Let’s Grow Canada



Canada is a land rich in natural abundance. For generations, we’ve played the role of supplier to the world, providing food, energy, and minerals to nations near and far. Our relationship with our closest trading partner, the United States, has been long-standing and largely positive. It is so positive that our supply chains have become deeply intertwined, with many goods now crossing borders multiple times before reaching consumers.

But recent global events have made it clear: those days of seamless cooperation can no longer be taken for granted. Canada’s closest trading partner has, of late, become unpredictable and we must forge a new path forward.

As economic tensions with China and the U.S. escalate, Canada must turn inward to our core strengths. We are a country of vast land and modest population, with immense opportunities. Yet, burdensome policies and sluggish processes continue to limit our grasp. We produce more food than we consume, yet food insecurity is rising. We generate more energy and food than we need, yet we export much of it as raw commodities, giving up economic benefits in the process.



The truth is simple: Canada provides the essentials of life. The food on the table. The heat in our homes. These are not luxuries, they are necessities. And they must become the foundation of our national resilience. To stand tall in a shifting global landscape, Canada must stand on firm ground.

That ground is agriculture.

Canadian agriculture is a vital industry rooted in both rural and urban communities. It contributes nearly $150 billion annually to our GDP and employs 2.3 million people—more than the automotive, forestry, steel and aluminum, and oil and gas sectors combined. It is the largest manufacturing sector in the country, and a key driver of domestic economic growth.

Yet for too long, agriculture and agri-food have been treated as secondary players in Canada's economic strategy. We have the land, freshwater and marine resources, skilled people, and regulatory credibility to be a global leader in sustainable food production. But while other nations invest boldly in agri-tech, domestic processing, and export readiness, Canada has been slow to respond. RBC reports that in 2000, Canada was one of the top five global leaders in agri-food exports. Yet today, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) reports that Canada has slid to ninth place. Global market share has declined by nearly 12% since 2000, even as our export value has quadrupled, suggesting other countries are innovating faster and capturing more value.

Recent work from Farm Credit Canada highlights the opportunity cost of inaction. Their analysis shows that simply restoring primary agriculture's historic productivity growth could deliver $30 billion in net cash income over the next decade. The message is clear: innovation is our path forward, and time is of the essence.



The Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which represents 190,000 farm families across the country, stresses that this isn't just an economic issue, it's a livelihood issue. Producers are ready to drive innovation and adopt new practices, but they need the right tools, infrastructure, and policy environment to succeed. Farmers know better than anyone that

productivity gains don't just strengthen Canada's trade position, they also make family farms more resilient, communities more secure, and ensure Canadians continue to have access to safe, affordable food and agriculture products.

This is a wake-up call.

That call is why the recent Let's Grow Canada letter, supported by leaders across the agri-food supply chain that bring food to your table, is urging the federal government to treat agriculture and agri-food as a strategically important sector and implement the following actions:

1. **Create a focused plan for economic growth in agriculture**
   Make agriculture and agri-food—including Indigenous agriculture—a national priority. Set clear targets for production growth, innovation investment, value-added processing, exports, and stable labour supply.
2. **Ensure regulations support a growth agenda**
   Align the mandates of key regulators with Canada's food security and competitiveness goals. Reduce regulatory burdens and make Canada a top destination for agricultural investment and innovation.
3. **Prioritize transportation and trade infrastructure**
   Invest in rail, port, cold chain, and rural infrastructure to ensure our products can get to market. Ensure reliable service to maintain Canada's reputation as a dependable supplier.
4. **Modernize risk management tools**
   Update programs to reflect the current risk profile of agriculture in light of climate change and trade wars. Ensure inclusive, responsive tools that support the sector amid trade and environmental disruptions.

This call to action is not a rhetorical exercise grounded in defending or maintaining what Canada has today, but about the strategic economic and food security implications of investing in Canadian agriculture's future. If supported by enabling policies and infrastructure, Canada's agriculture and agri-food businesses can contribute an additional $100 billion over the next ten years.

The time is now. Agriculture must become a cornerstone of Canada's future—strategically positioned to drive economic growth, foster innovation, support sustainability, and improve the standard of living for all Canadians. To change course, agriculture must be made a national priority, backed by meaningful investment and coordinated federal leadership.

Canada can stand on its own. But we must first stand together on the firm foundation of our natural strengths.