

Next Policy Framework for Agriculture (2023 to 2028)

# Industry and Community Meetings

What We Heard



Strategic Policy and Evaluation Division

Department of Agriculture and Land

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Note: This report will be updated periodically. The most recent version of this report can be found on the Department's website.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Agriculture and Land has held meetings with industry, community groups and other organizations to identify insights for the next policy framework for agriculture (NPF). On April 1, 2023, the NPF will replace the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), a cost-shared agreement with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the Department of Agriculture and Land (DAL).

This report contains insights from meetings with industry, community groups and other organizations. Meetings were held from November 2020 until April 2021. This report will be updated periodically, as additional meetings are completed.<sup>1</sup>

Key findings from meetings indicate that the following should be considered when developing NPF policies:

- Productivity and Profitability
- Value-added and Agri-food Processing
- Markets and Trade
- Research and Innovation
- Labour
- Environmental Sustainability
- Business Risk Management Programs
- Financial Sustainability and New Entrants
- Public Trust and Awareness
- Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Land Administration

### Acronyms

**AAFC** – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

**BMP** – Beneficial management practices

**BRM** – Business risk management

**CAP** – Canadian Agricultural Partnership

**DAL** – Department of Agriculture and Land

**GDI** – Gender, diversity, and inclusion

**LPA** – *Lands Protection Act*

**NPF** – Next Policy Framework

**TFW** – Temporary foreign worker

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<sup>1</sup> For the most recent version of this report, refer to the report posted on the Department's website.

## RÉSUMÉ

Le ministère de l'Agriculture et des Terres a rencontré des représentants de l'industrie, des groupes communautaires et d'autres organisations afin de recueillir des idées pour le prochain cadre stratégique (PCS) en matière d'agriculture. Le 1<sup>er</sup> avril 2023, le PCS remplacera le Partenariat canadien pour l'agriculture (PCA), une entente de partage des coûts entre Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada et le ministère de l'Agriculture et des Terres.

Le présent rapport contient des observations tirées des rencontres avec l'industrie, les groupes communautaires et d'autres organisations. Les rencontres ont eu lieu entre novembre 2020 et avril 2021. Le rapport sera mis à jour périodiquement, au fur et à mesure que d'autres réunions seront organisées.<sup>2</sup>

Les principaux constats des réunions indiquent que les éléments suivants doivent être pris en compte lors de l'élaboration des politiques du PCS :

- Productivité et rentabilité
- Agriculture à valeur ajoutée et transformation agroalimentaire
- Marchés et commerce
- Recherche et innovation
- Main-d'œuvre
- Durabilité environnementale
- Programmes de gestion des risques de l'entreprise
- Viabilité financière et nouveaux venus
- Confiance et sensibilisation du public
- Égalité des genres, diversité et inclusion
- Administration des terres

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<sup>2</sup> Pour obtenir la version la plus récente, consultez le rapport affiché sur le site Web du Ministère.

## Table of Contents

About this report	1
BACKGROUND AND EVIDENCE	1
FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS FOR THE NPF	2
Meetings	2
Productivity and Profitability	2
Value-added and Agri-food Processing	2
Markets and Trade	2
Research and Innovation	2
Labour	2
Environmental Sustainability	2
Business Risk Management Programs	3
Financial Sustainability and New Entrants	3
Public Trust and Awareness	3
Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion	3
Land Administration	3
Other	3
Conclusion	3
APPENDIX A: Record of Meetings	4

## **About this report**

This report contains insights from meetings the Prince Edward Island (PEI) Department of Agriculture and Land (DAL) completed with industry, community groups and other organizations to plan for the Next Policy Framework (NPF) for agriculture. This report represents one line of evidence that the Department will use to develop policies for the NPF. The report will be updated periodically, when additional meetings are completed.

The report advances the Department's strategic priority to develop modern policies and priorities and its goals to facilitate engagement, base policy decisions on the best evidence available and promote transparency.

## **BACKGROUND AND EVIDENCE**

### ***The Canadian Agricultural Partnership***

The Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) is a five-year cost-shared agreement with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). Under the CAP, the DAL and AAFC deliver programs for agriculture development in PEI (2018 to 2023). The initiative represents a \$37M strategic investment in PEI's agriculture industry. The CAP supports the agriculture industry to

- increase competitiveness, productivity, and profitability,
- increase environmental sustainability,
- expand domestic and international markets, and
- improve the anticipation, mitigation and response to risks.

The CAP is scheduled to conclude on March 31, 2023 – at which point it will be replaced with the NPF.

### ***Meetings***

Meetings began in the fall of 2020, and will continue until the launch of the NPF. To date, the Department met with twenty-one (21) groups and organizations to identify priorities and goals for agriculture development in PEI. Organizations included groups that represented specific sectors, and community organizations representing various interests (e.g., immigration, gender equity, etc.) The key question that guided the meetings was: *What does your organization consider to be priorities for agriculture development in PEI?*

The meetings were structured to facilitate dialogue to identify priorities and goals for specific sectors and the agriculture industry at-large. Conversations also involved gaining perspective on recommendations for agriculture development following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to public health protocols limiting in-person gatherings, large meetings were not permitted. Meetings were completed one-on-one and using other forms of electronic communication. Individuals who participated in meetings were provided the opportunity to offer feedback on draft versions of this report.

### ***Expert literature***

The Department is reviewing expert and peer-reviewed literature related to agriculture to understand what should be considered as priorities for the NPF. A report containing insights from the literature review will be added to the Department's website.

### ***Program evaluation***

The Department is evaluating its CAP programs to understand their performance, relevance and impact, and to identify lessons-learned for the next policy framework. Once completed, results of this evaluation will be added to the Department's website.

### ***Public consultation***

The Department will consult with the public at-large, to identify priorities and goals for agriculture development in PEI. A public survey has been administered in English, French, Arabic and Spanish. Results of the survey will be added to the Department's website

## **FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS FOR THE NPF**

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### **Meetings**

Results of meetings with industry, community groups and other organizations so far have shown that the following should be considered when developing policies for the NPF.

#### ***Productivity and Profitability***

Increasing the productivity and profitability of farms and the agriculture industry emerged as a theme. Most references to productivity and profitability pertained to improving yield, quality, increasing demand and consumption, or the general growth and development of an agricultural sector. Infrastructure – for storage, irrigation, transportation, or energy – was cited as important for increasing productivity and profitability. Organizations also referred to the importance of remaining competitive, and how coordinated transportation and shipping could reduce costs and support competitiveness.

#### ***Value-added and Agri-food Processing***

Another theme from the meetings was value-added agriculture and agri-food processing. Groups referred to the importance of adding value to primary products through processing, packaging, and sizing as a means of becoming more productive and profitable. It was found that local processing capacity is a priority, and how – in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions – additional local processing capacity may improve the resiliency of PEI's food system. Local processing capacity was seen as particularly important for livestock sectors.

#### ***Markets and Trade***

Markets and trade is important for supporting the viability of the agriculture industry and agricultural producers. This theme includes references to external markets, maintaining market access, and diversifying trading partners in light of recent trade disruptions. Others spoke more generally to the importance of accessing new markets, as domestic markets alone can be too small to enable profitability. Local and regional markets remain important; the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have contributed to an increased interest in local food. Finally, many organizations noted that trade policy has important implications for supply-managed sectors.

#### ***Research and Innovation***

Funding for research and innovation is important. In many cases, research and innovation priorities were tied to other priorities, such as productivity and profitability, as well as value-added agriculture and agri-food processing. Examples from this theme include: increasing yields and productivity for crops and livestock, supporting the diversification of agricultural commodities and varieties, supporting innovation and technology adoption, market research, and sustainability-related research and innovation – such as climate resilient commodities and varieties, soil health, and changing pest and disease management needs. Finally, many organizations referred to the importance of knowledge transfer through extension activities.

#### ***Labour***

Having access to an adequate supply of skilled labour, from both internal and external labour markets, is important. It was noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has made labour challenges more pronounced, and that streamlining the temporary foreign worker (TFW) program is a priority. Some groups pointed to a need for greater public awareness regarding the importance of temporary foreign workers in agriculture, while others referred to improving working conditions for temporary foreign workers and creating pathways to permanent residency. Overall, access to labour and/or labour-saving technologies was cited as important.

#### ***Environmental Sustainability***

Another theme identified during meetings was environmental sustainability. Several groups spoke to the importance of promoting and adopting beneficial management practices (BMPs) to promote the environmental sustainability of agriculture. Environmental codes of practice were cited as a priority in promoting sustainability in agriculture. With regards to climate change, soil health and nutrient management, as well as climate-resilient commodities and varieties were described as important. Some groups noted that determining if agricultural irrigation can be sustainably implemented in PEI is important. Finally, during meetings, it was communicated that sustainable energy sources, such as electricity, are a priority.

### **Business Risk Management Programs**

Several groups referenced business risk management (BRM) programs. Most comments referred generally to improving the delivery of BRM programs and making them more flexible, while others were more specific. For example, some sectors spoke to the possible expansion of BRM programs to include new sectors or commodities. Others identified increasing compensation rates and removing the reference margin limit from the Federal AgriStability program is important.<sup>3</sup>

### **Financial Sustainability and New Entrants**

In addition to BRM programs, groups also spoke to the importance of financial sustainability more generally. This theme included references to financial sustainability, support for new entrants to agriculture, access to capital, preferential financing, and succession planning,

### **Public Trust and Awareness**

Many organizations cited public trust in agriculture and awareness of agriculture as priorities. Priorities included activities to promote public trust, increase awareness of agriculture, and promote various sectors within the agriculture industry. Many expressed the view that the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions to food supply chains may have increased public trust in agriculture, and raised awareness of all that goes into food production and the food supply system.

### **Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Gender, diversity, and inclusion (GDI) emerged as a theme of increasing importance. Groups spoke to the importance of supporting women in agriculture (e.g. increasing participation on marketing and commodity boards). Newcomers to Canada were also referenced; newcomers – including temporary foreign workers – could play a role in meeting labour market needs, increasing demand for some food products, and succession planning. Finally, food insecurity was prioritized by some as an issue which disproportionately impacts Indigenous peoples, women, newcomers, and other underrepresented groups.

### **Land Administration**

A broad range of feedback was heard during meetings regarding land administration. Within this theme, there was general agreement that agricultural land should be preserved and kept in use for agricultural production. The affordability of land was also cited as a concern, especially for new farmers. Finally, some groups referred to the *Lands Protection Act* (LPA), in particular topics such as enforcement of the LPA, and aggregate land holding limits.

### **Other**

Many other responses – which were important, but did not form distinct themes – were noted. This included promoting mental health and wellness across the agriculture industry, building regional flexibility into the NPF, and increasing membership within a given commodity organization.

### **Conclusion**

This report summarizes what the Department heard during meetings with industry, community groups and other organizations. Meetings were held from November 2020 to April 2021. The results of these meetings will be used as one line of evidence when developing policies and priorities for the NPF in Prince Edward Island.

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<sup>3</sup> As of March 26, 2021 the reference margin limit for AgriStability was removed. <https://www.canada.ca/en/agriculture-agri-food/news/2021/03/canadas-ministers-of-agriculture-agree-to-implement-a-key-improvement-to-the-agristability-program-to-better-support-farmers.html>



**Appendix A: Record of Meetings**

<b>Group / Organization</b>	<b>Responded to Invitation (Y/N)?<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>
1. L'nuey	Yes	April 19, 2021
2. PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association	Yes	April 1, 2021
3. PEI Vegetable Growers Cooperative Association	Yes	March 17, 2021
4. PEI Grain Elevator Corporation	Yes	February 11, 2021
5. Dairy Farmers of PEI	Yes	January 8, 2021
6. PEI Sheep Breeders Association	Yes	November 30, 2020
7. PEI Hog Commodity Marketing Board	Yes	November 30, 2020
8. PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women	Yes	November 26, 2020
9. Food Island Partnership of PEI	Yes	November 24, 2020
10. PEI Potato Board	Yes	November 23, 2020
11. PEI Horticulture Association	Yes	November 20, 2020
12. PEI Certified Organic Producers Cooperative	Yes	November 16, 2020
13. Chicken Farmers of PEI	Yes	November 16, 2020
14. PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada	Yes	November 13, 2020
15. Cattle Producers Association of PEI	Yes	November 13, 2020
16. PEI Wild Blueberry Growers Association	Yes	November 12, 2020
17. PEI Institute of Agrolgists	Yes	November 10, 2020
18. 4-H PEI	Yes	November 9, 2020
19. PEI Women's Institute	Yes	November 9, 2020
20. Atlantic Grains Council	Yes	November 9, 2020
21. PEI Federation of Agriculture	Yes	November 6, 2020
22. National Farmers Union	No	N/A
23. Charlottetown Farmers Market Co-op	No	N/A
24. PEI Young Farmers Association	No	N/A
25. PEI Agriculture Awareness Committee	No	N/A
26. PEI Beekeepers	No	N/A
27. Egg Farmers of PEI	No	N/A

<sup>4</sup> "No" means that an organization was contacted on at least two (2) occasions, and did not reply and/or did not follow-up with a date which they were available to meet.