

Northern Healthy Foods Initiative



Introduction

This report describes the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative (NHFI) and its accomplishments to date.

The NHFI provides funding for local and regional food system projects in northern Manitoba. The projects are developed and operated by local governments, community and youth groups, First Nation communities, private sector and community based organizations.



History

In 2003, the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet mandated a study on the high costs of northern food prices. In August 2004, the Northern Food Prices Report was publicly distributed (www.gov.mb.ca/ana/food_prices/2003_northern_food_prices_report.pdf). The report identified seven options for addressing the high cost of food in northern Manitoba. With a primary focus on community-based projects in remote northern communities lacking all-weather road access, NHFI concentrates on food self-sufficiency projects like community foods programs, greenhouse pilot projects, northern gardens and food business development.

In the lead up to permanent operations, grants were given to three regional organizations: Northern Association of Community Councils Inc., Bayline Regional Roundtable Inc. and Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. Given that these three organizations serve a good number of small and large, road access and remote on and off reserve communities, they became the primary service/project delivery vehicles for the NHFI. On April 1, 2010 Food Matters Manitoba (formerly the Manitoba Food Charter) was added as a partner to serve 12 new communities.

Organizational Structure

The NHFI is a provincial initiative administered by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA).

Guidance is provided by a management committee with representatives from:

- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI)
- Manitoba Conservation
- Manitoba Health
- Manitoba Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors
- Healthy Child Manitoba
- Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Annual programming is delivered by community based organizations including:

- Frontier School Division
- Northern Association of Community Councils
- Bayline Regional Roundtable
- Food Matters Manitoba
- Four Arrows Regional Health Authority

Project specific funding is also provided to successful applicants.

The Primary Focus

The primary focus of the initiative to date has been food self-sufficiency.

Objectives:

1. To support and promote local food self-sufficiency activities in northern Manitoba.
2. To help northern Manitobans to make healthier food choices.
3. To make healthier foods more available.
4. To stimulate economic development and diversification that improves the quality of the northern Manitoba food system.
5. To demonstrate new approaches to improving food accessibility in northern Manitoba.

The NHFI supports local and regional projects that contribute to improving the availability of nutritious foods in northern Manitoba, whether through lower prices, improved quality or greater access. Additionally, the NHFI seeks to educate and support northern Manitobans to make healthy choices in their selection of food.

Projects must be ecologically sound, promote a sustainable approach, demonstrate clear community benefits and take into account the need for individuals to gain greater knowledge and control of the local food system. Funding may be awarded to projects that address the following NHFI priority areas:

Grow North Projects

This priority targets gardening initiatives by schools, community groups and communities to revitalize local fruit and vegetable production for personal and group use. The range of activities includes, but is not limited to:

- greenhouses
- small livestock production
- classroom curriculum development and use
- germinating materials
- vegetable gardens
- food preservation

Typically, funding is for gardening materials and supplies, and educational workshops. Recipient communities or groups are expected to support their local initiatives with labour, and local resources like equipment, meeting spaces and materials from the local environment.

Local Community Food Security or Food Self-Sufficiency Community Planning Projects

This priority area helps communities understand how they can benefit when they develop an action plan for improving their local food system. NHFI encourages a community asset mapping process that matches local food system goals with local resources (people, places and things).

Innovative Community Food Projects

This priority area focuses on bringing people together to work on projects that make healthier food more available or accessible. Examples include bulk food buying groups and the Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program.

Food Based Economic Development Projects

This priority area helps community groups, co-operatives and industry sectors develop innovative food-based economic development projects. The outcome of these projects must clearly lead to the improved access to healthier foods in northern Manitoba.

Food Science, Plant Science and Nutrition Education

This priority supports school based activities consistent with the Manitoba curriculum in schools.

Partnerships

Partnerships are extremely important to NHFI. They help with implementation, growth and community development. The NHFI Management Committee model brings a unique cross-departmental approach to provincial government efforts to increase access to nutritious and affordable foods in northern and remote Manitoba. Partnerships with constituent-serving organizations enable the province to deliver programming at the community level, where other community-specific linkages also exist. NHFI works closely with many federal government departments and agencies including Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada. Some municipal governments, such as the City of Thompson play integral roles in projects. Partnerships with regional health authorities have helped introduce healthy eating activities in other target communities. Educational partnerships include the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, which provides school nourishment programming in Manitoba's northern schools. Private partnerships include organizations like Heifer International, Via Rail, Perimeter Airlines and Peak of the Market.

Partnerships with community organizations benefit from participation by community staff and volunteers. This year at the community level, as many as 30 salaried employees and 80 volunteers have worked on helping with NHFI programs.

It is estimated that provincial government employees directly involved with NHFI contribute about 5,000 hours annually to increasing food security in the north. In 2011, over 1000 gardeners received technical advice, equipment and materials. Over 200 students are participating in growing activities and learning about healthy eating. Other supported projects, such as this year's school nourishment programs, used close to two hundred volunteers and thousands of volunteer hours.

NHFI benefitted from many unrecorded volunteers hours:

- carpenters donated time to build greenhouses
- teachers committed to extracurricular activities
- neighbours helped each other with gardening advice and shared produce
- youth served meals at conferences
- elders taught people about traditional gathering, hunting and preserving
- people improved their own food self sufficiency by raising chickens
- drivers provided transportation at learning events
- experts provided nutrition tips
- youth helped elders with their gardens
- healthy living champions promoted healthy eating and physical activity



Frontier School Division

The Frontier School Division (FSD) mission statement includes the following:

- students are healthy and successful and parents provide support, guidance and direction
- families build a strong foundation for students
- staff are participating members of the community
- high standards of teaching result in academic excellence
- appropriate educational programming is provided for all students
- school programs reflect the needs and aspirations of the community
- language and culture celebrated in the community and school builds identity
- schools are safe places where individuals are respected, cared for and valued
- FSD is an innovative and dynamic leader in education

The emphasis on this project is developing integrated food, soil and plant science curriculum activities in the schools and extending them into the community.

Northern Association of Community Councils

Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC) is an advocacy group that serves the interests of up to 50 member community councils in the northern Manitoba region. The core objective of NACC is to promote improvement of local municipal services to its communities. Their NHFI focus emphasizes self-directed food initiatives and community gardens.

Bayline Regional Roundtable

Bayline Regional Roundtable (BRRT) was formed in 2001 and named for the region served by the rail line that connects The Pas to Churchill. The Bayline is a forum where communities located along the Hudson Bay Railway line come together to discuss common concerns. The NHFI regional emphasis is on partnership, capacity building and community gardens.

Food Matters Manitoba

Food Matters Manitoba (FMM) engages Manitobans in creating a healthy, fair and sustainable food system for all. Their goals include providing forums and networks, public awareness, advocacy, education, action and focus to Manitobans about Manitoba's food system and food security as defined in the Manitoba Food Charter. FMM works to increase access to healthy and nutritious foods in northern Manitoba communities by developing community action plans, gardens and food projects. It also works to create and strengthen regional and local networks to address northern food security issues.

Four Arrows Regional Health Authority

The four First Nation communities at Island Lake face serious health concerns including a major outbreak of diabetes. NHFI is working with Four Arrows Regional Health Authority (FARHA) and residents to promote healthy living in Wasagamack, St. Theresa Point, Garden Hill and Red Sucker Lake First Nations.

NHFI grant funding is provided as follows:

1. The four regional constituent-serving organizations receive annual funding for administration and co-ordination, agricultural support and training, and agricultural materials and equipment.
2. FSD receives funding on a project specific basis for the Veggie Adventures Educator Curriculum Workshop and the Northern Grow Program.
3. Special projects are funded on a project-specific basis.

Leaf Rapids Education Centre greenhouse



Celebrate Success

Frontier School Division

The Northern Grow Program was funded for a third year. The project is a school based strategy to increase healthy eating in northern and remote communities:

1. It generates awareness and excitement by re-introducing gardening to students and their families through the implementation of the Veggie Adventures Educator Curriculum, providing opportunities for learning, healthy eating and physical activity in addition to networking with the community through greenhouse operations, workshops, seedling and produce sharing.
2. It generates community commitment by helping with community meetings to enhance networking and collective problem solving concerning local food issues.
3. It develops infrastructure by promoting partnerships with local community champions who will work with interested communities to assess their readiness for future greenhouse operations. It continues to support schools and community residents in the development of existing and new school and community gardens and greenhouses.
4. It provides technical expertise in gardening and greenhouse management.

There were 240 gardens supported in 2011. Activities to date include the provision of equipment and materials including grow lights and boxes, fertilizer, tools, pots, geodesic domes, tillers, seeds, seedlings and berry plants. Research has been conducted on growing berries and was facilitated by planting a berry nursery in Leaf Rapids. Leaf Rapids Education Centre is considered the base for operation for the project and houses much of the infrastructure used to support the program including two greenhouses, a hydroponic growing area being used by students and a student mentorship program initiated to engage youth and to address needs for trained gardening technicians. Students have developed a website to stay connected and to problem solve.

Funding was provided for the FSD 5th annual Veggie Adventures Educator Curriculum Workshop held in conjunction with the FMM Root Camp at the Leaf Rapids Education Centre on April 13 and 14, 2011. The curriculum provides students with the opportunity to meet curriculum outcomes in addition to learning about gardening nutrition and healthy eating as well as other life skills and values such as commitment, responsibility, team work and organizational skills.

“Gardening is a positive way to develop family relationships and self esteem”

- Participant at
2010 Root Camp



Vegetable plants germinated in a Leaf Rapids Education Centre

Northern Association of Community Councils

Annual Grow North Activities

There were 187 gardens planted in 2011 including individual, community and container gardens. Resources provided include seeds, fruit trees, bedding plants, poultry resources, tillers, quadivators, basic gardening tools, fertilizer, composting equipment, canning starter kits, backpack sprayers, container gardening supplies, basic gardening information, recipes, preservation and healthy living resources. Workshops have been hosted on gardening, preservation techniques, Making Baby Food, Pressure Canning, Building Soil Alternatives, composting and the Canada Food Guide. Other activities have included weekly youth cooking classes, establishment of a healthy cooking club and school gardening projects. Goats and chickens are being raised.

Special Projects

An NACC representative attended North American Indigenous Food Symposiums in 2007 and 2009 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The forums presented speakers and research projects ranging from current land issues to the global food crisis in indigenous communities. They also encouraged community mobilization efforts on indigenous food production.

Gardening assistance was provided in Granville Lake. This increased the availability of healthy nutritious foods and reduced the need to travel by snowmobile or boat to the nearest grocery store in Leaf Rapids. NACC worked in partnership with FSD to introduce gardening. The project resulted in one community garden, 10 container gardens and one individual garden. Supplies were provided for three raised bed gardens at the school. Children learned about vegetables and plant care and harvested tomatoes and potatoes.

A Northern Gardening Kick-off Event was hosted on May 20 and 21, 2009 in Barrows with 20 participants and in Pelican Rapids with seven participants. The purpose was to increase awareness of the NHFI and to expand the number of gardens. The event included a presentation, a container gardening workshop and the distribution of seeds.



NACC NHFI Coordinator, Amy Yonda, delivering a "Healthy Eating Workshop" at the 2010 Root Camp, Leaf Rapids, MB

Goats - Berens River, MB



Funding has been provided to host two fish smoking workshops that seek to re-introduce the harvesting and preservation of traditional foods. Local fishermen will provide expertise to an anticipated 140 attendees from over 15 communities. The workshops are aimed at increasing the awareness of local food production.



Bayline chickens

Bayline Regional Roundtable

Annual Grow North Activities

There were 172 gardens harvested in 2011. Greenhouse operations are in place in Oxford House, Wabowden and Pikwitonei. A greenhouse is being started in Thicket Portage. Past activities include publishing recipe books, a refrigerator and freezer guide and a guide on raising turkeys, geese and chickens. Dairy goat production has started in Wabowden. Potential raisers are being trained on basic goat care, milking, pasteurization, cheese and soap making and proper composting of used bedding and manure. The Wabowden greenhouse provided seedlings for each Bayline community.

Resources provided include: seeds, lumber, poultry equipment, chicken feed and chicks, gardening resources, fertilizer and gardening tools. Workshops were held on preservation techniques, soil fertility, and poultry production, Smoking and Canning Fish, Small Scale Farming, Soap and Cheese Making, Moose Meat Canning, Seed Care and Development, Germination and small scale farming. A Facebook page was developed so gardeners can share information.

Equipment purchased included implementation kits, chicken production equipment, greenhouse equipment, quadriculators and tillers. Berry planting has been implemented. Portable pop-up displays that highlight northern food project successes and provide awareness related to the NHFI were purchased. Freezers have been purchased as part of the Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program.

Special Projects

Funding was provided to support a teacher to accept an award for the 2009 Manitoba Excellence in Sustainability Awards: Education for Sustainability category which recognized her efforts to successfully implement the Veggie Adventures Educator Curriculum at the Mel Johnson School in Wabowden.

Gardening and poultry production equipment and supplies were provided for shipment over the winter road to communities without all weather road access.



Refurbished greenhouse in Wabowden, MB

Food Matters Manitoba

Annual Grow North Activities

Gardening activity in 2011 included planting 120 gardens which includes 53 new garden starts. Workshops topics have included: Seed Starting, Basic Gardening, Tiller Maintenance and Demonstration, Composting, Home Canning, Greenhouse Maintenance and Lasagna Gardening. Resources provided were seeds, compost bins, fruit trees and plants, growing resources, tillers, composting bins, seed germinating supplies, gardening tools, lumber, soil and canning supplies. A greenhouse was constructed in Fox Lake. Workshops were provided in schools. An NHFI photo album was created that celebrates community achievements “on the ground” that are making a difference in many families lives.

Special Projects

Funding was provided for a second Root Camp held in conjunction with the FSD Annual Veggie Adventures Educators Curriculum Workshop in Leaf Rapids. The partnership was struck to kick off gardening activities in preparation for the upcoming gardening season. Past agenda topics have included:

- Implementing Planting and Gardening Activities in Schools
- Basics of Plant, Seedling Care and Development
- Building Techniques (cold frames, raised beds, grow boxes)
- Nutritional Value of Plants
- Healthy Eating and Reading Labels
- Horticultural Therapy
- Poultry Production
- Greenhouses

*“I love the
smell of dirt”.*

Youth that attended
the 2008 Northern
Harvest Forum



Francis Hall (Wabowden) and Dolly Bittern (Thicket Portage) peeling yams for healthy cooking demonstration at 2008 Northern Harvest Forum

Youth engagement has resulted in the creation of a student blog where young gardeners can share information and stay connected in addition to assisting with the healthy meal preparations and serving.

The forum also provided an opportunity to witness the construction of a geodesic dome greenhouse, an innovative concept developed to extend the northern growing season.

For a fourth year, funding was provided to the Growing Local – Food Security Conference. The funds covered cost of travel for community representatives who attended to learn about community food projects.

Past presentations have included:

- Getting Things Growing Up North (NHFII Delegation)
- Northern Fishery Panel
- Choosing the Best Fruit Crops for Northern Manitoba

For three consecutive years the Northern Harvest Forum was hosted by FMM to provide opportunities to strengthen networks and capacity to address northern food security issues. Educational materials were distributed to participants. The forum helped northerners address issues from a regional perspective. All community members participating in workshops were encouraged to pass on acquired knowledge and skills to at least one other participant or resident in their community. There were 104 registrants who selected from a variety of workshop topics like:

- Community Healing Through Plants
- Grocery Store Virtual Tour
- Engaging Youth in Traditional Foods

Funding was provided for a representative from FMM to attend the 3rd North American Indigenous Food Symposium from June 4 to 6, 2009 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The forum presented speakers and research projects ranging from current land issues to the global food crisis in indigenous communities. It also encouraged community mobilization efforts on indigenous food production.

Funding support was provided for the Horticulture Therapy Program in Shamattawa First Nation in an effort to implement and support sustainable horticultural activities. The project engages participants from the community and the school in horticultural/plant and nature related activities in order to increase or sustain knowledge of plants, gardening, food production, as well as to provide an educational and healing experience for those involved. The horticultural therapy sessions include activities and teachings that focus on traditional plants and foodstuffs, from planting to harvest. For children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder and other challenges; hands on activities and active engagement in a garden or nature setting offers more suitable and kinesthetic ways to learn as well as “hidden” therapeutic benefits like reduced cortisol levels, increased creativity, reduced blood pressure and feelings of competence. The project is being cost shared with the ANA Northern Youth Empowerment Initiative.

Jointly with the BRRT, the FMM hosted two strategic planning sessions with northern grocers regarding the accessibility and availability of nutritious food in March and April 2009. As a result, BRRT is exploring options to increase access to affordable nutritious food in retail settings.



Thicket Portage Community members preserving at 2008 Northern Harvest Forum

Four Arrows Regional Health Authority

“Gardening is an all year round healthy way to live.”

Gardener from St. Theresa Point First Nation

Annual Grow North Activities

During the past growing season, 263 gardeners planted 175 gardens in the Island Lake area. There were 160 gardens planted and maintained during the 2010 growing season and a greenhouse was constructed. School activities included berry cultivation, plant germination and hosting the 100 Year Treaty Centennial Celebration. In addition to technical assistance, radio/television presentations on food security and gardening were conducted. Equipment and material purchases included tillers, gardening kits, fertilizer, fencing, chicken feed and equipment, and compost bins. Various kinds of seeds and berry plants have been purchased each year. Soil remediation was also conducted and two poultry production videos have been produced. Through a partnership with the University of Manitoba Natural Resources Institute youth were hired to assist local gardeners.

Special Projects

In addition to partnership funding, support has been provided for the Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program, which provides up front loans to low income families to purchase energy efficient freezers. Funding was provided to purchase greenhouse/chicken coop structures that facilitated poultry production in addition to extending the growing season.



Individual garden – Wasagamack FN



Large turnip and potatoes – Wasagamack FN

Representatives from Four Arrows Regional Health Authority (FARHA) attended the North American Indigenous Food Symposium in Saskatoon in May 2007. The conference provided helpful information to partners related to topics such as on-reserve agricultural projects, historically important crops and organizing agricultural projects in the communities.

Other Special Projects

Mother Nature's Pantry – Food from the Forest

Funding was provided to support Brenda Gaudry to develop an independent video entitled “Mother Nature’s Pantry – Food from the Forest.” The video is intended to increase the awareness and harvesting of natural nutritional foods found in the boreal forest in northern Manitoba. It featured the producer, travelling through the forest chronicling the search for native plants and trees that were commonly used by her ancestors for consumption and medicine. Presented in DVD format, the video also:

- provides traditional knowledge about health and healing benefits of native plants
- promotes country foods that are sustainable alternatives and healthy food choices
- provides instructions on how to identify and when to harvest traditional foods and plants
- explains how to process, clean, cook, freeze and preserve traditional foods for later use

Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba - School Nourishment Program

In partnership with Manitoba departments including Health, Healthy Living, Education and Citizenship and Youth, annual funding to support school nourishment programs is provided to the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. NHFI funding is provided based on programming to schools in the north. The project has improved social skills and behaviour, increased attendance, improved healthy eating practices and improved overall student performance in 25 schools in the north.

Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program

Funding is provided in the form of a loan to low income families to purchase energy efficient freezers. The program expects that the cost of the freezer will be paid back over time, replenishing the loan and making funding available to purchase additional freezers for other families. Freezers can be used to preserve fresh fruit and vegetables harvested in the fall, for storage of bulk food purchases and for keeping traditionally harvested food. To date there have been 435 freezers purchased in 22 communities using the revolving loan program. Keewatin Tribal Council and BRRT are now able to buy freezers for additional families by using proceeds from repaid freezer loans.

Healthy Together Now (HTN) (formerly the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative)

A partnership with the HTN has created the opportunity to increase the geographical reach of NHFI programs in other communities through three northern regional health authorities and promote healthy eating in the communities and schools they serve. Programming has included:

- community container gardening
- individual and community gardening
- fish canning workshops
- school nourishment programs
- berry and fruit tree planting
- diabetes awareness
- healthy cooking classes (budgeting, shopping and cooking)
- food preservation
- breastfeeding support to nursing mothers

Participating health authorities include Burntwood, Parkland and NOR-MAN.

Thompson Zoo

Funding has been provided to the Thompson Zoo for the past five years for the continuation and development of the Boreal Farmers Project. This project provides hands on learning to school age children, local agency groups as well as the general public by illustrating the importance of healthy eating and food security through environmentally sustainable methods. Activities reported include: a community gardening program that included workshops on indoor seed starting, soil amendments, companion and square foot gardening, organic pest control and fertilizing, building raised beds etc.; this past growing season 21 family gardens were planted along with the greenhouse that was planted by the Earth Roots Kids Camp that provides awareness to kids as it relates to food security. One hundred and fifty two youth and 42 adults participated.



Raised bed located at Thompson Zoo

Northern Harvest Forum

Through a partnership with MAFRI and NHFI regional partners, the Northern Harvest Forum was hosted in October 19 & 20, 2011 in The Pas, Manitoba. The MAFRI Northern Agriculture Program and Manitoba Conservation's Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention Program provided partnership funding to deliver sessions that included backyard composting, healthy cooking demonstration, community strategic planning sessions, food preservation, fruit crop production and gardening basics. Dr. Stephen Brown from the University of Alaska gave the keynote address that outlined agricultural efforts in Alaska.

Annual Maintenance - Refrigeration Units

In partnership with Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, three commercial refrigeration units were installed in 2006/07 at the three Island Lake area airports (St. Theresa Point, Red Sucker Lake and Garden Hill First Nations). These facilities are being used for receiving and storage of nutritious perishable foods when ordered direct from Winnipeg suppliers. Shipment of these perishable goods is subsidized by Nutrition North Canada (formerly the Food Mail Program). The units require annual maintenance.

Northern Food Prices Survey Program

A priority from the Northern Food Prices Report was the development of a Northern Food Prices Survey Program. NHFI funded a survey conducted by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics in northern communities. It is recognized that it is important to have accurate food pricing information available to be able to speak to the issue of high retail food costs in northern Manitoba and the need for healthy affordable alternatives.

Growing Local Productions - Mel Johnson School Project

Funding was provided to Growing Local Productions to produce an educational documentary film about the Mel Johnson School gardening project stimulated by the Veggie Adventures Educators Curriculum in Wabowden. The anticipated outcome is to celebrate the success of the curriculum and to develop resource material that can be used to encourage future use of the curriculum. The Mel Johnson School project has received acknowledgement from the David Suzuki Foundation and Frontier School Division representatives were invited to speak to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. The DVD was screened at the Eco Focus Film Festival in Athens, Georgia where it won a Most Inspirational Film Award. The festival is a celebration of environmental films that promote discussion and inspire audiences into awareness and action on behalf of the environment.

Northern Greenhouse Project

The Northern Greenhouse Project began in partnership with MAFRI and Manitoba Conservation. Eight obsolete grow chambers were acquired from the University of Wisconsin-Madison on the condition that all chambers were dismantled and removed from the site.

The grow chambers were used as part of an experiment to examine the direct affects of climate warming on a boreal forest and are no longer required by the university. They were used in the spring of 2009 to build four new greenhouses for the Bunibonibee Cree Nation.

“If one child becomes a gardener you cannot measure the social impact: crime, health, mental wellness, physical activity and nutrition.”

Participant at 2010 Veggie Adventures Curriculum Workshop

Poplar River First Nation - Growing Knowledge, Skills and Healthy Foods

Consistent with the NHFI objective to promote food self-sufficiency through local food production and assisting Manitobans to make healthier food choices, the Poplar River First Nation was provided funding assistance to create community awareness of the benefits of local food self-sufficiency. This project is being delivered in partnership with Heifer International and the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources and intends to engage youth and elders.



North Parkland Region

ANA Local Government Division and NACC, worked with several communities in the North Parkland Region to start community gardening projects. Activities included basic gardening and preservation workshops and provision of gardening equipment such as seeds, tillers and bedding plants in an effort to increase healthy eating and improve nutrition.

Eleanor Waitowicz (Wabowden) assisting student to cage a tomato plant

Vitality Gardening

Vitality Television was provided funding to produce a 13-week series entitled Vitality Gardening, which shows gardening in the north and teaches skills for gardening as a way to battle diabetes and chronic disease related to poor diet and lack of exercise. The series was rated at the top of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network in the first season. Health Canada First Nations and Inuit Health cost shared on the project. In summer and fall 2009 the show was repeated with ratings in the top five. PBS North Dakota began airing the series in August 2010. The series also began airing on ONE: The Body, Mind and Spirit Channel on October 5, 2010.

Seed Stands and Seeds

To supplement the 2009 growing season, NHFI funded the purchase of seeds to replenish seed display stands. Nineteen display stands and seeds were provided in 2007/08 by MAFRI to ensure quality seeds were available to supplement the community gardening activities.



Mel Johnson School, Wabowden - Greenhouse plant sale

Overall Totals

Communities (First Nation, ANA and municipalities) involved in a variety of NHFI activities in 2011/12	Over 80
Total Gardens - 2011	Over 800
Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program	435
Greenhouses/Geodesic Domes	59
Refrigeration Units	3
2010/11 Livestock: Chickens/Turkeys/Geese/Ducks/Goats	13 communities 29 families

Garden numbers fluctuate each year because of changes in rainfall, growing season temperatures and other uncontrollable events such as flooding.

Future Plans

Future plans for the Initiative include:

- continued support for gardening, greenhouses and small livestock production
- expansion of the Revolving Loan Freezer Purchase Program
- focus on traditional hunting and gathering
- expanding the number of participating communities through new partnerships
- a focus on business opportunities related to improving access to healthy, affordable food
- continued support for innovative projects that increase food self-sufficiency

Financial Details

Provincial grant funding for community based projects, since inception

Budget Description	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Programming	179,000	179,000	179,000	149,000	449,000	585,000	585,000	585,000
Funding Increase	0	0	0	300,000	135,800	0	0	0
Sub-total	179,000	179,000	179,000	449,000	584,800	585,000	585,000	585,000
Other Province of Manitoba Funding Contributions	0	0	93,200	125,000	115,000	100,000	50,000	100,000
Total Funding Available	179,000	179,000	272,200	574,000	699,800	685,000	635,000	685,000



Other Province of Manitoba Funding Contributions:

2006/07

Infrastructure and Transportation	\$93,200
Partnership to install commercial refrigeration units at St. Theresa Point, Red Sucker Lake and Garden Hill First Nations.	

2007/08

Manitoba Climate Change Action Fund	\$75,000
Health and Healthy Living	\$50,000

2008/09

Manitoba Climate Change Action Fund	\$75,000
Health and Healthy Living	\$40,000

2009/10

Manitoba Climate Change Action Fund	\$75,000
Health and Healthy Living	\$25,000

2010/11

Healthy Living Youth and Seniors	\$50,000
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2011/12

Healthy Living Youth and Seniors	\$50,000
MAFRI - Rural Economic Development Initiative	\$50,000

Additional partnerships and projects have accessed additional funding and provided in-kind contributions to date as follows:

Description	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Partnership In-kind Contributions	68,700	59,600	65,200	193,600	114,900	184,000	255,900	264,200
Partner Funding from other Sources	106,000	53,500	95,400	253,400	273,500	429,600	186,300	259,200

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