

**Bill to Promote Local Food Passes Final Vote  
Ontario Committed to Supporting Farmers, Building Stronger Agri-food Industry**

Ontario is moving forward to help promote the good things that are grown, harvested and processed in Ontario the passage of the Local Food Act, 2013 on November 5, 2013.

The new legislation is part of a strategy to build Ontario's economy by making more local food available in markets, schools, cafeterias, grocery stores and restaurants. This will create jobs and expand the province's agri-food sector.

The new legislation -- the first of its kind in Canada -- will increase local food awareness, and boost sales by setting local food goals and targets in consultation with sector partners. The act will also create a non-refundable tax credit of 25 per cent for farmers who donate their surplus harvest to eligible community food programs such as food banks, and proclaim a Local Food Week that will take place annually, beginning the first Monday in June.

Building a stronger agri-food industry is part of the government's economic plan to support a dynamic and innovative business climate, invest in people and invest in infrastructure.

Quick Facts

- The Local Food Act will also require the government to produce an annual local food report on its activities to support local food.
- The province's agri-food sector contributes approximately \$34 billion to the economy and supports more than 740,000 jobs across Ontario.
- The province's farmers produce more than 200 commodities, including fruits, vegetables, livestock, dairy, poultry, grains and oilseeds. Food processors in Ontario purchase about two-thirds of the food that is produced on the province's farms.
- Ontario's Local Food Fund is part of a \$30 million investment from the province to create jobs and support innovative local food projects over the next three years.

What people are saying:

*"The Local Food Act will benefit people by making the connection between buying local and helping grow an important Ontario industry. If we increase demand to homegrown food, we will create jobs and boost the agri-food sector's contributions to our economy. It's an important and historic step forward and I*

*thank everyone who helped support this Legislation”, Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario and Minister of Agriculture and Food.*

*“The Local Food Act will serve as a constant reminder of the bounty of Ontario. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is happy to see that it will target food literacy, local food use and will help farmers attend to the needs of others through a community food donation tax credit.” Mark Wales, Ontario Federation of Agriculture*

*“By raising the profile of local food, the Local Food Act will provide Ontario food and beverage processors with an opportunity to further develop local food systems and market development strategies. Ontario consumers are demanding high quality food and drink, and our processors are willing and able to deliver”. Steve Peters, Alliance of Ontario Food Processors*

**Locally here are some of things our community has been doing to raise the issues of food and farming:**

- **Future of Food & Farming Summit** held in October, 2012. The goal of the session was to increase awareness of the links between food, health, community economic development, food security and farming within the context of planning for the future of Peterborough County. Twenty-seven community leaders attended, from non-profit and government interests, to farmers and others throughout the value chain of local food system. The results of this summit included documentation of local issues facing the future of food & farming. Full Proceedings available.
- **Working Group on Food & Farming** established from participants of that 2012 summit. Members include: Linda Slavin (Sustainable Peterborough), Dr. Rosana Pellizzari (Peterborough County City Health Unit and chair of the Community Food Network), Brad Appleby (City of Peterborough), Bryan Weir (County of Peterborough), Jamey Coughlin (Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation), Bill Astell (producer), Judy Coward (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs), Pat Learmonth (Farms at Work, co-chair), Dawn Berry Merriam (Peterborough Social Planning Council, co-chair)

**Sustainable Peterborough** adopted the Future of Food & Farming Working Group to support its pillar on food and agriculture. The Future of Food & Farming Working Group has been focussing on the strategies in the Sustainable Peterborough Plan document, namely:

- Maintain adequate farmland availability to support our sustainable agricultural needs.
- Facilitate the production, storage, processing, distribution, and marketing of local, healthy food.
- Encourage farmers to practice good environmental stewardship.

In December, 2012, the Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) designed and circulated a survey on attitudes towards buying local food. The main goal was to gauge the public's purchasing habits and attitudes toward local foods in order to advance policy development efforts in this area. We asked people to respond to questions about:

- their purchasing habits, perceptions and attitudes towards local foods;
- how they define local foods (in terms of distance travelled and region of production);

- how they see their role in the local food economy (consumer, producer, distributor, etc.);
- their access to and the availability of local foods from different food retailers.

The results of the PSPC “**Local Food & What We Think About Buying Local: the Future of Food & Farming**” were released at the follow up summit on the **Future of Food & Farming: Next Steps**. (for the complete report go to our website at [www.pspc.on.ca](http://www.pspc.on.ca))

In March, 2013, the follow up summit **Future of Food & Farming: Next Steps** was held. The goal of the session was to move the discussion on food and farming to the next level of community dialogue. Presentations were made on the following community initiatives that are underway and that support the dialogue of local food access, production and education:

- Nourish Peterborough
- Official Plan Summary: Plan It
- Identification of how much land we will need to achieve the stated goal of feeding ourselves today? In 2036?
- The Percentage of farmed land in the county protected as Prime Agriculture

Products delivered by/with the Future of Food & Farming Working Group:

- Survey of local attitudes towards buying local food
- Calculation of land required for our community to feed itself, now and in the future
- Documentation of amount of land designated as prime agriculture
- Discussions underway to broker relationships between farms and schools
- Proposal developed re local survey of grocery stores and their policies/abilities to buy and sell local products (to be done in partnership with Transition Town Peterborough) through Trent Centre for Community Based Education

Upcoming workplan:

1. Input to the County Official Plan Review process
2. Input on the Local Food Act as it impacts the local food system in Peterborough
3. Continuing work on Sustainable Peterborough community priorities

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