

# **Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget**

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## **List of Recommendations**

- **Recommendation 1:** That the government create a Future Crisis Prevention Center that will
  - study and research the link between animal agriculture and
    - pandemics and zoonotic diseases
    - climate emergency and ecosystem collapse
  - make the research widely available to the general public and very clear to understand through all public mass media
  - make recommendations on how to prevent or minimize future crises
  - that provide initial funding in the amount of \$2 billion which could grow as it needs
- **Recommendation 2:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$100,000,000 to research official statistics on veganism, vegetarianism and meat reduction in Canada and the provinces and make them available to the public.
- **Recommendation 3:** That the government amend the Food and Drugs Act and amend Canadian legislation in order to obtain at least one mandatory healthy plant based option for public cafeterias under federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to, all hospitals, universities, senior centres, and schools.
- **Recommendation 4:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$500,000,000 to research, define, and implement at least one mandatory healthy plant based option for public cafeterias under federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to, all hospitals, universities, senior centres, and schools.

## **Body of Submission**

### Recommendation 1 : Future Crisis Prevention Center

The coronavirus has confronted us with an unprecedented crisis the world has never seen before. It has affected all of us and paralyzed all levels of activity. The crisis could have been avoided if the voices of scientists had been heard and if the world had been better prepared, with a universal basic income and better security measures. We fear that this is only the first of many more to come. Other pandemics could still occur in the future because we have not addressed the possible root cause of the pandemic. The climate emergency and the collapse of ecosystems are on the horizon, even though they have been eclipsed from public debate because of the current crisis. We need to start taking a proactive rather than a reactive approach.

Some crisis seem more likely than others if we listen to the scientific community and a link between them and their prevention is also known to the scientific community but not yet widely listened to by governments and made widely public to the population by official governmental means. Governments need to step in to maximise our safety. Their role in protecting citizens extends beyond economic security, policing and counter-terrorism, to crisis prevention.

#### The link between animal agriculture, pandemics and zoonotic diseases

The United Nations recently announced that pathogens that affect humans often come from livestock and bushmeat.

*“The coronavirus (COVID-19) is a zoonotic disease. Zoonotic diseases are transmitted between animals and humans. Diseases passed from animals to humans are a significant threat to human health. When the symptoms are serious, our lack of prior exposure means humans have no existing antibodies to defend themselves against the disease. Recent zoonotic disease outbreaks include Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS (2002); Avian Influenza or bird flu (2004); H1N1 or Swine Flu (2009); Middle East Respiratory Syndrome or MERS (2012); Ebola (2014– 2015); Zika virus (2015–2016); and the West Nile virus (2019).*

*Almost a century’s worth of global trends confirm that zoonotic disease outbreaks are occurring more frequently. A [2016 UN Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) report flagged zoonoses as an issue of global concern. On average, three new infectious diseases*

*emerge in humans every year; and 75 per cent of all emerging infectious diseases in humans are now zoonotic. ”*

[Science points to causes of COVID-19](#)

The next major pandemic could well come from factory farms (e.g. [H5N1](#) threat ).

*“The swine flu epidemic of 2009 killed up to [575,400](#) people in a year. The cause of its origin in humans? The international trade of pig meat between America and Eurasia, according to the [US Center for Disease Control](#).*

*(...)*

*And meat-borne pandemics may follow us in years to come. Or even sooner. Last week, research was [published](#) indicating that a new form of swine flu is circulating in farmed pigs. The researchers warn that the virus has "all the essential hallmarks" of a possible pandemic.”*

*Meat and pandemics: the surprising link*

Pandemics are not a question of if, but of when, as the “[Pandemic](#)” Docuseries from Netflix showed well before the coronavirus emerged. It was released on January 22, 2020, before the coronavirus outbreak was recognized as a Global Pandemic.

Given the above information, that the pandemic has taken us once by surprise, is a grave error. However, that the next pandemic will also take us by surprise, is more than unacceptable. The government of Canada needs to study the question of pandemics officially by working with the international scientific community and make the results widely available and undisputed. Furthermore it must make recommendations and implement legislations to prevent further outbreaks according to the findings of the research. This includes food safety and researching and subsidising healthy and sustainable alternatives to animal agriculture.

The link between animal agriculture, climate emergency and ecosystem collapse

The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#), the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change says:

*“Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and increase further with 2°C.”*

[IPCC Headline statements \(concise narrative\)](#)

Animal Agriculture may well be the leading cause of climate change.

Here are some possible links which need to be officially researched and validated:

- 2005 - Alan Calverd publishes [estimate of GHG](#) from “Livestock” breathing alone is 8.8 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e or 21% of total (Physics World).

- 2006 – FAO publishes [Livestock's Long Shadow](#) (LLS) calculating GHG emissions from “Livestock” sector is 7.5 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e or 18% of total.
- 2009 – Goodland/Anhang publish [WorldWatch report](#) correcting errors in LLS and calculating GHG emissions from “Livestock” sector to be 32.6 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e or 51% of total.
- 2011 – FAO scientists [publish critique](#) of Goodland/Anhang's estimate in Animal Feed Science and Technology (AFST) Journal.
- 2012 – Goodland/Anhang [publish refutation](#) in AFST Journal and reiterate their estimate. FAO scientists [decline to continue](#) the debate despite AFST Editor's invitation.
- 2013 – FAO [partners](#) with International Meat Secretariat and the International Dairy Federation and [publishes revision](#) to LLS, calculating GHG emissions from “Livestock” sector to be 7.1 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e or 14.5% of total, without addressing any of the errors pointed out in Goodland/Anhang (2009).

Once again, it would be unacceptable for a health crisis, a livelihood crisis, a food security crisis, a water supply crisis, a human security crisis and a crisis of economic growth to occur when it can be avoided. Governments must intervene to maximize our security. The Government of Canada must formally address the climate emergency and ecosystem collapse by working with the international scientific community and making the results widely available and uncontested. In addition, it must make recommendations and implement legislation to prevent further epidemics based on research findings. This also involves researching and subsidizing healthy and sustainable alternatives to animal agriculture if required.

## Conclusion

Given the above arguments, we believe this is the most important recommendation in our presentation. We recommend that the government create a Centre for Future Crisis Prevention that is well funded, free of lobbying influence and that works honestly to ensure the long-term safety of its citizens.

## Recommendation 2

On July 18, 2018, Canadian television network CTV had announced:

*“Vegetarians and vegans now account for nearly 10 per cent of Canada's population, and their increased presence is forcing the restaurant and meat production industries to consider new approaches. According to research from Dalhousie University, there are 2.3 million vegetarians in Canada, up from 900,000 15 years ago. Another 850,000 people consider themselves vegan. Those two numbers add up to 9.4 per cent of the Canadian population.”*

In 2019 and 2020, these numbers have probably increased. In order to make an informed decision on how to meet the needs of its citizens, we need up-to-date statistics on this very relevant issue. That is why we recommend that the government provide \$100,000,000 in funding to research official statistics on veganism, vegetarianism, and meat reduction in Canada and the provinces and make them available to the public.

## Mandatory healthy plant based option : Recommendation 3 and 4

### Recommendation 3: Amendment of the Food and Drugs Act and other Canadian legislation

Based on a compassionate approach to reducing suffering, we call on the government, in accordance with section 2A of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to allow individuals to choose food that aligns with their conscience. Everyone should have the right to eat in accordance with their deep values and identity or creed.

It has been almost two years since the Portuguese Vegetarian Association, with the support of some Portuguese political parties, managed to push for the approval of pioneering [legislation](#) that mandates the availability of vegan meals in all public facilities throughout the country. This was achieved mainly by popular demand and the contribution of over 15,000 people who signed a petition. We feel strongly about the importance of this law. It will help to tackle major health, ethical and environmental issues related to eating habits. It will also make vegan food more widely available. We feel encouraged that this positive breakthrough inspired an international movement, and now several countries are pushing their governments to approve a similar law. We hope that Canadian government will listen to the Canadian public, make the courageous decision to align with modern values, and take action on this issue.

Therefore:

*Whereas: At present, there are few, if any, plant-based menu options in public eating establishments in Canada;*

*Whereas: The absence of plant-based options is a major obstacle to implementing the new Canada Food Guide recommendations, of eating more vegetables, whole grains, fruit and nuts, and less meat and dairy;*

*Whereas: The absence of plant-based options infringes on the rights of vegans who choose not to consume animal products. ([Section 2A of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) recognizes citizens' fundamental right to freedom of conscience);*

*Whereas: Our food choices have a major impact on public health and the environment (Greenhouse gases, pollution, and water waste; resistance to antibiotics, zoonotic diseases; chronic non-contagious diseases, etc.) and the government is responsible for protecting future generations;*

*Whereas: Most Canadians would like to reduce their consumption of animal products and to increase their intake of plant-based foods, but find it challenging to do so, in many circumstances;*

***We ask the Government of Canada to introduce a law that requires a variety of vegan options in public cafeterias and restaurants in schools, hospitals, prisons, government buildings, etc.***

#### Recommendation 4: Plant based options budget

Given the fact that our food choices have a major impact on public health and the environment (Greenhouse gases, pollution, and water waste; resistance to antibiotics, zoonotic diseases; chronic non-contagious diseases, etc.) and given the fact the government is responsible for protecting future generations, independent of recommendation 4 of amending the law, we feel a budget must be granted to encourage and help public institutions to provide and plant based options and comply with new Canada Food Guide recommendations.

*“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.”*

Food Policy for Canada

For this statement to become operational, we feel plant based options need to be funded by the government with a budget of 500,000,000 is provided to incentivize this for public cafeterias under federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to, all hospitals, universities, senior centres, and schools.