
News Release

Federal-Provincial-Territorial



Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture meet to support a competitive and sustainable agriculture and agri-food sector

July 21, 2023 – Fredericton, New Brunswick



The annual conference of Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture was held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, from July 19 to 21, 2023. Ministers discussed the agriculture and agri-food sector's key issues, including the successful launch of the \$3.5 billion Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) that came into effect on April 1, 2023. In the face of current challenges and concerns related to global food security, Ministers underlined the importance of working together to ensure that hard-working producers and processors in Canada have the supports they need to continue to feed Canadians and a growing global population.



Ministers expressed their concerns regarding the extreme weather situations currently impacting producers across the country, including drought and wildfires. Ministers committed to working together expeditiously to share data and complete AgriRecovery assessments. Ministers also committed to ensuring that producers have access to a full suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs that are timely and reliable. In view of this, Ministers committed to continuous improvement of BRM programs to support farmers and ranchers. In order to ensure timeliness, simplicity and predictability of AgriStability, Ministers agreed to the implementation of an optional new model.



Prevention and preparedness planning for African Swine Fever was also discussed. Ministers acknowledged the need for continued strong collaboration between federal, provincial, and territorial governments as well as industry on the development of integrated disease prevention, surveillance and management plans and cost-shared response programming. Ministers recognized the importance of increasing Canada's readiness and capacity to respond to potential disease outbreaks and re-affirmed their commitment to closely collaborate on this issue, and to engage with key players across the value chain by the fall. It will be critical to maintain public confidence in the Canadian food supply and to mitigate trade-related market disruptions, notably by establishing zoning arrangements with our trading partners. Ministers also discussed actions taken already, such as the ongoing work through Animal Health Canada (AHC).

AHC is a national organization that provides a collaborative space for government and industry partners to achieve animal health and welfare priorities, while providing expertise in areas such as emergency preparedness, emerging diseases, animal health surveillance, and updating the codes of practice for the care and handling of farm animals. Ministers unanimously endorsed AHC's proposed role in emergency preparedness and indicated their support for continued investment and its operations. Ministers support the importance of traceability measures and stated the necessity of ensuring that measures are designed to reflect operational realities.

Ministers agreed that innovation, scientific research and development, and collaboration play key roles in continuing to increase productivity and economic growth, while protecting the environment. Ministers highlighted the importance of building on a foundation of strengths and expertise from across jurisdictions and noted actions already taking place across the supply chain to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon and improve the environmental and economic sustainability of the sector. Ministers continue to champion the work of industry partners, in building a clean future that is both sustainable for our planet and supports farmers' economic livelihoods. Ministers committed to continuing to work with stakeholders to respond to

the challenge of climate change and extreme weather events, such as drought and wildfires, and to meet the growing demands for healthy, sustainable and nutritious food. The federal government presented on the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy and provinces and territories shared their current strategies and initiatives. Ministers emphasized the importance of science and evidence-based decision-making in improving the long-term growth, resilience and sustainability of the agriculture and agri-food sector.

Ministers recognized that Canadian producers need effective tools to manage weeds, pests and plant diseases. Ministers agreed that science and evidence-based decision-making on regulating crop protection products is paramount. They also recognized the importance of supporting research into pest management tools, practices and solutions such as biopesticides and integrated pest management approaches. Following the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) presentation, and recognizing the difficulties faced by our producers, Ministers agreed to create an FPT working group which will explore the challenges of pesticide management.

Ministers are committed to improving supply chain resiliency and as such, received an update from industry on the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct consultations held in May 2023. Ministers recognized the important steps taken by industry towards the implementation of the Grocery Sector Code of Conduct by year's end. Ministers were also briefed on the plan to establish an office which will provide training, education, dispute resolution services and oversight, as well as send a signal to Canadian consumers that the grocery sector is improving its transparency. Ministers supported the industry-led collaborative process and remained open to discussing how governments can support this effort going forward, including through short-term financial support for the creation of the office. Ministers remained united in calling for the participation of all key players in the industry, who will support its operations.

Ministers advanced talks on the federal government's commitment in Budget 2023 of \$57.5 million over five years (starting in 2023-24) and \$5.6 million in ongoing funding to support and establish a Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine bank for Canada, and to develop FMD response plans with provinces and territories. Ministers agreed on a collaborative approach, working with industry, to support this project which will enable the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to secure a strategic reserve of vaccines to help Canada's livestock industry against FMD outbreaks.

Ministers discussed international trade and market diversification, including ongoing trade negotiations with key partners. Discussions also centred around collective efforts to position Canada as a trusted and sustainable supplier of choice to the Indo-Pacific region by leveraging Canada's first-ever Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-Food Office, which will be in Manila, Philippines, as well as existing federal, provincial and industry resource investments in the region.

Ministers also discussed labour, including recent disruptions at the Port of Vancouver, Specified Risk Material, Clean Fuel Regulations as well as honey bee health. In addition, Ministers highlighted advancements on interprovincial trade pilots and committed to continue the progress on this issue. For more information, please see the Background: Summary of Items from the 2023 Annual Meeting of Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture.

The next Annual FPT Ministers' meeting will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon, in July 2024. The Ministers who were not in attendance in Fredericton were represented by other officials*.

**Nunavut was not represented at the meeting.*

Quotes

“By working together, we can continue to overcome the challenges facing the agriculture and agri-food sector and seize the opportunities for growth. Underscored by the launch of the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, our ambitious vision for the future of the sector will ensure that producers, ranchers and processors have the tools they need to manage risk, grow their production, productivity, and profitability while remaining good stewards of the land. This vision is also at the heart of the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, being developed in collaboration with industry.”

- The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

“The agriculture and agri-food sector is an important component of the New Brunswick and Canadian economy, while also feeding Canadians and those across the globe. The sector is resilient and sustainable and will prosper by seizing opportunities and addressing challenges through a collaborative approach. During our meetings this past week, we discussed many important topics including Business Risk Management programs, animal health, environment and labour. As the provincial-territorial co-chair, I am pleased with the commitments all parties made to support and advance the agriculture and agri-food sector and help it succeed.”

- The Honourable Margaret Johnson, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, New Brunswick

Quick facts

- Canada’s agriculture and agri-food sector contributed \$143.8 billion to national gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022, accounting for 7 per cent of national GDP.
- Exports of agriculture and agri-food products continue to grow, worth nearly \$93 billion in 2022 compared to \$82 billion in 2021.
- In 2022, Canada’s agriculture and agri-food system employed 2.3 million people (11.4 per cent of total jobs in Canada).
- Sustainable CAP is a five-year, \$3.5-billion investment by Canada’s federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada’s agri-food and agri-products sectors. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

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Backgrounder: Summary of Items from the 2023 Annual Meeting of Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture

Business Risk Management (BRM)

Ministers were briefed on progress on a range of BRM program changes resulting from the Sustainable CAP agreement, including to AgriStability, and BRM and the environment. On AgriStability, the new model will be offered on an optional basis to producers in applicable provinces and territories in a flexible way that ensures producers have access to the program in a manner that meets their needs. Ministers also raised other potential BRM improvements for further analysis to support crops and livestock.

Ministers discussed progress on piloting AgrilInsurance premium rebates for producers who adopt practices that reduce production risks and have a positive environmental benefit. The federal government is also committed to working with interested provinces to continue evaluating the option of whole farm AgrilInsurance, which has the potential to reduce premiums for farmers and encourage diversification of crops. Ministers also noted progress on their shared commitment that, starting in 2025, producers with allowable net sales of \$1 million or more will need an agri-environmental risk assessment to receive government contributions through AgrilInvest.

Livestock Price Insurance

The federal government and the maritime provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) have agreed to continue discussions on a Livestock Price Insurance program for producers in those provinces. Ontario and Quebec look forward to discussions to explore support for their programs.

Labour

Recognizing the acute labour challenges being faced by the agricultural sector, Ministers highlighted the importance of working together to remove barriers for workers seeking employment opportunities and committed to sharing ideas and approaches. In this context, Ministers received a presentation on the Atlantic Immigration Program which is both a pathway to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers and helps employers hire qualified candidates for jobs they haven't been able to fill locally.

Interprovincial trade

Ministers were provided with an update on the interprovincial food trade pilot projects they had requested at their November 2021 meeting and whose tangible progress they supported at their July 2022 meeting. The pilots aim to: address situations like Lloydminster, which lies on the Alberta-Saskatchewan border; explore solutions for meat processing in rural areas that lack slaughter availability, such as in Ontario-Quebec and Ontario-Manitoba border regions; and explore solutions for Ontario's "Ready to Grow" meat plants for high-volume provincially regulated meat businesses seeking to test market opportunities in other Canadian provinces or territories.

Honey bee health

Ministers agreed to continue working together with industry representatives and other stakeholders through the Industry-Government Working Group on Bee Sustainability. This Working Group will continue to consider issues affecting Canadian honey bee health and explore both short and long-term solutions for the sector with the aim of helping to improve the sustainability of the Canadian honey bee sector, including on matters relating to the mortality of honey bee colonies, the overwinter honey bee colony losses and the impact of varroa mites. Ministers also discussed the new risk assessment that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will be undertaking to evaluate the risks associated with the importation of honey bee packages from the United States.

Specified Risk Material

Ministers also noted the ongoing collaboration between the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the cattle sector to better understand the challenges with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Ministers also emphasized the importance of completing the work on a specified risk materials analysis. Ministers discussed considerations and possible approaches to alignment with the United States on the issue of specified risk material and disposal requirements.