

# Canada Must Move Now to Unleash Economic Growth in the Agri-Food Sector

## New report calls on federal government to create Agri-Food Growth Council

TORONTO, April 20, 2017 — Canada's agri-food leaders want Prime Minister Trudeau to create an Agri-Food Growth Council to focus on actions that will unleash growth in the industry, according to the [\*Canada as an Agri-Food Powerhouse\*](#) report, released today by the Public Policy Forum (PPF) and the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI).

The report is a summary of roundtable discussions held in March 2017 with more than 150 agri-food stakeholders across Canada. It builds on the February 2017 report issued by the Minister of Finance's Advisory Council on Economic Growth which emphasized the potential for Canada to become "the trusted global leader in safe, nutritious and sustainable food for the 21st century."



"The stakeholders we talked to made it clear — the agri-food sector needs to be a national economic priority. Establishing an Agri-Food Growth Council that reports to the centre of government and includes leaders from across the broader food system has the potential to drive this growth agenda, triage and resolve issues, and galvanize this diverse sector around a common vision," said David McInnes, special advisor to the board and former CEO of CAPI. "We heard repeatedly that the potential for inclusive growth is enormous, especially if we put a strong emphasis on the greater societal benefits delivered by Canada's agri-food sector, such as improved nutrition and environmental sustainability."

The report also calls for the creation of an inter-departmental agri-food task force, to improve alignment within government and resolve priority regulatory obstacles. Following are some of the most common comments from stakeholders during the roundtable meetings:

- The aspirational vision — being the trusted global food leader – should be the lens through which all relevant policies and strategies are assessed.
- The responsiveness of our regulatory system should be made a comparative advantage that ensures both consumer protection and a nimbler, modernized regulatory environment. This would help encourage investment, innovation and competitiveness.
- While export growth must be prioritized, there are also opportunities to drive significant growth domestically, particularly among small and medium enterprises. This requires swift action on internal trade barriers.
- Delivering co-benefits – enhancing health and natural capital – is crucial to building public trust and strengthening our global food brand.

"Our trusted food brand, leading-edge technology and responsiveness to changing consumer trends put Canada in a strong position to satisfy the appetite of the world's growing middle class for high-quality food. With an empowered sector, better alignment and bold actions, Canada can seize this opportunity to be a global agri-food superpower," said Edward Greenspon, Public Policy Forum president and CEO. "The agri-food sector can unleash significant economic growth and deliver broad societal benefits for decades to come. Now is the time to make it happen."

### **Canada as an Agri-Food Powerhouse**

In February 2017, the Advisory Council on Economic Growth, established by the Minister of Finance, released its second wave of recommendations, which emphasized the potential for Canada to become "the trusted global leader in safe, nutritious and sustainable food for the 21st century." Using the Advisory Council's report as a starting point for discussion, the PPF and CAPI partnered on a coast-to-coast consultation convening roundtables in Charlottetown, Montreal, Ottawa, Guelph, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary and Vancouver to hear from more than 150 sector leaders and stakeholders. This report is a summary of those discussions. The report is available [here](#).

### **About Public Policy Forum**

The PPF works with all levels of government and the public service, the private sector, labour, post-secondary institutions, NGOs and Indigenous groups to improve policy outcomes for Canadians. As a non-partisan, member-based organization, the PPF works from "inclusion to conclusion," by convening discussions on fundamental policy issues and identifying new options and paths forward. For 30 years, the PPF has broken down barriers among sectors, contributing to meaningful change that builds a better Canada. For more information, visit [www.ppforum.ca](http://www.ppforum.ca) or follow us on Twitter: [@ppforumca](https://twitter.com/ppforumca)

### **About The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute**

As an independent, non-partisan policy catalyst, CAPI brings insight, evidence and balance to emerging issues. CAPI provides a neutral place to hold dialogues and generate perspectives among leaders across the food system. For more information, visit [www.capi-icpa.ca](http://www.capi-icpa.ca) or follow us on Twitter: [@CdnAgriFood](https://twitter.com/CdnAgriFood)

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