

Province to lower food prices in remote, northern Manitoba

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Residents in some remote Manitoba communities could be paying less for healthy foods this fall under a new pilot program announced by the Premier Greg Selinger on Tuesday. The program is called AFFIRM and stands for Affordable Food in Remote Manitoba.

AFFIRM will be piloted in 10 Manitoban communities: Tadoule Lake, Brochet/Barren Lands, Shamattawa, Berens River, York Landing, Churchill, Pikwitonei, Ilford/War Lake, Thicket Portage and Pukatawagan.

"Retailers in seven of the 10 communities will be eligible to receive a subsidy on fresh milk, vegetable and fruit purchases, which will translate in lower prices for the consumer," said a news release from the province.

The three remaining communities, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei and Ilford/War Lake, do not have stores that sell fresh fruits, vegetables or milk. The province pledges to use AFFIRM to find alternative ways to deliver these essential foods to residents.

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The price of milk is expected to drop significantly under AFFIRM. In some communities it's not uncommon for a four-litre jug of milk to

cost \$14.99, said Premier Greg Selinger. The new subsidy could save the consumer up to \$6.40 on the purchase.

The North West Company said Tuesday it will pass along the savings to consumers.

"The program is a step in the right direction to address the inequities in food accessibility programs in northern Canada" stated Christine Reimer, vice president of sales and operations, with the North West Company, in a release.

AFFIRM is a step towards making good on a long-standing agreement to provide healthy food to all corners of Manitoba said Chief Ernie Bussidor, Tadoule Lake Sayisi Dene.

"At the historic treaty ceremonies that took place more than 100 years ago, our ancestors were told to give up the nomadic lifestyle along the tree line and adhere to stationary living. Fruits and vegetables, livestock and plows were promised to our people," said Chief Bussidor.

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