



SUSTAIN ONTARIO

the alliance for healthy food & farming

Local Food, Local Jobs:

Growing Local Food Infrastructure in Ontario from Field to Table

“The Ontario government could help build an infrastructure for a regional food economy, a regional system to support diversified farming, shorten the food chain and reduce the carbon footprint.” Betsy Donald. 2009. “From Kraft to Craft: Innovation and Creativity in Ontario’s Food Economy.” Toronto, Martin Prosperity Institute.

The April 6th 2009 provincial announcement of \$24 million to “develop the logistics to get more Ontario-grown food into the province’s schools, hospitals, food service companies and other institutions” is a timely investment in the local food economy. Demand for local food is at an all-time high. Across Ontario, public interest groups, stakeholder organizations and food enterprises have been developing innovative ways to get local food to consumers. Targeted investment in local sustainable food production, processing and procurement will spur economic growth across the province, creating new green jobs. The Government of Ontario can create the conditions for Ontario producers to access new markets and stimulate food enterprise development. Sustain Ontario - The Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming, is launching the “Local Food, Local Jobs” initiative to support a local and sustainable food system for Ontario.

Sustain Ontario recommends key investments over the next three years in local food infrastructure and programs that stimulate regional food economies across the province.

1. Encourage relevant ministries to co-operate on the development and execution of a province-wide local food strategy.
2. Support regional civil society groups, stakeholder organizations and enterprises to scale-up their local food and agriculture efforts, and develop innovative partnership models to build supply chains for local food.
3. Encourage the purchasing of local and local sustainable food in all public sector food procurement contracts. Provide transition funding for institutions to develop local supply chain linkages.
4. Re-establish infrastructure to support the local food economy by developing regional food processing, abattoirs and distribution facilities, and by enabling on-farm post-harvest handling and other value-added activities.

5. Support farmers to transition to meet the surging demand for local food, and encourage production practices that shorten the food chain and reduce the carbon footprint.

The province of Ontario should balance the investment of \$24 million for local food procurement between priority areas:

Developing and executing a province-wide local food strategy - \$3 million.

Transitional funding for farmers and institutions to develop local supply chain linkages - \$7 million.

Supporting civil society groups, stakeholder organizations and enterprises to scale-up their regional food and agriculture efforts, and develop innovative partnership models to build supply chains for local and local sustainable food - \$7 million.

Re-establishing infrastructure to support regional food economies across the province - \$7 million.

About Sustain Ontario - The Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming

Sustain Ontario is a province-wide, cross-sectoral alliance that advocates for a food system that is ecological, equitable and financially viable. Sustain Ontario takes a collaborative approach to research, policy development and action by addressing the intersecting issues related to healthy, local, sustainable food and agriculture. In partnership with a broad-based membership, Sustain Ontario works to:

Improve collaboration among all groups working on food and farming issues in Ontario;

Animate networks of members and allied organisations to devise and implement policies on issues of common concern;

Advise and liaise with government on issues related to food and agriculture, and;

Promote a food system that is good for health, the environment and the economy.

Sustain Ontario members who support this initiative include:

The Stop Community Food Centre

Delta Waterfowl Foundation

Kawartha Heritage Conservancy

Toronto Food Policy Council

Local Food Plus

FarmStart

Ontario Farmland Trust