

# Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy Summary and Recommendations<sup>i</sup>

## Goals and Strategic Directions

The Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy is a cross-government, multi-stakeholder coordinated approach to food policy development. The vision is to establish and implement a cross-sectoral Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy to promote and support healthy Ontarians and a diverse, healthy and resilient food system. It is a plan for healthy food and farming in Ontario.

### Goals

1. To promote health through healthy eating and access to healthful food for all Ontarians.
2. To reduce the burden of obesity and chronic disease on Ontarians and the Ontario health care system.
3. To strengthen the Ontario economy and environment through a diverse, healthy and resilient food system.

### Strategic Directions

1. Ontarians have access to and the means to obtain safe, healthy, local and culturally acceptable food.
2. Ontarians have the information, knowledge, skills, relationships and environment to support healthy eating and make healthy choices where they live, work, learn and play.
3. Ontario has a diverse, healthy and resilient food production system that contributes to an equitable and prosperous economy.

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<sup>i</sup> Prepared by the Ontario Food and Nutrition Design Team , Dec 12, 2012

## Strategy development and consultations

The Ontario Collaborative Group on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (OCGHEPA)<sup>ii</sup> identified a need for an Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy in 2009 and began research for the strategy. Two reports were released in 2010 identifying the capacity to undertake a strategy and recommendations for moving forward. In June and November 2011, there were two rounds of consultation with relevant ministries and provincial food, health and farming groups. After the June 2011 discussion forum an Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy “Design Team” was created to write a draft strategy and carry out the consultation process with relevant stakeholders. A draft strategy was posted online for consultation from April to May 2012 and a third stakeholders’ discussion forum was held in June 2012, including 40 representatives of government, food, agriculture, education and health sectors. There were 233 participants and 126 submissions for the online survey. Through Sustain Ontario we have connected with 24 agricultural committees and local food policy councils to date, as well as the Canadian Environmental Law Association. Each of the organizations involved in the Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy has provided input on the DRAFT Ontario Food and Nutrition strategy.

For more information on the Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy visit:  
<http://sustainontario.com/initiatives/ontario-food-and-nutrition-strategy>

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<sup>ii</sup> The Ontario Collaborative Group on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (OCGHEPA) is a provincial collaboration of not-for-profit, public health and academic organizations dedicated to addressing population-based issues relating to healthy eating, physical activity, healthy weights and the determinants of health, including food access, availability and adequacy.

Our **mission** is to improve the health of all Ontarians by advancing healthy eating and active living initiatives through strategic partnerships, knowledge exchange and collective action. Our **vision** for 2015 is an Ontario that supports healthy eating and active living for all.

## Recommendations

This report contains recommendations informed by leading agriculture, food, and health organizations in Ontario. These stakeholders have been part of the consultation process on the food and nutrition strategy since June 2011 (see Appendices 1 and 2).

The top priorities are related to the Key Supports to develop and implement an Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy (OFNS):

1. Establish a coordinated provincial mechanism within government and with stakeholders to address the complex food system and to advise on planning and implementing effective, equitable and evidence-informed food and nutrition policies and programs.
2. Support the ongoing monitoring, measurement, analysis and dissemination of key health, social, economic, environmental, food and agriculture indicators.
3. Establish policy, legislation, regulation and programming recommendations to support healthy Ontarians and a diverse, healthy and resilient food system.
4. Ensure capacity and resources to support all elements of the Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy including funding for the coordinated provincial mechanism and a food and nutrition advisory council and investment in initiatives aimed at achieving expected Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy outcomes, through reallocation of funds and savings from inter-ministerial collaboration.
5. Develop a process to ensure clear, effective, timely communication occurs at all levels and among all players with respect to food system decision-making – within and among ministries, the food and nutrition advisory council, non-governmental partners and the public.

This coordinated provincial mechanism should include a **food and nutrition advisory council** or secretariat that is cross-government and involves stakeholders representing agriculture, food system, health, education, industry, environment, and civil society to set broad directions on matters related to promoting a healthy province and a diverse and sustainable food system. This would include finalizing and adopting the OFNS **Strategic Plan 2012 to 2017**.

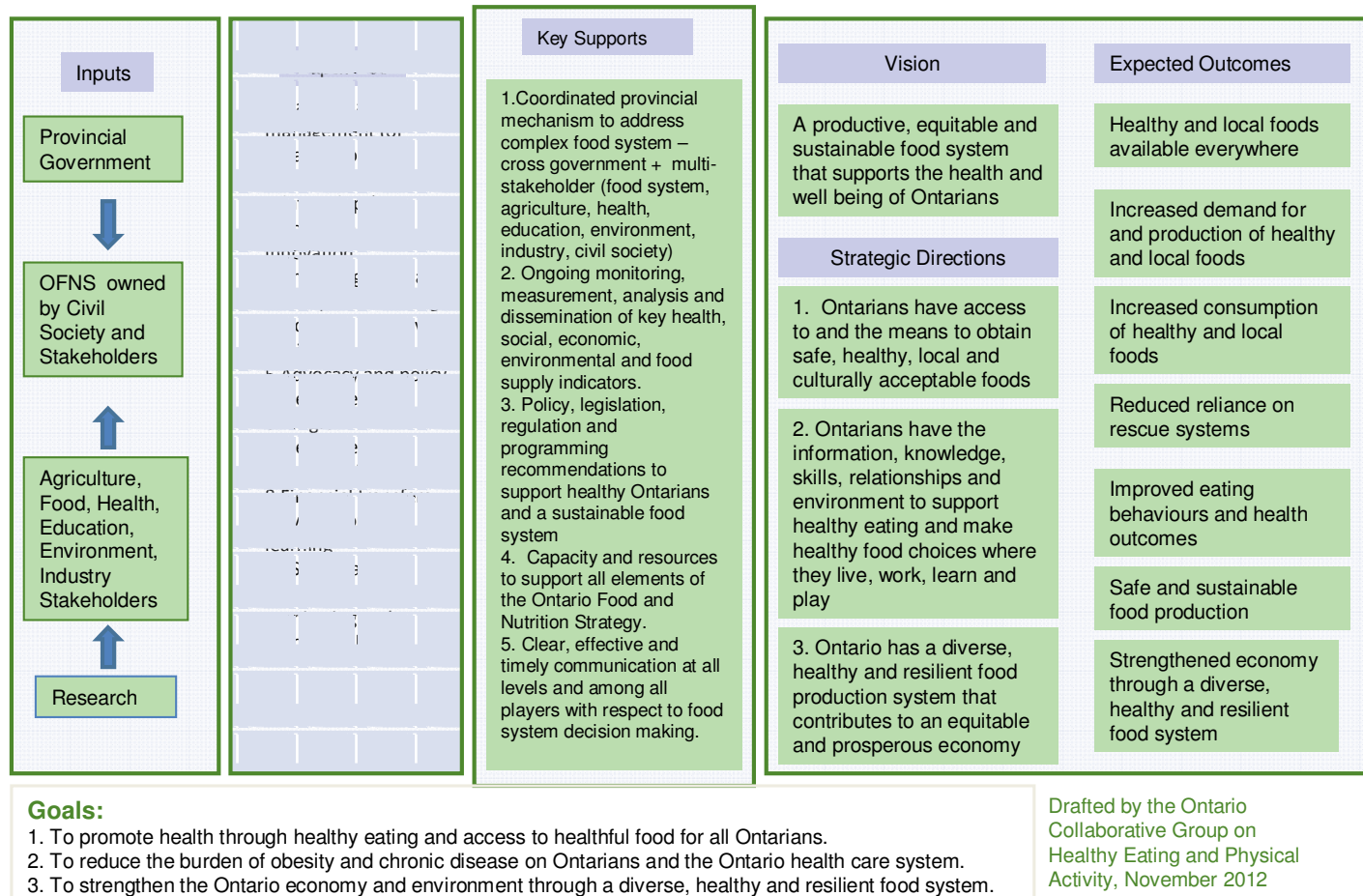
The **food and nutrition advisory council** or secretariat would provide ongoing guidance and expertise to government on food and nutrition policy and program development and implementation and connect to ministers whose ministries' policies, programs, activities, practices or decisions affect or are affected by health, nutrition, food, local food and food systems and the environment (i.e. Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Education; Children and Youth Services; Aboriginal Affairs; Environment; and Economic Development). We envision a **food and nutrition advisory council** or secretariat that would operate at arm's length from the government and be supported collaboratively by government and stakeholders. The **food and nutrition advisory council** or secretariat could include members of the already existing Ontario Food and Nutrition Design Team and Stakeholders Advisory Group.

Ontario can show leadership by becoming the healthiest province supported by a diverse, healthy and resilient food system achieved through an inclusive participatory approach that leverages the strengths, energy and resources of the various ministries within government and other important health partners and stakeholders. These stakeholders include highly skilled, committed people who are aware of the need for immediate action and are ready to collaborate now.

## Acknowledgements

The Ontario Collaborative Group on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (OCGHEPA) deserves recognition for establishing a credible and diversified Design Team (see Appendix 1) and Stakeholder Advisory Group (see Appendix 2) representing key agriculture, food, education and health organizations as well as those involved in research, food security and food policy development. The Canadian Cancer Society – Ontario Division, Cancer Care Ontario, Dietitians of Canada and Sustain Ontario are all credited with supporting the work of the Design Team and Stakeholder Advisory Group for meetings, teleconferencing, organizational and support services.

## Key Components of an Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy



## Mission

To establish and implement a cross-sectoral Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy to promote and support healthy Ontarians and a diverse, healthy and resilient food system.

## Goals

1. To promote health through healthy eating and access to healthful food for all Ontarians.
2. To reduce the burden of chronic disease and obesity on Ontarians and the Ontario health care system.
3. To strengthen the Ontario economy and environment through a diverse, healthy and resilient food system.

# Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy Strategic Plan 2012 to 2017

## Strategic Directions:

**1. Ontarians have access to and the means to obtain safe, healthy, local and culturally acceptable food.**

**2. Ontarians have the information, knowledge, skills, relationships and environments to support healthy eating and make healthy choices where they live, work, learn and play.**

**3. Ontario has a diverse, healthy and resilient food production system that contributes to an equitable and prosperous economy.**

## Vision

A productive, equitable and sustainable food system that supports the health and wellbeing of all Ontarians.

## Expected Outcomes

- Healthy and local foods available everywhere
- Increased demand for and production of healthy and local foods
- Increased consumption of healthy and local foods
- Reduced reliance on rescue systems
- Improved eating behaviours and health outcomes
- Safe and sustainable food production
- Strengthened economy through a diverse, healthy and resilient food system.

## Key Supports/Recommendations

1. Coordinated provincial mechanism to address the complex food system – cross government + multi-stakeholder (food system, agriculture, health, education, industry, civil society)
2. Ongoing monitoring, measurement, analysis and dissemination of key health, social, economic, environmental, food and agriculture indicators.
3. Policy, legislation, regulation and programming to support healthy Ontarians and a diverse, healthy and resilient food system.
4. Capacity and resources are provided to support all elements of the Ontario Food and Nutrition strategy.
5. Clear, effective, timely communication occurs at all levels and among all players with respect to food system decision making.

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## Definitions

**Equitable:** results in human well-being and access to opportunity for all people

*Source: Building an Equitable Green Economy: Forum for Sustainable Development*

**Food access:** having sufficient economic, physical, and relational resources, to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.

*Source: Adapted from World Health Organization Glossary, <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>*

**Healthy food** – healthful and nutritious, provides essential nutrients as described by Canada’s Food Guide. “Healthy foods” should not contain excess amounts of saturated fats, *trans*-fats, sugar or salt (these amounts have not been defined). Our definition of “healthy food” is not limited to the nutrients that a food contains. “Healthy food” comes from a food system where food is produced, processed, transported, and marketed in ways that are environmentally sound, sustainable and just. *Source: Prevention Institute*

**Sustainable:** does not compromise the environmental, economic, health or social well being of present and future generations

*Source: Growing Food Security in Alberta/SELRS Pillars*

**Sustainable food system:** food produced, harvested, processed, distributed and consumed in a manner which maintains and enhances the quality of land, air and water for future generations, and in which people are able to earn a living wage in a safe and healthy working environment by harvesting, growing, producing, processing, handling, retailing and serving food. *Source: Food Secure Canada*

## Appendix 1- Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy Design Team Members

- Cancer Care Ontario – Rebecca Truscott
- Canadian Cancer Society – ON – Florentina Stancu-Soare/Joanne DiNardo
- Canadian Diabetes Association – Sharon Zeiler
- Canadian Environmental Law Association- Theresa McClenaghan
- Christian Farmers Association of Ontario – Nathan Stevens
- Dietitians of Canada – Lynn Roblin\*/Leslie Whittington-Carter
- Ecological Farmers of Ontario – Shauna Bloom

- Farm Start – Christie Young
- Heart and Stroke Foundation – Carol Dombrow
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture – Neil Currie
- Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health – Kathy Page/Amy MacDonald/Lindsay Davidson
- Ontario Tobacco Research Unit – Catherine Mah
- Organic Council of Ontario – Jodi Koberinski
- National Farmer’s Union – Joan Brady/Ann Slater
- Nutrition Resource Centre (until Feb 2012) & community member – Cindy Scythes
- Public Health Ontario – Heather Manson/Mary O’Brien
- Ryerson University - Jessica Wegener/Ellen Desjardins
- Sustain Ontario – **Ravenna Nuaimy-Barker\***/Carolyn Young
- Toronto Food Policy Council – Lauren Baker
- University of Waterloo – Rhona Hanning
- York University – Rod MacRae
- University of Guelph – Ralph Martin

\* Design Team – Co-Leaders

## **Appendix 2. Stakeholders Advisory Group\***

- Breakfast for Learning
- Cancer Care Ontario
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Environmental Law Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Partnership Against Cancer
- Chief Medical Officer of Health’s Office
- Chiefs of Ontario
- Christian Farmers Association of Ontario
- Dietitians of Canada
- Ecological Farmers of Ontario
- Farm Start



- Food and Consumer Products of Canada
- Food Security Network – Ontario Public Health Association
- Greenbelt Foundation
- Heart and Stroke Foundation
- National Farmer's Union
- Nutrition Resource Centre – Ontario Public Health Association
- Ontario Association of Foodbanks
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Management in Public Health
- Ontario Collaborative Group on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- Ontario Ministry of Education
- Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- Ontario Physical and Health Education Association
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute
- Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health
- Ontario Tobacco Research Unit
- Organic Council of Ontario
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Public Health Ontario
- Ryerson University
- Sudbury District Health Unit
- Sustain Ontario
- Toronto Food Policy Council
- University of Guelph
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology
- University of Toronto
- University of Waterloo
- Vineland Research and Innovation Centre
- Wilfrid Laurier
- York University

\* These organizations have had representatives at one or more of our 3 stakeholder meetings held June and November 2011 and June 2012.