



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

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PETITION NO.: **421-04103**

BY: **MR. ERSKINE-SMITH (BEACHES-EAST YORK)**

DATE: **JUNE 3, 2019**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE MARIE-CLAUDE BIBEAU, PC, MP**

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Response by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Food policy**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

On June 17, 2019, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) launched the first ever federal Food Policy in Canada. The *Food Policy for Canada* is a whole-of-government policy that will aim to achieve the vision that *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.*

The *Food Policy for Canada* is an ambitious initiative, the product of consultation and collaboration with Canadians across the country. The Government of Canada heard from more than 45,000 Canadians, including agricultural producers and processors, experts in environment, health and food security, Indigenous groups, non-government organizations, and community advocates. The Food Policy recognizes that a strong and competitive agricultural sector is vital to Canada's prosperity, creating good jobs, growing the middle class, and bringing high-quality products to the tables of Canadian consumers.

The Government of Canada is proud to support and invest in all agricultural sectors and is committed to ensuring that they remain strong and competitive for the future. For example, in November 2018, as part of our efforts to support plant-based agriculture, the Government announced close to \$153 million for the Protein Industries Canada (PIC) Supercluster. The funding will be matched dollar for dollar by the private sector. PIC objectives are based on four main

pillars of crop breeding, sustainable crop production, value-added processing and market development. This initiative is a significant investment to expand the usage of plant protein sources, such as peas, as part of efforts to continually diversify and strengthen the agricultural sector to become the world's leading source of high-quality, sustainable, plant proteins.

Since October 2015, the Government has allocated more than \$51.5 million to the organic sector, including companies that produce organic products. This includes investments to review the 2020 Canadian Organic Standards, to help the organic sector streamline the review process of the Canadian Organic Certification Standards, and to establish the Organic Science Cluster.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (the Partnership) is a five-year, \$3 billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector. Partnership programs include a robust suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs to help manage significant risks that threaten the viability of farms and are intended to provide equitable support to all producers, regardless of commodity or region, and therefore preclude any sector-specific treatment. Through the Partnership, provinces and territories design and manage delivery of cost-shared environmental stewardship programs that increase farmers' adoption of beneficial management practices and technologies that enhance the long-term environmental sustainability and resilience of the sector by supporting actions to address soil and water conservation, reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change.

The Canadian animal production sector has identified food safety, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability as priority areas for investment and development. There are many examples of producer-led animal welfare initiatives supported by the Government of Canada, such as ProAction by the Dairy Farmers of Canada and the development of the Codes of Practice for the care and handling of farm animals by the National Farm Animal Care Council. The livestock industry, with our support, is working to ensure the highest quality of animal care, consistent with consumer preferences.

As responsible stewards of the land, Canadian farmers and ranchers recognize the importance of protecting the natural resources which agriculture depends on. Canada's animal sector is tremendously diverse and ranges from bison grazing on natural grasslands as they have done for hundreds of years, to highly efficient poultry operations with a very small ecological footprint. Canadian livestock producers use modern production practices to ensure that operations are sustainable over the long term, and raise a large portion of their animals on quality grazing lands which are unsuitable for annual crops. Grazing pastures contribute to regulating the flow and quality of water, protecting fragile soils from erosion, and play an important role in providing biodiversity habitat.

The sector has been able to reduce its environmental impact as a result from improvements in production efficiency, as well as feeding and breeding practices. According to Environment and Climate Change Canada's National GHG Inventory, enteric methane emissions from cattle accounts for 3.5 percent of the total emissions in Canada, the carbon footprint of Canadian beef is one of the smallest in the world. In comparison, the transportation sector contributed 28 percent of the total emissions in Canada.

Total GHG emissions from agriculture have been relatively stable over the last 10 years, even as the sector has grown. As published in Canada's 2018 National Inventory Report, agriculture's total GHG emissions in 2016 were 60 Mt of carbon dioxide equivalents, representing 8.4 percent of Canada's total GHG emissions. Of these emissions, animal production accounted for approximately half of them, while the other half of emissions are from crop production.

AAFC is working with cattle ranchers to improve the environmental footprint of the cattle production sector. One area AAFC researchers are focusing on is finding ways to reduce GHGs, especially methane, which is produced in the digestive

system of cattle. This work involves better management practices for animals and grasslands to produce healthier, more productive cows, while lowering emissions. For further information, please visit [www.agr.gc.ca/eng/science-and-innovation/agricultural-practices/climate/greenhouse-gases/?id=1329321969842](http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/science-and-innovation/agricultural-practices/climate/greenhouse-gases/?id=1329321969842)