

Dear Ms LaFrance

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my ideas about how to capitalize on the opportunities that new markets – like those resulting in current trade agreements, as well as emerging and other markets, offer.

The most obvious to me, would be to steer the nation toward producing what the world wants, and become an integral leader in organic agricultural production on a sustainable level. We all know that by converting the millions of hectares of conventionally produced soy, corn and canola to organic crops, that nourish people and revitalize the environment, Canada can compete and be a top international player, in the growing demand for pesticide-free and non-genetically modified food.

Rather than attempt to compete with under-priced, BGH enhanced milk production from the USA, Canada could focus on becoming a leading producer of organic milk from small family farm collectives and cooperatives. At the same time, transitioning the population to the consumption of pesticide-free food would reverse the current explosion of chronic and terminal illnesses that result in Canadians over taxing the medical system, and overdosing themselves with, including diabetes, crones, RSIs, cognitive disorders and cancer. With a lighter load on our medical system and need for expensive pharmaceuticals, think of the money the government can reinvest in things, like job training and addressing the country's aging infrastructure.

Last but not least, if Canada were to go in this direction, replacing low-grad feedstock produced by chemical-intensive mono-cropping, bringing livestock out of the CAFOs and back to the land, and engaging farmers in ecologically sound production of fruits and vegetables, the entire carbon footprint of today's most marketed crops could be reduced by an incredible amount. The mere conversion to organic production methods could single handedly allow Canada to become a world leader in the production of the ecologically sustainable food and fibre, employ millions of workers with safe and healthy, fair paying jobs, ease the need for fossil fuels, replenish depleted soils, save many plant and animal species from extinction, and possibly, the most important benefit of all, make it easy for Canada to meet and exceed targets established in the Paris accord.

I don't know about everyone else, but personally, at 53, I've had enough of the status quo running the game. Let's take these new market opportunities to transition the way we HAVE been doing things in Canada and move towards a sensible model that is inclusive, globally and locally. The organic market is ripe and growing steadily. This is a win-win opportunity that lets everyone benefit. Isn't that what Canada is all about?

Carrie Watson