

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



2020–2021:

A year of content, connections and communication

CAPI's research plan, like much of the rest of the world had to adjust when COVID-19 began to disrupt much of the work it does. This Annual Report reflects the outcomes of the revised research plan and the changes CAPI underwent through 2020–2021.

CAPI's updated 2020–2021 research agenda focused on its Creating Prosperity from Chaos work plan which culminated in the Big Solutions Forum (BSF) held in May 2021. Initially, the chaos referred to disruptions in global trade, the sustainability of agri-food systems, and food security. However, chaos took on a new meaning when the pandemic began, impacting the health and wellbeing of all and bringing a chaotic "new normal" to our daily lives.

The goal of the Creating Prosperity from Chaos work plan was to develop practical policy alternatives aimed at securing the future success of the Canadian agri-food industry by tackling the joint wicked problems of sustainably and profitably feeding the growing world population while addressing climate change, conserving our natural capital, and protecting the global commons in an increasingly unpredictable, volatile, and multi-polar global environment. In other words, CAPI aimed to identify solutions

for how to "do more and better with less". At the same time, CAPI was seeking answers on "how to build a more resilient, sustainable and prosperous agri-food system in a post pandemic world."

CAPI strives to connect all of its work through its interdisciplinary approach, which draws expertise from across academia, farming, food production, government, and civil society to conduct policy research, analysis, and development. That interdisciplinary approach also demonstrates the interconnectedness of the opportunities and threats that the food system faces.

CAPI's approach to policy research includes a variety of methods to maximize the impact it has on agri-food system policy development. These methods include fellowships, research, dialogues, public events, partnerships (and funding) and communications. The activities under each method are described below.

HIGHLIGHTS

7

Reports Released

2,600+

Mailing List Subscribers

1,390+

Webinar Views

7

Dialogues

59

Media Mentions

11,000+

Website Visitors

128

Participants at Dialogues

6

Webinars

4,000+

Downloads

1. CRITICAL RESEARCH

Research continues to be the foundation of all of the work that CAPI does. This research is conducted and communicated in a variety of ways: fellowships, commissioned research, dialogues, public events, and partnerships.

In 2020–2021 CAPI launched a series of research projects focused on four themes under the Creating Prosperity from Chaos workplan– i) Prosperity through increased trade and international cooperation; ii) through the development of green growth technologies and practices; iii) by investing in value-added in Canada; and iv) by improving efficiency and sustainable intensification in agriculture. While the research began in 2020–2021, some of the results were released in 2021–2022.

1.1 Foundational Fellowships

CAPI also strives to strengthen future research capacity by investing in young scholars through its Doctoral Fellows program. In the Fall of 2020 CAPI launched the second cohort of Doctoral Fellows with a focus on Sustainability and Resilience in Canadian Agricultural Soils, a topic that contributes directly to the Sustainable intensification. The four Doctoral Fellows are an interdisciplinary group from universities across Canada. In year one of the Doctoral Fellows Program the Fellows worked on individual reports that were released in summer 2021. The reports varied from cover cropping on the Prairies, to flooding in agricultural lands in Quebec, to soil conservation practices for long-term productivity and climate change mitigation, to natural climate solutions in Canada's agricultural sector.

1.2 Relevant Research

Specific research was undertaken to address the impact of the pandemic on the Canadian agri-food system. The pandemic raised awareness of the vulnerability of the agri-food system and the desire and need for increased local processing in Canada. CAPI explored this topic by commissioning a study on the Feasibility of Small Local Meat Packing Plants in Canada. The research findings were then shared with stakeholders during a Dialogue who reacted to the research findings and contributed to additional policy analysis and development. Key conclusions were that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to improve resilience, but a combination of both large and small processing capacity can make the system more robust, and greater resilience will depend on open borders, an enhanced investment environment and greater supply chain cooperation.



*The Research Report
is available here.*



*The What We Heard Report
is available here.*



Another important research piece that had been initiated in late 2019 and continued into 2020–21 was commissioned research into Chronic Wasting Disease, a disease of cervids, that presents risks to animal, environmental and human health, food security, indigenous communities, local economies, and agricultural trade. The research was shared with stakeholders during a Dialogue in February 2021. The final report was released in June 2021 along with a What We Heard Report from the February dialogue. Key recommended actions included i) launching a national conversation among key rightsholders and stakeholders to develop a pan-Canadian approach around controlling the spread; ii) improving the governance of zoonotic diseases using a One Health approach across key stakeholders; iii) allocating greater resources for research, testing, surveillance, and monitoring; iv) introducing zoning and buffer zones; and v) finding creative solutions for remediation on contaminated farms.

1.3 Dynamic Dialogues

Dialogues are a meaningful way for CAPI to engage a variety of key stakeholders on critical issues facing the agri-food system. The Dialogues are grounded in policy analysis and research that requires input and insight from stakeholders and an honest unbrokered discussion. Held under Chatham House Rules, they allow participants to offer a full range of perspectives and analysis, which ultimately lead to more informed policy recommendations and strategic advice to industry and government.

As the world became virtual during the pandemic, Dialogues became an important tool for CAPI. A total of five dialogues were held during 2020–2021, exploring various issues and themes as part of the Creating Prosperity from Chaos work program along with other priority research areas. Some covered the impacts of COVID on the sector, green growth in agriculture, food autonomy in Quebec, Chronic Wasting disease and the feasibility of small local meat packing plants in Canada.

At the outset of the pandemic, CAPI convened its first virtual dialogue on April 3, 2020, to learn more about how the sector was faring in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in the short term, as well as to identify key issues towards longer-term solutions for the future resilience of the sector.

The What We Heard report from the April 3, 2020 Dialogue can be found [here](#). It was concluded that the Canadian agri-food system though vulnerable, responded relatively well, especially once declared essential. Yet weaknesses became evident related to labour, border issues, and emergency preparedness, calling for greater cooperation across governments, inspectors, and supply chain partners.

Other Dialogues held during 2020–2021 are described under Engaging Events & Productive Partnerships.

1.4 Engaging Events

In addition to invite-only dialogues, CAPI held a series of six public webinars throughout 2020–21 and early 2021 to increase our knowledge and understanding under the four themes of the Creating Prosperity from Chaos research plan. Webinars were used to engage a broader variety of perspectives on key topics, connecting research and strategic thinking with a broader audience, including the general public.

On February 5, 2021, CAPI held a webinar titled The New Frontier – Investing, Sustainability and Value-Added that explored the impact that environment, social and governance (ESG) investing is and can have on the agri-food system. Attended by over 300 people from across the industry, we heard from four prominent agri-food industry leaders who discussed the challenges and opportunities facing the agriculture and agri-food industry including the factors driving investment in value-added and sustainability. The discussion was followed by a brief question and answer session. The webinar can be watched [here](#).

In early March, CAPI convened a webinar series on sustainable intensification, titled More and Better with Less: Sustainable Intensification in Agriculture. Increased intensification is necessary not only for ensuring we can feed the world while meeting climate change goals, but also for farm profitability and sector incomes in both developed and developing countries, a conclusion reached in previous years' CAPI research on optimizing growth.

The first webinar explored the science of sustainable intensification. The second explored the threats and opportunities on the agri-food system.



1.5 Productive Partnerships

Policy research, analysis and development is more effective when it is done as part of a broad and engaged network. CAPI undertook two significant projects with partners as part of an ongoing effort to develop stronger partnerships across the sector.

In the early days of the pandemic, the Growing Stronger project emerged, as CAPI teamed up with the Arrell Food Institute (AFI), along with a large interdisciplinary network of advisors to gather evidence on what happened to the Canadian food system during the pandemic. We heard directly from producers, processors, food security experts and Indigenous communities on how the impact of the pandemic was felt along the whole agri-food system.

CAPI held a series of Dialogues as part of its contribution to the project, including one on Prosperity through Green Growth and Agri-Food Technologies for a Resilient Recovery and another on Food Autonomy, Local and Global Systems.

This was a national, lessons-learned exercise that provided policy recommendations to ensure that the Canadian food system is robust against future threats. Engagement revealed some key strategies and recommendations found in the final report: addressing the root causes of insecurity must be core to any post-pandemic strategy, the agri-food sector must be positioned as a driver of green growth in order for Canada emerge stronger, and need for silos to be broken down and further collaboration encouraged between all stakeholders.

This report has been cited in various media reports and even by the OECD in its recent “Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Report, 2021”.

During the summer of 2020, CAPI partnered with its US counterpart the Farm Foundation to host a two-part dialogue series, focused on global food and agricultural trade and its importance for sustainability and food security. Day One focused on the Future of the Multilateral System and Day Two focused on Sustainability and Efficient Trade.

The outcomes of those Dialogues, other work done in partnership with the Farm Foundation as well as CAPI’s own work led to a series of findings and recommendations released in late 2020. Key CAPI recommendations focused on Canada: i) forging strategic alliances with “like-minded” partners who will work to promote rules-based trade, ii) leveraging existing trade agreements (e.g. CPTPP) to expand trade in agriculture and agri-food products, iii) ensuring that future trade agreements include provisions valuing the sector’s contribution to fighting climate change and promoting environmental sustainability and iv) investing in intelligence-gathering on markets and geopolitical trends that impact the sector. The recommendations were shared with senior officials and industry leaders during Dialogues in October 2020.



2. INCREASING COMMUNICATIONS

Over the course of FY2020–2021 CAPI made a concerted effort to increase and improve its communications and outreach.

This included launching CAPI's monthly newsletter, The CAPI Connection, in early 2021. All issues of The CAPI Connection can be found on CAPI's website.

CAPI also increased outreach through traditional and social media to connect its research with a broader audience. CAPI has continued to steadily increase its presence on social media and has become progressively active on Twitter and LinkedIn. CAPI has sent out 23 email blasts to our stakeholder list of over 2600 stakeholders announcing CAPI webinars, newsletter and commentary on current events.

It's staff and partners have also been featured in a variety of media across Canada including: Radio Canada International, Western Producer, iPolitics, EconoTimes, TELUS Talks, Ontario Farmer, Farmtario, and National News-watch. In total CAPI generated 59 pieces of media coverage in FY2020–2021. The high point in media engagement came in summer of 2020 with CAPI's involvement in the Growing Stronger project with partner organization the Arrell Food Institute.

3. THE BIG SOLUTIONS FORUM

Most of the research conducted in 2020–2021 led to events in the subsequent fiscal year.

This included the Creating Prosperity from Chaos program, which culminated with The Big Solutions Forum (BSF) in May 2021.

The first day of the BSF was an invite-only pre-Dialogue with participants from industry, academia and government. The Dialogue included a presentation from Professor Christopher Barrett on bundling innovations to transform food systems and from CAPI that outlined the conclusions reached from the year-long program and challenged participants to think of creative solutions. On May 20th, the final day of the BSF, we heard perspectives from five Deputy Ministers and five industry leaders on the future of Canada's agri-food system in light of CAPI's conclusions and findings from the pre-Dialogue.

CAPI'S CONCLUSIONS WERE:

- The Canadian agri-food system has great potential and the capacity to contribute to sustainable food production, global food security and climate change solutions while improving its competitive advantage.
- The biggest and relatively untapped opportunity is in our ability to use multidisciplinary knowledge to create solutions.



The Executive Summary is here



CAPI's Presentation Report can be found here



The Pre-dialogue Summary Report is available here



The What We Heard May 20th Report is available here.

CAPI identified **four key actions** that are required to
CREATE PROSPERITY FROM CHAOS



4. FUND DEVELOPMENT

CAPI has been moving to diversify its funding model for several years. Those efforts increased substantially in 2020–2021. In September 2020 CAPI engaged its first Fund Development officer and began to aggressively pursue new opportunities for public, private and philanthropic funding.

The work by the fund development team has included developing new partnership opportunities, materials that promote CAPI and the incredibly important work that it does, identifying potential funders and developing a team of volunteers to be the front line of CAPI's fundraising efforts.

CAPI now works alongside the Canadian Agri-Food Foundation (CAFF), see below for more information on CAFF.

CAPI would like to acknowledge the work of that fundraising team, including the Directors, past and present, that are engaging current and prospective partners to increase support for neutral, independent policy analysis and development and are putting CAPI on solid footing for the future.

The results of the focus on fund development are having a positive impact on CAPI.

In 2020–2021 CAPI would like to acknowledge the following partners who supported CAPI financially:



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada



GLOBAL INSTITUTE
FOR FOOD SECURITY
Nutrien - a Founding Partner



The work in 2020–2021 is having an impact in 2021–2022. The partnerships continue to increase and CAPI looks forward to reporting the results of that work in next year's Annual Report.

The Canadian Agri-Food Foundation (CAFF) is a non-profit charitable organization incorporated under the laws of Canada. CAFF is governed and run by a four-person voluntary Board of Directors. It operates at arms-length and independent from the structure and authority of the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI). Directors are in support of the goals, objectives, and policies of CAPI.

The objective of the Foundation is to promote excellence in the agriculture and agri-food industry in Canada for the benefit of the public by:

- conducting research on best practices related to the agriculture and agri-food industry and disseminating the results of the research to the public, industry stakeholders, the policy research community and the federal and provincial governments;
- conducting research and sharing results on existing and emerging issues in the agricultural sector;
- developing and assessing balanced, unbiased alternative to issues in the agricultural sector; and
- providing industry stakeholders advice and a third-party perspective when agricultural policy decisions are made.

5 ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The primary objective for CAPI's administration and finance continues to be to support CAPI's research activities. This work includes supporting the logistics of CAPI events, coordinating research agreements, administering CAPI's contribution agreement with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and other relevant administrative work.

CAPI's FY2020-21 audited financial statements conclude the Annual Report. The audited statements provide an overview of CAPI's position over the year, including the breakdown of Research and Administration expenses. CAPI's Contribution Agreement with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provides for up to 30% of expenses to be related to Administration. In FY2020-21, CAPI's Administrative expenses were approximately 25% of total expenses. The Audited Financial Statements include all other information required under Article 10 of the Contribution Agreement.