



**Liberal Party of Canada**

350 Albert Street, Suite 920  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6M8

**Parti libéral du Canada**

350, rue Albert, bureau 920  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 6M8

September 8, 2021

Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Via email: [vhuston@cpma.ca](mailto:vhuston@cpma.ca)

Dear Mr. Huston,

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party of Canada's formal response to your questionnaire.

On behalf of our Leader, Justin Trudeau, and the entire Liberal team, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership.

We appreciate your interest in the Liberal Party of Canada's policies as they relate to the issues which affect you.

Sincerely,

Liberal Party of Canada



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**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?**

A Liberal government would continue to be a close ally to the fruit and vegetable sector, with an aim to helping growers and other players in the supply chain to sustainably grow their businesses and enhance their competitiveness. We remain firmly engaged on how we can best provide the support our growers need to achieve these ends. We are open to continuing to work with the fruit and vegetable sector on their proposals, including the creation of a statutory deemed trust, similar to the U.S. Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act. It should be noted that when the Parliamentary committee of Agriculture examined this question in 2016, it was pointed out that the dispute resolution mechanism under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations would help address some of these related issues. In February 2018, we announced an investment of \$175,000 towards the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation, to help them harmonize standards, procedures and services to its members to help them avoid commercial disputes. Understanding that while the role of the DRC does not necessarily protect growers in cases of bankruptcy and insolvency, we are committed to continuing to work with the fruit and vegetable sector on examining all the evidence and solutions to provide further financial protections.

**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?**

The Liberal Party is committed to delivering a range of measures through our Strengthened Climate Plan from December 2020 to realize our ambitious goal of 40-45% reduction in emissions by 2030. Accounting for an estimated 10% of GHG emissions in Canada, the agriculture sector has a role to play to help us get there. We have committed to a path forward that recognizes the challenges of competitiveness within the agriculture sector and we are putting in place a range of measures to support farmers in their efforts to reduce emissions. One of those measures is the implementation of a Federal Greenhouse Gas Offset System, which opened for consultations at the beginning March 6, 2021, with final regulations expected in fall 2021. The proposed Enhanced Soil Organic Carbon protocol aligns with increased interest in potential climate benefits from the adoption of regenerative agriculture land-management practices. Farmers who reduce or remove GHG emissions through regenerative agriculture practices carried out in accordance with the protocol may be able to generate offset credits which can then be sold, providing a financial incentive. In order to encourage more GHG-reducing best management practices, we have also launched the \$200M On-Farm Climate Action Fund and we are proposing to triple funding under the \$165M Agricultural Clean Technology Program. This program offers a large range of opportunities to fruit and vegetable growers to install new innovations in their operations.



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**Will your party commit to providing federal government support for the National Index on Agrifood Performance and engage with stakeholders to achieve our common sustainability goals and secure Canada's position as a global leader in agri-food sustainability?**

We have been active in promoting the sustainability of Canadian agri-food products on the world stage, including our efforts as part of the UN's Food Systems Summit. We are open to discussing the National Index on AgriFood Performance and any proposals the CPMA have to support this initiative.

**Should you be elected, will your government commit to taking a holistic view of how supporting a sustainable agri-food industry complements environmental targets?**

The Liberal Party is taking a comprehensive approach to supporting growers and food processors in becoming more environmentally sustainable. We announced over half a billion dollars in new programs in the last year, including through expanding our Living Labs initiative, hiring 75 more scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and implementing our Agricultural Clean Technology Program and the Agricultural Climate Solutions Program, which are supporting a sustainable agri-food industry so together we can achieve our environmental targets.

**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?**

We are launching the first-of-its-kind Canada Water Agency to do exactly that: develop a long-term strategy for sustainable water management in Canada. Throughout this process, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has been intimately involved in the process. We know the importance of our freshwater resources to our agriculture sector, and will continue to ensure the sustainable management of this resource while also ensuring the continued food security of Canadians.

**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?**

The Liberal Party is committed to continuing to work with the fruit and vegetable sector on how we can fulfill consumer expectations around the reduced use of plastics and support the recycling of plastics and innovative packaging alternatives. As part of our platform, we are committed to banning harmful, unrecyclable single-use plastics and have set a goal of eliminating plastic waste by 2030. In order to achieve this commitment, we are proposing to create a new \$100 million infrastructure and innovation fund over the next 5 years that will scale up and commercialize made-in-Canada technologies and solutions for the reuse and recycling of plastics. Other measures include accelerating the implementation of our zero plastic waste action plan, in partnership with provinces and territories, and ensure Canada's actions are consistent with other leading jurisdictions and supporting provincial and territorial producer



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responsibility efforts. We fully recognize the ongoing efforts made by partners like the Canadian Produce Marketing Association to reduce plastics in the agri-food sector. And we have proven we are prepared to support innovative new industry-led projects to tackle this issue. In March 2021, we announced \$4.1M for five new projects that will improve plastic waste management and on-farm sustainability, and advance bioplastics research. Together, we will continue working closely with partners such as the CPMA to meaningfully reduce and recycle plastics in the agriculture sector.

**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?**

We have made the reduction and recycling of plastics a priority for our party, and we are eager to work with partners such as the CPMA to create a more holistic approach to resolving this issue, including more fully-developed recycling collection systems. As an example, we provided \$1.1 million to Cleanfarms through the Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program to develop a strategy to responsibly manage the estimated 60,000 tonnes of plastic waste generated on Canadian farms every year. Their project will increase farmer access to recycling programs and explore ways to deliver long-term, permanent programs that will help Canadian farmers continue to improve the sustainability of their operations.

**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?**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have proven that we are always ready to support Canadian farmers and growers to meet the challenges of safely welcoming and housing temporary foreign workers. We announced \$58.6 million to strengthen the temporary foreign worker program, which included \$35 million for the Emergency On-Farm Support Fund that went directly to producers to improve health and safety on farms and in workers' living quarters. We are also providing \$142 million through the Mandatory Isolation Support for Temporary Foreign Workers to help producers cover the cost of safely housing workers during quarantine. As we continue our work to improve the temporary foreign worker program, we will continue to consult and explore ways we can support our producers in conditions for workers.

**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?**

When the pandemic struck, we took significant steps to protect workers and employers, and we are committed to doing whatever it takes, as long as it takes, to finish the fight against COVID-19. Through the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, we have helped businesses protect over 5 million jobs. We are committed to extending the eligibility period for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy until October 23,



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2021, and to increasing the rate of support employers and organizations can receive during the period between August 29 and September 25, 2021. We also introduced the Canada Recovery Hiring Program, which provides support so businesses can afford to hire the workers they need to recover and grow as local economies reopen. We are committed to extending the Canada Recovery Hiring Program to March 31, 2022, so businesses can hire more workers and Canadians can get back on the job.

**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?**

Since the moment COVID-19 struck we have been working extremely hard to ensure our agriculture sector, particularly our horticultural producers, can count on their workforce and that they can ensure their safety. We have and will continue to work to facilitate the safe and expeditious arrival of foreign workers, and through our efforts we have been able to welcome the vast majority of the tens of thousands workers we were counting on these past two seasons. To get there, we have already simplified processes, including priority processing of applications, highlighting that work permit applicants can continue working with the same employer while they have an extension application being processed. We also increased the maximum duration of employment under LMIA's from 1 to 2 years for employers of workers in the low-wage stream and removed the minimum recruitment requirements for 6 months, for workers in agriculture and food processing.

In our Liberal platform, we committed to develop an Agricultural Labour Strategy, reform the TFW program by reducing red tape, recognizing Trusted Employers and increasing the mobility of workers. We will also expand pathways to permanence, welcome 2,000 skilled refugees to fill labour shortages, introduce a new Labour Mobility Tax Credit, increase access to training and services for women and vulnerable groups to enter the workforce, and introduce a Career Extension Tax Credit to help seniors 65 and stay in the workforce.

**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?**

The Liberal government was proud to implement the first ever Food Policy for Canada with key actions already undertaken, and we will endeavour to ensure it's continuation in the long term. We are also committed to supporting the ongoing work of the Food Policy Advisory Council to ensure that government and food experts can have ongoing consultation and collaboration.



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### **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?**

In our platform, we have committed to continue working to ensure all Canadians have access to healthy food. We are also committing to work with our provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders to develop a National School Food Policy and work towards a national school nutritious meal program with a \$1 billion dollar investment over five years. And we will introduce new restrictions on the commercial marketing of food and beverages to children and establish new front-of-package labelling to promote healthy food choices. Our Liberal party recognizes that fruits and vegetables can contribute to a healthy, balanced diet. Any nutrition guidance put forward by our party will be based on sound evidence and science.

### **Is your party committed to providing federal funding and resources to support the reduction of food loss and waste across the supply chain?**

In our platform, we have committed to build upon our Food Waste Reduction Challenge to create a new No-Waste Food Fund to help build a circular food economy in Canada where no food is wasted, from farm to table. The fund will help all players along the food supply chain to commercialize and adopt ways to eliminate, reduce, or repurpose food waste.

### **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?**

Our Liberal party understands that there exists a significant tension in retailer-supplier relations. That's why our Liberal government formed, together with Provincial governments, a Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Retail Fees to examine the impact of retail fees and a Food Industry Code of Practice. This working group has been in close consultation with industry to understand the different realities faced by the sector. Our party will prioritize solutions identified by the working group and industry which will benefit the entire food supply chain.

### **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?**

We will ensure that the sector grows and is competitive by continuing our strong actions on trade, regulatory reform, and innovation. Due to the Liberal government's strong stance on trade, our Canadian exporters are now connected to 1.5 billion customers in over 50 countries, and have invested over \$1 billion to help exporters access those markets and increase the number of trade commissioners in



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overseas markets. We have also invested in science and innovation, including hiring 75 scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, expanding our Living Labs network, investments in value-added processing through the Agri-Innovate program and the new \$153 million Protein Industries Supercluster to increase the value of Canadian crops and spur new business investments. Beyond these new commitments, we will continue to support new innovations in the fresh produce supply chain through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, and its successor agreement, due to launch April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

**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?**

As the digital economy grows, we have to make sure that Canadian businesses are poised to compete and win. That's why we have a plan to help almost 160,000 small and medium-sized businesses adopt new technologies and digitize their offerings. And we'll create jobs for almost 30,000 young people in the process. We will also move forward with our plan to implement the Canada Digital Adoption Program.

We created the Universal Broadband Fund to connect communities to high-speed internet, and we have invested more than \$8 billion to accelerate the delivery of high-speed internet and wireless service across Canada. That is more funding committed to broadband investments than all previous federal governments, combined. Because of our investments, this year alone over 400,000 more Canadians will have access to high-speed internet. And with our plan, Canada's large national carriers will be required to accelerate the roll-out of wireless and high-speed internet in rural and northern Canada by meeting targets by 2025.

**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?**

We have worked to build strong rural economies through concrete actions, including the creation of a fund to build public transit in rural communities, helping rural and remote communities get off diesel and have cleaner air, building community centres and recreation centres in 97 rural communities, and launching a Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot to bring skilled newcomers to smaller communities and help local economies grow.

We also created new Regional Development Agencies, including PacifiCAN, PrairieCAN, and FedNor and will continue to strengthen all of our RDA's so that rural and small communities have the support they need right where they are.

Beyond our significant investments to connect more rural communities to high-speed rural broadband, we have invested \$4.2 billion National Trade Corridors Fund funds bottlenecks to get our goods to market in





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Canada and international markets, including projects for marine, air, rail and road projects. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Infrastructure Canada has approved 3,600 projects, representing \$9.9 billion in federal investments, and has committed an additional \$17 billion towards public transit, green and inclusive buildings and other community infrastructure projects for a total of 9,700 infrastructure projects since 2015, representing \$38 billion in federal spending. We have invested \$3.7 billion in water and wastewater alone, which included the building or upgrading of 222 wastewater treatment plants. In our platform, we have also committed to create a Pan-Canadian Grid Council to promote infrastructure investments, smart grids, grid integration, and electricity sector innovation with the goal of making Canada the most reliable, cost effective, and carbon-free electricity producer in the world.

### **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?**

Since being elected, we have worked together with the sector to grow our agricultural and agri-food exports to \$74 billion in 2020, which is a 10% increase from the previous year and almost reaches our goal of \$75 billion by 2025. Our aggressive Export Diversification Strategy is backed by investments of over \$1.1 billion, and includes new agricultural trade commissioners and key programs such as CanExport to support the exports of small farm and food businesses. We have also invested heavily in the Canadian Food Inspection agency – this year we increased the CFIA's budget by 5% per year (\$162.6 million over 5 years and \$40 million ongoing) to support activities in 4 key areas; Export Certification to Support Market Access, Oversight of Imports, Domestic Oversight and Surveillance, Digitization. We continue to support the World Trade Organization in upholding a rules-based trading system and enforcing those rules. Since it was launched in 2018, the "Ottawa Group" has helped Canada lead on the world stage, alongside like-minded nations, to champion a predictable and transparent international trade environment. Together, we will continue to help Canadian farmers and food businesses to grow their exports and lead the sustainable relaunch of our economy.

### **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?**

We are continually looking at ways to increase our resources and capacity to serve importers and exporters to more seamlessly access international markets. To that end, we have made substantial investments in the CFIA and through our Export Diversification strategy. In Budget 2021, the government also committed \$38.2 million over five years to Global Affairs Canada for additional resourcing to support Canada's trade control regime. Our Government also enacted, after significant consultation with industry, the Safe Food for Canadians regulations which reduced unnecessary administrative burden on businesses by replacing 14 sets of regulations with one, and will help maintain and grow market access for Canada's agri-food and agricultural sector. We have also invested significantly in reducing our transportation





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bottlenecks. For example, we implemented a \$4.2 billion National Trade Corridors Fund to get our goods to market in Canada and international markets. In Vancouver, Canada's busiest port, the fund is contributing hundreds of millions of dollars to build a more fluid road, rail, and marine gateway.

**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?**

Canada has one of the safest and most trusted food suppliers in the world, thanks in part to our strong regulatory system. But, we know that regulations need to keep up with the pace of business in order to remain competitive. Since 2018, we have been conducting targeted regulatory reviews to identify and eliminate bottlenecks to economic growth. The first round of reviews led to the publication of Regulatory Roadmaps on the high-growth sectors of agri-food and aquaculture, health and bio-sciences, and transportation and infrastructure. We are committed to continually improving our regulations so that they encourage competitiveness in the sector. We are also committed to consulting closely with sector partners to develop and implement beneficial regulatory reforms. To maintain momentum on strengthening Canada's regulatory systems, Budget 2021 proposed up to \$6.1 million over two years, starting in 2021-22, to renew the External Advisory Committee on Regulatory Competitiveness and to continue targeted regulatory reviews.