

FOOD SECURE CANADA

Annual report

2019



FSC

Food Secure Canada

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Message from Chair of the Board

The past year has been very challenging, yet exciting. Many of us on the board, including myself, started our terms after a very difficult moment at the 2018 Assembly, perhaps the most difficult in FSC's history. The walk out by Indigenous peoples and people of colour and exchanges since have been an opportunity for learning and growth. I would like to thank all my colleagues for having embraced these difficult moments as an opportunity to strengthen the foundations of the organization to collectively move forward in an inclusive manner. While we still struggle and have a long way to go, we are committed to dismantling structures of colonialism and racism and other forms of privilege in the food movement and broader society. We have engaged and reported on this work publicly over the past year and will continue to do so and invite your participation on this challenging journey, which continues to have unresolved questions.

FSC continues to have many strengths including commitment from its individual and organizational members, a small but dedicated and professional staff, and many partners and collaborators across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. One of our most important tasks this year as a board was to shepherd the process to recruit our new executive director, Gisèle Yasmeen, who started in May after seven years of dedicated service by our former and founding ED, Diana Bronson, who took the organization to a new level in terms of federal government advocacy and stellar growth in the participation around our signature event every two years: the Assembly. The Assembly has been an important gathering point for the food movement from coast to coast in both official languages over the years, offering valued opportunities to connect, learn, share, and collaborate with others. In recognition of the size of the growing food movement (resulting in 800 participants at the last Assembly) and deep concerns about the growing inappropriateness of the structure of these gatherings in the past, we want to do things differently from now on.. We are fortunate to have acquired modest resources to permit us to experiment with other, smaller types of gatherings – including virtual interaction – over the next year to design food movement engagement strategies that work for our current context. We look forward to engaging further on this in 2020.

FSC turned 18 years old in June 2019. As such, we are coming of age as an organization. I would like to congratulate the FSC staff team and our many collaborators across the country for various successful campaigns and accomplishments. The Coalition for Healthy School Food continues to go from strength to strength and the second edition of the Eat Think Vote campaign delivered for the 2019 federal election had nearly 7,500 participants and was highly successful. Moreover, we are now on the other side of a new national food policy and await with anticipation the Ministerial appointments to the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council – initiatives that bear an undeniable FSC stamp. While our new strategic planning process is in its initial stages, it shows promise and we are excited about the opportunity to engage with our members, partners and other stakeholders to craft a way forward.

I would like to thank my fellow board members for their commitment to the organization. In particular, gratitude is due to the members of our board executive, particularly our outgoing treasurer, Wendy Roscoe. I would also like to acknowledge two board members who had to step down over the past year due to other commitments, namely, Bibiana Virguez and the newly elected Member of Parliament for Whitby, Ryan Turnbull. Last but not least, we are grateful to our membership and funders for their ongoing support. We look forward to fruitful collaborations with all of you in 2020!

MELANA ROBERTS



Message from the Executive Director

I joined Food Secure Canada in May 2019 at an exciting time, namely, a month before the announcement of the long-awaited Food Policy for Canada. The food movement called for an integrated national food policy for decades, and it was a significant moment in our collective history. We will continue to push for a higher bar for next steps and monitor the implementation and ongoing development of the policy, including the opportunities provided due to its alignment with Canada's commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and associated 2030 targets, including zero hunger.

Further to years of effort by FSC and its partners, the food policy also commits to forming a Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council, for which nominations have been solicited. We will be monitoring the make-up and resourcing of this council closely once it is appointed, in line with our ongoing calls for the need to provide a strong voice civil society to balance industry in food policy making circles.

Echoing commitments in federal budget 2019, the food policy also committed to developing a National School Food Program. Read more about this great step forward in this annual report.

Meanwhile, the global consensus on food systems is at an exciting turning point. The past year has witnessed the release of reports from EAT-Lancet and the IPCC - confirming that the way we produce and consume food is exacerbating climate change, as well as the promise that lies within transforming food systems for the health of people and planet. This is in line with repeated analysis and recommendations provided by food movement actors all over the world and here at home helps strengthen calls for significant transformation of our food systems going forward.

FSC itself is also at a turning point. The intersection of the food-system with poverty versus privilege, through structured access – or not - to healthy food be it through the colonialism faced by Indigenous peoples and/or racial discrimination towards people of colour is more firmly recognised by the organization, and has been strengthened as a result

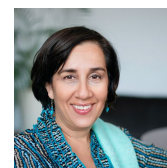
of the challenges around the 2018 Assembly. Intense work over the past year on this question has helped us move forward but we recognize we have a long way to go and commit to working to center marginalized communities in all we do. We will continue to engage with and learn from the broader food justice movement on this important work.

Over the next year, FSC will be developing a new strategic plan in collaboration with our members, partners and collaborators. This will involve listening to understand current food movement structure and capacity in relation to a changed environment, to help inform our role in the broader food movement. The recent launch of the charitable People's Food Institute is a particularly promising development we look forward to supporting.

In closing, I would like to thank our dedicated volunteer board of directors for their tireless commitment to our cause. In particular, I would like to acknowledge our Chair, Melana Roberts, who has graciously and gently held my hand since I started. The engagement, talent, professionalism and determination of the FSC staff team keeps me motivated and inspired every single day and I thank them for all they do. I would also like to recognize Diana Bronson for ensuring a smooth transition after her seven-years as founding Executive Director. Last but not least, I want to thank the members of FSC. Thank you for being present and helping us build this organization. Special gratitude is extended to our funders over the years for believing in us.

May we continue to work together to achieve a healthy, just and sustainable food system for all.

GISÈLE YASMEEN



What we do

Food Secure Canada is a pan-Canadian alliance of organizations and individuals working together to advance food security and food sovereignty through three interlocking goals:

zero hunger	healthy and safe food	sustainable food systems
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To do this work, we collaborate with a diverse range of members and collaborators, including food security organizations, national and international non-profits, farmers organizations, institutions, Indigenous leaders, food businesses, community groups, academics, and many more.

We work with our collaborators for deep and lasting change in our food system in three ways: sharing information, fostering networks, and advocating for policy change.

Meet our board and team [here on our website](#).

Here is a list of our current board of directors as approved at our December 2019 AGM:

- Ashley Jean-Marie, QC, *Treasurer*
- Bryanna Kumpula, AB
- Ilham Saydna, ON
- Jessica McLaughlin, ON
- Julie Price, MB
- Kristina Craig, YT, *Secretary*
- Larry McDermott, ON
- Melana Roberts, ON, *Chair*
- Nancy Neamtan, QC
- Naomi Robert, BC
- Rob Moquin, MB
- Satya Ramen, NS
- Susanna Klassen, BC, *Vice-chair*

We would like to thank outgoing board members for their dedication in the past years, including Wendy Roscoe (QC) our previous Treasurer, and Ryan Turnbull (ON) who stepped down from the board to become MP for Whitby.

National Food Policy

Launch of the National Food Policy

Since its creation, Food Secure Canada has been calling for the creation of a national food policy, which would provide the framework for building a healthy, just and sustainable food system from coast to coast to coast. And now, after decades of collective action with collaborators, we finally have our first Food Policy for Canada.

It is a game-changing policy prioritizing community resilience, connections among food actors, health, sustainability, self-determined Indigenous food systems and inclusive economic growth. Together, we have taken the conversation from the kitchen table to the cabinet table.

The Food Policy for Canada is a game-changer.

This is a historic moment for not only Food Secure Canada, but the food movement as a whole, a testament to decades of community work and activism.

In 2019, we worked alongside elected officials and civil servants in Agriculture and Agrifood Canada and other departments on several steps, including:

- Meetings with Minister Bibeau in Ottawa, to re-emphasize the importance of more voices at the table, through a multi-stakeholder council
- Meetings with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and their staff to emphasize the horizontal nature of the food policy and reinforce support for the commitment of a universal, healthy national school food program negotiated with the provinces with autonomy for Indigenous communities
- Supporting civil servants from AAFC for the food policy launch
- Providing an [in-depth policy analysis](#) of the food policy
- Sharing information and gathering input from our members through an online meeting

While the policy has an ambitious vision statement and robust principles, the initial funding is modest. Moreover, it is unclear how the food policy will intertwine with other government priorities. The risk remains that the overall political environment will continue to overshadow critical issues such as food insecurity, support for climate-resilient ecological agriculture, as well as the health impacts of the way we currently eat. The way forward will also require naming the racialized implications of our current food system, with the latest studies showing that Indigenous and Black households are much more likely to experience food insecurity than non-Indigenous and white households, respectively. [Read more in our op-ed](#) in *Policy Options*.

Budget 2019

After years of advocacy, a budget line was established for “Canada Food Policy” with \$134.4 million in funding over five years for four specific areas of action, and a commitment to create a National School Food Program in cooperation with provinces and territories.

The budget includes support for local food projects and for communities tackling Northern food security, food waste reduction programs, and a pilot project towards permanent residency for immigrant farm workers. These align with important policy demands from the food movement, as well as priorities from some sectors of the agri-food industry. We released a [full analysis of the budget](#) online.

Healthy Eating Strategy

Advocacy action for a Healthy Eating Strategy

Since 2015, FSC has been participating in the development of Health Canada's *Healthy Eating Strategy*, which aims to encourage healthy people, communities and local economies. In 2019, we participated in the following activities:

- **Canada Food Guide:** The new Food Guide sought to make recommendations based on independent nutritional science, free from conflict of interest. FSC was pleased to be involved in this precedent-setting process, and we were on site to support the launch of historic Canada's new Food Guide on January 22, 2019 in Montréal. Check out our [summary of the day here](#).

Further reading

- Our previous ED Diana Bronson and the Coordinator of the Coalition for Healthy School Food, Debbie Field, were present and interviewed at the launch – "[New Canada's Food Guide is a giant step forward, dietitians say.](#)" *Montréal Gazette*.
 - [Diana Bronson spoke with Global News' The West Wing](#) about the impact of the Food Guide
- **Marketing to kids:** As a member of the steering committee of the [Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition](#), FSC mobilized its members and called on Senators to support Bill S-228 to restrict the marketing of foods and beverages high in salt, sugar and saturated fat to children under 12. While this bill was not passed in the previous government, it has been resurfaced and was named in the mandate letter of the new Minister of Health, Patty Hajdu.
 - **Front of pack labelling:** Health Canada's proposed regulation for Front-of-Package (FOP) food labels aim to help Canadians to better identify healthier processed foods by labelling food products high in sodium, saturated fat, and sugar. FSC participated heavily in building public support for this via social media and [our op-ed in iPolitics](#).

More work is required to ensure that continued evolution of the Canada Food Guide is in the public interest including making it culturally relevant, particularly to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples through the lens of an Indigenous food sovereignty approach. We hope that other pillars of the Healthy Eating Strategy like restricting marketing to kids and supporting front of pack labelling, which were not achieved during the last government, will succeed in this second mandate. For more details on our actions on the Healthy Eating Strategy, [see the webpage here](#).

Eat Think Vote 2019

FSC’s biggest project in 2019 was the second edition of *Eat Think Vote (ETV)*, a campaign to bring together communities with their candidates to make food an election issue. Building on the lessons learned from our first ETV, 2019 saw a campaign with more participation, reaching many new groups, to talk about food insecurity, climate change, school food, and other food issues.



Between August and October 2019, 7437 Canadians and community members gathered to talk with their candidates ahead of the federal election. Their message was clear: food insecurity and other food issues matter to Canadians, and they want their incoming government to work towards a healthier, more sustainable and more just food system.

50 events	7437 participants	117 community hosts
216 candidates	34 candidates elected	4 candidates in Cabinet

Eat Think Vote showed that Canadians care deeply about food insecurity and other food issues. The energy didn’t stop at the election; our team worked with event hosts to train and accompany them in advocacy and relationship-building with their MPs. To end the campaign, we held a [webinar on advocacy](#), featuring tips from MPs across several parties.

For more info, photos, media, and stats on the campaign, visit the [Eat Think Vote website here](#), or see the [Facebook album here](#).

Coalition for Healthy School Food

The [Coalition for Healthy School Food](#) is a group of over 110 organizations from across Canada advocating for a national school food program. We seek an investment by the federal government in a cost-shared Universal Healthy School Food

Momentum is building across the country for a national healthy school food program.

Program that will enable all students in Canada to have access to healthy meals at school every day. Building on existing programs across the country, all schools would eventually serve a healthy meal or snack at little or no cost to students.

Here are some key moments from the Coalition in 2019:

- **Gaining support in Parliament:** Presented in the House of Commons by MP Julie Dabrusin, and later as a private member's bill by MP Don Davies, the call for a national school food program had MPs championing its cause in Ottawa.
- **A healthy school food program named in the budget:** In March 2019, the government committed to a National School Food Program as part of the National Food Policy.
- **Great Big Crunch:** Food Secure Canada organized the [Great Big Crunch](#) in partnership with the Coalition for Healthy School Food and FoodShare Toronto. Students, teachers, parents and others who are passionate about food came together to make noise for healthy, local food in schools.
- **Member engagement:** The Coalition grew to over 110 members, organizing under provincial and territorial chapters.
- **#NourishKidsNow campaign:** A mass print and online campaign was launched to get broader support for school food.

The Coalition, founded and hosted by FSC, continues to push for an effective approach in the public interest, including working alongside provinces, territories and Indigenous nations to focus on a universal program that respects and expands on the work already underway across the country.

Meetings on the ground

While the majority of our work takes place from our office in Montréal, Québec, we were also on the ground to meet with collaborators. In addition to regular meetings in Ottawa, here is a sample:

- **Broadbent Institute (February 2019):** Our team attended the Broadbent Summit and gathered 200 progressive thinkers together to talk about making food an election issue. [Click here for photos](#) of the event.
- **Toronto (March 2019):** We met with collaborators both old and new to talk about the last 10 years of policy action, and where FSC and the food movement can go in the future.
- **Presentation to the Standing Committee on Agriculture (March 2019):** Former ED Diana Bronson and the Director of Black Creek Community Farm, Leticia Deawuo, went to Ottawa to present to the House of Commons's Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-foods. Read the testimonies here: [FSC's testimony](#), [Leticia Deawuo's testimony](#)

- **Vancouver (June 2019):** Several board and staff members presented and attended the Canadian Association for Food Studies conference, and met with collaborators to learn about how to better integrate diversity, equity and inclusion in all of our work.
- **Nourish conference (August 2019):** Our then staff member Jennifer Reynolds kicked off a new campaign for local procurement in healthcare institutions with the Nourish Conference in Toronto. Read André Picard's [summary of the conference in The Globe and Mail](#).
- **ETV events (October 2019):** ED Gisèle Yasmeen travelled to Ottawa and Toronto to attend two ETV events on the ground. ETV Campaign Manager Rachel Cheng travelled to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia to help event hosts at their ETV events, and meet with local partners.
- **National Farmers Union Convention (November 2019):** ED Gisèle Yasmeen attended the NFU convention in Winnipeg, MB, celebrating 50 years of the farm movement.
- **Food Law conference (November 2019):** Board Chair Melana Roberts spoke on the opening plenary, while staff member Debbie Field presented on the Coalition for Healthy School Food, and staff member Rachel Cheng moderated a panel on migrant workers' rights.
- **Annual General Meeting (December 2019):** To end the year, we held an Annual General Meeting for members in Montréal, where members could participate virtually for the first time. This was followed by a visioning dialogue and reception. [Click here for a recap](#) of the AGM.



Sustainable Consumption for All

Between April 2018 and March 2019, FSC led a research project to better understand how consumers living with low-incomes value and access sustainably grown foods, what barriers they face in doing so and what policy measures could be undertaken to facilitate greater access. Titled “Sustainable Consumption for All: Improving the accessibility of sustainably-produced foods in Canada,” the report surveyed 1500 Canadians and 50 people in focus groups across the country, and shed insight on how sustainable food is important for low-income Canadians.

Key research findings were presented during a [webinar on June 10, 2019](#).

Other happenings

Staff changes

In May, we thanked Diana Bronson for her seven years of leadership, and gave a warm welcome to our new Executive Director, **Gisèle Yasmeen**. We also said farewell to two staff members:

- **Jennifer Reynolds**, previously the staff lead on institutional food procurement, as she went on to work full time on the Nourish project
- **Gabrielle Spenard-Bernier**, previously the communications coordinator, as she moved to BC

Launch of the People's Food Institute

For years, close friends of Food Secure Canada have explored the possibility of creating a charitable organization to support the activities of Canada's food movement. At the end of 2019, we were pleased to announce that [The People's Food Institute](#) was granted charitable status. It is a new opportunity to support the important research, education and networking priorities of Canada's food movement.

Looking forward

Over the next year, the FSC board and team will be working closely together to develop a new strategic plan in collaboration with our members, partners and collaborators. This will involve listening to understand current food movement structure and capacity in relation to a changed environment, to help inform the role of FSC in the broader food movement. The past year was an exciting one full of victories for not only FSC, but also the food movement, and we look forward to working alongside you in 2020.

Further reading

- **Thank you to our 2019 funders and sponsors**
- **Last audited financial statements**
- **Thanks to [our members](#)**