



## Advancing Canadian interests in international trade FEDERAL ELECTION 2025

### TALKING POINTS

*When in doubt, think Connect (why is it important to YOU?), Contrast (what's missing?), Solve (how can the government/candidate help?)*

- **Connect:** Free and fair international trade offers huge economic growth opportunity for Canadian fresh produce businesses and provides Canadians with access to safe and healthy fresh food options year-round.
- **Contrast:** Particularly with the review of CUSMA on the horizon, the threat of trade action by the U.S. President against Canada and Mexico raises serious concerns. A lack of harmonization in crop protection regulation, products, and residues, creates unnecessary and costly duplication and hinders the competitiveness of Canadian products in the international marketplace.
- **Solve:** Every effort should be made to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to trade and support the competitiveness of Canadian products in all free trade agreements. International standardization between government bodies and the advancement of free and fair trade across the Canadian border are critical not only to our sector's ongoing competitiveness and economic success, but also to supporting food security in communities across the country.

### OUR ASKS TO POLITICAL PARTIES/CANDIDATES

1. Will your party support a strengthened food system and food security for all Canadians by adopting a whole-of-government agriculture and food production lens and making food production and access to food a whole-of-government priority in legislation, policy and crisis management?
2. Will your party dedicate federal government resources to advance Canada's free and fair trade agenda, remove regulatory barriers impeding Canada's competitiveness in the global marketplace, and enable further expansion of mutual recognition efforts with other key trading countries?
3. Will your party commit to engaging in regular and ongoing consultation with our industry, and with the Trump Administration, to ensure a strong response to any trade action taken against Canada and to emphasize the important benefits for all three economies stemming from free and fair trade across North America?
4. Will your party prioritize the implementation of Bill C-280, the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, to provide critical financial protection to produce sellers?

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

- The fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain generates nearly \$15 billion of Canada's GDP and supports more than 185,000 jobs from coast to coast to coast (Conference Board of Canada, 2023).
- 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.
- Unnecessary regulatory barriers, such as overly prescriptive labelling regulations, hinder Canada's competitiveness in the global marketplace.
- The North American fresh produce industry is highly integrated, with economic, health and food security benefits for all three countries. In 2023 alone, Canada imported just over \$5 billion in fresh produce from the United States, representing a little less than half of all fresh produce imports. Just as important, Canadian companies exported just over \$4 billion in fresh produce to the United States, comprising more than 95% of all fresh produce exports (Statistics Canada, 2024).
- Following decades of advocacy, CPMA welcomed the passage of Bill C-280, the *Financial Protection for Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Farmers Act*, which received Royal Assent in December 2024. This important legislation establishes a financial protection mechanism for fresh produce sellers in Canada and opens the door to reciprocal protection to those selling to the U.S. market.

## ABOUT CPMA

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.