

Join the Kawartha Region Local Food Wholesale Project

You are invited to participate in an exciting new project that seeks to support expanded production, wholesale marketing, and purchasing of local food within Kawartha Lakes, the City of Peterborough, and Peterborough County.

The Kawartha Region Local Food Wholesale Project aims to build the capacity of the local economy in providing local food to consumers through expanded local food utilization by food service, restaurants, retail, and institutional businesses.

During this two-year project, as a **Local Food Producer** participant, you will receive, at no cost:

1. **Group training** to better understand effective wholesale production and marketing practices. (February 2024 to April 2024)
2. **One-on-one coaching** at your own convenience to adapt training material to your own business. (April 2024 to December 2025)
3. Facilitated coordination for aggregation and distribution of locally produced foods **to local food buyers in restaurant, retail, food service, and institutional businesses** within the region who will be concurrently participating in the Local Food Buyer side of this project. (July 2024 to December 2025)

Producer Benefits

The Kawartha Region Local Food Wholesale Project aims to build the capacity of the local economy in providing local food to consumers.

Participating local food producers and food buyers will build mutual understanding and lasting relationships and identify wholesale models that work for both sides of the wholesale relationship. By doing this together, with the assistance of a team of expert advisors, the group can expand access, networks of collaboration and support, and create greater availability of locally produced foods through local wholesale channels.

What benefits will this provide local food producers?

- The utilization of an economy of scale will provide more time for farming and other interests by reducing time selling and delivering.
- The ability to concentrate on the products each producer most enjoys producing.
- Higher farm profits overall, even with possibly lower farmgate prices.
- The chance to learn new skills to improve each farming operation and address common challenges.
- The opportunity to learn new business management skills.
- Knowledge of the unique needs of buyers who are interested in sourcing quality local food and the tools to work together to build a successful local food wholesale network.

Producer Training

We are excited that producer training and coaching will be provided by David Cohlmeier of Sustainable Good Food Consulting. David was the founder and former owner of Cookstown Greens and has decades of experience working with both farmers and chefs.

What will training entail?

- Several group workshops using the Guidelines and Toolkit in a modular format.
- Written materials and handouts will be provided to participants.
- The opportunity to meet with other producers to build a collaborative network of support in developing local food wholesale capacity

Guidelines and Toolkit

Guidelines and Toolkit for local food producers will include:

- A booklet and templates with the content developed to address needs identified by the participants.
- A thorough review of the many practices that producers could incorporate into the business to succeed in the local food wholesale marketplace.

Training topics:

Producer Training topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Production planning
 - What products are in demand
 - What product mix can I produce
 - What are my best periods for availability
 - Which varieties/breeds are most suitable
 - Rotations and cover-crops to minimize pests
- Packaging
 - Quality (size, cleanliness, temperature)
 - Methods for grading, washing, cooling
 - Standard packaging/labeling requirements
 - Educating staff about the need for consistency
 - Aggregating products with other producers
- Logistics
 - Negotiating contracts with Buyers
 - Agreeing on Prices and Payment terms
 - Farmgate pick-up vs delivered
 - Communicating with Buyers
 - Keeping orders, delivery, and storage reliable
 - Understanding the challenges that buyers have
- Food Safety requirements

- Best post-harvest handling practices
- Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR)
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- These improve yields, appearances, and shelf-life
- Worker Safety practices
- Market development
 - Profiling your Value Proposition
 - Using your Brand to support higher prices
 - Connecting with wholesale Buyers
 - Preparing for buyer farm visits
 - How to suggest new products
 - Compare costs with alternate channels
- Business planning
 - Record-keeping to provide useful data
 - Calculating full Costs of Production
 - Knowing the full Costs of Marketing
 - Forecasting Cash Flow
 - Scaling capacity for optimal profit
- Finding sources of funding

One-on-One Producer Coaching

The training and one-on-one coaching phase is meant to be advisory in nature, and any costs for amendments by buyers would be borne by them and not the consultant. The Coaching aspect of this mandate will extend through the final phase of the project on an as-needed basis, even after the initial individual business recommendations are provided.

Facilitated Aggregation and Distribution Pilot Activity

The final portion of the project will see a Pilot Aggregation/Distribution System be undertaken to assist the group of producers and buyers engaged in the education and coaching phases of this project to enter wholesale buying relationships as a collective group with centralized activities. This will address challenges of product delivery costs, potential difficulties meeting volume demands, risk of potential crop losses, insufficient variety, and more.

The Local Food Hub demonstration pilot project will facilitate collaboration among participants to test and choose the appropriate aggregation and distribution systems (be it a central place or a network of smaller function-based facilities, or other arrangement) which will ultimately increase the volume of local food transactions and improve efficiency for local food distribution and buyer procurement in the region.

Next Steps for Interested Local Producers:

Step 1: Expression of Interest

To register for this project, complete this short **Expression of Interest Form**. Tell us why you are interested in this project and what you hope to achieve by participating. Please note spaces are limited. **The deadline to apply is December 22, 2023.**

Step 2: Follow-up Questions

Within 7 days of completing this Expression of Interest, the Project Coordinator will contact you to collect additional information to determine an appropriate training and personalized coaching plan.

All information collected about your business will be kept confidential. Contact information will only be used for communications within this project by the project team. Other information provided in your responses will be used to guide the development of training and coaching within this project.

Please indicate your interest in participating by completing this short **Expression of Interest Form**. **The deadline to apply is December 22, 2023.**

For additional information, contact:

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