



# ALBERTA FIRST NATIONS FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY

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This strategy was prepared for the Food Security Working Group of the Prevention Subcommittee of the Alberta Co-Management Committee

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## **Introduction**

### **Understanding Food Security**

Food security refers to the idea that

“all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” (“Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action,” 1996)

Food insecurity

“exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain.” (Anderson, 1990)

### **Food Security and Health**

Food security is an important issue for Alberta First Nations. It lies at the root of diet-related health issues such as diabetes and overweight/obesity, has a significant influence on early childhood growth and development, impacts the ability of kids to learn and succeed in school and affects overall health and well-being at all stages of life.

Diabetes rates for First Nations are three to five times that of the general Canadian population (*A First Nations Diabetes Report Card*, 2006). Overweight and obesity are also higher, with Alberta data from the First Nations Regional Health Survey reporting that 70% of First Nations adults are overweight or obese and that 49.4% of children are obese (Pace et al., 2012).

Beyond diabetes and overweight/obesity, the health effects of food insecurity are also seen in poorer self-perceived general health, higher stress, lower life satisfaction, and a very weakened sense of community belonging (Willows, Veugelers, Raine, & Kuhle, 2011). In addition, infants and children living in food insecure households are at significantly higher developmental risk (Rose-Jacobs et al., 2008).

## **Food Security Data for Alberta First Nations**

Data on food insecurity for Alberta First Nations on-reserve is found through the First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) 2008/10 (Pace et al., 2012). Its findings include:

- Almost half (47.6%) of adults said that they couldn't afford to eat balanced meals
- Over half (54.1%) said that the statement "The food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have any money to get more" was either often true (14.4%) or sometimes true (40.7%).
- Nearly one quarter (24.8%) of adults (or other adults in their household) cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food. Of those who had to do this, 39.5% had to do it almost every month, 45.9% had to do it some months but not others, and 14.6% had to do it for only one or two months.

## **The Causes of Food Insecurity**

Given the high rates of food insecurity, what are its causes? Food security is influenced by factors of both supply and demand.

On the supply side, food security is affected by factors such as the availability and quality of local food sources, the proximity of food sources, the length of growing seasons, the climate, skills related to preserving food, the quality and safety of the land, water, and ecosystem, etc.

On the demand side, food security is affected by factors such as knowledge and skills related to cooking available and accessible food, available income for purchasing food, the availability of programs such as good food boxes or bulk purchasing that make food more affordable, etc.

The relationship between food security and income is particularly noteworthy. In Canada, the prevalence of food insecurity increases as income declines. As summarized in the Canadian Community Health Survey (*Income-Related Household Food Security in Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey Cycle 2.2, Nutrition (2004)*, 2007):

- Among Aboriginal households in the lowest income category, the prevalence of severe food insecurity (45.9%) was roughly double that of moderate food insecurity (23.3%).

- Among Aboriginal households, food insecurity was more prevalent among those with “social assistance” (67.7%) and “other” (66.6%) listed as their main source of income, compared with salary/wages” (21.8%). The prevalence of food insecurity among children was high when social assistance was the main source of household income — 37.8% among all households with this main source of income; 57.8% among Aboriginal households with this main source of income.

Strengthening social assistance may be an area of interest for communities in this strategy as a means of improving food security for those who have social assistance as their main source of income.

## **Colonization and First Nations Food Insecurity**

The current situation of food insecurity is better understood in its historical context as the relationship between Alberta's First Nations and food has changed quite substantially over the past few hundred years.

Alberta First Nations, previous to European settlement, generally lived in balance. The land was their source of food and sustenance both directly through plant food sources and indirectly as the land supported buffalo and other game which formed a staple part of their diet. In this relationship, the people prospered as the land prospered, and suffered as the land suffered.

With the arrival of settlers and the signing of treaties, this relationship changed as historically dependable food sources became less so over time, replaced by government and market sources of food.

In addition, for generations, children were separated from their families and communities through the residential school program, effectively severing cultural ties and traditional knowledge transfer to the younger generation (British Columbia Provincial Health Officer, 2009).

The consequences of these changes included a change in diet, nutrition, and health, referred to as a 'nutrition transition' (Sharma, 2010). This transition has had health consequences. For example, while diabetes was rare among First Nations prior to 1940, the rates increased rapidly after 1950 and have now reached epidemic levels in some communities (Young, Szathmary, Evers, & Wheatley, 1990).

As Alberta's First Nations continue to develop and heal from residential school, intergenerational trauma, and other elements of colonization, their food security will also increase as they regain control over their food system, their way of life, and their future.

The purpose of this strategy is to create a plan – a plan for increasing food security for Alberta's First Nations based on the ideas and priorities of Alberta's First Nations communities.

## Developing the Strategy

The development of this food security strategy followed a number of steps:

1. An environmental scan
2. A series of community engagement sessions
3. A series of stakeholder consultations

**Summary Table**

Method	Description	Involvement
Environmental Scan	To identify, from food security initiatives in a First Nations or indigenous context, learnings and practices that can inform the creation of a five-year food security strategy for Alberta First Nations.	Peer-reviewed articles (n=44), grey literature reports (n=30), and discussions with key contacts (n=11).
Community Engagement Sessions	To engage with interested First Nations communities from each of the Alberta Treaty areas to gather feedback on their vision for food security for their community 5 years into the future and to describe both pathways that can help them get there and barriers that need to be removed to help them work towards their vision.	All 44 First Nations in Alberta were invited to participate. Involvement was spread across all three treaty areas (Treaty 6 (n=2), Treaty 7 (n=3), Treaty 8 (n=3)) with some meetings representing multiple First Nations. A total of 16 First Nations participated in eight community meetings.
Stakeholder Consultations	To identify potential partners for the food security strategy who have existing and emerging initiatives or resources that could align with or benefit our food security strategy.	Consulted with 12 stakeholders ranging from academics to entrepreneurs – identified by the Food Security Working Group

## **Environmental Scan**

An environmental scan was conducted in Spring 2013 with the purpose of identifying, from food security initiatives in a First Nations or indigenous context, learnings and practices that could inform the creation of a five-year food security strategy for Alberta First Nations.

The environmental scan searched both peer-reviewed and grey literature and also included a number of conversations with professionals working in this field.

The environmental scan included a number of key learnings and recommendations. A summary of the key learnings from the environmental scan include:

- emphasizing the demand side of food security along with the supply side; it is not enough to grow or provide healthy food if the skills, knowledge, or desire to eat healthy food are lacking.
- traditional or country foods, where possible, are a key component of increasing food security.
- ensuring incentives such as government subsidization that help vegetables and fruit get to remote and difficult-to-reach areas don't stop with the supplier but are passed on to the consumer.
- shorter term funding makes it difficult to reach sustainability. To show changes in clinical outcomes such as weight or blood sugar levels, and to take the time necessary to develop relationships in the community, longer term funding strategies are necessary.
- there is a potential role for public sector involvement or partnership with private sector enterprises that supply food as a means of reducing the cost of doing business.
- a framework that should be considered as a complement or even alternative to food security is food sovereignty. Food sovereignty calls for a fundamental shift in focus from food as a commodity to food as a public good. The core of food sovereignty is reclaiming public decision-making power in the food system.

- increasing food security is related to cultural expression. Efforts to express and strengthen culture include themes related to the acquisition and use of food as well as benefits to underlying well-being for individuals, families, and communities.
- the idea of a foodshed, similar to a watershed, including the local processes and actors involved in the production, processing, distribution and exchange of food within a specific geographic area – may be a helpful way to look at food security through a systems lens.
- communities want to drive their own solutions. Communities want the support to become more self-sufficient, to have the capacity to grow, supply, store, distribute and preserve their own produce.

Summary recommendations from the environmental scan include:

- that the development of food security strategies be community-driven
- that the appropriate role of government in the development of a food security strategy includes
  - providing funding, emphasizing longer term funding
  - leading and supporting multi-sectoral initiatives to increase food security
  - intervening in market systems to help subsidize the true cost of supplying healthy food in rural and remote areas where the cost is high, and ensuring the subsidies benefit the consumer as well as the supplier
  - providing leadership to raise the profile of food security as an issue both at the community level and within all levels of government
  - facilitating the sharing of lessons, insights, and practices
  - developing public policies that support increased food security
- that food insecurity be framed as a product of colonization, and that food sovereignty be considered as an alternate or complementary frame for food security efforts
- that food security strategies and initiatives have a long enough time frame to allow for:
  - the development of relationships in the community

- progress towards the sustainability of funded initiatives
- clinical outcomes to be observable
- healing from multigenerational trauma be aided through the presence of a stable food supply

The complete environmental scan was accepted by the Food Security Working Group in June 2013. This includes examples of various initiatives across Canada and elsewhere that are working to improve First Nations food security.

## **Community Engagement Sessions**

A series of community engagement sessions were held across the province. All 44 First Nations in Alberta were invited to participate. Invitations were followed up on to create a sampling of communities spread as evenly as possible across all three treaty areas. A total of 16 First Nations participated in eight community meetings.

The purpose of these meetings was to:

- Create a vision for Food Security in communities and the Alberta Region
- Identify possible goals and outcomes for a food security strategy
- Identify key recommendations for both First Nations & Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) and First Nations communities

Not every meeting followed this outline precisely as different communities had different priorities and things to talk about.

These meetings took place between September 2013 and March 2014.

In June 2014, the Food Security Working Group met and analyzed the information from these community meetings to identify common themes and priorities for the strategy. The five themes identified by the Food Security Working Group from the community consultations were:

1. Access/Delivery Systems
2. Education/Skills
3. Policy Change
4. Resources
5. Community

The findings from these community meetings form the core of this food security strategy.

## **Stakeholder Consultations**

The purpose of the stakeholder/partner consultation was to identify potential resources or partners for the food security strategy. The Food Security Working Group created a list of potential stakeholders/partners at their June 2014 meeting. The results of this consultation were presented and discussed at the September 2014 meeting of the Food Security Working Group, with four additional stakeholders/partners identified to consult with.

## Alberta First Nations Food Security Strategy

### Vision for the Alberta First Nations Food Security Strategy

Based on the input received at our community engagement sessions, the following vision was created for the strategy:

#### ***Food Sovereignty for Alberta First Nations***

### Guiding Principles

In the past, First Nations had sovereignty and control over their lands and subsisted on the foods that they hunted and harvested. Over time, and tied in with colonization, this sovereignty and control was lost. Efforts to increase food security, therefore requires as a fundamental and guiding principle, the restoration and increase of sovereignty and control over local food systems. It also requires influence over policy decisions that determine the extent and nature of food insecurity. One of the first steps towards achieving sovereignty and control is the creation of a Food Security Strategy by Alberta First Nations.

### **Food Sovereignty and Control**

Food sovereignty calls for a fundamental shift in focus from food as a commodity to food as a public good. The core of food sovereignty is reclaiming public decision-making power in the food system. Canada's People's Food Policy identifies seven food sovereignty principles:

1. Focuses on Food for People
2. Values Food Providers
3. Localizes Food Systems
4. Puts Control Locally
5. Builds Knowledge and Skills
6. Works with Nature
7. Recognizes that Food is Sacred

(*Resetting the Table : A People 's Food Policy for Canada, 2011*)

One of the principles of food sovereignty that merits particular attention is "puts control locally". This sounds simple but can in fact be quite difficult. It requires:

- Understanding that while communities might not have the same knowledge or experience as experts or stakeholders, their vision and plans and priorities are what is most important

- Moving past just listening to community input to actually putting community in control of what it wants to do with its own resources
- Only responding to community requests and ideas, never initiating or motivating projects or programs
- Going to people where they are at and helping them with their ideas and work rather than relying on community meetings to bring together the right mix of people to work on an initiative
- Creating a supportive infrastructure that is nimble and responsive to community needs and plans, an infrastructure that is oriented to serving the energy and passion in community. This sort of infrastructure requires funding support to serve as a resource and also requires excellence in its ability to facilitate access to resources that can benefit community plans and needs.

### Influencing Policy

As discussed earlier in the strategy, there is an inverse relationship between food security and household income with food insecurity increasing as income declines. Food insecurity is therefore closely linked to government policies and approaches to income assistance. As described in a submission to Olivier De Schutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, prior to his visit to Canada (Tarasuk, McIntyre, & Power, 2012)

*"The many federal and provincial programs that comprise our 'social Safety net' are failing to enable many Canadians to meet their basic food needs...A public policy approach is required to address weaknesses in the social safety net of Canadians through both federal and provincial/territorial jurisdictional lenses... Any public policy approach must make explicit food security policy goals to ensure that income transfer programs of all sorts are designed to enable household food security - synergistic with other poverty-reduction goals."*

Income is only one part of the puzzle. Education and economic development policies also impact food security, affecting high school completion rates, access to job markets and access to job training. First Nations people need to be involved in the process of influencing those policy levers with the potential to increase food security.

Given the strategy's vision and principles, the process and pathways for working towards it are described in the strategic lines of action for this strategy. These are based on input from our community meetings.

## Strategic Lines of Action

The five themes identified by the Food Security Working Group from the community consultations were:

1. Access/Delivery Systems
2. Education/Skills
3. Policy Change
4. Resources
5. Community

These five themes serve as the organizing framework for the strategic lines of action for this food security strategy, with ideas and comments based on the feedback gathered in our community meetings.

### Access/Delivery Systems

Much is said about the increased cost of transportation to remote communities as a factor causing higher prices. While it does take longer and cost more to get food to distant communities, in conversation with a major food supplier/distributor during our stakeholder consultation, they mentioned that the increased cost related to transportation to remote areas affects prices by adding a few cents to the price, not dollars. Based on this information, the high prices for food seen in some rural and remote locations cannot be attributed solely to the high cost of transportation. Other factors, including a profit motive, must also be examined. Whatever the factors, improvements can be made in how people are able to access food.

Sometimes improving access even includes sharing information so that when a community organization, such as a school, develops a system of accessing food others are aware of it and able to explore a partnership to utilize it.

Our community meetings identified a number of ideas that communities would like to work towards to improve access to healthy food and delivery systems that bring food to their communities. Ideas around which there was a consensus of interest and vision included:

- Creating a Food Bus service. Communities that are close to services in neighboring communities can look at delivery models. One example is a bus converted to bring fresh produce and food to places that don't have

- local access<sup>1</sup>. The bus could work as a mobile market and/or a delivery service.
- Operating a general store in each community with affordable, healthy food. Communities vary in size and in their ability to support retail food establishments. However, even small villages are able to support general stores that sell food and produce along with other community goods there is demand for. In consulting with the owner of a small grocery/general store in a village with a population of 280 people that has been in operation for 75 years, they related that two important factors were scale and people. In other words, a small store in a small village should not try to be something different. For example, produce might be a set of shelves rather than a section. And qualified employees, as for all businesses, are crucial for success.
  - Offering a Good Food Box program, possibly subsidized for those who are in need. A variation on the Good Food box could be other forms of bulk purchasing that can make food more affordable.
  - Encouraging local agriculture, even at the home level. Chickens and other small animals can be raised at most homes with community regulations or bylaws in place, while larger animals such as elk or cows or larger groups of chickens could be raised where there is more land to support them. There are also innovative models to help encourage local agriculture as a local source of food such as Community Supported Agriculture or CSA's<sup>2</sup>.

### **Education/Skills**

In our community meetings, we often came across the idea that people were not used to cooking or working with certain vegetables or other types of less familiar, healthy foods, or lacked skills related to gardening or agriculture or entrepreneurship. Perhaps a desire or a vision was in place, but the skills to implement the idea were missing.

Our community meetings identified a number of ideas that communities would like to work towards to improve education and skills related to food. Ideas where there was a consensus of interest and vision included:

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<sup>1</sup> See for example <http://www.oprah.com/spirit/Farmers-Market-on-a-Bus-Fresh-Moves-Bus> and <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/home-and-garden/architecture/food-truck-with-a-difference-converted-bus-brings-fresh-produce-to-low-income-neighbourhoods/article19547446/>

<sup>2</sup> For more information on CSA's in Alberta visit <http://www.csaalberta.com/>.

- Learning how to prepare and grow healthy foods. Preparing healthy foods for meals was often mentioned, as it is not enough to provide access to healthy foods if people are unfamiliar with how to use them or there is no demand for them. Learning to grow healthy food was also often mentioned as something a lot of people could do at their homes with some basic support to show them how to plant and nurture plants and to rototill or prepare a plot of land. Filling this need could provide entrepreneurial opportunities as well as program opportunities.
- Smoking and preserving food. Hunting, trapping, and gathering were often mentioned as traditional ways of obtaining food that there was interest in. These forms of obtaining food are seasonal in nature, and benefit from skills around smoking and preserving food. The teaching of these skills offers the opportunity for an increased food supply.
- Creating a business plan. For those with an interest in being in business for themselves in a way complimentary to food security, assistance with writing a business plan would be helpful.
- Writing a grant application for funding. Even when grants are available for programs, not every community has the available human resources or experience to write a grant application to fund a program or initiative. Training to increase grant writing skills would be beneficial.
- Policy advocacy. Numerous examples were given in our community meetings of ways that government regulations or laws had a detrimental effect on community and food security. Training in how to organize and advocate for policy change at various levels of government would help to empower communities and treaty areas and other stakeholders with the ability to influence government and advocate for positive change.

### **Policy Change**

In our community consultations, we were made aware of multiple facets of food insecurity where levers for change rested in policy. Policy change can happen at the First Nation, provincial and/or federal levels, with a greater degree of influence and control likely to occur at the local level. These included:

- Creating healthy policies restricting or banning unhealthy options in vending machines in schools, health facilities, band offices, government buildings, and other appropriate places
- Creating policies to protect the land, water, and the environment as the ultimate source of food
- Advocating for policy changes at the community, provincial, and federal levels of government that impact food security (i.e. public health act regulations pertaining to the institutional use of uninspected wild meat; Section 32 of the Indian Act relating to the sale or barter of agricultural products, etc)
- Introducing subsidies to make food more affordable and accessible. For example, if the price of liquor is the same across the province, even in remote and rural areas, why can't the price of food likewise be regulated? Or, if corn is subsidized to largely go into corn syrup, why can't healthier foods be subsidized?
- Advocating for changes to social assistance rates to increase the level of individual and household finances available for food

## Resources

For a community-driven strategy, funding to support, encourage, and enable community initiatives is essential.

First Nations communities have access to a variety of health funds that address food security through various programs and initiatives such as the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, Brighter Futures Initiative, Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative and Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve. As communities move towards more flexible funding agreements, community priorities such as food security can be addressed through these and other sources of funds.

It would also be helpful to continually share information about potential sources of external funding that could be of benefit to communities and other stakeholders in their efforts to increase food security such as provincial grants and private foundations and funders.

Additional resources identified in our community meetings that would be helpful to contribute to food security included:

- Elders as keepers of traditional knowledge related to food security such as ceremonies, harvesting, sharing of food, and food preservation
- Leadership and decision makers that support/endorse food security initiatives

- Community members with knowledge and/or passion about promoting food security
- The availability of a Community Nutritionist to work in the community and particularly in the schools. Community Nutritionists are a great asset to the communities where they serve. Increasing the number of Community Nutritionists would be a great help to efforts to increase food security.
- Equipment - Many activities that could increase food security require equipment that is expensive or large and not normally accessible to a homeowner. Communities with a stock of equipment (i.e. rototillers, fence post pounders, food preservation equipment and facilities) accessible to the community can help facilitate and empower community members as they work on their ideas to increase food security. Sometimes this equipment can be made available through partnerships with Public Works or other departments.

## **Community**

As discussed earlier, having community at the center of this strategy is of utmost importance.

Our community meetings identified a number of ideas that communities would like to work towards to strengthen community infrastructure for food security. Ideas around which there was a consensus of interest and vision included:

- Greenhouses as a means of increasing the yield of produce by prolonging the growing season
- Community gardens as a resource for community residents and programs
- Private gardens for each resident who wishes to have one
- Community providers who go hunting and fishing for the specific purpose of sharing their game and fish with the community
- Community freezers as a resource where community food could be preserved
- Soup Kitchens to provide healthy meals to those who need them

- Fruit trees planted in community to provide a visible cultural change agent in the community around food and to provide a source of local food for those who need it

## **Recommendations**

In order to realize the anticipated impact of increased food security in five years' time, a number of recommendations would help move Alberta First Nations along the pathways towards this outcome. These include recommendations that could be led by the Preventions Subcommittee of Co-Management and those that could be championed by communities.

### **Access/Delivery Systems**

Explore ways to improve access to healthy, affordable food

At the Regional, Treaty and/or Tribal Council areas this could include:

- Working with food producers and distributors to identify economies of scale and opportunities to improve access to market foods in communities
- A Food Bus service that brings produce and healthy food to areas where access to grocery stores is limited. The bus could work as a mobile market and/or a delivery service
- Bulk purchasing that can make food more affordable
- Working with partners to improve access to traditional foods

At the community level, this could include the suggestions above as well as:

- A general store in each community with affordable, healthy food
- A Good Food Box program, possibly subsidized for those in need
- Supports for local agricultural initiatives, even at the home level. Sometimes policies or bylaws need to be revised to accommodate this.
- Support for increasing access to traditional foods

### **Education/Skills**

Encourage skill-building and educational opportunities to build capacity for food security

At the Regional level, this could include training and capacity development on:

- Developing a business plan
- Writing a grant application for funding
- Policy advocacy

At the community level, this can include training and capacity development on:

- Smoking and preserving food
- Learning how to grow and prepare healthy foods
- How to do bulk purchasing
- Cooking skills

## **Policy Change**

Work for policy changes that would improve health and food security

At the Regional, Treaty and/or Tribal Council areas this could include:

- Supporting the harvesting and use of traditional food in ways that are safe and culturally appropriate. This could include forming a committee of partners and stakeholders to review existing policies on the use of uninspected wild meat in institutional settings and look for opportunities to revise existing policies
- Protecting First Nations land, water, and environment as the ultimate source of food using data sources such as the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment study (FNFNES) to leverage potential policy changes
- Explore opportunities for subsidizing and standardizing healthy food through potential funders and partners

At the community level, this can include:

- Restricting or banning unhealthy food choices in vending machines where appropriate
- Protecting First Nations land, water, and environment as the ultimate source of food through local bylaws
- Subsidizing healthy foods at the local level
- Advocating for healthy food choices at community events
- Selling locally grown food

At an intersectoral level (i.e. federal, provincial, tribal), this can include:

- Advocating for changes to social assistance rates to increase the level of individual and household finances available for food
- Conducting a cost of healthy eating study in First Nations communities and neighboring communities to establish financial thresholds for food security that can assist in advocacy discussions around changes to social assistance rates

## **Resources**

Making available resources that promote food security

At the Regional, Treaty and/or Tribal Council areas this could include:

- Exploring partnerships and networking opportunities with key stakeholders (eg Growing Food Secure Alberta; food distributors, food banks)
- Identifying potential sources of funding for community and Regional food security initiatives

At the community level, this can include:

- Identifying human resources such as Elders, leadership and decision makers, community members, community nutritionists
- Equipment (i.e. rototillers, fence post pounders, food preservation equipment and facilities)

### **Community**

Encouraging community initiatives to improve food security

At the Regional, Treaty and/or Tribal Council areas this could include:

- Supporting community-based projects through Preventions Subcommittee proposals, where funding is available.
- Working with Regional partners/stakeholders and community members to identify opportunities to share community successes

At the community level, this can include:

- Supporting community greenhouses
- Supporting individual and community gardens
- Supporting healthy school meal and snack programs
- Supporting community hunting and fishing
- Supporting community freezers as a resource where community food could be preserved
- Supporting community soup kitchens to provide healthy meals to those who need them
- Supporting the planting of fruit trees on community land
- Encouraging local entrepreneurship that can help to improve food security
- Bringing school meal programs into the community such as Breakfast for Learning or Breakfast Clubs of Canada

## **Next Steps**

As the mandate of the Food Security Working Group finishes with the completion and launch of this strategy, it is requested that the Prevention Subcommittee of Co-Management take on the following responsibilities in order to achieve the strategic actions and recommendations described in this strategy:

- Follow through on activities identified in the Implementation Plan.
- Share information about available sources of funding for food security projects to interested communities.
- Facilitate mentoring between communities on specific projects.
- Facilitate the sharing of knowledge when communities have an interest in a project or initiative and an experienced resource can help build their skills and capacity to accomplish their goal.
- Oversee the revisions to the draft evaluation plan and identify potential resources for the ongoing evaluation of this strategy.
- Include community representatives in a coordinating mechanism for this strategy's implementation to participate in discussions and decisions about the ongoing focus of this strategy.
- Facilitate the development of intersectoral partnerships where new opportunities and new relationships can help communities increase their food security.
- Facilitate learning opportunities to build skills and capacities in communities.
- In an ongoing manner, assess the external environment related to food security (economic, political, etc) for opportunities to strengthen food security for Alberta's First Nations.

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