Emergency Food Distribution Platform Underway to
Get Food to Where It Is Needed Most

A national consortium including government and organizations from the food, technology and non-profit sectors is leading the charge to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the food supply chain in Canada

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Vancouver, British Columbia: Through the first collaboration of its kind, a consortium of key stakeholders from the government and the food, technology, transportation and non-profit sectors are banding together to use technology to solve some of the catastrophic impacts COVID-19 has had on the food supply chain and food security of Canadians.

Led by FoodMesh, a Vancouver based technology startup, and co-funded in part by the Digital Technology Supercluster, Vancity EnviroFund and industry participants, this landmark project will bring together organizations with a shared interest, to simplify matching large volumes of unsold food and delivering it to an on demand network of Canadian charities and food businesses according to best and highest end use.

"The COVID-19 outbreak has created severe volatility in the food supply chain, partly due to a near shut down of our food service industry. Currently there are few commercially viable ways to reroute that food to secondary markets in a quick and cost effective way" said Jessica Regan, CEO of FoodMesh.

"We have witnessed truck loads of high value food commodities being dumped due to time and cost restraints to find new markets; meanwhile food relief organizations are seeing increases in new clientele. We believe this waste is avoidable with the right solution in place." Regan said.

"This project is about using technology and network effects to bring stability and predictability to accessing nutritious food in a time of uncertainty, while ensuring our food suppliers are compensated fairly for their work." adds Regan.

The collaboration will enable FoodMesh and the project partners to build on its existing model and infrastructure that has already rescued over five million meals worth of food from the landfill, and scale the program nationwide to help meet the significant increase of food with no end market across Canada.

This ambitious and complex project will involve developing Canada's largest and most diverse online food share network, including simplifying how we intelligently match and deliver surplus products to avoid loss, feed our food insecure, while providing cost recovery to our farmers and food businesses.

The project will develop a national food share network that will help reroute at least **1.5 million meals each month** to local food relief organizations, while providing cost recovery to Canadian farmers and food businesses.

"FoodMesh and its collaborators are saving precious, much-needed food from our landfills," said Sue Paish, CEO of the Digital Technology Supercluster. "Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that these critical resources are preserved and delivered to those that need it most."

Julie Dickson, industry advisor to the project adds, "By finding new ways to more efficiently and strategically connect all parts of the value chain, we unlock benefits that have a far greater upside potential than conventional donation streams, with the net result being both prevention of wasted food, as well as economic gain for all participants. It's truly a win-win-win."

To learn more about the Emergency Food Distribution Platform, or how to participate (either as a supplier or recipient of food), visit www.foodmesh.ca/supercluster

About FoodMesh:
Mesh Exchange (dba FoodMesh) is a Vancouver based technology startup, building scalable food recovery solutions for food businesses and governments. We build apps and programs to simplify and digitize the redistribution of surplus food. Established in March 2016, our work is rooted in fixing avoidable food waste by developing viable business tech solutions for food businesses targeting waste reduction goals. Learn more at foodmesh.ca.

About the Digital Technology Supercluster:
The Digital Technology Supercluster solves some of industry's and society's biggest problems through Canadian-made technologies. We bring together private and public sector organizations of all sizes to address challenges facing Canada's economic sectors including healthcare, natural resources, manufacturing, and transportation. Through this 'collaborative innovation,' the Supercluster helps to drive solutions better than any single organization could on its own. The Digital Technology Supercluster is led by industry leaders such as D-Wave, LifeLabs, LlamaZOO, Lululemon, MDA, Microsoft, Mosaic Forest Management, Sanctuary AI, Teck Resources Limited, TELUS, Terramera, and 1Qbit. Together, we work to position Canada as a global hub for digital innovation. A full list of Members can be found here.

Consortium Participants:
Participants of the Consortium Include: United Way Lower Mainland, Save On Foods, Buy-Low Foods, Nesters Markets and Associated Grocers, Daiya Foods, Fraser Valley Regional District, City of Richmond, Vancity EnviroFund, Metro Vancouver, National Zero Waste Council, Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health, Traction on Demand, and Salesforce.

About Vancity

Vancity is a values-based financial co-operative serving the needs of its more than 543,000 member-owners and their communities, with offices and 60 branches located in Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Victoria, Squamish and Alert Bay, within the unceded territories of the Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw people. With $28.2 billion in assets plus assets under administration, Vancity is Canada's largest community credit union. Vancity uses its assets to help improve the financial well-being of its members while at the same time helping to develop healthy communities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

About the COVID-19 Program:

The COVID-19 Program aims to improve the health and safety of Canadians and support Canada's ability to address issues created by the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, the program will build expertise and capacity to anticipate and address issues that may arise in future health crises, from healthcare to a return to work and community. More information can be found here.

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