House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** Food Secure Canada

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Children, youth and families

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Allocate $200 million annually to implement a national school nutrition program that would provide fresh, healthy snacks to elementary and high school students daily. For the one-third of students who go to school hungry or poorly nourished, this program would improve their health, their well-being and their ability to succeed in school.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$100 million -$499.9 million

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Applying a five-cent-per-litre tax on sugary soft drinks and on energy drinks is an option that would increase general federal revenues. However, funding for a school nutrition program is essential and must not depend on this tax being applied. If the tax is not introduced, resources must come from the federal budget.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

This recommendation would benefit all elementary and high school students across Canada.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

A national school nutrition program would provide all elementary and high school students with healthy and locally grown food that is minimally processed and packaged. Over the short term, the program would improve the students' health, help them learn better and increase high-school graduation rates. In the long run, the program would result in higher incomes, lower incidence of chronic disease and lower health-care costs. It would also mean more money in the pockets of local farmers supplying the foodstuffs served to the students.

Topic: Agriculture, food and fisheries

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Support funding for initiatives aimed at facilitating access for new and young farmers to productive land and farm equipment and machinery (establishment of a family investment fund, development and implementation of technical resources, etc.); provide for tax incentives to facilitate the succession and transfer of farms to young farmers; and make it easier for those farmers wishing to retire. The aim of this recommendation is to increase the number of farmers in Canada and develop sustainable agriculture.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$500 million-$999.9 million

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

This recommendation could be funded through the Growing Forward 2 program as part of the federal budget.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

This recommendation will directly benefit new farmers, established farmers and farmers wishing to retire across Canada. Canada's entire economy will benefit in the long run.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

The average age of Canada's farmers is 54, and 75% of today's farmers will be looking to sell or hand down their farms over the next 10 years, but do not have successors. Our recommendation would reverse the downward trend in the number of farmers observed over the past 10 years. This would raise farming income, create more jobs and contribute significantly to the growth of Canada's economy.

Topic: Aboriginal peoples

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Nutrition North Canada's current budget of $54 million is inadequate. It has to be increased to $100 million annually to strengthen support for food security in northern communities. This would greatly reduce the proportion of children facing food insecurity in the North, which currently stands at 56%.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$100 million -$499.9 million

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Our recommendation would be funded through the federal budget.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Residents in every northern community, including remote communities, would benefit from our recommendation.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Aboriginals' after-tax income is $16,069, or almost $9,000 less than the national average. However, food costs are significantly higher in northern communities. An increase in funding for Nutrition North Canada and more efficient use of this funding would reduce the cost of food, increase the buying power of Aboriginal populations and thus improve their quality of life.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

Canada urgently needs a national food policy. Close to two and a half million Canadians are food insecure, farmers and fishers are going out of business, our natural environment is being pushed to the limit, a quarter of Canadians are considered obese, and we are the only G8 country without a nationally funded school nutrition program. The status quo is no longer an option.

However, until a national food policy is developed, there are things we can do now to eradicate hunger, produce healthy, sustainable food and have a sustainable food system.

In that regard, Food Secure Canada has made some very relevant recommendations in a position paper entitled People's Food Policy, which was developed following a consultation of more than 3,500 Canadians. Key elements include the following:

- Ensuring that food is eaten as close as possible to where it is produced (domestic/regional purchasing policies for institutions and large food retailers, community-supported agriculture, local farmers' markets, etc.);
- Supporting food providers in a widespread shift to ecological production in both urban and rural settings (organic agriculture, community-managed fisheries, indigenous food systems, etc.), including policies for the entry of new farmers into agriculture;
- Enacting a strong federal poverty elimination and prevention program, with measurable targets and timelines, to ensure Canadians can better afford healthy food;
- Creating a nationally funded Children and Food strategy (including school nutrition programs, school gardens and food literacy programs) to ensure that all children at all times have access to the food required for healthy lives; and
- Ensuring that the public, especially the most marginalized, are actively involved in decisions that affect the food system.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided