

Manitoba's full plate story

When looking at how to tell the story of Manitoba's agricultural sector, it is best to look at it as a full plate story. There are many consumers who may not know the breadth and variety of products that are grown, raised, produced, or processed right in their own backyards.



This could be one of the province's many crops like wheat, barley, oats, canola, soybeans, rye, sunflowers, corn, peas, forages, or a variety of fruits and vegetables. When it comes to livestock, Manitoba boasts strong production of beef, chicken, turkey, bison, sheep, and pork, not to mention by-products like dairy milk and honey. Simply put, when you walk down the aisle of a grocery store, you'll see Manitoba's mark everywhere you look.

This full plate story ties together producers from all corners of the province, whether it be Swan River, Brandon, La Broquerie, Winkler, Selkirk, and everywhere in between. Many Manitoba producers grow multiple types of crops, as well as many who raise livestock or have dairy cows in addition to their crop operations. They are aware of the importance of every component of the agricultural sector and recognize the diversity of products we have to offer.

Verwey Farms in Portage la Prairie is an example of Manitoba farmers' diversity of products they have to offer. This multi-generational mixed farm is operated by Verwey family, including many of their children, near Portage la Prairie. Their 6000-acre farm includes wheat, canola, soybeans, corn, barley, oats, and alfalfa production, as well as a Charolais beef herd and a dairy operation.

Many of their children are involved in the farm's operations, including three of the brothers' sons who work full-time on the farm. Farming has always been a family affair for the Verweys, going back to 1959 when John and Norma Verwey founded the farm that continues to grow and produce more crops, dairy, and cattle for consumers in Manitoba and beyond.



Manitoba agriculture's spirit of collaboration and diversity of production is also demonstrated through a locally produced television show, Great Tastes of Manitoba, which was established in 1990. This farm to table cooking series showcases nutritious, affordable, delicious foods grown by Manitoba's farmers. Great Tastes connects Manitobans with dietitians, chefs, home economists and experts from seven different farmer directed organizations.

The series and its accompanying digital channels are a one-stop shop for anyone who is interested in knowing where their food comes from and supporting local farmers. The first 32 seasons of Great Tastes of Manitoba have aired on 5 different broadcast networks, included 7 different hosts, and featured 25 unique locally grown ingredients.

Beef & Barley Soup (video available by clicking here)

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) canola oil
- 1 lb (500 g) beef stewing cubes, trimmed
- Season salt and pepper, to tastes
- 6 cups (1.5 L) Peak of the Market vegetables, cut in small pieces (i.e.: onions, carrots, rutabaga, and/or potatoes)
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) pot or pearl barley
- 1-900 mL Low sodium beef broth tetra pack
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) prepared tomato sauce
- 1 Tbsp (25 mL) fresh thyme and dill, (1/4 tsp (1 mL) each if using dried herbs)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp (5 mL) salt
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) black pepper
- 4 cup (1 L) water

Method

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat; brown beef cubes.
2. Stir in remaining ingredients.
3. Add 4 cups (1L) water; bring to boil. Reduce heat to simmer; cover and cook for about 2 hours or until beef and barley are tender.
4. Discard bay leaf before serving.

For more recipes inspired by Manitoba farmers, check out Great Tastes of Manitoba's website at: <https://greattastesmb.ca/our-recipes/>.