



PRESS RELEASE

CPMA welcomes government commitment to national school food program

April 2, 2024 (Ottawa, ON) – The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) was thrilled to see yesterday’s announcement that Federal Budget 2024 will include \$1 billion over five years to launch a national school food program for Canada. The program will aim to deliver meals to an additional 400,000 children per year.

"We know that many families are struggling with the cost of essentials, and that Canadians are eating less and less fresh fruits and vegetables – with detrimental impacts for our health and wellbeing and resulting in an economic burden calculated at almost \$8 billion annually," said CPMA President Ron Lemaire. "Canada is currently the only G7 country without a national school food program. We are very pleased to see the government moving forward with investment in this critical support for families across the country."

CPMA has been a longstanding supporter and advocate of a national school food program and a proud member of the Coalition of Healthy School Food. In a 2022 CPMA member survey, 68% of respondents indicated that they were active in supporting school nutrition programs. CPMA’s [Half Your Plate](#) campaign and [Freggie Children’s Program](#) are initiatives that aim to increase fresh produce consumption in Canada by helping Canadians align with the Canada Food Guide recommendation to fill half their plates with healthy and nutritious fruits and vegetables.

"Yesterday’s announcement is a result of many years of efforts by a diverse group of stakeholders," said Lemaire. "CPMA and our members 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."

CPMA will continue to engage with the government as the national school food program is developed, to ensure that enhancing nutrition and promoting healthy eating practices, including through the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, are core objectives of the program.

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About the Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that represents a diverse membership made up of every segment of the produce industry supply chain who are responsible for 90% of the



fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada. CPMA is fortunate to represent a sector that is both a significant economic driver for communities and that also improves the health and productivity of Canadians.