



CROP PROTECTION PRIORITIES

Canadian fruit and vegetable growers rely on crop protection products, such as pesticides, biopesticides, and beneficial organisms, to ensure not only the health of crops, but also the safety of Canadians and Canada's overall food security. They are used to control diseases, insect pests, weeds, and invasive species that affect the quality and availability of Canadian-grown fruits and vegetables. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is responsible for regulation, registration, and re-evaluation of all crop protection products in Canada, which are thoroughly evaluated for environmental and human health and safety.



..... *Supporting Competitiveness, Food Security, and Sustainability*

Improving the Regulation and Re-evaluation of Crop Protection Products

**ACTION
REQUIRED**

Increase essential funding for the PMRA and their initiatives.

BACKGROUND

- New crop protection products represent innovation in the fruit and vegetable industry but must first be reviewed and registered by PMRA before being used by Canadian growers.
- Canadian growers have lost, and may continue to lose, access to valuable crop protection products, largely due to products being revoked in re-evaluations.
- Over 340 re-evaluations and special reviews are either underway or will commence in the next 5 years.
- The horticulture industry supports a strong science-based approach to pesticide regulation, and as such the PMRA must be supported in order to provide modernized, well informed risk-based assessments on existing and new crop protection products.



- Without the necessary resources (like qualified reviewers and modernized risk assessment tools) to conduct thorough scientific reviews and to support science- and data-based conclusions, decisions can be made that are detrimental to growers and the Canadian economy. This may mean loss of critical crop protection products, delays in accessing new innovation relative to our trading partners, or ultraconservative risk mitigation measures.

Contemporary Data Enables Modernized Regulation and Better Protects Canadians and the Environment

ACTION REQUIRED

BACKGROUND

- The Canadian fruit and vegetable industry supports a modernized approach to the regulatory work of the PMRA. In order for the PMRA to make modern science-based regulatory decisions, they must have up-to-date data to support them. The PMRA cannot generate their own data, however, they are in the best place to administer funding and experimental protocols to address very specific data requirements of the agency.
- Agriculture is an innovative, evolving business. Methods of production change with discovery and technology, and the PMRA is not currently equipped to make regulatory decisions on innovative practices in a timely manner.
- Given that the PMRA is mandated to protect both human health and the environment, risk assessments on water are frequently the driver for revocation of crop protection products, despite the fact that the PMRA does not have access to modern Canadian water monitoring data.

Provide specific funding to the PMRA to acquire data for regulatory improvements to support science-based decisions and to establish and administer a national water monitoring program for pesticide residues.

- The PMRA calculates specific re-entry intervals (REIs) for crop protection products, which dictate the time after which it is safe for humans to re-enter a field after application of a product. Agricultural workers most often wear gloves in the field, but the PMRA does not have data to calculate how protective these gloves are. As a result, the calculated REIs are often inaccurate, and too long to be agronomically feasible. The PMRA requires funding and resources to obtain up-to-date data with which to make modernized regulatory decisions.
- In order to provide critical and robust information for risk assessments and trend analysis, a national surface water monitoring program must exclusively monitor targeted pesticide residues for use by the PMRA. This program may be different than the Canada Water Agency, but if they are to be combined, Environment and Climate Change Canada must work closely with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and PMRA to meet the long term needs of Canadian growers.

Strengthening Canada's Pest Management Centre Drives Competitiveness

ACTION REQUIRED

Provide sufficient budget and resources to PMC to both support new uses of crop protection products and pest management strategies; and address the research backlog caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

- The Pest Management Centre (PMC) under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has successfully demonstrated its ability to work with fruit and vegetable growers on challenging pest management issues. The PMC's grower-supported Minor Use Program has helped register over 2,300 new applications of crop protection products since 2003 and is a critically important resource for Canadian fruit and vegetable growers.
- The PMC also works on the development of integrated pest management solutions and registration of biopesticides through the Pesticide Risk Reduction team. These projects are important for developing innovative alternative management solutions for agricultural pests.
- As crop protection products are lost in PMRA's re-evaluations, PMC can play a critical role in finding suitable pest management alternatives in order to support the competitiveness of Canadian growers.



- Increased funding and resources to the PMC would help address the incredibly high demand for projects. In 2019, there were over 3500 crop/pest problems nominated by Canadian growers, and the PMC had the capacity to take on 37 of these projects. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PMC only had the capacity to accept 10 additional projects.
- A wide variety of crop protection tools in the toolbox are required for Canadian growers to compete with imported produce and ensure Canadian food security. The PMC has an integral role to play in the development and knowledge transfer related to new technology and alternative crop protection strategies. With sufficient resources, the PMC could be utilized to address the crop protection voids left by product revocations resulting from re-evaluation.



About the **Canadian Horticultural Council**

The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) is an Ottawa-based voluntary, not-for-profit, national association that represents fruit and vegetable growers across Canada involved in the production of over 120 different types of crops on over 14,237 farms, with farm cash receipts of \$5.4 billion in 2019. Since 1922, CHC has advocated on important issues that impact Canada's horticultural sector, promoting healthy, safe and sustainable food, and ensuring the continued success and growth of our industry.

www.hortcouncil.ca