



Liberal Party of Canada

350 Albert Street, Suite 920
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Parti libéral du Canada

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

September 13, 2021

Canadian Horticultural Council

Via email: jboswell@hortcouncil.ca

Dear Rebecca Lee,

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,

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1. Will your party commit to tabling and adopting the draft Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Products Protection Act to establish a limited statutory deemed trust that protects produce growers and sellers during bankruptcy in Canada?

A re-elected Liberal government would continue to be a close ally to the fruit and vegetable sector, with an aim to help 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.

2. Will your party commit to providing a \$5 million budget increase, with appropriate inflationary increases annually, to the Pest Management Centre (PMC)?

We understand the need for resources and capacity so that scientific agencies can make science-based decisions in close communication with horticulture growers in Canada. While previous Conservative Governments have a record of cutting science capacity across the Government of Canada, our Liberal Government has a strong record of restoring lost capacity and making significant new investments in agri-food science. Recently, in August, we announced an investment of \$50 million towards Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's pest management research, to be supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada. \$42 million will be invested over three years in the Health Canada's PMRA to further strengthen its human and environmental health and safety oversight and protection, including improving the availability of independent data to further support pesticide review decisions, and the transparency of decision-making. A further \$7 million will be invested to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and \$1 million to Environment and Climate Change Canada in supporting work, to accelerate the research, development and adoption of alternative pest management solutions. We are committed to working with industry to ensure we have the scientific capacity to support the initiatives of our agri-food industry partners.

3. Will your party encourage science-based harmonization of phytosanitary requirements and Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) with our trading partners to ease technical barriers to trade?

A re-elected Liberal government would continue working with our allies to promote regulatory approaches that facilitate trade while helping Canada's agricultural sector to bring safe, high-quality



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products to international markets. We set a goal of increasing annual agri-food exports to C\$75 billion by 2025, and last year we reached \$74 billion in agri-food trade. Our Liberal Government has been a champion for Canadian farmers and food businesses in promoting science-based and rules-based international trade, and we expect our trading partners to do as well. We know how important it is for the World Trade Organization to uphold a rules- and science-based trading system and to enforce those rules. Since we launched it 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 based on rules and science. We will continue to champion the value of science-based trade with our allies and trading partners, so that we can grow our exports and help feed the world.

4. Will your party provide immediate funding to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to administer a national water monitoring program?

A re-elected Liberal government will continue to ensure scientific agencies have the capacity they need and that we are protecting our environment, most notably our precious water resources. We will invest \$42 million over three years in Health Canada's PMRA to further strengthen its human and environmental health and safety oversight and protection, including improving the availability of independent data to further support pesticide review decisions, and the transparency of decision-making. Besides this, we are also launching a Canada Water Agency to improve the management of freshwater in Canada. To that end, the Canada Water Agency will work closely with both Environment and Climate Change Canada, who currently coordinate national water monitoring programs, well as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

5. Will your party commit to providing the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) with access to critical pesticide use data for the purpose of re-evaluations?

A re-elected Liberal Government will continue with the investment of \$50 million towards the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), which is designed to give them access to better pesticide use data for the purpose of re-evaluations. We will continue working closely with the sector to ensure this agency has the capacity to fulfill their mandate to make evidence-based decisions on the re-evaluation of pesticides.

6. How would your party address the development of an Agriculture and Agri-Food Labour Strategy?

Since COVID-19 struck Canada 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



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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.

7. Will your party commit to implementing a Recognized Employer Program to help streamline and standardize Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) applications?

As detailed in our platform we will create a Trusted Employer program and help to increase the mobility of workers. We will continue working closely with the sector to ensure that the Temporary Foreign Worker program is as streamlined as possible, while protecting the health and safety of workers.

8. What does your party see as the biggest gap in Canada's Business Risk Management suite of programs, and what steps would you take to improve them?

A re-elected Liberal Government will continue fighting for improved business risk management so that farmers are well-supported to deal with the many risks they face. In our platform, we have committed to work with provinces, territories, and farmers, including Indigenous and young farmers—to update business risk management agriculture programs to fully integrate climate risk management, environmental practices, and climate readiness. Earlier this year, when we launched the consultation for the new federal-provincial-territorial cost-shared agreement, we said clearly that we need to be more focused on addressing the risk of climate change, supporting farmers to mitigate those risks, and setting targets to work towards together. We have already proven our capacity to lead on this file when we led provinces to remove the reference margin limit from the AgriStability program, which was introduced by the Conservatives in 2012 and contributed to a steep decline in program participation. That change alone has led to an increase in the estimated payout of \$95 million per year from AgriStability from farmers who need it the most. We were also there, along with the provinces, to support producers facing the drought by committing half a billion in federal AgriRecovery drought relief funding. Our federal offer to increase the AgriStability compensation rate from 70% to 80% still stands, pending approval by conservative provincial prairie governments.

9. What steps will your government take to recognize best practices already being undertaken by the industry, and how will your government ensure farmers are able to take advantage of green technology?

We are 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



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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. A Liberal Government would move forward with our plan to rebate farmers for the price on pollution related to propane and natural gas– the first payments expected this year are estimated to be \$100 million and they would increase over time. This builds upon the other exemptions already in place for farm fuels under the federal pollution pricing model. We will also move forward on 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.

10. Would your party support the development of a National Index on Agri-Food Performance, and how would this be used to highlight the leadership of Canadian growers as sustainable producers?

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 CHC have to support this initiative.

11. What steps will your party take to ensure market access for Canada's fruit and vegetable products?

We will continue to look for ways to increase our resources and capacity to serve exporters to access international markets more seamlessly. 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 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. We have also invested significantly in reducing our transportation 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. Together, we will continue to help Canadian farmers and food businesses to grow their exports and lead the sustainable relaunch of our economy.

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12. Would your party prioritize the removal of grade inspections for potatoes and onions traded between Canada and the United States? In the interim, would your party ensure the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has sufficient resources to provide services that are quicker, more flexible, and better adapted to marketing practices.

We are ready to work with horticulture growers to resolve issues related to grade inspections for potatoes and onions traded between Canada and the United States. Unlike the Conservatives who have a record of cutting the CFIA, we 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. Our Liberal 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.