

Industry Overview:

Vegetable



Our Food. Our Future.
Growing Opportunities in Agriculture

 Newfoundland
Labrador

Large-scale vegetable production in the province is concentrated in regions throughout the province which have adequate soil depth, mostly on soil developed by alluvial outwash (old river deltas). This tends to make the farming regions in the province small but intense in terms of usage of available land. Coupled with short, cool summers, and you have the defining elements of the Newfoundland and Labrador vegetable production industry: cool season crops grown in pockets of soil throughout the province.



Vegetable production enterprises in the province tend to fall into two groups: large-scale producers with storage and grading facilities who sell their produce to the local retail (grocery store) chains; and small-scale producers which operate seasonally and sell produce directly to the public. The crop profile produced by these two groups also differentiates their enterprises. Large-scale producers focus on traditional crops such a potato, carrot, beet, turnip (rutabaga), cabbage, parsnip and turnip greens. These crops are demanded in large volumes by the Newfoundland and Labrador public and thus profits can be made in producing large volumes. Smaller scale producers have much greater control over their crop profile and new and novel crop can be experimented with little financial risk, and fetch a premium price at farm markets. Also small-scale farm markets often rely on a diverse offering to draw in

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customers by providing produce that is not available in large retail settings. For these reasons small scale operators are the drivers of greater crop diversity.

Millions of dollars' worth of produce is purchased through retail grocery stores every year in the province, with the vast majority of this produce coming from outside the province. Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador place value on local agricultural products, for reasons of freshness, quality, and environmental sustainability among others. While many current producers grow the traditional "Jiggs Dinner" variety of root crops, and room to grow in these commodities remains, consumer demands are expanding beyond these traditional crops, creating opportunity for large-scale production into novel crops. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Onions (leeks, green, purple, red)
- Herbs
- Leafy greens (kale, bok choy, lettuce, spinach)
- Bell Peppers
- Radishes
- Tomatoes

Tremendous opportunity exists within the vegetable production industry. Changes in market demand due to aging demographics, climate change and global food insecurity have created an environment with huge possibilities for new farmers on both the small and large scales. Add to this a resurgence in the local food movement which had been traditionally associated with life in the province prior to the 1950's and the province is primed for an agricultural renaissance; one that should see a significant increase vegetable production. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador is unique in Canada in that it leases agriculturally viable crown land to commercial farmers. These two factors give vegetable producers in the province an opportunity that is not found elsewhere in Canada: low cost land and, at present, a large available market. This combination of lease system and available market has already started to attract prospective producers from outside the province.

