

Who We Are

The Kwayeskastasowin Wâhkôhtowin team is spread across the Prairie Provinces, inside and outside of Treaty Four Territory. The team is associated with the Natural Systems Agriculture Laboratory at the University of Manitoba, and it works in partnership with faculty members of the Universities of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta; with Indigenous partners and governments; and with members and staff of the National Farmers Union and Sask Organics.

Top Visionary

kwayēskastasowin wâhkôhtowin

The Challenge

Treaty Four Territory, set in the southern Canadian Prairie Provinces, is home to approximately 500,000 people, of which around 15% are Indigenous. Thirty-five First Nation reserves are located in Treaty Four Territory. While the population was historically rural, a steady increase in farm size and mechanization has meant that many villages have disappeared.

In the 1870s, to efficiently produce and export grain for the global market, Canada's colonial authorities remade the prairies in Treaty Four Territory to reflect an industrial mode of production. Despite entering into treaties with the Indigenous nations who occupied the lands, the Canadian government pursued policies to eliminate Indigenous peoples and their cultures. The ripple effects on both the land and the community are still felt to this day.

The climate also poses a challenge: severe winters reach below -40 degrees Celsius and the frost-free growing season is limited to 120 days. With annual precipitation ranging between 14-21 inches, the landscape is prone to both drought and flooding.

The Facts*



1/7

Canadians live in a household that has experienced food insecurity in the past 30 days

*Citations available upon request

“Our Vision aims to mitigate the impact of colonialism on the people and the land by changing the story about prairie food systems. Our new story - kwayēskastasowin wâhkôhtowin - illustrates how we can make things right by recognizing the relatedness of our peoples and our land.”

The Vision for the year 2050

To transform the food system in Canada's Treaty Four Territory from an extractive agricultural model to a system of proven regenerative methods in rural and urban settings through public discourse and social innovation.

Our Solution

To transform the agriculture system across rural and urban settings in the Prairies, we identified actions and commitments for a successful future in which this Vision becomes a reality:

- We will establish a social innovation laboratory dedicated to supporting a 30-year transformative agricultural process covering six key areas: economy, environment, diet, policy, technology, and culture.
- To raise awareness and inspire engagement, we will continue to develop and hone purposeful and intentional communication strategies and to amplify the solutions of others that move us towards a sustainable, equitable, and unified society in the prairies and beyond.
- In the development of the social innovation laboratory and through our ongoing storytelling, we will collaborate with a wide range of

stakeholders – including farmers, Indigenous communities, the energy sector, and governments – in order to encourage ongoing discourse on food systems and societal change from diverse viewpoints.

- We will provide education, encouragement and support to individual, community and institutional stakeholders to align them with our Vision and to move the whole community forward together in one powerful, harmonious effort.
- We will infuse all strategies with the need to transform our society in the spirit of *kwayēskastasowin wâhkôhtowin*, which means making things right by recognizing the interconnectivity of all things.