



Farm to School Manitoba Healthy Choice Fundraiser

Manitoba Association of Home Economists
Box 582 Station Main
Winnipeg, MB R3C 2J3
Phone: 204-885-0718

Annual Report
2019-2020

Submitted April 3, 2020

Melodie Ho, MSc, RD, Program Coordinator
Symone Moodoo, BSc, RD, Program Sub-Contractor

OVERVIEW

In its tenth year, Farm to School Manitoba Healthy Choice Fundraiser (Farm to School Manitoba) is a program that have been bringing local Manitoba vegetables to schools and licensed daycares in the form of a fundraiser. Providing competitive returns in the fundraiser market, schools and daycare centres are providing nutritious Manitoba vegetables to the children and families within their communities. The fundraiser is available strictly to Manitoba schools (Grades K-12) and licensed daycare centres. Farm to School Manitoba has worked at forming positive connections with these schools and daycare centres making their experience with Farm to School positive and forming relationships that have resulted in loyal fundraising groups returning each year.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

This program was developed and functions through a collaboration of three major partners: Manitoba Association of Home Economists (MAHE), Peak of the Market, and the Government of Manitoba.

PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS

Key organizations in the community are active supporters and collaborators with Farm to School Manitoba. Each organization has served as a valuable connection for the growth and success of the program since its inception. Winnipeg Harvest, Canola Eat Well, Manitoba Association of Parent Councils, Manitoba Child Care Association, Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, Manitoba Healthy Food in Schools, Frontier School Division and Nutrition for Early Learning and Childcare continue to support the Farm to School Manitoba program through collaboration, marketing efforts, providing promotional opportunities for the program, and providing feedback in program development and evaluation initiatives as able.

AMENDMENT TO PROGRAM COORDINATOR CONTRACT

At the discretion of the MAHE program liaison, a subcontractor was solicited to share the role and responsibilities of the program coordinator during the period of April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 due to personal circumstances. An amendment to the original program coordinator contract was completed and agreed upon by all parties.

PROGRAM PROMOTION

As a key responsibility of the Program Coordinator, promotion of Farm to School Manitoba takes place throughout the year and is preferably targeted to the program's desired audiences: teachers, parent council members, childcare staff and administration, students as well as the general public. Participation in tradeshow, community events and workshops accounts for the majority of in-person program promotion carried out by the Program Coordinator.

Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Annual Conference, May 4, 2019

Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) held their annual conference supporting parental involvement in education throughout Manitoba. Farm to School Manitoba participated in the tradeshow

exhibit where multiple parent council leaders attended to learn more about numerous programs available to schools in the province. The program coordinator had a display booth and was able to share about the fundraiser with delegates as well as distribute promotional materials and resources.

Manitoba Child Care Association Annual Conference, May 23-24, 2019

Manitoba Child Care Association held a Marketplace event at their annual Early Learning & Child Care Conference. Farm to School Manitoba attended as a tradeshow vendor and also provided vegetable bundles as raffle prizes. The display table was very well-received and had a high amount of traffic on both conference days. Both of the Farm to School Manitoba Program Coordinators were able to promote the fundraising program and answer delegate questions.

Bruce D. Campbell Farm & Food Discovery Centre

Family Fun Day – Veggie Adventures: From Farm to Table, August 10, 2019

Farm to School Manitoba, in collaboration with Canola Growers, hosted a free educational event of vegetable-themed activity stations. The event was open to the general public. Activities included learning about Manitoban grown produce, an interactive food demo, building your own beehive, and vegetable game activity boards with themed prizes.

Peak of the Market Family Fun Day, August 14, 2019

Peak of the Market held its 21st annual Family Fun Day and Farm to School Manitoba was a featured display at the event. The day supported/raised awareness for Children's Variety and all proceeds collected went directly to this worthy foundation. The event was very well-attended and many patrons visited the Farm to School Manitoba booth and learned about the fundraising program.

Farm to School Manitoba Annual Program Kick-Off, September 7, 2019

Farm to School Manitoba kicked off its 10th fundraising season early in September at The Forks in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was an informal promotional event that was targeted to the general public in attendance that day and to the program's social media community. The event was held on a weekend day to attract families to attend in anticipation of the 2019-2020 school year beginning the following week.

Themed activity boards and trivia games were available for children and their families to play along with educational giveaways/prizes that were in keeping with Farm to School Manitoba's brand. Content of the activities focused on agriculture, grocery shopping and budgeting, and nutrition. In addition to interactive games, the Farm to School Manitoba program coordinators also raffled off two vegetable bundles that were on display.

The event attendance was fair with some higher patron traffic closer to the noon hour, reflecting the general traffic of The Forks that day.

Winnipeg VegFest, September 21, 2019

For the first time, Farm to School Manitoba participated in Winnipeg's most popular vegan festival, VegFest. This event is devoted to promoting all aspects of a vegan lifestyle and was attended by more than 5,000 patrons. There were over 80 different vendors featured at VegFest who represented many

sectors, including home and beauty, wellness, clothing, art, food and not-for-profit organizations. The Farm to School Manitoba display table was highly visited throughout the festival and was very well-received by patrons. The program coordinator was able to promote the program and answer questions.

Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba Cooking Workshop, October 4, 2019

Farm to School Manitoba provided program flyers and vegetable bundles as display items and door prizes for an annual workshop held for breakfast, lunch and/or snack program coordinators. Delegates included education assistants, teachers, community connectors and administrators. There were approximately 60 participants in attendance. The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba program coordinator also shared about the Farm to School Manitoba fundraising program during the workshop.

Manitoba Home Economics Teachers' Association (MHETA)

Professional Development Day, October 25, 2019

Farm to school Manitoba attended the annual MHETA Professional Development Day at John Henderson School in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The one-day event attracted home economics teachers from across the province and was filled with educational presentations and hands-on workshops. There were a number of relevant organizations marketing at the event. Farm to School Manitoba had a display table with promotional materials, resources and a vegetable bundle offered as a door prize. The program coordinator connected with attendees and enlightened those who were unfamiliar with the program.

Frontier School Division School Committee Conference, February 6, 2020

The Frontier School Division held its annual School Committee Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Those in attendance included members who have been elected by their communities to advocate for the best interest of children in their local schools. This two-day conference allows delegates to participate in workshops and engage in discussions/feedback with the Frontier School Board. Farm to School Manitoba had a display booth with promotional materials and a vegetable bundle as a door prize. This event was an effective opportunity to promote healthy fundraising to stakeholders from Northern Manitoba.

Great Big Crunch Contest and Event, February-March 2020

Farm to school Manitoba held its second Great Big Crunch Contest for schools and licensed daycares to win a chance to host a Great Big Crunch event at their facility. Contestants were required to submit an entry via email with information about any healthy eating or local food initiatives carried out at their respective facility. The purpose of the contest is to promote March Nutrition Month, the Great Big Crunch National Campaign to promote healthy, local foods, and to provide promotional and community engagement opportunities for the Farm to School Manitoba Program Coordinator.

The contest was promoted via social media and e-newsletters by Farm to School Manitoba and by collaborating agencies: Manitoba Healthy Food in Schools, Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care, Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, and Nuton among others.

A Great Big Crunch resource package was developed and distributed to all those who entered the contest and was also made available to any school or daycare interested in hosting an event on their own. Due to recommendations released by Manitoba Health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the scheduled events with the contest winners were cancelled/postponed indefinitely.

COMMUNITY PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

National Farm to School Conference, May 15-17, 2019

Farm to Cafeteria Canada hosted its second National Farm to School Conference in Victoria, British Columbia. Attendees included school staff and administrators, policy makers, health professionals, community members, and not-for-profit organization representatives among others.

The Farm to School Manitoba program coordinator attended the conference as a delegate but was also invited to be a formal presenter, both during the program's opening plenary and during a break-out education session. These presentations provided the opportunity to highlight the valuable efforts of Farm to School Manitoba in promoting local, healthy eating to children and their families in Manitoba as well as educate delegates on the operations and logistics of a local vegetable fundraising program.

School Nutrition Action Group

Farm to School Manitoba is an active member of the Manitoba School Nutrition Action Group. The purpose of this dietitian group is to work collaboratively to support a comprehensive, positive school nutrition environment in all schools in Manitoba. This is accomplished through information sharing, networking, advocacy, collaboration, and resource development and sharing. The program coordinator participates in the bi-monthly scheduled conference calls and in any sub-group activities, as needed. The Farm to School Manitoba fundraiser activities are regularly communicated with the group members to be shared with their respective networks and on their own marketing platforms to achieve further reach of potential program participants.

Manitoba Child Care Nutrition Working Group

Farm to School Manitoba is an active member of the newly formed Manitoba Child Care Nutrition Working Group. The purpose of this dietitian group is to work collaboratively to support child care facilities in Manitoba to create healthy food menus and supportive nutrition environments. This is accomplished through information sharing, networking, advocacy, collaboration, and resource development and sharing. The program coordinator participates in the bi-monthly scheduled conference calls and in any sub-group activities, as needed. The Farm to School Manitoba fundraiser activities are regularly communicated with the group members to be shared with their respective networks and on their own marketing platforms to achieve further reach of potential program participants.

Site Visits: Program Observation and Online Promotional Content, October – December 2019

During the fundraising season, the Farm to School Manitoba program coordinator scheduled school and daycare visits with fundraising coordinators to attend their vegetable delivery day and bundling activities. This was completed to gain a better understanding about the program process, to receive informal feedback from fundraising coordinators, to learn about use of raised funds, and to take photos for social media content. Five different visits took place throughout Winnipeg and surrounding areas. Photos, videos and feedback were collected and shared across all Farm to School Manitoba online media platforms.

Nelson McIntyre Career Exploration Week: A Taste of the Culinary World, January 28, 2020

Farm to School Manitoba's program coordinator was invited to present to Grade 9 students during their annual Career Exploration Week at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate. The session included a discussion about a vegetarian diet and considerations, and a hands-on cooking workshop that incorporated plant-based proteins into the prepared recipes. This event was highlighted on the Farm to School Manitoba website as well as on all social media platforms.

ONLINE PROMOTION

Farm to School Manitoba operates social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The following types of content were shared approximately 3-5 times weekly on these platforms:

- Program updates: enrollments, 150k vegetable donation challenge call-out, program stats and highlights, important dates, contests
- Program photos and videos taken at special events, site visits, conferences and workshops
- Program photos submitted by program users from previous Farm to School photo contests
- Recipe ideas from third party websites
- Program and third party relevant resources
- Shared posts from collaborating partners and community organizations
- Locally-relevant community content

Peak of the Market carries out Farm to School promotion year round using various media, which results in added promotional value for Farm to School Manitoba:

1. The home page on www.PeakMarket.com has a feature box dedicated to the Farm to School program which links the public to the national Farm to School site, www.FarmToSchool.ca.
2. The mobile sign display in front of the Peak of the Market building advertises the Farm to School Manitoba program in anticipation of the fundraising season each year.
3. Peak of the Market sends out an email announcing Farm to School's annual fundraiser launch to their Manitoba Recipe Subscribers contact list each year.

In 2017, Peak of the Market established an in-house coordinator role for the Farm to School program across all four provinces. The Farm to School coordinator at Peak of the Market is responsible for managing the Farm to School Manitoba e-newsletters and program update emails.

MAHE, the administering agency for the Manitoba branch of the program, promotes Farm to School Manitoba through multiple avenues:

1. Social media accounts
2. E-newsletters with program information or special events/announcements sent to MAHE members with the intent to encourage member engagement and distribution among networks
3. In-person program sharing at conferences, workshops and expos across Manitoba where MAHE is a featured or presenting organization

With respect to Farm to School Manitoba's websites, Peak of the Market uses www.FarmToSchool.ca as the landing page for the Farm to School program across Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern

Ontario. For those interested in the Farm to School program in Manitoba, they can either be directed from the multi-province site or go directly to www.FarmtoSchoolManitoba.ca for more information related to the program as it operates in Manitoba.

New Farm to School Manitoba Website and Social Media, September 2019

In response to the recent program evaluation recommendations, a new website provider was obtained in May 2019 in order to increase the user-friendliness and accessibility of the content available on the Farm to School Manitoba website while also reducing costs to maintain the website.

New features of the website include its ability to be viewed on all types of devices, including mobile devices, a community page with sub-tabs to view blog posts about site visits and nutrition month activities, and a recipe page that features links to Peak of the Market, Canola Eat Well and Dietitians of Canada's recipe pages.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Final Evaluation Committee Meeting, Health In Common, May 6, 2019

To conclude the program evaluation process that began during the 2018-2019 fiscal year, a final evaluation committee meeting was held with Health In Common, the contracted organization that provided program planning and evaluation services for Farm to School Manitoba.

The final report recommendations were reviewed by the committee and key priorities were identified for the 2019-2020 program year which included focusing on strengthening program promotion by working with existing programs and networks, program information sharing with community members to enhance the feasibility of schools and daycares being able to participate in the program, and improving the data management to facilitate program operations and long-term monitoring.

In response to the above identified priorities, the following activities were initiated during the 2019-2020 program year:

- Increased collaboration with key provincial organizations involved with school and daycare nutrition work to enhance program promotion and audience reach
- Improved website featuring program information, resources, and blog posts of site visits that highlight the activities and efforts involved in vegetable delivery days at schools and daycares
- The introduction of a Facebook "Friends of Farm to School" community group for the purpose of promoting conversations among program coordinators and participants related to fundraising efforts and logistical concerns among others
- Updates to the data management software utilized by Peak of the Market to improve tracking of program measures for evaluation

In addition to addressing program evaluation recommendations at the meeting, a draft work plan (Appendix A) and a draft communication plan (Appendix B) were developed to enhance the work and efficacy of the Farm to School Manitoba program coordinator.

THE RESULTS

Participants

A total of 259 groups enrolled for the Fall 2019 Farm to School Manitoba fundraising period. Of this total, 240 groups (92.7%) submitted orders, 189 of which were schools and 51 that were licensed daycares. The total number of groups that ordered in 2019 is a 6.2% decline from the previous year.

Bundle Orders

The fundraising program includes two types of vegetable bundles available for sale. The following describes the cost and contents of each type of bundle:

- Bundle A: \$12.00 each – 2 lbs carrots, 2 lbs cooking onions, 5 lbs red potatoes
- Bundle B: \$22.00 each – 3 lbs carrots, 3 lbs cooking onions, 10 lbs red potatoes, 1 lb parsnips, 1 head of green cabbage

The total number of bundles ordered through the Farm to School Manitoba program in 2019 was 37,806 which is a 4.0% decrease from the previous year (39,366 bundles were ordered in 2018). Of this total, 5,294 bundles of vegetables were donated to food banks in Manitoba, 14.5% of all bundles purchased.

The following is a breakdown of the bundle orders for the 2019 fundraising period:

- 19,207 orders of Bundle A for school/daycare orders (172,863 lbs of vegetables)
- 13,305 orders of Bundle B for school/daycare orders (266,100 lbs vegetables)
- 3,179 orders of Bundle A for donation to food banks (28,611 lbs vegetables)
- 2,115 orders of Bundle B for donation to food banks (42,300 lbs vegetables)

Pounds of Vegetables

The total amount of vegetables ordered in the 2019 fundraising period equalled approximately 509,874 lbs. Of this total, approximately 70,911 lbs of the vegetables were donated to food banks in Manitoba.

School and Daycare Fundraising Profits

All fundraising groups retain 50% of all the money collected from the sales of the vegetable bundles. For the 2019 fundraising period, the total dollars retained by participating Manitoba schools and licensed daycares was \$303,936, combined. This is a 3.1% decrease from the previous year (\$313,751 was retained in 2018).

Participation Throughout the Province

The following information pertains to the distribution of participating schools and daycares among different geographical locations in Manitoba. Geographic regions were determined based on the postal code provided by the facility for enrollment and delivery. Schools and daycares were categorized based on the following:

- Any unit with a northern postal code was classified as “Northern”
- Any unit from the cities of Winnipeg, Brandon, or Portage La Prairie were classified as “Urban”
- All other units were classified as “Rural”

Of the 189 participating schools and daycares in 2019, 104 (55.0%) were located in urban Manitoba, 70 (37.0%) were from rural areas, and 15 (7.9%) were from Northern Manitoba. Of the 51 participating licensed daycares, 31 (60.8%) were located in urban Manitoba, 20 (39.2%) were from rural areas, and none were from Northern Manitoba.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The project has run successfully over this past year with financial contribution from the Province of Manitoba through the Ministry of Health, Seniors and Active Living. In 2019, the Province of Manitoba confirmed support of Farm to School Manitoba for an additional year with a grant of \$25,000.

The program is administered by the Manitoba Association of Home Economists through a hired contract program coordinator who is responsible for preparing and managing the program's annual budget, participating in strategic planning and program evaluation with partnering agencies, and following through with new initiatives and recommendations. The key project management activities to which the funding is allocated include promotion of the program at in-person events and via online outlets, development and maintenance of content for the Farm to School Manitoba website and social media accounts, coordinating special events, including the proclamation of Local Veggie Day in Manitoba, as well as planning and leading stakeholder and partner meetings as appropriate.

Peak of the Market provides in-kind financial contributions that exceed the total revenue of the program. These additional costs are associated with program promotion and operations, including order placement and delivery.

Please refer to Appendix C for the 2019-2020 financial budget. Heading into the 2020-2021 fiscal year, Farm to School Manitoba has a surplus of \$470.95. This funding was allocated towards the annual Great Big Crunch contest and corresponding event(s). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in public health recommendations to cancel large group events in Manitoba, the Great Big Crunch events that were to take place at Elmwood Elementary School in Winnipeg and Hazel M. Kellington School in Neepawa were both cancelled. The surplus dollars will be used towards hosting healthy eating events at these schools at a more appropriate time which will likely align with Farm to School Manitoba's annual kick-off celebrations in Fall 2020 or later.

PROGRAM GOALS ESTABLISHED FOR 2020-2021

The following goals have been developed by the Farm to School Manitoba Program Coordinator to address the interests and recommendations put forth by program partners both informally and formally over the 2019-2020 fiscal year and from recent program evaluation findings:

- Increase number of program participants, specifically licensed daycares and participants from Northern communities
 - Increase the total participation by licensed daycares by 10% to 56 daycares in the 2020 fundraising period
 - Increase total participation by Northern schools and licensed daycares by 10% to 17 in the 2020 fundraising period
- Increase number of total bundle sales by 5% to 39,696 bundles in the 2020 fundraising period

- Increase number of bundle donations to Manitoba Association of Food Banks by 10% to 5,823 bundles in the 2020 fundraising period

PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020-2021

The following opportunities and recommendations have been compiled by the Farm to School Manitoba Program Coordinator based on ideas, feedback and suggestions put forth by program partners and community stakeholders over the past years as well as through best practices. They are meant to achieve results that are in line with the established program goals for the 2020-2021 year.

- Increased Participation/Sales
 - Maintain current participation by incorporating aggressive, targeted marketing strategies and through consultation with a third party public relations agency; focus to be on past/current daycare participants as well as past/current northern school/daycare participants
 - Continue with the 150,000 lb donation campaign and combine 2019 results with the 2020-2021 fundraising year to work towards goal; collaborate with Winnipeg Harvest and other supporting agencies to promote the campaign as part of Manitoba's 150-year celebrations
- Annual Kick-Off Event(s):
 - Coordinate with Great Big Crunch contest winners to host kick-off events in place of previously cancelled events in March 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic; promote media coverage and community interest as was previously planned
 - Collaborate with Manitoba Agriculture for proclamation of Local Veggie Day to coincide with Farm and Food Awareness Week; promote media coverage and community interest
- Potential event opportunities:
 - Discover Agriculture in the City, March 2020
 - A free event that offers the public a chance to explore the world of agriculture and to discover how agriculture impacts daily lives
 - Well-attended annual event at a busy community location, The Forks in Winnipeg
 - Farm to School Manitoba to be a featured display with educational activities and games geared towards children, promotional materials and resources
 - Potential to collaborate with key stakeholders: Farm and Food Discovery Centre and Manitoba Agriculture
- Move forward with recommendations identified in 2019 formal program evaluation:
 - Foster the Friends of Farm to School Facebook group to encourage program participants to join and share their experience with the Farm to School Manitoba Fundraiser, start discussions and seek tips and strategies from fellow members
 - Develop and disseminate a "toolkit" for existing and new fundraising leads, including information on leading community practices and frequently asked questions based on challenges identified in formal program evaluation and through other sources
 - Collaborate with Peak of the Market to ensure indicators of program success and efficacy are being captured through current data management systems

- Incorporate communication plans and strategies into 2020-2021 work plan to ensure targeted communications to priority audiences
- Expand connections and maintain current relationships to promote increased program awareness and encourage participation:
 - Connect with Northern and remote communities in Manitoba through in-person and video attendance at conferences, expos, workshops, as well as through social media and website
 - Connect with licensed daycares throughout the province electronically and via post mail to disseminate program information and promotional materials
 - Travel to and/or delivery of promotional materials and resources in northern communities

FINAL NOTES

The structure of this report is in keeping with past annual reports compiled by previous program coordinators for Farm to School Manitoba. Opportunities and recommendations for future program years are based on past and ongoing recommendations from schools, licensed daycares, community stakeholders and the program partners. This report is complete and accurate to the best knowledge of the Program Coordinator, Melodie Ho, and the 2019-2020 sub-contractor, Symone Moodoo.