

Government of Canada investment brings nutritious surplus food to vulnerable Canadians

From: [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#)

News release

August 13, 2020 St. Hyacinthe, Quebec – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, was at Nutri Group Head office, in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, today to announce details of the first-ever federal government program that will provide millions of pounds of quality, nutritious, surplus food to Canada's most vulnerable populations.

The innovative Surplus Food Rescue Program is a \$50-million federal initiative designed to address urgent, high volume, highly perishable surplus products falling under fruit, vegetables, meat and fish and seafood. These surpluses were created because the COVID-19 pandemic largely shut down the restaurant and hospitality industry, leaving many producers without a key market for their food commodities.

The Program awarded contributions to eight organizations that leverage existing food redistribution and recovery networks and agencies, who will bring the food to every region in the country. Partners, which include leading not-for-profits Food Banks Canada and Second Harvest, and La Table des Chefs, will redistribute products such as potatoes, walleye, chicken, turkey, eggs, and more. In total, the program will redistribute approximately 12 million kilograms of surplus food to more food insecure families that would otherwise have been wasted.

For over 30 years, Nutri-Group and its partner producers have been providing consumers in Canada with high-quality sustainable eggs, while helping farmers build stronger businesses and rural communities. Through the Surplus Food Rescue Program, Nutri Group will be providing Food Banks Canada and Second Harvest more than 1 million dozen eggs at cost to ensure Canadians continue to receive fresh, nutritious food during the pandemic. The eggs will be redistributed to many food banks and local food organizations across Canada, notably across the network of moissons in Quebec.

The significant disruptions to Canada's restaurant and hospitality industry caused by COVID-19 has left many producers with surplus food and no way to get it onto the plates of Canadians. The eight partnerships announced which involve over 100 different organizations will help farmers meet the needs of vulnerable Canadians and recover the cost of their efforts.

The funding provided under the Program is ensuring producers and food processors like Nutri Group are fairly compensated for their work at the cost of production, while growing relationships with community food providers and supporting efforts to reduce food waste.

Quotes

"This is a win-win. Not only are we helping producers who cannot sell their goods to restaurants, but we are also aiding Canadians that have had to seek help from food banks. These eight impressive partnerships between food businesses and not-for-profit organizations, target those food commodities that had significant and urgent surpluses, making a difference both at the level of the producer and the food bank, from coast-to-coast-to-coast."

- The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

“The women and men of Canada’s fish and seafood industry are working hard throughout this pandemic to keep our economy stable and our food supply chain strong. This program will help ensure that none of their effort goes to waste, as we redirect surplus fish and seafood to the Canadians who need it most. By working across sectors to build partnerships, we’re creating a mutually beneficial system that meets two urgent needs at once.”

- The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

“We are very grateful for this investment by the federal government. It leverages the deep supply chain expertise and knowledge the food banking network has, thereby helping those in Canada experiencing food insecurity in the most efficient manner. We are thankful for the opportunity to build deeper partnerships within the agri-food system as well as helping ensure that highly nutritious, available food feeds people in need and that these resources are stewarded responsibly.”

- Chris Hatch, CEO, Foods Banks Canada

“The pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges across the entire food supply chain as well as for Canadians struggling with food access. Funding from the Surplus Food Rescue Program will have positive environmental, economic and social impact by diverting healthy surplus food to communities, instead of becoming landfill waste. As an organization with the dual mission of ‘no waste, no hunger,’ Second Harvest is proud to participate in this integrated response to meet the needs of the agri-food sector and vulnerable Canadians.”

- Lori Nikkel, CEO, Second Harvest

“As a producer-owned company with a presence across the country, we are committed to making eggs available to all Canadian families, the production of which meets the highest standards of quality and animal welfare. The Nutri Group feels challenged in the present context where more families are using food banks and these organizations are struggling to meet demand. As the implementation of this assistance program begins, we would like to salute the measures taken by the federal government, which proposes promising solutions to meet the needs expressed by vulnerable families and to resolve various issues raised within our poultry industry.”

- Serge Lefebvre, President of Nutri Group and egg producer in Montérégie, Québec