

Canada's Food Price Report goes national for 2021

Annual report on food prices to get nation-wide boost by adding two more world-class universities

Halifax — *Canada's Food Price Report* is going cross-country. Jointly released by long-time collaborators Dalhousie University and the University of Guelph, the 2021 project team will include the University of Saskatchewan and the University of British Columbia.

“We’re going national!” says Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, Senior Director at the Agri-Food Analytics Lab and the report’s lead author. “When we started this project a decade ago, we always wanted to make it fully Canadian and have institutions across the country contribute. We now have four very strong institutions joining forces. With COVID-19, it’s going to be challenging to forecast food prices this year, so we need all the help we can get.”

Now in its 11th year, the annual *Food Price Report* research team uses historical data sources, machine learning algorithms, and predictive analytics tools developed over many years to make predictions about food prices in Canada.

“The report gains national recognition and attention year after year. It’s an exciting opportunity to collaborate and bring our expertise in crop production to the table,” says University of Saskatchewan project lead Dr. Stuart Smyth, Associate Professor and USask’s Agri-Food Innovation and Sustainability Enhancement Chair. “Innovation in food is such a fascinating subject — people love food but they fear innovation, so these are conversations that everyday consumers want to have.”

“Our Food and Resource Economics team will include faculty members with expertise in commodity markets and international trade, and students from the Masters of Food and Resource Economics program with expertise in econometric analysis,” adds UBC project lead Dr. James Vercauteren, Professor, Food and Economics Group with the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. “British Columbia’s unique determinants of regional and national food prices will now be emphasized in the report, broadening its scope and accuracy.”

Dr. Simon Somogyi, Arrell Chair in the Business of Food, is the University of Guelph project lead. “It’s an exciting time for this report and the contributions from our new partners will add tremendous value to our endeavours and to the information we can offer consumers.”

Charlebois looks forward to the more complete perspective the new partnerships will bring. “The relationships people have with food across the country are very different. It’s important to capture those different perspectives.”

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