

*Eating Healthier in
Newfoundland and Labrador*

**Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework
and Action Plan**



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Fall 2006

Eating Healthier In Newfoundland and Labrador

Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework and Action Plan

(Phase 1: 2005-2008)

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

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The Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework Advisory Committee is recognized for the guidance it has provided to the development of this document and additional supporting documents to government.

The membership of the committee includes representation from:

- Department of Education
- Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
- The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council
- The Regional Nutritionists of the Regional Integrated Health Authorities

In addition, thank you to the many stakeholders and reviewers who provided insightful feedback and direction during the consultative process.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador, the provincial food and nutrition framework, will serve as a guide to direct and support government, organizations, community groups, industry and citizens in decisions relating to food and nutrition. Although the primary focus of this document is food and nutrition, physical activity is integrated in a number of areas to reflect the strong relationship between healthy eating and physical activity in health and well-being.

The need for a provincial food and nutrition framework was recognized by government and advocated by citizens for a number of years. Recognizing that food and nutrition is a multifaceted area, an interdepartmental committee was formed to address this initiative, with the Department of Health and Community Services serving as lead. The collaborative efforts of this interdepartmental committee resulted in the formulation of a draft food and nutrition policy document. A consultation process, which included more than 140 groups and yielded approximately 800 recommendations and comments, occurred and this feedback was instrumental in shaping the final document. As part of the final revision, *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* was changed from a policy to a framework to better reflect the nature of the document.

Some of the key food and nutrition related challenges facing Newfoundland and Labrador include poor eating habits, low levels of physical activity, increasing rates of obesity in adults and children and limited availability and access to healthy food choices and physical activity opportunities, especially for groups such as low income, children, youth, women who are pregnant and seniors. *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* provides a framework to meet these challenges and improve the nutritional health of residents through the achievement of the framework vision.

Framework Vision

All residents of Newfoundland and Labrador will have reasonable access to an adequate, nutritious and safe food supply and a supportive, comprehensive network of food and nutrition services.

The goals of the Nutrition Framework include:

1. Support measures which allow individuals and communities to achieve nutritional well-being through the reinforcement and promotion of healthy eating practices and physical activity.
 2. Support measures which allow access to an adequate food supply and access to appropriate nutrition services and programs so that the needs of vulnerable populations can be met.
-

3. Support measures which promote the development, production, marketing and distribution of foods which are reflective of healthy eating practices, food safety and also supportive of environmentally and economically sustainable practices.
4. Support and promote food and nutrition research efforts which provide credible information and data in matters relating to nutritional well-being, healthy eating practices and physical activity.

Efforts to meet the goals of the food and nutrition framework will be guided by the following key directions:

- Reinforce healthy eating and physical activity practices
- Support vulnerable populations
- Enhance the availability of safe, high quality food which supports healthy eating
- Support food and nutrition research.

These key directions address a significant number of food and nutrition areas which all have relevance to nutritional well-being. However, initial food and nutrition priorities have been determined as a starting point for the framework implementation and include:

- Healthy Living for Children and Youth: Schools
- Healthy Living for Preschool-Aged Children
- Healthy Living for Seniors

Many of the initiatives and actions outlined in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* are ongoing or in development and provide a foundation for successful implementation of the food and nutrition framework. In addition, the development of *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* has provided an opportunity to identify challenges, strengths and partners in the many areas of food and nutrition. In the final analysis, the implementation of an effective food and nutrition framework is a long-term goal, but one which is of critical importance to the health of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes that nutrition is a cornerstone of good health and well-nourished individuals, of all ages, are better able to actively participate in the life of their community. To assist individuals and communities in achieving nutritional well-being, the Government has developed *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*, a provincial food and nutrition framework.

This framework will serve as a guide to direct and support government, organizations, community groups, industry and citizens in decisions relating to food and nutrition. Although the primary focus of this document is food and nutrition, physical activity is integrated in a number of areas to reflect the strong relationship between healthy eating and physical activity in health and well-being.

This emphasis is in alignment with the focus on healthy eating and physical activity in *Achieving Health and Wellness*, the Provincial Wellness Plan, which encompasses a number of the priority areas identified in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. In addition, *Regaining Our Health*, the provincial physical activity strategy, includes a number of physical activity strategies and actions which complement food and nutrition issues and initiatives and a number of these strategies and actions are included.

Additionally, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, in its 2005 Speech from the Throne and Budget, committed to the development of a comprehensive government-wide poverty reduction strategy. Poverty will be considered broadly in this framework and the poverty reduction strategy will integrate the actions of this framework with other initiatives.

Rationale

The need for a provincial food and nutrition framework has been recognized by government and advocated by citizens for a number of years. This concept was further supported with the 1996 publication of *Nutrition for Health: An Agenda for Action*. This national nutrition plan was created to “ensure integration of nutrition considerations into health, agriculture, education, social and economic policies and programs” in an effort to promote nutritional well-being for all Canadians.¹

Nutrition for Health: An Agenda for Action outlines four key directions which were determined by national food and nutrition experts. In recognizing the value of these recommendations, we have adapted the following key directions for use in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. These include:

- Reinforcing healthy eating and physical activity practices.
- Supporting vulnerable populations.

¹ Joint Steering Committee (1996). **Nutrition for health: An agenda for action**. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

- Enhancing the availability of safe, high quality food which supports healthy eating.
- Supporting food and nutrition research.

Provincial Perspective

Newfoundland and Labrador has a long history as a pioneer of food and nutrition policy. Before Confederation, Newfoundland and Labrador had initiated calcium fortified flour. In the 1960s, Newfoundland and Labrador was a leader in having vitamin C added to evaporated milk and recently the province was instrumental in adding folic acid to flour. This pioneer role continues with the development of *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*.

Newfoundland and Labrador is unique due to its geography, economics, culture and population demographics, and there are many challenges. Provincial rates of stroke, heart disease and obesity are among the highest in the country, while the levels of both physical activity and household income are the lowest. Unhealthy eating and inactivity have significant economic impact, both provincially and nationally. Based on estimates of national projections, the provincial cost of unhealthy eating is approximately \$126 million annually and the cost of physical inactivity is approximately \$42 million annually.

Framework Development

Recognizing that food and nutrition is a multifaceted area, an interdepartmental committee was formed to address this initiative, with the Department of Health and Community Services serving as lead. The collaborative efforts of this interdepartmental committee resulted in the formulation of a draft provincial food and nutrition policy document, *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Partners in the policy development process included:

- Department of Education
- Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation

Consultative Process

This framework provided a guide for dialogue amongst stakeholders and government. To offer groups and agencies the opportunity for input, *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* was distributed to more than 140 stakeholder groups for consultation. In addition, a provincial food and nutrition policy stakeholder forum and provincial dietitian forum were held to provide stakeholders and government an opportunity to share ideas and enhance partnerships. As a result of this comprehensive consultative process, more than

800 recommendations, ideas and comments were received. As part of the final revision, *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* was changed from a policy to a framework to reflect better the nature of the document.

Moving Forward

There are many challenges related to healthy eating which need to be addressed to achieve the desired outcomes outlined in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. However, as ways are sought to improve aspects such as eating habits and physical activity habits, Newfoundland and Labrador can celebrate successes including an improved economy, increased marketing of local foods and the successful development of provincial aquaculture. A food and nutrition framework provides a guide to meet challenges and to enhance successes. Through partnerships, creativity and resourcefulness, the nutritional health of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will be enhanced and sustained.

II. FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

Department of Health and Community Services Vision

For individuals, families and communities to have achieved optimal health and well being.

Framework Vision

All residents of Newfoundland and Labrador will have reasonable access* to an adequate, nutritious and safe food supply and a supportive, comprehensive network of food and nutrition services.

Statement of Purpose

Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador is a provincial government food and nutrition framework which provides guidance to government, industry, organizations, community groups and citizens.

Guiding Principles for Decision-making

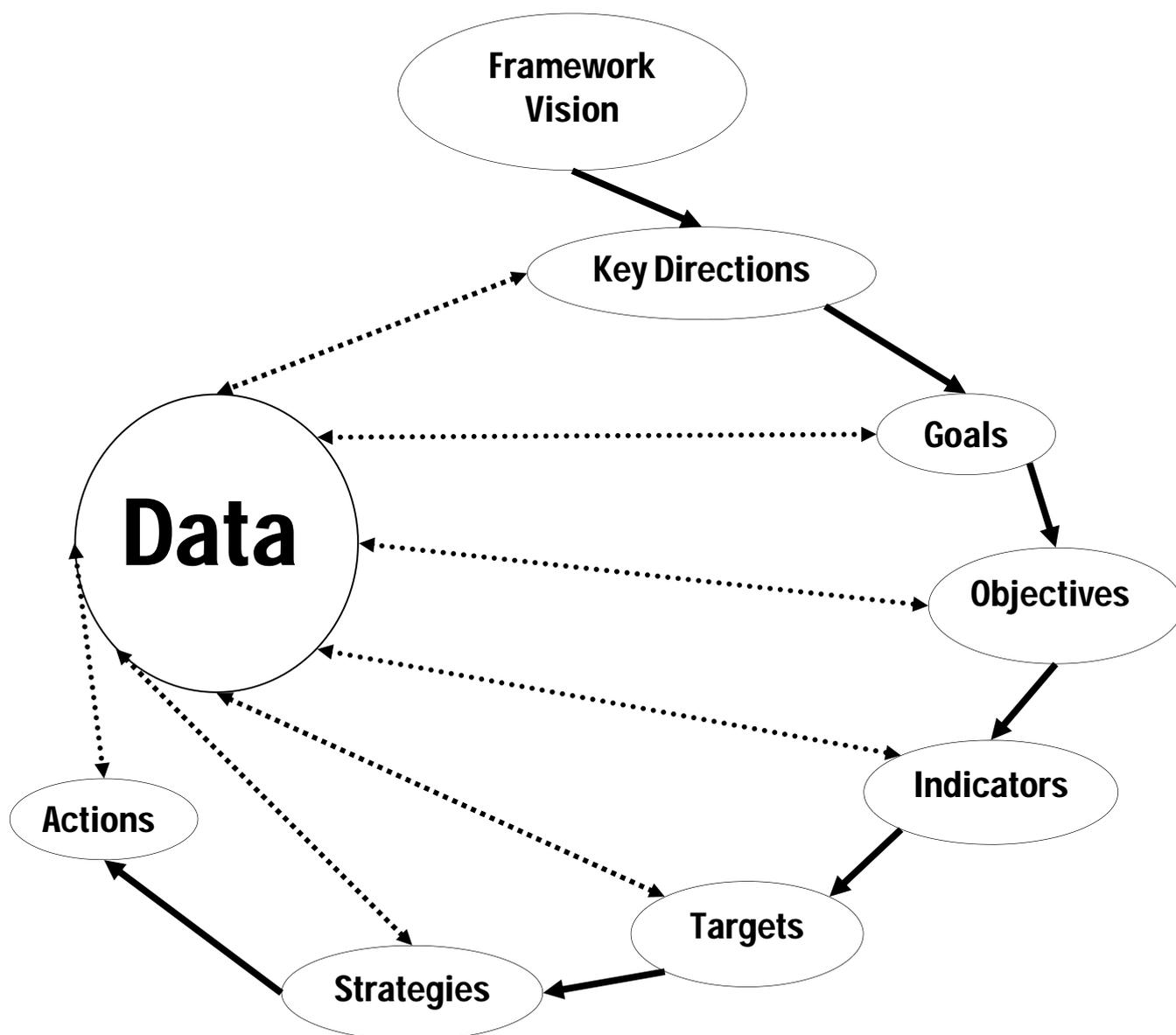
- People-centered
- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Equity
- Evidence-based
- Quality
- Sustainability

*Reasonable access indicates that every resident will be able to achieve and maintain the highest level of nutritional well-being possible through a variety of programs and services. The pathway to achieve this goal may vary depending on factors such as geography, income level and abilities. However, a reasonable pathway will exist for all residents.

Nutritional well-being is a state in which an individual or community has health, security and positive outlook as each relates to food and nutrition.

III. FRAMEWORK

A framework is essential to the successful development, implementation and evaluation of any large scale initiative. The following framework outlines the specific planning components used for the development of *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. This framework is portrayed in a manner to reflect the ongoing strategic planning which will occur as new data and information becomes available.



IV. KEY DIRECTIONS AND STRATEGY SUMMARY

***Key Direction One:
Reinforce Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Practices***

Goal: *Support measures which allow individuals and communities to achieve nutritional well-being through the reinforcement and promotion of healthy eating practices and physical activity.*

Rationale

This key direction targets creating environments which help people to stay healthy. Food is a significant part of daily living and both healthy eating and physical activity have a positive impact on health. An environment which supports healthy lifestyle choices is essential and there are many factors which contribute to the creation of a supportive environment, including the availability of healthy food choices and options for physical activity. In addition, clear, consistent messages are needed by government, industry and non-governmental organizations to promote well-informed decision making by consumers. These messages must be supported by programs which translate this information into practical application for the target population. Working together, government, industry, communities and citizens can create environments which make healthy lifestyle choices reasonable options for people living in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Fast Facts

- In 2005, the provincial breastfeeding rate was 64 per cent. In 1992, the rate was 39 per cent.
- Seventy-one per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are overweight or obese.²
- Fifty-three per cent of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are not physically active enough for health benefits.³
- Thirty-three per cent of girls and twenty-three per cent of boys age 12 -19 years of age in Canada are physically inactive.⁴

² Statistics Canada (2004). **Canadian Community Health Survey.**

³ Statistics Canada (2003). **Canadian Community Health Survey.**

⁴ Statistics Canada (2004). **Canadian Community Health Survey 2002/2003.**

Key Strategies

There are seven key strategies which are necessary to achieve the outlined goal:

Strategy 1.1 Create and maintain environments in which nutritional well-being and physical activity are promoted and supported so that healthier choices are reasonable choices.

Strategy 1.2 Develop, expand and/or maintain public education programs which provide sound food and nutrition information, expertise and skill development relating to food and nutrition as well as promote physical activity.

Strategy 1.3 Use and promote national recommendations as provincial guidelines for healthy eating and physical activity.

Strategy 1.4 Develop, expand and/or maintain nutrition programs for groups throughout the life cycle.

Strategy 1.5 Promote and support dental health.

Strategy 1.6 Ensure that practical skill development relating to healthy eating and physical activity is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels of the educational system and is also an integral part of other educational activities.

Strategy 1.7 Ensure that nutrition and physical activity information is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels of professional training.

Proposed actions to support the preceding strategies are located in the Action Overview on page 23.

Key Direction Two: Support Vulnerable Populations

Goal: *Support measures which allow access to an adequate food supply and access to appropriate nutrition services and programs so that the needs of vulnerable populations in Newfoundland and Labrador can be met.*

Rationale

This key direction focuses primarily on the barriers and obstacles which contribute to nutritional vulnerability. Nutritional vulnerability can occur in response to a number of factors. Any person who may experience difficulty in accessing adequate food, in quantity or in nutritional content, is nutritionally vulnerable. Nutritional vulnerability is often associated with poverty, but it can also occur as a result of other factors including disability, lack of knowledge, lack of transportation, limited time or skill in preparing meals, certain social situations, and a variety of health conditions. In addition to addressing the immediate needs of those who are presently experiencing nutritional vulnerability, long-term systemic solutions are also necessary.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has developed a long-term, comprehensive, government-wide poverty reduction strategy. Issues related to food

security and the relationship between nutritional vulnerability and poverty are considered and many of the focus areas highlighted in the provincial food and nutrition framework are addressed in the poverty reduction strategy. Addressing poverty is one of the keys to improving access to nutritious foods.

Physical activity opportunities can also be compromised in the nutritionally vulnerable population. Services and programs addressing nutritionally vulnerable populations need to take into account the potential limitations regarding this important partner to healthy eating.

Fast Facts

- In 2005, approximately 47,300 people per month living in Newfoundland and Labrador received income support.⁵
- Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest percentage of a provincial population (5.5 per cent) using food banks. In March 2005, more than 28,000 people visited the 30 food banks in Newfoundland and Labrador.⁶
- Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest prevalence of diabetes in Canada.⁷

Key Strategies

There are four key strategies which have been determined as necessary to achieve the outlined goal. These include:

Strategy 2.1 Identify and support long-term strategies to address barriers which have an impact on food security and the nutritional health of vulnerable populations.

Strategy 2.2 Improve initiatives which enable those with limited income to have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply and physical activity opportunities.

Strategy 2.3 Develop, expand and/or maintain nutrition and practical skill development programs to support optimal nutrition for groups who are vulnerable.

Strategy 2.4 Address major nutrition and health issues facing residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Proposed actions to support the preceding strategies are located in the Action Overview on page 33.

⁵ Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (2006). **Special tabulations.**

⁶ Canadian Association of Food Banks (2005). **Hunger Count 2005 Time for Action.**

⁷ Statistics Canada (2003). **Canadian Community Health Survey.**

**Key Direction Three:
Enhance the Availability of Safe, High Quality Food Which Supports
Healthy Eating**

Goal: *Support measures which promote the development, production, marketing and distribution of foods which are reflective of healthy eating practices, food safety and also supportive of environmentally and economically sustainable practices.*

Rationale

It is imperative that safe, high quality food to support healthy eating is available in adequate amounts in order to meet the needs of the population. Sustainability of the food supply is a critical piece of these efforts. Ensuring a sustainable food supply begins with the protection of natural resources. The promotion of locally produced food, such as seafood and agricultural products, is also an important part of these efforts. An emphasis on the quantity of available food is a significant aspect of food security as is an emphasis on the quality and safety of food.

Public confidence in the quality and safety of the food system can be enhanced through the development and promotion of national and provincial guidelines. Legislation, regulation and the establishment of standards, including provision for inspection and monitoring, are essential to the overall efficacy of such programs, and support public confidence. Public confidence in the nutritional quality of food can also be achieved through access to information about foods in the marketplace. To assist with accessing such information, food and nutrition expertise is needed by both food producers and food purchasers.

Fast Facts

- Only 25 per cent of the population consumes adequate amounts of fruit and vegetables.⁸
- In 2004, the provincial Aquaculture sector production exceeded 5,600 tonnes, with an export value of approximately \$22 million.⁹
- Newfoundland and Labrador has the lowest provincial rate of salmonellosis and E. coli infection in the country.¹⁰
- Newfoundland and Labrador produces approximately 2 million eggs annually.¹¹

⁸ Statistics Canada (2004). **Canadian Community Health Survey.**

⁹ Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2005). **2004 Seafood Industry Year in Review.**

¹⁰ Health Canada (2004). **Notifiable diseases on-line.** http://dsol.smed.hc.gc.ca/dsol-smed/ndis/index_e.html.

¹¹ Department of Natural Resources, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2004). **Special tabulations.**

Key Strategies

There are four key strategies which have been determined as necessary to achieve the outlined goal. These include:

Strategy 3.1 Promote and support the importance of nutrition and the availability of foods which support healthy eating as a factor in the production, processing and marketing of food.

Strategy 3.2 Establish and maintain high standards of food and water safety.

Strategy 3.3 Promote the development and marketing of local products which support healthy eating practices.

Strategy 3.4 Promote economically and environmentally sustainable practices which protect food-related resources.

Proposed actions to support the preceding strategies are located in the Action Overview on page 38.

Key Direction Four: Support Food and Nutrition Research

Goal: *Support and promote food and nutrition research efforts which provide credible information and data in matters relating to nutritional well-being, healthy eating practices and physical activity.*

Rationale

Food and nutrition research is essential to a better understanding of health needs and to guide the development of food and nutrition services in this province. Research on the determinants of food choices and research to evaluate programs, practices and policies are equally important and will aid all stakeholders in developing effective policies and programs. In addition, research addressing the role and relationship of healthy eating and physical activity in overall health, disease prevention and treatment is an essential component in the promotion of nutritional well-being.

Provincial food resources include both fisheries and agriculture. These resources contribute significantly to the diet and subsequently to the nutrition and health status of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Research which contributes to a greater understanding of their composition and contribution to health is important. It is also important to encourage nutrition research in the basic and clinical areas and in the applied areas including social marketing, food security, nutrition education, program evaluation, strategic planning and community development and mobilization.

The dissemination of research results is important to assist in the planning and evaluation of existing programs and services and to identify areas where new programs need to be funded. It also provides an opportunity to garner public support by providing feedback to participants and the public in general, and needs to occur in a timely fashion. The ongoing

development of research initiatives and the development of provincial expertise in food and nutrition are essential to successful framework development and implementation.

Fast Facts

- The only national comprehensive nutrition survey conducted was in 1972.
- In 1996, the provincial nutrition survey, *Nutrition Newfoundland and Labrador*, was conducted.
- Newfoundland and Labrador conducts a Nutritious Food Basket Survey annually.
- The province participates in a number of surveys which have a nutrition component such as the National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth and the Canadian Community Health Survey.

Key Strategies

There are five key strategies which have been determined as necessary to achieve the outlined goal. These include:

Strategy 4.1 Identify recent, current and planned research initiatives.

Strategy 4.2 Establish research priorities.

Strategy 4.3 Encourage food and nutrition research.

Strategy 4.4 Monitor food and nutrition programs, services, policies and practices.

Strategy 4.5 Develop a provincial dissemination plan for food and nutrition research.

Proposed actions to support the preceding strategies are located in the Action Overview on page 44.

V. INITIAL PRIORITIES

There are many challenges related to healthy eating which need to be addressed to achieve the desired outcomes outlined in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. The key directions address a significant number of food and nutrition areas which are all important. However, initial food and nutrition priorities have been determined as a starting point for the framework implementation and include:

- Healthy Living for Children and Youth – Schools
- Healthy Living for Children aged 1-5 years
- Healthy Living for Seniors

Priority Area One: Healthy Living for Children and Youth – Schools

Healthy eating and physical activity are essential components in the healthy growth and development of children and youth. Poor dietary habits and inactivity can lead to a number of problems, one of which is obesity. In addition to obesity, problems with body image and eating disorders are also a significant concern with this population. Due to societal and peer pressures, many children and teens are striving to reach unrealistic body sizes and weights.

The pressures and influences of children change with age. As children become older, their exposure to influences about healthy eating and physical activity increases as they become involved with social and sporting activities and attend school. School is the primary setting for healthy eating and physical activity education programs and schools should be the primary focus of healthy eating and physical activity efforts. However, schools exist as part of a larger community and often the health values of the school reflect the health values of the community. Creating home, school and community environments which promote healthy eating, physical activity and the achievement and maintenance of healthy weight is a critical foundation for healthy living for children and youth and also supports parents, care givers, teachers, coaches and community members in their roles as champions and models of healthy eating and physical activity.

Current Status

The statistics relating to the rates of childhood and youth obesity and inactivity are a growing concern in Newfoundland and Labrador as are the number of children and youth living in poverty. Thirty-six percent of Newfoundland and Labrador children between the ages of two and seventeen are overweight or obese.¹² Approximately 16 per cent of children in the province are living in low income households.¹³

Healthy food is provided to some children and youth through school food programs offered by foundations such as the Newfoundland and Labrador School Milk Foundation and the Kids Eat Smart Foundation. Physical activity opportunities are provided through schools,

¹² Statistics Canada (2005). **Canadian Community Health Survey 2.2.**

¹³ Statistics Canada (2003). **Low-Income Cutoff (after tax LICO).**

recreation departments/committees and sporting associations in communities across the province. However, these healthy eating and physical activity programs are not accessible to all children and youth and further enhancement is needed.

A primary focus for program enhancement and development is the school system. As indicated in the Coalition for School Nutrition report, *Survey of Food and Nutrition Policies and Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*, there are significant concerns related to adequate and appropriate food and nutrition services in schools. General findings include: limited availability of comprehensive school food and nutrition policies, healthy food choices, adequate cafeteria space and access to food and nutrition expertise. In addition, the reported school-based physical activity opportunities and participation rates show a need for improvement. The implementation of the School Food Guidelines, launched in the 2005-2006 school year, speaks to the Government's commitment to creating a school environment conducive to healthy eating. As well, the development and implementation of curricula is an ongoing mechanism to address the concerns around physical activity and nutrition.

Meeting the needs of children and youth from low income families remains a challenge. Food insecurity is the reality of day to day living for many Newfoundland and Labrador families. School nutrition programs provide support in this area. Additionally, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is developing a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy which is considering poverty broadly and will integrate the related actions outlined in this framework with other initiatives.

Actions

1. Develop and implement provincial school guidelines which support healthy eating and physical activity and which reflect the following components related to healthy eating:

- Allowing adequate time and facilities for dining
- Offering reasonable food pricing
- Providing healthy food choices and removing unhealthy food choices in cafeterias, canteens and vending machines.
- Using appropriate healthy food choices for fund raising.
- Promoting and using locally produced foods when possible for school food services.
- Marketing healthy eating and physical activity messages to parents and care givers.
- Requiring training for school caterers on healthy eating and nutrition.
- Delivering school programming which:
 - ◆ provides all children with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes and beliefs about healthy eating.
 - ◆ addresses the importance of positive body image and healthy weight.

- ◆ promotes and supports healthy eating and physical activity programming which includes and/or targets parents and families.

2. Ensure all communities provide choices and support for healthy eating through:

- Collaborating with food producers, suppliers and retailers on initiatives which support the availability of healthy food choices.
- Promoting the provision of healthy food choices at community and recreational events, especially for those which involve children and youth.
- Enhancing opportunities for children, outside of the school day, to be involved with activities which promote and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity principles.
- Promoting healthy eating as an essential component of organized sporting and physical activity programs and events.

3. Enhance initiatives which enable vulnerable children and youth to have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply such as:

- developing healthy eating opportunities, including school food programs which are accessible to all children, such as those offered through the Newfoundland and Labrador School Milk Foundation and Kids Eat Smart Foundation.

Priority Area Two: Healthy Living for Children Aged 1-5 years

The early years of childhood are a crucial time for intellectual and social development and an appropriate nutritional intake plays a significant role in this development. In addition, habits and preferences developed in early childhood can have significant impact on eating habits in future years.¹⁴ Ensuring an adequate nutritional intake can be challenging for the preschool population due to factors such as food preferences, fluctuations in appetite and the independent behaviour often associated with this age group. Parents and caregivers often need assistance during these early years. Readily available information and support regarding healthy eating, when available, through education programs can be beneficial. This support is especially important when a preschooler is overweight.

Current Status

The statistics relating to the rates of childhood obesity and inactivity are a growing concern in Newfoundland and Labrador as are the number of children and youth living in poverty. Thirty-six per cent of the provincial preschool aged population are overweight¹⁵ and

¹⁴ Health Canada (1995). **Canada's food guide to healthy eating: Focus on preschoolers.** Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.

¹⁵ Canning P, Courage M and Frizzell L (2004). **Overweight and obesity in preschool children in Newfoundland and Labrador.** Centre of Excellence for Children and Adolescence with Special Needs, Nutrition, Health and Development, Memorial University.

approximately 16 per cent of children in the province are living in low income households.¹⁶

At present, the primary program which provides information and support is the Provincial Preschool Health Check. Nutrition screening and education are part of this service, but such aspects can be limited depending on available resources. There are programs offered throughout the province through federally and provincially funded Family Resource Centres, which have nutrition components. These programs target vulnerable populations, but all families are welcome to attend. However, these programs are not available in all communities.

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating Focus on Preschoolers reinforces the need for an appropriate nutritional intake for this age group and provides direction for the development of healthy eating programs for preschoolers.¹⁷ The provincial manual, *Standards and Guidelines for Health in Child Care Settings*, reinforces healthy eating principles. Programs which comprehensively target the healthy eating practices of the entire preschool population need enhancement to ensure that information about healthy eating practices for this population is easily accessible and comprehensible to both children and their caregivers.

Actions

1. Ensure all communities provide choices and support for healthy eating by:

- Collaborating with food producers, suppliers and retailers on initiatives which support the availability of healthy food choices.
- Promoting the provision of healthy food choices at community and recreational events, especially for those which involve preschool-age children.
- Enhancing opportunities for children, outside of the preschool day, to be involved with activities which promote and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity principles.
- Promoting healthy eating as an essential component of organized sporting and physical activity programs and events.

2. Promote, support and ensure implementation of the Newfoundland and Labrador *Childcare Services Act* to ensure healthy living opportunities for children in preschool and child care services settings with a focus on healthy eating by:

- Promoting the provincial manual, *Standards and Guidelines for Health in Child Care Settings*, which reinforces healthy eating principles.

¹⁶ Statistics Canada (2003). **Low-Income Cutoff (after tax LICO)**.

¹⁷ Health Canada (1995). **Canada's food guide to healthy eating: Focus on preschoolers**. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.

3. **Enhance initiatives which enable vulnerable children and youth to have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply by:**
- Seeking ways to provide support, nutrition education and opportunity for skill development to parents of nutritionally vulnerable children through the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Family Resource Centre programs.
 - Supporting current programs and services for healthy eating and physical activity for preschool-aged children.

Priority Area 3: Healthy Living for Seniors

Healthy eating and physical activity are important for seniors in order to promote healthy aging and independent living. Advancing age presents potential concerns such as increasing susceptibility to chronic illness, decreased mobility, loneliness, depression, poor dentition, impaired vision, decreased sense of smell and taste, and increased use of medication. Barriers such as fixed income, lack of transportation, isolation, limited mobility and limited knowledge of healthy eating practices may also exist. Often these problems can lead to inadequate nutritional intake and compromised nutritional status. In addition to programs and services which address healthy eating and physical activity as part of healthy aging, special programs are needed which assist the elderly who are vulnerable.

Current Status

Older adults are one of the fastest growing population groups in Canada. In 1999, 12 per cent of the Canadian population was sixty-five years and older and this number is predicted to increase to 19 per cent by the year 2020.¹⁸ In Newfoundland and Labrador, it is predicted that adults aged sixty-five and older will make up 13.5 per cent of the population by 2006 and 26 per cent by 2026.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, the age group who are the least physically active is the provincial senior population.²⁰

Public education programs targeting the older population in Canada are limited. Seniors also have educational challenges, such as literacy level, visual limitation and hearing impairment, which need to be considered when developing and promoting healthy living initiatives. In addition financial barriers create food insecurity for some seniors resulting in poor nutritional intake. Addressing these challenges and designing effective, enjoyable programs which assist the senior population in maintaining health and independence are very important. Initiatives which provide the opportunities for seniors living in Newfoundland and Labrador to access information and education about healthy eating and physical activity are needed.

¹⁸ Statistics Canada (2003). **2001 Canadian Year Book, Catalogue no. 11-402-XPE.**

¹⁹ Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (2003). **Seniors Morbidity.** Fast Facts: February 2003; Volume 1.

²⁰ Statistics Canada (2004). **Canadian Community Health Survey 2003.**

Additionally, many seniors live in long-term care facilities and personal care homes. As an example, there are ninety-seven personal care homes in the province which primarily serve the senior population. Dietitians are involved with the nutritional aspect of care in both personal care homes and long-term care facilities through the regional integrated health authorities.

Actions

- 1. Continue providing and enhancing lifestyle programs which address healthy eating and physical activity as part of healthy aging.**
- 2. Continue supporting and enhancing nutrition interventions within a comprehensive range of community-based services such as home support, meals on wheels, respite care and care giver supports which are based on identified needs for the elderly and continuing care clients.**
- 3. Enhance support of provincial and community initiatives for seniors which address barriers to healthy eating and physical activity.**

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has provided leadership in the development of *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* and will continue to provide leadership in future food and nutrition initiatives. As with the framework development, intersectoral collaboration and support will be sought in these efforts. The outcome summaries and strategic plans outlined in this document identify proposed actions necessary to achieve the vision of *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. However, there are also preliminary actions which are critical aspects of all of the outcome summaries and action plans. These actions are as follows:

Partnerships

Sharing resources and ideas is a critical aspect of successful framework development and implementation. Each aspect of the framework affects more than one sector and each sector has different perspectives and strengths. Input from the various sectors will continue to be actively sought as will partnerships for the development, implementation and evaluation of framework initiatives. Further detail will be given to actions in each of the key directions through action plans targeting specific focus areas. Stakeholders involved with a specific focus area will be identified and participation will be sought. In some cases, groups may have strategies for specific action plan areas which, if in alignment with *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*, may be used as a foundation for provincial planning.

Availability of Data

It is essential to develop and implement a system to gather and analyze data regarding the various aspects of the food and nutrition framework. Data is especially important in establishing specific indicators and targets needed to evaluate efforts. However, the tools to gather the data and to make recommendations for specific targets are limited on provincial and national levels. Additional provincial data corresponding to some areas of the food and nutrition framework will be available through initiatives including the data collection for the Provincial Government Community Accounts, the Department of Health and Community Services Client Referral Management System, the Canadian Community Health Survey and the Provincial Nutrition Survey. In addition, data regarding physical activity trends are available on both provincial and national levels.

Preliminary Scan of Food and Nutrition Services and Programs

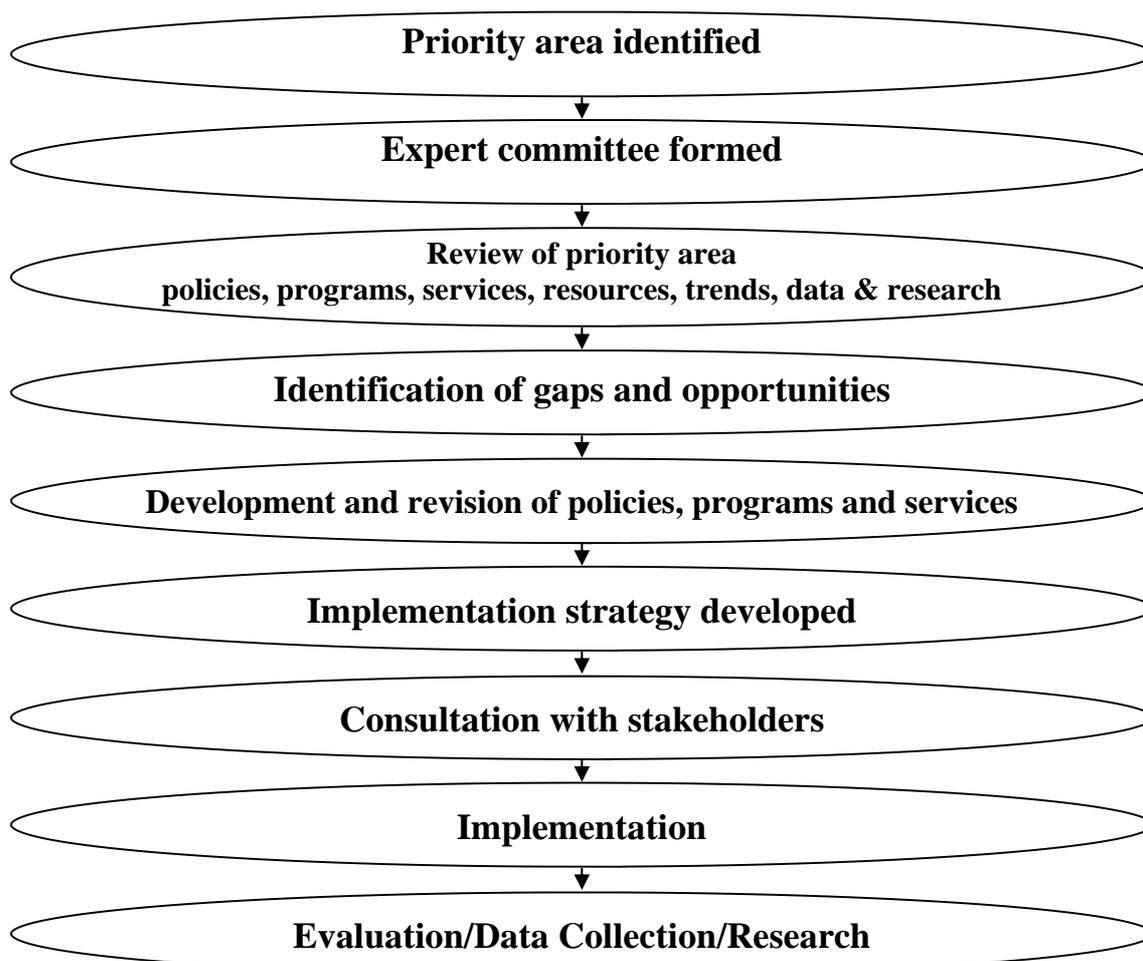
Conducting a provincial scan of food and nutrition programs and services was necessary in order to determine the resources needed to initiate implementation. This scan identified needs, current resources and gaps in resource allocation, including human resources such as food and nutrition expertise. A more comprehensive review will be needed in each of the key action plan areas in the future as implementation efforts are enhanced. In addition, a review of the physical activity areas which are captured in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* will be needed.

Cost of Implementation

The cost of implementing a provincial framework will be addressed in an incremental manner over time as resources become available. Assistance with costs and creative funding opportunities will be pursued to finance some aspects of framework work. As an example, national research funding will be sought to assist with the evaluation of various aspects of the food and nutrition framework. In addition, collaborative funding opportunities, such as federal/provincial/territorial partnerships and joint initiatives between industry and community groups, will be pursued.

Implementation Process

In addition to the preceding actions, a formalized structure and process is needed. It is proposed that the Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework Advisory Committee continue to determine and guide the future development, implementation and evaluation of the provincial food and nutrition framework. Identifying priorities is central to the successful implementation of *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador*. As previously discussed, initial food and nutrition priorities have been determined as a starting point for the framework implementation. It is anticipated that the following process will occur once a priority area is identified:



Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework Advisory Committee

A Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework Advisory Committee has been formed to guide the implementation of the provincial food and nutrition framework with representation from the following Departments, Councils and Groups:

- Department of Education
- Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
- Provincial Wellness Advisory Council
- Regional Nutritionists of the Regional Integrated Health Authorities

The structure of this committee will be reviewed regularly and membership may be changed to reflect the demands of the framework implementation.

VII. ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW: Key Direction One: Reinforce Healthy Eating & Physical Activity Practices

Strategy 1.1	
Create and maintain environments in which nutritional well-being and physical activity are promoted and supported so that healthier choices are reasonable choices	
Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Establish a food and nutrition network utilizing the regional wellness coalitions. This network would include government employees, health professionals, food and nutrition experts, physical activity personnel, educators, community groups, industry representatives, researchers and community members who are involved with the creation and maintenance of supportive environments related to food and nutrition. → Continue to review and enhance resources currently available and ensure that the availability, access and evaluation of such resources continue and are enhanced as needed. → Promote nutrition and physical activity as core components of all appropriate programs, with the provincial government actively taking leadership. → Ensure that healthy eating and physical activity are in the core mandate of health agencies, boards and corporations. → Encourage the development of breastfeeding support and policies in public places. → Enhance the development and implementation of activities which assist consumers with food choices. → Promote the provision of healthy food choices at community and recreational events, especially for those which involve children and youth. → Enhance opportunities for children (including children in low income families), outside of the school day, to be involved with activities which promote and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity principles. → Promote healthy eating as an essential component of organized sporting, community and physical activity programs and events. → Enhance the capacity of community groups involved with healthy eating and physical activity, including providing opportunities for community groups to increase skills in areas such as strategic planning and community mobilization.
Workplaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to encourage the development of healthy eating/physical activity policies and programs in work sites, such as those which promote the availability of healthy choices in work site cafeterias and vending machines and those which support breastfeeding and physical activity with the provincial government actively taking leadership.

Strategy 1.1

Create and maintain environments in which nutritional well-being and physical activity are promoted and supported so that healthier choices are reasonable choices

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop and implement provincial guidelines for schools which support healthy eating and physical activity and include the following components related to healthy eating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ adequate time and facilities for dining ◆ reasonable food pricing ◆ provision of healthy food choices in cafeterias, canteens and vending machines and the removal of unhealthy choices ◆ use of appropriate healthy food choices for fund raising ◆ incorporation of locally produced foods whenever possible for school food services ◆ required training for school caterers on healthy eating and nutrition ◆ delivery of school programming which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provides all children with the opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and positive attitudes and beliefs about healthy eating ▪ addresses the importance of positive body image and healthy weight ▪ promote and support healthy eating and physical activity programming which includes and/or targets parents and families ◆ promotion of healthy eating and physical activity messages to parents and care givers through the students and schools. → Continue to promote school-based health promotion, including food and nutrition, as an integral part of preschool, primary, elementary, intermediate and high school programming and services. → Continue to promote equitable physical activity opportunities in all schools for all ages through a wide variety of activities with an emphasis on quality daily physical activity. → Enhance opportunities for students to participate in physical activity outside of school hours.

Strategy 1.1

Create and maintain environments in which nutritional well-being and physical activity are promoted and supported so that healthier choices are reasonable choices

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Cultural diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Continue to encourage and support initiatives regarding healthy eating and physical activity for provincial Aboriginal populations in conjunction with the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs and ensure ongoing communication regarding food and nutrition framework initiatives.→ Identify and develop actions to address the food and nutrition challenges facing Aboriginal, new Canadians and ethnic populations who live in Newfoundland and Labrador.→ Develop and implement a public campaign around incorporating traditional Newfoundland and Labrador foods as part of a healthy diet.

Strategy 1.2

Develop, expand and/or maintain public education programs which provide sound food and nutrition information, expertise and skill development relating to food and nutrition as well as promote physical activity.

Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Healthy eating and physical activity programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to review, recommend and support nutrition and healthy eating as a basic component of all health programs and other government programs which have a food and nutrition component. → Encourage the development and availability of food and nutrition programs which address the practical aspects of healthy food preparation and encourage skill development. → Continue to recommend physical activity as a basic component of all health programs and other applicable government programs.
Prevention of chronic disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Assess current activities relating to chronic disease prevention, identify gaps where programs are needed and enhance efforts to ensure that all individuals, communities and health professionals have access to services. → Develop and implement a provincial chronic disease management strategy. → Reduce risk factors for heart disease by continuing to support and promote the efforts of health programs and initiatives. → Participate in and support activities which target the prevention of diabetes including activities relating to the Canadian Diabetes Strategy and the provincial diabetes strategy. → Participate and support activities which target the prevention of cancer. → Continue to work toward a reduction in the prevalence of obesity through the delivery of a healthy weight campaign with a strong focus on positive body image.
Reliable, consistent and comprehensive nutrition and physical activity information for the consumer, community groups and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to enhance access to information on healthy food choices including the practical aspects of food procurement, preparation and storage, and physical activity through the development, establishment and promotion of provincial materials and guidelines, which take into account such factors as age, cultural sensitivity, literacy level, stages of development and other special needs such as visual or hearing impairment. → Establish coordination for the ongoing development, updating and promotion of nutrition information materials and resources.

Strategy 1.3

Use and promote national recommendations as provincial guidelines for healthy eating and physical activity.

Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Provincial government Community groups Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Continue to promote the use of <i>Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating</i> as the basis of all nutrition information and education.→ Continue to promote national guidelines targeting specific groups in provincial activities including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy: National Guidelines for the Childbearing Years</i>◆ <i>Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants</i>◆ <i>Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating Focus on Preschoolers</i>◆ <i>Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating Focus on Children Six to Twelve</i>→ Continue to promote the use of <i>Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living</i> and <i>Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children and Youth</i> as the basis of all physical activity programs and services and incorporate concepts, such as <i>Vitality</i>, which promote positive body image and self esteem.

Strategy 1.4

Develop, expand and/or maintain nutrition programs for groups throughout the life cycle.

Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Pregnancy and women of childbearing years	<p>→ Continue to promote and support healthy pregnancy outcomes, including the prevention of neural tube defects and low birth weight, through the provision of appropriate and accessible prenatal nutrition information, education and care with the following foci:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the provincial prenatal record serves as a tool for appropriate nutrition screening and referral. • coordinate the monitoring and evaluation of the nutrition component of <i>A New Life Childbirth Education Program</i>. • continue to provide support, nutrition education and opportunity for skill development for pregnant women through access to Healthy Baby Clubs and Family Resource Centres. • provide appropriate accessible postnatal nutrition information, education and care.
Breastfeeding	<p>→ Increase the initiation and duration of breastfeeding through the continued development, implementation and evaluation of a provincial breastfeeding strategy²¹ which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public education and promotion • professional education • implementation of Baby-Friendly Initiative • resource development • research <p>→ Enhance the provincial breastfeeding data collection.</p>

²¹ Strategy adopted from Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Perinatal Program's *Breastfeeding in Newfoundland and Labrador: Moving towards the new millennium: A strategic plan (1999-2004)*, 1999.

Strategy 1.4

Develop, expand and/or maintain nutrition programs for groups throughout the life cycle.

Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Infant nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ensure that accurate information and support services regarding best infant nutrition practices are available to all health professionals and community groups involved with infant feeding. → Continue to provide parents with information regarding infant feeding as part of the <i>Healthy Beginnings Program</i> and through child health clinics and enhance opportunities for parents to access practical education and support for infant feeding. → Continue to provide nutrition expertise support to the Family Resource Centres and Healthy Baby Clubs through the services of regional nutritionists and dietitians.
Children Teens Parents and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to promote and support the importance of adequate nutrition in early childhood development through initiatives targeting child care settings, Family Resource Centers and care givers. → Promote, support and ensure implementation of the Newfoundland and Labrador <i>Childcare Services Act</i> to ensure healthy living opportunities for children in preschool and child care services settings with a focus on healthy eating. → Continue to promote the provincial manual, <i>Standards and Guidelines for Health in Child Care Settings</i>. → Monitoring and evaluate the nutritional component of programs such as the Early Childhood Development Initiatives, the Community Action Program for Children, and the initiatives of the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Plan. → Support the implementation of the School Food Guidelines in all districts and subsequently in all schools. → Support and enhance nutrition programs which improve access to healthy foods, promote healthy eating and provide nutrition education, such as programs offered by the School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Kids Eat Smart Foundation. → Promote and support initiatives which target healthy eating, physical activity and positive body image. → Promote and support healthy eating and physical activity programming which includes and/or targets parents and families.
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to provide and enhance lifestyle programs which target healthy eating and physical activity as part of healthy aging.

Strategy 1.5	
Promote and support oral health	
Focus	Proposed Actions
Children Teens Parents and families Adults	<p>→ Promote and support oral health in the province with the following foci:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Health Program (NLDHP), both the Children’s Component (for all children age 12 and under) and the Income Support Component (children age 13-17 and adults). • Develop a proposal for a revised NLDHP. • Collaborate with the Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Association (NLDA) and the Dental Department, Janeway Health and Rehabilitation Centre to update and revise print material on oral health used in parent and child health education programs. • Review current oral health prevention education programs and associated programs used in regions and, in consultation with Regional Integrated Health Authorities, revise/develop as needed. • Review and revise the school health curriculum respecting oral health in collaboration with the Department of Education. • Develop a proposal for a provincial oral health strategy in consultation with appropriate stakeholders.

Strategy 1.6

Ensure that practical skill development relating to healthy eating and physical activity is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels of the educational system and is also an integral part of other educational activities.

Focus	Proposed Actions
Preschool	→ Promote, support and ensure implementation of the <i>Newfoundland and Labrador Childcare Services Act</i> to ensure healthy living opportunities for children in preschool and child care services settings.
K -12	→ Continue to collaborate with the Department of Education and school districts to ensure that : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• food and nutrition skill development is a curriculum requirement in primary, elementary and intermediate programs and an optional component in high school programs.• students are encouraged to work with food in a laboratory setting to obtain experience in handling, preparing and consuming food.• nutrition information is integrated into all relevant high school programs and the development of an enhanced nutrition course for senior high school students is continued.• healthy eating and physical activity is highlighted with staff, parents and children.
Post-secondary students	→ Examine ways to incorporate healthy eating and physical activity education into the academic experiences of post-secondary students.

Strategy 1.7

Ensure that nutrition and physical activity information is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels of professional training.

Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Training programs for occupations which have direct or indirect involvement with food and nutrition	<p>→ Collaborate with relevant departments, institutions and agencies to ensure that relevant and current nutrition and physical activity education is included in the basic and continuing education of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• chefs and cooks• community service providers• dietitians/nutritionists• early childhood and K - 12 educators• food service personnel• home economists• health care professionals• home support workers• mental health workers• recreation workers
Ongoing education opportunities	<p>→ Provide educational opportunities on healthy eating and physical activity for dietitians/nutritionists, educators, health care professionals, home economists and food service and community service providers through regional and provincial conferences and symposiums; and in partnership with provincial groups.</p>

Action Plan Overview: Key Direction Two: Support Vulnerable Populations

Strategy 2.1	
Identify and support long-term strategies to address barriers which have an impact on food security and the nutritional health of vulnerable populations.	
Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Access to food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Work collaboratively with the Poverty Reduction Strategy to develop recommendations regarding meeting the needs of those of limited income in the ability to purchase adequate food. → Address broad issues which affect access to food through the development and implementation of the Government-wide poverty reduction strategy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local economic development and employment • literacy and education • housing (including fuel costs)
Availability of food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Seek ways to increase availability of healthy choices in communities. → Examine ways to support community members in challenges, such as transportation, which inhibit full access to food.
Food pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Work with industry to seek ways to assure stable and reasonable food prices including the promotion of local foods and the enhancement of local markets. → Continue to expand the growth and viability of local food-based businesses and industry. → Promote community-based initiatives to assist with food costs such as food purchasing clubs.
Self-reliant food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Assist communities and individuals in self-reliant food production efforts through the promotion of community-based food projects such as community gardens. → Continue to promote local game and locally grown produce as healthy options. → Assess contribution of local game, self grown and/or harvested produce to family and individual food procurement.
Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Determine the need to develop a plan of action to address provincial food insecurity through consultation with government departments and agencies who are involved in the following areas of food security: food access, availability and cost, food safety, self-reliant food production, income support, supplemental food programs, community education, water quality and sustainability of food supply.

Strategy 2.2

Improve initiatives which enable those with limited income to have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply and physical activity opportunities.

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Income support initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to review income support rates and the Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit and continue to advocate for improvements to the National Child Benefit Supplement. → Continue to review income support initiatives to assess their adequacy in meeting access for special dietary and nutritional products and examine ways to identify and assist those disadvantaged due to disease conditions and limited income. → Continue to use mechanisms for assessing income adequacy such as monitoring the price of a nutritious food basket.
Supplemental food programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to address immediate food needs of vulnerable groups through community-based programs such as school food programs, food supplementation for high-risk pregnant women and meals on wheels. → Continue to review and make recommendations of current policies and procedures of the Mother Baby Nutrition Supplement re: enhancing referral mechanisms, participation in the program, and monitoring and evaluation; and seek additional ways to ensure individuals in high risk populations are aware of the program. → Continue to promote the provision of nutritious food at emergency food services, such as food banks, while seeking long-term solutions to eliminate the need for such services.
Community-based initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to support the development and implementation of innovative and collaborative community initiatives, such as community kitchens, to foster knowledge, skill development and social support. → Enhance nutrition education opportunities for those of limited income which target low cost, healthy food procurement and preparation.
Physical activity opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Enhance access to physical activity opportunities for those of limited income.

Strategy 2.3

Develop, expand and/or maintain nutrition and practical skill development programs to support optimal nutrition for groups who are vulnerable.

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Pregnancy	→ Continue to facilitate increased access and participation of high risk pregnant women and their families to childbirth education, counselling, and nutrition support services.
Infant nutrition	→ Continue to provide support, nutrition education and opportunity for skill development to nutritionally vulnerable pregnant women and mothers of infants through access to the Healthy Baby Club Program as part of the Canada Prenatal Nutrition and the National Child Benefit Programs.
Children and adolescents	<p>→ Continue to seek ways to provide support, nutrition education and opportunity for skill development to parents of nutritionally vulnerable children through the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the nutritional component of programs such as the Early Childhood Development Initiatives, the Community Action Program for Children, and the initiatives of the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Plan including programming and services offered through provincial Family Resource Centers.</p> <p>→ Continue to provide enhanced nutrition and physical activity opportunities for vulnerable children, adolescents and parents through school-based programs, such as those offered by the School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Kids Eat Smart Foundation, and seeks ways to meet vulnerable children's and adolescent needs during non-school time periods.</p>
Aboriginal People	→ Continue to encourage and support initiatives which identify and address barriers and challenges facing people of Aboriginal populations in achieving nutritional health and an active lifestyle.
Post-secondary students	→ Determine barriers and challenges facing post-secondary students in achieving nutritional health and an active lifestyle and investigate means to address concerns.
Seniors at home or living in institutions	<p>→ Implement nutrition interventions within a comprehensive range of community-based services such as home support, meals on wheels, respite care and caregiver supports which are based on identified needs for the elderly and continuing care clients.</p> <p>→ Continue to monitor personal care homes to ensure access to nutritious menus.</p> <p>→ Enhance support of province and community initiatives which address barriers for seniors to healthy eating such as isolation, transportation, income and disabilities.</p>

Strategy 2.3

Develop, expand and/or maintain nutrition and practical skill development programs to support optimal nutrition for groups who are vulnerable.

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Persons with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Continue efforts to promote the incorporation of nutrition education and counselling into programs and service delivery for persons with disabilities.→ Develop suitable nutrition education resources, including programs with practical skill development components, for individuals with disabilities.
Clinical nutrition therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Continue efforts to promote the availability of timely, accessible and appropriate programs, counselling and services for individuals needing therapeutic diets, therapeutic nutrition education/counselling and/or nutrition support such as home enteral or parental nutrition throughout the entire province.
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Continue efforts to promote the incorporation of nutrition education into mental health programs and provide adequate and appropriate nutrition counselling services for mental health clients.
Alcohol and substance abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Continue efforts to promote the incorporation of nutrition education and counselling into addictions programs.

Strategy 2.4

Address major nutrition and health issues facing residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Cancer Diabetes Heart disease, hypertension and stroke Obesity Osteoporosis Other acute and chronic medical conditions	→ Enhance present treatment programs and services necessary to effectively address pertinent nutrition and health issues with a focus on clinical nutrition therapy and physical activity.
Screening, referral and counselling services	→ Develop and implement provincial standards for nutrition screening, clinical nutrition therapy and nutrition education referral, and nutrition intervention.

Action Plan Overview Key Direction Three: Enhance the Availability of Safe, High Quality Food Which Supports Healthy Eating

Strategy 3.1	
Promote and support the importance of nutrition and the availability of foods which support healthy eating as a factor in the production, processing and marketing of food.	
Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Food producers, suppliers and retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Collaborate on intersectoral initiatives designed to enhance training opportunities concerning the nutritional quality of food products. → Continue to collaborate with relevant partners to develop procedures for the production and processing of food products which support healthy eating. → Encourage the development of food products with compositional characteristics which support healthy eating.
Restaurants/ food outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to work with the food service sector to support healthy eating through initiatives such as the Heart Smart Restaurant Program.
Food labelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to participate in and support federal food labelling initiatives and public education programs.

Strategy 3.1

Promote and support the importance of nutrition and the availability of foods which support healthy eating as a factor in the production, processing and marketing of food.

Publicly-funded and/or government regulated organizations and institutions

- Schools
- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Personal care homes
- Child care settings
- Group homes
- Correctional institutions
- Municipal governments

- Ensure that all provincial public institutions such as hospitals, long-term care facilities, group homes, child care centres, schools, universities, community colleges and correctional institutions have food and nutrition policies and offer healthy reasonably priced food choices in cafeterias and canteens and provide patients/residents with healthy menu options.
- Ensure that all provincial government buildings which provide food services provide healthy food options.
- Continue to encourage training programs targeting healthy eating for those involved in food services in institutionalized feeding settings.
- Partner on healthy eating initiatives with municipalities focusing on the provision of healthy choices at public events.

Strategy 3.2

Establish and maintain high standards of food and water safety.

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Food handling legislation, regulations and codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Continue to use a risk-based approach to food premises inspections with resources focussed on high risk food premises and attention focused on critical hazards within the operation of food premises.→ Ensure that all food premises are licensed, inspected and operated in accordance with current regulations, protocols and guidelines.→ Continue inspection of all provincial fish plants.→ Participate in a Federal/Provincial/Territorial process to develop harmonized national codes and standards for a safe and nutritious food supply.→ Continue to conduct site or incident specific education with inspections/investigative activities.→ Continue to promote relevant legislation, regulation and codes.

Strategy 3.2

Establish and maintain high standards of food and water safety.

Safe food handling practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Conduct a review of present food safety public education programs to identify gaps in collaboration with all affected stakeholders. → Continue to develop and support implementation of consumer food safety campaigns such as FightBAC. → Enhance the availability of consumer food safety programs including those which address food fundraising campaigns (cold plates, bake sales etc. . .) and traditional Newfoundland and Labrador food procurement and preparation practices. → Continue to support and implement comprehensive quality improvement programs in the food industry in cooperation with all interested partners such as the quality improvement initiatives implemented by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. → Continue to implement the Continuous Quality Improvement Program (CQIP) through Department of Natural Resources to encourage the cooperation in the development and implementation of food safety programs for agrifood value added processing. → Continue ongoing evaluation of existing food safety programs and policies. → Continue to respond to emergencies, complaints, food recalls and report violations. → Develop a risk assessment tool(s) to support a risk management framework pertaining to food safety. → Support implementation of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Program. → Collaborate on intersectoral initiatives designed to enhance training opportunities related to improving the safety of food products. → Enhance food handling/sanitation training for individuals in the food and food services industries including those involved with quality improvement.
Water safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to implement the <i>Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality</i> through the use of provincial water standards. → Continue to implement the provincial plan of action for water safety <i>Source to Tap</i>.

Strategy 3.3

Promote the development and marketing of local products which support healthy eating practices.

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
<p>Promotion of Newfoundland and Labrador food products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seafood (including aquaculture)• Agriculture• Local produce and game	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Collaborate with relevant partners to develop and market products which are consistent with <i>Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating</i>.→ Continue efforts to improve the overall quality of seafood and agriculture products produced in Newfoundland and Labrador.→ Include the nutritional value of local agricultural and seafood products in marketing and promotional campaigns where appropriate.→ Continue to review product yields and seek products which have economic viability.→ Continue to promote Newfoundland and Labrador food products through festivals, fairs, farmer markets and campaigns such as <i>"We are Growing"</i>.→ Promote Newfoundland and Labrador food products which support healthy eating for use in cafeterias, school events and as healthy alternatives for fundraising.→ Promote Newfoundland and Labrador food products to food services and cooking classes/schools.→ Continue to seek ways to merge products, such as agriculture and seafood, in recipes and events.→ Continue efforts to provide healthy recipes which incorporate local products and local game for consumer use.

Strategy 3.4

Promote economically and environmentally sustainable practices which protect food-related resources.

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Identification and management of environmental issues	→ Continue to identify and develop management strategies for environmental issues.
Land, air and water resources	→ Continue to develop resource sustainability initiatives, such as crop rotation and seedling programs, through government interdepartmental collaboration and liaisons with other agencies and stakeholders.
Pesticide use	→ Support and promote federal, provincial and community initiatives relating to pesticide use and participate in national programs such as activities outlined in the <i>Action Plan for the Urban Use of Pesticides</i> .
Antibiotic use	→ Continue to promote and support national regulations regarding livestock antibiotic use.
Waste management	→ Continue to implement the Provincial Waste Management Strategy. → Enhance commercial and household recycling efforts in the province through partnerships with stakeholders and community programs. → Ensure availability of adequate and accessible recycling programs. → Promote full utilization of all components and by-products of food production.
Emergency response capacity	→ Establish an ongoing process to assess the provincial emergency response capacity in regards to food and water supply.
Public education	→ Enhance school and public education programs on areas relating to sustainability of food resources.

Action Plan Overview: Key Direction Four: Support Food and Nutrition Research

Strategy 4.1	
Identify recent, current and planned research initiatives.	
Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Provincial research initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review research currently being conducted and identify gaps that need to be addressed. → Continue to develop a food and nutrition research register through a partnership with key stakeholders including Memorial University and the Department of Health and Community Services.

Strategy 4.2	
Establish research priorities.	
Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Provincial research priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop a structure and an evidence-based decision making process to establish and review provincial priorities with input from stakeholders including government departments and agencies, the Centre for Applied Health Research, universities and colleges, health care providers, community groups and industry. → Examine the results of the Provincial Nutrition Survey and the Canadian Community Health Survey 2.2 and make appropriate recommendations.

Strategy 4.3	
To encourage food and nutrition research.	
Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Local food and nutrition expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Facilitate and develop local food and nutrition expertise by ensuring the availability of resources to encourage new researchers such as on-site and distance practice-based research courses, a food and nutrition research mentorship program and a food and nutrition research network. → Provide opportunities for food and nutrition policy stakeholders, including community groups, to develop and apply research skills. → Hold food and nutrition research symposiums in conjunction with stakeholder groups. → Continue to participate in nutrition surveys and surveys with a nutrition component such as the Canadian Community Health Survey, National Population Health Survey and National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth.
Research funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review and identify available food and nutrition research funding. → Provide assistance with the development of funding proposals. → Seek research funding for the implementation and evaluation of the provincial food and nutrition framework.

Strategy 4.4	
Monitor food and nutrition services programs and services, policies and practices.	
Focus Area	Proposed Actions
Nutrition surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to partner with national and provincial stakeholders in the development of a nutrition surveillance system.
Programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop a method to monitor food and nutrition programs and services.
Provincial food and nutrition framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop a method to monitor the implementation of the provincial food and nutrition framework.

Strategy 4.5	
Develop a provincial dissemination plan for food and nutrition research.	
Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Research opportunities	→ Develop a provincial dissemination plan which includes strategies for ensuring that research training, funding and participation opportunities are widely disseminated.
Research findings	→ Develop a provincial dissemination plan which includes strategies for ensuring research findings are converted into effective policies, programs and services and disseminated widely through a public relations/marketing strategy with involvement of media as needed.

VIII. MEASURING SUCCESS

Overview

In any initiative, one of the key questions which arises is: how will success be measured? A significant aspect of strategic planning is evaluation. The strategic planning format used in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* reflects the current provincial government protocol. The government's commitment to evidence-based decision making is evident in the inclusion of mechanisms to comprehensively monitor action plan progress.

Key Direction Outcome Summary

There is an outcome summary which provides an overview of how the key directions will be evaluated. This summary includes objectives, indicators and targets.

Objectives

An **objective** is a description of the broad end results which are being sought. The combined objectives are reflective of the stated goals of the key directions. These objectives are generalized statements which would be expected to remain relatively consistent over time.

Indicators

An **indicator** is a measurement used to monitor progress. Over time, indicators may need to be adapted or additional ones may need to be added in response to new information and data.

The indicators proposed for the framework implementation are not intended to comprehensively measure all aspects of the framework, but instead, are meant to provide data in key areas. Consideration in choosing these indicators included relevance, validity, availability, practicality of data collection and cost. Some of the indicators were adopted from provincial initiatives or national documents such as *Nutrition for Health: An Agenda for Action*, while others were determined through interdepartmental and stakeholder consultation.

In addition to providing specific data about the framework progress, the use of indicators will stimulate questions for informal and formal research efforts. For example, breastfeeding initiation rate is an indicator of healthy eating practices. An increase in the provincial breastfeeding initiation rate is a sign that the situation is improving. However, if it is known that a region in the province has a higher breastfeeding initiation rate than other areas, the question of "why" is raised. The answers to such questions provide information which can be applied to other regions' activities and to enhance further provincial success.

The indicators proposed in *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* are preliminary ones and will be further defined as additional data becomes available. In addition, current and future national initiatives focusing on food and nutrition indicators will assist with future provincial efforts.

Targets

A **target** is also a measurement used to monitor progress, but is a short-term measure of success. Targets have outlined desired results typically with specific time lines which are used to compare actual results.

Using targets to monitor and predict change is becoming standard practice; however, it is still a growing area with both opportunities and challenges. Key challenges include the lack of data collection in some areas of food and nutrition and the need to use self-reported survey data, which has limitations. Additionally, there are no guarantees that the same survey questions used to generate baseline data for framework targets will be repeated in future national surveys to allow comparison. The collection of the majority of this data is new which does not allow projections based on trends.

There are efforts on a national level to develop and coordinate food and nutrition targets. In the interim, it is important to identify targets which can indicate progress in provincial efforts. The framework targets are best efforts in challenging circumstances and are adopted from strategic plans from other initiatives or are based on recommendations from government departments. It has been noted in areas where data is not yet available to allow reasonable targets to be projected at the present time.

An overview of the outcome measurements for each key direction area is located in the following table. These outcome measurements will be updated and reviewed regularly. Specific outcome measurement for priority areas will be further defined.

Framework Outcome Summary		
Objectives What is trying to be achieved?	Indicators How will efforts be measured?	Targets What are the short-term desired results?
Increased proportion of the population engaging in healthy eating practices and consuming a nutritionally appropriate diet, consistent with national guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Estimated intake of fruit and vegetables	★ Increase adequate consumption of fruit and vegetables by 20 per cent by 2015
	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiation and duration of breastfeeding	★ Increase initiation of breastfeeding from 63 per cent to 70 per cent by 2010 ★ Increase duration of breastfeeding* ²²
	<input type="checkbox"/> Incidence of low birth weight	★ Decrease the rate of babies born with a low birth weight*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of the population that is overweight/obese	★ Reduce the proportion of the population who are overweight/obese by 20 percent by 2015

²² * Indicates specific target will be determined once additional data is available.

Framework Outcome Summary		
Objectives What is trying to be achieved?	Indicators How will efforts be measured?	Targets What are the short-term desired results?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Intention to make changes in eating habits	★ Increase the proportion of the population intending to make positive changes in eating habits by 20 per cent by 2010
Increased number of environments which support healthy eating and physical activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Adoption of School Food Guidelines	★ All schools will adopt the Provincial School Food Guidelines by 2007
Increased proportion of the population with a physical activity level consistent with national guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Level of physical activity	★ Decrease the percentage of the population who are physically inactive by 20 per cent by 2015
	<input type="checkbox"/> Intent to make changes in physical activity	★ Increase the proportion of the population intending to make positive changes in physical activity by 20 per cent by 2010
Increased proportion of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians within vulnerable populations consuming diets which are nutritionally appropriate and consistent with national guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Estimated intake of fruit and vegetable in the low income population ²³	★ Increase adequate consumption of fruit and vegetables in the low income population by 20 per cent by 2015
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of children and youth who are overweight/obese	★ Reduce the proportion of children and youth who are overweight/ obese by 20 per cent by 2010
Increased proportion of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians within vulnerable populations with a physical activity level consistent with national guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Level of physical activity in the low income population	★ Increase the percentage of the low income population who are physically active by 20 per cent by 2015 ★ Decrease the percentage of youth who are sedentary by 20 per cent by 2010 ★ Decrease the percentage of seniors who are sedentary by 20 per cent by 2010

²³ Low income is defined as before tax income of < \$15,000 per year if 1 or 2 people; <\$20,000 per year if 3 or 4 people; < \$40,000 per year if 5+ people.

Framework Outcome Summary		
Objectives What is trying to be achieved?	Indicators How will efforts be measured?	Targets What are the short-term desired results?
Increased proportion of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians having access to an adequate food supply.	<input type="checkbox"/> Cost of nutritious food basket ²⁴ in relation to income	★ Increase the percentage of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have the ability to purchase a nutritious food basket*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of the population which is food insecure	★ Decrease the percentage of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are food insecure by 20 per cent by 2015
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of children and youth living in food insecure households	★ Decrease the number of youth living in food insecure households by 20 per cent by 2015
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of schools which provide support to disadvantaged children through subsidized feeding programs.	★ Increase the percentage of schools which provide support to disadvantaged children through subsidized feeding programs*
Increased availability of foods which support healthy eating.	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of production of locally grown and raised agriculture foods	★ Increase the production of locally grown and raised agriculture foods*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of food choices offered in schools which meet the school food guidelines	★ Ensure all food served or sold in schools will meet the school food guidelines by September 2008
Increased availability of safe, high quality food and water.	<input type="checkbox"/> Record of critical hazards identified during retail food premise inspections	★ Achieve a reduction in the number of critical hazards identified during retail food premises inspection*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Inspection rates of identified food products	★ Increase passing inspection rates of identified foods*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of food premises which are assessed at high risk	★ Decrease the percentage of food premises which are assessed as high risk*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of communities which have a safe water supply	★ All communities will have access to a safe water supply*

²⁴ A nutritious food basket is a measurement tool which indicates the average cost to purchase groceries to adequately feed a specified number of people in a family.

Framework Outcome Summary		
Objectives What is trying to be achieved?	Indicators How will efforts be measured?	Targets What are the short-term desired results?
Increased incidence of environmentally sustainable practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of farms which have completed Environmental Farm Plans	★ Increase the percentage of farms which have completed Environmental Farms Plans from 32 per cent to 100 per cent by 2008
	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of Newfoundland and Labrador households engaged in composting	★ Increase the percentage of households which compost from 20 per cent to 30 per cent by 2008.

IX. CONCLUSION

The development and implementation of a provincial food and nutrition framework is an important initial step in ensuring reasonable access to food and nutrition information, programs, services and for the achievement of food security. Together with other initiatives such as the poverty reduction strategy, the physical activity strategy and the provincial wellness plan, *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* provides a framework for government, industry and citizens to assess provincial strengths and to determine challenges. This framework is meant to be a guide for dialogue and a source of direction for long-term strategic planning.

Implementation is the process of animating framework. Implementation of a food and nutrition framework can occur in a variety of ways depending on the resources available and the needs of the individual or community. Implementation is an ongoing process that corresponds with the ever-changing world. Aligning individual and community priorities with resources within an overall provincial implementation plan is the challenge which lies ahead.

The framework vision of *Eating Healthier in Newfoundland and Labrador* can be considered the destination and the implementation is the journey. Government, through broad consultation, has decided on the destination or the end points of the food and nutrition framework and has developed an initial plan for the journey. The implementation plan will be further defined to ensure that all people living in Newfoundland and Labrador have reasonable access to an adequate, safe food supply and a supportive, comprehensive network of food and nutrition services.