



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# A FOOD POLICY FOR CANADA

Report of the Standing Committee on  
Agriculture and Agri-Food

Pat Finnigan, Chair

DECEMBER 2017  
42<sup>nd</sup> PARLIAMENT, 1<sup>st</sup> SESSION

---

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

#### **SPEAKER'S PERMISSION**

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Standing Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website  
at the following address: [www.ourcommons.ca](http://www.ourcommons.ca)

# **A FOOD POLICY FOR CANADA**

## **Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food**

**Pat Finnigan  
Chair**

**DECEMBER 2017**

**42<sup>nd</sup> PARLIAMENT, 1<sup>st</sup> SESSION**

## **NOTICE TO READER**

### **Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons**

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

## **CHAIR**

Pat Finnigan

## **VICE-CHAIRS**

Luc Berthold

Ruth Ellen Brosseau

## **MEMBERS**

John Barlow

Sylvie Boucher

Pierre Breton

Francis Drouin

Lloyd Longfield

Eva Nassif

Joe Peschisolido

Jean-Claude Poissant\*

## **CLERK OF THE COMMITTEE**

Marc-Olivier Girard

## **LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT**

### **Parliamentary Information and Research Service**

Alison Clegg, Analyst

Khamla Heminthavong, Analyst

---

\* Non-voting member, pursuant to Standing Order 104(5).



# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

has the honour to present its

## **TENTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied the issue of a food policy for Canada and has agreed to report the following:





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

SUMMARY.....	1
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS .....	3
A FOOD POLICY FOR CANADA.....	7
INTRODUCTION .....	7
CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING A FOOD POLICY.....	8
COMPONENTS OF THE FOOD POLICY.....	9
A. Increasing Access to Affordable Food .....	9
1. Challenges related to poverty .....	11
2. Food distribution.....	12
3. Local and regional production.....	12
B. Improving Food Safety and Health .....	14
1. Bringing producers and consumers closer together .....	15
2. Preventing and reducing obesity and chronic disease.....	17
C. Conserving the Quality of Soil, Water and Air .....	19
1. Adopting environmentally friendly practices .....	19
2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the agriculture and agri-food sector.....	21
D. Growing More High-Quality Food.....	22
1. Importance of export and domestic markets .....	23
2. Market access and regulatory streamlining.....	25
E. The Future of Agricultural Production and the Next Generation of Farmers .....	26
1. The next generation of farmers.....	26
2. Access to farmland .....	27

3. Labour .....	28
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A FOOD POLICY .....	29
A. Inclusion of All Stakeholders .....	29
B. Governance .....	30
1. Whole-of-government approach .....	30
2. Creation of a permanent council.....	30
CONCLUSION .....	31
Appendix A: List of witnesses.....	33
Appendix B: List of briefs .....	37
Request for government response .....	41

## SUMMARY

---

On 19 September 2017, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food began a study on a first food policy for Canada, which is being developed by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and will be implemented over the coming year. The goals of this policy are to produce safe, nutritious and affordable food in an environmentally friendly way. During the course of its study, the Committee heard 52 witnesses and received 14 briefs.

This report focuses on the four broad food policy themes set out by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. In addition to these themes, the Committee believes that the food policy should also take into account the following issues: the next generation of farmers, access to farmland and farm labour.

The Committee recognizes that the issue of food is of interest to a broad range of stakeholders who have different points of view. This poses a great challenge in terms of policy implementation. To achieve the pursued goals, the Committee believes policy development should focus on a whole-of-government approach and close collaboration among stakeholders including farmers, ranchers, fishers, food processors, consumers and civil society.

The report also contains recommendations for the successful implementation of the food policy. The Committee's recommendations include establishing a governance structure, supporting the next generation of young farmers, supporting the growth and development of local and regional agriculture and helping Canadian companies access foreign markets. In addition, the Committee believes that this first food policy will bring producers and consumers closer together to help them produce food responsibly, in a manner that respects the environment and animal welfare.



# LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

---

*As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.*

## **Recommendation 1**

**The Committee recommends that the Government recognize that Canadians have the right to adequate nutrition and that the Government of Canada align its policies to achieve this goal for all Canadians. .... 9**

## **Recommendation 2**

**The Committee recommends that the Government implement measures to provide for an adequate supply of more affordable, safe, high-quality and nutritious food for Canadians, especially vulnerable populations in Canadian society, such as children, Canadians living in poverty, Indigenous peoples and those in remote and Northern communities. .... 14**

## **Recommendation 3**

**The Committee recommends that the Government support the implementation of initiatives to combat food insecurity in Indigenous and northern communities by reviewing the Nutrition North Canada program. .... 14**

## **Recommendation 4**

**The Committee recommends that the Government provide support for the growth and development of local and regional agriculture ..... 14**

## **Recommendation 5**

**The Committee recommends that the Government help implement initiatives, such as a federal, provincial and territorial recognition protocol for animal care, that bring producers and consumers closer together in order to strengthen and maintain public trust. .... 17**

**Recommendation 6**

The Committee recommends that the new food guide be informed by the food policy and include peer-reviewed, scientific evidence and that the Government work with the agriculture and agri-food sector to ensure alignment and competitiveness for domestic industries..... 17

**Recommendation 7**

The Committee recommends that the Government invest in awareness campaigns and education about healthy eating in order to improve the overall health of Canadians and reduce health care costs. .... 18

**Recommendation 8**

The Committee recommends that the Government support the Canadian organic sector by providing ongoing funding for the Canadian Organic Regime. The Committee also recommends that the Government support the growth of exports and ensure that the sector can meet the growing demand for organic products..... 20

**Recommendation 9**

The Committee recommends that the Government streamline approvals of new biotechnology innovation, such as seeds and plant breeds. .... 20

**Recommendation 10**

The Committee recommends that the Government, in conjunction with all members of the supply chain, establish education tools and take action to reduce industry food loss and consumer food waste..... 20

**Recommendation 11**

The Committee recommends that the Government continue and increase efforts and investments to assist the agriculture sector in continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve environmental practices, with an emphasis on conservation of soil, water, and air..... 22

**Recommendation 12**

The Committee recommends that the Government continue to support domestic growth in the regional agriculture and agri-food sector, as well as in the industries under supply management. .... 23

**Recommendation 13**

The Committee recommends that the Government continue to support domestic growth in the regional agriculture and agri-food sector, as well as the industries under supply management by ensuring that the outcomes of a renegotiated NAFTA do not erode the domestic market on which they rely. .... 24

**Recommendation 14**

The Committee recommends that the Government continue to focus on export growth in Canada’s agriculture and agri-food sectors, with a view to increasing Canadian agricultural exports to at least \$75 billion per year by 2025, and reducing barriers to export growth. .... 24

**Recommendation 15**

The Committee recommends that the Government not increase the financial burden for Canadians, making the cost of food more expensive, and for our farmers who rely on export markets and must remain competitive..... 24

**Recommendation 16**

The Committee recommends that the Government, in partnership with community groups and non-governmental organizations, invest in community-level action in the areas of innovative agriculture initiatives, food security, food literacy, and food loss and waste. .... 25

**Recommendation 17**

The Committee recommends that the Government strengthen programs to support farmers and food processors in their efforts to innovate and adapt to changing production conditions and market demands. .... 26

**Recommendation 18**

The Committee recommends that the Government take a whole-of-government approach to ensure market access for Canadian producers in key export markets and address trade irritants and non-tariff barriers..... 26

**Recommendation 19**

The Committee recommends that the Government enhance tools to support young farmers and new entrants into agriculture and that the Government work with farmers to better accommodate the intergenerational transfer of family farms. .... 27

**Recommendation 20**

The Committee recommends that the Government, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, take steps to ensure sufficient labour is available in the agriculture and agri-food sector, including through the temporary foreign workers program to attract and retain talent, with a possible path to permanent residency. .... 29

**Recommendation 21**

The Committee recommends that the Government establish a national food policy advisory body consisting of the key government departments, the agriculture and agri-food sector, academia, Indigenous peoples and civil society. .... 31





# A FOOD POLICY FOR CANADA

---

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, consumers have become increasingly concerned about how food affects their health and the environment, and they want more information about the products they buy. The Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector must be flexible and adapt its products to meet consumer demands. Canada's agriculture and agri-food system is made up of a wide range of stakeholders, each of which plays an essential role in the system as a whole. These stakeholders have a growing interest in food issues, whether they relate to the food itself, the way it is produced or its role in the economy.

In his mandate letter, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lawrence MacAulay, was tasked with developing a food policy that emphasizes healthy living and safe, high-quality food produced by Canadian farmers and ranchers.<sup>1</sup> To support the creation of Canada's very first food policy, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (the Committee) adopted the following motion on Tuesday, 29 November 2016: "That the Committee undertake a national food policy review that promotes healthy living and safe food and that the Committee report its findings to the House."<sup>2</sup>

On 29 May 2017, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food launched public consultations to support the development of *A Food Policy for Canada* that would cover issues affecting the entire food system, including production, processing, distribution and consumption. These consultations to identify the food-related issues that matter to Canadians came to an end on 31 August 2017. During the consultation process, more than 40,000 Canadians provided input on four key themes:<sup>3</sup>

- increasing access to affordable food;
- improving health and food safety;
- conserving our soil, water and air; and
- growing more high-quality food.<sup>4</sup>

---

1 Office of the Prime Minister, "[Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Mandate Letter](#)."

2 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 29 November 2016.

3 Government of Canada, "[Consulting with Canadians – A Food Policy for Canada](#)."

4 Government of Canada, "[A Food Policy for Canada](#)."



The Government of Canada also held regional engagement sessions across Canada and a food policy summit on 22 and 23 June 2017.<sup>5</sup> The future food policy will set a long-term vision for achieving health, environmental, social and economic objectives relating to food while identifying measures that could be taken in the short term.<sup>6</sup>

The Committee held seven public meetings between 19 September and 17 October 2017, and heard from various stakeholders from the agriculture and agri-food sector, diet and health research groups, Indigenous communities and food bank networks, among others.

## CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING A FOOD POLICY

The witnesses that the Committee heard unanimously supported the Government of Canada's initiative to establish Canada's first food policy. They stated that developing a food policy that involves many stakeholders is an enormous challenge, particularly because Canada's food system is quite complex.

Moreover, the agriculture and agri-food sector continues to demonstrate flexibility and to provide products that meet consumer demands regarding health, food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare. In addition to satisfying growing consumer demands, the sector must produce food in a changing environment, given climate change, a growing global population and increasingly limited resources.

Witnesses noted that food is a complicated subject that involves many players from various sectors. Canada's food system includes a large number of stakeholders that play crucial roles throughout the agri-food chain, from production and processing all the way to the consumer's table.

The food policy is expected to be released in early 2018. Since many stakeholders with different perspectives are involved and given the complexity of developing a national food policy, Cam Dahl, President of Cereals Canada, sounded a note of caution. He suggested that the policy development process not be rushed, as it requires an ongoing dialogue. Mr. Dahl said, "A hastily constructed policy will undoubtedly miss key elements that are important both to Canadian society as a whole and to Canadian agricultural producers."<sup>7</sup>

---

5 Government of Canada, "[Consulting with Canadians – A Food Policy for Canada](#)."

6 Government of Canada, "[A Food Policy for Canada](#)."

7 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1630 (Cam Dahl, President, Cereals Canada).

## COMPONENTS OF THE FOOD POLICY

A number of witnesses said that the first component that should be included in a food policy is official recognition of the right to food. As one of the fundamental principles set out in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948, the right to food absolutely must be at the heart of the food policy in order to ensure the health and well-being of all individuals and their families. According to Hilal Elver, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Canada is a leader in supporting the right to food. Canada confirmed this position in 1976 when it signed the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which recognized the right of everyone to adequate food and freedom from hunger.<sup>8</sup>

Canada has also ratified several other international legal instruments that confer a right to adequate food on particular segments of society, such as women and children.

Most recently, Canada made a commitment to adopt a national plan for the realization of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Particularly relevant is goal number two, which affirms a commitment to end hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. This commitment is very central to Canada's evolving national and international food security.<sup>9</sup>

### Recommendation 1

**The Committee recommends that the Government recognize that Canadians have the right to adequate nutrition and that the Government of Canada align its policies to achieve this goal for all Canadians.**

#### A. Increasing Access to Affordable Food

Witnesses told the Committee that despite the abundance of food in Canada, not all Canadians have access to affordable food. On average, Canadians devote 14% of their income to food purchases, of which 10% represents groceries and 4% represents restaurant expenditures. Some witnesses argued that Canada is one of the countries where households devote the lowest proportion of their income to food. However, households in remote and Northern regions of Canada spend a larger proportion of their income on food, as food prices there are much higher than in southern Canada.

---

8 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1535 (Hilal Elver, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, United Nations Human Rights Council, As an individual).

9 Ibid.



Furthermore, the rate of food insecurity is higher among those segments of the population, particularly among Indigenous populations.<sup>10</sup>

Health Canada references the following definition of food insecurity: “the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so.”<sup>11</sup> According to [PROOF](#), a food insecurity research organization at the University of Toronto, over 4 million Canadians experience food insecurity, including 1 in 6 children. The rate of food insecurity is particularly high among children living in Canada’s North. A recent UNICEF report revealed that Canada ranks 37<sup>th</sup> among 41 high-income nations in childhood food security.<sup>12</sup> Various studies have measured the level of food insecurity among Indigenous populations and found that it varies from 24% to 70%.

Depending upon the type of study and where it happened and the different populations, it can range anywhere from 24% in Nunavik in northern Quebec, based on specific questions and different methodologies, to 70% in Nunavut, which is the Inuit health survey, children’s survey. Broadly, for 2012 APS data, it’s about 52% of Inuit in Canada who report regular household food insecurity. That is a massive difference in relation to food insecurity for non-Inuit Canadians.<sup>13</sup>

Mike Dugate, Executive Director, Chicken Farmers of Canada, noted that chicken is the most affordable animal protein. However, the challenge is to ensure that chicken prices remain affordable, because animal rights movements may influence these prices.

Chicken is the most affordable meat protein. I think that’s a key reason it is Canada’s most consumed meat, but the challenge before us is to make sure it remains affordable. Right now, for us and all of animal agriculture, the real threat to affordability is the security coming from activists who are masquerading as consumers. These activists are extorting our restaurant partners. They’re maligning our farmers. They’re campaigning against the humane transportation of animals. They’re campaigning to take chicken and other meats out of Canada’s food guide. Their ultimate objective is to dictate to Canadians what they can and cannot eat, and they are trying to reach their goal by driving up the cost, and that’s the affordability issue of nutritious food for consumers.<sup>14</sup>

- 
- 10 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1530 (Shawn Pegg, Director, Policy and Research, Food Banks Canada).
- 11 Government of Canada, [“Household Food Insecurity in Canada: Overview.”](#)
- 12 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1535 (Diana Bronson, Executive Director, Food Secure Canada).
- 13 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1645 (Natan Obed, President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami).
- 14 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1650 (Mike Dugate, Executive Director, Chicken Farmers of Canada).

Given the disinformation the public is hearing about food production, producers have undertaken awareness campaigns to show that they care about animal welfare and environmental protection as much as consumers do. Farmers are fully aware of the importance of ensuring that their practices respect the environment and animal welfare, as their livelihoods depend on it.

So it wasn't designed to sell more eggs; it was designed to have people like Roger talk about animal welfare, talk about food safety, talk about what he does on his farms. It's interesting that, when we started to put their faces in front of the product, it really resonated with consumers. Farmers are highly trusted, as you know, and lo and behold, not only did it improve public trust, but it actually sold a lot more eggs.<sup>15</sup>

## 1. Challenges related to poverty

Witnesses asserted that poverty is the real problem, not the affordability of food.<sup>16</sup> Today, over 4 million Canadians experience food insecurity because they do not earn enough income to buy the food necessary for their well-being. Nick Saul, President and Chief Executive Officer of Community Food Centres Canada, explained that the main causes of food insecurity are inadequate minimum wages and social assistance benefit amounts, increasingly part-time and precarious work, and unaffordable housing.<sup>17</sup>

Because they live in poverty, many people are forced to use food banks. Although food is plentiful in stores, people with low incomes simply cannot afford it. Food banks are not just used by people with jobs whose incomes do not cover basic living costs; they are also used, as some witnesses noted, by many beneficiaries of government assistance programs, such as old age pensions, disability pensions, social assistance and Employment Insurance, indicating that these programs are not always sufficient to meet people's basic needs.<sup>18</sup>

Food banks were mainly created in the 1980s to deal with a difficult economic situation that was supposed to be temporary. Thirty years later, they are more active than ever and meet real vital needs to address food insecurity. This has been especially true since the 2008 recession, when the demand skyrocketed and has remained high.<sup>19</sup>

---

15 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1715 (Tim Lambert, Chief Executive Officer, Egg Farmers of Canada).

16 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1650 (Mike Dugate).

17 Ibid., 1550 (Nick Saul, President and Chief Executive Officer, Community Food Centres Canada).

18 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1650 (Sonia Latulippe, Chief Executive Officer, Moisson Outaouais).

19 Ibid.



Food banks are largely supplied by donations from agricultural producers and unsold products from grocery chains. Each year, egg producers donate over 3 million eggs to food banks.<sup>20</sup> To prevent food waste, a number of grocery chains have partnerships with food banks. However, the latter do not have the infrastructure to handle all the products they might otherwise receive.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Food distribution

According to a number of witnesses, in addition to poverty, unequal food distribution is one of the reasons Canadians do not have access to food. Some neighbourhoods in major cities do not have a grocery store, which makes obtaining fresh products very difficult for some vulnerable individuals. The problem of food distribution is particularly serious in remote regions. Food often arrives in these areas in very poor condition owing to a lack of infrastructure for transporting fresh products.<sup>22</sup>

Witnesses noted that the food policy will need to include the transportation sector. The way fresh products are shipped is an important issue, particularly for Northern communities, which import most of the food they consume. Some witnesses said that food distribution network monopolies in the North limit access to food and exacerbate the problem of poverty. To improve access to fresh food for Northern residents who live in isolated communities, the Government of Canada established the Nutrition North Canada program.

Nutrition north Canada subsidizes transportation only to selected communities for fresh foods in retail stores. It is not targeting food insecurity or the population that specifically suffers food insecurity, and it is not facilitating greater access to traditional and country foods.<sup>23</sup>

## 3. Local and regional production

Indigenous peoples shared with the Committee their desire to preserve their diet and customs based on traditional hunting and fishing activities. However, access to this traditional food is compromised because of climate change and the high cost of the equipment, such as snowmobiles and boats, required for these activities. To improve

---

20 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1645 (Tim Lambert).

21 Ibid., 1610 (Jason McLinton, Vice-President, Grocery Division and Regulatory Affairs, Retail Council of Canada).

22 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1645 (Natan Obed).

23 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1645 (Pat Vanderkooy, Manager, Public Affairs, Food and Nutrition, Dietitians of Canada).

access to traditional and local foods while taking the cultural realities of Indigenous communities into account, communities have launched initiatives such as the Northern Farm Training Institute, which offers agricultural training to Indigenous communities.<sup>24</sup> Natan Obed, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, recognized that a Canadian food policy will not resolve all the problems facing Indigenous peoples, but he believes that Canada needs to take steps in the right direction.<sup>25</sup>

For several years now, consumer interest in buying local has grown steadily. Some witnesses believe that consuming local products is a major economic driver of regional development. In this regard, many regional and provincial initiatives have been launched to promote buying local, including local procurement by public institutions, initiatives to provide food in schools, such as a program run by a New Brunswick agri-food co-operative, and community-supported agriculture.

Some witnesses argued that small-scale agriculture can potentially satisfy consumers' growing demand for local food and that the marketing of local food should be supported. The organic agriculture sector focuses on local and farmers' markets.<sup>26</sup> However, small-scale agriculture faces many challenges.

One of the main things that limits direct marketers' and small-scale farmers' ability to grow is food safety regulations that are designed for industrial scale production and processing. What we would like to see, ideally, is some flexibility in that system and a recognition that a one-size-fits-all regulatory approach does not work. Somebody selling eggs to their neighbour or to people down the street should not have to adhere to the same expensive and onerous regulations as somebody who is producing 10,000 cartons a day and shipping them all over the country.<sup>27</sup>

While some witnesses hope the food policy further promotes buying local, others believe it is also important to strike a balance between the local market and the export market. The beef sector maintained that domestic and international sales each has a key role to play in the food policy. Canadians may appreciate certain cuts of meat, while foreign markets will value others more. In 2016, [47%](#) of Canadian beef production (including live cattle) was exported, representing 622,490 tonnes worth \$3.6 billion.<sup>28</sup>

---

24 Ibid., 1615 (Irena Knezevic, Vice-President, Canadian Association for Food Studies).

25 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1645 (Natan Obed).

26 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1705 (Jim Robbins, President, Organic Federation of Canada).

27 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1505 (Ayla Fenton, Youth President, National Farmers Union).

28 Canadian Cattlemen's Association, [Industry Stats](#).



Therefore, the industry must be able to sell each piece and reap the benefits from all markets.<sup>29</sup>

### **Recommendation 2**

**The Committee recommends that the Government implement measures to provide for an adequate supply of more affordable, safe, high-quality and nutritious food for Canadians, especially vulnerable populations in Canadian society, such as children, Canadians living in poverty, Indigenous peoples and those in remote and Northern communities.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Committee recommends that the Government support the implementation of initiatives to combat food insecurity in Indigenous and northern communities by reviewing the Nutrition North Canada program.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**The Committee recommends that the Government provide support for the growth and development of local and regional agriculture.**

## **B. Improving Food Safety and Health**

Food safety is unquestionably the top priority of the agriculture and agri-food sector, which continually works to improve food safety and animal welfare. The agriculture sector and the seafood industry are among the most highly regulated sectors as regards food safety. In 1992, the seafood industry was the first Canadian food sector to adopt the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, a comprehensive and preventive approach to food safety assurance.<sup>30</sup> Canada also uses a traceability system for the livestock industry that can track an animal throughout the supply chain. Moreover, traceability strengthens Canada's ability to respond quickly to emergency situations or disease outbreaks. For its part, the grain sector uses the Canadian Identity Preserved Recognition System (CIPRS).

The Canadian identity preserved recognition system, or CIPRS, is a grain traceability standard administered by the Canadian Grain Commission and audited by third parties

---

29 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1705 (Brady Stadnicki, Policy Analyst, Canadian Cattlemen's Association).

30 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1535 (Patrick McGuinness, Interim President, Fisheries Council of Canada).



to ensure CIPRS-certified grain shipments are pure and adhere to the highest food quality and safety standards.<sup>31</sup>

## 1. Bringing producers and consumers closer together

Witnesses pointed out that there is a large gap between producers and consumers, the latter often being unfamiliar with the way food is produced. That is why public trust is one of the agriculture and agri-food sector's key priorities. To help Canadians learn more about the agriculture sector, farmers are hosting tours of their operations and inviting the public to meet with them to better understand how they produce food.<sup>32</sup>

Ms. Christina Franc, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions, said that agricultural fairs are ideal meeting places for the agricultural community and urban dwellers who want to learn about where their food comes from. These fairs include educational components related to agriculture and food. While agricultural fairs were in decline in the recent past, they have been regaining popularity owing to a cultural shift. However, Ms. Franc expressed concern about the ever-present threat of cuts to the education funding that is available to fairs and exhibitions.<sup>33</sup>

According to many witnesses, education is a vital part of any food policy because it can build a relationship between producers and consumers, and encourage the latter to learn about where their food comes from. Furthermore, some argued that the food policy provides an opportunity to dispel various myths about modern agriculture and promote the agriculture sector as one that produces food responsibly, in a manner that respects the environment and animal welfare.

If designed and implemented properly, Canada's food policy has an opportunity to bridge the gap between the Canadian public and modern Canadian agriculture. As an industry, we understand that building public trust is very important, and that we need to reconnect with consumers and the public. This initiative has the potential to bring the public and farmers and ranchers together to find shared values in Canada's food and agricultural systems.<sup>34</sup>

---

31 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1545 (Chris Masciotra, Director, Corporate Affairs, Soy Canada).

32 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1700 (Roger Pelissero, Chairman, Egg Farmers of Canada).

33 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1530 (Christina Franc, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions).

34 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1635 (Dan Darling, President, Canadian Cattlemen's Association).



In addition to gaining a better understanding of agriculture, consumers also need to be able to make informed choices when buying food. Yet labelling sometimes poses problems and leads consumers to believe one product is better than another when that is not necessarily true. Gordon Harrison, President of the Canadian National Millers Association, suggested that many Canadians “don't really read labels very often unless it says “new” or “improved” or they've never seen the product before.”<sup>35</sup> Some witnesses believe that the government, in partnership with industry, could play a role in this area and resolve food labelling challenges.<sup>36</sup>

Food and Consumer Products of Canada (FCPC) agrees that it is impossible to put every available piece of information on a label, even if industry would like to inform consumers as much as possible. That is why FCPC launched a digital label in Canada called “SmartLabel,” which enables consumers to obtain further information on their products.<sup>37</sup>

Some witnesses said they are worried about the changes to food labelling requirements that Health Canada is currently making to categorize foods as being good or bad. Several witnesses emphasized the importance of Health Canada maintaining a science-based approach to labelling.<sup>38</sup>

Witnesses argued that other methods can be used to improve public health, such as education that encourages people to change their eating habits.<sup>39</sup>

Consumer education is extremely important. That's why five years ago FCPC launched the consumer education program in partnership with Health Canada. It was very successful. Basically, it educated Canadians on understanding the nutrition facts table on the back of the pack. Health Canada determined that there was a gap there and that people did not quite understand. It was very successful, and it showed a fantastic working relationship between industry and Health Canada. It educated consumers. It got them to understand about balance and to understand individual choices. For example, if I've just finished running a marathon, I'm okay with a little bit of sodium in my food products. If I'm a sedentary person suffering from some chronic disease, that may not be good for me.<sup>40</sup>

---

35 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1620 (Gordon Harrison, President, Canadian National Millers Association).

36 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1605 (Casey Vander Ploeg, Vice-President, National Cattle Feeders' Association).

37 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1555 (Carla Ventin, Vice-President, Federal Government Affairs, Food and Consumers Products of Canada).

38 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1535 (Gordon Harrison).

39 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1545 (Carla Ventin).

40 Ibid., 1610 (Carla Ventin).

Witnesses also shared their concerns about the new food guide. They worry that the revised version of the guide will favour one food group over another, including vegetable-based sources of protein over animal-based ones. The Canadian National Millers Association is concerned that the new food guide may encourage consumers to give up enriched white bread, hamburger and hot dog buns, and other bakery products made with enriched flour.<sup>41</sup> Pat Vanderkooy of Dieticians of Canada argued that, very much like previous versions, the new food guide will emphasize dietary variety.<sup>42</sup> Many witnesses emphasized that the new food guide must be based on objective scientific studies and help consumers make healthy food choices.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**The Committee recommends that the Government help implement initiatives, such as a federal, provincial and territorial recognition protocol for animal care, that bring producers and consumers closer together in order to strengthen and maintain public trust.**

#### **Recommendation 6**

**The Committee recommends that the new food guide be informed by the food policy and include peer-reviewed, scientific evidence and that the Government work with the agriculture and agri-food sector to ensure alignment and competitiveness for domestic industries.**

## **2. Preventing and reducing obesity and chronic disease**

The foods that Canadians choose to eat have a major impact on their health. Poor eating habits are contributing to a rise in childhood obesity and to the increasing incidence of chronic disease among the general population. The rise of chronic diseases linked to poor diet is a growing concern. These diseases affect different social groups at different rates, depending on their financial situation; the poorest are most affected. According to the testimony of Sonia Latulippe, Chief Executive Officer of Moisson Outaouais, three of every four deaths in Canada are attributable to chronic diseases.<sup>43</sup>

---

41 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1535 (Gordon Harrison).

42 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1650 (Pat Vanderkooy).

43 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1650 (Sonia Latulippe).



Diet-related diseases are putting a great deal of pressure on the Canadian health care system.<sup>44</sup> These diseases cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$26 billion per year in direct and indirect health care expenditures alone. If the costs to the workforce and premature death are included, the total rises to \$68 billion.<sup>45</sup>

Witnesses noted that a healthy, nutritious diet would reduce health care costs. A study recently published by the *Canadian Journal of Public Health* revealed that three-quarters of Canadians do not eat enough fruits and vegetables, failing to meet the minimum number of servings recommended by *Canada's Food Guide*. According to the study, if Canadians ate 20% more fruits and vegetables, or one additional serving per day, the economic cost of health care would shrink by \$880 million per year over five years.<sup>46</sup>

To address the health problems that stem from a poor diet, some witnesses suggested regulating unhealthy foods by imposing a tax on sugary drinks or by restricting advertising directed at children. Others asserted that regulation would not provide a concrete resolution to diet-related health problems.

In the past, government has been particularly fixated on introducing regulations as the primary way to improve health. Regulations to reduce salt or sugar content in foods do not change the use of the salt shaker or the sugar bowl.

Government can play a bigger role in educating consumers about a dietary approach to food choices. Communicating the positive nutrition and health attributes of foods on food packaging is a way to educate consumers and incentivize the food industry to innovate and reformulate to feed the demand for healthier and more sustainable products. A greater presence of credible information sources, such as government-issued dietary guidelines, will be critical in establishing the benchmark that ensures consumers are educated about healthy diets.<sup>47</sup>

## Recommendation 7

**The Committee recommends that the Government invest in awareness campaigns and education about healthy eating in order to improve the overall health of Canadians and reduce health care costs.**

---

44 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1635 (Dag Falck, Organic Program Manager, Nature's Path Foods, Canada Organic Trade Association).

45 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1635 (Pat Vanderkooy).

46 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1540 (Ron Lemaire, President, Canadian Produce Marketing Association).

47 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1645 (Gordon Bacon, Chief Executive Officer, Pulse Canada).

## C. Conserving the Quality of Soil, Water and Air

Clean water and healthy soil are essential resources for agriculture. The production, processing, distribution and consumption of food, as well as food loss and waste, have impacts on the environment. These impacts may include greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, soil degradation, water pollution and biodiversity loss.

### 1. Adopting environmentally friendly practices

Thanks to technological advances, farmers have been able to adopt more environmentally friendly practices, whether that be by including techniques arising from organic agriculture or from biotechnology.

Technologies like pest control products and biotech crops have played an important role in sustainably increasing agricultural production in Canada while maintaining the high safety standards we have established in this country. These advancements have resulted in economic gains, environmental protection, and cost savings for consumers. For example, plant science technologies alone contribute \$9.8 billion to Canada's GDP every year. These technologies have also allowed farmers to be more productive on existing farmland. In fact, without pesticides and biotech crops, Canadian farmers would need to cultivate 50% more land to produce what they grow today. This would be devastating for Canada's biodiversity.<sup>48</sup>

In contrast to the statement above, some witnesses contended that pesticides are a threat to the viability and sustainability of agriculture in Canada. Annie Bérubé, of Équiterre, proposed a national strategy to reduce pesticide use as part of the national food policy.

[The] overuse, extensive use, and over-dependence on synthetic pesticides, as the first tool to combat pests, are the problem when we know that we have beneficial management practices, integrated pest management, and organic practices that should be our first weapons in managing pests.<sup>49</sup>

These witnesses stated that organic agriculture helps reduce pollution from pesticides. It can also improve the health of agricultural soils, which in turn improves yields and product quality.<sup>50</sup> The organic sector lamented the fact that, even though organic

---

48 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1540 (Dennis Prouse, Vice-President, Government Affairs, CropLife Canada).

49 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1705 (Annie Bérubé, Director, Government Relations, Équiterre).

50 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1640 (Ashley St Hilaire, Director, Programs and Government Relations, Canadian Organic Growers).



agriculture makes a tremendous contribution to the conservation of resources, it receives much less government support than large-scale conventional agriculture.

### **Recommendation 8**

**The Committee recommends that the Government support the Canadian organic sector by providing ongoing funding for the Canadian Organic Regime. The Committee also recommends that the Government support the growth of exports and ensure that the sector can meet the growing demand for organic products.**

In the food processing industry, environmental protection is an integral part of current practices respecting water, recycling, recovery of waste material including organic waste, and energy consumption.<sup>51</sup> As for the retail sector, it recognizes that food waste results in enormous losses both economically and environmentally. To manage this waste, every member of the Retail Council of Canada participates in food waste reduction and composting programs. Today, a large proportion of food waste occurs in our homes.<sup>52</sup>

When we compare Canada and the world on food loss and food waste, we are among the most wasteful societies on the planet. We're last. Food loss is before purchase, and food waste is after purchase. Consumers represent half of all the food waste in Canada.<sup>53</sup>

Many consumers do not understand all the information on labels. For example, consumers may throw away products that are still good because the best-before date is approaching, which can create more food waste.<sup>54</sup>

### **Recommendation 9**

**The Committee recommends that the Government streamline approvals of new biotechnology innovation, such as seeds and plant breeds.**

### **Recommendation 10**

**The Committee recommends that the Government, in conjunction with all members of the supply chain, establish education tools and take action to reduce industry food loss and consumer food waste.**

---

51 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1535 (Sylvie Cloutier, Chief Executive Officer, Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec).

52 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1620 (Jason McLinton).

53 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1555 (Jean-Charles Le Vallée, Associate Director, Food Horizons Canada, The Conference Board of Canada).

54 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1715 (Sonia Latulippe).

## 2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the agriculture and agri-food sector

Agricultural activities have environmental impacts. Several witnesses drew attention to greenhouse gas emissions related to agriculture and agri-food activities in Canada. The Committee notes that, according to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, approximately 10% of Canada's GHG emissions come from crop and livestock production, excluding emissions from the use of fossil fuels or from fertilizer production<sup>55</sup>. Reducing GHG emissions and improving environmental performance are already priorities for the agriculture and agri-food sector.

The egg industry reported that over the past 50 years it has reduced its environmental footprint by half while doubling production. The industry noted that its investments in research will enable it to identify more environmentally sound practices.<sup>56</sup> Likewise, Chicken Farmers of Canada is completing a life-cycle analysis of the sustainability of its industry in order to make targeted environmental improvements.<sup>57</sup> The environmental impacts of the Canadian livestock and crop sectors are among the lowest in the world thanks to research and increased productivity.

A good example is the widespread adoption of zero or minimal till farming, which keeps carbon in the ground and promotes healthy soils. In 1991, only 7% of western Canada was seeded with no till practices. Today, this number has grown to 65%, allowing Canadian farmers to sequester millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases in their fields every year.

Beyond the benefits of sequestering GHGs, it is important to understand that this change in practice has also resulted in improved soil health, which means the soil can now support a healthier crop, and possibly more importantly for farmers, leaving our soils in better condition for the next generation.<sup>58</sup>

Some witnesses pointed to carbon pricing as a way to reduce GHG emissions. To date, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec have adopted systems to price carbon pollution and all other provinces should have a system in place by the end of 2018.<sup>59</sup> Linda Delli Santi of the Canadian Horticultural Council told the Committee that the cost

---

55 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, [Greenhouse gases](#). Date Modified: 11 August 2016

56 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1640 (Roger Pelissero).

57 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1655 (Mike Dungate).

58 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1630 (Jack Froese, President, Canadian Canola Growers Association).

59 Government of Canada, ["Pricing carbon pollution in Canada: how it will work."](#)



of the carbon tax for a five-acre greenhouse in British Columbia was \$50,000.<sup>60</sup> Mike Dungate of Chicken Farmers of Canada made the following comment about carbon pricing: “we need to make sure there's consistency in how it's applied across provinces and between commodities.”<sup>61</sup>

### **Recommendation 11**

**The Committee recommends that the Government continue and increase efforts and investments to assist the agriculture sector in continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve environmental practices, with an emphasis on conservation of soil, water, and air.**

### **D. Growing More High-Quality Food**

According to the report of the Advisory Council on Economic Growth, chaired by Dominic Barton, the agri-food sector will become one of the largest economic sectors in the world. Similarly, Budget 2017 identified the agri-food sector as an engine of economic growth.<sup>62</sup>

Budget 2017 recognized the potential growth of the agriculture and agrifood sector, setting an ambitious target of increasing agrifood exports from \$55 billion to \$75 billion by 2025.<sup>63</sup>

A number of witnesses noted that Canada is a net exporter of food products, as it produces more than it consumes. Moreover, the Canadian market is relatively small, so Canadian businesses must turn to export markets in order to grow.<sup>64</sup> Witnesses also reminded the Committee that food imports are an integral part of Canada's food system.

After all, we do live in Canada and there are seasonal considerations. In order for us to enjoy the products that we also in enjoy in December, January and February, we need to recognize the role that imports play in our access to these foods at affordable prices year-round.<sup>65</sup>

---

60 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1700 (Linda Delli Santi, Chair, Greenhouse Vegetable Committee, Canadian Horticultural Council).

61 Ibid. (Mike Dungate).

62 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1540 (Carla Ventin).

63 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1630 (Jack Froese).

64 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1650 (Gordon Bacon).

65 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1550 (Jason McLinton).



## 1. Importance of export and domestic markets

Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector, which employs approximately 2.3 million workers across the country, depends on exports. In 2016, the value of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports was \$56 billion; \$62.6 billion if seafood exports are included.<sup>66</sup> In 2016, Canada was the fifth-largest exporter of agriculture and agri-food products, exporting over half of its agricultural production. The members of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance account for over 90% of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exports.<sup>67</sup>

International trade is crucial for Canadian agriculture and agrifood as 58% of its total value is generated through exports. We export over half of the agrifood products that we grow, and Canadian agriculture has already made great strides over the past 10 years as our exports have grown by over 100%, from \$30 billion to over \$60 billion, boosting farm cash receipts by 61% over the same time frame.<sup>68</sup>

According to Patrick McGuinness of the Fisheries Council of Canada, the seafood industry generates approximately \$8 billion in revenue annually, including \$6 billion from exports, making Canada the eighth-largest exporter of seafood in the world.<sup>69</sup> Although food exports are vital to the Canadian economy, some witnesses asked that the export-oriented food sector not be favoured over the regional food sector. The industries under supply management, which is designed to meet domestic demand, believe it is as important to support food products destined for domestic markets as it is those intended for export.

As the government looks to increase availability of high-quality food domestically and internationally, it is important to maintain support for domestic policies like supply management that offer a secure food supply.<sup>70</sup>

### Recommendation 12

**The Committee recommends that the Government continue to support domestic growth in the regional agriculture and agri-food sector, as well as in the industries under supply management.**

---

66 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, [An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food System 2017](#).

67 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1640 (Claire Citeau, Executive Director, Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance).

68 Ibid.

69 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1535 (Patrick McGuinness).

70 Ibid., 1640 (Roger Pelissero).



### **Recommendation 13**

**The Committee recommends that the Government continue to support domestic growth in the regional agriculture and agri-food sector, as well as the industries under supply management by ensuring that the outcomes of a renegotiated NAFTA do not erode the domestic market on which they rely.**

To ensure a more abundant supply of high-quality Canadian food on international and domestic markets, a number of witnesses suggested creating better conditions for farmers and food processors, including by eliminating obstacles such as excessive regulation and interprovincial trade barriers, among others.<sup>71</sup>

Witnesses emphasized that the food policy needs to make it a priority to create a competitive business environment so that Canadian businesses can meet the goal of supplying large quantities of high-quality food while increasing the agriculture and agri-food sector's contribution to the Canadian economy. This includes support for research and innovation.

Any policy, program, or decision that reduces competitiveness or constrains the development or the adoption of new technologies will have negative implications for consumers as well as for the world's food security, the environment, and global stability.<sup>72</sup>

### **Recommendation 14**

**The Committee recommends that the Government continue to focus on export growth in Canada's agriculture and agri-food sectors, with a view to increasing Canadian agricultural exports to at least \$75 billion per year by 2025, and reducing barriers to export growth.**

### **Recommendation 15**

**The Committee recommends that the Government not increase the financial burden for Canadians, making the cost of food more expensive, and for our farmers who rely on export markets and must remain competitive.**

Some witnesses pointed out that Canada invests millions of dollars in the agri-food sector and that, to a large extent, these investments go toward new technologies.

---

71 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1535 (Sylvie Cloutier).

72 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1530 (Christopher White, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Meat Council).

Yet innovation can be viewed as more than just a matter of technology; it occurs at the social level as well.

Innovation can mean thinking creatively about engaging citizens in food activities to increase food literacy. It can mean running a social enterprise that helps build skills and social networks for persons who experience social isolation and marginalization. It can mean reviving agro-ecological practices that build soil and regenerate our ecosystems with old technologies and practices.<sup>73</sup>

### Recommendation 16

**The Committee recommends that the Government, in partnership with community groups and non-governmental organizations, invest in community-level action in the areas of innovative agriculture initiatives, food security, food literacy, and food loss and waste.**

## 2. Market access and regulatory streamlining

Witnesses underlined that to achieve the objective of producing a large volume of high-quality food, the policy must include a trade component that focuses on negotiating and implementing free trade agreements with key markets. At present, over 300 market access barriers have been identified.<sup>74</sup> Reducing trade barriers is therefore critical to ensuring market access which would support production and exports and an increase in the processing capacity of the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector.<sup>75</sup> To this end, the departments with jurisdiction in trade must be provided with the necessary resources. Witnesses also suggested harmonizing federal and provincial regulations and modernizing and streamlining the regulatory process to encourage innovation.<sup>76</sup>

If we want to grow more food and keep it affordable, then we need to focus on our competitiveness, and that means continuing to invest in research, development, innovation, and technology, and it means resolving a number of competitive challenges, whether that's access to labour, the regulatory burden, or even investing in rural infrastructure.<sup>77</sup>

---

73 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 3 October 2017, 1530 (Irena Knezevic).

74 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1640 (Claire Citeau).

75 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1545 (Chris Masciotra).

76 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1545 (Dennis Prouse).

77 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1545 (Casey Vander Ploeg).



### **Recommendation 17**

**The Committee recommends that the Government strengthen programs to support farmers and food processors in their efforts to innovate and adapt to changing production conditions and market demands.**

### **Recommendation 18**

**The Committee recommends that the Government take a whole-of-government approach to ensure market access for Canadian producers in key export markets and address trade irritants and non-tariff barriers.**

## **E. The Future of Agricultural Production and the Next Generation of Farmers**

Besides the four themes set out to guide the development of the food policy, the witnesses thought that the policy should also take into account the following issues: the next generation of farmers, access to farmland and farm labour.

### **1. The next generation of farmers**

For over 70 years, the number of farms and farmers has been in constant decline. The farming population is growing older; Canadian farmers are about 55 years old on average. Since 1990, the number of farmers under age 35 has shrunk by 70%. Three-quarters of farmers expect to retire over the next 10 years, yet only 8% of them have a succession plan in place.<sup>78</sup>

According to the 2016 Census of Agriculture, Canada had 193,492 farms averaging 820 acres in size. Farms of less than 10 acres accounted for close to 7% of Canadian farms, while farms of more than 400 acres made up 37% of the total. The census also revealed that 44.4% of all farmers earn non-farm income. Indeed, 30.2% of all Canadian farmers worked 30 hours or more per week off the farm.<sup>79</sup> Numerous witnesses argued that the food policy needs to support young people who are ready to start a career in agriculture. According to the National Farmers Union, about 80% of new farmers do not have a farming background, and 60% of the young people entering agriculture today are women. These new farmers primarily operate small and medium-sized organic farms

---

78 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1640 (Ayla Fenton).

79 Statistics Canada, [2016 Census of Agriculture](#).

that do direct marketing.<sup>80</sup> Aspiring farmers face numerous challenges when they start out in agriculture.

They do have a specific set of challenges that need to be addressed in terms of accessing training and capital and land, which are not totally separate from those of existing farmers. Because they're predominately coming from a non-farming background, we do need additional supports in terms of training and linking them into that farming community whereas before it was sort of easier to have succession.<sup>81</sup>

### Recommendation 19

**The Committee recommends that the Government enhance tools to support young farmers and new entrants into agriculture and that the Government work with farmers to better accommodate the intergenerational transfer of family farms.**

## 2. Access to farmland

The rising cost of farmland is an obstacle for people seeking to enter agriculture. The next generation of farmers often does not have the means to buy land at high prices. Furthermore, agricultural land is increasingly being used for urban development.

David J. Connell of the University of Northern British Columbia said that farmland protections should not only be integrated into the food policy, but also be considered a precondition for addressing the four themes of the policy.<sup>82</sup> Mr. Connell also noted that farmland protections vary from province to province. However, he acknowledged that the Constitution limits what the federal government can do to protect agricultural land.<sup>83</sup>

[T]he federal government can play a critical role in helping to better protect Canada's agricultural land base. Specifically, the federal government could adopt a clear, direct statement of policy to protect the agricultural land base and to support its use for farming. Such a statement would ensure that the public interest in protecting farmland is integrated across provincial, territorial, and local jurisdictions.<sup>84</sup>

---

80 Ibid., 1645 (Ayla Fenton).

81 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1620 (Amanda Wilson, Policy Analyst, Coordinator of Community Engagement, Food Secure Canada).

82 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1555 (David J. Connell, Associate Professor, Ecosystem Science and Management, University of Northern British Columbia, As an individual).

83 Ibid., 1615.

84 Ibid., 1555.



### 3. Labour

For the agriculture and agri-food sector to continue to grow and develop, it must be productive and competitive while having access to an adequate supply of labour. Yet the agri-food sector continues to report that it is experiencing a severe labour shortage. A number of Canadian businesses assert that they have no choice but to use foreign labour to fill vacant positions.

[O]ur first problem is that these jobs at slaughter plants are in rural Canada for the most part. We no longer have a whole lot of kids coming off the farms, and we no longer have access to immigrants who don't have college education, which we used to have up until the 2000s. These two big sources have dried up. We had to find a new source. Temporary foreign workers were there.<sup>85</sup>

In 2014, 4-H Canada conducted a survey of its youth members that revealed the following: “More than 80% of them indicated they were aware of careers in agriculture, and more than 50% indicated they wanted to pursue careers in agriculture.”<sup>86</sup> Witnesses argued that the food policy could play a role in promoting career options in the agriculture and agri-food sector and in matching workers with job opportunities.

Career promotion and skills development is a huge piece and an area in which a national food policy can play a critical role by identifying the opportunities that exist in the sector, making Canadians more aware of what actually takes place in food production and looking to ways in which we can match the labour demands that exist in this sector with supply from within Canada to meet those needs.<sup>87</sup>

---

85 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1610 (Ron Davidson, Senior Vice-President, Canadian Meat Council).

86 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1650 (Shannon Benner, Chief Executive Officer, 4-H Canada).

87 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1625 (Scott Ross, Director of Business Risk Management and Farm Policy, Canadian Federation of Agriculture).

## Recommendation 20

**The Committee recommends that the Government, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, take steps to ensure sufficient labour is available in the agriculture and agri-food sector, including through the [temporary foreign workers program](#) to attract and retain talent, with a possible path to permanent residency.**

Going beyond these additional themes, some witnesses expressed concern about proposed tax reforms respecting income sprinkling and the capital gains exemption, which could affect transfers of farms to the next generation. These witnesses wanted more time to study how the proposed tax changes would also affect farmers.<sup>88</sup> Note that on 19 October 2017, the Department of Finance indicated in a [news release](#) that it would not move forward with some of these measures.<sup>89</sup>

## CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A FOOD POLICY

The witnesses acknowledged that implementing the food policy at the federal level will not be easy. They identified a number of conditions that should be met to make the policy robust and effective. Given that the food policy involves many stakeholders with distinct objectives, the policy must be grounded in a sound partnership in order to build a common vision, common priorities, and common goals.<sup>90</sup> The policy's development must be based on science.<sup>91</sup> The witnesses also repeatedly cited the issue of governance as being critical to the success of a food policy.

### A. Inclusion of All Stakeholders

Food matters to everyone. This is why a number of witnesses called for balanced representation of all stakeholders, including producers, processors, scientists, consumers, and community organizations, in the food policy's development process.<sup>92</sup> The various levels of government, civil society and Indigenous peoples must also be part of the discussions.

---

88 Ibid., 1650 (Dan Darling).

89 Department of Finance Canada, [Targeted Tax Fairness Measures Will Protect Small Business Owners Including Farmers and Fishers](#), 19 October 2017.

90 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 26 September 2017, 1535 (Diana Bronson).

91 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1535 (Scott Ross).

92 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1540 (Christopher White).



In addition, industry stakeholders expressed concern about Canadians' expectations for industry practices. They fear that, if the public and the industry do not reach an understanding on modern agricultural practices, the food policy may not be implemented successfully. Scott Ross of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture offered the following explanation: "Without this basic understanding, any policy will repeatedly push up against misunderstanding, division, and misalignment."<sup>93</sup>

## B. Governance

### 1. Whole-of-government approach

Many witnesses told the Committee that in order to implement a comprehensive national food policy, a coordinated whole-of-government approach is essential, so that policies and programs are well aligned.

Witnesses found that some government initiatives, such as growth targets for the agri-food sector, tax reforms and the proposal to require front-of-package warnings on food, are contradictory. The lack of alignment among government initiatives often imposes new costs and creates uncertainties that limit the agri-food sector's ability to grow.<sup>94</sup> Jack Froese of the Canadian Canola Growers Association added that "a whole-of-government approach can help prevent a patchwork of initiatives and mixed messaging."<sup>95</sup>

### 2. Creation of a permanent council

Some witnesses proposed that a durable long-term governance structure be established to bring together all stakeholders and clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities.<sup>96</sup>

Food policy cannot be developed in a vacuum. It needs to be developed using the whole-of-government approach that cuts across departments and agencies, and it also takes into account other government initiatives under way.

The federal government currently has several initiatives under way that must be taken into account when designing a food policy. For example, Canada's healthy eating strategy, the

---

93 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 19 September 2017, 1535 (Scott Ross).

94 Ibid.

95 House of Commons, AGRI, [Evidence](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 5 October 2017, 1630 (Jack Froese).

96 Ibid., 1635 (Pierre Lampron, President, Dairy Farmers of Canada).



proposed safe food for Canadians regulations, and CFIA's plants and animals health strategy. There are a lot of moving parts that must be complementary or the results will be policies and initiatives that are misaligned and/or contradictory. We hope that those leading each of these initiatives are in regular discussions with one another. It is important to ask how a food policy fits with all this other work under way.<sup>97</sup>

To ensure continued progress on the food policy and to coordinate government actions, several witnesses recommended creating a permanent national food policy council. A number of witnesses suggested that the mandate of this governance body could be to advise the federal, provincial and territorial governments on policy matters, to sponsor research, to seek common ground among the many stakeholders involved, and so on. They agreed that the governance body must adhere to principles such as transparency, participation and accountability.<sup>98</sup>

### **Recommendation 21**

**The Committee recommends that the Government establish a national food policy advisory body consisting of the key government departments, the agriculture and agri-food sector, academia, Indigenous peoples and civil society.**

## **CONCLUSION**

Developing and implementing a national food policy pose a significant challenge because food policy lies at the intersection of agricultural, health, trade, environmental, economic, and other policy areas, some of which involve shared responsibility between different levels of government and departments. All Canadians, including farmers, ranchers, fishers, food processors, consumers and civil society, have a stake in the development of a healthy and sustainable food system. Development of a food policy for Canada that integrates the needs and perspectives of a wide variety of stakeholders has potential to be an important step towards systematically and inclusively addressing food-related priorities in Canada. Building buy-in, tailoring implementation to meet the needs of all Canadians, and allowing flexibility to adapt to emerging realities will be important considerations.

---

97 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 21 September 2017, 1635 (Dave Carey, Executive Director, Canadian Seed Trade Association).

98 House of Commons, AGRI, *Evidence*, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 28 September 2017, 1605 (Evan Fraser, Director, Arrell Food Institute, University of Guelph, As an individual).



## APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p><b>Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food</b></p> <p>Beth MacNeil, Director General Policy Development and Analysis Directorate, Strategic Policy Branch</p>	2017/06/20	65
<p><b>Canadian Cattlemen's Association</b></p> <p>Dan Darling, President Brady Stadnicki, Policy Analyst</p>	2017/09/19	67
<p><b>Canadian Federation of Agriculture</b></p> <p>Scott Ross, Director of Business Risk Management and Farm Policy</p>		
<p><b>Canadian Organic Growers</b></p> <p>Jim Robbins, President Organic Federation of Canada Ashley St Hilaire, Director Programs and Government Relations</p>		
<p><b>Soy Canada</b></p> <p>Dale Adolphe, Interim Executive Director Chris Masciotra, Director, Corporate Affairs</p>		
<p><b>The Conference Board of Canada</b></p> <p>Jean-Charles Le Vallée, Associate Director Food Horizons Canada</p>		
<p><b>Canadian National Millers Association</b></p> <p>Gordon Harrison, President</p>	2017/09/21	68
<p><b>Canadian Seed Trade Association</b></p> <p>Dave Carey, Executive Director</p>		
<p><b>Egg Farmers of Canada</b></p> <p>Roger Pelissero, Chairman Tim Lambert, Chief Executive Officer</p>		

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Fisheries Council of Canada</b> Patrick McGuinness, Interim President</p> <p><b>Retail Council of Canada</b> Jason McLinton, Vice-President Grocery Division and Regulatory Affairs</p>	2017/09/21	68
<p><b>Canadian 4-H Council</b> Shannon Benner, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Équiterre</b> Annie Bérubé, Director Government Relations</p> <p><b>Food Banks Canada</b> Shawn Pegg, Director Policy and Research</p> <p><b>Food Secure Canada</b> Diana Bronson, Executive Director Amanda Wilson, Policy Analyst Coordinator of Community Engagement</p> <p><b>Moisson Outaouais</b> Sonia Latulippe, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Union des producteurs agricoles</b> Marcel Groleau, Chair Annie Tessier, Coordinator Food Sovereignty Coalition</p>	2017/09/26	69
<p><b>As individuals</b> David J. Connell, Associate Professor Ecosystem Science and Management, University of Northern British Columbia Evan Fraser, Director Arrell Food Institute, University of Guelph</p> <p><b>Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance</b> Claire Citeau, Executive Director</p>	2017/09/28	70

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<p><b>Canadian Horticultural Council</b>  Rebecca Lee, Executive Director  Linda Delli Santi, Chair  Greenhouse Vegetable Committee</p> <p><b>Chicken Farmers of Canada</b>  Mike Dungate, Executive Director</p> <p><b>Community Food Centres Canada</b>  Nick Saul, President and Chief Executive Officer</p>	2017/09/28	70
<p><b>Canadian Association for Food Studies</b>  Irena Knezevic, Vice-President</p> <p><b>Cereals Canada</b>  Cam Dahl, President</p> <p><b>Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec</b>  Sylvie Cloutier, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Dietitians of Canada</b>  Pat Vanderkooy, Manager  Public Affairs, Food and Nutrition</p> <p><b>Food and Consumer Products of Canada</b>  Carla Ventin, Vice-President  Federal Government Affairs</p> <p><b>Pulse Canada</b>  Gordon Bacon, Chief Executive Officer</p>	2017/10/03	71
<p><b>Canadian Canola Growers Association</b>  Jack Froese, President  Catherine Scovil, Director of Government Relations</p> <p><b>Canadian Meat Council</b>  Ron Davidson, Senior Vice-President  Christopher White, President and Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Canadian Produce Marketing Association</b>  Ron Lemaire, President</p>	2017/10/05	72

<b>Organizations and Individuals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>CroLife Canada</b> Dennis Prouse, Vice-President Government Affairs	2017/10/05	72
<b>Dairy Farmers of Canada</b> Pierre Lampron, President Yves Leduc, Director, Policy and Trade		
<b>National Farmers Union</b> Ayla Fenton, Youth President		
<b>As an individual</b> Hilal Elver, Special Rapporteur on Right to Food United Nations Human Rights Council	2017/10/17	73
<b>Canada Organic Trade Association</b> Dag Falck, Organic Program Manager Nature's Path Foods Tia Loftsgard, Executive Director		
<b>Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions</b> Christina Franc, Executive Director		
<b>Co-operation Agri-food New Brunswick</b> Marc Allain, Chief Executive Officer		
<b>Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami</b> Natan Obed, President		
<b>National Cattle Feeders' Association</b> Casey Vander Ploeg, Vice-President		

# **APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS**

---

## **Organizations and Individuals**

---

**Bryant, Christopher**

**Caldwell, Wayne**

**Cameron, Greg**

**Canada Organic Trade Association**

**Canadian 4-H Council**

**Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance**

**Canadian Association for Food Studies**

**Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions**

**Canadian Canola Growers Association**

**Canadian Cattlemen's Association**

**Canadian Federation of Agriculture**

**Canadian Horticultural Council**

**Canadian Meat Council**

**Canadian National Millers Association**

**Canadian Organic Growers**

**Canadian Produce Marketing Association**

**Canadian Seed Trade Association**

---

## **Organizations and Individuals**

---

**Cereals Canada**

**Chicken Farmers of Canada**

**Community Food Centres Canada**

**Connell, David J.**

**Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec**

**Co-operation Agri-food New Brunswick**

**CroLife Canada**

**Dairy Farmers of Canada**

**Dairy Processors Association of Canada**

**Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food**

**Dietitians of Canada**

**Egg Farmers of Canada**

**Elver, Hilal**

**Équiterre**

**Fertilizer Canada**

**Fisheries Council of Canada**

**Food and Consumer Products of Canada**

**Food Banks Canada**

**Food Secure Canada**



---

## **Organizations and Individuals**

---

**Food Sovereignty Coalition**

**Fraser, Evan**

**Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami**

**Johnston, Tom**

**Margulis, Matias**

**Moisson Outaouais**

**National Cattle Feeders' Association**

**National Farmers Union**

**Organic Federation of Canada**

**Pulse Canada**

**Retail Council of Canada**

**Soy Canada**

**The Conference Board of Canada**

**Union des producteurs agricoles**

**USC Canada**



## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 65, 67 to 73, 75, 79 to 81 and 83](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Finnigan  
Chair

