Alberta Food Matters

Annual Report 2025

Alberta Food Matters

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CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Last year strikes me as a year of landmark events. The long awaited National School Food Program began its rollout on April 1st when it was announced it was in the Federal Liberal budget, and then the actual commencement of the signing of agreements between the Federal government and the provinces and territories. Historic! It was also epic for me to travel to Montreal last fall to meet with all the luminaries that have made the National School Food program come to fruition!

At the Coalition for Healthy School Food CHSFmeeting in Montreal we had presentations on a variety of aspects of school food: how provincial school food programs were rolling out. One aspect of what is happening in other provinces that struck me was that most of the truly stellar programs had existing non-profits engaged in running those programs. This provincial group in Alberta could be the role of Alberta Food Matters, which is connecting school food organizations from across the province, and getting speakers to our monthly meetings.

Now that the National School Food program has 13 for 13 provincial and territorial agreements signed, I am cautiously hopeful that it will be cemented into what our nation does - feed its school age children healthy food.

As the work of AFM had shifted over the last five years to being the provincial lead on school food, and our network of partners has grown phenomenally, I so appreciate our AFM Board members for their help and support! We are seeking to grow the membership of our Board to broaden our capacity to meet the increased responsibility! One of the areas of responsibility would be to attend “foodie” symposiums, events and webinars to report back to the Board what is happening around the province or country.

We have been undertaking a Strategic Planning series of meetings, and it appears that a direction we are headed is to increase our connectivity to local growers and provide resources to increase the uptake of local food in institutions in our province.

Looking forward to another impactful year! Wanda Laurin, Chair

FINANCIAL REPORT - Claire
Financial Statement 2024
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eZt8k-11o4t20ObHwzi8ZpMr-GLuPhga/edit

STRATEGIC PLAN
AFM has engaged in several sessions with Community Development Facilitator, Heather Nickel to revisit our goals we had established in 2021. AFM should have a new Strategic Plan ready to focus us on our go-forward plan for the rest of 2025 and into the next three or four years.

Alberta Food Matters Vision → All people in Alberta have healthy food as close to home as possible.
Hi
AFM Mission → AFM works to foster leadership, relationships and actions that reconnect people, land and food in Alberta; Alberta Food Matters grows through community development, research and evidence-based approaches, policy development and skill building, educational projects, programs and workshops.

AFM Values → We believe that healthy, clean food is an essential human right. We value nature as the enduring measure, mentor and model: sustainable, equitable, locale-driven, regenerative and systemic. We believe successful actions and healthy food systems are built on relationships. We value asset-based approaches that recognize everyone, and every group has something to contribute. We value equity: practices that are participatory and support open-source sharing. We value credible, evidence–based information and practices.

Operational Objectives → (What we do) Events, Workshops, Research, Policy, Advocacy, Webinars, Share information

Strategic Goals → (2025-2028) 1. Strengthen and steward well, a Board and organizational structure to support our work. 2. Ensure people recognize and know AFM and trust our brand reflects our values. 3. Establish sustainable financial strategy. 4. Strategically focus our efforts to engage both grassroots and systems for initiatives and advocacy around food security in Alberta.

ACTIVITIES IN 2024-25

School Food Community of Practice/Coalition - monthly meetings

Throughout 2023 AFM hosted Zoom School Food Community of Practice meetings. In January of 2024 we began a facilitated discussion with all the partners. We were looking at where we are, where we want to be in the future, and how we are going to get there.

Coalition for Healthy School Food

Wanda and Avni have been attending the CHSF monthly steering committee meetings. These meetings were planning sessions and information sharing sessions amongst the CHSF partners on how to get the Federal Government to put money into a national school food program. In November 2024 the Coalition hosted an in-person meeting to plan a go-forward strategy to ensure the National School Food program has enough momentum to become embedded in Federal funding.

Grant applications

The Canada Summer Jobs program application was sent in January. We have not yet had confirmation from the Federal government that we were successful in receiving funding.

Communities Choosewell Symposium:
Presentation on the National School Food Program

Chelsea Costa, Masters Student:
Working with Ab School Food CoP on advertising the National School Food Program rollout

Seeds of Change Film Festival:
Laura & Wanda attended (& Brett!)

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING:

1. **AFM Website** https://albertafoodmatters.ca/ Gbemiro is our webmaster and posts changes to our website
2. **Newsletter** Laura creates a newsy quarterly newsletter to update our subscribers on AFM initiatives, food security happenings and upcoming events. https://albertafoodmatters.ca/resources/newsletters/
3. **Social Media**: AFM uses facebook and instagram to share our events and recordings and also to keep our followers apprised of news in the food security sector. https://www.facebook.com/groups/315316863003
4. **Youtube**: Gbemiro has posted AFM's webinar recordings on our Youtube page. The site contains a whole host of speaker sessions and presentations, check it out! Alberta Food Matters - YouTube

Our Partners & Outreach - Initiatives we are engaged in:

Coalition for Healthy School Food (CHSF) - has been tirelessly advocating to the Federal government to create a universal, healthy school food program. Referencing other countries that have school food programs in place for decades, and pulling best practices and policy is a focus: https://www.healthyschoolfood.ca/ CHSF is also working with provincial groups and CHSF Chapters to develop a comprehensive network of healthy school food practitioners and to connect and share best practices.

Bow Valley Food Alliance (BVFA) - created a Food Charter for municipalities to sign on to and to work to implement, working with schools to develop programming to deliver healthy local food to students and work to improve student food literacy and skills. Avni is currently running a locally sourced, healthy lunch, working with a chef to create interesting and inviting meals at the francophone school. A model for others to try! Mentorship of those who are already running programs is a keystone to moving the dial for more healthy, local food in school food programs.

Farm2Cafeteria Canada provided the Animator project with $20,000 in infrastructure funding, and was also involved with APHA in evaluating the project. Jesse Veenstra took the lead on developing documentation to capture what had happened in both schools. F2CC is the new umbrella organization for CHSF

Food Secure Canada - https://foodsecurecanada.org/

Alberta School Food "Community of Practice": composed of organizations across the province who are currently engaged in delivering school food. We have established monthly meetings. We are working together to share our experiences and best practices. We have grown to a loose association of over 90 agencies providing food to schools across the

province, and we are hoping to include even more school food organizations to make the Alberta Community of Practice completely comprehensive of all the groups involved in school food in our province.

Apple Schools: **https://appleschools.ca/** Apple Schools has placed a school food animator for 4 schools in Grande Prairie this year! Your AFM Chairperson is looking forward to dropping in to see it in operation as they get underway!

Alberta Environmental Education: **https://www.abcee.org/** Jenn Mireau joined Wanda and Laura Harrisson (Brown Bagging for Calgary Kids) this spring to present on the new National School Food program to the attendees at the Communities Choosewell Symposium in Calgary. The outcomes and input from this session are being used by the Alberta School Food Community of Practice to look for ways to give, (if I may be so bold as to suggest!), guidance on implementing the National School Food Program.

Alberta Human Ecological & Home Economics Association (AHEA): https://www.ahea.ab.ca/ Our main contact with this group is through Home Economics teacher, Jodie Kachkar. Currently we share grant opportunities with this teacher group, and keep them updated with regards to the roll-out of Federal funding for school food. In future, it would be great to begin to network with teachers more fully, to have their input from their perspective on how the funding is being used (or could be used).

National Farmers Union (Region 7 & Youth President): AFM is very happy to have connected with Adama Bundu, NFU Youth President, who is in Edmonton. Adama invited AFM to have an information table at a co-run event (with New Grocery Movement), “Seeds of Change Film Festival” held in Edmonton. It was a film festival featuring various farmers/producers who are running sustainable operations using environmentally friendly practices.

Lunchbox (Whitecourt): https://www.communitylunchbox.ca/ I am excited to have made this connection with a northern Alberta community organization that has been delivering lunches for schools for over a decade. This group, along with others in the province, who depend on fund-raising and volunteers largely to run their programs need our advocacy to turn their existing programs into sustainable and funded programs that are aligned with outcomes of the Federal National School Food program.

New Grocery Movement: https://newgrocerymovement.com/ (Edmonton group). Along with NFU, Becca MacLeod with the New Grocery Movement, hosted the “Seeds of Change Film Festival” this spring and invited AFM to have an information sharing table. It was a pleasure to visit with attendees and other booth presenters. Very informative and inspiring!

Community School Food Animator
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ_1wOO8ZAE

AFM has been working on this Community School Food Animator project since our School Food Matters Symposium in 2020.

We are happy to say that we discovered that Apple Schools does a program that is very similar to the F2School model. We are working with Apple Schools to bring the program to Grande Prairie and then to Peace River again.