

'Tis the season to celebrate Ontario's dynamic agri-food sector by sourcing local



As we approach the end of another growing season, [**The Ontario Federation of Agriculture**](#) (OFA) wants to remind everyone that agriculture, its diversity and bountiful yields are an annual cause for celebration.

Each year, Ontario farmers work 12.3 million acres to produce over 200 commodities that fill plates across the province, country and world. There are 49,600 farms in Ontario and the average size is 249 acres. Our farmers grow a large variety of food products from ginseng, canola, peaches, lima beans, mushrooms to hops, herbs, artichoke, sweet potatoes, bok choy, sprouts and Christmas trees. Ontario livestock producers raise an array of animals that include bison, pheasant, sheep, goat, turkey, chicken, cattle and hogs.

It's important to remember that local food extends beyond fresh fruits, vegetables and meats. Local includes a significantly diverse range of commodities from the dairy in your fridge to the deli meat in your crispers. Foods such as frozen vegetables, jams or canned pickles are all grown by farmers in this province and processed locally at peak freshness.

Agri-food workers go to great lengths to produce a wide variety of delicious, high-quality food products that support a healthy lifestyle, whether fresh, processed, or frozen. We're able to produce such high volumes and variety of quality food because Ontario has more than half of the highest quality, Class 1, farmland in Canada.



When visiting the grocery store or Farmers' Market, be on the lookout for seasonal crops such as brussels sprouts, apples, cranberries, pears, day-neutral strawberries, raspberries, cabbage, carrots, purple cauliflower, potatoes, golden beets and large varieties of edible pumpkins and squashes.

Make preparing your locally sourced meals a family affair by inviting the kids into the kitchen. Teaching them how to locally source, prepare and enjoy Ontario food products prepares them for life-long healthy food choices. Check out OFA's food literacy initiative, [Six by Sixteen](#), for youth-friendly recipes, interactive activities and resources.

Looking to decorate for fall? Purchase locally grown ornamental cornstalks, pumpkins, gourds, fall mums and straw to celebrate the bounty of harvest in style. Support local agri-tainment farms and learn about agriculture firsthand by picking your own pumpkins and apples.

When you support your local farmers, you are also supporting the employment opportunities the agri-food sector creates, as well as the economic growth and prosperity it contributes to the province and nation.

Our food supply chain continues to prove its resiliency, strength and unshakeable devotion to provide Ontarians and the world affordable, nutritious, high-quality food. Whether a producer or consumer, fall is the perfect time to celebrate the abundance of nutritious, affordable, fresh, local food on our plates and everyone along the agri-food supply chain.