



For immediate release

## **Inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption in Canada creates significant economic burden, study finds**

**July 20, 2017 — Ottawa:** Canadians do not eat enough fruit and vegetables, and this inadequate produce consumption has a negative effect on the health of Canadians and the economy, says a study published in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health*.

The study, *The Economic Benefits of Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Canada*, found that over three-quarters of Canadians do not meet Canada's Food Guide recommendations on the number of daily servings of fruit and vegetables. This lack of produce consumption creates an estimated annual economic burden of \$4.39 billion—\$1.47 billion in direct costs and \$2.92 billion in indirect costs that include premature mortality and disability.

"A significant majority of Canadians are not consuming the recommended daily servings of fruit and vegetables, with important consequences to their health and the Canadian economy. Programs and policies are required to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption in Canada," says Dr. Hans Krueger, study co-author, President of H. Krueger and Associates Inc., and Adjunct Professor at the School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine.

According to the study, Canadians consume an average of 4.38 servings of fruit and vegetables per day. If consumption were to increase by 20% to 5.26 servings, there would be an approximate reduction in the economic burden of 20%, or \$878 million annually.

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) supported this study and strongly favours an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption to improve the health of Canadians. CPMA has called on the federal and provincial/territorial governments to establish policy statements supporting the goal of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption of Canadians by 20% over the next five years.

"This increase would be the equivalent of one additional serving a day of produce for all Canadians," says Ron Lemaire, President of CPMA. "We know a balanced diet that's rich in fruit and vegetables is the cornerstone of good health and an important line of defence against chronic disease and excess weight."

### **For more information, please contact:**

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### **About the Canadian Produce Marketing Association:**

Based in Ottawa, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that represents companies that are active in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada, from farm gate to the dinner plate. CPMA's vision is to enable and lead the produce industry by enhancing the market and facilitating trade of fresh fruit and vegetables for its members. CPMA is proud to represent over 840 members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.