



Honourable Heath MacDonald  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

June 30, 2026

Dear Minister MacDonald,

On behalf of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable industry, I am writing to share recommendations to inform your government's efforts to develop the Next Agricultural Policy Framework. We look forward to working with you to help Canadian businesses thrive and ensure that the fresh produce industry can continue to provide our safe, nutritious products for tables here at home and around the world.

Based in Ottawa, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is a not-for-profit organization representing companies active in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada, from the farm gate to the dinner plate, spanning the entire produce industry. The Association's members include major growers, shippers, packers, and marketers; importers and exporters; transportation and logistics firms; brokers, distributors, and wholesalers, retailers, and foodservice distributors; and fresh cut operators and processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is proud to represent more than 900 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

The fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain is a significant contributor to Canada's economy and food security, generating \$18 billion in GDP and supporting more than 188,000 jobs in rural and urban communities from coast to coast to coast<sup>1</sup>. In addition to our sector's economic contributions, we also provide Canadian families with safe and nutritious food that is crucial to supporting their health and well-being.

The development of the Next Agricultural Policy Framework comes at a time when growing political uncertainty with our largest trading partner, a series of port disruptions, escalating severe weather events and continuing consumer concerns about the cost of food have all contributed to significant challenges for the Canadian fresh produce sector. A resilient and competitive domestic food system is foundational to national food security, economic growth, and global trade competitiveness. CPMA emphasizes that a whole-of-government approach and shared departmental ownership are needed to prioritize agriculture and food production as a strategic cornerstone of the government's broader Build Canada economic strategy and to unleash Canada's potential as a food superpower.

To begin, CPMA strongly agrees that a focus on markets and trade, growth and competitiveness, and resiliency should guide the Framework and reiterates our support for the measures and considerations outlined in the previously submitted, *Joint Industry Input to the Next Policy Framework*, which we have included here in *Appendix 1*. In addition, CPMA offers the following recommendations of particular

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<sup>1</sup> Signal49 Research (formerly Conference Board of Canada), 2025

relevance to the fresh produce supply chain. In the Next Agricultural Policy Framework, the government should:

#### *Growth and Competitiveness*

- Work with the provinces and territories to prioritize the National School Food Program as a critical piece of food infrastructure supporting the health and wellbeing of families across the country and providing opportunities for Canadian produce businesses.
- Attract and retain talent for the future fresh produce supply chain by building future skills for the diverse careers available and investing in the critical infrastructure needed to retain workers in communities across the country.
- At the same time, provide support for automation and advanced technologies across the supply chain, including in packing, distribution, and logistics, to address ongoing labour shortages.

#### *Research and Innovation*

- Create an enabling regulatory environment for new products, technologies, and business practices supporting sustainable solutions.
- Support agriculture and food businesses in adopting innovative technologies, including AI tools, and in implementing cybersecurity measures to strengthen supply chain resilience.
- Expand partnerships between industry and post-secondary institutions around research, innovation, and workforce development.

#### *Resilience and Market Diversification*

- Accelerate market diversification by expanding mutual recognition efforts with other key trading countries and addressing regulatory and infrastructure barriers impeding Canada's competitiveness in the global marketplace.
- Make targeted investments in cold chain and supply chain infrastructure so Canadian companies can meaningfully participate in new and emerging export markets.
- Prioritize implementation of Bill C-280, the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, to provide critical financial protection to produce sellers.
- Strengthen collaboration on data sharing between industry and governments to improve climate modelling, pest management, and risk forecasting.

#### *Accountability and Impact*

- Reinforce regulatory coordination and predictability across federal departments to ensure initiatives affecting food production, trade, and perishable supply chains are delivered in a timely, coordinated manner supporting competitiveness and supply chain reliability.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of the comments shared above. CPMA and our members are happy to serve as a resource for your government and to answer any questions you may have about the needs and priorities of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable industry. We look forward to continued engagement throughout the development and implementation of the Next Agricultural Policy Framework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Ron Lemaire', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ron Lemaire  
President  
Canadian Produce Marketing Association