a wide range of partners and stakeholders to successfully complete the NiKigijavut Hopedalimi Project.

- Hopedale community residents and organizations
- Hopedale Inuit Community Government
- Nunatsiavut Government Departments of Health & Social Development, and Lands & Resources
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (Collaborator)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (Funder)
- First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (Funder)
- Provincial Departments of Health & Community Services; Human Resources, Labour & Employment; Labrador & Aboriginal Affairs; and Natural Resources

Highlights from the Action Plan

This project resulted in a clear and concrete action plan outlining the required steps to address key priorities identified through community consultations. The identified priorities include:

- **Expand the Community Freezer Program** to include a wider variety of species, available to more local residents
- **Increase Gardening Capacity in the Community** by providing educational workshops and materials for gardening
- **Develop a Community Hunt Program** to support the community freezer program and increase wild food harvesting education and awareness
- **Increase Youth Support Programs** to enhance knowledge and awareness of traditional food skills among youth
- **Increase Food Education and Awareness** on the importance of eating healthy, and preserving traditional food knowledge and skills

Priority Area One: Networking & Information Sharing

A major activity of FSN is to facilitate networking and information sharing among organizations and individuals that are actively involved in addressing food security issues in the province.

Over this past year, FSN has been working hard to increase the opportunities for groups from across the province to get connected, learn from one another, and share success stories. Some of the highlights from this year include:

- **Monthly E-News Update** was first developed and introduced in June 2009. This monthly email is packed with information on upcoming events, opportunities for action, new food security resources, and news-bites. The E-News has been continually growing and is now sent to over 500 organizations and individuals across the province.
- **Provincial Teleconference Series** was initiated in the summer of 2009. This teleconference series engaged on average 25 participants per call from across the province in discussion on various topics related to food security. 6 Teleconferences were held on topics including: Community Gardens, Buying Local, Pillars of Food Security, Nutrition Month, Food Security Policy Groups, and Farmers' Markets.
- **Farmers' Market Summit** was hosted in partnership with the St. John's Farmers' Market in November 2009. This gathering brought together over 30 representatives of farmers' markets from across the province to share best practices and to host a visioning session for farmers' markets in Newfoundland & Labrador.
- **Food Security Initiative Inventory** FSN finalized the first copy of the Food Security Initiative Inventory in June 2009, which provides a listing of community food security initiatives from across the province. This has grown to include over 200 listings in the past year.

Priority Area Two: Public Awareness & Education

In order to address issues of food security in Newfoundland and Labrador, the public needs to be an informed and engaged. Increased public awareness and education is a regularly identified need of FSN's partner groups from across the province.

Over the past year, FSN has been working hard to help increase awareness and education of food security issues provincially, while our community partners are working to do so locally. Some of the highlights from 2009-2010 include:

- **World Food Day 2009** FSN worked with community partners to host World Food Day celebrations in 5 locations across the province – Labrador City, Corner Brook, Marystown, Botwood-Peterview, and St. John's. FSN provided copies of the film FRESH! to partners to host screenings. In St. John's, the Meal and a Movie event attracted over 90 people and raised \$500 for the local group Food Education Action St. John's (FEAST)
- **Media Attention** FSN began developing and submitted regular press releases to provincial media on various food security related issues. Over the past year FSN has seen an increased interest in food security from the media. There have been many radio and newspaper segments, including a full page article on community gardening in *The Telegram* in February 2010.
- **Website and Blog** FSN has been working hard to increase our online presence and to provide educational resources through our website and blog. The Root Cellars Rock blog was introduced in May 2009 as an online space to learn about food skills and participate in online discussion.
- **Presentations** FSN has been attending meetings and giving presentations about food security across the province. FSN gave over 10 presentations to a range of organizations and groups across the province.

Priority Area Three: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships

It is only through a strong and collaborative approach that we can effectively address food security issues in Newfoundland and Labrador. A main role of FSN is to continuously build relationships between key strategic partners and stakeholders in order to strengthen our network and work collaboratively to improve food security in our province.

Over the past year FSN has been attending events and meetings, hosting displays at conferences, giving presentations, and sitting on committees to build relationships with strategic stakeholders. Some of the new and strengthened relationships that FSN has built over the past year include, among many others:

- **Community Food Security Initiatives**
 - Farmers' markets across the province
 - Community gardens across the province
 - Community kitchens across the province
 - Bulk Buying clubs across the province
- **Regional Food Security Working Groups**
 - Burin Peninsula Environmental Reform Committee
 - Food Education Action St. John's (FEASt)
 - Western Environment Centre
 - Labrador Food Security Sub-Committees
- **Agricultural Organizations**
 - Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of Agriculture
 - Newfoundland & Labrador Young Farmers' Forum
 - ACORN-NL
- **Government Departments and Agencies**
 - Nunatsiavut Government
 - Public Health Agency of Canada
 - First Nations and Inuit Health Branch
 - Provincial Departments of Health & Community Services; Human Resources, Labour & Employment; Natural Resources; and Labrador & Aboriginal Affairs

Priority Area Four: Support for Food Security Initiatives

Community food security initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador are the foundation of FSN. FSN strives to act as a catalyst of and support for community based food security initiatives across the province by providing networking, information, and resource support to groups that are actively addressing food security issues in their communities.

FSN has been working hard to strengthen our role in supporting local food security groups. Highlights from 2009-2010 include:

- **Community-led Food Assessment Model** FSN piloted the community-led food assessment model in Hopedale as a tool for initiating community action to address local food security issues. FSN plans to continue to apply and adapt this model in other regions of the province, including Labrador West, Lake Melville, and the Burin Peninsula in 2010-2011.
- **Food Security Best Practices Toolkits** FSN began the process of researching and developing best practices toolkits on bulk buying clubs, community kitchens, community gardens, and farmers' markets that will help groups in starting these initiatives. The final toolkits are scheduled to be completed for winter 2011.
- **Liaising, Networking, and Brokering** FSN has been providing ongoing support to groups across the province initiating and expanding community-food security initiatives through networking, brokering, and providing resource support.

FSN is continuing to address the needs and opportunities identified by our community partners by initiating additional teleconference networking opportunities, developing additional resources and tools, and providing additional online spaces to facilitate networking and information sharing between groups.

Priority Area Five: Research

FSN completes ongoing research to identify priority areas for food security action, developing food security briefs, completing organizational reviews, and maintaining up to date resources.

Highlights from 2009-2010 FSN research projects include:

- **Peoples Food Policy Project** FSN has been actively engaged in the Peoples Food Policy Project and has hosted 3 Kitchen Table Talks to help inform federal food policy recommendations.
- **Submissions to Government Consultations** FSN has engaged members in developing and submitting recommendations to Government Consultations including the Pre-Budget Consultation held in February 2010.
- **2009 Organizational Review** After completing two successful projects and a key staff person moving on to other work, in the spring of 2009 FSN found the opportunity to carry out an organizational review. Through consultations with 15 key informants, representing a broad range of stakeholders, this review developed a 10-point strategic organizational development plan outlining approaches to strengthening FSN
- **Strengthened Relationships with Academic Researchers** FSN has been actively building relationships with food security researchers from Memorial University, Grenfell College, Labrador Institute, as well as Institutions from across Canada such as Mount St. Vincent University, and Trent University.

Partners and Collaborators

FSN would like to acknowledge and thank our organizational and government partners and collaborators for their contributions over this past year. Their valuable knowledge, resources, and input have enriched FSN's projects and activities in 2009-2010.

FSN would also like to thank all of the community groups across the province that are actively addressing issues of food security in their regions.

FSN looks forward to working closely with these groups and organizations to continue to address food security issues in Newfoundland and Labrador in coming years.

Funders

FSN would also like to thank the following granting agencies for their support:

Public Health Agency of Canada, Population Health Fund

Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada

Department of Health and Community Services, Wellness Program

Department of Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development, Community Capacity Building Program

Department of Human Resources, Labour, and Employment, Job Creation Partnership Program

Looking Forward

It is a very exciting time for food security in Newfoundland and Labrador and FSN's Board of Directors and Staff are looking forward to the opportunities for growing our network. In the coming year, FSN will be further implementing community-led food assessments, increasing support for community food security initiatives, and continuing to foster provincial dialogue.

Beyond this, FSN's Board of Directors will be developing a 3-year plan that will guide the growth of the organization. This plan will build on the strengths of FSN, the opportunities which have been identified by our community partners, and address food security challenges that we face in this province.

FSN looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with community partners and key stakeholders to address food security issues in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to build a strong foundation for improving access to healthy food for all.

Getting Involved

Want to get involved with the Food Security Network of Newfoundland & Labrador?

There are many ways to get connected with FSN:

1. Become a member
2. Get involved with a local initiative
3. Make a donation
4. Join a committee
5. Subscribe to the E-News
6. Volunteer at and attend community events
7. Participate in teleconferences

Simply email or call Rick Kelly, Communications Coordinator to get involved or learn more:

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