Northern Healthy Foods Initiative: Towards Community Food Security and Northern Rural Development in Manitoba
Who are we?

Food Matters Manitoba works with youth, families and elders in 13 northern and remote First Nation Manitoba communities to:

- Increase healthy food access
- Create growing and food preserving programs
- Reclaim lost food skills
A food security crisis...

- 75% of households in Northern Manitoba communities experience food insecurity
- 8 times the rate of the rest of Canada

Limited access to healthy food caused by:

- High food prices
- Low incomes
- Lack of availability of healthy choices
- High cost of harvesting traditional foods
- Environmental contamination
Manitoba’s Reality for First Nation Children

- Childhood obesity rates have doubled in the past 5 years and type 2 diabetes and other health-related conditions are on the rise.
- As of December 2008, 164 new cases of children with type 2 diabetes were diagnosed.
- 99% of those children are Aboriginal.
- Diabetes is so prevalent, kids see it as a normal part of life.
First Nations People in Manitoba have the highest diabetes rates in Canada

Diabetes by age group: First Nations, 1991

% with diabetes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>% with diabetes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>1*</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2*</td>
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<td>25-29</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>30-39</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>40-49</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>50-64</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>65+</td>
<td>23</td>
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Sustainable Livelihoods for Food and Nutrition Security: Assets

- **Financial**: Adequate money for food & food-related infrastructure, Stable income
- **Natural**: Safe, clean water & soil, Genetic diversity, Supportive climate, Sustainable food supply (wild and domestic)
- **Physical**: Housing, Kitchen, Food markets, Traditional land-based foods, Furniture, Information & education, Adequate food markets (e.g., grocery/restaurants/school/work)
- **Social**: Relationship with family/others who have cultural food knowledge, Support from household members with domestic food work, Positive food norms, expectations and traditions, Shared meals (family/others), Time
- **Human**: Knowledge & Skills: Nutrition, Menu planning, Food purchasing, Food storage, Food preparation, Self-efficacy

- Motivation & Interest: Value healthy eating and domestic food work

Slater, J & Yeudall, F (2012)
Manitoba Northern Healthy Foods Initiative

- Over 80 Northern Manitoba communities
- Nearly 1000 projects and programs from gardens to goats to Geodesic
- 170,000 lbs of vegetables
- 500 individual and community freezers
- Over 50 greenhouses
Community Development
people at the center of finding solutions
Community Development
people at the center of finding solutions

- Partnering with local government, community members, and local food champions
- Holistic projects with broad impact
- Listening to & learning from northern people
Traditional Food Projects
restoring indigenous knowledge
Northern Growing
more than a garden
Northern Growing
more than a garden
Northern Growing
more than a garden

- Raised beds & container gardening
- Geodesic domes & greenhouses
- Community orchards and fruit patches
- Small scale low tech greenhouses serve as an opportunity for training and community capacity building
Northern Cooking
rediscovering traditional land-based food practices & food literacy
Northern Cooking
rediscovering traditional land-based food practices & food literacy

Traditional food fusion cooking
- Northern Sushi and Thai moose meat skewers
Northern Poultry
feeding the people...from the labour of our hands
Cross Lake Chicken Club

- In 2012, 7 families raised 350 chickens
- In 2013, 9 families raised 425 chickens
- Families build chicken coops, learn to raise chickens, and use the poultry and eggs to sustain their families
- Improved mental & physical health
Horticulture Therapy
healing through plants, gardens, and the natural landscape
Horticulture Therapy
Shamattawa First Nation

- High incidence of individuals suffering addictions & subsequent prevalence of FASD
- Improve cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing
- Planting and growing, nature crafts, making salves and lip balms from plant materials
Traditional Foods
rediscovering and reclaiming
Traditional, Healthy Foods from our Land

Meet the animals from your land and learn how they will keep your bodies healthy:

- **Niska**
  - Eating too much fat is not too good for your body and we're low in fat!
- **Moosa**
  - We are important for your muscles; We will make you grow strong!
- **Atik**
  - We are full of protein!
- **Kinesew**
  - Choose more fish; We're healthy!

It's important to eat wild meat because you get sick less.

We taste Delicious!

Illustrations by Suki Beatty, Fox Lake Cree Nation Working Committee
Challenges

- Short growing season
- Soil quality
- Turnover of community champions
- Community crises
- Youth vandalism
- Animal interference
- Access to water taps
- Traditional foods in a modern economy
- Environmental contaminants
- Limited funding relative to demand
Opportunities

- Community Interest
- Micro Economic Development
- Collective vs Individual benefit
- Northern Seed Selection
- Northern Horticulture and bedding plants
- Northern Poultry
- Youth Interest
- Cultural Skill Reclaiming
- Diverse Partnerships
- Time and relationships
How to Find FMM:

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