

Food Charter

for United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and Lanark County

foodcore

Leeds . Grenville . Lanark

Introduction

Food provides daily sustenance and contributes to our physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. It connects families, cultures and communities. In 2022, [one in nine people in Canada worked in the agri-food system](#), and all of us eat! Whether you are a grower, producer, cook or eater, you are part of the food system. This Food Charter paints an aspirational picture of our food system in which all people, relationships, economic and ecological systems in Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark Counties can flourish.

Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge that FoodcoreLGL acts on the unceded Algonquin territory and homelands of the Kanien'kehá:ke of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Indigenous peoples are the holders of inherent rights and stewards of these lands and continue to maintain responsibility to ensure its health and integrity for future generations. We acknowledge that Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous Nations live in Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark communities.

Equity in the Food System

We recognize that systemic inequities disadvantage some more than others in accessing food. FoodcoreLGL is committed to finding ways to support the food sovereignty of diverse communities and to challenge systems of oppression that perpetuate the current inequities in our food system.

Current Context

We find ourselves at an intersection of many social, environmental and economic crises. [14.9% of people living in Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark reported experiencing food insecurity from 2019 - 2021](#). Farmers depend on off-farm work and face rising production costs. Food costs are growing at a rate far outpacing household income. Our soil and water quality are degrading, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. [According to the United Nations](#), one third of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions are linked to food. We must address the growing climate crisis by radically reducing our use of fossil fuels, synthetic fertilizers, plastics and other toxins polluting our air, land and water.

While daunting, these crises do provide opportunities for building more connected, healthier communities. Our region benefits from productive agricultural lands, sufficient water resources and diverse agricultural traditions. There is growing public interest in knowing where our food comes from and how it is produced. Food production is diversifying with new farms, community gardens, and food businesses taking root.

Our Vision

Food producers, eaters, community organizations, businesses, institutions, and local governments work together to create a future where...

The right to food is realized in our communities:

- Everyone can access and afford sufficient, safe, nutritious, and personally-acceptable food.
- A variety of foods are available wherever people live, work, learn, and play.
- Everyone has the opportunity to buy, grow, or obtain nourishing foods in rural and urban settings.

Our farmers, growers, producers, processors and retailers are thriving:

- Farmers, growers, producers and all food workers have adequate incomes, viable livelihoods and safe work environments.
- Agricultural land and natural ecosystems are valued, protected, and enhanced.
- Farmers readily find markets for their products locally, domestically and internationally.
- The production, processing, storage and distribution of locally-produced and seasonal foods are prioritized.
- Farmers and future farmers have access to land, education, mentoring, training, and equipment.
- Farmers are recognized as active partners in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and are supported in practising or transitioning towards [regenerative agriculture](#).

Our communities have high food literacy:

- People have the confidence and necessary knowledge and skills to prepare a variety of foods.
- The community understands the connections between food choices, our environment, and health.
- [Food literacy](#) opportunities are supported within the community for all ages to learn how to grow, purchase, cook, and preserve food.

Our natural environment is thriving:

- Ecosystems and biodiversity are highly valued for their essential role in human health and wellbeing, for our food system and beyond.
- Surface and underground water resources are understood to be a precious, limited resource, are accessible, protected, clean and free of pollution. .
- Regenerative agriculture practices are used, supported and promoted in order to protect and enhance our ecosystem.
- Consumers have reliable information about the climate and other environmental impacts of their food choices.
- Food is not wasted. Greenhouse gas emissions from wasted food are eliminated. Alternatives including redistribution, animal feed and composting are in place to deal with surplus food.

Our communities are resilient:

- Food producers, eaters, community organizations, businesses, institutions and local governments work together to create a food system that promotes community health and resilience.
- Diverse foods and agricultural products are produced, processed, stored and consumed locally, thereby creating jobs, stimulating the local economy and reducing risks to our food supply.

Food and farming are celebrated:

- Community members come together to grow, cook, share, and enjoy food.
- We celebrate the diverse historical, cultural, and spiritual ways that food is important to our communities

I/we endorse the Food Charter for United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and Lanark County

(Individual or Organization - will appear on foodcoregl.ca)

(Phone and email - will be confidential)

For more information or to endorse - www.foodcoregl.ca, foodcoregl@gmail.com or 1-800-660-5853 and ask for "Foodcore"