



Policy Statement in Support of Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

Goal

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) and the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) call on the federal and provincial/territorial governments to **establish policy statements supporting the goal of increasing the fruit and vegetable consumption of Canadians by 20% over the next five years**. This is equivalent to one additional serving a day for all Canadians, increasing consumption for many to the base amount recommended by *Canada's Food Guide*.

Action Needed

- A whole-of-government approach to a complex and challenging issue that will align policy and integrate activities and programs in support of a common objective - improved health outcomes. The approach would renew and refocus existing programs and funding in support of multiple areas of priority to government.
- To address a complex Canadian food environment, a systems approach is required that supports healthy food choices and that is integrated between all segments and stakeholders. Characteristics should include:
 - Different strategies for different populations, including culturally appropriate programs;
 - Intersectoral collaboration;
 - Public-private partnerships;
 - Enabling infrastructure.
- Measureable outcomes are critical to deliver success. These must be guided by the policy statement/objective, be based on implementation plans and give visibility across all sectors.

Impact

- Reduce Canadians' risk of chronic disease and excess weight;
- Reduce health care costs associated with chronic disease and excess weight;
- Improve access and affordability to quality fruits and vegetables for all Canadians and especially rural, remote, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities;
- Stimulate growth of the fruit and vegetable sector including increased activity on Canadian farms;
- Encourage innovation in food distribution and storage infrastructure for rural and remote communities; and
- Establish a common focus for relevant ministries and agencies including: Health Canada; Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; and across provincial, territorial and municipal mandates and programs.

Background

- There are a number of contextual issues that affect the food environment and food security in Canada, including affordability, accessibility, availability and food literacy.
- A policy statement is intended to provide a framework for integrating increased fruit and vegetable consumption into existing health promotion initiatives and other government priorities.
- A balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables is a cornerstone of good health and an important line of defense against chronic disease and excess weight.
- Children are suffering from excess weight, presenting a troubling future: the next generation of Canadians may be the first that does not live longer than its parents.
- In 2013, 27.6 million Canadians did not consume the recommended number of fruits and vegetables per day. The economic burden attributable to low fruit and vegetable intake in Canada today is \$4.4 billion in direct and indirect costs (H. Kruger & Associates, Inc., *The Economic Benefits of Fruit and Vegetable Consumption*, 2016).
- Canada is the only G7 country without some form of national fruit and vegetable health/nutrition policy.

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