

April 21st, 2020

Hello everyone,



I am sending you this note in an effort to keep you up to date on CFA's COVID-19 pandemic mitigation efforts for Canadian producers. Please visit [CFA's COVID-19 Resource Page](#) which is continually updated with information relevant to farmers.

Last week, CFA held a [Virtual Press Conference](#) to detail the impacts of COVID-19 on Canadian agriculture and also to call on government to make food production the #2 priority in Canada, second only to health-care. It was a large step to take, and while CFA does not mean to cause panic about food insecurity, we felt like there was no other option as our sector is at a tipping point where the consequences of a lack of meaningful support from our federal government will

impact our domestic food supply.

As Farmers make crop and animal production plans for 2020, we need to feel confident that we will not go broke due to COVID impacts on our farms and the food supply chain, that instead government has our backs. Possible reductions of processing capacity, uncertainty of availability season-long labour and a lack of substantive safety net programs are just some of the things that are keeping farmers from feeling secure in making further investments in farming activities. We are working diligently with the Federal Government in an effort to get Canadian agriculture the support it needs. Media pick-up has been very strong for our press conference, and we hope this will further push the government to take bold action to maintain Canada's Agri-Food sector.

CFA is asking the government for four large items to help support the sector:

- An Emergency Preparedness Fund to assist farmers in dealing with expenses and obstacles from COVID-19.
- To fix Business Risk Management programs so that they are responsive to farmer's needs.
- To help farmers and food processors access personal protective equipment to keep them and their staff safe.
- To develop a program to incentivize unemployed Canadians to work on farms.

I encourage you to write your MP urging them to prioritize food production be the #2 priority behind health-care. We are seeing other sectors, such as Canadian Arts and Sports, receive \$500 million while Canadian Agriculture receives \$50 million to help deal with the costs to isolate the workers we need to feed this country. Farmers in the US have received \$50 billion to help deal with the impacts of COVID-19. It is beyond frustrating to see our industry, that is both foundational and integral to the long term success of our country, seems to be largely ignored.

There is no regional or rural/urban divide when it comes to food. Every Canadian needs food every day, and its consistent, affordable abundance for the past several decades has let people become complacent about where their food comes from. It seems difficult for the average Canadian to understand the food sector's current situation and urgent need. But through grassroots efforts we hope to show our political decision-makers that domestic food security is a priority for all of Canada.

We urge you to continue to take part in our bi-weekly surveys, found on the [front page of our website every week](#). These surveys are integral to making sure we are aware of any issues, current or upcoming, related to COVID-19.

Thank you,
Mary Robinson, CFA President