

Benchmarking project to examine relationships between health and agriculture

OTTAWA, March 27, 2007 — A coalition of government, industry and not-for-profit organizations, led by the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI), is launching a major project to examine the relationships between population health and the agri-food sector.

"Most developed and developing nations face high and rising costs in the areas of agriculture and health," said CAPI Chair Gaëtan Lussier. "It is also a well established fact that agriculture and food are major determinants of population health. To the extent that we can positively influence population health through agricultural and food production, we have an opportunity to improve quality of life and industry competitiveness, and reduce the very real health care costs that individuals and governments face," Mr. Lussier.

The project consists of a series of studies identifying food related initiatives that have had a demonstrated impact on the agri-food sector and the health of the population. Under terms of reference for the project, investigators will examine initiatives that highlight various relationships between agriculture (production, processing, distribution and consumption) and health (protection, promotion and access to healthy eating).

"The links between food and health are very complex," said Diane Finegood, Scientific Director, Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes, with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Ms. Finegood noted that it is only by working with the agri-food sector that we can identify ways of ensuring that people have access to the foods they need to live long and healthy lives.

In addition to CAPI, eight other organizations are participating in the project. They are Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, Dietitians of Canada, Health Canada, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Work on the project is expected to be completed over the next eight to ten months.

"Understanding the interrelatedness between agriculture and health is a key step towards establishing policies that benefit both," said Dr. Edward Tyrchniewicz, Project Manager and Associate Dean of the I.H. Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba, adding that what the coalition is ultimately working towards is to provide Canadians with additional health benefits while simultaneously improving the prospects for Canadian agriculture and the agri-food sector.

Media Coverage

- [Representatives From Key Organizations Gather To Find Solutions For A Hungry World: McGill Conference On Global Food Crisis, *Medical News Today*](#)
- [Benchmarking Project to Examine Relationships between Health and Agriculture, *Nursing News*](#)