ᓄᓇᕗᒻᒥ ᓂᕿᖅᑲᐃᓐᓇᑎᖕᓯᓂᖅᓴᖅ ᑲᑎᒪᔨᐊᖅᓂᖅᓴᖅ
NUNAVUT FOOD SECURITY COALITION
NUNAVUNMI NIQIKHAQAQNIKKUT KATIMAYIIT
COALITION SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE DU NUNAVUT

Nunavut Food Security Coalition 2016 Meeting Report

The Nunavut Food Security Coalition is a collaborative working group under the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction that brings together government departments, Inuit organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to look at how policies and programs can make food more accessible and affordable for Nunavummiut who find themselves in vulnerable situations. The Coalition was established in June 2012 and is co-chaired by the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. It provides leadership for the development and implementation of the Nunavut Food Security Strategy and Action Plan.

The Food Security Coalition held its 2016 annual face to face meeting in Igloolik on September 13-14th, 2016. This meeting had three main objectives:

1) Identify ways in which food can be made more affordable and accessible to low income Nunavummiut who find themselves in vulnerable situations.
2) Build on recommendations made in the March 2015 Nunavut Food Security Coalition research paper on the Nutrition North Canada Program.
3) Advance Nunavut Food Security Coalition 2014-16 Action Plan Item 2.4:
    a. Explore the factors that influence the cost, quality, and accessibility of food in Nunavut, and make policy and program recommendations.
    b. Conduct an analysis of Nunavut's market food chain, including food subsidy programs, to identify areas of potentially improved efficiency.
    c. Eliminate inefficiencies in the food supply chain through implementation of a food transportation management system.

The meeting brought together representatives from the federal Nutrition North Program Office, Northwest Company, Arctic Coops, Regional Wildlife Organizations, Inuit Organisations and the Government of Nunavut as well as community members and the cargo directors from Calm Air, First Air and Canadian North.

Bringing together partners from across sectors allows the Food Security Coalition to develop a broader understanding of the issue of food security in Nunavut. It brings critical issues to the forefront, empowers community organizations to inform policies and programs and encourages joint problem solving.

Context

Food insecurity in Nunavut is complex and connected to issues of availability, accessibility, quality and knowledge on how to obtain, store, prepare and consume food. Participants at the 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting emphasized the importance of designing food security programs with an understanding of the realities of hunger and poverty. Participants spoke of Nunavummiut experiencing food insecurity as having many reasons for making the food choices they make over and above price and nutrition considerations. Participants recounted stories of parents going hungry in order to ensure there is enough food for their children. Participants related the physical and mental health impact that the stress of food insecurity creates. As well as being a symptom of poverty, lack of access to healthy food options can perpetuate poverty. It is difficult to focus on learning, employment or hunting when you are hungry. Strong links were made by participants between food insecurity and negative health outcomes as well as increased interaction with the justice system.

Presentation Highlights:

The agenda for the 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting included presentations on the Nutrition North Canada Program, the country food industry in Nunavut, the 2016 Nunavut Food Price Survey, food supply chain economics, grocery management systems and the airline cargo management systems.

Federal Nutrition North Canada Program Office – Presentation

Representatives from the federal Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Nutrition North Canada Program office attended the 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting to present an overview of the Nutrition North Canada Program. This presentation focused on explaining how the Nutrition North subsidy is administered while highlighting the effect the program has had on food prices in Nunavut.

Regional Wildlife Organizations

Representatives of Nunavut's Regional Wildlife Organizations participated in a panel discussion on the challenges in accessing country food today and ways that we can support Nunavummiut who are hungry and find themselves in vulnerable situations to access country food. The difficulty for many Nunavummiut in accessing country food due to the high price of gas and other hunting necessities in Nunavut was emphasized.

It was noted that HTOs are well placed to support the preservation of traditional sharing networks and increased access to country food for those in need, particularly single parents, expectant mothers, Elders and widowers. Representatives also spoke of the challenges hunters face in having to work full time to pay for the costs of living and thus only being able to hunt on a part time basis. They also recounted the challenges of balancing access to country food with wildlife conservation efforts, particularly with regards to caribou quotas, and noted they were trying to come up with local management solutions. The lack of consensus on the transportation of country food between communities, particularly caribou, was noted. Suggestions from this discussion included increasing funding for Hunters and Trappers Organizations and Hunter Support programs, increasing investment in community feasts, and including more support for traditional harvesting activities in schools which has the added benefit of improving the transfer of traditional knowledge.

2016 Nunavut Food Price Survey

The results of the 2016 Nunavut Food Price Survey, which was conducted in March 2016, were presented by the Nunavut Bureau of Statistics at the 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting. This presentation provided an overview of the food price survey design, data collection and analysis steps and survey challenges. The presentation outlined price data collected for 24 food items per community, provided a comparison of Nunavut and Canadian food price averages and provided a comparison of annual food price averages from 2013-2016. Future work that may be possible was discussed, including changes to the list of food items included in the survey and conducting research on the reasons behind changes in food price data from year to year and on the reasons for differences between communities. An interest in collecting price data quarterly was expressed.

Food Supply Chain Economics

The Nunavut Food Security Coalition invited economist Al Phillips to present on the topic of Food Supply Chain Economics in order to help advance work on two actions under the 2014-2016 Nunavut Food Security Action Plan:

a. Explore the factors that influence the cost, quality, and accessibility of food in Nunavut, and make policy and program recommendations.

b. Conduct an analysis of Nunavut's market food chain, including food subsidy programs, to identify areas of potentially improved efficiency.

This presentation explained what is a supply chain and provided an overview of the factors that impact a supply chain. The presentation framed a discussion on the costs of different transportation methods (truck, train, boat and plane) and highlighted factors particular to a northern food supply chain, notably limited transportation methods, high operating costs and thin markets. An overview of economics and market distortions was provided. The presentation also focused on explaining monopolies and duopolies and how subsidies and market regulation can be used to help provide oversight and help to ensure specific market outcomes are achieved (such as distribution and accessibility of food). The food supply chain economist noted that subsidy programs require constant monitoring and adjustment to changes in the market.

Grocery Retailers, Food Supply Chain and Transportation Management Systems

The Northwest Company and Arctic Cooperatives were invited to provide presentations on food supply chain and transportation management systems. The Northwest Company updated the Coalition on its progress in implementing its Transportation Management System and provided a comparison major operating costs between the Iqaluit Northmart store and a Winnipeg Giant Tiger store to highlight the higher operating costs of the north: transportation – $4.2 million compared to $154 thousand; heat and electricity costs: $1.1 million compared to $43 thousand; average labour costs for one refrigeration repair: six thousand compared to five hundred; and inventory management - $6 million compared to $435 thousand. The Arctic Cooperatives provided a comparative analysis of operating costs and sales across three different sample market sizes, noting costs amounted to 41% of sales in a small market compared to only 19% in a larger market. Participants discussed the impact of product variety on price, the need for stronger partnerships between airlines, local contractors and grocery retailers and the relationship, the possibility of sealift and financing programs for low income families and accountability mechanisms between head office and local managers.

Northern Airlines, Transportation Management Systems

The cargo directors from Nunavut's three air carriers (Calm Air, First Air and Canadian North) were invited to present on their role in the food transportation system and to provide an overview of challenges that contribute to the high costs of food transportation. Policies such as free or reduced cost for transporting country food were highlighted. The airline companies highlighted efforts undertaken to mitigate factors that increase operating costs, noting for example, scheduling efforts, inventory tracking systems, contingency plans, staff training, temperature tags, pallet tuques, temperature

guns and fleet investments. The Airlines also committed to sharing their country food shipment data. Participants discussed the procurement process for jet fuel, the impact on costs of ownership of airports and runways, Nav Canada surcharges and warehousing needs.

Five Years In – An Evaluation Of Nutrition North Canada – Tracy Galloway

Tracy Galloway from the University of Toronto attended the 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting to present her research evaluating the Nutrition North Canada program. Some points highlighted by her research included noting the kg of food shipped per capita, that nothing in the subsidy program prevents food prices from being raised in communities with higher average incomes and that foods not included in the Revised Northern Food Basket are not being monitored.

Meeting summary:

The 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting focused on four main categories of discussion: Country Food, Supply Chain Management, the Nutrition North Program, and other solutions for making food more affordable.

Country Food

Meeting attendees agreed that many Nunavummiut consider country food to be the preferred and most nutritious source of food. Improving access to traditional foods not only improves food security outcomes but also plays a critical role in Inuit culture, and contributes to strong, sustainable, self-reliant communities. Below are some specific points from the meetings:

1. Attendees agreed that there should be increased support for Hunter and Trapper organizations. Meeting participants felt that strengthening hunter support programs and supporting children to learn how to hunt would have a beneficial impact on food security.
2. Coalition members discussed country food being subsidized at a similar rate to the subsidies provided to store-bought food under the federal Nutrition North Canada program.
3. Some participants felt that improved mechanisms should be developed to allow country food to be sold in stores more easily.
4. Participants called for increased funding for community freezers.

The Nutrition North Canada Program

Suggestions and ideas to improve the Nutrition North Canada subsidy program were a main focus of the meeting in the context of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's current mandate to review the program.

In terms of changing how the Nutrition North program functions, participants discussed three possible levers with which to effect change: food item eligibility, community eligibility and subsidy rates. Members discussed that, within the context of the current Nutrition North Canada Program budget, any changes to the list of items that are subsidized or to the subsidy rates per community would involve trade-offs – one could not be raised without another being lowered.

Coalition members agreed that under the current program design, the Nutrition North Canada Program budget allocated to Nunavut is insufficient for there to be a meaningful impact in lowering the price of food to an affordable price point.

Recommendations for change that were raised included:

1. Certain goods should receive higher levels of subsidy:
    a. Flour and other baking goods, which are traditionally important to the diet of Nunavummiut but are currently subsidized at the lower level.
    b. A higher subsidy level should be created for infant formula and other early childhood necessities.
    c. Subsidies for basic hygiene items (toothpaste/dish soap etc.) should be increased.

    Coalition members did not review and identify specific items that could be removed from the list of currently subsidized food items. The idea that each community could develop a customized list was suggested.

2. Members called for more funding to be allocated to the program.

3. Members called for the program funding to be indexed to inflation. The annual 5% budget escalator of the Nutrition North Canada Program is insufficient to cover both growing consumption and inflation, meaning the program's impact is gradually reducing.

4. Locally harvested country food should receive equal treatment to imported store sold meat in terms of federal support. The Nutrition North Canada Program should subsidize the cost of locally harvested food and increase the proportion of the program budget that targets country food.

5. Sealift is the main system for bulk purchase but is not subsidized through the Nutrition North Program. The price point of shelf stable items could be significantly reduced. Also, refrigerated sealift for frozen products would, for example, be a more effective food supply system for High Arctic communities where transportation logistics and weather delays often lead to spoilage of food shipped by air. The NNC program should not restrict a food importer to air transport where a combination of marine transport and reliable warehouse storage could lead to better food security outcomes. Coalition members recommended expanding the subsidy to sealift, noting that this would also incentivize an increase in warehouse and community freezer capacity and technology.

6. A common theme was the idea that the subsidy should to be based on the needs of Nunavummiut, rather than the cost of shipping.

7. Participants agreed that, regardless of the benefits of possible changes to the Nutrition North subsidy program, the program was insufficient on its own to comprehensively address food security issues in the north. Members called for more funding to implement additional food security programs.

8. Some participants remained sceptical about whether subsidies were being fully passed on to the consumer. Recommendations included improved monitoring mechanisms, including monitoring whether reduced prices on subsidized goods are being recouped with increased prices on goods that are not currently monitored.

9. Members noted differences between communities in the extent of price changes over time since the Nutrition North program came into effect in 2011. Suggestions were made that the subsidy level of each community should in some way be adjusted over time to reflect changes in the economic conditions of each community.

10. Currently the Nutrition North Canada Program subsidy is applied to each kilogram of eligible food that is shipped, without consideration for whether the food is consumed or whether the product is spoiled en route to its destination. This mechanism means that some of the program funds are being wasted and are not benefiting consumers. Instead, if these ‘wasted’ program funds due to food spoilage and non-consumption could be redirected towards foods that are

more weather resistant or in good condition and actually purchased and consumed by Nunavummiut, there would be a greater impact in reducing the overall price of food. Participants recommended that the Nutrition North Canada Program be redesigned so that incentives are created to reduce and or avoid food spoilage.

11. Products with long shelf lives are still much more expensive in Nunavut. Representatives of retailers have explained that this is caused by stores running out of certain products before next year's sealift can arrive. Investment in warehouse capacity could help reduce this issue by enabling retailers to store a greater supply each year.

Attached as appendix B at the bottom of this document is the Nunavut Food Security Coalition's March 2015 submission to the Nutrition North Canada Program Advisory Board, outlining recommendations on how to improve the Nutrition North Canada Program.

Supply Chain inefficiencies and Infrastructure Challenges

Meeting participants noted the following supply chain inefficiencies and infrastructure challenges

1. Damage from landing on poor quality/gravel runways was flagged by airlines as one of their significant cost factors. Furthermore, the short length of some runways limits the types of planes that can land, or limits the weight planes can safely carry, thereby limiting the ability of airlines to use cheaper transportation options. Lack of marine infrastructure (eg. deep sea ports) in communities also affects the cost of bringing goods into the Territory.
2. Airlines spoke about the impact of reducing delays and cancellations that improved airport technology could have (ILS systems/IFR systems).
3. Coalition members discussed the extent to which airport ownership and airport user fees had an impact on food prices. It was recommended that the Coalition engage Nav Canada on the potential impact reduced or eliminated Nav Canada fees on food cargo shipments might have on food prices.
4. Airline fuel and refrigeration electricity costs were noted as some of the major operating costs of the food supply chain.

5. Keeping produce from freezing and reducing spoilage are significant challenges in the food transportation system. Airlines spoke of innovative tools they use such as 'cargo tuques and temperature guns. Members emphasized the need for a stronger focus on the quality and freshness of product at tender. They also discussed the need to better coordinate the movement of goods between the airport, local contractors and the store as a way to reduce spoilage.
6. Coalition members advocated for increased supports for community freezers and warehouse capacity to reduce reliance on resupply flights and to create options for locals in storing food.
7. Coalition members noted the need for employers to be able to support employees in being successful at work and in managing life and family challenges. The costs of operating airlines and retailers are impacted significantly by employee absences and employers need tools to help support their employees.
8. Inconsistent cargo volumes and one way cargo traffic
9. Having to bring airplane and refrigeration mechanics from the south as there is no local labour force in these fields.

Other solutions for making food more affordable and accessible to vulnerable and low income Nunavummiut

As part of the 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting agenda, participants also discussed broader solutions to food insecurity. Ideas brought forth included exploring tax mechanisms, investing in marine infrastructure, investing in warehouses and community freezers, investing in food processing plants, developing low income financing and sealift programs, increasing discounts for seniors and elders who often support larger extended families, increase the availability of coupons. It was also noted that proposed reforms to the Income Assistance Program were tabled in the Legislative Assembly in June 2016.

Recommended Research

At the 2016 Nunavut Food Security Coalition meeting the Nunavut Food Security Coalition identified research that should be explored to expand the options and information that is available to decision makers in the territory:

- Food price regulations
- Priority cargo regulations
- Greenland State stores – would smaller markets be better served by a crown corporation than a private enterprise?
- What are the health care and justice cost impacts of food insecurity?
- What is the frequency of food shortages/missing products in communities?
- Explore industry standards and social research on profit margins
- Nunavik 'bulk buying' community based programs and country food centre
- Research on the reasons behind changes in food price data from year to year and on the reasons for differences between communities
- Explore feasibility and potential impact of recycling as a return cargo option.

Igloolik Community Engagement

On September 13th, 2016, the Nunavut Food Security Coalition hosted a community meeting to discuss food insecurity. The Nunavut Development Corporation, Kivalliq Arctic Foods and the Igloolik Arctic Cooperative donated and transported country food for this community event. Over 75 members of the community turned out to provide their perspective and ideas. Below are a few observations from the community meeting:

1) Community members clearly and strongly communicated that store-bought food is too expensive. They also expressed concerns with the quality and freshness of produce.

2) It was clear that information about the Nutrition North program is lacking and that the program is not having a meaningful impact on the lives of those who are experiencing food insecurity.

3) Community members communicated that addressing hunger should be the primary goal of programs. They called on the Food Security Coalition to find more ways to support those most in need. Participants suggested that programs designed to feed school children make a big difference in health and education outcomes in their community. They also spoke about recipe books as a valuable tool in supporting Nunavummiut to learn how to cook nutritious and filling meals.

4) Nunavummiut tend not to trust that the Nutrition North subsidy is being passed on to consumers by retailers. More needs to be done to assure Nunavummiut that they are benefiting from the Nutrition North program.

5) A very common point brought up at this community meeting was that the Nutrition North subsidy levels should be higher on certain items. Flour was the most commonly suggested item, but hygiene products, early childhood materials, and cookware were also suggested.

6) Community members discussed what is considered to be nutritious food, noting the nutritious value of country food and noting children are consuming too much junk food. There was a call for education initiatives focused on the fact that not all store bought food is nutritious. There was also a call for more programs to ensure that country food is plentiful and affordable in communities. Subsidies on gasoline and bullets and hiring hunters to supply country food to vulnerable populations were suggested by the community as a way to support the consumption of country food in Nunavut.

AGENDA
September 13-14, 2016
Igloolik, Nunavut
Old Community Hall

Meeting Objectives:

1. **Identify ways in which food can be made more affordable and accessible to vulnerable and low income Nunavummiut.**
2. **Build on recommendations made in the March 2015 Nunavut Food Security Coalition research paper on the Nutrition North Canada Program.**
3. **Action Item 2.4**
    1. Explore the factors that influence the cost, quality, and accessibility of food in Nunavut, and make policy and program recommendations.
    2. Conduct an analysis of Nunavut's market food chain, including food subsidy programs, to identify areas of potentially improved efficiency.
    3. Eliminate inefficiencies in the food supply chain through implementation of a food transportation management system.

Tuesday, September 13, 2016

11:30 am – 12:00pm	**ARRIVAL** (lunch provided)
12:00 pm – 12:15 pm	**Opening Prayer** **Welcome from the NFSC Co-Chairs** *Kiah Hachey, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.* *Lindsay Turner, Department of Family Services*
12:15 pm – 12:30 pm	**Introductions** • What perspective/role do you bring to the meeting? • What do you hope to contribute or get from the meeting?
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	**Federal Nutrition North Canada Program Office –** Presentation and Q&A
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	**Regional Wildlife Organizations - Country Food -** Panel Discussion and Q&A
2:30pm -2:45 pm	Break
2:45 pm-3:45 pm	**Break out Groups – Country Food** • What roles do each partner play in the country food system? • How can we ensure that Nunavummiut who are most vulnerable to food insecurity are able to access country food? • How can federal programs, GN and NTI harvester support

	programs better support access to country foods? • Should and how can federal programs, GN and NTI harvester support programs support inter-community trade of country foods? • What factors influence dietary choices and preferences (country food vs store bought food)? • What economic development initiatives could increase access to country food?
Tuesday, September 13, 2016	
3:45pm -4:15pm	**2016 Nunavut Food Price Survey**
4:15 pm – 4:30 pm	Break
4:30 pm – 5:45 pm	**Food Supply Chain Economics - ** Al Phillips
5:45 pm - 6:00pm	Overview of the day and tomorrow
7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	**Community Public Meeting**

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

8:00 am – 8:30 am	**Arrival** (Continental breakfast provided)
8:30 am – 8:45 am	Summary of first day and public meeting
8:45: pm – 9:45 pm	Break out groups – Addressing hunger versus encouraging the consumption of healthy foods
9:45 am – 10:45 am	**Grocery Retailers, Food Supply Chain and Transportation Management Systems** – Panel Discussion and Q&A
10:45 am -11:00 am	Break
11:00 am -12:15 am	**Northern Airlines, Transportation Management Systems** - Panel Discussion and Q&A
12:15 pm -1:00 pm	**LUNCH**

Wednesday, September 14, 2016	
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Break out groups **Nutrition North Canada program** – recommendations: • What would you like the objective of a "food/basic hygiene" subsidy program to be? • Does the current range of subsidized foods meet family needs? • Is there a preference in food formats (frozen, fresh, dried/dehydrated)? • How could the program better support those with limited incomes? • How can the subsidy be targeted to support local economic development and locally produced foods? • How can the subsidy create incentives to choose the most economical shipment method? • Should an income measured monthly tax benefit approach, similar to the Canada Child Benefit be considered instead of a subsidy approach? • Should Nutrition North focus on increasing low income Nunavummiut's capacity to sealift/bulk buy instead of the current system? • How can the subsidy be targeted to create incentives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the food distribution system? • How can the administrative processes for businesses be simplified in accessing the NN program? • What data would you like to see the monitoring mechanism capture?
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Break out groups **Food Supply Chain/Food Transportation Management –** recommendations • What inefficiencies currently exist in the food supply chain? What solutions would help address them? • What are the factors that influence the cost, quality and accessibility of store bought food in Nunavut? • Could we bring the prices down if a smaller range of foods were imported (i.e. only bananas and apples and not cherries)? • Can the quality/freshness of produce be improved/can spoilage be reduced by importing only more resistant

	produce? • What sealift solutions to could lead to a decrease in food prices? • How can government programs encourage companies to choose the most efficient transportation method?
3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm -4:00 pm	Break out groups **Identify ways in which food can be made more affordable and accessible to vulnerable and low income Nunavummiut** • What specific policies or legislation could be considered? • What infrastructure investments would have the greatest impact on food prices? • What community economic development initiatives could assist with food security? • How can partners better coordinate to make food more affordable and accessible? • What research needs to be done to better understand the state of food insecurity in Nunavut? • What data could help inform our discussions? • Should and what kinds of investments should be made into local food production initiatives (greenhouse, arctic farming)? • What initiatives could make sealift and bulk buying a more feasible option for low income Nunavummiut?
4:00 pm – 4:30pm	**Tracy Galloway – University of Toronto** "Five years in: an evaluation of Nutrition North Canada"
4:30 pm – 4:45 pm	Nunavut Food Security Coalition updates
4:45pm – 5:00 pm	Wrap up and Thank yous!