

A new approach for agriculture

The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) is creating a national dialogue on policy models that will enable Canada to thrive in the emerging agri-food world.

CAPI is looking ahead by exploring potential policies that will: deliver healthier foods, improve the sustainability of food production, and enhance the agri-food sector's competitive position.

CAPI has assembled three Leadership Panels to guide its work and help define novel policy options needed to address each of these core questions:

- **Food and wellness connection:** Can we afford to eat the same way?
- **Sustainability:** Can we afford to produce our food the same way?
- **Viability:** Should we change the way we support the agriculture/agri-food sector?

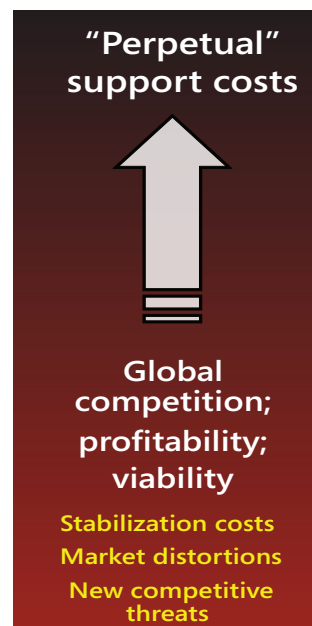
Advisory in nature, the Leadership Panels are represented by the private sector, academia, NGOs and government. (Panel members are listed



Food and Wellness



Sustainability



Viability

CAPI will define novel policy options under each of three themes.

on the web at www.capi-icpa.ca.)

CAPI will publish project reports for each panel. Moreover, CAPI will synthesize their work. Each spring, CAPI will publish this analysis (see timeline below) by presenting new policy ideas and identifying the policy

linkages across the three themes.

CAPI's work will be relevant to the unfolding policy process leading up to — and beyond — the renewal in 2013 of Growing Forward, the five-year federal, provincial and territorial policy framework for agriculture.

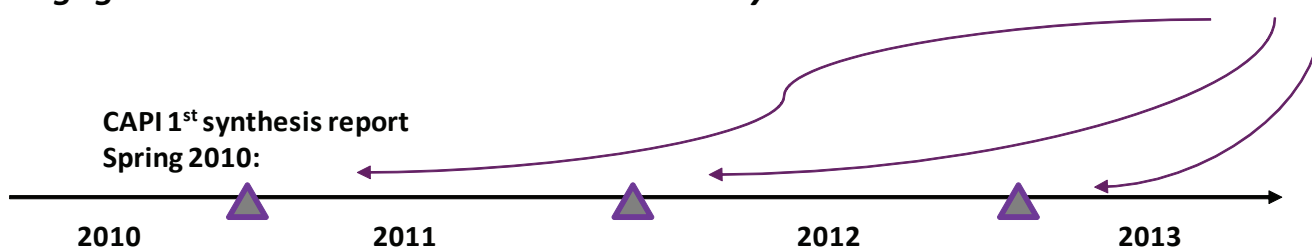
Timeline

Engage leaders

Focus the research

Synthesize results

Create the dialogue *



(* Across government, value chain, research community, NGOs, media)



FOOD & WELLNESS

The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute is advancing a national dialogue on the integration of health and agriculture policies.

Leadership Panel on Food & Wellness Connection

The Problem: Canadians are beset by rising rates of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. The cost of providing health care is increasing. The cost of bringing new therapies to market is enormous. Currently, health and agriculture policies are devised largely on separate tracks, with little regard for how they support each other. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the foods they eat and how these foods are produced and processed.

THE CHALLENGE:
Can we afford to eat the same way?

Opportunity: We need to change the way we eat. Policy-makers need to focus on preventing disease – of which diet is a major determinant – in order to make people healthier and reduce health budgets. This challenge presents economic opportunities for the agriculture and agri-food sector. Canada is capable of producing the healthiest and safest foods in the world. Getting there means examining the responsiveness of the regulatory environment, our capacity to support the production of healthier foods, and the efficiency of the innovation pipeline. All of these factors contribute to delivering premium value-added foods and Canadian brand advantages.

... It's about:

An integrated health and agri-food policy strategy.

Opportunity:

Disease prevention and the role of diet/food links agriculture and health policy for the next agriculture policy framework (in 2013) and the next health accord (in 2014).

Policies that support healthier ingredients and result in differentiated, value-added products that deliver consumer and producer benefits.

Near-term plan:

Case studies on Canadian ingredients:
February 2010.

Leaders Summit: February 2010.

Follow through on updated action plan: 2010-2011.

Research Program: CAPI has studied the links between health and agri-food policies and programs. Guided by its Leadership Panel on Food and Wellness Connection, CAPI is now exploring optimum approaches for Canadian policy-makers that are based on the common desire to deliver nutritious and healthy foods. CAPI is exploring how stakeholders can resolve production impediments in order to deliver healthier foods from a more vibrant Canadian agri-food sector. CAPI is seeking to build a platform for consensus on an action plan to engage policy-makers. Case studies will explore success models that are drawn from the experiences of key commodities. In 2010, CAPI held a pivotal Leaders Summit and is undertaking subsequent research to identify the most forward-moving ideas on how to integrate health and agri-food policies.



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The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) is an independent, unbiased policy forum that is dedicated to the success of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. CAPI is committed to the protection of personal information within its control in accordance with the privacy laws of Canada.

Canada 



SUSTAINABILITY

As stewards of rural lands, the agriculture community has an important role to play in environmental conservation in Canada and in sustaining food production.

Leadership Panel on Sustainability

The Problem: Climate disruptions – hot, cold, wet, dry – are posing challenges to agriculture around the world. Although Canada's agriculture sector is better positioned to adapt to these changes than many countries, it faces major issues in different regions: dryer soils, water access issues, water quality, flooding, changing frost patterns, etc. Producers everywhere will need to diversify, moving away from an over-reliance on the fossil fuel-based economy. The agricultural sector faces growing pressures to meet sustainable production practices, even while ensuring that food supply requirements are fulfilled. These pressures on producers are revolutionizing how food is produced.

THE CHALLENGE:

Can we afford to produce our food the same way?

The Opportunity: We need to change the very systems that underpin our food production system. Canada stands to gain a competitive advantage by adopting sustainable

practices along the entire food production system: the inputs required to produce food and bring it to market and the outputs generated in doing so. For example, adopting new technology is key to coping with regional climate change

impacts. By strengthening its focus on productivity, Canada is poised to position itself as one of the most dependable suppliers of quality food in an era of increasing environmental pressures.

... It's about:

A sustainable food supply in the face of climate change, weather variability and environmental challenges.

Opportunity:


Food production systems, productivity and supply dependability will increasingly depend on adaptation technologies and responses.
Link environment and agriculture policy.

Near-term plan:

Ecological goods & services research project:
June 2010.

Canada-U.S. symposia on adaptation:
March, June, 2010.

Examine Canada's "S&T" capacity and policy to support adaptation requirements: 2010-2011.

Research Program: Farmers are being asked to make changes in their production processes in order to reduce the environmental impacts caused by agricultural activity. They are also being asked to help create ecological goods and services (EG&S). Ecological goods and services represent the benefits humans derive from ecosystem functions. Farmers may benefit from these adjustments but may also be subjected to additional costs. CAPI's research is focused on "who should pay for EG&S?" CAPI is also looking at the optimum models for achieving environmentally sound agriculture practices while addressing food sustainability and helping farmers cope with climate change adaptation. CAPI is planning a series of symposia in 2010 to advance the dialogue on climate change adaptation. In the world of a changing climate, CAPI is interested in how Canadian agriculture can remain competitive and agile by better leveraging its R&D capacity. 



VIABILITY

The future of Canadian agriculture depends on a productive, viable and profitable sector.

Leadership Panel on Viability

The Problem: In Canada, government agricultural program payments cost several billions of dollars annually. The payments vary across the sector and over time but the demand for financial support is significant and seemingly “perpetual.” In the face of lower-cost producing countries, Canada’s position as a leading exporter is falling (down from 5th to 9th since 2002) and Canada’s negotiating position in international trade continues to come under pressure. The economics of certain commodity sectors is facing severe strain.

THE CHALLENGE:

Should we change the way we support the sector?

The Opportunity: We need to consider changing the way we support the agriculture/agri-food sector. Demand for commodity foods will continue to increase in the coming decades, particularly as niche markets grow. Canada has the capacity to play a major role in both markets. But Canadian governments need to modernize the way they structure and fund their program models. Several policy issues need to be addressed, such as the affordability of government funding and the economic models and marketing structures that support

Canada’s agricultural sector. A viable sector means producer profitability that does not rely on “perpetual” government support.

... It’s about:

The optimum economic model(s) for Canada.

Opportunity:

Demand for commodity foods and niche markets will increase and Canadian agriculture has the capacity to play a substantial role in both markets. To position the country for the future, Canada needs to assess the adequacy of program data and assess the way it structures/funds its programs.

Near-term plan:

Assess programs protecting farms against different types of risks and policies aiming to improve farm income.

First phase of research and consultations: Spring 2010.

Second phase: Fall 2010, early 2011.

Research Program: A series of short papers is being produced to clarify certain agricultural policy issues, such as the structure of farm incomes and the objectives of farm programs. In addition, CAPI is undertaking a set of more detailed papers, including research to examine farm performance through the clarity offered by disaggregating farm data. Our work will assess how the calibre of policy-making would benefit, or not, from better farm performance measures. CAPI will also assess the pertinent factors impacting farm competitiveness that should help shape future farm programs or policies. The research will also evaluate current farm income stabilization programs and establish a clear methodology for evaluating program successes in the future. With these results, CAPI will conduct workshops with stakeholders in 2010 to elicit feedback and produce policy options.