



Election 2021 – 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 **Tuesday, September 7, 2021**, 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.

Providing Financial Protection for Produce Sellers

The Canadian produce industry has been requesting the implementation of a financial protection tool for produce sellers for many years. Growing, harvesting, packing, and marketing fruits and vegetables comes with many risks. Overhead and capital costs continue to rise, while returns are delayed until the product is sold, and payment is collected down the supply chain. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges and has put the produce supply chain in an even more vulnerable position.

Due to the unique nature of our supply chain, current provisions in the *Safe Food for Canadians Act and Regulations* and the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* do not provide a workable mechanism for suppliers of perishable fresh fruit and vegetables when buyers become insolvent. While the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* allows suppliers to recover their product following a buyer bankruptcy, it provides no rights when the product has been resold or is no longer identifiable. Given how quickly produce spoils, it would be rare that fresh fruits and vegetables would be available for repossession. The existing "super priority" provision for farmers also requires that product must have been delivered within 15 days of the bankruptcy, failing to address the needs of fruits and vegetable suppliers, who regularly receive payment 30 days (or more) after product is delivered. The implementation of a Canadian limited statutory deemed trust would effectively protect produce sellers during bankruptcy in Canada and bring our sector in line with the intent of the super priority for farmers under the current *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act*.

Agri-food organizations from across Canada have called for the creation of a deemed trust mechanism for produce sellers (see enclosed [letter to Prime Minister Trudeau](#)). As we focus on Canada's economic

recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial that we work to provide all possible safeguards for the food supply chain and protect one of our most essential sectors.

1. Should you be elected, will your party commit to protecting Canadian produce sellers by creating a statutory deemed trust, similar to the U.S. *Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act*?

Supporting a Sustainable Produce Sector

A sustainable environment is essential to the future viability and growth of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry and Canada as a whole. As noted in [CPMA's Election Platform Development Brief](#), the fresh produce sector is taking a leadership role in adopting various environmentally sustainable practices, including through initiatives such as the National Index on Agri-food Performance. Moving forward, the Canadian agricultural sector will be a key partner in tackling climate change and moving to a low-carbon economy, but more government support is needed.

2. Should your party form government, will you work to provide reasonable and fair recognition for past efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement more environmentally sustainable practices?
3. Will your party commit to providing federal government support for the National Index on Agri-food Performance and engage with stakeholders to achieve our common sustainability goals and secure Canada's position as a global leader in agri-food sustainability?
4. Should you be elected, will your government commit to taking a holistic view of how supporting a sustainable agri-food industry complements environmental targets?
5. Will your party commit to developing a long-term strategy for sustainable water management for all Canadians, including ensuring a secure source of water to support Canadian agriculture?

Reducing Unnecessary and Problematic Plastics

To be successful in reducing the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics, industry and government collaboration is essential to achieve long-term, sustainable change. The Canadian produce industry continues to be deeply engaged across all segments of the supply chain to reduce the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics, while working to find solutions to mitigate the food safety and food waste implications of reducing the use of plastics for fresh produce.

The federal government has a critical role to play in supporting industry efforts, promoting evidence-based solutions, and working with its provincial and territorial partners to address the fragmented collection systems across the country that do not effectively collect and recycle the materials currently in circulation that could be kept and utilized in the circular economy.

6. Should your party form government, will you commit to working closely with industry to take a systems approach to find solutions to reduce plastic waste that are evidence-based, and include a combination of education, innovation, and critical infrastructure investments?
7. Should you be elected, will your party commit to providing federal leadership and funding to the development of harmonized, efficient and cost-effective recycling collection within communities across Canada, a commitment of utmost importance in supporting a circular economy?

Bridging the Labour Gap

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the logistical challenges of bringing employees to Canada through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program have posed a considerable threat to food production, food security and the integrity of the food supply chain in Canada. Furthermore, the labour gap in horticulture is becoming a crisis, with the gap expected to increase to 46,500 jobs by 2025 – the largest labour gap in the agricultural sector.

8. Will your party recognize the ongoing nature of increased costs growers are assuming due to the COVID-19 pandemic by committing to measures to help growers manage costs associated with housing reforms and health and safety requirements?
9. Will your party commit to maintain access to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy until the Public Health Agency of Canada has declared that the COVID-19 pandemic has ended?
10. Should you be elected, how will your party work to improve service standards and processing times for applications under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and the Agricultural Stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, including by working with source countries and implementing measures to further streamline the collection of biometrics as well as visa and work permit application processes?

Strengthening Canada's Food System and Fostering Healthy Communities

The COVID-19 pandemic has made healthy living even more important to Canadians. Still, 80% of Canadians are not eating enough fruits and vegetables, resulting in an economic burden calculated at almost \$4.4 billion annually. The targets of the Food Policy for Canada are important to promote the long-term social, environmental, and economic sustainability of the Canadian food system and increase Canadians' consumption of safe and nutritious food. The newly formed Food Policy Advisory Council also plays an important role in bringing stakeholders together from across the food system to strengthen Canada's food security.

Increasing access to a variety of food for Canadians, year-round, means supporting innovation in areas such as the storage, distribution, and transportation sectors, resulting in reduction in food loss and waste, better nutrient retention, and lower prices for the consumer.

To support a robust food system, stakeholders across the agriculture sector, including the produce supply chain, are also calling for the development of an industry-led Canadian Food Industry Code of Practice. Through our work with the Canadian Food Industry Collaborative Alliance, CPMA has been working to advocate for a model that is developed by and for the Canadian agri-food sector.

11. Will your party include a commitment to provide ongoing financial support to achieve the targets of the Food Policy for Canada and to support the work of the Food Policy Advisory Council?
12. Should you be elected, how will your party commit to supporting measures promoting the *Canada Food Guide* recommendation to fill *Half Your Plate* with fruits and vegetables?
13. Is your party committed to providing federal funding and resources to support the reduction of food loss and waste across the supply chain?

14. What is your party's position on a Food Industry Code of Practice? Will your party support an industry-led, collaborative, and inclusive process to develop a Food Industry Code of Practice that meets the unique needs of Canada's food system?

Fueling our Competitiveness through Innovation and Infrastructure

Agriculture, including the fresh produce industry, has the potential to act as the backbone of Canada's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, but more investment is needed to support our sector's growth. A 2019 RBC report found that Canada's share of global AgTech investment is only 3.4%, falling behind countries such as Brazil and India.

Planning for COVID-19 recovery must include making broadband internet and cell phone coverage more accessible as growth in online purchasing, delivery and curbside pick-up accelerates. At the same time, it is essential that rural communities across Canada see investments in critical infrastructure to support their economic development now and into the future.

15. Should you be elected, how will your party commit to providing innovation funding and whole-of-government support specific to the fresh produce supply chain, to bolster the industry and foster our ongoing competitiveness?
16. How will your party support small-and medium-sized businesses making the shift to digital and ensure sufficient, dedicated funding to support the rapid expansion of high-speed internet infrastructure and cell phone service coverage so that all Canadians and Canadian businesses have access to the digital infrastructure they need?
17. Is your party committed to delivering sufficient, dedicated federal funding to invest in rural infrastructure, including roads, energy, and service infrastructure, such as waste management?

Promoting Canadian Produce through Global Trade

To ensure the ongoing viability of the food system and support Canada's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, 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.

18. Should you be elected, how will your party dedicate federal government resources to advance Canada's free and fair trade agenda and enable further expansion of mutual recognition efforts with other key trading countries?
19. Is your party committed to supporting measures to enhance government oversight of Canada's ports and to help businesses more seamlessly access international markets through our commercial border?

Ensuring Meaningful Consultation to Achieve Effective Regulatory Modernization

A collaborative approach to find workable solutions for industry and government is the backbone to success for regulatory and policy compliance. While the government's move toward increased consultation with industry is welcome, work remains to ensure that these consultations provide benefit to both government and stakeholders.

20. Should you be elected, will your party commit to undertake a comprehensive review of the regulatory modernization process to allow the government to better facilitate thorough stakeholder participation, to better understand the administrative or other costs of proposed changes, and to develop effective regulations that meet the needs of both industry and the Canadian public without stifling economic competitiveness?