# FOOD SECURE CANADA

# **Annual report**

2020





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# Message from the Executive Director

I thought 2019 was a milestone year for Food Secure Canada with the change of ED, launch of the Food Policy for Canada and call for nominations to the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council-two initiatives that this organization had advocated for over decades. We had no idea what was around the corner. In mid-March, we quickly adjusted to the realities of a global pandemic. Our communication, policy, convening and advisory roles pivoted to respond to this unprecedented situation. We have further demonstrated our relevance towards achieving a healthy, just and sustainable food future by aligning our work to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 context where issues of food security and food sovereignty have risen to the forefront of public consciousness.

We recognize the suffering during this pandemic – which exacerbates existing socio-economic inequalities – while also seeing it as an opening for food-system transformation. Food Secure Canada was called upon for commentary and advice and did its best to step up to provide valuable information, networking, policy-development and advocacy in collaboration with members, partners and allies. Despite having our own challenges as an organization, we are privileged to be able to do this important work and are honoured to serve.

We have also had steps forward in terms of governance and clarification of modalities and principles around membership, engagement and "food citizenship" to better support the movement. This is an area where we have wanted traction for years and where we need to adapt to a changed environment by providing more flexible options for involvement by our many constituencies, allies and partners. Furthermore, the ramping up of activities of the People's Food Institute - launched at the 2019 FSC AGM - provides a unique opportunity to support the evolving food movement ecosystem. We also welcome collaboration with other social movements with complementary goals. Together we are stronger. The exploration of an "ethical space" framework, introduced by the recently reconvened and independent Indigenous Circle, provides a worldview and tool to explore more

decolonized ways of thinking about and doing our work. In tandem, we continue to learn and grow with respect to our commitment to anti-racism and other, interrelated systemic oppressions, recognizing that there are many blind spots and areas to be addressed within ourselves, the food-system and broader society. All this requires time, energy and patience as well as dialogue, learning, un-learning and listening. The steps forward on our strategic planning to rearticulate and clarify the vision, mission, mandate and values of the organization as well as strategic goals, have been helpful in this regard.

I would also like to thank my spectacular team, as well as our board of directors, who are all volunteers, as well as you-our members, partners, funders, and those who have participated in our campaigns and events, notably *Cultivating Change*, our big event in November 2020. Our goal for the year to come is to continue to use the unique moment from Covid-19 to help mobilize different interest groups, so that we can build a food system that is healthier, more just, and more sustainable, and in public interest. The Sustainable Development Goals, even though they are imperfect and contested, give us an ambitious set of goals such as zero hunger, improving nutrition, and building sustainable food systems by 2030, and we look forward to working with you on this.

We increasingly see that food is inseparable from health and justice, being an important tool to effect systems-wide change. It is more important than ever for civil society, organizations, and other individuals to push for change.

GISÈLE YASMEEN



# What we do

**Food Secure Canada** is a pan-Canadian alliance of organizations and individuals working together to advance food security and food sovereignty through three interlocking goals:

zero hunger	healthy and safe food	sustainable food systems

To do this work, we collaborate with a diverse range of members and collaborators, including food security organizations, national and international non-profits, farmers organizations, institutions, Indigenous leaders, food businesses, community groups, academics, and many more.

We work with our collaborators for deep and lasting change in our food system in three ways: sharing information, fostering networks, and advocating for policy change.

Meet our current board and team <u>here on our website</u>. Here is a list of our 2020 board of directors:

- Ashley Jean-Marie, QC, *Treasurer*
- Bryanna Kumpula, AB
- Ilham Saydna, ON
- Jessica McLaughlin, ON
- Julie Price, MB
- Kristina Craig, YT, Secretary
- Larry McDermott, ON

- Yasmine Hassen, ON
- Melana Roberts, ON, Chair
- Nancy Neamtan, QC
- Naomi Robert, BC
- Rob Moquin, MB
- Satya Ramen, NS
- Susanna Klassen, BC, Vice-chair

We would like to thank outgoing board members for their dedication in the past years:

- Satya Ramen, NS
- Julie Price, MB

# Covid-19

As the pandemic wears on, Food Secure Canada's role has been to harness the power of the collective in order to build a food system that is more healthy, sustainable and just. Even as the world changed drastically in light of Covid-19, we've been seeing incredible solidarity, ingenuity, and motivation for systems-wide change. The crisis has highlighted the deep inequities in our system, and while we must address the urgent needs of today, how do we channel energy to enact long-term systemic change? Here are a few actions we undertook.

### **Resources for Covid-19**

At the start of the pandemic, the FSC team compiled resources to help organizations access funding, keep track of policy proposals, and amplify how to help food organizations. Here's a highlight of our key articles:

<u>"How to get funding for</u> food security work in your community"	<u>"Covid-19: Food systems</u> policy proposals from the food movement"	<u>"How to help during</u> <u>Covid-19: A list of what food</u> <u>organizations need across</u> <u>the country</u> "
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### Webinar: Short-Term Response to Food System Transformation

In April, we hosted a webinar on using food policy for transformative change. We asked the panelists, **"where is the momentum right now, and how can we use it to build a better food system in the long-term?**" A recording of the webinar is <u>available here</u>.



The panel, moderated by Executive Director of Food Secure Canada Gisèle Yasmeen included:

Laura Reinsborough	Stuart Oke		Elizabeth Kwan	
Food for All NB	National Farmers Union		<u>Canadian Labour Congress</u>	
Nick Saul	Debbie Field	<u>thy School Food</u>	Jessica McLaughlin	
<u>Community Food Centres Canada</u>	<u>Coalition for Heal</u>		<u>Thunder Bay &amp; Area Food Strategy</u>	
"It is early in these stages to see what the long term food system's transformation might be. I don't believe that any		"Really giving that autonomy back to First Nation communities to be able to determine		

might be. I don't believe that any transformation from this moment is inevitable, I believe that we have to be very intentional."

> -Laura Reinsborough Food for All NB

"Really giving that autonomy back to First Nation communities to be able to determine their own food system is something that we're really hoping will come out of the crisis."

> – Jessica McLaughlin Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy

# Growing Resilience and Equity

Growing Resilience and Equity: A food policy action plan in the context of Covid-19 In May, FSC published a policy action plan for renewing the country's food system in response to Covid-19. <u>Growing Resilience and Equity: A Food Policy Action Plan in the</u> <u>Context of Covid-19</u> charts a way forward, developed through a process of information gathering, consultation and convening with individuals and organizations involved in social movements advancing food system transformation.

Within an inclusive public-interest based approach to food policy, programming and governance, FSC continues to advocate that Canada focus on the following:

- Address the root cause of food insecurity through establishing a universal livable income floor beneath which no one can fall, while ensuring that everyone in Canada has access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food;
- Build resilient, ecological local food systems that shorten and diversify food chains, revitalize communities, ensure greater access to healthy and fresh foods, support lower-emissions food systems, build greater resiliency to shocks and reduce food loss and waste;
- Support Indigenous food sovereignty where First Nations, Métis and Inuit determine their own place-based food systems, advancing policies that will best support self-determined resilient futures;
- Champion decent work and justice for all workers along the food chain by ensuring decent pay and conditions for every Canadian and international food worker, and meeting the specific demands of migrant workers;

- Ensure everyone is at the policy-making table through immediately convening, resourcing and empowering the **Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council**. Resources to ensure that wider civil society voices, above all those most marginalized by the present food system, should be included;
- Harmonize Canada's national and international food policies, prioritizing food sovereignty approaches, supporting family farms and low-input, low-emissions agroecological food production as well as sustainable processing and distribution.
- Immediately advance a National School Food Program, as promised in Budget 2019 and in the Food Policy for Canada, ensuring that it meets health outcomes, is universal, and is developed in collaboration with provinces, territories, key stakeholder groups and Indigenous leaders.

## Letter-writing campaign

To make sure that *Growing Resilience and Equity* got to the desks of policymakers, FSC used a petition tool called New/Mode for the first time, so that any member of the public could easily send a letter to their Member of Parliament, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Agriculture Marie-Claude Bibeau.

## **Statistics:**

• 259 letters sent (210 in English, 49 in French)

- 37% of ridings reached (125 ridings total)
  - **Top ridings:** Halifax, Kingston and the Islands, Papineau,
  - Laurier Sainte-Marie, Rosemont La Petite-Patrie, Laurentides Labelle
- Campaign lasted from May 20 July 2 (44 days)

## Social media campaign



The social media campaign around the launch of the *Growing Resilience and Equity* action plan and the letter-writing campaign that followed had a reach of 17,000 through Food Secure Canada's Facebook and Twitter. When taken together with promotion of the action plan through mainstream media outlets the total reach was 50,000.

## Meeting with the Minister Bibeau

In August, the FSC team met with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Marie-Claude Bibeau, in a meeting attended by partners from across the food movement as well as from other departments of government, including Health Canada. We shared our vision for using a food system lens to work towards Indigenous food sovereignty and Black food sovereignty, in addition to the support needed for a National School Food Program. In addition to our ED Gisèle Yasmeen, partners in this meeting included representatives from:

- Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy
- Black Creek Community Farm
- Seed Change

- National Farmers Union
- Yukon First Nation Education Directorate



# Cultivating Change: A just transition to a regenerative food system

## Virtual gathering

During this week-long virtual gathering from Nov. 12-18, we looked at the intersections between food systems, anti-racism, decolonization, and environmental justice movements, learning from Indigenous, Black and racialized food leaders, building our collective consciousness and capacity for anti-racist and decolonized approaches to allyship within the food movement.

The purpose of this event was to:

- Showcase and highlight the work of Black, people of colour, and Indigenous food leaders, e.g., inviting speakers who are leading food systems work in Black and Indigenous communities, highlighting their challenges/successes/needs for alliances across food movements, other social movements and broader society, etc.
- Highlight the connections between food systems work and other aspects of anti-racism and decolonization to host spaces that unpack the connections and provide opportunities for other forms of allyship.
- Build consciousness and capacity for anti-racist and decolonized approaches within the food movement itself, especially leaders, while simultaneously facilitating space for policymakers to be part of this work.

## **Convening committee**

Helping us to put together the gathering was a group of dedicated leaders. We extend a special thanks to the members of the convening committee:

- Melana Roberts
- Gisèle Yasmeen
- Susanna Klassen
- Naomi Robert
- Dawn Morrison
- Jolene Andrew
- Kevin Huang
- Rachel Cheng
- Amélie Lévesque

## Numbers from the gathering

We received approximately 1200 registrations and we came together for the first online Food Secure Canada gathering. Despite the distance, we shared dozens of photos, exchanged over 1100 messages, all while participating in bilingual and sometimes trilingual sessions.

<b>1,244</b> people registered	<b>815</b> attendees who connected via the Whova app	<b>39</b> forum topics
1,147 messages exchanged	<b>50</b> photos shared	

Participants gathered around the world to engage with Cultivating Change. See a distribution of the attendees and speakers <u>on this map</u>.



#### **Sessions**





Leadership from the Frontlines: Black pod Sovereignty Perspectives from Across the Food System Under Sovership (1, 2020, 2000, 5:30) pm EDT 4:40, 4:40



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Connecting local and global movements: Food sovereignty for all Wednesday November 18, 2020 200 pm ET • Ettratet Morfor, La Via Campesina • Ra Parta • Bel Barreiro, Smithsonan Scholar Emeritus • Gitable Yamere, food Scaure Canada

## Thank you to our funders and sponsors

Cultivating Change was partially funded by:

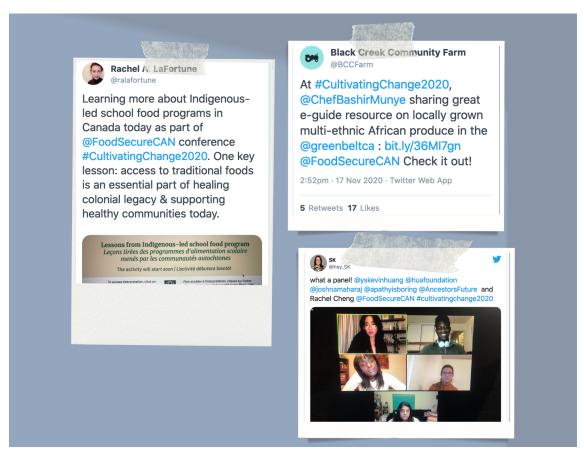
		Innovation, Science and Economic
	Government of Canada's	Development Canada's
McConnell Foundation	Sustainable Development Goals	Contributions Program for
	(SDG) Funding Program	Non-profit Consumer and Voluntary
		Organizations

#### Cultivating Change was sponsored by:

InterPares	International Development Research Centre	People's Food Institute	UFCW Canada
Fledge	Nature's Path Organic	Système Alimentaire Montréalais	UBC Farm - Centre for Sustainable Food Systems
Chinese Canadian Military Museum	National Congress of Chinese Canadians	C.K. Choi Foundation	Anavets Dominion Command

## Social media

Here are some of the top mentions of <u>#CultivatingChange2020</u> on social media:



# **Coalition for Healthy School Food**

Across the country, close to 2 million children and youth participate in school food programs. With the closing of schools in spring 2020, members of the Coalition for Healthy School Food worked hard to ensure children and their families continued to access healthy food. They did so by providing lunches and snacks to schools, reallocation of funds to provide food boxes or gift vouchers, and sharing resources and running workshops on the importance of healthy eating for children and youth during COVID. Read more in the <u>Coalition's blog post here</u>.

## **Federal advocacy**

It was also an important year for advocacy for a National School Food Program, with the Coalition making a submission to the **Pre-Budget Consultations** in advance of the 2021 Budget (<u>read more here</u>). The Coalition also continued meetings with federal elected officials from all political parties, and two federal cabinet ministers expressed their support for a National School Food Program:

- January & July 2020: Canadian Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault, FSC board member Nancy Neamtam and FSC staff Rachel Cheng, and members of the Collectif Québec (Marie-Claude Ouellet and Chantal Masson from the Carrefour alimentaire Centre-Sud)
- September 2020: **Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Ahmed Hussen,** with FSC staff (Gisèle Yasmeen, Rachel Cheng), Cantine pour tous (Thibaud Liné), Heart & Stroke (Manuel Arango), Coalition for Healthy School Food (Debbie Field).

## **Other events**

The Coalition for Healthy School Food brought a diversity of school food speakers together to explore the intersections between food systems anti-racism, decolonization and environmental justice movements during Cultivating Change events (click <u>here</u> for the recording).

This year demonstrated the strength of the movement for school food in all parts of Canada, and the strength of the Coalition and its 142 members in building momentum for a universal cost-shared healthy school food program in Canada.

# Sustainable Development Goals

Food Secure Canada received funding from the Government of Canada's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Funding Program in order to:

- Improve the capacity of FSC and the food movement to mobilize around the 2030 Agenda
- Increase awareness of food policies that contribute to the SDGs within the food movement and with policymakers

To this end, <u>we created an online resource hub</u> so that those working in food can better understand the intersections of food policy and the Sustainable Development Goals.

For those working in the food movement, the SDGs represent objectives to which we can hold our governments accountable, provide a yardstick for progress, and act as a common ground as we work for change in partnership with actors across sectors, departments, and levels of government. A baseline survey conducted by FSC with food movement workers show that 47% of respondents already use the SDGs in their advocacy, even if 72% of them worry that we may be too far off to reach these targets by 2030.

## **SDG community visits**

Across Canada, communities lead the way to meeting these ambitious targets, working towards goals such as zero hunger, good health and well-being, responsible consumption and production, and climate action. As part of this grant, FSC interviewed leaders from across the country to highlight their work and how they are forging forward even during the pandemic. All of the interviews <u>can be read here</u>.

# Environmental scan

## Summary

As part of the new strategic planning process for FSC, we launched an environmental scan as a way to get the pulse of the food movements across Canada. To that end, an online survey was sent out and made available for feedback from food movements actors across Canada.

The objective of this survey was to:

- Better understand momentum and opportunities in the food movement(s)
- Inform reflections on strategic directions for FSC in supporting the food movement(s)

Altogether, 98 participants filled out the survey, 74 in English and 24 in French. Full results are <u>available on our site here</u>.

# **PROOF** webinar

On March 26, 2020, over 300 people joined a webinar hosted by Food Secure Canada on the <u>latest food insecurity statistics</u>, presented by Dr. Valerie Tarasuk from the PROOF food insecurity research program at the University of Toronto. Tarasuk explained that before Covid-19, more Canadians were experiencing food insecurity than ever before, a number that has risen to 4.4 million people, including 1.2 million children under 18.

Watch the <u>full webinar here</u>.

"Everything we know about household food insecurity in Canada suggests that without effective responses to the hardships brought on by COVID-19, food insecurity will increase in prevalence and severity, and the health implications of being food insecure will become even more dire." –Dr. Valerie Tarasuk



# Parliamentary Appearance

Executive Director Gisèle Yasmeen was invited to appear before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food on December 8th. You can find the transcript in English <u>here</u> and in French <u>here</u>. A recording on ParlVu is also available <u>here</u>.



#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

# FSC in the Media and Presentations

COVERAGE FROM MARCH-DECEMBER 2020 in reverse chronological order

English

- <u>Food-giving organizations look to establish reliable local food systems</u>: (The Kingston Whig Standard) OCTOBER 9, 2020
- Food affordability and access in Canada: (Globe & Mail) OCTOBER 9, 2020
- <u>Greater understanding, support required to strengthen Canada's food system (link is</u> <u>external)</u>: (Canadian Cattleman) OCTOBER 7, 2020
- <u>Time is right for a national school food program</u>: (Vancouver Sun) OCTOBER 3, 2020
- Planting seeds in a food desert: (Globe & Mail) SEPTEMBER 29, 2020
- <u>Yasmeen and Field: Want to support women and families during the pandemic? Then</u> <u>support school food program</u>: (Ottawa Citizen) SEPTEMBER 29, 2020
- An opportunity to change how corporations treat the workers who put food on our table: (Rabble) AUGUST 10, 2020
- Food insecurity on the rise, concentrated in families with children: StatsCan: (iPolitics) JUNE 24, 2020
- <u>COVID-19 is Worsening Food Insecurity in Nunavut</u>: (The McGill International Review) JUNE 23, 2020
- Food Security in the time of COVID-19: (Daraja Press) JUNE 19, 2020

- <u>Take action now for healthy, just and sustainable food systems</u>: (Rabble) JUNE 1, 2020
- <u>Food experts warn COVID-19 could undo trends of Canadians choosing healthy</u> <u>groceries</u>: (iPolitics) MAY 28, 2020
- <u>Cracks in the global food system more apparent with COVID-19</u>: (Policy Options) MAY 27, 2020
- <u>Preparing for the Food and Nutrition Security Impacts of COVID-19</u> organised by Care Canada and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, MAY 26, 2020
- <u>The pandemic has laid bare structural inequalities in our food systems, advocate</u> <u>says</u>: (CBC - Sunday Edition) MAY 15, 2020
- <u>Opportunity to re-think food production in Canada amid COVID-19: report</u>: (*iPolitics*) MAY 15, 2020
- <u>Food security in Canada in times of COVID-19: a paradigm shift</u>, The Margaret A. Gilliam Lecture Series in Global Food Security, MAY 5, 2020
- <u>Fast support for slow food: Could COVID-19 economic recovery measures strengthen</u> <u>local food systems in BC?</u>: West Coast Environmental Law, MAY 6, 2020
- <u>5 lessons for food systems thinking from COVID-19</u>: (Medium) APRIL 1, 2020
- How the coronavirus pandemic is affecting food security in Canada: (Global News) APRIL 1, 2020
- <u>Melana Roberts and Gisèle Yasmeen: An opening to transform our food-system?</u>: (The Province) MARCH 30, 2020

## French

- <u>La chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire face à la 2e vague de COVID-19</u>: (ICI Radio-Canada) SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
- <u>Le système alimentaire du pays doit être renouvelé en réponse à la COVID-19</u> : (Radio-Canada International) SEPTEMBER 10, 2020
- <u>COVID-19 : réfléchir à l'insécurité alimentaire</u> : (Radio-Canada) APRIL 12, 2020
- <u>COVID-19 : La sécurité alimentaire à l'avant plan</u> : (Radio-Canada) APRIL 7, 2020

# Looking forward

Global food movements continue to be at a pivotal crossroads as is the world itself. Food Secure Canada's work has been mostly domestically focused and will continue to serve as the hub for knowledge sharing, networking and federal influencing from coast to coast to coast in both official languages. However, our work is connecting more and more around the world and with that other social movements and we see the current context as one where the food-systems lens is increasingly recognized with far greater attention to the issues involved. In addition, the World Food Systems summit, while controversial, is an opportunity to question the status quo, particularly in Canada and civil society will have its voice heard as part of this process and beyond.

# Further reading

Thank you to our <u>2020 funders</u> and sponsors Audited financial statements <u>2018-2019</u> and <u>2019-2020</u>