



FOOD MATTERS MANITOBA

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2024

# THE NORTHERN SUN



**PROVIDING MEAT TO  
OUR ELDERS IS A  
VERY IMPORTANT  
TRADITION**







# THE NORTHERN SUN

ISSUE 4  
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2024

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The Northern Sun is a quarterly publication designed to inform and educate readers about Food Matters Manitoba's efforts in Indigenous food sovereignty. Articles reinforce these values, efforts, and highlight our Northern partners' work in their communities.

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## FEATURE

# MOOSE MEAT FOR ELDERS

*Food Matters Manitoba, Northern partners, and Interlake Regional Health Authority team up to provide moose meat for elders on National Truth and Reconciliation Day.*

**BY CHANTAL MARIE SCHROMEDA**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANGELINA HARTWELL**

**M**any years ago, Métis elder Lillian Kimball cherished the moments she spent with her family huddled around the dinner table sharing delicious, traditional wild meat in Powerview-Pine Falls.

While her mother tended to the family's chicken and turkey coop, her father spent much of his time out on the land dedicated to providing his family and community with moose, duck, and deer.

*“I was used to eating wild meat like deer and moose,” she says.*

Harvesting wild meat and sharing it among the community was an integral part of life and culture in the area - getting residents through difficult economic times, explains Kimball.

While the town's long standing paper mill is now permanently closed, during the Great Depression, the mill closed between 1932 and 1935 due to a reduced demand for newsprint, according to the Manitoba Historical Society Archives.

“There were no more jobs when the mill closed - it was terrible,” says Kimball. “Quite a few people left, they went to other places in Manitoba.”

This closure left many residents without money for food.

Residents who stayed in town hunted more frequently as a means to put food on the table for their families and others around the community - with Kimball's father often harvesting moose and deer for relatives.

**N**ow a resident at Sunnywood Manor Personal Care Home in Powerview-Pine Falls, it's been years since Kimball has had the familiar taste of wild meat.



But for National Truth and Reconciliation Day, Food Matters Manitoba (FMM), Northern partners, and Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA) joined forces to provide elders in Powerview-Pine Falls and Ashern with moose meat.

“It was an honour and a privilege to be able to share moose meat with elders in the hospitals and care homes on National Truth and Reconciliation Day,” says FMM’s Executive Director, Demian Lawrenchuk.

FMM was initially contacted by IERHA with a plan to find wild meat for elders in a couple of their medical facilities, he explains.

“I immediately got excited and started talking with our team to see how we could make this work,” he says.



Once hearing about the plan, traditional harvester and FMM’s Northern partner Marvin Cook, Cook’s grandson, and FMM’s Community Project Coordinator Myron Cook - Cook’s son, wasted no time getting out onto the land in Kisipakamak (Brochet) to harvest a large bull moose for the elders.

For Cook, working with his family for this initiative was a rewarding experience - especially learning from his father, who he notes has so much traditional knowledge to pass down.

***“Providing meat to our elders is a very important tradition to conserve and secure,” says Cook. “I am very proud to be able to do so.”***

The group butchered, packaged, and froze the moose with most of the meat immediately handed out throughout the community with a portion set aside for this initiative, adds Lawrenchuk.

The moose was placed and sealed into a cooler for FMM’s Northern Coordinator Morgan McCurdy, the morning of her flight from Kisipakamak to Winnipeg.

“During my connection in Thompson it was placed in a freezer during my layover,” she says. “On the flight home to Winnipeg all I could think was, ‘This cooler better be in the bottom of this plane!’”

Once McCurdy landed in Winnipeg, Lawrenchuk transported the meat to Powerview Pine-Falls and Ashern to be picked up by one of the IERHA staff.

For Regional Manager of Indigenous Health with IERHA, Jamie Boyer, this initiative with FMM meant introducing and honouring Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and healing into the health care system.

“These types of initiatives are important for representation, reconciliation, and can provide a pathway forward for future initiatives,” says Boyer.

**A**t Sunnywood, elders gather around one another in the dining room as they are served a delicious roast, followed by moose meat tacos a couple days later - a hit among residents, states cook Holly Arthur.

“It’s been an amazing experience,” she says. “I’ve never done moose, so this is my first time cooking moose and it turned out amazing.”

In Ashern, moose meat was served as a taco salad for lunch, with a bannock taco and moose stew at dinner for patients on acute and in the personal care home, explains cook Tanya Rank.

For many of the residents, eating the traditional meat brought back feelings of nostalgia.

“Some of the ladies stated they cooked it in their own kitchens and I believe some of the men, if not all, were hunters,” says Rank.

Many of the residents offered fond stories of their youth, hunting, and eating wild meat.



“It was very touching to watch them recount tales from their youth with huge smiles on their faces - from hunting with dad or having eaten wild meats all the time,” says Boyer.

**U**pon reflecting on childhood memories, Kimball believes the community was most healthy eating wild meat.

“It seems to me that people are not so sick when they eat wild meat,” she remarks. “There’s just something about it, and the thing is, when the mill closed people started hunting more because there was no money.

Moose meat in particular has a high nutrient content and lean protein - offering medicinal and healing properties, according to 2024 Nutrients study by Shafiee and others.

In the Cree understanding, all things are connected, explains Lawrenchuk.

Part of medicine’s benefits in the Cree culture is not only their physical properties, but the energy that they’ve soaked up throughout their lives - the purity and wellbeing of the natural world that emboldens their physical properties, he continues.

*“This is the same with our traditional food,” he states. “The moose continues this cycle of life by consuming these plants and medicines, and turning them into food for us to consume.”*

Wild food keeps elders connected to themselves, their families, their memories, and their traditions, adds McCurdy.

“This is especially important after a lifetime of society telling them that their culture is less than,” she says. “This ability to heal in the final years of life is a good step in the path towards reconciliation.”

The initiative was an empowering one - with FMM’s work focusing so heavily on employment, empowering communities and youth, building local food systems, and improving health and well being, to be able to see the movement reach down south is a special feeling for all involved.

“It feels really good to be able to see this movement even reach all the way down south to feed elders some of the food that they grew up with,” says Lawrenchuk.

While it’s not possible to provide access to wild meats for everyone, taking the time to support small initiatives like this goes a long way, explains FMM’s Northern Programs Manager, Myles King.

“The mental and spiritual impact of eating food that is intertwined with your culture and past cannot be overstated - especially for those that have not had access to it for years,” states King.

Rank adds that initiatives like this would be a great option on occasion for elderly residents - especially during hunting season.

While Lawrenchuk notes it wouldn’t be practical or wise to harvest moose in the north with the goal of continuously providing it to people in the south, FMM looks forward to special moments like this and hopes to be able to do it again.

Everyone’s involvement in making this initiative happen cannot be understated - the staff, patients, and residents were all impressed with the generosity of FMM and the team of harvesters in Kisipakamak, adds Boyer.

“The excitement and commitment from our harvesters up north highlights the strong sense of community that our people hold,” says Lawrenchuk.

Despite having never met these elders, the team up north was moved by a strong sense of duty and opportunity to share, adds Lawrenchuk.

*“This is one of the main teachings I’m constantly reminded of - take care of the elders, take care of each other,” he says.*









## COMMUNITY

## TATASKWEYAK'S SCHOOL GARDEN

*Teacher Vivian Lin's update on the growth of the school garden in Tataskweyak (Split Lake) this fall.*

**BY VIVIAN LIN**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY VIVIAN LIN**

**S**o far we have set up four growtowers, and we're waiting for the last one to be up when the teacher who is supposed to take care of it becomes less busy.

All veggies are growing well. We see tomato flowers and baby strawberries from seeds. The kids have tried veggies from growtowers directly.

Students are also quite interested in plants and veggies - with the experience from last year, they have been asking about marigolds and coleus.

*One student said the lettuce he got last week was yummy and wanted to know what lettuce looked like on the growtower.*

**W**e're trying to either send home bags of lettuce or make salad to go with hot breakfast every Wednesday.



**I** don't want to have any soil in my classroom because of the bug issues I had last year with soil. I also don't want any soil close to a growtower or a hydroponic unit.

Therefore, there are less spots available for us to plant flowers in pots now.

I'm hoping I can find more people who are interested in gardening - volunteer to set up a few tables with flowers, plus green onions, because these flowers and greenstones will be in soil and pots.



## COMMUNITY

# HELPING HANDS 4-H CLUB'S ANNUAL GARDEN MARKET

*Helping Hands 4-H Club in The Pas hosts annual market with garden produce grown locally.*

**BY CHERYL ANTONIO**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHERYL ANTONIO**

**T**he Pas Helping Hands 4-H Club had a wonderful (and interesting) garden season. Harvest time is always a busy but rewarding time for all.

The beans and peas didn't produce as much as they normally do, and the squash and cucumbers were late. The first frost was early! In the end though, we had lots of good food for many different purposes.

*Each year, Helping Hands hosts market sales throughout the summer and fall in which garden produce is sold locally.*



**Y**outh learn many skills from having a market.

They learn how to ensure the produce is clean and looks nice. Then, they learn how to set up the table and make sure it looks good too. They check other markets and sales to see what the competitive prices are. They learn how to make an attractive and easy to read advertisement and where to post it (local businesses, stores, social media, newspaper, and radio).

During the market, the kids must be polite and courteous. They very quickly learn how to make change and to count money. They keep the table looking nice as the product moves out.

**I**f there are leftovers, they take them back to the kitchen and turn them into pies, cakes, loaves, jams/jellies, relish, pickles, soups, and more. These items are sold at the following market. Nothing goes to waste! They have also learned social media markets are a quick way to move inventory.

When Helping Hands organizes group markets, they also make sure they help the other vendors move their stock into the market space and to clean up afterward. People love it when the youth help them - they sure remember who those kids are later on! They also learn good public speaking skills and how to interact with people.



## COMMUNITY

# HIDE TANNING AND TUFTING WORKSHOP

*Students at the Frontier School Division in Kisipakamak (Brochet) participate in a hide tanning and tufting workshop.*

**BY JOHN HALKETT**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HALKETT**

**G**race Masse implemented a presentation/workshop on hide tanning and tufting at the Frontier School Division in Brochet, Manitoba.

We used a woodland caribou hide. I assisted with preparation and presentation during the workshop. Learning how to work with hide is an essential skill to practice to keep our traditional ways alive.

On day one (November 5th), we had the hide tanning preparation, photo consent forms signed, a meeting at school, and the hide tanning frame built.

**O**n day two (November 6th) at 9am, Grace showed students from the school how to remove the remaining fat, meat, and connective tissue from the skin of the caribou by using handheld tools.

Students also had the chance to use a bone for the flesh removal so they could get a better sense of how it was to work with hides before we had all these fancy tools.

Grace thoroughly explained the process of hide tanning to the students during the presentation and also shared historical facts on hide tanning during the presentation.

*Many students got involved, worked hard, and did a great job.*

Grade 8s were also present for this day.

**O**n day three (November 7th) at 9am, a larger and sturdier frame was built for the hide. Students were shown where to cut holes in the hide for stringing.

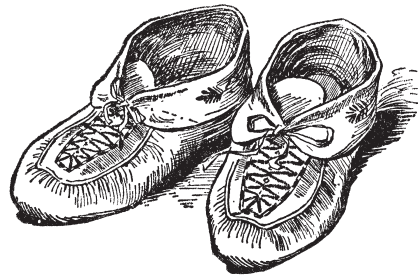
Grace walked the students through the stringing process and the students were able to stretch and string up the hide. Grade 7 and 8 were also present for this.

Tufting was taught by Grace in the afternoon in the classroom of the grade 8 students.

**T**ufting caribou is a craft practiced by many First Nation individuals residing in Northern Indigenous communities.

Tufting is the act of stitching small patches of hair on small canvases for clothing. For example, caribou tufting can be used for decorating moccasins, mitts, and other types of clothing.

*Each student made their own tuft on a small canvas, and made caribou tuft keychains for themselves in the classroom with Grace for the rest of the school day.*



The students showed much interest in the hide tanning and tufting practices. Many students asked when is the next time we can do this again.

The hide was returned to FMM's Community Project Coordinator Myron Cook (who harvested the caribou a week prior) after we were done using it for the presentation.







**FIRST PERSON****A YOUTH HARVESTER'S MOOSE HUNT**

*Youth harvester Paul Nice perseveres to harvest moose for the community of Sherridon.*

**BY PAUL NICE****PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL NICE**

I've been trying to go out every day that the weather would allow - trying and hoping to get a moose all hunting season. I was starting to get discouraged the closer to the end of the rut I was getting towards, but I didn't give up.

This one particular morning I was up before the sun was - getting the side by side ready in the bitter cold morning with frost creeping in on everything. I remember thinking to myself, 'today is the day.'

I was off before daybreak, hopeful because the weather was looking up. Once I got to the hunting area, I got camp set up and I got ready to hunt.

Once I was out there it didn't take long before I heard my first grunt of the season. Thankfully I managed to get a good shot on him - take down the camp after not even having it set up for more than 3 hours and started the skinning process.

Once I hauled him home and processed him, I handed the meat out to the elders of my community, all nice big roasts.

*One thing I've taken from this interaction is to always be ready for anything when out on a moose hunt, you never know when you'll be locking eyes with a bull.*





## FIRST PERSON

# MOOSE SEASON IN MAKESO SAKAHIKAN (FOX LAKE/GILLAM)

*Youth harvesters celebrate a successful moose hunting season in Makeso Sakahikan (Fox Lake/Gillam).*

**BY DRAYDEN JOBB**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY TEGAN LOCKHART & DRAYDEN JOBB**

Cameron and I have been going out for awhile and haven't been able to connect with anything - we've gone out numerous times with guys from Gillam to show us trails and spots on the lake for moose hunting. We greatly appreciated that they were willing to share their knowledge and spots with us.

Down the Nelson River - we got to go down the Nelson River a few times with Jordan's Principle land based coordinator, family members, and ourselves.

Cameron, Tegan, Jordan, (youth) and I decided to head down river one day to find some caribou to harvest for our families and community. We made it down towards the Weir scanning the shorelines - glad to say we made it down to where the caribou were spotted crossing.

We went behind Weir Island and spotted a young bull laying in the grass. Cam and I got ready as Tegan turned the boat towards shore. We got out of the boat, walked up the bank over a hill, loaded up our guns, got the moose in our sights and Bang! Bang! Down goes a moose.

*It was a great experience for us, couldn't have been any better.*





## FOOD

# TURKEY PESTO MEATBALLS

**RECIPE BY LAURA HARRISON**

## Ingredients

- 1 package ground turkey about 0.365 kg
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 3 tablespoons basil pesto
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese finely shredded
- 1/2 teaspoon dried chilies
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil for frying

## Instructions

1. Add first 7 ingredients to mixing bowl and knead together.
2. Form into 12 meatballs.
3. Add olive oil to pot and turn on to medium heat.  
(Oil is hot enough when you sprinkle some flour in and it sizzles).
4. Add meatballs to pot, cover with a lid and cook for 4 minutes.
5. Flip each meatball over and cook for another 4 minutes with lid on.
6. Remove meatballs from pot, and place on a paper towel lined dish to remove excess grease.





**FOOD****PIZZA SPAGHETTI SQUASH****RECIPE BY HELPING HANDS 4-H CLUB**Instructions:

1. Pre heat your oven to 425.
2. Cut your spaghetti squash in half, lengthwise.  
Remove the seeds (you can roast these later!).
3. Cover a cookie sheet with tinfoil. Place the squash on the pan, open end up. Drizzle with oil, (olive oil is best but other oils work well too) salt, and pepper.
4. Roast for about 50 minutes or until a fork slides easily into the flesh.
5. Turn the oven down to 350 degrees.
6. Taking two forks, pull the sides of the squash down into the centre cavity. It should look like spaghetti! Mix in your favourite pizza toppings such as cheese, mushrooms, peppers, meat, pineapple, and sauce - whatever you have on hand or prefer. Sprinkle with more cheese.
7. Bake your pizza squash until the cheese on top is nicely browned, about 15 - 20 minutes.
8. You can serve it right up in the squash or you can dish it out onto a plate.
9. Serve with a salad or fresh tomatoes and cucumbers.





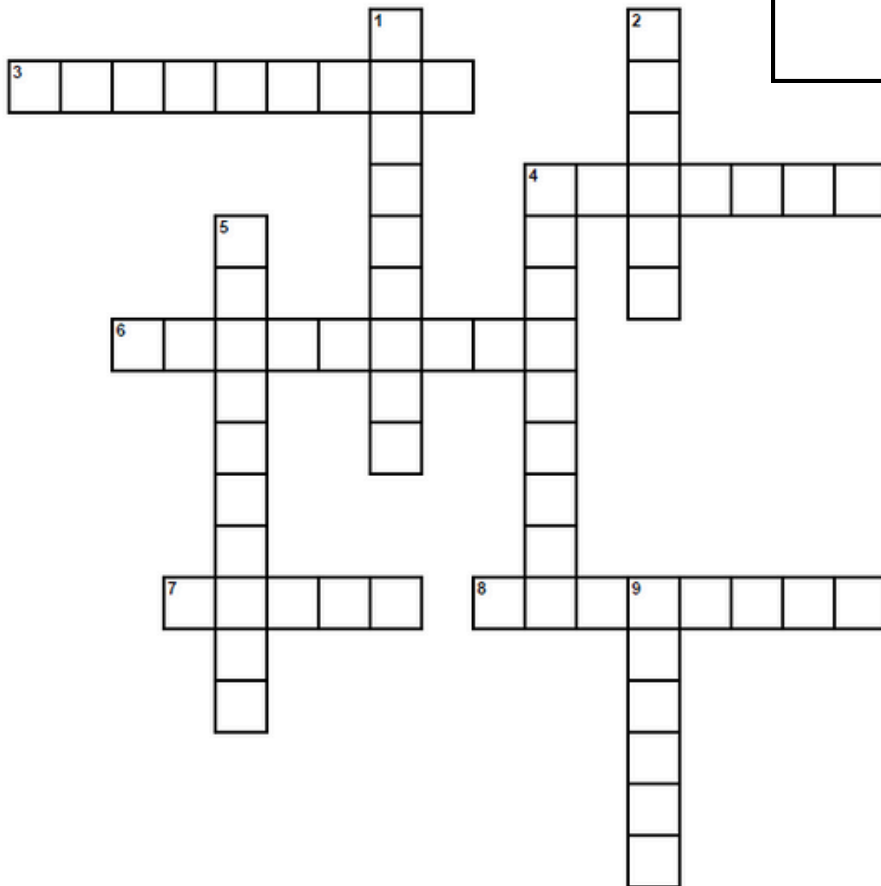
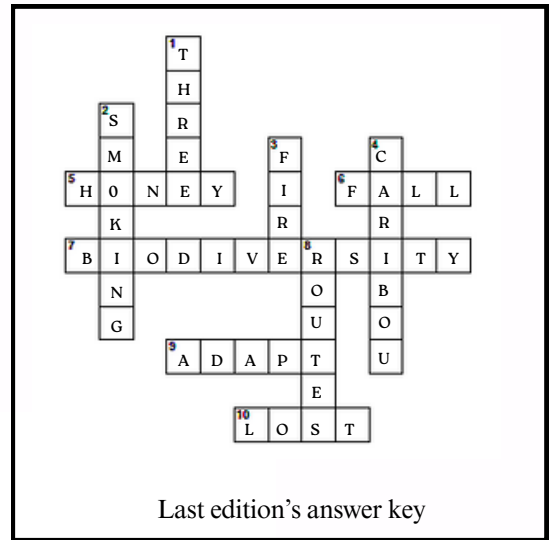
**GAMES**

# THE NORTHERN SUN CROSSWORD

PRESENTED BY **FOOD MATTERS MANITOBA**

**ACROSS**

- 3. Students are trying new foods while learning about the growing process
- 4. Moose meat is a healthy source of \_\_\_\_
- 6. Take care of the elders, take care of each other
- 7. Spending time on the land with each other strengthens \_\_\_\_
- 8. Sharing knowledge and skills with each other while harvesting



**DOWN**

- 1. After processing traditional food it gets distributed to the \_\_\_\_
- 2. Healthy habits can start early at \_\_\_\_
- 4. Harvesting is hard work, don't give up
- 5. Harvesting keeps \_\_\_\_ alive
- 9. Garden produce for the community

