



Peak of the Market Ltd: Cultivating a Circular Food System

Company Overview

Peak of the Market Ltd. (Peak) is a grower and packer based in Manitoba, Canada. The company is grower owned and operates within the shipper/packer segment of the supply chain. They are committed to improving sustainability across its operations; and supplying high-quality potatoes and vegetables to retailers, foodservice, and community partners.

The Challenge

Peak of the Market Ltd. identified significant challenges related to food loss and waste. These challenges included the rejection of edible but cosmetically imperfect produce due to strict grading standards, a lack of alternative markets for surplus or “off-grade” crops, and fragmented supply chain coordination. This resulted in lost revenue for growers, operational inefficiency and unnecessary environmental impacts from wasted food.

The Solution

To address some of these challenges, Peak implemented a comprehensive food loss and waste reduction initiative as part of their sustainability goals. As Pamela Kolochuk, Chief Executive Officer at Peak of the Market explains, “As a grower-owned organization, we have a responsibility to ensure that everything we produce is used to its fullest potential. When good food goes to waste while families go without, that’s a problem we’re committed to solving.” The core of this solution is a partnership with Harvest Manitoba, the province’s largest food bank; the Winnipeg Football Club, and other community groups focused on food security. Peak invested in new processes, protocols, and partnerships to keep edible produce in the food system:

- **Surplus Diversion:** Off-grade but still edible produce is donated to local food banks and community organizations, with Harvest Manitoba and the Winnipeg Football Club as flagship partners.
- **Animal Feed:** Produce not suitable for human consumption is sent for livestock feed, closing resource loops and minimizing disposal impacts.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Peak supports modernized grading standards and tax incentives for donations to encourage broader industry change.
- **Measurement & Transparency:** The company introduced new protocols to distinguish between unmarketable, edible, and inedible produce, setting the stage for honest reporting and continuous improvement. They set goals, establish metrics, and track progress on a regular basis.

Where Loss Occurs

Farms & Packer/Shippers

Main Drivers

Cosmetic standards, supply chain gaps, limited markets

Solutions

Donation to food banks, animal feed, process improvements, advocacy

Key Partners

Harvest Manitoba, community partners, growers, livestock operators

Produce Types

Carrots, potatoes, onions, other root crops

Measurement

Volume tracked via in-house protocols & partner reporting

Social/Environmental Impact

More food for families, less landfill, GHG savings

Policy Context

Flexible grading & donation incentives

UN SDGs

2 – Zero Hunger
12 – Responsible Consumption
13 – Climate Action

- **Education:** Ongoing efforts to share best practices with supply chain partners ensure that produce is handled for maximum shelf life and value.

Turning Surplus into Solutions — Peak of the Market Ltd. & Harvest Manitoba Partnership

Every year, thousands of pounds of perfectly edible Manitoba potatoes and vegetables never make it to store shelves—not because they’re unsafe or unfit, but because they don’t meet the cosmetic grade standards demanded by the fresh market. For most food systems, that’s where the story would end: with good food going to waste in the field or the packing shed.

At Peak, this is just the beginning. Driven by a commitment to both sustainability and community, Peak has pioneered a model for off-grade management. Instead of letting off-grade but edible carrots, potatoes, onions, and more fall through the cracks, Peak collects these vegetables from its operations and sends them directly to Harvest Manitoba—turning surplus into sustenance for families across the province.

The result is less waste, more nutrition for Manitobans in need, and a living demonstration of what’s possible when growers and food rescue organizations work together. In 2025 alone, Peak donated 3,068,500 pounds of produce, significantly expanding access to fresh, healthy food across the province.



Off-grade but perfectly edible produce is sorted and packed for donation, keeping nutritious food in the system and out of landfill.



What might be overlooked on store shelves becomes a vital source of fresh food for families when redirected through community partnerships.

Peak’s approach didn’t happen by accident. For years, strict grading standards and fragmented supply chains left growers with limited options for produce that fell outside the “perfect” category. With no real market for most cosmetically imperfect vegetables, large amounts of good food were left behind, affecting both the bottom line and the environment.

Refusing to accept food loss as an unavoidable cost, Peak invested in new processes and forged strong partnerships to keep more food in the system and out of the landfill. Today, partnerships with Harvest Manitoba and other organizations focused on food security are at the heart of Peak’s impact. Regular pickups and close coordination mean that surplus vegetables are quickly distributed to food banks, community kitchens, and meal programs province wide.

It's a partnership built on trust, clear communication, and a shared goal: turning Manitoba's agricultural abundance into food security for everyone. "Our partnership with Peak of the Market shows what's possible when the food system is designed to work smarter," said Vince Barletta, Harvest Manitoba President & CEO. "By ensuring that surplus, high-quality produce reaches people instead of going to waste, Peak is helping us expand access to fresh, nutritious food for families across Manitoba. This is an incredible, ongoing partnership that reduces food waste and delivers real impact in communities where it's needed most."

It's a living demonstration of what's possible when growers and Food Banks work together.

Peak's efforts extend beyond simple redistribution. The team uses sorting and handling protocols that help capture and channel as much edible produce as possible, whether that means donation, animal feed, or other uses.



Produce moves along the grading line at Haskett Growers in Winkler, MB. Potatoes that don't meet cosmetic standards remain fresh and nutritious,

Careful measurement and transparent reporting are embedded in the process, creating a culture of transparency and accountability that sets a new standard for the industry.

At the same time, Peak is advocating for policy changes, such as modernized grading standards and tax incentives for donations, to help other growers follow their lead.

Sorting and handling protocols help capture and channel as much edible produce as possible.

Investments in logistics, measurement, and staff training have reduced disposal costs and improved grower returns, all while opening the door to additional tax incentives and a more resilient business model.

But for Peak, the greatest return is the one felt across the community: fewer hungry families, less waste, and a more sustainable Manitoba.

To learn more about Peak of the Market Ltd. visit our website at www.peakofthemarket.com or follow us on social media!