

2013C002D– The Alberta Diet Implementation



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Background. What is it all about?

In my research at the University of Alberta, I led a team called Physical Activity and Nutrition for Diabetes in Alberta (PANDA). For the nutrition part, we focussed on menu planning and using foods that were acceptable, accessible and available to Albertans. Various sponsors and our research participants encouraged us to make the menu plan and recipes available to the general public.

Objective: To publish the menu plan and recipe book in a format suitable for the general public, specifically targeting people living in Alberta and other Canadian prairie provinces.

What was done: We translated our original resource, that was specifically target for people with type 2 diabetes patients, into a book accessible by everyone living on the Canadian Prairies. In order to do this, we had to create or access recipes, engage food photographers, a graphic designer and many other professionals to help us create the book. We also had terrific cooperation from Alberta- and Canada-based commodity organizations, who provided recipes and technical expertise. We called the book the *Pure Prairie Eating Plan – Fresh food, practical menus and a healthy lifestyle*.

The 28-day menu plan (a.k.a. PPEP) includes recipes, shopping lists and nutritional information, using foods that are commonly grown and consumed in the Prairie Provinces. Every inclusion was guided by the premise that to trigger healthy eating, food must be accessible, acceptable and available. The book was published in December 2013 and we have sold approximately 4000 copies. To do this, we engaged in many marketing activities around Alberta and across Canada. We also created a website, blog and Facebook page to provide a continuing connection to our customers.

Key Results: The Pure Prairie Eating Plan by Catherine B Chan and Rhonda C Bell.

Take home message for the industry: Healthy eating is not a fad and it doesn't have to be exceptionally complicated. Foods grown by local producers on the Canadian prairies are part of a healthy diet.

Value to the Industry: Thanks to the support from ACIDF, ALMA, university and industry sponsors, net proceeds from sales of the book so far have been directed to further diabetes research (approximately \$30,000). We hope that the agriculture industry can use PPEP to demonstrate how the foods they grow can be incorporated into a healthy diet. We also hope that PPEP has helped to increase nutrition knowledge in the people using it, since healthy eating can reduce chronic disease risk or secondary complications of disease.

Value to the team: Many U of A students were involved in the research behind PPEP and also in its creation. Students from NAIT also helped with our marketing plan. PPEP has also sparked other community-focused projects. Rhonda Bell and I have used the book in our research in a variety of ways. Health Canada purchased a large number of books for its programming in Aboriginal communities. We will soon be evaluating its utility in a primary care setting, as part of chronic disease prevention and treatment programming offered by our health care system.