



## Dine Alberta: Savour Regional Flavour

### *History:*

**Dine Alberta: Savour Regional Flavour** was unveiled as a pilot project in October 2003. With initial funding from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the program was designed to provide a month long showcase for Alberta regional foods in the Alberta food service industry. The aim is to increase consumer, tourist and restaurant industry awareness and purchase of local food ingredients.

### *Rationale:*

There is increased interest in where food has come from, how it is grown and who is producing it. Local foods are “foods less traveled”, can be picked at the peak of their freshness and flavour, and are in demand by chefs and tourists. Canadian Tourism Commission statistics reveal that eating out and tasting local and regional foods is one of the highest motivations for tourists when they are traveling. Regional cuisine enriches the cultural tourism experience. Tourists who enjoy culinary experiences are likely to be better educated, have a higher income level and are also more interested in a wide range of cultural, entertainment and outdoor activities. The Dine Alberta program is a wonderful opportunity to bring Alberta’s outstanding agricultural bounty to the attention of Albertans and visitors to the province.

### *Program Components:*

For the month of September, each year, Dine Alberta offers diners a chance to enjoy special menu dishes created with regional Alberta ingredients in participating restaurants throughout the province. Chefs are encouraged to purchase their ingredients from Alberta producers and to create special menus featuring at least three dishes including soups, salads, appetizers, entrees and desserts. Special mention of the producers and information on the ingredients are included on the menus, and wait staff are encouraged to promote the Dine Alberta program and feature menu items to their customers.

Dine Alberta passports and restaurant brochures are distributed through Travel Alberta information centres and participating restaurants. The program is promoted through newspapers and local and provincial magazines, radio, TV, and the Dine Alberta website. The Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, officially launches the program each year to celebrate the harvest and focus on the value and contributions of producers and processors to the Alberta economy.



### ***Sponsors and Partners:***

Support and interest continues from commodity groups including Alberta Elk Commission, Bison Producers of Alberta, Alberta Lamb, AWAPCO, Alberta Pork, Alberta Beef, Potato Growers of Alberta, Fruit Growers Society, Wapiti River, and Alberta Whitetailed & Mule Deer Association. As well, Big Rock Brewery came on board as a sponsor in 2005. Travel Alberta and Edmonton Tourism have been major sponsors and partners for all three years of the program. Alberta Agriculture continues to provide the framework and structure for the Dine Alberta program and seeks to form partnerships with groups and agencies that have a strong commitment to supporting local agriculture.

### ***Dine Alberta Restaurant and Producer Participation:***

In 2003, 45 restaurants in Edmonton, Calgary, central and southern Alberta participated in Dine Alberta. Nearly 75 producers were featured in a producer/restaurant booklet and provided a source for chefs seeking local and regional products to feature on their menus. The program has shown a steady increase since its inception with a target of 100 restaurants and 90 producers registered in Dine Alberta. The program expanded in 2004 to include the mountain parks, Jasper and Banff as well as northern Alberta and now covers the entire province. Dine Alberta is featured in restaurants serving Italian, Greek, Lebanese, German, Swiss and East Indian foods, as well as in bistros, café bakeries, hotel dining rooms and some of the finest white tablecloth restaurants throughout Alberta.

### ***Economic Impact:***

Over the three years of the program more than \$3 million dollars has been injected into the Alberta economy, through the purchase of Dine Alberta meals during the September promotion. Producers and processors realized nearly \$1 million in sales of local ingredients during that same time frame.

***“It really makes me feel good that I am supporting the family farm by buying local products”.***  
**Chef Jasmin Kobajica, Crowne Plaza, Chateau Lacombe**

### ***Food Service Trends:***

- Albertans have the highest food service sales per capita in Canada spending 39% of their household food dollars, or 11% of total income, in food service
- Annual Alberta 2005 household spending on foodservice was \$1830
- Alberta captured \$4.46 billion or 13.8% of Canadian commercial foodservice sales

### ***Goals and Objectives of Dine Alberta:***

- To support and encourage chefs to purchase and feature local ingredients on their restaurant menus.
- To increase consumer awareness and purchase of regional foods when dining out.
- To increase the use and sales of Alberta grown vegetables, fresh and processed meats, fruits and other locally grown and processed ingredients into foodservice.
- To assist small and diversified agri-food producers in their ability to market their foods, become more profitable and sustainable.
- To realize spin-off rural economic benefits through the development and growth of on-farm foodservice and culinary tourism experiences.

Contact: Marlene Abrams, Alberta Agriculture and Food:  
780-968-3519 or [marlene.abrams@gov.ab.ca](mailto:marlene.abrams@gov.ab.ca)

[www.dinealberta.ca](http://www.dinealberta.ca) or [inquiry@dinealberta.ca](mailto:inquiry@dinealberta.ca)