



# SERVING UP LOCAL

Manual For Increasing Local Foods In Long-Term Care



Golden Horseshoe  
Food and Farming  
Alliance



Possibility grows here.

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## ***Acknowledgements***

This resource is a summary of good practices published as part of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance project, *Serving Up Local: Increasing Municipal Local Food Procurement*. The project was made possible with financial support from the Government of Ontario, in partnership with the Greenbelt Fund, in acknowledgment of the exciting potential Ontario's public institutions have in helping to sustain agriculture in Ontario.

*Serving Up Local* is a partnership between Durham and Halton Regions, the City of Hamilton and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA), to increase the amount of local foods offered in their facilities with a special focus on long-term care homes. We use the purchasing power of public institutions to strengthen Ontario's agricultural sector and appeal to our residents seeking local food offerings.

The GHFFA is a partnership between the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, the Friends of the Greenbelt, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Niagara and Durham Colleges, the Vineland Innovation Centre, the Holland Marsh Growers and the Regional Municipalities and Federations of Agriculture in Niagara, Peel, Halton, York, and Durham, and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto. The collaboration works for an integrated and coordinated approach to food and farming viability in the area to ensure that the Golden Horseshoe retains, enhances and expands its role as a leading food and farming cluster.

The wisdom offered by municipal and long-term care home staff was invaluable to this work. We are grateful to the following individuals for contributing their expertise and time to the project and to this manual:

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# INTRODUCTION

This manual is a collection of good practices resulting from the experience of nine long-term care (LTC) homes in three regions in the Golden Horseshoe region of Ontario as part of the *Serving Up Local* project from May 2016 to January 2018. It is designed to provide resources and steps that can be put into practice to initiate and grow institutional local food procurement programs by long-term care and other food service and procurement staff throughout the MASH (Municipalities, Academics, School Boards and Hospitals) sector in Ontario.

While local food is becoming easier to access across the province, Ontario foods still make up the minority of food purchases in the long-term care sector. Barriers to local food procurement have been identified anecdotally among long-term care staff in the *Serving Up Local* project and are similar to those documented in other Ontario studies in long-term care, including My Sustainable Canada's 2015 report, *Local Food and Ontario's Long-Term Care Sector*. Some of these challenges are common in other institutional food procurement settings as well. This manual describes how institutions may work through the challenges as well as the exciting opportunities that Ontario's rich agricultural sector presents.

# Definitions

**Broader Public Sector:** Public institutions in Ontario include municipal buildings, hospitals, universities and colleges, long-term care facilities, public schools and some daycares.

**Long-Term Care Homes (LTC Homes):** LTC homes provide care, services and accommodation to people who require the availability of 24-hour nursing care, supervision in a secure setting, or frequent assistance with activities of daily living such as dressing and bathing. LTC homes are sometimes referred to as nursing homes or homes for the aged. They may be for-profit, not-for-profit, or municipally run organizations, and often have waiting lists for their beds. Since 2010, only people with high care needs are eligible for LTC in Ontario, largely due to the Ontario government's aging-in-place strategy that increases funding for care at home. The result is that Ontario seniors in LTC are in greater need of medical and personal care than before.<sup>i</sup>

**Procurement:** Procurement is the process an organization or institution undergoes to select suppliers for goods and services based on criteria such as cost and quality, established payment terms, and contracts for the purchase of goods and services.

**Request for Proposal:** A request for proposal (RFP) is the first stage in the contracted procurement process. RFPs are issued by an institution (buyer) to inform suppliers that the institution is interested in procurement of a commodity and/or service. The priorities of the buyer are communicated through the evaluation matrix at the end of the RFP, which enumerates their criteria and how they are weighted. Product information, price, and other qualifiers are then provided by the suppliers through a proposal bid. The buyer determines the winner of the contract using an evaluation matrix.<sup>ii</sup>

**Group Purchasing Organization:** A group purchasing organization (GPO) is an entity that aims to help healthcare providers such as long-term care homes, hospitals, and home health agencies, realize savings and efficiencies by aggregating purchasing volume and using that leverage to negotiate discounts with manufacturers, distributors and other vendors.

**80/20 Purchasing Rule:** Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) contracts issued by healthcare facilities may include a clause stating that the facility reserves the right to purchase 20% of its goods and services from vendors not listed in the GPO contract(s) for all food categories under contract.

**Velocity Reports:** These are purchasing reports provided by the facility's food distributor(s) on an annual or quarterly basis that identify products purchased over a specific timeframe. The request can be made to delineate Ontario food purchases vs. imports in these reports to assist with local food tracking.

**Retherm:** Retherming is the process of reheating food that has been previously cooked to a safe temperature and safely cooled to a frozen or refrigerated state. Retherm ovens are typically used in large institutions and allow food preparation to occur off-site, catering to centralized production kitchens that have satellite operations.

**Long-Term Care Homes Act:** The Ontario government's Long-Term Care Homes Act (LTCHA), 2007, governs all long-term care homes in the province. The LTCHA aims to help ensure that residents of long-term care homes receive safe, consistent, high-quality, resident-centred care. It details requirements for menu planning, meal service, and includes a formula for staffing food service workers.

**Buying Group Rebates:** Buying group rebates are paid to the institutional buyers based on their purchases with the contracted vendors, either per vendor or as a percentage of their total purchase in a category.

# Why Increase Local Food in Long-Term Care?

## ***Appealing to a Large Number of Ontarians and Improving Health***

With 625 long-term care homes licensed to operate in Ontario with a combined 78,443 beds for residents<sup>iii</sup>, the long-term care sector provides food services to many older adults in Ontario.

Worldwide, malnutrition affects 30-60% of older adults living in LTC homes, and greatly impacts health, well-being and quality of life. Canadian research by the Schlegel-University of Waterloo Research Institute for Aging (RIA) and the Agri-food for Healthy Aging (A-HA) program demonstrates that poor food intake is considered the primary cause of LTC malnutrition, yet it is preventable. The research identified key determinants that could contribute to increased food intake, a primary indicator being the residents' perception of the "quality" of their meals.



As part of the *Serving Up Local* project, the GHFFA administered a survey to 103 residents and their family members at six of the homes taking part in *Serving Up Local*, to determine if a "local/Ontario" label increased their interest in, and improved their perception of, food served thereby contributing to a positive mealtime experience for residents. **79% were interested to know if food was sourced locally and 71% felt better about the food served when they knew it was sourced locally from Ontario.**

For the full *Serving Up Local* survey results see **Appendix A**.

Food is an important element of physical, emotional and psychological health in this vulnerable population. If showcasing local foods to LTC residents results in greater interest in food, then local food may be a tool to help address malnutrition and dehydration rates in long-term care homes.

## ***Making the Most of Budgets***

Long-term care has one of the lowest fixed food budgets in the Broader Public Sector. **What can be accomplished in the long-term care sector has the potential to demonstrate what is certainly possible in other sectors with greater budget flexibility.** A 2015 survey by Dietitians of Canada's Ontario LTC Action Group was completed by 382 Nutrition Managers and Registered Dietitians in LTC. When respondents were asked about changes they would make to resident menus if there were additional funds available, most respondents would improve the quality of meats and other protein, and serve more fresh fruit and vegetables. Meanwhile, reducing these items was the most common menu change made to reduce expenditures.<sup>v</sup> Fortunately, Ontario vendors offer a wide variety of nutrient-dense fresh meats and fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables to support the goals of these nutritional experts in long-term care.

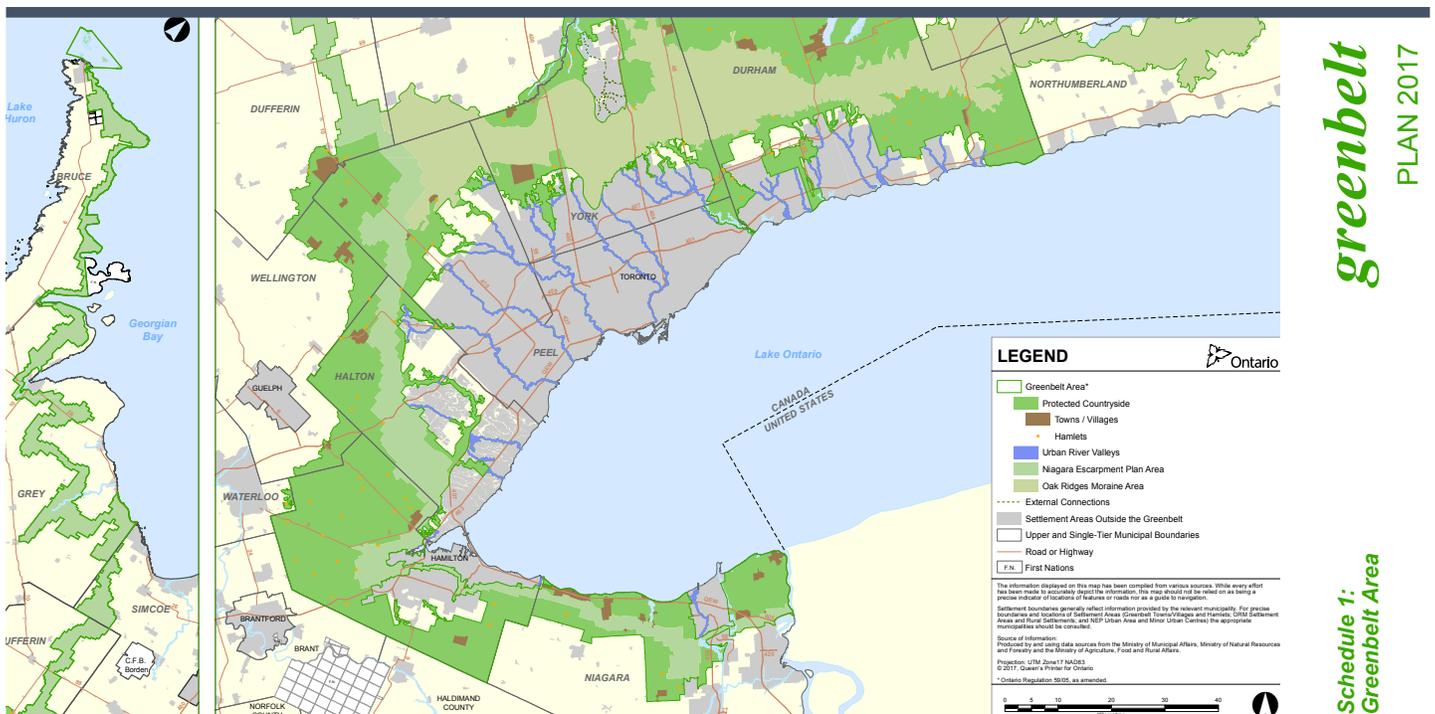
Over the duration of the *Serving Up Local* project, collectively the nine LTC homes increased their seasonal fresh fruit and vegetable purchases (with a focus on strawberries, asparagus, corn on the cob, peaches, tomatoes), by 124%!

## Sustaining Agriculture in Ontario

The Broader Public Sector has a significant opportunity to **contribute to the local economy and help sustain agriculture in Ontario** with an estimated \$745 million dollars spent by these publicly funded institutions annually on food and beverages.<sup>vi</sup>

Ontario's Greenbelt is a significant agricultural resource contributing to local food purchasing potential. It extends as far north as Tobermory and stretches 325 kilometres from Rice Lake in Northumberland County to the Niagara River. It encompasses 856,424 acres of farmland and 11% of all farms in Ontario. **Forty-three per cent of the total Greenbelt area is currently used for agricultural purposes.** The Greenbelt's location at the heart of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, one of the fastest growing regions in North America, is beneficial for the next stage in the value chain—food processing. The Golden Horseshoe accounts for 60% of Ontario's post-farm-gate employment in food processing and manufacturing.<sup>vii</sup>

Furthermore, one of the key findings of the *Dollars & Sense: Opportunities to Strengthen Southern Ontario's Food System* study produced in partnership with the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Metcalf Foundation, and the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, was that over 50% of currently imported food could be produced in Ontario. Replacing 10% of the top 10 fruit and vegetable imports with Ontario grown produce would help create 3,400 jobs and boost the province's GDP by nearly a quarter billion dollars.<sup>viii</sup>



# Profile of *Serving Up Local* LTC Homes

Halton Region, Ontario	Region of Durham, Ontario	City of Hamilton, Ontario
Allendale, Milton Post Inn Village, Oakville Creek Way Village, Burlington	Fairview Lodge, Whitby Hillsdale Estates, Oshawa Hillsdale Terraces, Oshawa Lakeview Manor, Beaverton	Wentworth Lodge, Dundas Macassa Lodge, Hamilton
The majority of food is purchased and prepared in Allendale's production kitchen using on-site cooking and cook-chill system for distribution to the three Halton homes	Each Region of Durham long-term care home prepares resident meals using both on-site cooking and prepared items	Food is prepared at each home using on-site cooking and prepared items
572 resident beds	847 resident beds	430 resident beds
Approximately 1,802 meals served per day in 20 dining rooms, and two community programs	Approximately 2,896 meals served per day in 32 dining rooms and several community programs	Approximately 1,350 meals served per day in 17 dining rooms and community programs
<b>Age:</b> 44-111, average age 85 <b>Sex</b> Female: 73% Male: 27%	<b>Age:</b> 23-109, average age 86 <b>Sex:</b> Female: 70.4% Male: 28%, Other 1.6%	<b>Age:</b> 46-102 years, average age 89 <b>Sex</b> Female: 69% Male: 31%
<b>Top Diagnoses</b> Neurological Diseases 79.8% Heart/Circulation Diseases 77.4% Dementia (Alzheimer's) 63.6% Hypertension 63.2% Musculoskeletal Diseases 61.8% <sup>ix</sup>	<b>Top Diagnoses</b> Dementia (Alzheimer's/Other) 68% Musculoskeletal Diseases 67.3%	<b>Top Diagnoses</b> Hypertension 67.5% Dementia (Alzheimer's) 49.5% Osteoporosis 35% Hyperlipidemia 30.5% Diabetes, Type 2 20%

# STEPS TO ACTION

The *Serving Up Local* project was undertaken by Durham and Halton Regions and the City of Hamilton to increase the amount of local foods offered in their facilities with a special focus on long-term care homes. The initiative was facilitated by the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) and extended over a 21-month period from May 2016 to January 2018. The project followed the “Steps to Action” described in this manual, and identified and addressed the following barriers:

## Assembling Your Team and Defining Local

- Knowing who should be on the project team and expertise necessary for the initiative
- Deciding on a definition of “local” as the definitions vary within food procurement

## Reviewing Current Purchasing Practices and New Opportunities and Challenges

- Lack of institutional knowledge on current local food purchases
- Insufficient knowledge on local food options or the cost impact of those choices
- Accurately identifying origin of local foods
- Group Purchasing Organizations and existing food contracts limit ability to purchase local

## Evaluate New Products and Change the Menu

- Restrictions around getting new Ontario products listed with distributors
- Limited food budget
- Limited labour budget
- Local Retherm options are limited

## Sustain the Change

- Trade Agreements that impact local procurement

# Assembling Your Team and Defining Local

## ***Assemble Your Internal Team***

Increasing local food is not just a food service issue - it requires the creation of a multi-stakeholder team within the long-term care home. The diverse perspectives of team members help ensure that challenges and opportunities all along the food chain relating to menu planning, food sourcing, purchasing, delivery, preparation, serving and consumption can be more easily identified and acted upon.

These stakeholders are the staff who know how food is purchased, who purchases it, who delivers it (distributors), what food contracts are in place and when they go out to tender, how food is cooked, who creates the menu and who makes the decisions.

Within the long-term care home;

- Bring together food directors, dietitians, staff in procurement, cooking and serving
- Ensure there is a plan to include the opinions of residents and their family members in changes to the menus
- Create a space where all voices, opinions and ideas are heard

The *Serving Up Local* teams in our project were made up of food directors, nutrition services supervisors, registered dietitians, and home administrators.

## ***Define Local***

A first step for the internal local food team will be to define what is "local" for the LTC homes' food system. A regional definition may be a high priority for regional and municipal governments, but they can be difficult to satisfy when accommodating the scale of purchasing required by your facility/Group Purchasing Organization. Some distributors more readily indicate "Canadian" on order lists, but this definition doesn't necessarily support Ontario's agricultural community.

The *Serving Up Local* project used the Foodland Ontario definition: "Food must be grown/raised and processed in Ontario."

Provincial definitions of local are most widely accepted and many of the large food service companies and distributors now have databases of their local food products based on an Ontario definition. Consider both the origin of the food product and where the processing takes place.

## Assemble Your External Team

Healthcare facilities in Ontario are organized into Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs) to combine the purchasing of the facilities' medical equipment, supplies, nutrition products and food. An external team made up of counterparts in the GPO, such as Food Directors, Managers and Nutrition Services Supervisors at other LTC homes within your region can help to boost buying power and refine strategies to increase the purchase and preparation of local foods. Bring together counterparts in the GPO who are food leaders in other LTC homes, to:

- Review current purchasing practices
- Share recipes that incorporate local ingredients as the local food initiative develops
- Find similarities in product needs for bulk purchasing of Ontario products

Distributors are the conduit between the GPO and the LTC home. There may be multiple distributors within each GPO, for example for breads, dairy, dry goods and fresh produce. The distributor sales team markets products to the LTC home buyers. They may offer their own brand of products and can provide information about available local products from other vendors. Your counterparts in your GPO may share the same distributor sales representative who will be a key resource for your external team when considering bulk purchasing options.

Outside of these collaborators, do the assessment to identify any champions you may have missed. Who's a foodie on your team? Who has a real passion for farming? Engage these food staff, administrators, distributors, funders, or political representatives in your food system who are inspired by local foods to ensure a local purchasing initiative can get off the ground and will be sustained.



*Region of Durham long-term care teams test local food recipes for retherm ovens at Burlodge Canada's "Refresh" seminar.*

# Reviewing Current Purchasing Practices & New Opportunities

## **Reviewing Current Purchasing Practices**

Once your team is assembled, you will want to know what local foods you are currently buying. Unless your facility has a local food purchasing policy, it is unlikely that there is any institutional knowledge of local food purchases. To acquire this information, each long-term care home can request purchasing reports from their food distributor(s) and GPO. These reports, called velocity reports, can be provided on an annual or quarterly basis and summarize products purchased over a specific timeframe. The request can be made to identify Ontario food purchases vs. imports to assist with local food tracking. Reports differ from region to region. In some cases, separate reports need to be requested of the GPO, the fresh dairy provider, breads, distributors and fresh produce providers. In other cases, the main distributor or GPO captures most of these sales.

- Request a list from your GPO of all distributors that will provide velocity reports for the complete purchasing picture at your home
- Request velocity reports from the GPO and all necessary distributors for a specific time period that identifies local purchases
- Use velocity reports to track growth in local food purchases year over year, ensuring that the time periods are consistent

See **Appendix B** for a *Velocity Report Request Template Letter*.

From these reports, determine the baseline of Ontario foods purchased by the home and the percentage of the total food budget it represents. The velocity reports will also reveal new opportunities to purchase local food. Easy substitutions can be identified and made where velocity reports show that local alternatives are available from the distributor for products that are currently being purchased as imports. Make sure that you are reviewing similar pack sizes. You may be surprised to find that the local option will be equal or better quality than your current purchase and may save you money.

See **Appendix C** for a *Local vs. Import Food Price Comparison Template*.

## **Bring the “Local” Dialogue to Your Distributor**

There are a number of ways to learn about opportunities to purchase Ontario foods.

- Your distributor may offer menu planning days for food staff or help to organize vendor fairs where residents can sample food. Request that more local vendors be represented there.
- Request a list of local vendors and products available through your distributor and GPO. They may not have a list currently available, but the more requests they receive, the more likely they will be to put resources towards creating a local list.
- Ask specific questions of your distributor about local options you would like to include in your menus. For example, if you want a local chicken breast, ask your distributor what options they carry and what their price points are. This will help to make an informed decision on the true cost of local and what your options are.

## Stories from the Field: Halton Region

Having open lines of communication with your vendors and distributors is key. Marilyn Lo, Nutrition Services Supervisor at Allendale LTC home in Halton Region found that accurately identifying the origin of local foods proved challenging in some cases. From Marilyn's experience: "Different vendors have different definitions of local. We had to dig deeper for some items to see if they were local or not as they weren't consistently labeled as such. There is the issue of vendors that ship nationally not identifying product sourced from Ontario. We had some items we knew were local but were not listed as local; therefore [the distributor] had to rename their item." Marilyn was able to pinpoint discrepancies by scanning the home's own internal tracking system for purchases, and then bring these questions directly to the home's distributor and vendors.



Members of Halton Region's long-term care food team, L-R Alice Martone, Marilyn Lo and Laura Richards, visiting the VG Meats processing facility in Simcoe, Ontario

# Set Your Target

Setting a specific monetary goal or percentage increase target of more local food in your facility allows your team to stay focused on the initiative and to set a benchmark against which to measure, celebrate and grow your successes. To set your goal, you must have the full picture from the start. The big picture includes:

- Baseline of the home's current local food purchases
- Opportunities that can be found within the home's current food purchases and contracts to include more Ontario produce and product within the required contracted list of vendors
- New local options available that could also be purchased by the homes in food categories not under contract
- Price comparison of targeted local food products and current imported purchases

The goal of the *Serving Up Local* project was to see a 5% increase in local food purchases from each of the three regions involved. In some cases, this goal was surpassed and in other cases it proved quite difficult. Homes that were utilizing more than 75% outsourced food options had less opportunity to incorporate local Ontario ingredients in their menus as the current local frozen entrée market is quite limited. It was therefore more difficult for them to increase their local options than the homes that were cooking a majority of their food from scratch.

Set a realistic goal that reflects the unique context of your home's food purchasing opportunities and challenges and keep revisiting it as your work moves forward.

**Your GPO contract may include a clause that the facility reserves the right to purchase 20% of its goods and services from vendors not listed in the GPO contract(s) for all food categories under contract, creating opportunities for new local vendors.**

# Evaluate New Products and Change the Menu

With the Ontario government setting out a budget of \$9.00/day per resident for all meals, snacks and beverages, as well as detailed requirements for menu planning and meal service, there are many factors to consider when evaluating changes to the LTC menu.

## **Compare Cost of Local Substitutions**

Cost is one of the main perceived barriers to switching to local foods. In the *Serving Up Local* project, many local options were actually cost neutral or offered modest savings, especially in the categories of frozen vegetables, dairy, some frozen entrées and select fresh fruits and vegetables.

Review the distributors' velocity reports, and plug products listed as Ontario origin and the similar imported products your home may be purchasing into the Local vs. Import Food Price Comparison Template. This resource will help to compare costs of similar volumes and pack sizes as well. Ensure you are consistent with the measurement you are using to compare prices.

See **Appendix C** for the *Local vs. Import Food Price Comparison Template*.

Group Purchasing Organizations and existing food contracts can limit financial incentives to purchase local. Rebates from GPOs to LTC homes may be affected when purchasing from non-preferred vendors.

## **Review Nutritional Specifications**

Plug the nutritional information provided by the vendor into the home's or the distributor's nutrition analysis system. It is interesting to note that with protein identified as such an important macronutrient for the elderly, some higher cost Ontario items were found to provide a higher protein per gram measurement, resulting in a re-evaluation of the value of the Ontario product<sup>x</sup>

For more information, see the [VG Meats Case Study](#) in the *Greenbelt Working Paper, Farm to Institution: The Power of the Public Sector*.

## **Stories from the Field: Region of Durham**

Prepared menu options that incorporate Ontario ingredients are currently limited, but there are opportunities. Burlodge Canada, manufacturer of retherm ovens, offers "Refresh" seminars at their demonstration kitchen in Brampton, Ontario, for their clients to re-envision food prepared in the Burlodge retherm ovens. On the menu for the *Serving Up Local Refresh* seminar: local bread pudding, Ontario apple crisp, shepherd's pie with local beef and vegetables, Ontario feta and red pepper frittata, Mediterranean bean salad with Ontario cucumbers and tomatoes, Ontario honey roasted carrots and local pasta fagioli. Catherine Pazzano, Director of Food Services at Hillsdale Estates in Durham Region, attended the "Refresh" seminar and has now successfully increased the local ingredients cooked by retherm. "The Ontario honey roasted carrots is a tasty and easy addition to the menu for us."

### **Test Product Performance During Preparation and in Cooking System**

Product performance will depend on the type of preparation and cooking system used whether it is cooking from scratch, retherm or purées. Make sure that your new product choices are as acceptable to your residents as the previous choices were.

When utilizing Ontario ingredients to support increased scratch cooking in the *Serving Up Local* project, some food service staff were resistant to what was perceived as more work. Creativity and an openness to try new approaches are keys to successfully incorporating Ontario ingredients into long-term care home menus. Involving both residents and staff in recipe and menu development, and of course taste testing, are key components to increasing awareness and satisfaction with menu offerings.

#### **Stories from the Field: Region of Durham**

*“Some of the cooking from scratch recipes we are using that incorporate local ingredients include: Spaghetti Bolognese, chicken à la king, vegetarian chili, cottage roll, beef pie, beef chili. They are exciting as in some cases we do not have an outsourced alternative. In other cases we can customize the recipes to suit our residents’ needs. Our homemade items have been well received by residents.”*

*- Peter Chrisostomou, Food Service Supervisor, Fairview Lodge, Region of Durham*

### **Sample New Products with Residents**

Ensure Ontario vendors are invited to vendor food fairs at the homes to provide samples of Ontario products to residents and engage the Residents’ Council in new Ontario menu ideas.

### **Determine If Minimum Volumes Can Be Met to Get New Products on the Distributors’ “Consistently Available” List**

If a new product is to be listed with a distributor there is a minimum weekly volume required. If the product is not listed, it goes onto a “Special Orders” list, increasing order processing and delivery time, which is more challenging to plan for within a fixed menu. Combining buying power with other LTC homes can allow for the minimum volumes to be met in order to have new, desired Ontario products added to the “consistently available” list and ease the purchasing and distribution.

## Stories from the Field: VG Meats in Long-Term Care

A primary goal of the Serving Up Local LTC teams was to get more local proteins on the menu. There wasn't a contract in place with their Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) for raw proteins, hence there was an opportunity to make some movement in a high commodity category. Alice Martone, Nutrition Services Supervisor in Halton Region, was keen on finding Ontario proteins, stating, "I wanted to give farm-fresh, clean nutrient dense product. It also gives the residents satisfaction and comfort knowing that they are eating the freshest product possible like they did many years ago."

To learn more, the Serving Up Local teams visited the VG Meats' farm and processing facility near Simcoe, Ontario, owned by the Van Groningen family. When making their decisions about purchasing from VG Meats, Anne Kayler and Sandra Denman, Food Directors at the City of Hamilton's long-term care facilities recalled their experience at the farm, "The VG Meats team is definitely customer-focused and eager and willing to meet the needs of each long-term care facility. Our impression of the family operation during the VG Farm and Processing Tour was that they appear to genuinely care about the environment, treatment of the livestock, food safety and providing a quality product."

Although the VG Meats products were typically higher cost items per gram, they were also higher in protein per gram, resulting in a re-evaluation of the value of the Ontario product. Through greater discussions between the homes and VG Meats, a new product was listed with the homes' distributor - a pork cottage roll that is very popular with residents. The development of the cottage roll is a direct result of the farm trip and discussions between long-term care food directors and an entrepreneurial farm business. The LTC teams from all regions of the Serving Up Local project were able to combine forces and agree on the cottage roll product, thereby meeting the distributor's minimum volumes and allowing the VG Cottage Roll to be added to the "consistently available" order list.

For more information on the VG Meats Farm Trip, see [www.foodandfarming.ca/ltc-teams-tour-vg-meats/](http://www.foodandfarming.ca/ltc-teams-tour-vg-meats/)



The long-term care teams from Durham and Halton Regions and the City of Hamilton visit the VG Meats farm in Simcoe, Ontario.

# How *Serving Up Local* Teams Changed the Menu

top 10 local food purchasing wins for ***servicing up local's*** long-term care homes:



local food purchases **increased by a combined 23%** in the nine LTC homes that took part in the *servicing up local* project

1



collectively the nine homes **increased the purchase of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables by 124%**. fresh fruits and vegetables now coming regularly from ontario include: apples, cucumbers, potatoes, spanish onions

2



a **new relationship with** an ontario farm and processor, **VG meats**, was made yielding new sustainable meat options on the menu: cottage roll, mushroom meatloaf, beef crumble and sliced roast pork

3



**jiano's meat lasagna** was introduced to the homes - "It was a great find and a far superior product!"

4



most **frozen vegetables** were **switched to local** including corn, green beans, yellow beans, turnip, and butternut squash

5



**fresh eggs** are coming from ontario farms

6



**99% of fresh milk** is coming from ontario farms

7



a new **local scrambled egg blend** is now being used daily

8



**local vegetables and meats** are being used in from-scratch soup recipes

9



**local food purchases** were **increased** without a significant negative impact on the food budget

10

# Communicate the Change

Knowing how important it is to have a positive mealtime experience to increase food intake<sup>xi</sup> and that having local food choices on the menu makes a majority of residents feel “good” (see **Appendix A**), makes it essential to communicate the new local food additions to the menu.

Here are some communications suggestions from the *Serving Up Local* project:

**Weekly Menus:** Highlight meals that are composed of a majority of ingredients from Ontario.

See **Appendix D** for a weekly menu sample from Halton Region.

**Daily Menus:** Daily menus can be more specific as to which part of the meal is from Ontario, for example: “Succotash with Ontario-grown corn and lima beans”.

See **Appendix E** for a daily menu sample from Halton Region.

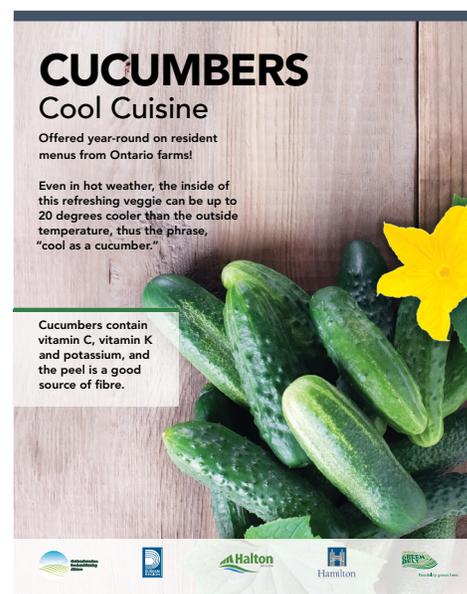
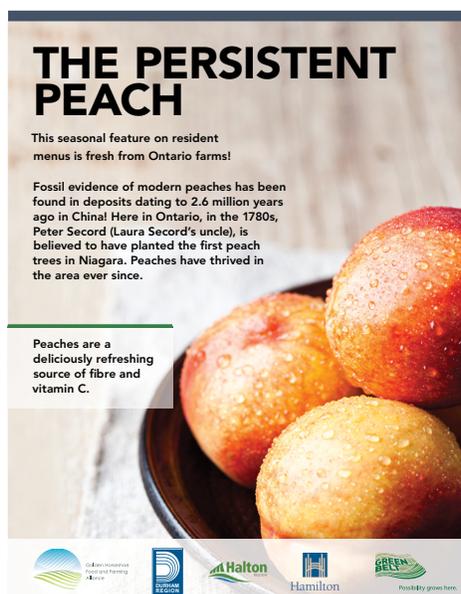
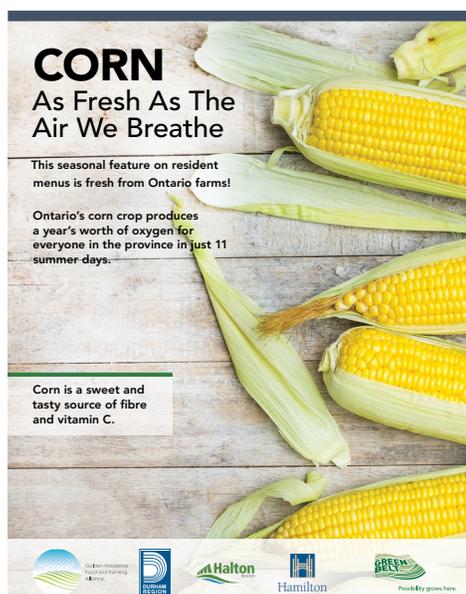
**Posters:** Posters feature a large image, of exciting seasonal fruits and vegetables, and large easy to read print.

**Banner:** A larger banner celebrating the commitment to local foods can be displayed in the front foyer, cafe or main dining area to communicate the project to residents and their families.

**Personal Accessories:** Buttons, t-shirts, hats, etc. can all be used by frontline staff as conversation starters to engage residents on their local food options.

The daily and weekly menus highlighting new Ontario meals can be an inadequate mode of communication for the visually impaired.

Posters with large images of attractive local, seasonal features and easy-to-read print were utilized in the *Serving Up Local* project.



Visit [www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/](http://www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/) for samples of communications pieces from the *Serving Up Local* project.

# Sustain the Change

## ***Incorporating local food language in food product Request for Proposals (RFPs)***

Procurement documents are important tools to ensure that the local food goals of the institution are understood and can be met by their vendors. Public institutions who wish to support local food should seek to understand trade restrictions and opportunities to procure local within trade agreements. Trade regulations may present some challenges to purchasing local food.

Trade agreements like the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) have non-discrimination clauses that prohibit using “local” as a deciding factor for winning bidders.

In their *Local Food Solution Paper - Volume 9*, the Greenbelt Fund provides potential solutions to non-discrimination rules that apply to local food procurement by utilizing language to include local food considerations in RFPs under environmental and sustainability considerations and focusing on seasonal foods or on fresh, unprocessed foods. Furthermore, if there is increased demand for local food from those that the institutions serve, the institutions can request that vendors identify local foods. This information can be used to give preference to a vendor who includes local, as long as the facility demonstrates that a competitive process was used. <sup>xii</sup>

*For more information on the potential impact of trade agreements on RFP creation see: Sustain Ontario's [Local Sustainable Food Procurement for Municipalities and the Broader Public Sector Toolkit](#) and the Greenbelt Fund's [Local Food Solution Paper - Volume 9](#)*

During the *Serving Up Local* project, Halton Region included local language in their procurement documents for food service. Here are some tips for including local in Broader Public Sector Procurement documents:

- Develop and provide your definition of “local” as it pertains to food products
- Emphasize your institution’s environmental and sustainability policies where they provide support for the purchase of local and sustainable products
- Include evaluative criteria on the vendor’s ability to: (1) procure local food, (2) provide velocity reports to track local food purchases and (3) provide a “Local List” to demonstrate Ontario substitutions and a cost analysis of those items

Release your Request for Proposal for food service to help you reach your local food goals!

See **Appendix F** for a list of local food language included in Halton Region’s procurement document for food products.

### ***Stories from the Field: Halton Region***

*To help sustain the local food purchasing initiative, Halton Region included local food language in their procurement document for food products served in long-term care. According to Jessica Reid, Halton Region’s Shared Services Manager for Services for Seniors, “Our Nutrition Services team wanted to bring the benefits of local food to our residents in long-term care, but we needed the tools to get us to our goal. The procurement document was, in essence, the first tool where we defined what we needed from a vendor to ensure we reached our goal of increasing local food options for our residents.”*

# CONCLUSION

Ontario's long-term care homes are well-positioned to offer the local food options that appeal to their residents and food staff, while helping to strengthen Ontario's agricultural sector. There are many local food champions, from LTC residents and their families to non-profit organizations, funders, government representatives and other public institutions who are behind you as you embark on this initiative! Making changes in a food system is not always an easy task - there will be bumps in this road. Connecting with other food system changemakers to learn good practices will remove some of the work of deciding where to start, who to engage and which questions to ask. The good practices and tools are offered in this manual support you on your way. Many Ontario institutions are embarking on changing the local food procurement landscape and working to overcome some of the challenges that are identified in this manual.

*For more information, visit:*

- *The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA), for case studies of the long-term care homes participating in Serving Up Local project at [www.foodandfarming.ca](http://www.foodandfarming.ca)*
- *The Greenbelt Fund, for local food resources prepared by Broader Public Sector institutions, including those in healthcare, at [www.greenbeltfund.ca/resources](http://www.greenbeltfund.ca/resources).*

# SUMMARY

## Theme

## Actions

### Assemble Your Team

Create an internal multi-stakeholder team within the long-term care home. Bring together food directors, dietitians, staff in procurement, cooking, and serving. Include the opinions of residents and their family members in changes to the menus.

Define what is “local” for the LTC home’s food system with your internal local food team.

Bring together the counterparts in your Group Purchasing Organization as an external team that can share recipes and discuss options for bulk buying.

### Review Your Purchasing & Local Opportunities

Request Velocity (purchasing) Reports from your distributors or GPO to understand baseline Ontario purchases and existing opportunities for replacing imports with local product options.

Ask your distributor about more Ontario options through an Ontario list and menu planning days. Be specific about new desired product.

Once you understand your baseline of Ontario food purchases and opportunities to buy more, set your target for increased local purchases.

### Evaluate New Products

Compare cost of local substitutions and review nutritional specifications. Some higher cost items may also have higher nutrient density.

Test product performance in your preparation process and cooking systems.

Sample new products with residents.

Determine if minimum volumes can be met to get new Ontario products on the distributors’ list. Use your group buying power.

### Communicate the Change

Highlight local options on daily and weekly menus.

Consider other visual aids such as posters and banners with images or personal accessories worn by food service and personal support staff.

### Sustain the Change

Review how trade agreements impact a preference for local purchasing.

Develop procurement document language that represents the values of local food and criteria that evaluate a vendor’s ability to procure local food.

Release your Request for Proposal for food service that includes local food language.

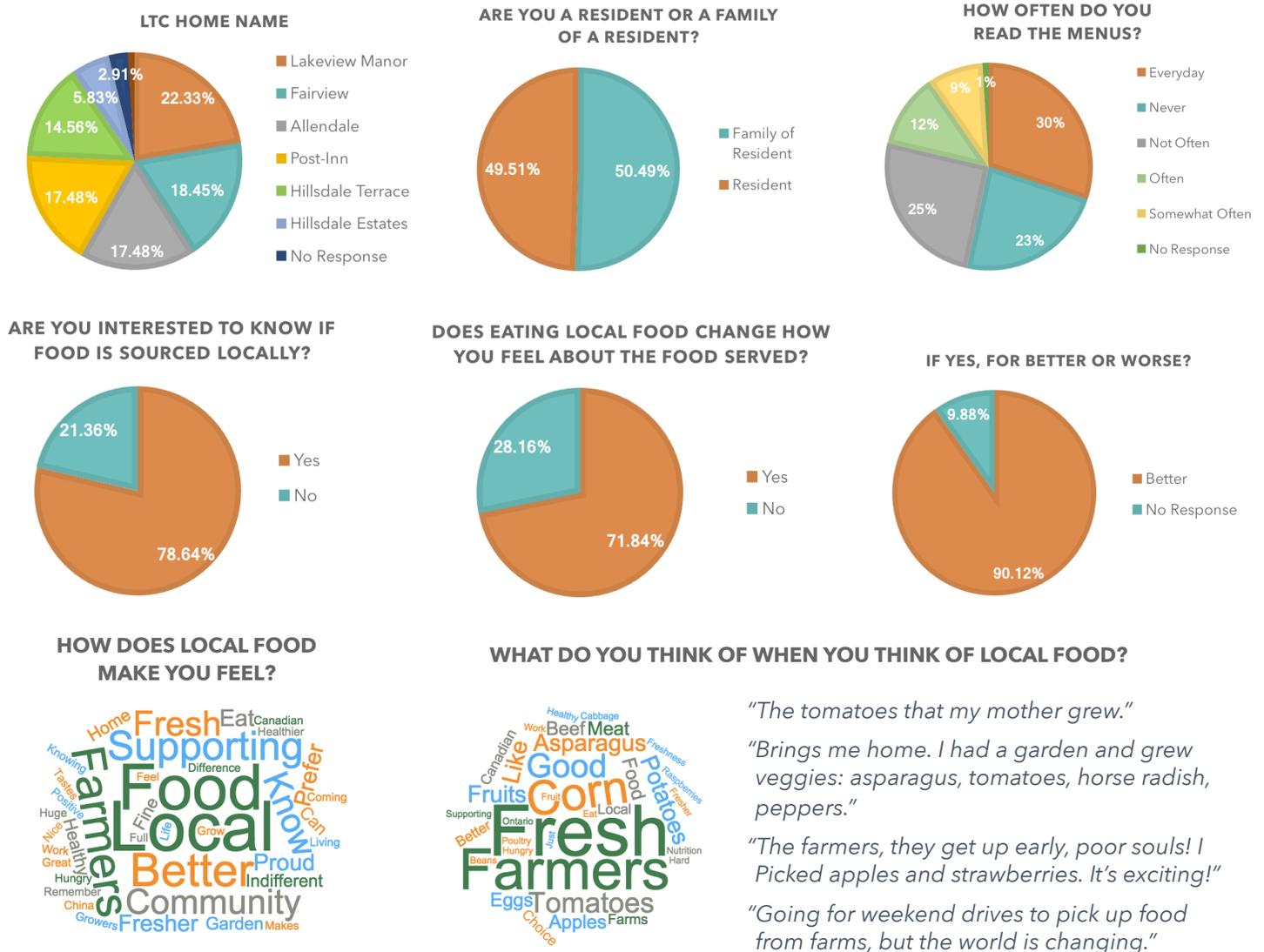
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# APPENDIX A: SERVING UP LOCAL SURVEY RESULTS, 2017

The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) administered a survey to residents and their family members at summer and fall events of six homes taking part in the *Serving Up Local* project. The survey aimed to determine if a “local/Ontario” label increased their interest in, and improved their perception of, food served at the LTC homes.

The simple survey asked participants:



## Survey Highlights

- 103 residents and family members surveyed at 6 different homes
- 30% of those surveyed said they read the posted menu every day at the homes
- 50% of those surveyed said they never read the menus posted at the homes
- 79% are interested to know if the ingredients used in meals served at homes is locally sourced
- 71% of respondents said that knowing local food is served at the home improves their perception of the food for the better

## APPENDIX B: VELOCITY REPORT REQUEST LETTER TEMPLATE

(Date)

To Whom It May Concern:

(The institution/s) is working with our partners to bring more transparency, and a greater understanding of our home's food system. We are requesting information on the origin of all foods purchased by our facility(ies) through your company from (time period).

This work is being undertaken to increase the traceability of purchased products and to determine what percentage of the products served in our facility(ies) meet the Ontario Foodland definition of Ontario local food: "Food must be grown/raised and processed in Ontario."

We were happy to hear about the good work that (Food service company and/or distributors) has done in the past to accommodate client requests for these sorts of velocity reports.

For our report, please delineate the food purchased that meet the Foodland Ontario definition of local as above, and those that do not.

We would greatly appreciate having the reports returned to us by (date).

If you have any questions about the food origin report request please contact (your name).

We look forward to seeing the results!

(Name)

(Position)

(Contact information)

# APPENDIX C: LOCAL VS. IMPORT FOOD PRICE COMPARISON TEMPLATE

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	<i>Sample</i>									
2	<b>Time Period:</b>									
3		<b>Item</b>	<b>Brand Name</b>	<b>Pack Number</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Distributor Code</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Total kg</b>	<b>Price/Unit</b>	<b>Total \$ Spent</b>
4	Current Purchases							0	J4/H4	
5								0	J5/H5	
6								0	J6/H6	
7								0	J7/H7	
8	<b>Total</b>						<b>SUM(G4:G7)</b>	<b>SUM(H4:H7)</b>	<b>SUM(I4:I7)</b>	<b>SUM(J4:J7)</b>
9	<b>Proposed Local</b>							0		\$ -
10								0		\$ -
11								0		\$ -
12										
13	<b>Total</b>			0	0		<b>SUM(G10:G13)</b>	<b>SUM(H10:H13)</b>	<b>SUM(I10:I13)</b>	<b>SUM(J10:J13)</b>
14	<b>Variance</b>									<b>J8-J14</b>

## Example

<b>Time Period:</b>	April - June 2016									
	<b>Item</b>	<b>Brand Name</b>	<b>Pack Number</b>	<b>Size (kg)</b>	<b>GFS Code</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Total kg</b>	<b>Price/Unit (kg)</b>	<b>Total \$ Spent</b>	
Current Purchases	Cottage Roll	Maple Leaf	6	1.3	1115034	14	109.2	\$ 11.38	\$ 1,242.77	
<b>Total</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>1.3</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>109.2</b>	<b>\$ 11.38</b>	<b>\$ 1,242.77</b>	
<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Cottage Roll</b>	<b>VG Meats</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1328177</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>\$ 8.40</b>	<b>\$ 907.20</b>	
<b>Total</b>			<b>4</b>	<b>1.8</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>\$ 8.40</b>	<b>\$ 907.20</b>	
<b>Variance</b>									<b>\$ 335.57</b>	

# APPENDIX D: SAMPLE WEEKLY MENU IDENTIFYING LOCAL

## Villages of Halton Main Menu - Week 1

	Monday(1)	Tuesday(2)	Wednesday(3)	Thursday (4)	Friday(5)	Saturday (6)	Sunday (7)
<b>BREAKFAST</b>	Assorted Juice Stewed Prunes Assorted Fruit Oatmeal/Assorted Cold Cereal Peanut Butter Buttered Toast Apple Spice Muffin Poached/ Scrambled Eggs	Assorted Juice Stewed Prunes Assorted Fruit Oatmeal/Assorted Cold Cereal Peanut Butter Buttered Toast Carrot Muffin Poached/ Scrambled Eggs	Assorted Juice Stewed Prunes Assorted Fruit Oatmeal/Assorted Cold Cereal Peanut Butter Buttered Raisin Toast Buttered Toast Banana Muffin Poached/ Scrambled Eggs	Assorted Juice Stewed Prunes Assorted Fruit Oatmeal/Assorted Cold Cereal Peanut Butter Buttered Toast Bran Muffin Poached/ Scrambled Eggs	Assorted Juice Stewed Prunes Assorted Fruit Oatmeal/Assorted Cold Cereal Peanut Butter Buttered Toast Carrot Muffin Poached/ Scrambled Eggs	Assorted Juice Stewed Prunes Assorted Fruit Oatmeal/Assorted Cold Cereal Peanut Butter Buttered Toast Banana Muffin Poached/ Scrambled Eggs	Assorted Juice Stewed Prunes Assorted Fruit Oatmeal/Assorted Cold Cereal Peanut Butter Buttered Toast Apple Spice Muffin Bacon Poached/ Scrambled Eggs
<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>Moroccan Chicken Thigh *new</b> Moroccan Potato *new Turmeric Cauliflower *new	<b>Pastrami Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bread</b> Beet and Potato Salad *new	<b>ON Egg Salad on Whole Wheat</b> Garden Salad with 1000 Island Dressing	<b>Roast Beef</b> Gravy & Horseradish Roast Potatoes Harvard Beets	<b>Poutine *new</b> <b>Potato Wedges</b> Cheese Shreds Brown Gravy Pork Sausage Waxed Beans	<b>Monte Cristo Sandwich *new</b> (Pastrami and Cheese) French Toast Tossed Salad with French Dressing	<b>Roasted Chicken with Chalet Sauce</b> Mashed Potato Roasted Winter Vegetables
	<b>Farmers Sausage</b> Apple Sauce Onion Mashed Potatoes <b>ON Red Cabbage</b>	<b>White Fish Fillet &amp; Lemon Sauce</b> <b>ON Potato Wedges</b> Broccoli	<b>Beef Stroganoff</b> With Egg Noodles <b>ON Peas</b>	<b>Havarti and Tomato Sandwich on WW Bread</b> <b>ON Cucumber Salad</b> with Ranch Dressing	<b>Sliced Turkey, Lettuce and Mayo Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bread</b> <b>ON Minced Coleslaw</b>	<b>Vegetarian Chili</b> Corn Bread Sour Cream <b>ON Carrot Parsnip Puree</b>	<b>Cheese Cannelloni</b> Spinach Garlic Bread
	Cinnamon Apple Donut *new Coconut Yogurt *new	Banana Loaf <b>ON Stewed Rhubarb</b>	Lattice Cherry Pie *new Vanilla Ice Cream	Carrot Loaf Mandarin Oranges	Rice Pudding Grape Jell-O	Date Squares Rosy Applesauce	Warm Pumpkin Pie Strawberry Mousse
<b>PM</b>	Raspberry Turnover Assorted Juices	Lime Snow Assorted Juices	Apple Slices Assorted Juices	Wafer Cookies Assorted Juices	Digestive Cookies Assorted Juices	GoGlu Cookies *new Assorted Juices	Cherry Turnover Assorted Juices
<b>DINNER</b>	Cream of Mushroom Soup <b>Macaroni &amp; Cheese</b> <b>ON French Green Beans</b>	Cream of Tomato Soup <b>Beef Pie with Gravy</b> Mashed Potato <b>ON Carrot Turnip Puree</b>	Minestrone Soup <b>Roast Ham with Maple Sauce</b> Scallop Potatoes <b>ON Corn Niblets</b>	Cream of Celery Soup <b>Chicken with Stuffing Bake *new</b> Mashed Potato <b>ON Squash</b>	Chicken & Rice Soup Buttered Dinner Roll Caesar Salad	Vegetable Soup <b>Pork Ribbette with Hickory Sauce</b> <b>ON Home Fried Potatoes</b> Cauliflower with Cheese Sauce	Cream of Chicken <b>Fish Nuggets with Tartar Sauce</b> Lemon Wedge Confetti Mashed Potatoes Creamed Corn
	<b>Breaded Veal</b> Parmesan Cheese Tomato Sauce Mashed Potato <b>ON Glazed Carrots</b>	<b>Turkey Rice Casserole</b> <b>ON Lima Beans with Red Peppers</b>	<b>Pasta Tomato &amp; Cheese</b> Garlic Bread Italian Mixed Vegetable	<b>Mushroom Quiche</b> Mashed Potatoes <b>ON Balsamic Brussels Sprouts *new</b>	<b>Salmon with Peach Sauce</b> Mashed Potatoes Gourmet Grilled Vegetable with Teriyaki Sauce	<b>Waffles</b> Pancake Syrup <b>ON Rhubarb</b> and Strawberry Compote Cottage Cheese	<b>Hot Dog on Bun Baked Beans</b> <b>ON Shredded Carrot Salad</b>
	Banana Cream Pie Peaches	Apricots Chocolate Pudding	Tiramisu Mousse *new Spiced Apples/Cinnamon	Warm Baked Custard with Nutmeg Pears	Pineapple Upside Down Cake Papaya	Butterscotch Ice Cream Vanilla Pudding	Lemonlicious Cake *new Mangos
<b>HS</b>	Salmon Salad Sandwich	Ham Salad Sandwich	Herb & Garlic Cream Cheese S/W	Peanut Butter & Jelly S/W	Strawberry Yogurt	Cheese Sandwich	Raisin Bread & Cream Cheese

\*Salads, juices & fresh fruits always available

\*\*Bread and butter offered at Lunch & Dinner

\*\*\*8 oz 2% milk at each meal including breakfast



Fall Winter 2017/2018  
Week 1  
Dec.-19-17

“We are proud to show our support for local Ontario grown ingredient suppliers”

# APPENDIX E: SAMPLE DAILY MENU IDENTIFYING LOCAL

## WEEK 1 – DAY 2 - TUESDAY

### Lunch

#### **Pastrami Sandwich**

on Whole Wheat Bread  
Beet & Potato Salad

### OR

#### **White Fish Fillet with Lemon Sauce**

Ontario Grown Potato Wedges  
Broccoli

### **Dessert**

Banana Loaf  
Ontario Grown Stewed Rhubarb

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### Dinner

#### **Cream of Tomato Soup**

#### **Beef Pie with Gravy**

Mashed Potatoes  
Ontario Grown Carrot Turnip Puree

### OR

#### **Turkey Rice Casserole**

Ontario Grown Lima Beans with Red Peppers

### **Dessert**

Apricots  
Chocolate Pudding



**“WE ARE PROUD TO SHOW OUR SUPPORT FOR LOCAL  
ONTARIO GROWN INGREDIENT SUPPLIERS”**

# APPENDIX F: LOCAL FOOD LANGUAGE IN THE HALTON REGION PROCUREMENT DOCUMENT FOR FOOD PRODUCTS

## 1.1 Definitions

A) **1.1.1 h) A definition of “local” pertaining to food and food product;**

“Local” is defined as products whose main ingredients are produced, processed, distributed and consumed in Ontario.

B) **1.14.1 Green Procurement**

The purpose of Halton Region’s Green Procurement Policy is to acquire goods and services (“products”) from suppliers that generate positive environmental outcomes, and to integrate sustainability considerations into product selection so that negative impacts on society and the environment are minimized throughout the full life cycle of the products.

C) **2.2 Scope of Work**

a) The Region seeks to obtain a primary Supplier that is qualified and experienced in providing but not limited to the following: Ability to provide local food products.

D) **2.3 Online Ordering**

a) The Supplier is required to provide access to a secure web based application to all LTC homes that meets the Accessibility for Ontario’s with Disabilities Act 249/10. The application must be proven effective in the Ontario Long Term Care Sector. The web based application must be a user friendly format that requires minimal staff time. Examples of functionality to include: ii) Reporting including velocity reporting

E) **2.25 Local, Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability in Food Procurement**

a) Environmental, economic and social sustainability is central to the mission of the Halton Region. It is critical that Suppliers understand the commitment that Halton Region has made to this issue.

By incorporating sustainable local food sourcing into our Food Services, Halton Region can work toward its vision of contributing to the economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and quality of life in Ontario. Halton Region seeks to enhance its relationship with stakeholders by providing them with freshly harvested, sustainably grown nutritious food. Suppliers should understand that Halton Region embraces its role as a responsible citizen of the city, province and country by fostering a Food Services program that economically supports local/regional farms, promotes environmentally sustainable local food systems, and improves the quality of life in Ontario, and is looking to expand this program.

Food Suppliers who support the concept are specifying products from farms that produce food in environmentally and socially responsible ways while educating consumers and others about the benefits of local sustainable food systems. Whenever possible, food should come from local/regional farms where farmers work diligently to:

- Employ sustainable production systems that reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, and conserve water and soil;
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat and biodiversity;
- Provide safe and fair working conditions for on-farm labour;
- Provide healthy and humane care for livestock; and
- Reduce on-farm energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions through recycling, minimal packaging, and selling their products regionally whenever possible

b) The Supplier must provide a monthly list of available local food products. The Supplier must also provide a quarterly list that identifies the percentage of local products being purchased by the LTC Homes.

**F) 3.6.1 Technical Proposal**

a) Product Quality and Service

- Identify your organizations local food certification process;
- Identify your organizations process for promoting local food substitutions including cost analysis
- Describe how your organization promotes local food procurement. Outline how your organization will support the Homes to monitor, track and provide reports detailing the total percentage of local food products purchased. For GPO's describe your process for ensuring suppliers will adhere to requirements under this RFP.



**For more information:**

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