



## **Election 2025 – Canadian Produce Marketing Association Questionnaire to Political Parties**

### **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 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

Below you will find key questions on which the produce industry is looking for leadership from Canada's federal political parties. **We kindly ask for your response by end of day on Wednesday, April 23rd**, as we hope to distribute responses received to our members and post them on our website. More information on our election asks can be found in our [Election Platform Development Brief](#), which has been enclosed with this questionnaire.

### **Making food a federal priority**

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, and we will continue to play a major economic role as we move forward. At the same time, 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. More federal support is needed to make food a federal priority and to create the conditions necessary to enable an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable fresh produce industry in Canada, while ensuring our competitiveness in the global marketplace.

1. Should you be elected, 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?

### **Advancing Canadian interests in international trade**

To ensure the ongoing viability of Canada's food system, we need a strong domestic and global strategy. Free and fair international trade in fresh produce offers huge economic growth opportunity for Canadian businesses and provides Canadians with access to safe and healthy fresh food options year-round. Increasing market access and sustainability of the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industry requires mutual recognition of food safety systems, and international harmonization of crop protection regulation,

products, and residue limits, to remove costly duplication. Every effort should be made to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to trade and support the competitiveness of Canadian products.

2. Should your party form government, will you 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. Should you be elected, 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?

### **Increasing produce consumption for healthier communities**

Even prior to recent inflationary pressures on the cost of food, year over year, Canadians are eating fewer vegetables and fruits, with significant health and economic consequences. Given the protective effect of fruits and vegetables on reducing the risk for many chronic diseases, it is clear that supporting access to these nutritious foods in all regions of the country can contribute substantially to the health and well-being of our communities, while also significantly decreasing government health care spending. Government policies that are grounded in evidence and provide equal access to fruits and vegetables in a "Food as Medicine" approach are needed to effectively address this challenge. CPMA's [Half Your Plate campaign](#) and [Freggie Children's Program](#) are working to increase fresh produce consumption in Canada, but more support is needed, including through critical investments such as the National School Food Program.

5. Should your party form government, will you invest in the health of Canadians using a "Food as Medicine" approach, and advance measures promoting the *Canada Food Guide* recommendation to fill *Half Your Plate* with fruits and vegetables, including in public procurement and government programming?
6. Will your party support measures to reduce diet-related diseases and hunger and mitigate health care costs associated with food insecurity and poor nutrition?
7. Should you be elected, will your party facilitate the timely delivery of funding and work with the provinces and territories to advance the development and implementation of the National School Food Program, and ensure that enhancing nutrition and promoting healthy eating practices, including through the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, are core objectives of the program?

### **Fueling a competitive and resilient produce supply chain**

The fresh produce supply chain is one of the most highly globally integrated supply chains in the world. The supply chain linkages of transportation, border access and ports of entry and exit are key to ensuring the smooth flow of essential goods across our border. The high volume and perishability of fruits and

vegetables means that longer dwell times at ports of entry and inefficient transportation infrastructure can not only delay delivery and increase costs for industry and consumers, but can also result in lost sales, product spoilage, and ultimately food waste. Reliable, efficient trade infrastructure, and measures to facilitate the flow of essential products through Canada's marine ports and other ports of entry are critical to supporting both our economic competitiveness and food security across the country.

8. Should your party form government, will you deliver sufficient, ongoing capital investment under the National Supply Chain Strategy and the National Trade Corridor Fund to enable trade and transportation infrastructure improvements, including the enhancement of cold chain infrastructure?
9. Will your party establish priority lanes at ports of entry and implement a dedicated Trusted Trader pilot program to further streamline the movement of essential and perishable products across the Canadian border?
10. Should be elected, will your party implement measures to prioritize the movement of food and essential goods through ports of entry in the event of emergency events or disruptions, and work to address the root causes of labour disruptions impacting critical supply chain infrastructure?

### **Building the fresh produce workforce**

Canada's agricultural sector faces a critical workforce gap, with labour shortages persisting across all supply chain stages and in both urban and rural communities. Federal programs such as the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program are essential but currently fall short of fully addressing the unique needs of the fresh produce industry, which require a specialized, timely workforce to manage perishable products and avoid delays or shortages that may directly impact food quality and availability. The future fresh fruit and vegetable industry will require a domestic and international workforce with a wide range of skills, including an increasing focus on expertise in areas such as robotics and artificial intelligence, software engineering and programming, green energy systems and data analysis. An effective National Workforce Strategy will require a total supply chain lens that considers and supports all aspects of the agri-food sector – from the farm to the dinner plate. The federal government has an important role to play in supporting educational efforts and raising awareness, especially among young and urban Canadians, about the significant and diverse opportunities available in our sector.

11. Should your party form government, will you implement a National Workforce Strategy to meet immediate labour needs and generate future interest in careers across the food supply chain through education, training and skills development?
12. Will your party commit to preserving the distinction between the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and other streams within the Temporary Foreign Worker program (TFWP), such as AgStream and the Low-Wage stream, and to establishing a permanent Recognized Employer Program under the TFWP?

## **Supporting a sustainable produce sector**

Across the agri-food sector, ambitious targets are being set to reduce the environmental footprint of producing and supplying food. Proof of sustainability is increasingly required to compete at home and abroad in an industry that is expected to show progress toward environmental and other societal outcomes. Setting ambitious sustainability targets without adequate data to baseline and track progress leads to uncertainty and unintended consequences. The lack of standardized methods to measure and report sustainability performance, along with varying requirements from customers and governments, add further cost and complexity to the food supply chain without effectively advancing sustainability outcomes. From reducing greenhouse gas emissions across supply chains, to adopting sustainable packaging, to mitigating food loss and waste, government and industry require more robust data and harmonized efforts to identify and achieve our collective sustainability goals. Innovative tools and alternative technologies are also needed to help the produce sector fight climate change while remaining globally competitive.

13. Should you be elected, will your party commit to engaging with industry to drive North American and global conversations to align efforts, standards and systems to effectively achieve our sustainability goals?
14. Should your party form government, will you provide federal leadership and investment in harmonized waste collection, recycling and composting infrastructure across Canada?
15. Will your party create an enabling regulatory environment for new products, technologies and business practices to support and de-risk the adoption of more sustainable solutions, and ensure that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency is sufficiently resourced to fulfill core functions including pre-market applications, re-evaluations and minor use registrations?