
nourish YOUR ROOTS



EVALUATION REPORT 2017



Prepared by Nourish Nova Scotia with evaluation support by Dawn Hare

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nourish Nova Scotia (Nourish) is a registered charitable organization that supports the nutritional health and well-being of Nova Scotia children and youth. Nourish Your Roots (NYR) is a farm-to-school fundraising program of Nourish designed to help sustain healthy food-related programs and initiatives in schools and non-profit childcare centres while supporting the local farm economy in Nova Scotia. This is achieved by connecting schools with farms to sell boxes of fresh produce as a fundraiser for schools' healthy eating programs such as breakfast programs, snack programs and edible school gardens.

The 2017 NYR Campaign marked a significant increase in the number of participating schools and childcare centres from across Nova Scotia. In its third year, NYR had participation from 102 schools and 6 childcare centres, representing eight school boards. Moving from two distinct selling and delivery periods in 2015 and 2016, the 2017 campaign began in September and ran for seven weeks, with deliveries ending the second week of November. In total, 14,608 boxes of local produce were sold to families across Nova Scotia, from Sydney to Digby Neck. NYR generated \$438,240 in gross revenue: \$270,073 for local farms, \$124,268 for schools and \$43,899 for Nourish to reinvest into the program. While the majority of boxes were packed onsite at the farms and delivered to the schools/childcares, the program was modified in some areas to include farm pick-up, student packing and farm visits. Customers were given the option to donate boxes again this year.

Overall, schools, consumers and farm partners were pleased with the success of the fundraiser. This evaluation focuses on NYR's implementation and program impact and was informed primarily by online surveys. Findings indicate that NYR is considered a win-win-win, supporting healthy school food programs, supporting local farms and enhancing community engagement and food literacy.

The evaluation demonstrates how school board representatives will continue to play an important role in supporting schools with program logistics and enhancing communication between schools and communities. Evaluation findings highlighted areas of improvement for the coming years including finding ways to promptly address quality related concerns, as well as to develop protocols of school placement through the Harvest Campaign. Planning is already underway for the 2018 campaign.

"[NYR] seems to have created a greater conversation around healthy eating and has generated some good ideas of new programs to initiate." – Elementary School Contact



"I love this fundraiser! This is my second year purchasing a box and each time I've been so excited to find out what's inside and think about how to use it. I love that I'm able to support the local school while also supporting local farms and receiving quality produce grown with care. Keep up the amazing work!" – Parent

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This evaluation and a full appendix is available online at www.nourishns.ca/nourish-your-roots/evaluation (appendix not included in printed version).



THE NOURISH YOUR ROOTS STORY

Nourish Nova Scotia is a registered charitable organization that supports the nutritional health and well-being of Nova Scotia children and youth. In its third year, Nourish Your Roots (NYR) remains an exciting program of Nourish NS. NYR helps schools and non-profit childcare centres to support their own healthy eating initiatives by connecting them with local farmers to sell fresh produce as a fundraiser.

Piloted in 2015 and expanded in 2016, NYR 2017 saw an increase in the number of participating sites and farm partners from across the province, and a shift in the program model. In 2017, the NYR Harvest Campaign was staggered over seven weeks, with the first selling period beginning in early September and deliveries ending the second week of November. To address the growing popularity of NYR, the Harvest Campaign was developed to better meet the supply of the local farmers and to accommodate more schools within the program. Farm partners were better able to space out their harvesting and labor requirements for NYR and families had the opportunity to purchase boxes at different times throughout the harvest season.

Yearly adjustments to the program model are based on evaluation findings and decisions of the NYR Advisory Group. This guiding group includes the NYR Coordinator, Nourish staff, several school board contacts, farm partners, community volunteers and representatives from the Department of Agriculture and the Nova Scotia Health Authority.



Farm Visit at Longspell Point Farm



\$30 NYR Box

\$9 for healthy eating initiatives in schools

\$18 for farmer

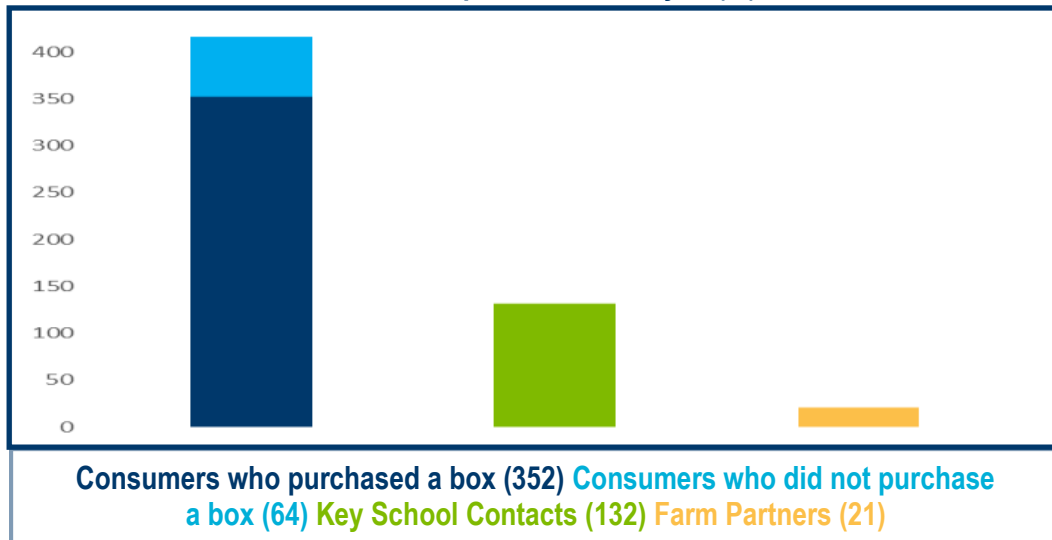
\$3 for Nourish to reinvest in NYR program

"Fresh NS vegetables delivered to my community AND supporting healthy eating at school – awesome idea!" – Parent

EVALUATION DESCRIPTION

The evaluation findings are based primarily on the results of three online surveys. The surveys provided data on the consumer experience, the school experience and the farm experience for NYR 2017.

Who completed the surveys? (%)

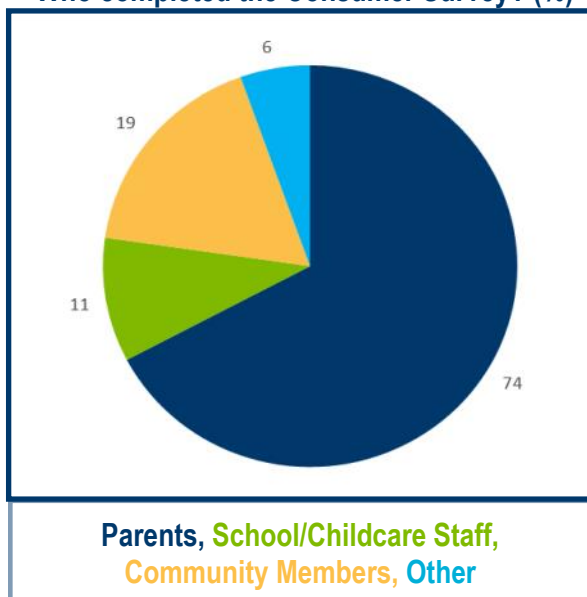


CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

Each NYR box contained an insert card that provided a recipe, links to the Nourish website for additional recipes, storage and preparation tips, as well as a link to the online Consumer Survey (Appendix A). Consumers were invited to share their thoughts and experiences on the Harvest Campaign, with an opportunity to win prizes for themselves and their participating school. While response rates were lower than anticipated, the online survey data provided consumer feedback and representation from all areas of the province and all six childcare centres. The survey also included a separate section for those who did not participate in NYR and who wanted to share their feedback.

The Consumer Survey was well promoted by Nourish via Twitter and Facebook and, to increase response rates for the consumer experience, schools were asked to promote the evaluation via their school communications and social media and a prize was offered as an incentive.

Who completed the Consumer Survey? (%)



Volunteers at Wiles Lake Farm Market

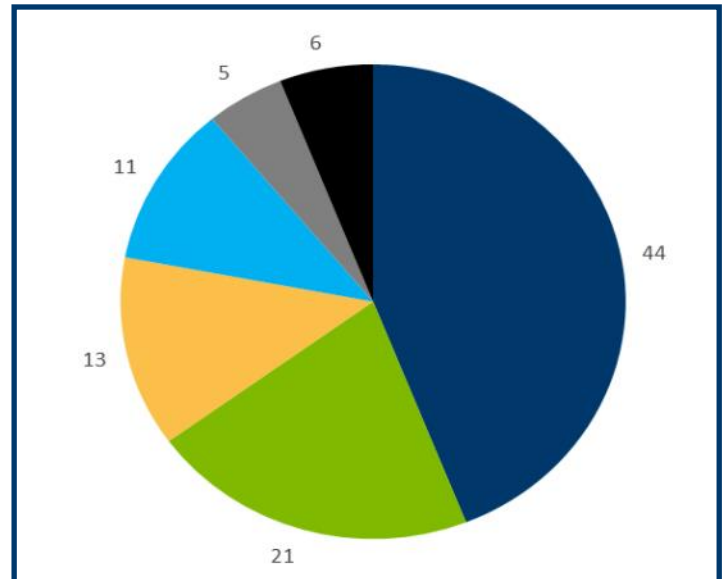
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

New in 2017, and to provide a richer set of data, participation in the online survey was a requirement for schools who had confirmed participation. The NYR online form requested contact information for both the Principal/Director of each school/childcare centre and one other person (organizing parent, staff, community volunteer, etc.). Both were identified as the Key School Contacts (KSCs). Following each school's fundraising campaign, KSCs were sent an email with the link to the online Key School Contact Survey (Appendix B), as well as a reminder of their commitment to participate in the program's evaluation. With 132 KSC responses, ninety-nine percent of schools and childcare centres are represented in the evaluation results.



Hank's Farm

Who were the Key School Contacts (KSCs)? (%)



Principals/Directors, Parents, Staff, Teachers, Vice-Principals/Assistant Directors, Other

FARM EXPERIENCE

The NYR Coordinator contacted all farm partners following the Harvest Campaign to invite them to share their feedback on the online Farm Partner Survey (Appendix C) or through telephone/in-person discussions. Data was collected from 21 farm partners, including some farmers who did not end up supplying produce for this campaign.

Prizes provided an incentive for both the school and the community to participate in the online surveys and acted as a way for schools to promote the evaluation. The intention of the incentive was to increase the number of consumer responses. The school with the highest percentage of survey responses won a prize for their school. The winner was Digby Neck Consolidated School! The school was offered the opportunity for a farm visit to a nearby farm in the Spring of 2018. There was also a random draw from the consumer survey and the winner won a package of Nourish NS and Select NS swag and merchandise.

The 2017 NYR Evaluation Report was coordinated by Dawn Hare, Annapolis Valley Farm to School Coordinator and school board contact for NYR schools in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. Nourish supported the evaluation with guidance, technical support, program materials and editing of the final report. The evaluation was guided by the program's values, principles and best practice standards (Appendix D), logic model (Appendix E) and evaluation matrix (Appendix F).

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Funding for the NYR Harvest Campaign included a grant from the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, the per-box fee levied during the NYR 2016 campaign and Nourish donors. The NYR Coordinator managed the program logistics and coordination for all 108 schools/childcare centres (Appendix G) and engaged in discussions with over 25 farming operations to partner farms and schools based on location and farm capacity. In total, 23 farm partners participated in NYR 2017 (Appendix H), ultimately 21 farms supplied or delivered produce.

School board contacts have a key role for NYR and without their support, the program could not be successfully delivered in all the regions. As points of contact for all school communications, it is through them that all information flows from the NYR Coordinator into schools. Additionally, several school board contacts currently sit on the NYR Advisory Group. Each of the 102 schools was supported by their school board contact and the 6 childcare centres dealt directly with the NYR Coordinator.

Schools expressed interest in the Harvest Campaign through an online sign-up form on the Nourish NS website, which closed in March 2017. The NYR Coordinator then worked with farm partners, school board contacts and the NYR Advisory to partner farms with schools and make decisions on which phase of the campaign each school was offered, allowing sufficient time for farm partners to plan their harvest. Decisions were made based on farm capacity, delivery planning and the number of interested schools in each area. Schools were notified in May 2017 of their selling and delivery periods and based on this information were asked to accept or decline on the campaign offered. Participating schools and childcare centres were provided with fundraising packages and promotional/information materials required to host a successful NYR campaign.

Harvest Campaign	Selling Period	Delivery Period	Number of Schools
1	Sept. 11 - 22	Oct. 2 - 5	40*
2	Sept. 18 - 29	Oct. 16 - 19	16
3	Sept. 25 - Oct. 6	Oct. 23 - 26	18
4	Oct. 6 - 19	Oct. 30 - Nov. 2	14
5	Oct. 16 - 27	Nov. 6 - 9	20

* One school received their delivery October 11th



Student helpers at Holland Road Elementary School

Program resources were updated for the 2017 Harvest Campaign. Six schools participated from the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) this year (compared to one last year), therefore more materials were offered in the French language to enhance inclusivity. The Nourish website saw an overhaul of the NYR page to provide schools with easy to find information to support their fundraising campaign including: frequently asked questions, promotional tools, new classrooms resources, kids in the kitchen ideas, new recipes and storage tips.

Promotion of NYR was done locally at the individual school level and provincially by Nourish. Louise Renault and the CBC Nova Scotia Do Crew helped pack the boxes at Elmridge Farm in Centreville. This media attention helped promote NYR as a whole and highlighted the role that volunteerism plays in NYR's success.



CBC Do Crew at Elmridge Farm

NYR boxes were packed and delivered to consumers in several different ways for the Harvest Campaign. 91.5% of boxes were packed onsite at the farm and delivered to the schools and childcare centres for customer pick-up at those locations. The remaining 8.5% of boxes involved variations of this model to meet the capacities and interests of the farm partner and school communities including farm pick-up, student packing and a farm visit (packing and pick-up). The NYR Coordinator worked with these farm partners to modify the program accordingly.



NYR Boxes ready to be unloaded at École Wedgeport School

There was a change to the delivery fee charged to schools to offset the transportation cost to farmers.

Following the NYR Advisory recommendation, transportation fees were based on distance:

Schools within 65km = \$50
Schools beyond 65km = \$75

FARM PICK-UP

Three schools/childcare centres on the South Shore had the opportunity to pick up their ready packed boxes at the farm/farm market based on their proximity (n=479). Visiting the farm/farm market was an opportunity for families to become more aware of where local produce is available in their communities.

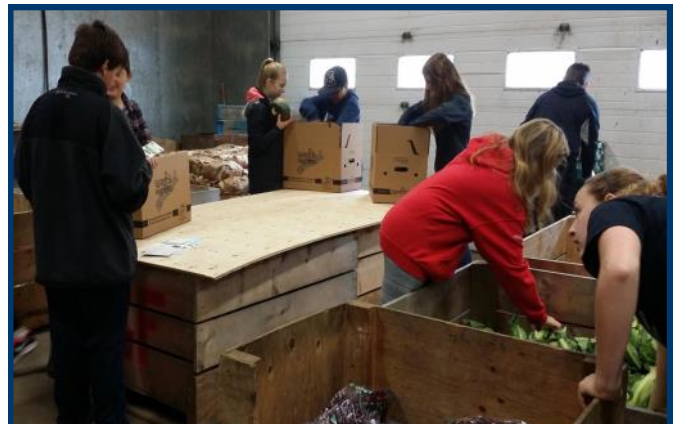
STUDENT PACKING

Students and volunteers from five schools (four in Chignecto Central Regional School Board (CCRSB) and one in South Shore Regional School Board (SSRSB)) were involved in packing boxes. Four schools packed at the school and one school packed at the farm, with customer pick-up taking place where the boxes were packed (n=730). One school had an assembly on the packing day and the students had the opportunity to talk with the farmer.

Engaging students to pack the boxes created opportunities for conversation about the produce and the farms, as well as building links to the curriculum. In CCRSB, a group of farms worked collaboratively to each supply 1-2 produce items for the boxes, supporting smaller scale farms' involvement in NYR.



Cobequid Consolidated assembly to meet the farmer



Hebville students packing at Indian Garden Farm

FARM VISIT (PACKING AND PICK-UP)

For the third year, customers from three schools in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board (AVRSB) had the option to visit a farm and to pack their own boxes (n=40). Families had the opportunity to pick and wash their own carrots in the field, weigh and bag their own onions and potatoes in the greenhouse and chose the remainder of their produce from bins already harvested by the farmer. Families enjoyed meeting the farmers and interacting with the livestock, as well as picking their specific produce items. The farmer indicated that the extra effort of organizing the visit was worthwhile.



Students picking carrots at Longspell Point Farm

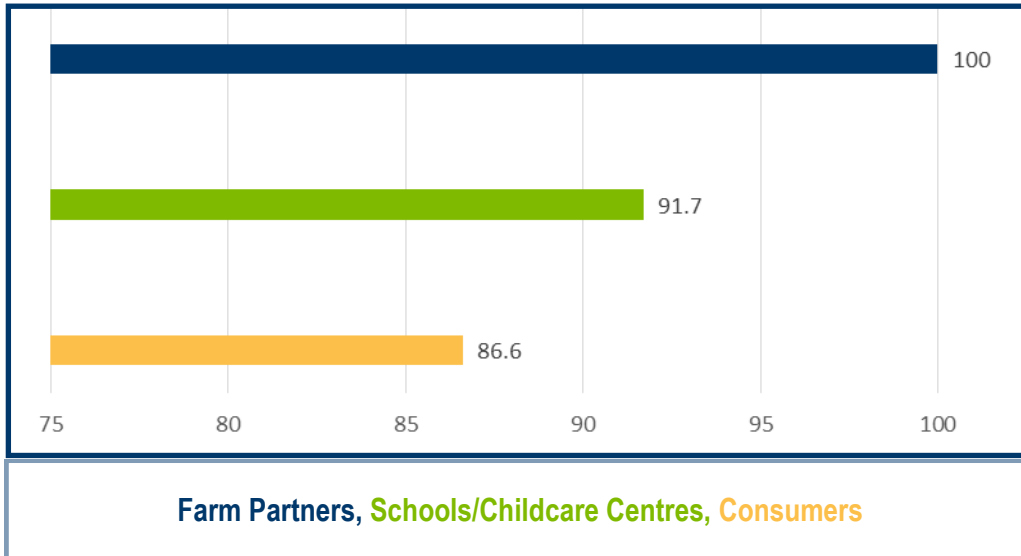
MEASURING IMPACTS

The 2017 Harvest Campaign marked a significant increase in the number of participating schools and childcare centres from across the province, as well as several program modifications recommended from previous evaluations. Overall, schools, consumers and farm partners were pleased with the results of the NYR fundraiser.

88.6% of schools indicated that NYR was a successful fundraiser

81.8% of schools indicated that were satisfied with funds raised

Would you participate in NYR again? (%)



Emerging from the survey data, the win-win-win concept was strongly highlighted by both the key school contacts (KSCs) and consumers. Survey respondents considered NYR to be a fantastic initiative for schools to raise money for their healthy food programs, to support local farms and to enhance community engagement and food literacy.

“Great program that sold itself. This fundraiser supports our school, local farmers and provides nutritious vegetables and fruit to homes as well as donations to local food banks and families! Win-win-win!”
 – Elementary School Contact



Student helpers at Elmsdale District Elementary



Delivery Day at Evangeline Middle School

“Love supporting healthy eating, our school and local farmers all in one package.”
 – Parent

HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS

In 2017, schools and childcare centres across Nova Scotia raised \$124,268 from the sale of NYR boxes to help fund their own healthy school food programs and initiatives.

In addition to supporting school-based programming, consumers and schools alike appreciated the message of healthy eating and the opportunity for a healthy fundraising alternative. NYR enables schools to engage with the community around healthy eating messages and provides a quality product that many families already purchase. NYR provides schools with an easy way to follow the fundraising directive in the *Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools (2007)* (www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/foodnutritionpolicyguidelines.pdf).



John MacNeil Elementary Breakfast Program

“We raised money for our school’s breakfast club and also for a whole school healthy eating activity!”
– Teacher, Elementary School



Breakfast Program Volunteers and students

“We were able to achieve our goal to make enough to keep fruit baskets in each classroom”
– Principal, Elementary School

Funds raised from NYR 2017 supported:

- Breakfast Programs
- Snack Programs
- Lunch Programs
- School Gardens
- Taste Testing
- Cooking Skills
- Farm to School
- Special Events - Family Cooking

“It supports the school while I receive a product that has a tangible benefit to my family. So much better than popcorn sales or wrapping paper.” - Parent



Students at École du Grand-Portage display fresh local produce from NYR boxes

“[NYR] demonstrates to the community that the school supports and encourages healthy eating.”
– Elementary School Contact

NYR's influence regarding school food culture is witnessed in the many ways schools linked the fundraiser to their priorities and existing messages around healthy eating. The fundraiser acted as a point of discussion among schools, families and communities as to the links between where our produce comes from, the importance of healthy school food programming and the ability to fundraise with a healthy alternative.

NYR provided opportunities for youth engagement. Students were engaged at the school level in selling, packing and unloading of the boxes, creating both excitement and curiosity for what was inside the boxes.

Cameron Brown, Nourish's roving reporter and student at Madeline Symonds Middle School, was featured in a two-part video exploring the journey of a NYR box from farm to school. The films tell the NYR story and act as a resource to promote the fundraiser to schools and the community. Both videos can be found on the Nourish NS website (nourishns.ca/nourish-your-roots/nourishyourroots) and at these links:

[NYR Connecting the Dots part 1 \(the farm\)](#)
[NYR Connecting the Dots part 2 \(the school\)](#)

"It brings healthy eating and the notion of the local food economy into the middle school conversation. Adolescents are huge consumers and need to be educated ones."
 – Principal, Middle School



"[NYR] encouraged families to try new foods. We had a taste test of carrots and parsnips in my primary classroom. Many students had not tried parsnips before."
 – Teacher, Elementary School



Hebville students packing NYR boxes at Indian Garden Farms

"[...] it was incredible to see the kids get to meet the local farmer who actually grew all of the food, and work together to unload it from the delivery truck."
 – Elementary/Middle School Contact



Cameron Brown at Noggins Corner Farm

SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMS

Participating farms realized \$270,073 in revenues through their involvement in NYR. Consumers were happy to support an initiative that made a positive impact for the local farming community. Many families reported a keen interest in supporting “local” as a factor in their decision to purchase a box.

Overall, farm partners believe in the Nourish Your Roots program, supporting schools and building awareness for seasonal, fresh Nova Scotia produce. For many farms, NYR added to the farm’s overall sales, helped relieve storage space for the winter and increased their customer base. Most farm partners felt that they received fair market value for their crops and appreciated the flexibility in choosing which produce items to include.



Delivery Day at Somerset and District Elementary School

“We shop at our local farmer market every week and love our Nova Scotia produce – thank you farmers! Nourish Your Roots is a great initiative for building awareness and fundraising – I hope it will continue.”
- Parent

13.9% of consumers purchased from a farmer for the first time*

42.3% of consumers are more aware of where to purchase local produce*



West Hants Middle School delivery day



Delivery Day at Champlain Elementary

*Based on survey responses.

Organic producers and smaller scale farms who offer retail prices in a farm market environment, found the pricing structure of NYR challenging due to their increased cost of production and transportation. Due to the nature and size of these farms, wholesale pricing is not a typical component of their business model as it is with larger scale farms. However, farm partners indicated that their participation in NYR went beyond reasons of straight profitability and they look forward to participating again next year.

Farm partners appreciated the early spring planning for NYR, enabling them to get a better estimate of the amount of produce required for the fall campaign, although planning for demand (number of boxes per school) remains a challenge.

Unforeseen circumstances (crop failure and communication issues between a farmer group) caused three farms to withdraw this year. However, all farm partners expressed interest in continuing their participation and support of NYR. As the program expands, many farm partners indicated that they have the capacity to provide more produce, pack and deliver more boxes and partner with more schools.



“It adds to overall sales volume and, to some degree, lets us determine which products to use, allowing us to move surplus items.”
– Farm Partner

“Having been through it once, we would be willing to consider a couple more schools another year as we know what to expect.” – Farm Partner

ENHANCING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND FOOD LITERACY

NYR garnered positive community feedback, with survey data strongly indicating that the boxes were well received and customers were impressed with the produce. Communities were enthusiastically supportive of the program.

The NYR fundraiser engaged parents, students and community members throughout the Harvest Campaign. Many parents volunteered in an organizing role, providing logistical support to schools and childcare centres. The farm visits and student packing variations provided the opportunity for families and community members to have hands-on participation.

Families gained food literacy skills through their involvement in NYR and in their use of the produce. Survey responses demonstrated ways in which families were trying new produce and recipes. Some customers preferred more traditional produce, while other families appreciated the surprise and the different types of produce found in their box. Families commented that they tried certain vegetables for the first time and that their children were more interested to try new items based on the excitement of receiving the box. A roasted vegetable recipe card was included in every NYR box, with an invitation for families to check out additional recipes and storage information on the Nourish website.

48.6% of consumers
tasted a new
vegetable/fruit/herb

47.2% of consumers
tried cooking with a new
vegetable/fruit/herb

"It is a great way to connect and converse with the community on important issues around healthy eating, food security and the local economy."
– Principal, Middle School

nourish YOUR ROOTS Supporting healthy school food programs and local farmers

Get cooking in the kitchen with friends and family.
For more recipes, storage and preparation tips, go to www.nourishns.ca/nourish-your-roots

Roasted Vegetables with Fresh Herbs

This recipe is a guide to use with whatever seasonal vegetables you have on hand.

Ingredients

4	Medium carrots	
2	Large parsnips	
2	Potatoes and/or sweet potatoes	
1	Squash	
1lb	Brussels Sprouts, trimmed	454 g
1	Turnip	
4	Small onions (or 2 large, halved)	
1/4 Cup	Olive oil	63mL
1/4 Cup	Finely chopped mixed fresh herbs (such as sage, thyme and rosemary - for dried herbs, use 2Tbsp/30mL)	63mL
	Salt and pepper to taste	

Directions

- Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
- Wash, peel and cut vegetables so they are all about the same size: about 1 inch cubed.
- In a large bowl, toss the vegetables with the olive oil and herbs. Season with salt and pepper.
- Spread vegetables on large-rimmed baking sheets. Roast for about 55 minutes, tossing once halfway through, until the vegetables are tender and golden.
- Serves about 4 - 6 people.

Storage by Vegetable

Apples, beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cranberries, fresh herbs, kale, leeks, parsnips, onions, turnip: Best stored in fridge between 0 and 4°C

Squash, sweet potatoes: Dry place with good air circulation between 10 and 16°C

Potatoes: Dark place between 4 and 10°C

Garlic: Dry, dark place between 4 and 16°C

Box contents vary

We'd love your feedback!

Complete the survey and be entered to win: www.nourishns.ca/nourish-your-roots

Share your Nourish Your Roots farm box experience using #NourishYourRoots

Quality is important to us. Please email comments to nyrcoordinator@nourishns.ca

Supported in part by **Select & NOVA SCOTIA**

Nourish Your Roots webpage received
7,983 visits during the campaign



Volunteers at Cobequid Consolidated School

"We had an overwhelmingly positive response from the school and surrounding community. They were so happy to see so much of the money stay in the community and promote health at the school."
– Parent Organizer, CSAP School

NYR insert.
Reverse side identical in French.

Customers were given the opportunity to donate a box to the school or a family in their community, recognizing that not every family can afford a \$30 box. In 2016, a small number of boxes were donated. In 2017, approximately 350 boxes were donated. Schools are in the best position to direct donated boxes based on their understanding of the school community. Donated boxes were given to individual families, community food banks and the school cafeterias for special, school-wide cafeteria meals. Both schools and consumers considered the donation box option to be an added and important bonus of NYR, with enhanced consideration of the broader school community. It is important to note that while not all families may be able to participate, all students at the school can benefit from the funds raised for healthy eating initiatives. Survey data also showed creativity from the community in dealing with extra or unwanted produce, through donations of unused produce to family, neighbors and friends.

“Four boxes were donated. We had four families that were identified to have a need for the food. We purchased a ham and then gave the families the Nourish box, along with a ham so they would be able to enjoy a nice meal together with their family.” – Teacher, Elementary School



Evangeline Middle School students unloading boxes on delivery day

“Some families donated boxes so they could be shared with families who could benefit from the contents for a healthier/more affordable Thanksgiving Dinner.” – Principal, Elementary/Middle School

“First time using leeks! Made potato and leek soup and it’s great! Also made cranberry sauce for the first time!” – Parent

“I was so impressed by the amount and quality of the food provided. It was a real treat opening the box with the kids and discovering what was inside – everyone was excited.” – Parent

“Anything we didn’t use for our household, we passed on to someone else.” – Parent

OPERATIONAL REFLECTIONS and MOVING FORWARD

As plans begin for the 2018 campaign, the NYR Advisory Group will reflect on the lessons learned through the 2017 NYR evaluation. Many of the modifications made this past year worked well for both the schools and the farm partners.

Changes implemented in the 2017 NYR Campaign

- **Communications**
 - Updates to NYR page on Nourish website, including additional information and new resources.
 - Enhanced presence on social media (Twitter and Facebook)
 - Updated online sign-up form for schools and childcares that gathered more information, with two Key School Contacts identified on the form.
 - Updated fundraising packages including more French language materials.
- Commitment by schools/childcare centres to reinvest funds raised in healthy food initiatives and to complete the evaluation survey.
- Schools/childcare centres signed up and participation confirmed before the end of the school year, in preparation for a quick start earlier in September. Schools had fundraising materials in time for September sell periods.
- Revised delivery fee schedule.
- Extended Harvest Campaign with deliveries from October to November.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Schools expressed appreciation of Nourish's organizational support throughout the campaign. General feedback indicated that the fundraiser was easy to implement at the school/childcare level, schools found the process well organized and the NYR materials helpful. With fundraising details organized in May 2017, schools could hit the ground running in the fall. Half of the schools/childcare centres had a committee or group within their site to organize the fundraiser and administrators in those schools appreciated the organizational assistance. Moving forward school board contacts may wish to encourage more volunteer involvement to help ease any strain felt by administrators and school support staff to successfully implement the fundraiser.

*"The changes that were made this year made things much smoother."
– Principal, Elementary School*

*"[...] for our first time it was straight forward and user friendly."
– Principal, Elementary School*

Consumer survey responses indicated that most families felt that the boxes were easy to pick up and that the fundraising materials were helpful. The school community showed great interest in NYR's impact and would appreciate additional communication from the schools regarding how much money was raised and the specific healthy food programs that benefit. School board contacts can also play a role in reinforcing effective communication strategies, while working with schools on program logistics and resources. Continued efforts to help schools effectively promote the fundraiser's results to the school community may also increase feedback in the consumer survey.

"As a parent, I would like to now how much money was raised for this fundraiser for our school." – Parent

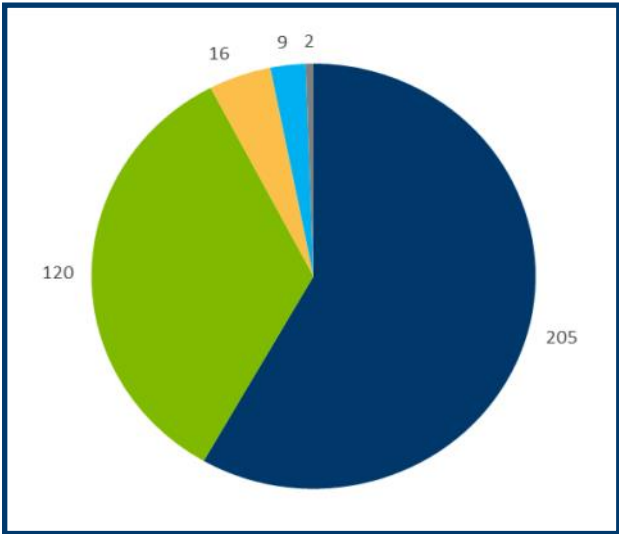
PRODUCE QUALITY AND PRICE

Consumers and schools were generally pleased with the produce quality, variety and the cost of the box. In highlighting the fundraising aspect of the program, consumers were satisfied to purchase a box of local produce to support their school.

While the majority of survey comments were positive, there were a few questions from consumers around the box's value for money. Comparisons were made with the cost of buying the same produce at large grocery chains, on sale or from local farmer markets for less. In addition, consumers also made comparisons between different schools, different farm partners and previous years. As an evolving program, the NYR Advisory will continue discussions on finding the right balance of value for money (for both consumer and farmer), however, it is important to keep in mind that NYR's primary focus is as a school fundraiser. Promotional campaigns may want to emphasize this overall fundraising purpose more explicitly moving forward. The evaluation findings show that continued discussions with farm partners around the amount and presentation of the produce in the box may be helpful in addressing some of these consumer concerns.

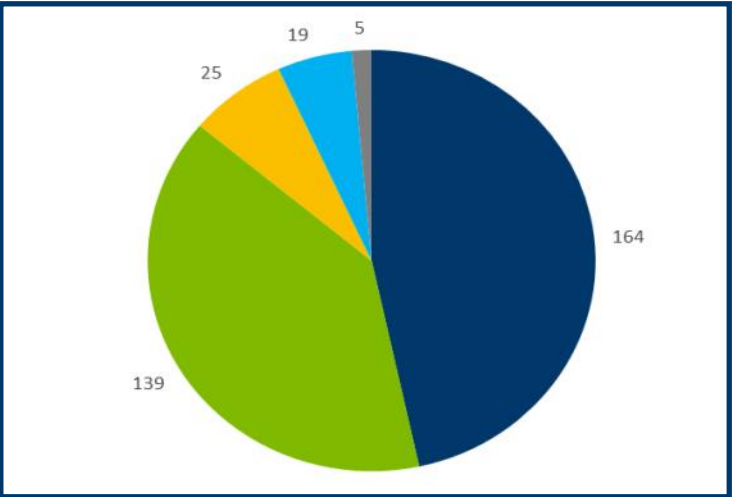
*"A fantastic fundraiser!
Very easy to implement, great product – great quality and price is very competitive. It makes selling boxes easy."
- Elementary School Contact*

**Consumer Experience:
Was the produce high quality?**



Strongly Agree, Agree, Unsure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

**Consumer Experience:
Was the price of the box appropriate?**

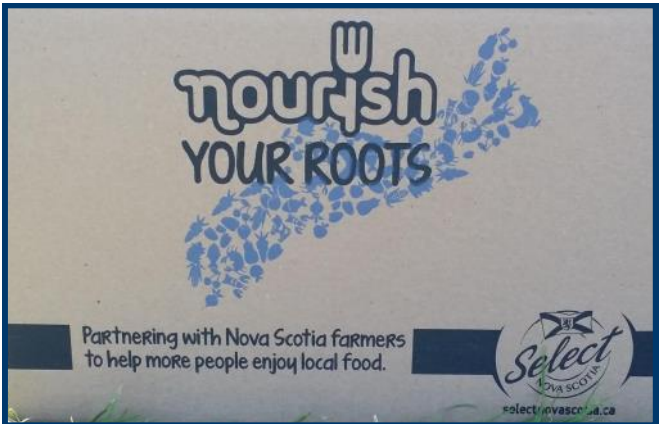


Strongly agree, Agree, Unsure, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

"I found this to be an excellent fundraiser. Not only did I receive a good selection of vegetables, I also found the quantity I received to be very good value for the money I spent." – Consumer

Quality concerns were raised by a small percentage of consumers, citing produce items that had spoiled or did not meet expectations of variety or size. However, most consumer respondents were thrilled with their NYR boxes and indicated that they would purchase again next year. NYR will continue investigating quality concerns and look at ways to address them in a timely manner during future campaigns. For example, the use of e-vouchers to send to customers with produce quality concerns may work well. Specific feedback on quality concerns from the 2017 campaign will need to be addressed with each farm partner before establishing the 2018 farm partnerships.

The consumer survey included a separate section for those who did not purchase a box, providing the evaluation with additional information. The price of the box remained a barrier for some. Families expressed interest in knowing what would be in the box beforehand and being able to select their own produce items. For some who had participated in previous years and experienced a quality issue, they opted not to purchase this year. Also included in this group were families who had simply missed the selling deadline or families who grew their own produce. The majority of the 64 respondents believed that NYR contributes to a healthy food environment and that they were glad that their school/childcare participated in the program. Moving forward, continued promotion is recommended to explain how farm offerings differ across the province, to highlight the donation option, and how NYR will deal address quality concerns.



EXTENDED HARVEST CAMPAIGN

The timing of when NYR was offered to each school provided many comments from both schools and consumers. Some schools who received their boxes before Thanksgiving weekend were thankful for the opportunity and felt that it boosted their numbers. Families appreciated the perfect timing for their Thanksgiving meal. While the delivery before Thanksgiving weekend may be identified by some as the most popular campaign, the quick turn around time required at the school level in early September was identified as a challenge by some schools and consumers.

“It was good timing because it was only a few days before Thanksgiving. I wasn’t going to roast a turkey this year, but when we received our box of delicious fall vegetables I went out and got a turkey.” – Parent

“We loved this. Bought boxes for some of our relatives. They loved them! The timing was perfect- just before Thanksgiving. We ate many of the veggies for our Thanksgiving Dinner. It was nice to tell all the guests that they were eating local produce.” – Parent

Survey responses indicated that some schools and consumers were disappointed to have missed the holiday opportunity and felt that their school’s sales were affected by this. However, for other schools, the burden of an early September selling period and getting the campaign organized and running so quickly into a new school year was not ideal and they appreciated running the campaign later in the fall. The extended Harvest Campaign allowed for more schools to participate in NYR in 2017, but in some cases this resulted in overlapping or close selling periods between feeder schools as well as other local schools in the area. Some schools indicated that this may have been a factor in decreased sales compared to previous years. Survey feedback provided suggestions of further staggering the selling periods of schools and the possibility of offering the fundraiser at different times of the year.

The NYR Advisory will need to consider ways in which it can allocate the distribution of selling periods and peak selling opportunities fairly, while also meeting the logistical needs of the NYR program.

*“We sold less boxes this year but likely because other schools are selling too.”
– Staff, Elementary School*



Pentz Elementary students
on delivery day

*“[...] it was fun showing our children all the vegetables from the box and seeing how many they could name. They were more keen to try them during our Thanksgiving meal. We look forward to doing it again next year!”
- Parent*

CONCLUSION

Healthy school food is important to Nova Scotians. Teachers, administrators, parents, community members and farmers placed strong emphasis on 'supporting schools' as the motivating factor for their participation in Nourish Your Roots. The NYR fundraiser provides the unique opportunity for schools to raise much needed funds to help sustain their healthy food programs and initiatives while supporting the Nova Scotia farm economy. In its third year, NYR expanded to more sites across the province, raised more funds for schools and increased farm revenues while continuing to foster an excitement focused on fundraising with local produce.

NYR is truly a win-win for all. Each year survey data has demonstrated positive impacts at the school and farm level, as well as overall customer satisfaction. Feedback has also shown increased awareness and appreciation for supporting local.

The NYR Advisory Group remains committed to the success of this fundraiser, eager to take the input received from survey feedback to inform improvements to the program. Planning is underway for 2018 and schools, farms and farm markets are already expressing keen interest from across Nova Scotia.



Students at Pentz Elementary meeting their farmer, Peter Wile

“Staff and students [...] would like to say thank-you to Nourish Nova Scotia for the opportunity to raise funds [...]. To have fresh vegetables from the garden to the table, was an excellent experience and very rewarding for us here at the school. Funds raised, will be put towards our Breakfast Program, and other areas that will benefit the health and education of our students. Thank-you for taking an interest in our youth!”
– Principal, Elementary School

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2017 NYR Harvest Campaign exceeded expectations and with another year under our belt we are all the wiser for the experience. Nourish Your Roots (NYR) continues to grow and evolve informed by those most closely vested in the outcomes: parents, students, schools and farmers.

In 2017, participating schools and childcare centres and farmers were required to take part in the evaluation as part of their commitment to the program. This was a purposeful change because we believe strongly in the premise “to know where you’re going, you need to understand where you’ve been.” Feedback and evaluation help us to do three important things: first, to continually improve upon the NYR program; second, to demonstrate impacts and outcomes of the program; and finally, to inspire us to continue our work to help build a culture of healthy eating in schools.

There are many individuals and organizations whose contributions we would like to acknowledge.

Nourish staff and NYR staff compliment. From everyday execution, to planning, communications, evaluation and accounting, the logistics and coordination required to deliver a quality NYR program is enormous. We draw upon the many skills of our staff and contractors to do so. Thank you **Caroline, Dawn, Jan, Melissa and Meagan** for making the 2017 NYR harvest campaign a success.

The **schools, school boards, parents, students, public health partners** and **community/Nourish volunteers**. Thank you for teaming up with Nourish to make fundraising with healthy, local vegetables and fruit a seamless, fun and profitable endeavour, and for capturing student engagement and delivery moments on film and in photos.

Our many **farm partners**. Thank you for sharing our values for this program and providing beautiful produce, grown with care. We couldn’t do what we do, without your enthusiastic support!

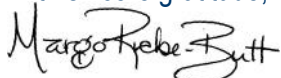
Our materials, packaging and delivery partners, **Staples, Maritime Paper** and the drivers from **Kings Produce**. We appreciate you going the extra mile, literally and figuratively, to make NYR happen again this past year.

NYR Advisory. Thank you for your expert leadership and guidance in helping to bring NYR to more communities across Nova Scotia in an equitable and sustainable manner.

Our funding partners: The **Province of Nova Scotia**, the **Department of Health & Wellness, Select NS** and the **individual and corporate donors of Nourish** who believe in our work and share the values and objectives of the NYR program. Your enduring support has enabled the growth of the NYR program, and on behalf of all of those to whom this program benefits, we thank you!

Finally, this year, NYR was featured in some special communications pieces. Thanks to **Louise Renault**, co-host of **CBC Information Morning** and her fabulous “**Do Crew**” for volunteering with the NYR program and assisting one of our farm partners on packing day. Many hands make light work! Thanks to **Truefaux Films** who took the NYR journey from seed to kitchen starring Sophie-Anne as the storyteller. Truefaux choose Nourish as charity of choice last year and produced this [video short](#) in-kind! Last but not least, thanks to our 2017 summer student, the talented **Meagan Brown** and her brother **Cameron** for their fun short films depicting the NYR experience from farm to school delivery in a two part series ([part1](#), [part2](#)). We also appreciate Halifax Regional School Board’s **Kelly Connors** for pitch hitting on delivery day as videographer!

With sincere gratitude,



Margo Riebe-Butt, RD
Executive Director, Nourish Nova Scotia