



## News Release

For Immediate Release

### Government of Canada Supports National Farm to School Initiative

*New national program will bring more of the local harvest into school cafeterias*

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Ottawa, Ontario

Public Health Agency of Canada

Improving food literacy – the ability to make healthy food choices – through activities such as hands-on cooking, exposure to new foods, and farm and gardening activities can help build the skills required to plan, purchase and prepare healthier foods. These activities help encourage children to make healthy eating choices and supports healthy living.

Today, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health, announced funding for the [Farm to School: Canada Digs in! Initiative](#). This innovative program, launched today, aims to empower and educate students in schools and on campuses about healthy eating. She was joined by Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada.

*Farm to School: Canada Digs in!* will bring healthy, locally grown food into schools, and provide students with hands-on opportunities to learn about healthy food options, meal preparation, sustainable food systems, local food production, marketing and distribution. Program activities will allow children and youth to benefit from greater availability of healthy, local and sustainable foods in schools and on campuses across Canada. This project also supports the Government of Canada's [Healthy Eating Strategy](#), which aims to make healthy food choice the easy choice.

### Quotes

“I am pleased to announce the Government of Canada’s support for this project that will make it easier for Canadian children and youth in schools and on campuses to access and learn about healthier food. Encouraging children and youth to try healthy food options, and learn more about where their food actually comes from, will help build the foundation for a lifetime of healthy eating.”

*The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor  
Minister of Health*

“Healthy living and the prevention of chronic diseases starts with making good choices, including becoming educated and exposed to healthy food options. Teaching kids about healthy food can have a tremendous impact on their health and wellbeing, and forms the basis for making positive, healthy lifestyle choices that can help prevent obesity and chronic disease.”

*Dr. Theresa Tam  
Chief Public Health Officer*

### Quick Facts

- Almost 40% of Canadians aged 12 years and older report consuming fruits and vegetables at least five times per day. Amongst males aged 12-17, the rate was 30% and for females ages 12-17 it was 32%. (Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015)



- The Public Health Agency of Canada is investing over \$1.2 million over three years in *Farm to School: Canada Digs In!* through its Multi-Sectoral Partnership Approach to Promote Healthy Living and Prevent Chronic Disease. This program supports innovative partnerships to promote healthy eating, physical activity and wellness, as well as address the common risk factors that underlie major chronic diseases. The Farm to School project is sponsored by the Social Planning Research Council of British Columbia.
- Project partners include Whole Kids Foundation, Sustain Ontario, Public Health Association of British Columbia, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Meal Exchange, Equiterre, Farm to Cafeteria Canada, Food First Newfoundland, and the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture Aquaculture and Fisheries.
- The Government of Canada's [Healthy Eating Strategy](#) aims to improve the availability of information on healthy eating, strengthen requirements for labelling and claims, improve the nutritional quality of foods, protect vulnerable groups, and support increased access to and the availability of nutritious foods.
- Farm to Cafeteria Canada leads the pan-Canadian Farm to School movement. This movement aims to engage students of all ages in activities to get more healthy local foods from the field and gardens onto the plates of children.

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