

Canada's National Pathways

Toward healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food systems

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CANADIAN CONTEXT AND VISION

Food systems, including the way food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed, and disposed of, have direct impacts on the lives of people and the planet. Canada's food systems are integral to the wellbeing of communities across the country; robust and resilient food systems support public health, environmental sustainability, and economic growth.

Overall, Canada's food systems are strong. However, it is challenged by a number of recent shocks: the COVID-19 pandemic exposed and deepened inequities; floods, fire, drought, hurricanes and other natural disasters exacerbated fragilities; wars on other continents have contributed to a global food crisis; and, rising inflation is putting pressure on the budgets of many Canadian households resulting in missed meals and use of food banks. While the genesis for the UN Food Systems Summit was to accelerate action among world leaders towards achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, recent events underscore the urgent need for collective action to make positive change in the near-term and take steps to ensure food systems are more sustainable, inclusive and resilient over the longer term.

A Food Policy for Canada

In 2019, the Government of Canada launched the Food Policy for Canada (Food Policy), bringing together diverse perspectives to help shape Canada's food systems. This included engagement led by Indigenous organizations to advance distinctions-based and self-determined food systems, and consultation with Canadians, including participation directly with citizens, civil society organizations, and businesses involved in food systems. The Food Policy is Canada's vision for a healthier and more sustainable food system – one that builds on a robust agenda to support growth for harvesters, farmers, producers, and food businesses in Canada and ensures a sustainable and accessible food supply for consumers. It is also the foundation for increased integration and coordination of food-related policies and programs.

Food Policy for Canada Vision Statement

All people in Canada are able to access a sufficient amount of safe, nutritious, and culturally diverse food. Canada's food system is resilient and innovative, sustains our environment and supports our economy.

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Decisions about food are made by individuals, organizations, and at all levels of government. Broader linkages and collaboration with all actors in Canada's food systems increase collective capacity and effectiveness to achieve positive health, social, economic, and environmental outcomes. These linkages can help build healthier and more sustainable food systems that support communities and the economy, and are responsive to unique regional contexts. A central piece of the Food Policy for Canada is the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council whose membership brings together diverse expertise and lived experience to provide advice on food system challenges and opportunities. Members that serve on the Council are not representatives of the federal government. Rather, they are individuals with backgrounds in the public sector, food industry, academia or non-profit organizations, who contribute social, environmental, health, and economic perspectives.

All orders of government are taking actions to address food system issues, for example, through: income support programs that improve Canadians' access to essentials, including nutritious food; policies to improve food environments for Canadians to make healthier food choices; initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including in the agriculture and food sector, to mitigate negative environmental impacts; and investments in adaptation and innovation to build climate resilience and increase the agriculture and food sector's capacity to produce high-quality food. Coordination across federal government seeks to enable food-related policies to achieve mutually reinforcing goals.

A major cornerstone of agricultural programming and collaboration between the federal government and provinces and territories is the \$3.5-billion, five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP), which came into effect April 1, 2023. Sustainable CAP will position the sector for continued success as a world leader in agriculture that is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable. Sustainable CAP will also enable the sector to continue feeding Canadians and a growing population at a time when rising costs and global food security are significant concerns.

While a wide range of actions are underway, more needs to be done, and urgently. Reports indicate that one in 10 Canadian households experience moderate or severe food insecurity due to economic constraints;¹

almost two in three Canadian adults are overweight or obese;² and, over a third of Canada's food supply is never eaten.³ In addition, multiple crises over the last two years have shown us that food systems are vulnerable to shocks, such as political conflict, increasingly impactful weather events and the cost-of-living crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has

¹ Statistics Canada. [Table 13-10-0834-01 Food insecurity by economic family type](#)

² Public Health Agency of Canada (2017). "Tackling Obesity in Canada: Obesity and Excess Weight Rates in Canadian Adults". [Tackling Obesity in Canada: Obesity and Excess Weight Rates in Canadian Adults - Canada.ca](#).

³ NZWC (National Zero Waste Council). (2018). *A Food Loss and Waste Strategy for Canada*. Vancouver (BC): NZWC.

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exacerbated food system inequities and vulnerabilities, and threatened livelihoods around the world, leading to growing food insecurity. At the same time, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is having serious consequences for global food security with impacts felt along the supply chain from productive inputs, such as fertilizer, to shipments of food staples around the world. War, pandemic and other factors have resulted in inflation, driving up prices all along the food chain that are having severe effects around the world, and causing the highest food price inflation Canada has experienced in decades.⁴ This global and domestic context sharpens our awareness of threats and opportunities, and shines a light on acute societal and environmental challenges requiring collaboration and multi-faceted solutions. A comprehensive vision for the future of food systems around the world is needed more than ever to meet domestic and international targets that will provide economic, social and environmental sustainability for future generations.

Approach to the UN Food Systems Summit and National Pathway Document

The Food Policy is based on extensive multi-stakeholder engagement, under the unifying theme of “Everyone at the Table!”. Principles of inclusion and diversity, reconciliation, collaboration, innovation, sustainability, and evidence and accountability guided the engagement process and the development of the policy. These same principles laid the foundation for Canada’s engagement in the UN Food Systems Summit (UN FSS), including our approach to the UN FSS dialogue process.

Over 360 organizations and stakeholders participated in Canada’s eight Member State Dialogues, held between April and June 2021, including representation from across Canada’s food systems, such as academia, civil society, the food and agriculture industry (including farmers, fishers, other producers and food processors); and Indigenous, federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments and organizations. Additionally, several Independent Dialogues were convened by individuals or organizations, independent from the federal government. The Dialogues’ organizers developed questions with a food systems lens for participants to use as a launching point for discussion on potential commitments and actions for Canada in support of achieving the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Dialogues focused attention on the strengths and weaknesses of Canada’s food systems, and on interconnected issues, such as sustainable practices, climate change adaptation and local food production, and the nexus around food insecurity, land use, and Indigenous rights.

⁴ Statistics Canada (2022). “Behind the Numbers: What’s Causing Growth in Food Prices”. Accessed on January 10, 2023. [Behind the Numbers: What’s Causing Growth in Food Prices \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/26-264-x/2022001/article/00001-eng.htm)

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Sustainable food systems can help achieve critical progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Food security goes beyond the production and supply of food, and includes the physical and economic ability to access food, availability of food that is nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate, and knowledge of food skills and nutrition.

To ensure sustainable food production systems, climate resilient agricultural practices are needed that increase productivity and production, simultaneously help maintain ecosystems, strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality. The imperative to address climate change will impact all sectors of our economy. Agriculture and fishing are no exception and are anticipated to be impacted by a changing climate more so than most industries. At the same time, food production is a contributor to GHG emissions and needs to be part of the solution to slow global warming and restore the environment.

All countries face their own unique food security challenges, with different factors affecting food security at the community and household level. In Canada, food insecurity cuts across demographics and geography, and action is needed to address the diverse challenges faced by its most affected populations, particularly Inuit, remote First Nations and Métis communities, and Indigenous communities in general.

PATHWAYS TOWARD PROGRESS

The Pathways outlined below consider issues and include commitments identified by participants in Member State Dialogues, Independent Dialogues, and through an online public consultation inviting comments on a draft document (from April to May 2022). Pathways capture initiatives already underway and build on new initiatives to promote positive change in Canada's food systems, and apply a food systems lens towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Food Policy for Canada's vision.

Canada's National Pathways are also intended to be forward-looking, in support of healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food systems. The Pathways are situated within the context of an emerging process to renew the Food Policy for Canada, and consider ideas that were proposed through Canada's UN FSS Dialogues. This document and its outcomes do not replace or duplicate other existing policy instruments, programming or reporting; instead, it accounts for and clarifies the steps being taken through various avenues to support stronger, more resilient food systems.

Eliminating Hunger and Reducing Food Insecurity

There are many factors that contribute towards a stable, accessible, affordable, and nutritious food supply and national food security. This pathway pertains to reducing hunger and household food insecurity (a narrower concept than food security). Other aspects of food security, including the promotion of sustainable production and local food economies,

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strengthening Indigenous food systems, access to healthy food, and robust domestic production and international trade - are discussed in other Pathways.

At its core, in Canada, food insecurity is a function of economic security, measured as a household's ability to afford food in the context of their overall budget. Those living in the lowest income quintiles report the highest rates of marginal, moderate and severe food insecurity.⁵ Household food insecurity is a sensitive marker of material deprivation and is exacerbated by compounding systemic inequalities. Further, food security is a key social determinant of health. Lack of access to sufficient and nutritious foods is associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, including malnutrition and poor mental health, as well as an increased likelihood of hospitalization for many conditions.⁶

Household income, the main source of a household's income (e.g. social assistance, wages), and home ownership are strongly correlated with household food insecurity⁷. Data from the 2021 Canadian Income Survey show that just over one in 10 Canadians (12.9%) reported moderate or severe household food insecurity in 2021. This number rises to 18.4% when mild food insecurity is included⁸. Data from the same survey also show that the burden of household food insecurity is not distributed evenly among people in Canada with moderate and severe food insecurity being the highest in female lone-parent (34.1%), and Indigenous of all ages (25.5%) and Black (27.2%) households⁹.

Indigenous populations experience higher rates of poverty and food insecurity. A cross-Canada participatory study of First Nations communities found that, on average across all regions over a 10-year period, 38.3% of First Nations households on-reserve experienced moderate or severe food insecurity.¹⁰ In 2017, 76% of Inuit aged 15 and over living in Inuit Nunangat were experiencing food insecurity when taking into account "marginal," "low," and "very low" food security rates.¹¹

⁵ Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

⁶ Pourmotabbed, A., Moradi, S., Babaei, A., Ghavami, A., Mohammadi, H., Jalili, C., Miraghajani, M. (2020). Food insecurity and mental health: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Public Health Nutrition*, 23(10), 1778-1790. doi:10.1017/S136898001900435X. See also: Karla L Hanson, Leah M Connor, Food insecurity and dietary quality in US adults and children: a systematic review, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 100, Issue 2, August 2014, Pages 684–692, <https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.114.084525>

⁷ Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

⁸ Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310083401>

⁹ Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310083501>

¹⁰ Indigenous Services Canada. First Nations and Inuit Health Branch-funded First Nations Food Nutrition and Environment Study (2008-2018). <https://link.springer.com/article/10.17269/s41997-021-00491-x>

¹¹ Aboriginal Peoples' Survey (2017).

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Canada has made some progress to address the income-based drivers of food insecurity. Canada offers a number of robust and targeted social programs and income supplements. These include the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), which provides substantial income support to families raising children. In the 2020-2021 benefit year, the CCB provided support to about 3.5 million families and over 6 million children, putting over \$25 billion, tax free, in the hands of Canadian families. Most families receiving the maximum CCB amounts are single-parent families, with over 90% of them being single mothers. The Canada Workers Benefit (CWB) supplements the earnings of low-income earners to help them receive more income and encourage more of them to join and stay in the workforce. For Canadian seniors, the Old Age Security (OAS) program plays a significant role in providing income security. OAS recipients who receive little to no income, other than this pension, are eligible for additional assistance through the Guaranteed Income Supplement. These programs provide cash supports to many Canadians, enabling them to decide how to spend their money, reduce their financial burdens, and improve their access to essentials, including food.

Results from the 2021 Canadian Income Survey (CIS) show that Canada's overall poverty rate, based on Canada's Official Poverty Line, decreased from 14.5% in 2015 to 7.4% in 2021. In 2022, however, Canadians were faced with rapidly increasing costs of living, driven by increased shelter and food costs. Rising costs combined with a slow growth rate in income suggests that some families could fall behind.¹² In September 2022, the Prime Minister announced a set of new measures to provide some relief from the rising cost of living through tax rebates to Canadians who need it most, a one-time top up to Canadian renters struggling with the cost of housing and a dental care support for families with children.¹³ Recently, Budget 2023 announced a one-time Grocery Rebate to provide new, targeted inflation relief to low- and modest-income Canadians and families.

Canada will continue to work with stakeholders and partners towards the commitment in Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy - Opportunity for All - to achieve a 50% reduction in poverty by 2030 relative to 2015 levels. The Strategy recognizes that poverty and food insecurity are linked. Food insecurity is an indicator on the Poverty Reduction Strategy's dimensions of poverty hub under the "dignity" pillar. Further, while Canada has been monitoring household food insecurity in Canada since 2005 via the Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada has introduced an annual food insecurity measure in the Canadian Income Survey to improve timely data collection and analysis of household food insecurity within an income context. Further to this, Statistics Canada's [disaggregated data action plan](#) is another positive development which could contribute to more inclusive data collection that can strengthen existing initiatives and identify new opportunities to target those who will benefit the most and reduce food insecurity.

¹² Statistics Canada (2023) [The Daily — Canadian Income Survey, 2021 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

¹³ [Making life more affordable for Canadians this year | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](#)

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Reducing Food Loss and Waste

Food loss and waste occurs throughout food value chains from farm to fork, creating unnecessary economic, environmental, and social burdens across global food systems, including in Canada. The United Nations estimates that 14% of total global food production is lost between harvest and distribution¹⁴ and 17% is wasted in retail, food service and households.¹⁵ In Canada, it is estimated that avoidable food loss and waste is worth \$49.5 billion annually.¹⁶ Food waste also represents the single largest percentage (23%) of Canadian municipal solid waste disposed.¹⁷

Dialogue participants identified many factors contributing to food loss and waste throughout the food system, including: lack of awareness of the issue; limits on quantification; operational inefficiencies; misalignment among supply chain actors; inadequate transportation, and storage; lack of clarity with regards to durable life date labelling; as well as household consumption patterns.

A collaborative approach is needed to prevent food loss and waste while maintaining the highest standards of food safety and avoiding unintended consequences of shifting the problem up- or down-stream in the supply chain. Where prevention is not feasible, there are missed economic and social opportunities when food is discarded, as well as environmental consequences, such as landfill methane emissions.

Reducing food loss and waste through prevention and diversion across Canada's food systems is a key priority. The Government of Canada has invested over \$100 million in initiatives to prevent and divert food loss and waste, through programs such as: the Food Waste Reduction Challenge which supports innovative business models and technological solutions; the Low Carbon Economy Fund which supports organics recycling infrastructure projects; and the Surplus Food Rescue Program, which redistributed eight million kilograms of food from disrupted supply chains to help meet growing demand at food banks and community food organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Canada is also working towards cutting food loss and waste in federal facilities across the country, for example by donating fresh fruits and vegetables from agriculture research centres to local charities¹⁸ and diverting at least 75% by weight of non-hazardous operational waste from landfills by 2030.¹⁹

¹⁴ <https://www.fao.org/policy-support/policy-themes/food-loss-food-waste/en/>

¹⁵ Food Waste Index Report 2021, United Nations Environment Programme, 2021.

¹⁶ The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste: Technical Report, Second Harvest and VCMI, 2019.

¹⁷ National Waste Characterization Report, Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2020

¹⁸ <https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/agri-info/good-news-grows/donation-innovation-leanne-wilson-kick-starts-government-effort-reinvent-food-donation>

¹⁹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/innovation/greening-government/strategy.html>

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Canada's agriculture and food sector is beginning to include food loss and waste reduction in operational processes and corporate responsibility efforts. Several provincial and territorial governments (for example, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec) and municipalities are also taking action, by introducing consumer awareness and education campaigns, setting targets and taking action to divert organic waste, such as food waste, from landfills. For example, the Government of Canada's Smart Cities Challenge has supported the Our Food Future initiative that is working with the Guelph and Wellington County municipal governments and collaborators to create Canada's first circular food economy, which has helped divert over 6,400 tonnes of food waste from landfill in its first two years.

To build on actions to date, Canada has committed to launch a No-Waste Food Fund to help all players along the food supply chain to commercialize and adopt ways to eliminate, reduce or repurpose food waste. The new No-Waste Food Fund could help Canada make progress towards a more circular food economy that conceives of food systems as closed-loop systems rather than as a linear "take-make-dispose" model.²⁰ Building on lessons learned from the Food Waste Reduction Challenge, a circular economy approach can help design food loss and waste out of the system by preventing it at the source, recovering value through alternate uses, and diverting any residual waste away from environmentally harmful disposal streams. Areas of focus could explore enabling actors along the food supply chain to commercialize innovations and adopt technologies and practices to eliminate, reduce, or repurpose food loss and waste.

We also heard from dialogue participants that there is more that the federal government can do to play a leadership role in driving system-wide food loss and waste reduction. This could include establishing a consistent and transparent approach to defining, measuring, and monitoring food loss and waste, building collective commitment through specific reduction targets, and supporting hubs or networks to facilitate cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships. The Government of Canada intends to build on this dialogue and explore options towards the development of a federal approach to better coordinate efforts across government to address food loss and waste.

Strengthening Indigenous Food Systems

Canada recognizes and supports Indigenous approaches to food systems as a way of life that is important for culture, spirituality, health, identity and well-being. This aligns with the Government of Canada's commitments to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, to support rights of Indigenous Peoples to participate in traditional food practices, to better integrate traditional knowledge into planning and policy decisions, and to support food system self-determination (Indigenous food sovereignty). Food has an important role in the trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples through

²⁰ https://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/SmartCities_Booklet.pdf (PDF)

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colonization and the residential school system. In seeking to make more meaningful progress on the path of reconciliation, the current COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to support sustainable, longer-term solutions for distinctions-based and self-determined approaches to food security and food sovereignty.

The Government of Canada will continue to work with Indigenous governments, organizations and communities to co-develop policies, programs, and initiatives that increase food security on and off reserve and support food sovereignty, such as local planning and infrastructure for community harvesting, processing, storage and transportation of foods; increasing the availability of reasonably-priced fresh healthy food in remote communities; and other initiatives focused on nutrition and access to food. Improved data collection, led by First Nation, Inuit, and Métis partners, could help advance understanding of place-based needs and scalable Indigenous-led food system initiatives, and provide valuable information to help guide policies and planning.

Indigenous-led food initiatives, such as the Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy, make an important contribution to improving Indigenous food systems and food security. In 2019, through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee, Canada and Inuit established the Inuit-Crown Food Security Working Group to provide a whole-of-government approach to the issue of food insecurity, leveraging the contribution of multiple federal departments and agencies as well as Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the four regional Land Claim Organizations, Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, and the National Inuit Youth Council. Anchored in poverty reduction, the Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy aims to end hunger and advance Inuit food sovereignty throughout Inuit Nunangat by: creating a common national understanding of the prevalence and drivers of Inuit food security; identifying Inuit driven policy solutions; and coordinating measurable actions. The Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy is aligned with the outcomes and deliverables identified in the current Inuit-Crown Health and Wellness Work Plan, approved by federal ministers and Inuit leaders.

Many Indigenous Peoples in Canada live in remote areas where traditional knowledge systems, creativity, adaptability, and innovation have been key to survival and success. Policy decisions around land use, industrial development, and conservation or habitat protection have important implications for conserving access to traditional foods and maintaining biodiversity. The concept of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) was advanced during the Dialogue process as an innovative solution to address some of these complex and interrelated issues. IPCAs jointly managed by Indigenous people and the federal, provincial or territorial government could provide a meaningful way forward on land use and conservation. Unlike conventional parks or conservation areas, IPCAs preserve the environment through the application of Indigenous knowledge systems and values to enable sustainable harvesting. Canada has established one IPCA, the Edézhzie Protected Area, through the Nature Legacy Program, ensuring that the relationships

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between the Dehcho Dene peoples and the lands of Edézhíe are maintained for present and future generations. The Edézhíe Protected Area is 14,218 square kilometers, covering an area more than twice the size of Banff National Park. Twenty seven additional communities are receiving funding through the Nature Legacy Program to establish IPCAs in locations across the country, while another 25 are receiving funding to support early planning and engagement that could result in additional IPCAs.²¹

Traditional country foods that are produced outside of commercial markets have an important place in Indigenous-led food systems, as well as for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nations people living in urban settings. In recognition of the value of these traditional food items to Indigenous Peoples, Statistic Canada has actively engaged with the governments of these territories to have the cost of these items included in the development of poverty measures in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Actions to support traditional food include a \$40-million investment by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs in the Harvesters Support Grant to increase access to country foods by providing funding to support traditional hunting, harvesting and food sharing in isolated communities. The Harvesters Support Grant was developed in direct collaboration with Indigenous partners and respects the inherent hunting and harvesting rights of Indigenous people in Canada. Additionally, Indigenous Services Canada's Climate Change Health Adaptation Program supports community-led projects that address health impacts of climate change in First Nations and Inuit communities, with approximately half of the projects addressing food insecurity due to the close connection between climate change and access to traditional country foods. With regards to traditional fisheries, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) issues Food, Social, and Ceremonial Fishing Licenses, allowing designated Indigenous harvesters to catch what is needed for themselves and/or their community. DFO evaluates and consults with the Indigenous communities affected in any given area on any potential changes to these licenses. In institutional settings, the challenge to comply with national food safety regulations can restrict or prevent the serving of traditional foods in schools, long-term care facilities, and other facilities where Indigenous people could benefit from their consumption. As part of Canada's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a feasibility assessment led by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food and other departments, is underway to respond to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's request for action to address legislative barriers to the processing, sale and trade of country foods, domestically and internationally. Federal and Inuit partners have agreed to work towards a collaborative approach to advance this priority, which also could contribute to realizing the Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy.

Enabling participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in market-based value chains can also strengthen Indigenous food systems and food security. Agriculture and Agri-Food

²¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/nature-legacy/indigenous-leadership-funding.html>

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Canada (AAFC) offers programs and services to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis who have projects or opportunities they would like to pursue in the agriculture and food sector. For example, the AgriDiversity program is a \$5-million initiative to help under-represented groups in Canadian agriculture, including youth, women, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities to fully participate in the sector. The innovative Indigenous Pathfinder Service is a one-on-one service which connects Indigenous people with AAFC staff who will listen to project ideas and suggest next steps, discuss available agriculture-related programs, services and funding, provide referrals to an industry, trade or scientific expert, and make connections with other FPT support across the country to help move the idea or project to reality.

Reducing dependence on the southern food industry and supporting local, community-led food initiatives also helps to increase food security across Canada's provinces and territories. The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) is implementing the Northern Isolated Community Initiatives, a five-year, \$15-million investment that supports community-led projects for local and Indigenous food production systems with an emphasis on innovative and practical solutions to increase food security across the North.

Access to safe drinking water on- and off-reserve continues to be a critical area for urgent action. In Canada, the responsibility for water management is shared among FPT, and municipal governments, and in some instances, with territories and Indigenous governments under self-government agreements. This shared responsibility necessitates close cooperation and collaboration among all levels of government, Indigenous Peoples, and the public. Canadian provinces and one of the territories (Yukon) have the primary jurisdiction over most areas of water management and protection while federal jurisdiction includes responsibilities for managing water in First Nations reserves, as well as two of Canada's three territories (Nunavut and Northwest Territories). Since 2015, \$5.2 billion has been invested in 611 projects in First Nations communities, leading to the lifting of 357 drinking water advisories (including 139 long-term advisories). As of May 2023, 31 long-term drinking water advisories are in effect in 27 communities. Actions to resolve a water or wastewater issue can include: feasibility studies; new system design work; interim repairs on existing systems; permanent repairs to existing infrastructure; construction of new infrastructure; and, improved training and monitoring. The decision to lift a long-term drinking water advisory lies with a community's chief and council, based on recommendations from environmental public health officers.²²

²² Government of Canada, Indigenous Services Canada (July 2022): [Ending long-term drinking water advisories \(sac-isc.gc.ca\)](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca)

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Advancing Environmentally Sustainable Production

Agriculture, fishing and agri-food production is a major economic contributor, supporting jobs and healthy communities across Canada. In 2022, the agriculture and agri-food system generated \$143.8 billion in revenue, accounting for 7 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product. It provided one in nine jobs in Canada, employing approximately 2.3 million people. [Canada is the fifth-largest exporter of agri-food and seafood in the world, exporting approximately \\$92.8 billion in agriculture and food products to over 200 countries in 2022.](#) Canada is the fifth-largest exporter of agri-food and seafood in the world, exporting approximately \$92.8 billion in agriculture and food products to over 200 countries in 2022. With the global population set to increase to 9.7 billion by 2050, Canada's ability to continue producing food is critical to food security.

Increasingly, climate change is affecting the way Canada can produce food due to more frequent and severe weather events that have a considerable impact on agricultural production, including damage to crops, livestock, and infrastructure, and increased vulnerability to pests and disease. This threatens food security and the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers. Canada's engagement in the UN FSS process surfaced a number of approaches for addressing these challenges and supporting environmentally sustainable production practices within the context of growing demands for nutritious food and supporting farmer livelihoods and strong rural communities. Calls were made to invest in innovation that would support the industry, for example: research into crops with enhanced root mass and cattle feed that reduces GHG emissions; expanding the use of precision agriculture; and supporting cross-compliance between sustainability programs. Stakeholders and partners identified multiple environmental, social and economic benefits, including: revitalizing and protecting biodiversity and soil health, the responsible use of chemical inputs for food production and food safety, reducing food loss and waste, and strengthening rural livelihoods - while building resilience in the context of climate change.

In Canada, farmers manage 189,874 farms on 62.2 million hectares of land. Overall, these farmers have considerably improved the sustainability of their soil management practices on land used for crops and grazing, for example, through no-till or conservation tillage techniques, restoring degraded land, using legumes and grasses in cover crops, using rotational grazing, and planting trees and shrubs as shelterbelts. In the early 1990s, agricultural soils sequestered more carbon than was emitted. This achievement was the result of a strong commitment to address soil degradation.

Over the past twenty years, increased production, as measured by real agricultural GDP, has not been accompanied by proportional increases in GHG emissions. Sectoral emission intensity (the ratio of net emissions to real GDP) has been decreasing (by 43% from 1997 to 2019) while production has almost doubled in the last 20 years. Total emissions, which declined in the late 1990s and early 2000s, have increased since 2005 meaning overall,

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emissions are roughly the same as they were two decades ago. What drives GHG intensity is complex. While drivers may include farmers adopting management practices and technologies that make agricultural production more efficient and environmentally sustainable, other factors, such as shifts in market forces (e.g. changes in consumer demand from red meat to poultry or from meat to plant protein) along with large changes in market structure also play a role.

Agriculture contributes 10% towards Canada's total national economic sector emissions. This value accounts for emissions from crop and livestock production and on-farm fuel use, but does not include carbon sequestration in agricultural soils which is reported separately. The sector is also one of the main sources of methane emissions, contributing 31% to Canada's total methane emissions in 2021.²³ Continued innovation, development and adoption of on-farm 'climate-smart' and agro-ecological practices and technologies have the potential to improve on-farm efficiencies, achieve further emission reductions and increase carbon storage, while also promoting other environmental co-benefits (i.e. biodiversity, water and soil health), and ensuring Canadian agriculture can continue to provide the world with safe and high-quality food. Increasing circularity in the agri-food sector can also help to strengthen local food economies in Canada while contributing to climate solutions.²⁴ In the context of increasing global ambition to address climate, biodiversity, and other environmental challenges, the Government of Canada has developed several broad strategies to frame action on the environment and climate. [Government of Canada measures that support environment and climate outcomes](#) in the agriculture sector provides an overview of these and other measures that support environment and climate outcomes in the agriculture sector.

In March 2022, the Government of Canada established the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan: Clean Air, Strong Economy, which provides a sector-by-sector roadmap to identify climate action and strategies for Canada to reach its 2030 emissions target of 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and a pathway for net-zero emissions by 2050. The Plan builds on existing initiatives announced under Canada's Strengthened Climate Plan and the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and outlines existing and proposed new measures that support emissions reductions and sequestration in the agriculture sector. For example, in 2021, Canada launched the 10-year, \$4 billion Natural Climate Solutions Fund (NCSF) to support land management activities that simultaneously provide climate mitigation, biodiversity, and human well-being benefits by protecting, sustainably managing, and restoring natural or modified ecosystems. Under NCSF, AAFC launched the \$200-million On-Farm Climate Action Fund. This fund directly supports GHG emission reductions by accelerating the adoption of practices that improve nitrogen management, increase adoption of cover cropping, and normalize rotational grazing. An additional \$470 million was

²³ 2023 National Inventory Report

²⁴ [Scaling the Climate-Smart Circular Economy \(flippingbook.com\)](#)

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announced in Budget 2022 to top-up, expand, and extend this program, and in Budget 2023 the Government of Canada expanded the program by an additional \$34 million

Additionally, Canada has signed on to the Global Methane Pledge, an international agreement to collectively reduce global anthropogenic methane emissions across sectors by at least 30% from 2020 levels by 2030. As such, Canada announced [*Faster and Further: Canada's Methane Strategy*](#), to further reduce methane emissions from across the economy while supporting Canadian technology and creating good paying jobs. The Government recently also announced its intention to launch a Methane Centre of Excellence for methane detection and elimination.

Sustainable CAP cost-shared funding for programs delivered by provinces and territories was increased by \$500 million to \$2.5 billion, which is up 25% from the previous Canadian Agricultural Partnership. The new funds will advance the five priorities agreed to in the *Guelph Statement* including advancing sustainable agriculture and agri-food and tackling climate change and environment. Sustainable CAP will help support a 3-5 Mt reduction in GHGs; support bee population health; and, support efforts to ensure that emissions reduction from fertilizer or other agricultural sources do not impede Canada's ability to contribute to domestic and global food security, now or into the future. Sustainable CAP also introduces the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program, a \$250-million cost-shared program to help producers conserve and enhance the resiliency of agricultural landscapes. This new program will use an ecological goods and services payment approach to support on-farm adoption. To best support producers with on-farm adoption of beneficial practices while reflecting local conditions and regional needs, the program will be designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

In 2021, AAFC announced \$4.3 million to support Canada's pulse and special crops farmers to meet growing global consumer demand for sustainable, high-quality plant-based protein. By increasing the market for Canadian-made pulse products, these investments encourage more farmers to add the nitrogen-fixing crops into their rotations, thereby increasing residual nitrogen in the soil and reducing the need for synthetic nitrogen fertilizers for subsequent annual grain crops. Canada will continue to enhance the public's trust at home and abroad on the sustainability of Canadian products by communicating best practices and initiatives, highlighting private-sector initiatives such as the Canadian Roundtable on Sustainable Beef which develops standards, enhances collaboration, and certifies producers, or the National Index on Agri-Food Performance which aims to provide benchmarks and support transparency on the environmental, economic, and social performance of Canada's agri-food system.

Canada also remains committed to healthy and sustainable aquatic ecosystems through responsible, science-based fisheries management. The Sustainable Fisheries Framework promotes and ensures precautionary and ecosystem based approaches are used to keep

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fish stocks healthy, protect biodiversity and fisheries habitats, and make sure that fisheries remain productive in order to meet current and future needs. In close collaboration with provinces and territories, Indigenous communities and industry, Canada will continue to prioritize the growth of the blue economy to create opportunities for freshwater and ocean sectors and coastal communities, recognizing that Canada's blue economy must be supported by world-leading efforts to conserve ocean health. This includes protecting, restoring, and rebuilding fish populations through the continued implementation of the modernized Fisheries Act, implementing the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, and developing a conservation strategy for wild Atlantic Salmon populations.

Freshwater ecosystems, such as Canadian lakes and rivers, sustain a vast variety of plant and animal species, supply drinking water for Canadians, and support industries, including agriculture and fisheries. Protecting and conserving Canada's freshwater resources is a key priority for the Government of Canada. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, with the support of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, have been tasked with establishing a Canada Water Agency and implementing a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, including a historic investment to provide funding to protect and restore large lakes and river systems.

In November 2022, the Government released Canada's first [National Adaptation Strategy](#), developed with provincial, territorial and municipal governments, Indigenous Peoples, and other key partners, including youth. The National Adaptation Strategy outlines a shared path and sets common direction for climate resilience in Canada, identifying key priorities for increased collaboration, and establishing a framework for measuring progress at the national level. At the same time, many producers note that adaptation is not only about preparing for extreme weather, but also about exploring opportunities such as enhanced crop diversity and longer growing seasons that could generate positive returns in the sector. To provide an integrated and coordinated approach to improving the agriculture sector's environmental performance and supporting its long-term vitality, Canada is developing a Sustainable Agriculture Strategy in collaboration with a diversity of partners. This Strategy will build on the environmental and innovation successes achieved to date in the sector, leverage opportunities related to increased market focus on sustainable food products, and focus resources to support an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable sector. The Strategy will support the agriculture sector's actions on climate and environment priorities towards 2030 and 2050 – including climate change mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity, water, and soil health while supporting competitiveness, and vitality of the sector. The Strategy is intended to serve as a key resource for all actors in the sector – government, industry, producers, non-governmental organizations, Indigenous peoples, and more – for taking action on environment and climate issues in the agriculture sector while providing the vital role of responding to growing demands for food. Public Consultations were held from December 2022 until end of March 2023. Engagements continue throughout

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the sector, including through the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Advisory Committee, which will run until the end of 2023..

Altogether, the above initiatives are informed by the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) which guides Canada's agriculture and agri-food systems towards sustainability: it is framed around the 17 SDGs; sets out targets; and, outlines implementation strategies for achieving them. The Agri-Environmental Sustainability Index is included in chapter 2, "Support a Healthier and More Sustainable Food System", with the target of achieving a score of 71 or higher by 2030.

The Government of Canada recognizes that Canadian farmers have long been responsible stewards of their land, and that the agriculture sector has demonstrated innovation and ambition in the adoption of sustainable practices and technologies, making significant strides in past years to reduce emissions. Moving forward, farmers and ranchers will remain key partners in developing and implementing solutions to tackle climate change and build resilience with support from the Government of Canada. This will be aided by research and development, and on-farm adoption of nature-based solutions and innovative technologies that build resilience, enable carbon sequestration, reduce GHG emissions, and generate other environmental benefits.

Supporting Local Food Economies and a Strong Workforce

Strengthening local food systems, by advancing opportunities all along the value chain, has the potential to bring wealth and jobs to communities, improve resilience, strengthen networks and social capital, while supporting circular economies that benefit the environment. Local initiatives also have the potential to generate economic and social returns in disadvantaged and marginalized communities, while addressing gaps in access to nutritious, locally produced foods. Feedback was received through the Pathways consultation process that strong local food economies are a key element for food system transformation towards healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food systems, advancing all SDG goals.

Canada invests in context-relevant support for local community food systems that support vibrant communities across the country. For example, the \$60-million Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF), launched under the Food Policy for Canada is aimed at community-based, not-for-profit organizations with a mission to reduce food insecurity by establishing and strengthening local food systems. The LFIF is supporting a wide range of community-led projects that improve access to safe, nutritious, and culturally diverse food, such as greenhouses, community kitchens, projects at food banks, and projects that increase access to traditional foods that are led by Indigenous communities.

Additionally, the AgriCommunication Initiative will contribute to better connecting Canadians with Canada's farmers, and the vital role they play in our food system through two streams.

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The first stream aims to help Canadians better understand how their food is produced. As part of this stream, the AgriCommunications Program is a 3-year, up to \$8-million federal initiative focused on supporting activities which increase appreciation and pride in the contributions of farmers and the food industry and enhance public trust (e.g. regarding origin and production methods). The second stream of the AgriCommunication Initiative will focus on increasing the sector's understanding of consumer preferences and expectations.

In addition to direct investments in local food economies, it is important to consider enabling factors such as the readiness and capacity of regional food actors and the availability of financing and other ecosystem supports. For example, there could be potential benefits to local and regional food systems through the reduction of interprovincial trade barriers and addressing regional supply chain disruptions and bottlenecks. In Atlantic Canada, for example, the economy has many small and medium-sized firms, often located in remote rural areas and with limited access to enabling conditions such as adequate infrastructure, access to skilled workers, and digital connectivity. As such, the importance of regionally tailored capacity-building initiatives that provide the conditions for innovative food economies to grow is recognized. Canada will continue to focus on funding the transportation sector in order to support reliable movement of food, build on local food production and processing to increase resilience, and to work towards the elimination of systemic barriers to entry into the marketplace for underrepresented entrepreneurs (for example Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, racialized groups), with a view to designing initiatives that foster equity and diversity in local food systems.

Food systems can be disrupted at local levels by a multitude of shocks and stressors (natural disasters, disease outbreaks, sudden and increased human migration, supply chain disruptions, financial crises, or other causes) and therefore building resilience and adaptation is key to fostering stability in the system. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified awareness around the importance of essential workers, including temporary foreign workers, throughout the supply chain, and of interdependencies in global supply chains. While global food trade is imperative to a diverse and abundant food supply, strengthening local food economies helps Canada to build resilience through local food "webs", reducing dependency on longer-supply chains in case of disruptions. The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of domestically focused agricultural sectors, such as those functioning under supply management, to local, and especially rural, economies and to overall domestic food security. These sectors have proven vital to ensuring a stable supply of fresh local products on Canadian grocery shelves while supporting fellow small- and medium-sized businesses and providing employment opportunities in rural regions. In addition, the Government of Canada will work with federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) partners and stakeholders, including First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation, on a national emergency preparedness and response plan for a crisis affecting Canada's entire food system, taking into consideration the food security of

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Canadians. Canada is committed to forward planning to mitigate future disruptions to the production, distribution and consumption of food.²⁵

A critical issue across multiple jurisdictions in Canada is a persistent and chronic labour shortage in farming and food processing. This is compounded by the advanced average age of farmers, and challenges for prospective farmers because of varying factors, including the price of farmland as financial speculation and urban sprawl threaten fertile land. The agriculture and agri-food sector faces obstacles that distinguish it from other economic sectors currently facing labour shortages, such as the seasonal nature of the work and a mostly rural location away from population centers and potential workers. A number of areas were discussed during FPT negotiations for the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, including the use of automation and technology, targeted skills development and training, employment incentives and best practices, improved working conditions and benefits, and initiatives to recruit and retain workers. The discussion also noted government and industry efforts to address labour needs are already underway as well as the importance of prioritizing ongoing collaboration, at all levels and in direct relation with labour representatives, to tackle this challenge.

In partnership with provinces and territories, employers, unions and workers, AAFC will develop a sector-specific Agricultural Labour Strategy to address this issue in the short and long term.²⁶ An online consultation for the Strategy was conducted from June to September 2022. This Strategy will complement existing policies and programs currently underway by provincial and territorial governments to address labour shortages. In addition, the Agri-Food Economic Strategy Table (AFEST) was developed as a new model for industry-government collaboration to support economic growth in the sector and it also leads an initiative to support growth of a diverse labour force with the right skills to help the sector achieve its maximum potential.

On the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, Employment and Social Development Canada will continue to implement sector-based work permits and the inspection regime to better protect the health and safety of temporary foreign workers. And finally, with respect to agricultural temporary foreign workers, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will work to expand permanent resident status for international students and temporary foreign workers through the [Express Entry system](#) for skilled immigrants who want to settle in Canada permanently.

²⁵ [Government Response - 8512-441-73 - House of Commons of Canada \(ourcommons.ca\)](#)

²⁶ AAFC (2022) [Rejuvenating the Workforce: Developing a National Agricultural Labour Strategy \(AgLS\) - agriculture.canada.ca](#)

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Improving Human and Animal Health

Dialogue participants highlighted the importance of food systems and human, animal and planetary health interdependencies; and that food system efforts must consider the impact on human health, animal health and environmental sustainability. Opportunities were identified for food system interventions to address broader societal issues, with impacts on health. For example, protecting soil health and preserving plant and animal biodiversity, has a positive impact on the micro-nutrients that people consume in their local environment, and therefore the health and diversity of their gut-biomes.

Canada is moving towards a “One Health” approach to better integrate environmental, animal and human health considerations in the food system. This will help break down silos and reduce risks of new pandemics, disease outbreaks, and antimicrobial resistance, all of which can have devastating impacts on our food system. Policies will strive to protect the habitats of wild animals at risk, and take all necessary measures to combat diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease and prevent entry of diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease and African Swine Flu into Canada and work with all stakeholders against anti-microbial resistance.

Canada is world-renowned for its high-quality livestock and aquaculture sectors, generating over \$25 billion in farmgate receipts. Maintaining the highest standards of animal care and handling is critical to the sector to uphold public trust. Under the AgriAssurance Program, \$4.5 million was invested in 2019 to help update or develop new Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farmed animals. A new Code of Practice for Farmed Salmonids (salmon, trout, char) was released in 2021 to ensure Canadian standards are in place and up-to-date to meet new and emerging consumer and market demands, while building consumer confidence about how farmed fish are raised, cared-for, transported and slaughtered. The Goat Code of Practice, completed in 2022, will respond to growing buyer and consumer expectations for on-farm goat welfare. An update to the Dairy Code of Practice, released in Spring 2023, addresses new scientific findings, changes in industry practices and changes in market and consumer demands.²⁷

In addition to the One Health approach indicated above, a range of measures are used to improve the nutritional health of Canadians and reduce the risk of diet-related diseases. Recognizing that food choices are influenced by many factors, in 2016, the government of Canada launched the [Healthy Eating Strategy](#)²⁸, which aims to improve the food environment in Canada to make it easier for Canadians to make the healthier choice. Since the launch of the Strategy, Canada has made significant progress on healthy eating initiatives by improving nutrition labelling, eliminating industrially produced trans fats in the

²⁷ National Farm Animal Care Council (2023). [Dairy Cattle - Codes of Practice for the care and handling of Dairy Cattle \(nfacc.ca\)](#)

²⁸ <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/food-nutrition/healthy-eating.html>

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food supply, releasing a new Canada's food guide, establishing a monitoring strategy to measure the extent and power of food advertising to children, publishing new sodium reduction targets for processed foods, and introducing front-of-package nutrition labelling.

Further advancing the Healthy Eating Strategy is a priority listed in the 2021 Minister of Health's mandate letter which includes supporting restrictions on the commercial marketing of foods and beverages to children. Canada's new nutrition labelling regulations for packaged foods requires a symbol on the front of packages indicating that a food is high in saturated fat, sugars and/or sodium by January 2026. The FOP nutrition symbol will complement the Nutrition Facts table, displayed on the back of food packages, to provide consumers with more accessible health information.

Canada will continue to monitor the extent and nature of advertising to children to inform decisions to support and promote healthy eating, including raising awareness of the influence of food marketing on food choices and eating habits. Additionally, Canada continues to promote healthy eating through Canada's food guide, which recognizes that the foods and drinks that Canadians choose has an impact on their health and may have an impact on the environment.

Canada also recognizes that poverty and other social determinants of health are predictors of Canadians' ability to regularly access nutritious foods and current food price inflation is making this harder for more people. Statistics Canada is doing work in this area at the nexus of socio-economic determinants and health through the Centre for Population Health Data and the Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics. Statistics Canada is working on the elaboration and establishment of common definitions and standards used to measure the links between these issues to allow comparisons across different regions and groups of people in Canada.

Working towards a National School Food Policy and School Nutritious Meal Program

As part of the Pathways consultations process, stakeholders and partners highlighted how multicomponent school food programs that go beyond the provision of food can contribute to multiple pathways for achieving sustainable food systems and meeting sustainable development goals. It was noted that multicomponent school food programs can include establishing nutrition standards, promoting healthy eating environments, integrating hands-on education about food and food systems, and building community partnerships, including through local food procurement. Participants of Canada's Member State Dialogues, as well as feedback received during consultations for this pathway, emphasized potential benefits of a school food program that advances healthy eating among all participating children, provides support to children in food insecure households, connects with local agriculture and food production, and strengthens Indigenous food systems. Participants emphasized

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that a well-designed national school food policy and resulting program could have the potential to improve interconnected health, social, environmental, and economic objectives.

As part of the engagement process, stakeholders noted that school food programs that are supported by strong nutrition standards and a food literacy component can make a significant contribution to increasing consumption of healthy foods by all children and youth. It was further noted this may also support the development of a lifetime of healthy eating habits for all children, regardless of income, helping them develop a palate for nutritious foods including vegetables, fruit, whole grains and protein foods in line with Canada's food guide. It was emphasized that ensuring the most vulnerable children have the nutritious meals they need to grow and learn is vitally important. Domestic and international evidence shows that school meal programs can act as social equalizers and help to reduce hunger among school aged children, while supporting stronger academic outcomes and achievement. This can drive lifelong positive impacts, such as lower health inequities, more equal economic opportunities, and benefits to local food systems.

Many current programs delivered by local and non-profit organizations across the country, integrate local and/or sustainable procurement such as through farm to school type programming. It was noted through the Pathways consultation process that a National School Food Policy and program could support local food economies and sustainable production goals through initiatives to connect schools and school food purchasers with sustainable producers (farmers, fishers, country foods), vendors and processors. Increased and reliable purchasing of local foods by schools can strengthen local production, hunting, gathering, harvesting and processing - with multiplier benefits for local as well as regional economies.

Indigenous-led school food programs are already strengthening First Nation, Inuit and Métis food systems in many communities, enabling access to culturally appropriate foods, teaching traditional food-ways and skills, and connecting students to cultural traditions, Elders and knowledge keepers. It was noted during the consultations that a National School Food Policy with embedded Indigenous food sovereignty principles could advance this important work.

In support of a Food Policy for Canada and continuing to strengthen Canada's food system, Budget 2022 included a commitment for the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to work with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders to develop a National School Food Policy and to explore how more Canadian children can receive nutritious food at school. Engagement on a National School Food Policy has begun with stakeholders and provinces and territories and will continue into 2023.

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Priorities for International Collaboration

Canada recognizes that agri-food trade is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Trade enables people to access diverse and healthy diets, reduces the volatility of food prices, builds communities' resilience to disasters such as floods or droughts, and can help producers in developing countries earn better incomes and reduce poverty. Canada has become a global leader in free trade by leveraging its dynamic domestic sector, and by negotiating 14 bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements with 51 countries.

Given trade's contribution to sustainability, Canada will work with Canadian and international trade actors, development organizations and local communities to support strong economic agricultural growth and empowerment of farming communities. Canada also participates in the inter-governmental Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue seeking to end deforestation and conversion of other natural ecosystems while promoting sustainable development and trade. In some cases, our trade agreements include progressive measures to ensure small and medium-sized enterprises from developing countries receive technical support to access Canadian agri-food markets. Going forward, Canada will continue to explore ways to improve global sustainability, labour standards, and human rights through trade.

Using a food systems approach, Canada will engage with its international and development partners, including multilateral institutions, to support science and evidence-based practices in four areas of food systems:

- Climate-smart and nature-based agriculture;
- Sustainable agri-food value-chains;
- Inclusive food system governance; and,
- Safety nets for food security.

Canada will deliver on a broad range of climate action and climate finance commitments for developing countries that encourage sustainable land and water management. This includes reducing GHG emissions, improving livelihoods, reducing hunger and malnutrition, empowering women and marginalized populations, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, managing floods, drought and water scarcity, and building resilience to shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather events and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Through the strategic and targeted blending of concessional finance, Canada's climate finance commitment will support efforts to mobilize greater capital for nature-positive investments in the agriculture sector and improve risk profiles for private and institutional investors. At COP26, Canada announced a contribution of \$55 million to support the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers' (CGIAR) new research strategy, which will help to end hunger and build climate-smart and sustainable food systems, while

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putting gender equality at the forefront of global agricultural research and development. On May 24, 2022, Canada also announced CAD \$100 million to the African Development Bank (AfDB) to support the inclusive sustainable growth of small and medium-sized agri-food enterprises. Funding for this initiative, called the Agri-SME Catalytic Financing Mechanism, demonstrates Canada's support of the AfDB's focus on climate-resilient, inclusive agricultural production. Bilateral development projects, like the Land4Life project in Indonesia, will continue to contribute to enhancing farmer livelihoods while building more climate-resilient landscapes. At a global level, Canada will work through new and existing initiatives, including the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural GHGs and the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture, among others.

Canada is committed to be a known and relied upon provider of safe, sustainable food value chains in diverse international markets and will seek to advance coherent aid, trade, environment, climate, and agricultural policies. Having more voices at the table is key to progressing at the global level. To that end, Canada will continue to provide support for inclusive global and regional dialogue among diverse food systems actors, such as those taking place through the Committee on World Food Security. Support for smallholder farmers to access local and global markets to enable them to retain greater value for their food products will also be provided, while promoting women's rights, empowerment and nutrition.

Canada will continue to contribute to and promote the development of international food standards based on science to support good governance of food systems. Canada will also continue to advocate for increased supply chain traceability and due diligence in order to better capture food product impacts on the environment (for example tropical deforestation and biodiversity loss), while also encouraging a larger share of imports certified under voluntary sustainability initiatives. Canada will work with donors, development partners, and standard setting governance mechanisms, such as through the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development and Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, to support policy dialogue and capacity building of food system institutions, and enable greater inclusion of Indigenous people, women and girls in food systems governance. Canada will also continue to support agricultural market transparency, including through the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), an international initiative launched in 2011 by the G20 Ministers of Agriculture to assess global food supplies of wheat, maize, rice and soybeans and provide a forum for policy coherence.

Canada will continue to collaborate on conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources to promote agricultural biodiversity. Canada will continue as an active participant in bodies such as the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Canada

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recognizes that countries are interdependent for genetic resources that are used by researchers, farmers, and Indigenous people to breed new and heritage crop cultivars and improve breeds of livestock. Only by working at the multilateral level can countries ensure continued access to the genetic diversity that is one of agriculture's fundamental inputs.

Safety nets for food security aim to assure access to a minimum amount of food consumption and/or protect households against shocks to food consumption. Canada will continue to support humanitarian and development activities to respond to the current food crisis through nutrition, school meals, and emergency food assistance programs. These activities will target the poorest and most marginalized and prioritize gender-sensitive approaches. For example, at the G7 Summit in June 2021, Canada signed on to the Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crisis Compact and in June 2022, Prime Minister Trudeau announced \$250 million dollar contribution to emergency food assistance²⁹, underscoring our ongoing commitment to better supporting food security around the world. Canada will continue to support emergency food assistance programs that seek to meet the nutritional needs of people affected by crisis, including women and girls. Interventions include providing targeted nutritious food assistance, fortified and ready-to-use therapeutic foods, treatment of acute malnutrition, and cash transfers, as well as other social protection instruments. For example, Canada will continue to partner with the World Food Programme to provide nutritious school meals for children in vulnerable populations as well as to support home delivery of nutritious foods for school children. Programming support is also directed towards improving the nutritional quality of the food supply through incentives for communities' food production, fortification, bio-fortification and reformulation, as exemplified through Canada's ongoing work with Harvest Plus to scale-up local production and consumption of bio-fortified crops. Canada also supports smallholder agro-ecological food production, recognizing the many benefits of strong and sustainable local food systems. Finally, Canada will continue to support response to food systems shocks, such as those brought on by conflicts, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada is supporting a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) COVID-response program that aims to ensure communities most impacted by COVID-19 have sustained access to nutritious food and sources of income, with a focus on women, youth, and Indigenous people.

In the context of the current food crisis, Canada is a vocal advocate on addressing immediate crises in a coherent manner while also setting course for medium- and long-term resilience. We are working with multilateral partners in major forums like the UN Rome-based Agencies, G7/G20, WTO to promote an evidence-based and coordinated response to the crisis. Canada is also the current co-Chair with the United States of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). GAFSP is an inclusive and flexible

²⁹ [Prime Minister Trudeau announces Canadian support to address global food security crisis | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/2022/06/22/prime-minister-trudeau-announces-canadian-support-to-address-global-food-security-crisis)

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multilateral financing instrument that provides funding to developing countries to improve the resilience of their food systems.

As part of the Food Systems Summit, Canada has joined a number of Coalitions of Action with global partners that support Canada's vision for food system transformation. Canada is participating formally or informally in the following coalitions: Achieving Zero Hunger; School Meals; Making Food Systems Work for Women and Girls; Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems; Agricultural Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM4C); Sustainable Productivity Growth for Food Security and Resource Conservation; Blue/Aquatic Foods; and Food is Never Waste. Canada will continue to explore opportunities to join Coalitions to advance resilient, sustainable, and equitable food systems.

APPROACH TO ACHIEVING THE PATHWAYS

The UN FSS process has enabled a deepening of collaboration among food system stakeholders that together can make real change to the benefit of the people, our economy, our environment, and our health. Stakeholders and partners across Canada, including governments at all levels, industry, civil society, and Indigenous partners, among others, have committed to continually advancing safe, high-quality, secure, nutritious and sustainable food systems through collaborative approaches, recognizing the interconnectivity of food systems, and the strength brought forward by diverse perspectives. As we move into a new phase of food system transformation at a global level, we recognize that additional efforts and focus will be needed.

Our vision is that all people in Canada are able to access a sufficient amount of safe, nutritious, and culturally diverse food; and, that Canada's food system is resilient and innovative, sustains our environment and supports our economy. We must break down silos and build partnerships to achieve this vision and reach the Sustainable Development Goals. This National Pathways document frames Canada's existing commitments and new initiatives to address key challenges we face in food systems over the next decade, and recognizes there is more to do.

Several broad themes from the UN FSS process reflect challenges and opportunities for change in Canada's food systems, which can inform our continued implementation of the commitments we have laid out in this document and future policy development regarding food systems in Canada:

- **Diversity:** There is no "one size fits all" policy solution and food systems vary greatly from one region to another, as do cultures and cuisines, local food systems and provincial, territorial, municipal, or Indigenous-led food policy environments. Inclusive and participatory food policy processes reflecting this diversity, including those with

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lived experience of food insecurity and other marginalizing factors, are important. In practical terms, this could mean more emphasis on using an anti-racist and Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens when implementing and funding programs on the ground.

- **Measurement and data:** There is a need for better metrics on all issues but especially on the different dimensions of food systems, including food security, sustainable production, inclusivity, and food loss and waste. Common definitions, and precise ways to establish baselines, enable comparisons and measure progress are essential if we are to identify approaches for sustainability that are appropriate for the national level, and for targeting programs and policies to meet regional and needs of different demographic groups.
- **Innovation and rediscovering:** There is a multitude of innovative projects in all regions of the country, whether these are community food projects, new technologies, sustainable farming practices, Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives, genetic research, or other measures; there is strong support for policies that reward innovators. Some of these ideas are not new, but are being rediscovered through community-based and citizen-led projects that shift the discussion of food systems away from scale, efficiency and profitability towards respect for local knowledge, resiliency, and environments.
- **Coherence:** Food policy crosses many levels of government and many departments, making it imperative to sustain coherence across policy arenas. Each government department has only a piece of the puzzle, making inter-departmental and inter-governmental cooperation critical for systemic change. This also applies at the domestic-international nexus. Government procurement mechanisms should be utilized whenever possible to affect positive change in Canada's food systems.
- **Collaboration:** Getting at the systemic issues underlying our problems with waste, food insecurity, unsustainable practices and food-related health issues will require involvement of everyone: industry, farmers, civil society organizations, educational institutions, researchers, government agencies, Indigenous communities and organizations and citizens.
- **Education and communication:** Access to information, outreach and engagement on public policies that are designed to strengthen food systems and alleviate malfunctions is key; food literacy, multi-stakeholder forums, farmer-to-farmer training, measures to enhance rural-urban understanding, and recognition for best practices were recurring themes.

Canada looks forward to continued dialogue on positive food systems transformation with the UN and all nations, and ongoing collaboration with food systems stakeholders, partners and individuals to achieve the Food Policy for Canada's vision and UN SDGs.