

Food Secure Canada

Celebrating

10

Years

**of Collective
Food Policy
Action**

2008-2018



FSC

Food Secure Canada

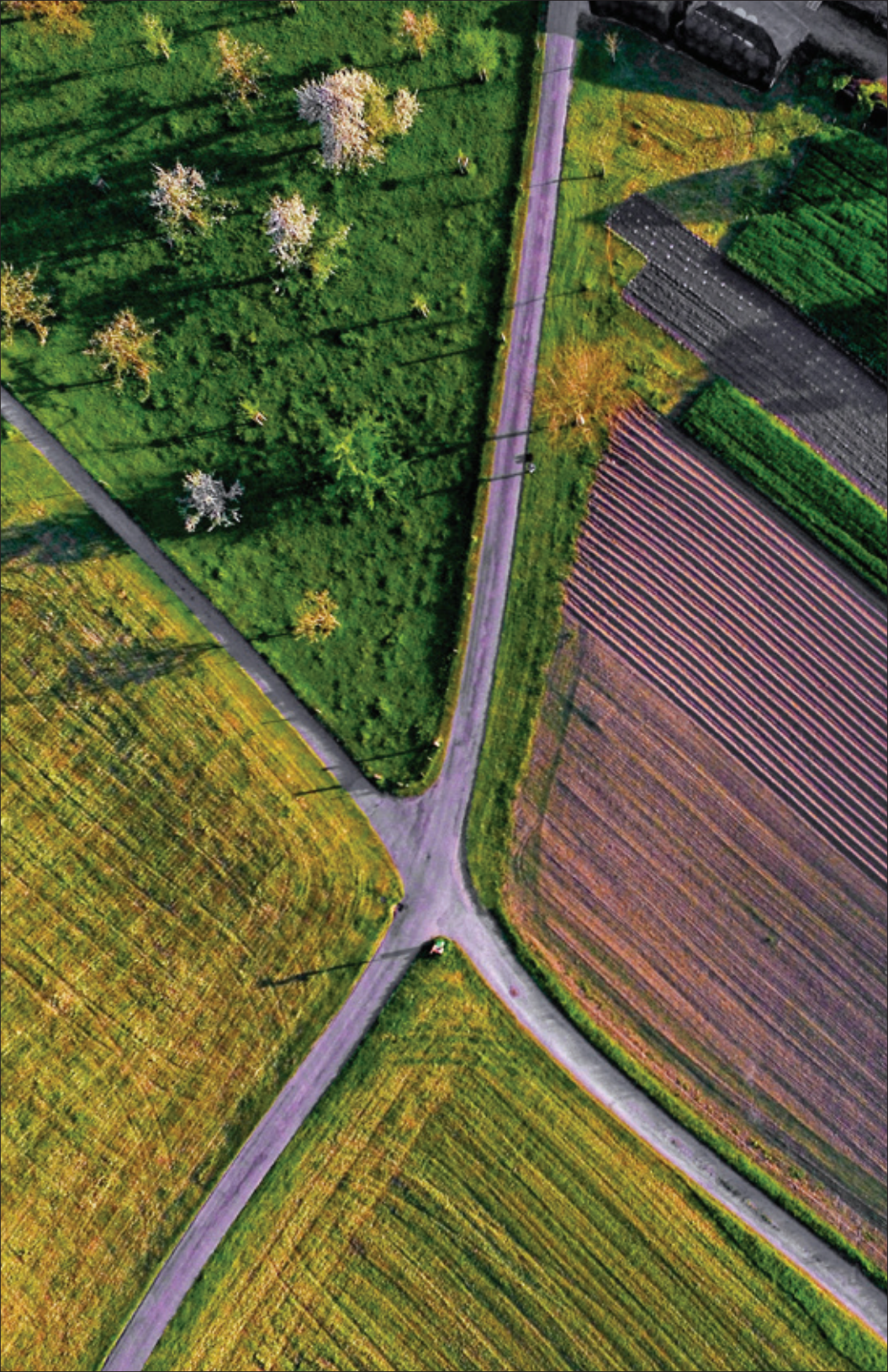


Photo: Ricardo Gomez Angel

Food Secure Canada is a pan-Canadian alliance of organizations and individuals working together to advance food security and food sovereignty.

Our members are from across Canada and work at local, regional and national levels towards the goals of zero hunger, sustainable food systems, and healthy and safe food for all.

We believe deep and lasting change can occur by:

Facilitating accessible dialogue to foster participation of civil society in food policy.

Supporting dynamic networks to facilitate research and enhance learning and collaboration on food system projects and campaigns.

Advocating for food policies at the federal level that reflect the priorities of Canada's food movement.



What a Decade it Has Been for Food Secure Canada!

— 2008-2011

People's Food Policy Project

— 2012-2013

Food is a Human Right

— 2015

Eat Think Vote

— 2015-2018

Food Policy: A New Federal Government Priority

From the launch of the People's Food Policy Project to the upcoming adoption of Canada's first-ever National Food Policy, the Food Secure Canada community has been working hard side by side, from coast to coast to coast.

This booklet highlights a journey that brought a policy vision from the kitchen table to the Cabinet table, from the grassroots to the House of Commons. That journey is by no means complete and we do not yet know what *A Food Policy for Canada* will contain. We have however learned a few things along the way about working for change, and it is an opportune moment to reflect together on the lessons learned and what lies ahead.

Photo: Scott Warman



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10



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11



12

- 1 FSC members strategize around federal government announcement on food policy, Montreal QC, October 2015.
- 2 Indigenous Prayer Circle opens FSC's 9th Assembly *Resetting the Table*, Toronto ON, October 2016. (photo: François Zeller)
- 3 FSC Members with Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay at *Food Policy for Canada* Summit, Ottawa ON, June 2017.
- 4 Parliamentary Secretary Jean-Claude Poissant hosts the Great Big Crunch on Parliament Hill, Ottawa ON, March 2018. (photo: Rachel Cheng)
- 5 Eat Think Vote event, QC, 2015.
- 6 Launch of the People's Food Policy on Parliament Hill, Ottawa ON, March 2012.

- 7 UN Special Rapporteur Olivier de Schutter delivers his report on the right to food in Canada, May 2012.
- 8 Eco-Ethnomics and Land Over Landings host Eat Think Vote event, Pickering ON, 2015.
- 9 FSC Executive Director Diana Bronson speaks with MP Greg Ferguson at the Great Big Crunch, March 2018.
- 10 Hundreds of copies of *Resetting the Table – A People's Food Policy For Canada* have been given to politicians across Canada since 2011.
- 11 FSC highlights the important work of members like Black Creek Community Farm, Toronto, 2015. (photo: Laura Berman)
- 12 The Depot Community Food Center hosts Eat Think Vote event, Montreal, 2015. (photo: The Depot)

2008-2011

People's Food Policy Project

3,500
participants

350
kitchen table talks

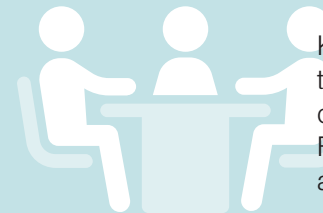
10
policy papers generated

50
academic mentions

Over a period of three years, 3500 people across Canada participated in the People's Food Policy Project, a vast exercise in grassroots democracy.

From kitchen table talks to collaborative research papers, it was a groundbreaking collective effort to envision what food sovereignty could look like in Canada. **It highlighted what was wrong with our current system and laid out a national policy vision where food is a foundation for healthy lives, communities, economies and eco-systems.** It built on the People's Food Commission that had taken place decades earlier as well as a food sovereignty meeting convened with la Via Campesina in 2007.

These cross-Canada deliberations led to the 2011 publication of *Resetting the Table, A People's Food Policy for Canada*. The federal election that took place that year saw food policies emerge in the platforms of all five federal parties for the first time in history. *Resetting the Table* was distributed to all Members of Parliament, presented before Committee, and discussed with a variety of stakeholders in addition to being used by organizations working at the provincial and municipal levels to influence their governments.



Kitchen table talks are now a model for how to practice genuine engagement in policy development and has laid the foundation for FSC's subsequent community mobilization and advocacy work.

Food is a Human Right

11

community events with the Special Rapporteur

40

organizations collaborating on a joint submission

52

community events to participate in the live debrief from the United Nations

120

organizations signed letter calling for an official apology from the Government of Canada with regards to its reaction to the Special Rapporteur

In 2012, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter, came to Canada to examine the country's record on implementing the internationally recognized human right to food.

Working with members and partners, FSC facilitated a joint submission on key issues in the country. FSC was instrumental in helping to organize the Special Rapporteur's meetings with civil society groups, labour organizations, international NGOs, farmers, and food policy experts. Collectively, we worked with the media and Parliamentarians to raise the mission's visibility and impact.

De Schutter's official report called for a national right to food strategy, as well as stronger protections for economic, social and cultural rights. While Cabinet Ministers dismissed the diplomat as "patronizing" and "ill-informed," civil society organizations found a powerful ally for the concerns they had been raising for years around the crisis of hunger, obesity and decent livelihoods for farmers. It made headlines across the country.

A year later in 2013, we hosted a cross-Canada interactive webinar and mobilized communities and organizations to connect for a live debrief with the UN Special Rapporteur in Geneva after he delivered his report to the UN Council on Human Rights. **It was a powerful moment, a rare occasion where grassroots organizations and activists had direct access to the United Nation's human rights protection system.**



Since this process, the right to food has been integrated into all of our work.

2015

Eat Think Vote

69

Eat Think Vote
events

4,660

participants

192

organizations
involved

164

political candidates attending.
Among them:

44

candidates were elected
as Members of Parliament

5

candidates were
promoted to Cabinet

From 2012 to 2015, FSC partnered with groups across the country to deepen our work on several issues such as healthy school food, better hospital food, support for new farmers, food justice, Northern and Indigenous food sovereignty, and local and sustainable food.

While policy dialogue with the federal government was minimal during this period, we used the opportunity of the 2015 federal election campaign to highlight our concerns and engage with decision makers.



Through the Eat Think Vote campaign, we crafted a unified and focused message: *"We need a new national food policy!"*

The campaign articulated four specific policy priorities:

- a feasibility study for a basic annual income;
- supports for new farmers;
- the need to address the crisis of food insecurity in Northern Canada; and
- the establishment of a national universal school food program.

Community food centres, universities and organizations of all kinds invited their local candidates to share a meal and talk food policy at Eat Think Vote events, using a handy toolkit that made organizing and unifying our efforts simple.

Food Policy: A New Federal Government Priority

20

government agencies involved in the policies' development

40

webinars organized

29

community events organized

19

policy briefs written

176

media stories generated

Dozens

of collaborations and meetings with MPs

The Eat Think Vote campaign was directly, if not solely, responsible for the mandate given to the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food to *“develop a food policy that promotes healthy living and safe food by putting more healthy, high-quality food, produced by Canadian ranchers and farmers, on the tables of families across the country.”*

Following this announcement, FSC immediately called together its members to explore the next steps for food policy. We collectively called upon the Minister of Agriculture to lead meaningful consultations and to engage all relevant federal departments that touch on food.



At the government's consultative Food Summit, held in June 2017 in Ottawa, FSC coordinated our members, partners and supporters in this national event around key messages. **FSC and member organizations presented discussion papers and policy briefs, putting forward 5 Big Ideas for Reforming Canada's Food System. Twenty-nine community events hosted by members were also held under the banner “What's your recipe for a better food system?”** A report from these community engagement sessions was submitted to government as part of the policy consultations.

Governance

With a mind to gaining a seat at the table, FSC also co-lead a multi-stakeholder initiative including representatives from industry, agriculture, research, philanthropy and civil society to develop a consensus proposal on governance based on establishing a new National Food Policy Council.

FSC synthesized the many discussions and inputs into a formal brief to the government of Canada, as well as leading the development of a detailed brief on the right to food.



In addition to our work to build a coherent overall framework for a national food policy for Canada, we continued to advocate for better policies and stronger coalitions on a variety of issues to:

Realize the human right to food.

Champion healthy and sustainable diets that are good for people and the planet.

Create a national school food program to ensure all children learn food skills and have access to healthy meals every day.

Encourage hospitals, universities and other public institutions to buy local, sustainable food.

Enhance Northern and Indigenous peoples' food sovereignty.

Support ecologically and socially minded farmers so they can thrive.

Address income as a prime determinant of food security alongside community food security.



Photo: Rachel Cheng

What Lies Ahead?

We are currently collaborating with our members and supporters to identify our strengths and lessons learned, and to collectively build a food system that is more healthy, sustainable, and just.

What's Next?

The next ten years is brimming with promise and potential. But we have choices to make about our priorities. You are invited to join the discussion at our upcoming Assembly and/or by becoming a member.

Food Secure Canada is committed to resetting the table to create a better food system.

Join us!

- Come celebrate** the 10th Assembly.
- Become** a member.
- Sign up** for our email updates.

Have thoughts on this document?
Send them to members@foodsecurecanada.org



foodsecurecanada.org

*Thank you to all of our partners who helped
to build this movement for a better food future.*



3875 St-Urbain Street, Suite 502
Montreal, Quebec H2W 1V1