

# Ottawa Food Policy Council 2019 Federal Election Survey

Find out how candidates in the Ottawa region responded to our survey on Good Food

## Candidate Responses

Candidate Name	Riding	Party	1. Will you seek to incorporate a food systems lens into policy-and decision making?	2. Will you work to ensure Good Food is accessible to all who live in Canada?	3. Will you work to ensure governments respect Canadians' and Indigenous food sovereignty and seed sovereignty?	4. Will you commit to policy making that increases food literacy, health and sustainability?	5. Will you commit to policy making that facilitates a safe and traceable food system?
Gordon Kubanek	Carleton	Green	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
			-	-	-	-	-
Chris Rodgers	Carleton	Liberal	Yes	Yes	Abstain	Yes	Abstain
			-	-	While not an expert in this, I will always advocate on behalf of my community and the issues that matter most to them.	Canada's Healthy Eating Strategy is a comprehensive approach to that includes the new Food Guide along with additional tools that address food labeling and nutritional content. I support this work and will endeavor to continue building on its.	This is a very interesting idea and I look forward to learning more about it. If elected, I will always advocate for my community and the things that matter most to them.
Kevin Hua	Carleton	NDP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
			-	-		-	-
Jennifer Purdy	Kanata-Carleton	Green	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
			-	-		Seed ownership is part of our "Vision Green" document.	We should know where our food comes from.

<b>Jacqui Wiens</b>	<b>Orléans</b>	<b>NDP</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
			-	-	I would need to know more about the differences between federal and provincial food inspection systems to fully endorse all points above. Assuming the standards result in the same degree of safety, I would tentatively agree with a less centralized system. Access to 'country foods' in the North is a big concern of mine. The current system of subsidizing transport costs for Southern foods to these communities ignores local needs, results in absurd pricing, and denies support for traditional food systems.	-	I know from speaking with residents of my riding that many farmers reach a point at which they can't expand their operations due to the cost of scaling up and lack of access to loans/support. I would support moves to improve the situation for new farmers with input from those affected. Ideally, children in school would not only learn about food systems, have access to healthy foods at school, but would also take part in first-hand experiences with vegetable gardens, visits to local farms, and potentially raising chickens for eggs in locations which allowed it.	
<b>Emilie Taman</b>	<b>Ottawa-Centre</b>	<b>NDP</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
			-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Catherine McKenna</b>	<b>Ottawa Centre</b>	<b>Liberal</b>	*See answers below					
<b>Angela Keller-Herzog</b>	<b>Ottawa Centre</b>	<b>Green</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
			-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Oriana Ngabirano</b>	<b>Ottawa-Vanier</b>	<b>Green</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
			-	-	-	-	-	

<b>Mona Fortier</b>	<b>Ottawa-Vanier</b>	<b>Liberal</b>	Yes	Yes	Abstain	Yes	Yes
			-	-	-	-	-
<b>Paul Durst</b>	<b>Ottawa-Vanier</b>	<b>People's Party</b>	Yes	Abstain	Abstain	Yes	Abstain
			-	-	-	-	Safe for sure. Still not sure of all the implications of traceable
<b>Claude Bertrand</b>	<b>Pontiac</b>	<b>Green</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
			-	-		-	-

***\*Responses from Catherine McKenna, Ottawa-Centre, Liberal***

**Question 1: Will you seek to incorporate a food system lens into policy-and decision-making?**

Canadian-made foods are recognized worldwide for the highest standards of quality and food safety. Responsible for 1 in 8 jobs across the country, our food sector is a powerhouse of the economy, particularly in our rural communities.

Safe food and good nutrition are important to Canadians, and maintaining the safety of Canada's food supply is a shared responsibility among government, industry and consumers. We know that eating a nutritious and balanced diet is one of the best ways to protect and promote good health, which is why we are committed to keeping Canadian's health at the forefront of all our decision making.

However, we know that more can be done to improve our food system. Food systems include the way food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed, and disposed of, and they have direct impacts on the lives of Canadians. Food systems are interconnected and are integral to the well-being of communities.

This is why our government developed the first ever Food Policy for Canada, meant to be a roadmap for a healthier and more sustainable food system for Canada. This Food Policy was developed to help guide public, private, and non-profit sectors on food-related decisions and actions that can improve people's lives, their health, and the health of the environment and the economy. This guide was used to help create the new Canada's Food Guide, which is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and emphasizes the importance of healthy habits, not just food choices. The new Food Guide is an integral part of Canada's Healthy Eating Strategy, which aims to make the healthier choice the easier choice for all Canadians.

**Question 2: Will you work to ensure Good Food is accessible to all who live in Canada?**

We took a new approach to healthy eating, which aims to improve the environment in Canada to make it easier for Canadians to make healthy choices. This is why we are:

- improving healthy eating information;
- improving nutrition quality of foods;
- protecting vulnerable populations; and
- supporting increased access to and availability of nutritious foods.

Our new food guide, released in January 2019, is a mobile-friendly web application that provides Canadians with easier access to dietary guidance. New resources and tools will be developed on an ongoing basis to help Canadians apply Canada's new food guide where they live, learn, work and play. We continue to consult with interested parties and the public to make sure that new guidance and resources are relevant and useful.

We know however that sometimes Canadian families still struggle to make ends meet, which is why we're focused on making life for affordable for all Canadians. This is why we introduced the Canada Child Care Benefit (CCB), which is helping nine out of ten families receive more money each month for expenses like groceries. As well, our government cut taxes for the nine million middle class Canadians, to help them save money to get ahead. Our initiatives have a real impact for middle class Canadians, with the typical middle class family being more than \$2,000 better off every year due to the CCB and middle class tax cuts.

### **Question 3: Will you work to ensure governments respect Canadians' and Indigenous food sovereignty and seed sovereignty?**

We know that Canada is a country that prides itself on its diversity. Canada's new Food Guide already recognizes that nutritious foods can reflect cultural preference and food traditions.

Canada's Food Guide is intended for all Canadians. Our government worked to ensure that the revised Food Guide is inclusive of Indigenous Peoples, reflecting social, cultural and historical context. Additionally, our government is committed to working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to support the development of distinctions-based healthy eating tools, as part of the revision process.

Nutrition North was strengthened in Fall Economic Statement of 2018 with an additional investment of 62.6 million over five years to support program changes and introduce a Harvesters Support Grant to lower the high costs associated with traditional hunting and harvesting activities.

One of the goals of Canada's new Food Policy is build strong indigenous food systems as defined by indigenous communities themselves, in partnership with those communities. Specifically, this means changing the way that decisions are made around indigenous food systems so that decision making:

- Adopts a distinctions-based approach to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of the First Nations, the Metis Nation and Inuit are acknowledged, affirmed, and implemented.
- Supports Indigenous food self-determination, meaning the ability of Indigenous peoples to define their own food systems.
- Takes a holistic approach that acknowledges that food is more than a product. For Indigenous peoples, it is the medicine that ensures their wellbeing; it is a way of sustaining culture and community; and, it is a way of reconnecting to the land.
- Looks (seven) generations ahead to assess the impact of current actions on future generations, and support intergenerational knowledge transfer.
- Promotes traditional two-eyed seeing to ensure that Indigenous knowledge and practices are considered alongside other forms of knowledge and evidence.

As part of the Food Policy for Canada, our government launched the Northern Isolated Community Initiatives Fund, which invests \$15 million to support community-led projects like greenhouses, community freezers, and skills training to strengthen Indigenous food systems, and combat significant challenges in accessing healthy food in Canada's North. In addition, the Local Food Infrastructure fund is an investment of \$50 million to make local food systems resilient, integrated and sustainable and to facilitate access to safe and nutritious food for at-risk populations.

#### **Question 4: Will you commit policymaking that increases food literacy, health and sustainability?**

The Food Guide that many of us grew up with focused on food choices. But we now know that our eating habits are just as important to our health as the foods we choose. Busy Canadians want simple guidance that they can trust to help them make healthy food choices for themselves and their families.

Too many Canadians aren't able to reliably access sufficient amounts of healthy food. Too many children at school are trying to learn on empty stomachs. And we are wasting more than 11 million metric tons of food every year – worth nearly \$50 billion. Our government knows that we can do better, which is why we created the first ever Food Policy for Canada, to be a roadmap for healthier and more sustainable food system for Canada. Our newly launched Canada's Food Guide is part of this plan, which is based on science and evidence, and prioritizes fresh, unprocessed, plant-based foods.

We know kids learn about the food guide at school, and we want to make learning about healthy eating accessible and easy for all ages. This is why our government is taking the first consultative steps alongside provinces, territories, and not-for-profit organizations towards the creation of a National School Food Program, to help improve the health of our children as they learn, leading to better futures for them, and ultimately for our country.

Our government knows the importance of helping Canadians make healthy choices for themselves and for their families. This is why we are investing in initiatives that help Canadians make healthy choices, and focusing on instilling Canadians with the knowledge to lead healthier lives.

A Food Policy for Canada also addresses sustainability.

An important aspect of sustainability is reducing food waste, which can combat greenhouse gas emissions, help the bottom line, and reduce grocery bills. This is why we invested \$26.3 million and are working with experts to launch a challenge to fund the most innovative food waste reduction proposals in food processing, grocery retail, and food service.

Our government supported initiatives like the Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program, which supports projects that will create technologies, practices and processes that can be adopted by farmers to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. These projects will also help farmers increase their understanding of how greenhouse gas emissions are connected to farming practices. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada also conducts targeted research to increase knowledge of agriculture's impact on water resources and enhance knowledge of nutrient management, to increase efficiency and lower the potential of contamination of water resources.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is a large federal custodian representing almost 7% of the currently scoped-in federal government greenhouse gas emissions, and is well-positioned to continue making contributions to the Low-Carbon Government target. The Department has already reduced its greenhouse gas emissions

by 35% as of 2016–17, and it will continue to make efforts predominantly through improvements to the energy efficiency of its buildings and operations and the modernization of its fleet.

**Question 5: Will you commit to policy making that facilitates a safe and traceable food system?**

Part of making healthy choices means that Canadians need to have the tools to know the foods they are consuming are safe.

This is why our government is cracking down on mislabeling and misrepresentation of food products, helping to protect consumers from deception and companies from unfair competition.

Canadians face a number of healthy eating challenges, including the widespread availability of inexpensive foods and beverages high in sugars, sodium, and saturated fat; powerful marketing; difficulties understanding and using nutritional information; and challenges accessing nutritious foods. Our Healthy Eating Strategy included improving food labels and FOP labelling to help Canadians make informed food choices.

Making it easier for Canadians to be free to make healthier choices has been a priority of our government since day one, and we have made many achievements on this. Canadians have busy lives, and we know that it is important for people to be able to choose to eat healthily for themselves and for their families.

## **Annex: Background information provided to candidates**

### **1. Policy-and decision-making must be made through a food systems lens.**

A food system includes all elements of (and decisions made about) food, from food production to disposal. This includes harvesting, processing, distribution, preparation, consumption, and recycling/composting. Political decision-making should be made through a food systems lens.

OFPC believes that policymaking, including a Food Policy for Canada, should employ a systems approach to address social, environmental, economic and health implications of food systems, rather than the current “siloeing” of food-related issues. OFPC points out that this will require horizontal policy-making. Canada needs government departments to work together in an interdisciplinary manner to achieve consensus on policies/strategies that they are expected to implement.

Federal departments should also be expected to work collaboratively with all actors in the value chain –provincial, municipal, industry, non-governmental organizations, urban and rural, Indigenous –to contribute to the Food Policy for all living in Canada and the general development of Canada’s agri-food policies.

### **2. Good Food must be accessible for all who live in Canada.**

Over the past decade, headlines have sounded the alarm that an increasing number of Canadians are food insecure. An estimated 6.5% (1 in 15) households in Ottawa experience some level of food insecurity. This phenomena has been attributed to numerous factors such as high student debt, the increasingly precarious nature of work, and a growing elderly population on fixed low incomes.

Poverty is a primary root cause of food insecurity. We need MPs who support a National Poverty Reduction Strategy that prioritizes Good Food for all through: a live able income; good jobs; health care for all; affordable childcare; and affordable housing.

OFPC has advocated for the following measures to improve food accessibility: increase the opportunities for residents and communities to grow, produce, and harvest their own food; improve food accessibility in Northern and remote communities; ensure that affordable food is nutritious food; increase accessibility through income-based solutions; and support opportunities for public, non-market means for acquiring food.

### **3. Governments must respect Canadians’ food sovereignty.**

All Canadians have the right to define their own food and agricultural systems. This right, known as food sovereignty, should be exercised at all jurisdictions, but particularly through local and municipal systems. Federal and Provincial Governments should work collaboratively to identify and reduce systemic and legal blocks affecting families and communities at the Municipal level, such as the inter-provincial differences in food inspection regulations where, for example, currently only federally inspected meat establishments can sell across Canada, while provincially inspected establishments also produce safe meat.

Canada must ensure genuine Indigenous food sovereignty, including providing better support for food-insecure communities, engaging in a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, and advancing reconciliation. This includes committing to addressing the high level of food insecurity among First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities living in Ottawa, including the ability to access affordable, healthy, culturally relevant food. Traditional knowledge of Indigenous foods and food production should be incorporated in policy initiatives. It could also implement initiatives to support increased capacity for local food production, particularly in the North, and less reliance on imported, southern-grown and -harvested foods.

Food sovereignty in Canada cannot exist without seed sovereignty. With climate change bringing new stresses to farmers' fields and seed biodiversity declining, farmers - and food producers of all kinds - need access to seeds that are adapted to regional farming conditions and resilient to climate change. The regulatory frameworks that govern seed in Canada will be under review over the next few years. Policymakers must ensure that farmers' rights to save seed are not only upheld, but that policies are implemented to support the preservation of on-farm seed diversity and the development of new varieties that are climate-resilient and in the public domain.

#### **4. Policymaking should increase food literacy, health and sustainability.**

Food policies should promote an understanding of food systems and enable access to healthy food options and sustainable diets. They should support local and sustainable food production and facilitate links between these producers and consumers/eaters.

MPs should support comprehensive food literacy opportunities in schools, the community and beyond. Comprehensive food literacy would include the concept of food systems as well as nutritional knowledge and food preparation skill acquisition. Canadians of all ages need to be equipped to make sustainable and nutritious food choices.

We reiterate the call, by the Coalition for Healthy School Food, for a Universal Healthy School Food Program to enable all students in Canada to have access to healthy meals at school every day. This includes ensuring access to Good Food in schools on First Nations reserves, given the federal government is solely responsible for funding elementary and secondary education for First Nations students on reserve.



A Food Policy for Canada should ensure a socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable food system. Good Food and local economic development need to work hand in hand to ensure that existing and new farms/farmers are ecologically and economically viable and supported. We need MPs who will ensure federal levers are used to support local economic development related to both food and farming in Ottawa, including on NCC lands, with an emphasis on new farmers and farms producing for regional markets.

We applaud the efforts to develop the new comprehensive Canada Food Guide. We encourage you to continue this work, including supporting programs to promote implementation

5. Policymaking should facilitate a safe and traceable food system.

Policymaking should facilitate a safe and traceable food system; that is, one in which there is tracking of food throughout the supply chain--from growers and producers to suppliers, processors, brokers, retailers, and regulators --to enable reductions in contamination response times, increase consumer confidence through labelling traits backed by systems of verification (e.g., GMO-Free, Organic or place of origin -country, region or specific farm).

Consideration should be given to developing policies that enable large and small farmers to access new technologies, such as blockchain, digital sensors, or cloud-based tracking systems where appropriate, in order to facilitate end-to-end transparency and provide both farmers and consumers with more information about the Canadian food system. Any requirements for the implementation of new technologies must not be cost-prohibitive for farmers, and the information must be delivered in consumer-friendly formats. The benefits would include allowing anyone to more efficiently source information about the origin, condition, and movement of food, giving confidence to consumers in knowing where their food comes from, and enabling officials to trace contaminated food in the event of a foodborne disease outbreak.