



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Chef Michael Smith in Ottawa with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association to Discuss the Importance of Eating More Fruits and Vegetables**

(Ottawa - February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016) The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is at the Chateau Laurier today to discuss with federal Parliamentarians the importance of the produce industry and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption in Canada.

“The CPMA continues to do a great job of growing our fruit and vegetable business across Canada. I’m proud to see such a thriving industry supplying Canadians with healthy food throughout the year,” states Minister of Agriculture Lawrence MacAulay.

“Evidence shows that a balanced diet filled with fruits and vegetables is a cornerstone of good health, yet 60% of Canadians over the age of 12 do not eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day,” adds Ron Lemaire, President, CPMA. “We need to show Canadians how easy it is to prepare fresh, healthy meals at home, and our *Half Your Plate* Ambassador Chef Michael Smith’s message is intended to inspire change.”

“Eating more fruits and vegetables is an easy step towards big improvements in overall health and preventing chronic illness. Filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal is easier than you may think. We’re proud to partner with the CPMA in helping Canadians live healthier lives,” says Ian Culbert, Executive Director, Canadian Public Health Association.

Chef Michael Smith will be doing a cooking demonstration at the event to promote the CPMA’s *Half Your Plate* message. Host of *Chef Michael’s Kitchen*, *Chef Abroad* and *Chef at Home* on Food Network Canada, Chef Smith has devoted his life to helping Canadians create a healthy food lifestyle that includes lots of daily fruits and vegetables. “We all know how important it is to eat lots of fruits and vegetables every single day but not all of us know how. That’s where I come in,” says Smith. “It’s my mission to remind everyone how simple healthy cooking is, that it’s not expensive, difficult or time consuming. We’re all in this together and together we can help every family improve their health, every day.”

The *Half Your Plate* program was launched in January 2015 by the CPMA and health partners the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Public Health Association, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. The campaign emphasizes how fun, practical and easy it is to prepare a wide variety of fruits and vegetables for meals and snacks at home, at school, at work, eating out or on the go. More information is available at [www.halfyourplate.ca](http://www.halfyourplate.ca).

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**About the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA):**

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that represents a diverse membership made up of every segment of the produce industry supply chain and is responsible for 90% of the fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada. CPMA is fortunate to represent a sector that is both a significant economic driver for communities and that also improves the health and productivity of Canadians.