



## Increasing produce consumption for healthier communities FEDERAL ELECTION 2025

### TALKING POINTS

*When in doubt, think Connect (why is it important to YOU?), Contrast (what's missing?), Solve (how can the government/candidate help?)*

- **Connect:** Given the protective effect of fruits and vegetables on reducing the risk for many chronic diseases, it is clear that supporting access to these nutritious foods in all regions of the country can contribute substantially to the health and well-being of our communities, while also significantly decreasing government health care spending.
- **Contrast:** Even prior to recent inflationary pressures on the cost of food, year over year, Canadians are eating fewer vegetables and fruits, with significant health and economic consequences.
- **Solve:** Government policies that are grounded in evidence and provide equal access to fruits and vegetables in a “Food as Medicine” approach are needed to effectively address this challenge. CPMA’s [Half Your Plate campaign](#) and [Freggie Children's Program](#) are working to increase fresh produce consumption in Canada, but more support is needed, including through critical investments such as the National School Food Program.

### OUR ASKS TO POLITICAL PARTIES/CANDIDATES

1. Will your party support a strengthened food system and food security for all Canadians by adopting a whole-of-government agriculture and food production lens and making food production and access to food a whole-of-government priority in legislation, policy and crisis management?
2. Will your party invest in the health of Canadians using a “Food as Medicine” approach, and advance measures promoting the *Canada Food Guide* recommendation to fill *Half Your Plate* with fruits and vegetables, including in public procurement and government programming?
3. Will your party support measures to reduce diet-related diseases and hunger and mitigate health care costs associated with food insecurity and poor nutrition?
4. Will your party facilitate the timely delivery of funding and work with the provinces and territories to advance the development and implementation of the National School Food Program, and ensure that enhancing nutrition and promoting healthy eating practices, including through the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, are core objectives of the program?

## **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

- Although Canadian adults should be eating 7 or more servings daily, the latest Statistics Canada numbers suggest that almost 80% of Canadians over age 12 are eating less than five servings per day (Statistics Canada, 2023).
- Research shows that vegetables and fruits provide a protective effect in reducing the risk for cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, and certain types of cancer (*International Journal of Epidemiology*, 2017).
- People who are food-insecure have been found to be much more likely to be diagnosed with a wide variety of chronic conditions, including mental health disorders, non-communicable diseases, and infections (PROOF Report, 2021).
- As fruit and vegetable consumption has decreased, the annual economic burden attributable to low produce consumption in Canada has increased from almost \$5 billion in 2015 to close to \$8 billion in 2021, a 60% increase in economic burden related to low produce consumption (H. Krueger & Associates, 2023).
- CPMA and our members have been longstanding supporters and advocates of a National School Food Program and are keen to work with the government to secure a consistent supply of healthy food for children across Canada and create real opportunities for beneficial partnerships in our food system.

## **ABOUT CPMA**

Based in Ottawa, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is a not-for-profit organization representing companies active in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada, from the farm gate to the dinner plate spanning the entire produce industry. The Association's members include major growers, shippers, packers, and marketers; importers and exporters; transportation and logistics firms; brokers, distributors, and wholesalers, retailers, and foodservice distributors; and fresh cut operators and processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is proud to represent more than 900 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.