

Leaders Summit advances thinking on the need for an agri-food and health strategy for Canada

OTTAWA, March 5, 2010 — Canada needs to integrate health and agri-food policies, concluded the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) after hosting a Leaders Summit on Food for a Healthy and Prosperous Future in Montreal February 17-18, 2010. The Summit brought together over 60 leaders representing the agri-food and health sectors, non-government organizations, the research community and governments.

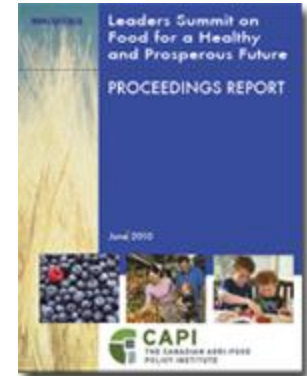
"Health and agri-food policies must support each other to address health challenges and create economic opportunities for the agri-food sector," said David McInnes, CAPI President & CEO.

Health leaders stressed that important changes are needed to Canadians' diets to improve health outcomes and reduce the impact on healthcare budgets. They focused on preventing disease by changing what we eat. (Note: the World Health Organization indicates that at least 80% of premature heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes and 40% of cancer could be prevented through a healthy diet, as part of a healthy lifestyle.)

Agri-food leaders demonstrated that demand for healthy foods can create real market opportunities. The Summit profiled how local, national and global companies are developing new products, new markets and new branding opportunities. Leaders were clear that it makes good business sense to engage the broader agri-food value chain - from producers through to retailers - and that health and agri-food partnerships can lead to creating or accessing healthier foods for consumers. As well, participants emphasized the importance of evidence-based research to develop more nutritious foods with demonstrated benefits on health. Please find descriptions attached to this press release of approaches that link the health and agri-food sectors.

While health and agri-food leaders saw many opportunities, they also identified obstacles to linking the health and agri-food sectors. Among the issues that need to be resolved are: how to make it easier for consumers to choose nutritious food, how the entire value chain can realize economic benefits from new opportunities and how to speed the process to develop and introduce new food products. Participants also noted the need for close collaboration between the federal and provincial governments for policy convergence to succeed.

"The Summit generated a sense of purpose and a genuine desire to work collaboratively to realize the potential of better linking the health and agri-food sectors. It also raised questions on how an integrated strategy would work," said Mr. McInnes. "The message was clear: we have a



collective opportunity to define how this convergence can benefit both the competitiveness of Canada's agri-food sector and the health of Canadians."

CAPI has pledged to develop a strategic roadmap to advance ideas on how to better integrate agri-food and health policy as a basis for advancing a broader dialogue on this issue. CAPI will work with its Leadership Panel on Food and Wellness Connection, and Summit participants, to develop these ideas and reach out to other stakeholders.

"Going forward, the Canadian agri-food sector needs to become an advocate for a better diet and the health community needs to become an advocate for a viable Canadian agri-food sector," noted Mr. McInnes.

Presentations

The Consumer:

- Alain Poirier: Healthy Diet Partnerships
- David Katz: Diets, Dollars & Destiny
- David Farnell: From Local Farms to Local Tummies

What's Working: Progress and Successes

- David Sparling: Food and Health Case Studies
- Grant Pierce: The Justification of an Ag-Health Research Strategy in Canada
- John Millar: What's Working

How to Accelerate Success

- Karen Basian: The Food and Health Connection
- Len Penner: Health and Agri Food Strategy