

# Building Food Security in Nova Scotia: An Opportunity for Leadership

Standing Committee on Community Services

June 7, 2011

Dr. Patty Williams, Debbie Smith, Karen Leblanc, Lynn Langille and Cynthia Watt  
on behalf of the NS Participatory Food Costing Project



**The Nova Scotia  
Participatory  
Food Costing Project**



Community University  
Research Alliance  
**Activating Change Together  
for Community Food Security**

# Presenters

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# Outline



- Changing context of work
- Determinants of food security
- Introduction to participatory food costing
- What have we learned?
- The Ripple Effect . . . A Roadmap for Change to Build Food Security in NS
- Questions / Discussion

# People's Food Policy Project

Creating food policy from the ground up

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What happens when 3500 people talk food?

Take Action! Sign the pledge!

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### Canada needs food policy:

CBC News Posted: Apr 18, 2011 8:20 PM ET | Last Updated: Apr 18, 2011 8:20 PM ET

Canada has to develop a national food policy to deal with poverty and other food security issues, a group of experts and interest groups said Monday.

The People's Food Policy project spoke to 3,500 people over the country and put together a report looking at how Canada can ensure adequate food for the country.

The report was put together by Food Secure Canada and the Social Justice Group. Food Secure Canada represents groups such as Food Banks Canada, the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Dietitians of Canada.

The group recommends eating locally produced food, supporting local producers and helping new producers get into the market, a national anti-poverty plan and a nationally funded children and food plan to teach kids about nutrition.

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### Food power to the people

JESSICA LEEDER — GLOBAL FOOD REPORTER  
 GLOBAL FOOD REPORTER— From Monday's Globe and Mail  
 Published Sunday, Apr. 17, 2011 9:18PM EDT  
 Last updated Monday, Apr. 18, 2011 6:04AM EDT

10 comments

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The food movement has spoken.

Thirty years after a cross-country team of Canadian food advocates first convened in an effort to develop a national food strategy, a revamped and expanded version of that group will today issue a 27-page roadmap to food system change.

The **People's Food Policy Project**, an umbrella group representing grassroots organizations and individuals from coast-to-coast, canvassed more than 3,500 Canadians over two years to come up with its findings. They are based on the concept of food sovereignty, the idea that people have a right to determine how their food is produced and when it comes



The Nova Scotia Participatory Food Costing Project



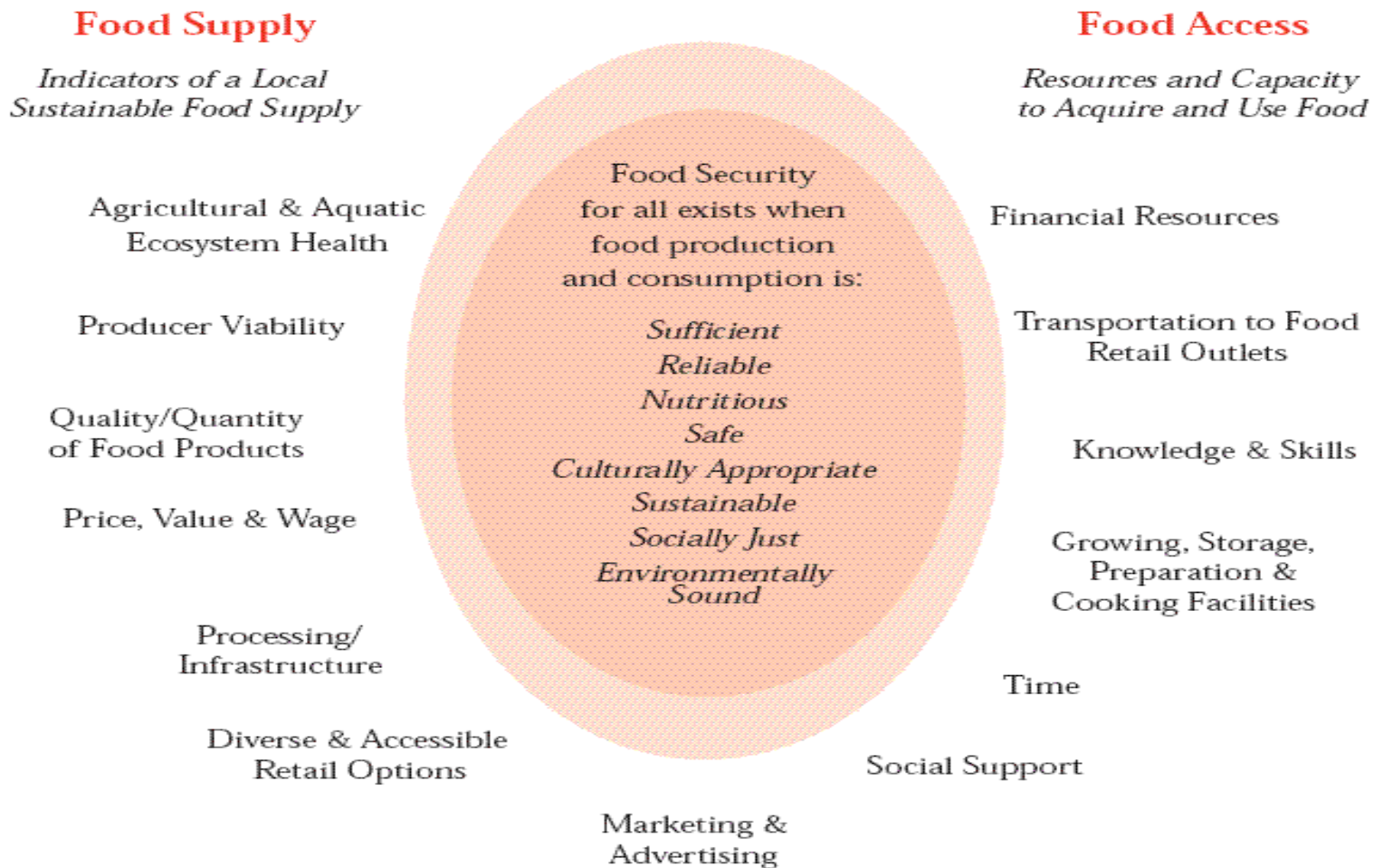
Community University Research Alliance  
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# Food Security

- When all people, at all times, have physical and economic **access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food** to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Food & Agriculture Organization, 1996, adopted by Canada 1998).
- A fundamental determinant of health and a pressing social issue



## Figure 1. Determinants of Food Security<sup>3</sup>

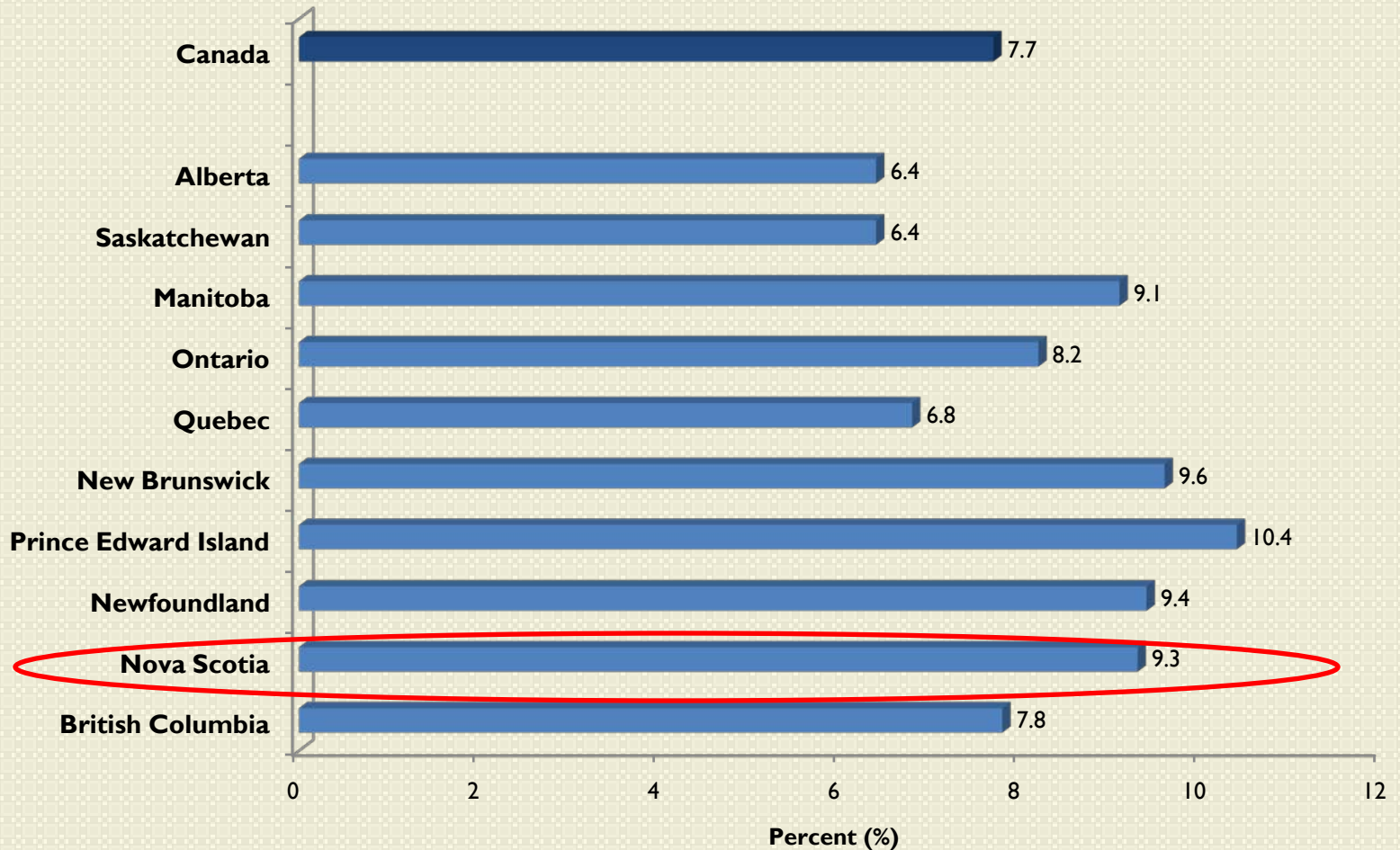


**Thought About Food?** Part 1—Understanding Food Security

(NS Participatory Food Security Projects Policy Working Group, 2006)

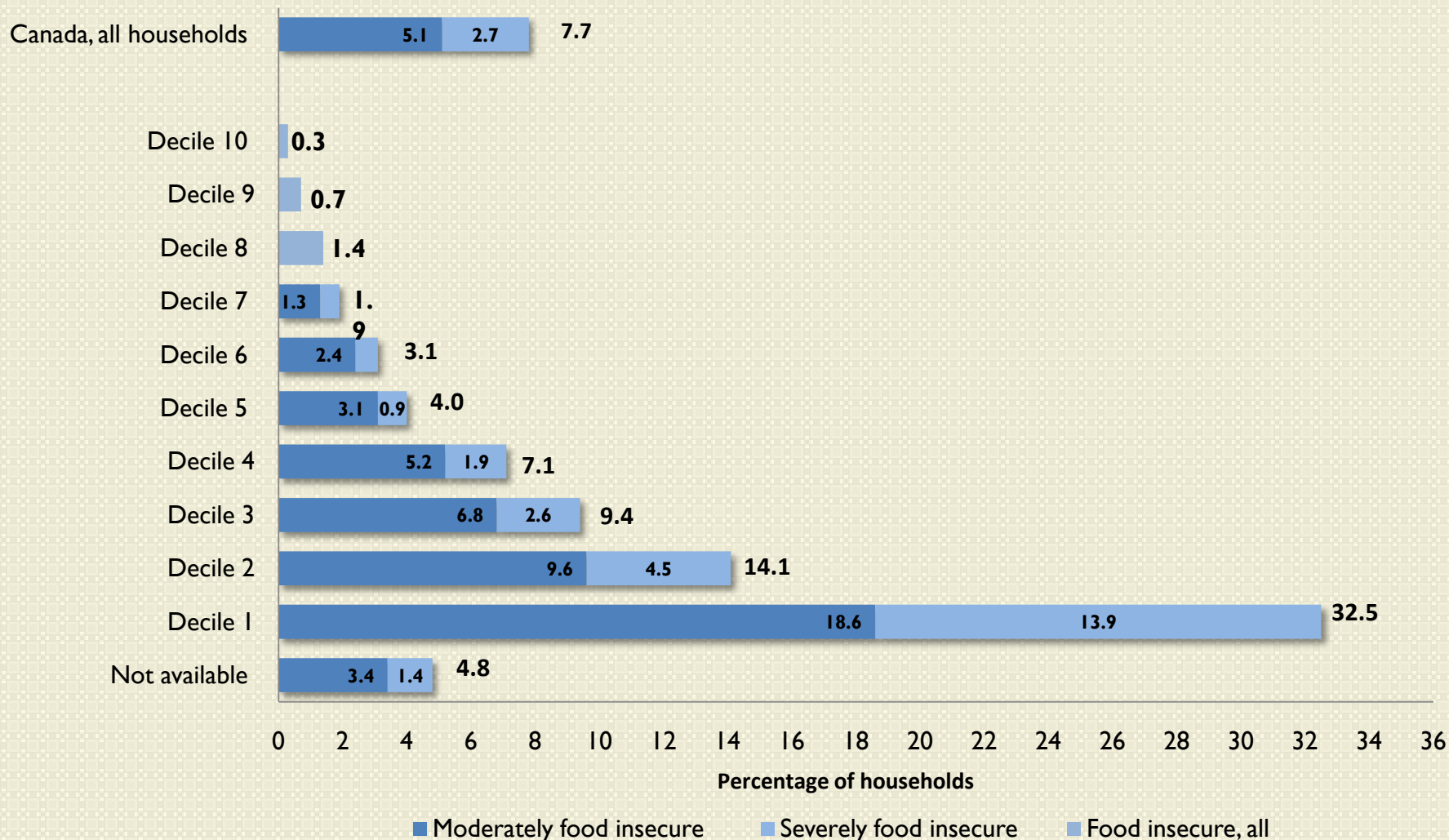
# Rates of Income-Related Food Insecurity in Canada

**Percentage of Households with Food Insecurity**  
Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2007-2008



# Rates of Food Insecurity in Canada by Income Distribution

Percentage of Households with Food Insecurity, CCHS, 2007-2008



Source: Health Canada, 2010 - Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2007-2008



# What's at Stake?



Food insecurity poses a significant risk to the health and inclusion of Nova Scotians and to the social & economic sustainability of the province.

- Burden on the health system
  - Obesity
  - Chronic disease
  - Mental health and social wellbeing
  - Maternal health and birth outcomes
  - Child development and school performance
  - Social exclusion

# Nova Scotia Participatory Food Costing

**Purpose:** To help build capacity food security for ALL Nova Scotians using participatory approaches to examine and address the accessibility of a nutritious diet:

- ✓ Engage
- ✓ Mobilize
- ✓ Collect and critically analyze evidence
- ✓ Share
- ✓ Inform



# Is a healthy diet affordable?



Reference Family of Four on Income Assistance in Nova Scotia\*

**Monthly Income:**

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Personal Allowance       | \$428.00         |
| Shelter Allowance        | 620.00           |
| Transportation Allow.    | 300.00           |
| Canada Child Tax Benefit | 640.24           |
| Childcare Allowance      | 132.07           |
| GST Tax Credit           | 63.00            |
| Special Needs            | 33.32            |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>\$2216.63</b> |

**Monthly Expenses:**

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|  Clothing etc.<br>\$159.79       |  Personal Care<br>\$94.54   |  Phone<br>\$29.60      |  Shelter<br>\$822.02                    |
|  Childcare<br>\$132.07           |  Transportation<br>\$462.31 |  Utilities<br>\$161.67 |  Household Cleaning Supplies<br>\$24.23 |
|  <b>Food Basket</b><br>\$770.65 |  |   | <b>Total</b><br><b>\$2,656.88</b>  |

**What's Left? (-440.25)**

\* June 2010

# Is a healthy diet affordable?



**Female Led Lone Parent Household  
Earning Minimum Wage With Three  
Children in Nova Scotia\***

| Monthly Income:            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Wages                      | \$1347.45        |
| Working Income Tax Benefit | 140.00           |
| Canada Child Tax Benefit   | 931.42           |
| GST Tax Credit             | 73.83            |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>\$2492.70</b> |

| Monthly Expenses:   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|  Clothing etc.<br>\$159.79       |  Personal Care<br>\$94.54   |  Shelter<br>\$822.02   |  Phone<br>\$29.60                       |
|  Childcare<br>\$526.10           |  Transportation<br>\$462.31 |  Utilities<br>\$161.67 |  Household Cleaning Supplies<br>\$24.23 |
|  <b>Food Basket</b><br>\$660.84 |  |   | <b>Total</b><br><b>\$2,941.10</b>  |

**What's Left? (-448.40)**

\* June 2010

# What have we learned?



- Many Nova Scotians cannot afford to eat a healthy diet
- Food insecurity contributes to social exclusion
- Food insecurity is associated with individual and household stress
- Food security includes sustainable food systems and transportation
- Improving food security is part of making life more affordable for individuals and families
- We need to 'debunk the myths' related to food security



# What have we learned?

- Need to work horizontally and vertically across sectors and governments
- Community supports are required... engagement and empowerment result
- Working together on all stages of the research helps build capacity to effect policy change, and ultimately contributes to efforts to build food Security in Nova Scotia



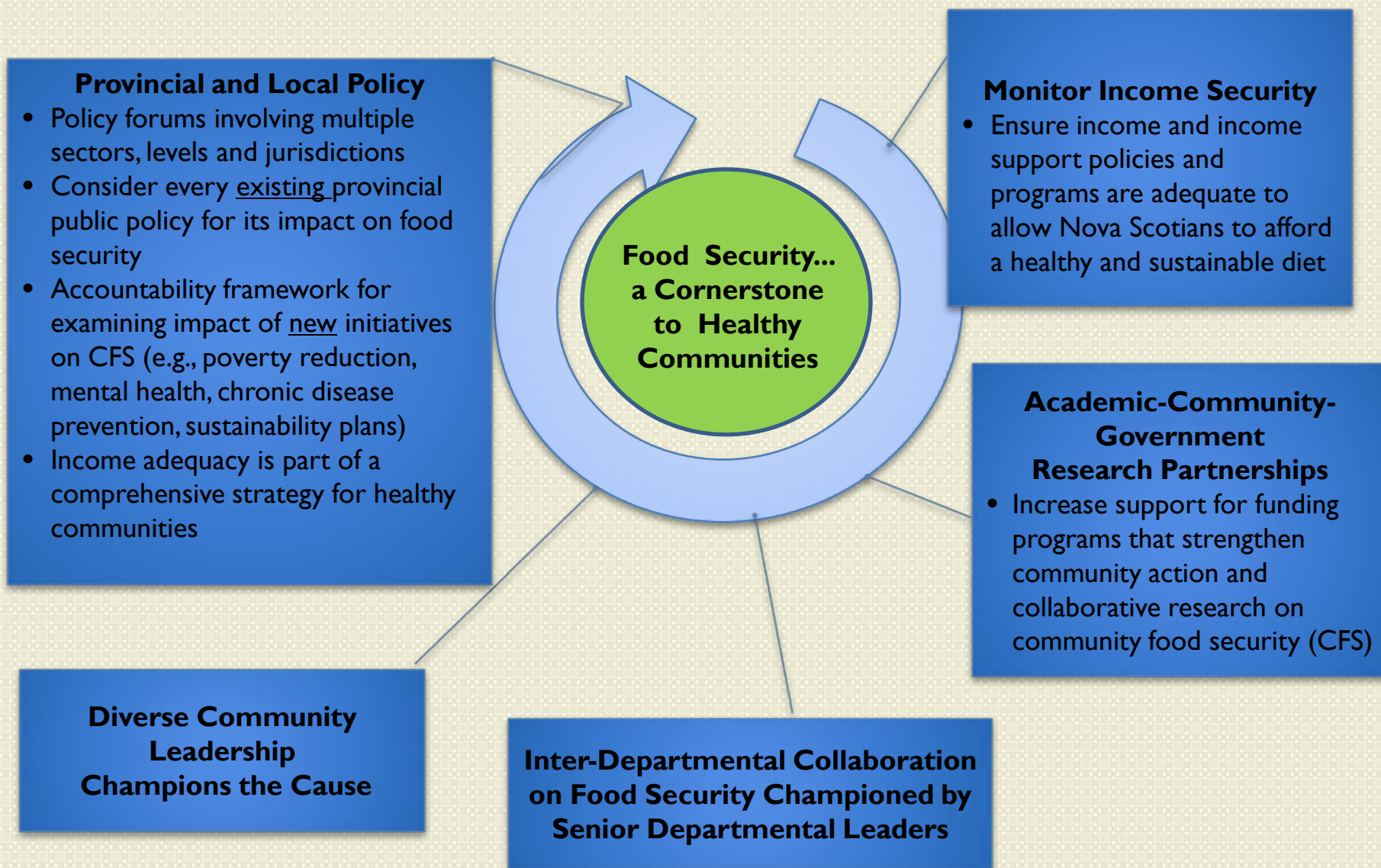


# Many steps have been taken to build food security in Nova Scotia...

- Giving voice to those experiencing food insecurity
- Healthy Eating Nova Scotia Strategy
- Increases to minimum wage and Income Assistance rates
- Strong network of committed partners
- Activating Change Together (ACT) for Community Food Security (2010-15)

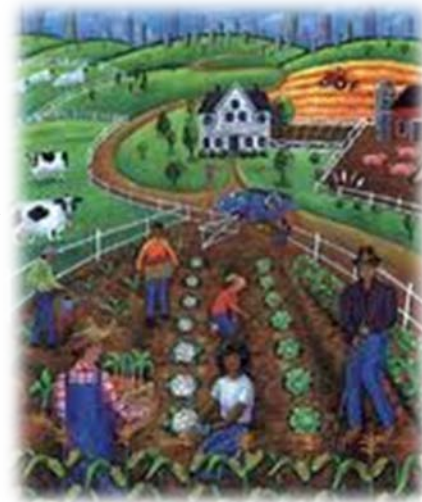


# A Roadmap For Change to Build Food Security in Nova Scotia



# Take Home Messages

- Many Nova Scotians cannot afford a healthy diet
- Food security supports the health of Nova Scotians and our communities, reduces the burden on our health system and contributes to social inclusion and community cohesiveness
- Nova Scotia has an opportunity to be a national leader in achieving food security



# Questions and Discussion

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**For more information...**

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Mount Saint Vincent University

<http://www.foodsecurityresearchcentre.ca/>

The Nova Scotia Participatory Food Costing Project

<http://www.foodsecurityresearchcentre.ca/nova-scotia-participatory-food/>



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