

The Food Bank Farm



The Food Bank Farm was created in response to an obvious need in the community of Sault Ste. Marie for fresh produce to supplement the food currently provided to individuals and families in need via the food bank system that exists within the city.

We operate the farm on a not-for-profit basis, and are dedicated to producing the maximum volume of a variety of high quality, nutritious produce items to those in the community who lack the financial resources to obtain food through traditional retail outlets.

The objective of the Food Bank Farm is to produce high quality vegetables for families in need. We grow, harvest, wash and package the food items, then deliver them to our partner the Soup Kitchen, who coordinates delivery of the food through their food bank located at 172 James Street in Sault Ste Marie. The successful operation of the farm is entirely supported by financial donations from within the community. We thank our donors for their ongoing support and generosity.

What's Happening At The Farm – End of Season

Our first season was very busy, and we are now able to provide a summary of how things went. The spring weather was very difficult – it was very cold and wet. As a result we got off to a bit of a rough



start. Our first few deliveries to the soup kitchen were not as large as we hoped. By mid summer, the weather began to get more agreeable, but it was still much wetter than normal. This resulted in Tomato blight destroying our entire tomato crop, and excessive moisture also ruined our cucumber crop. But there were some bright spots, our squash grew well, we had productive turnip and carrot crops, our beans did very well. In the late fall we had unexpectedly warm weather that extended our season two weeks beyond what we would consider normal.

At the height of the season we were delivering fresh produce twice a week to the Soup Kitchen. Norma was busy teaching cooking classes using our vegetables, and the classes were quite a hit. Building on this success we are in the process of developing recipe cards to pass out next year as produce is distributed. Norma is also talking about organizing some pickling classes to help teach people how to preserve the harvest.

When we add it all up, we estimate that we delivered approximately \$13,000 worth of food to the soup kitchen. Not bad for a year with very poor weather.

Supporters – Velorution Bike and Ski

We want to extend a special thank you to the owners and staff at Velorution Bike and Ski located at 162 Old Garden River Road here in Sault Ste. Marie. In August, the business provided a generous donation to support the Food Bank Farm, and along with the Sault Cycling Club, they spent an afternoon at the farm. All the cyclists met downtown, and rode their bikes out to the farm where we held a BBQ. We showed the cyclists around the farm, and everyone then dove in to help harvest veggies, and do a bit of weeding in the fields. This was a really nice example of the type of event we enjoy hosting at the farm. Other groups have been organizing events as well.

Events like this are fun for everyone involved and a large number of families in the city received some great produce as a result of the activity. We are already planning similar events for next season. We have room to accommodate additional groups, so if you have a group interested in participating in a special event at the farm, please contact us.



Volunteers – We Love Them!

By late in the fall we were getting lots of out at the farm and they have really been a big help. In this newsletter I wanted to introduce you to two: Peter Uhlig and Monique Wester



Peter and Monique have become very dedicated to making the farm a success. Both have fabulous backgrounds and experience that really can help us improve the way the farm is operated. Peter has been doing soil testing and investigating plant disease issues to help us improve productivity. Monique jumped right into the task of helping us assemble a greenhouse frame that a kind neighbor donated to the farm. Both spent countless hours weeding and harvesting vegetables, and became so

involved in the operation of the farm that they were able to instruct and guide the work of other volunteers at the farm.

Now that the off-season has arrived, Peter and Monique have not slowed down at all. They are in the midst of helping apply for funding support, and will be involved in every aspect of planning for the coming year. Isabelle and I are so thankful to have support from all of our wonderful volunteers. With great help I might actually be able to take a day off next year! Hahaha!

Just like Peter and Monique, You can get involved too!

In addition to being able to contribute to the work of the food bank farm via a charitable donation on our website, foodbankfarm.ca you can also participate in farming activities. No experience is necessary; we will teach you what to do.

Join Us To Expand The Farm!

Even though we grew a small mountain of food this year – it wasn't enough. There remains a critical need for fresh produce to support those in need. The farm is currently running at nearly full capacity, and we are investing heavily in things that will increase our productivity and allow us to grow even more food.

But, it won't be enough.

You can help!

You can become a Food Bank Farmer!

You don't need to dive into the effort at anywhere near the scale that we are, but if you are a **back yard gardener**, with a vegetable patch of your own, we are calling on you to get involved. Join our effort by planting an extra row of veggies in your own back yard. Care for them, water them, weed them, and when they



are ready, harvest them. The Food Bank Farm is planning to establish multiple collection locations throughout the city for all of the participants in our "Grow-A-Row" project. There will be a location near you, so that you can easily drop off your fresh produce. We will gather everything up, wash it, sort it, package it, and store it in our large walk in refrigerator at the farm. Once the produce is needed at the soup kitchen or food bank we will deliver it for distribution right alongside what is grown on the farm. There has never been an easier way for you to get involved and help grow food for those in need! Please join us today, by contacting our project co-ordinator Ayushi Shah, via e-mail at planning@foodbankfarm.ca or by calling 705 255 1459.

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