

Greenhouse to be Built at Highfield Farm to Support Local Food Infrastructure

Local urban farm hub receives funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

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A new year-round greenhouse is being built at Highfield Farm to support Calgary's community-based local food system, thanks to \$227,000 in funding through the Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF), delivered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The greenhouse will enable Highfield Farm to expand Calgary's usual short growing season to a year-round effort, supporting the goals of this local urban farming hub to provide Calgarians with fresh, locally-grown, nutrient-dense food while also providing an exciting community gathering place.

"In Canada, no one should have to go hungry. Strengthening food security for our most vulnerable populations is more important than ever. With support from the Local Food Infrastructure Fund, through the Compost Council of Canada, Highfield Farm will be better able to provide fresh, nutritious food for families when they need it most," said George Chahal, Member of Parliament for Calgary Skyview.

"This greenhouse is going to be an absolute game-changer for the farm," said Heather Ramshaw, Operations Manager at Highfield Farm, an initiative of the Compost Council of Canada through the support of amazing on-the-ground team leaders and the growing energy of community-minded volunteers. "Being able to extend our season in the spring and fall, and host year-round classes and programs will really boost our ability to make an impact on our community!"

Envisioned by the City of Calgary to advance urban food production and to provide the public with opportunities to engage with urban agriculture, The Highfield Farm Project has been working to transform the 16-acre parcel of underutilized and degraded land in Calgary's industrial area into an urban farm. Rooted on three value pillars: land revitalization, regenerative food and community building; much of Highfield Farm's approach is based on education and involvement – offering extensive opportunities for volunteering, experiential learning combined with environmental action including composting, soil health focus and crop selection. The site currently has 15,000 sq ft of garden space, over 200 members, and donates the majority of their production to food access organizations such as the Calgary Food Bank and the Mustard Seed.

The greenhouse will expand the farm's abilities to grow food year-round while also demonstrating a variety of regenerative growing methods and composting technologies, all which prioritize the nutrient-density of the food being produced. Aligning with the values and pre-existing procedures of Highfield Farm, much of the produce grown will be donated to food distribution organizations in Calgary, in an effort to improve access to fresh, local and highly nutritious foods by the city's most vulnerable populations.

Installation of the greenhouse is expected to be completed by April, in time to support the growing of seedlings for the 2022 outdoor growing season.

Stay up-to-date with Highfield Farm and the upcoming greenhouse installation by signing up as a member at highfieldfarm.ca. Highfield Farm is also currently seeking donations to support this project. Donations can be made at:

<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/ParksFoundationCalgary/communityprojects.html>

The Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF) is an initiative of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, created as part of the Government of Canada's Food Policy for a healthier and more sustainable food system in Canada. LFIF is aimed at community-based, not-for-profit organizations with a mission to reduce food insecurity by establishing and strengthening their local food system.

Highfield Farm is located on 16-acres in the heart of an industrial community in the city of Calgary. In partnership with the Compost Council of Canada, and the City of Calgary, the energetic Highfield Farm team is transforming this vacant property into a vibrant and productive urban farm through soil revitalization, food production and community programming. Supported by an extensive group of volunteers, the Highfield Farm urban agriculture project is producing locally-grown food, raising general awareness of urban agriculture, generating entrepreneurial opportunities, all in turn, strengthening our community.

The Compost Council of Canada is a national non-profit, member-driven organization with the charter to advocate and advance organics residuals recycling and compost use, returning essential organic matter back to our soils for enhanced health, vitality and productivity. Programs championed by the Council include agricultural research trials, the Compost Quality Alliance, Soil Safari workshops and Plant-Grow-Share a Row, a community-based food-growing and -sharing program to help neighbours in need. Together with the leadership of a local force of soil health and urban agriculture experts, the Council was selected by the City of Calgary to secure the lease of the Highfield Farm property to advance the city's urban agriculture support vision.

For more information, please contact:

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