

2014 Food Snapshot - Chéticamp, Cape Breton



Le Jardin Communautaire de Chéticamp Chéticamp Community Garden

Chéticamp is an Acadian community wedged between the highlands and Bay of St. Lawrence. Culturally and linguistically distinct from many of the surrounding communities, fishing and growing food has traditionally been an important part of this community. Despite this food production tradition, community members have shared with the project that, households who grow their own vegetables have become increasingly rare. *Le Jardin Communautaire de Chéticamp* (Chéticamp Community Garden) was established in the summer of 2014, after community members recognized both a loss of food knowledge in the community and a growing interest in learning (and in some cases *re-learning*) the skills and knowledge necessary to grow and prepare food. The Ecology Action Centre partnered with the local school (École NDA) and Le Conseil des Arts de Chéticamp to establish the community garden group. After a plot of land (50 x 50) was plowed, 6 gardeners maintained individual plots, while the remaining garden was tended by volunteers and students. The garden was so productive in its first year that excess food was able to be sold at the local farmers market. Funds raised have been plowed back into savings for next season's garden.

About this document

This snapshot is part of the research and evaluation work of the *Our Food Project* to measure the impacts of food systems interventions. It includes information shared through one in-depth interview with Le Conseil des Arts staff, and one food mapping workshop including a survey with 8 community members. A comparative snapshot will be conducted in 2016.



Catalogue of Primary Food Assets

These locations were mapped by Chéticamp community members.

Retail

La Boulangerie Aucoin	14 Lapointe Road
The Co-op	15081 Cabot Trail
Trofel	15151 Cabot Trail
Dancing Goat	Margaree Valley

Food Assistance

St. Vincent de Paul
Meals on Wheels

Produce Market

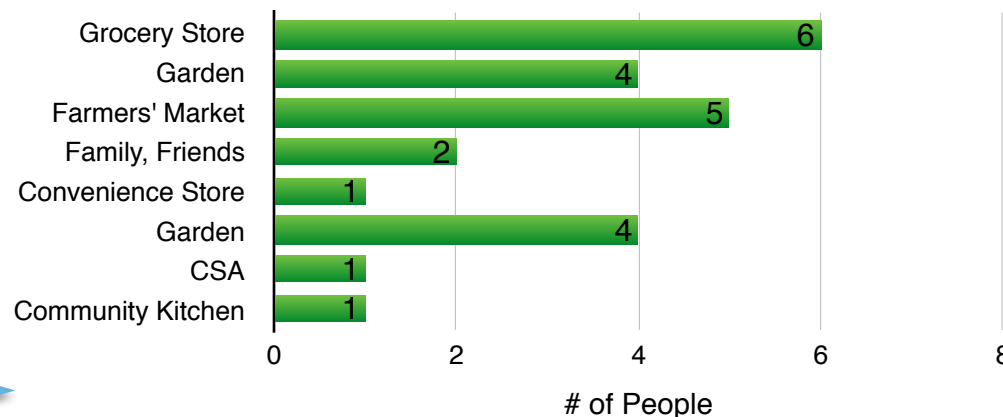
Simon's	
Henry Edouard	
Jamie LeBlanc	
Fish truck	
Seafood Stop Market	14803 Cabot Trail
Heart Strawberry Farm	
Farmer's Market	Senior's Hall (behind Chéticamp Church)

Food Skills & Growing

Friend/Neighbour's Garden
Chéticamp Community Garden
Home garden
Mom's garden
Cranberries
High bush cranberries
Blackberries
Blueberries
Strawberries
Raspberries
Wild meat

"I love cooking but if I was alone there is no way I would cook, no way"

Where do you get your food from?

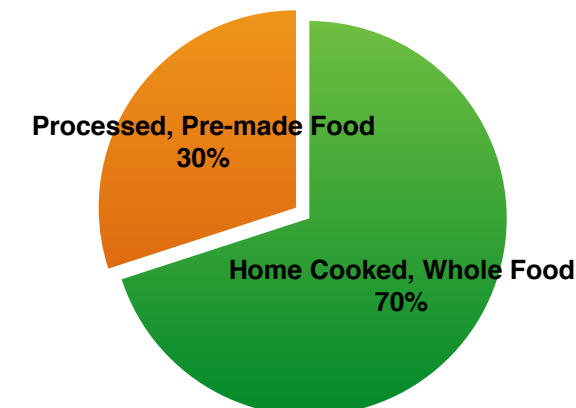


About the Chéticamp Community

Chéticamp is a small rural fishing village located on the west coast of Cape Breton Island. The majority of its residents are Acadian and speak French natively. The community's population has been declining in recent years. As a result, Chéticamp currently faces many of the challenges that other rural Nova Scotian communities are experiencing such as a decline in business, sports and art, and in the services that the community is able to offer its primarily older residents. The local economy is heavily reliant on tourism, and consequently many community members work seasonal positions.

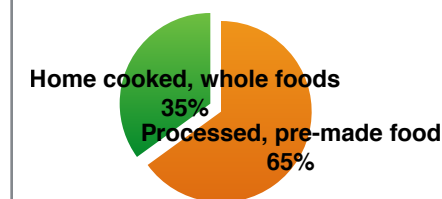
The food culture is fairly limited due to the lack of available options in the community. However, there appears to be a focus on traditional Acadian fare, convenience foods, foraging and hunting within Chéticamp's food culture.

Older Families



The older population in Chéticamp, which makes up the majority of residents, generally have a diet made up of traditional Acadian fare. Traditional Acadian foods include wild meat, potatoes, vegetables, lobster, chowders, soups and Fricot, an Acadian stew. This was estimated to make up approximately 70% of their diets. The remaining 30% is made up of processed foods such as cookies, fish sticks and cheese.

Young Families



Traditional Acadian food culture has not been passed down to younger generations and so young families with children tend to eat a lot of convenience foods such as french fries, pizza pops, TV dinners, pop and chips. However, they do know how to cook some whole food meals such as shepherd's pie, chicken and potatoes and fajitas.

2014 Food Snapshot - Chéticamp, Cape Breton

SUPPORTS for healthy food access

Listed in order of importance in the community.

- 1. Natural environment:** The area surrounding Chéticamp has an abundance of wild edible plants and berries as well as wild game that is free for everyone to access.
- 2. Community:** Neighbours, family and friends will trade or give away fruits, vegetables and game meat to others in the community, creating a network of healthy food access.
- 3. Knowledge and skills:** Participants identified that, along with a network that trades and/or gives away food, there is a high level of knowledge and skills to draw upon within the community.
- 4. Community and backyard gardens:** The community garden offers programming and support for the community. Some community members have small "hobby gardens".
- 5. Transportation:** Access to transportation to stores and restaurants within Chéticamp was identified by focus group participants as being a support and easy to come by due to community ties.

BARRIERS to healthy food access

Listed in order of importance in the community.

- 1. Seasonal employment:** Seasonal employment means that money is tight for many residents during the off-tourism season and that time becomes a bigger barrier during the tourism season.
- 2. Living alone:** Some community members who live alone reported that it was hard to find motivation to cook for one person and that a variety in diet was sacrificed when cooking for one.
- 3. Isolation:** Chéticamp is fairly isolated from other communities in Cape Breton. This means that produce and other food products are not as fresh when they arrive and that the prices are higher due to shipping costs and a lack of competition.
- 4. Lack of choice:** Due to isolation and declining population, there are only so many options for community members to choose from both in regards to where they shop and what they are able to purchase. Special diets and culturally-appropriate foods are both more difficult to come by. 100% of survey respondents felt that they were not able to access all the food that they want to.

OPPORTUNITIES for Positive Food Environments

"It is typical of a small town now, people sell goods from the farm or fishing to friends and family or give them away. It's not an official business so it's not really something that they would promote or advertise, it's more word of mouth"

Mentorship between generations: the older generation could teach younger generations about traditional Acadian food and the knowledge and skills associated with the Acadian food culture.

Community meals/potlucks: An opportunity for those living alone to come together to cook and share meals together.

Food workshops: Having food workshops in the off-tourism season could encourage community members to learn new skills and knowledge. Having workshops at the school could encourage children to take an interest in their food and create opportunities for furthered mentorship regarding healthy food choices, skills and knowledge.

The Chéticamp community garden: Participants identified that they would like to see the community garden continue to grow and see it as a way to help other opportunities identified to happen.

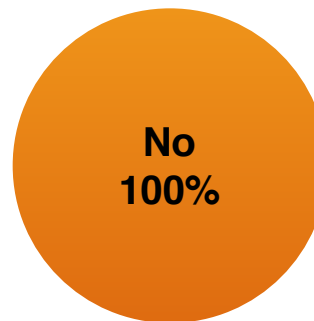
The Farmer's Market: Currently there is only one food vendor at the farmers' market in Chéticamp. Residents would like to see this change and the farmers' market continue to grow.

"You buy something and it expires the same week, sometimes it expires in days, then you're not getting your bang for your buck"

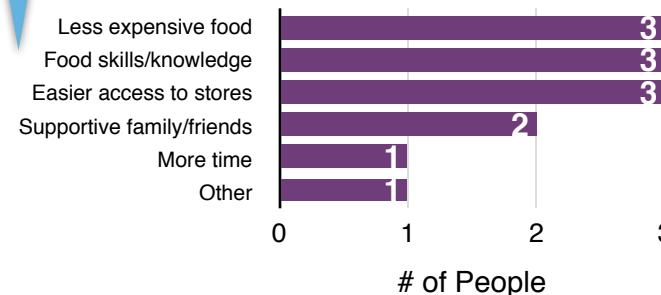
Why is food important to you?

Community ^{homegrown} life ^{energy} health ^{important}

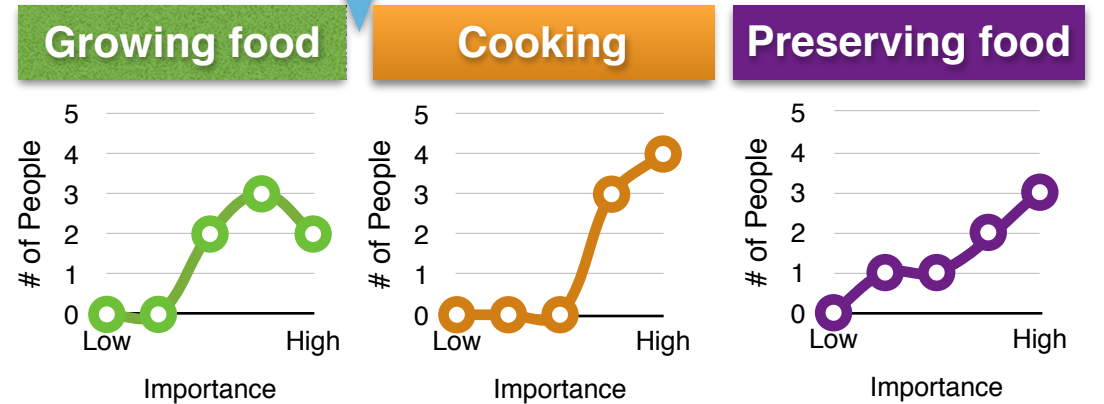
Are you able to access all the food you would like?



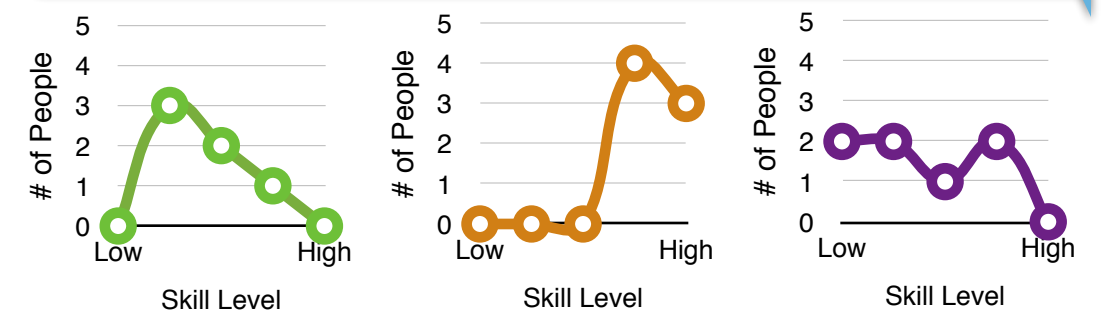
It would be easier to eat healthier with...



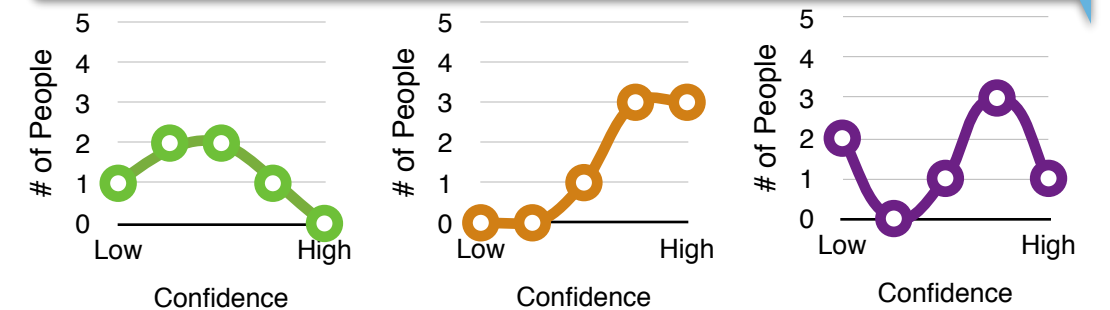
How IMPORTANT to you is.... ?



What is your SKILL LEVEL... ?



How CONFIDENT are you at... ?



The level of importance for all three activities is higher than the skill level and confidence level. One thing this data tells us is that there is an appetite to learn how to grow food, cook healthy food, and preserve (among other food-related skills).

I want to LEARN

