



Canadian
Horticultural
Council

Conseil
canadien de
l'horticulture

The voice of **Canadian fruit and vegetable growers.**
La voix des **producteurs de fruits et légumes du Canada.**

April 6, 2020

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Marie-Claude.Bibeau@parl.gc.ca

Re: Canada's fruit and vegetable growers need support now to ensure food supply into the future!

Sent via email.

Dear Minister Bibeau,

Continuing from my letter one week ago, we need to follow up on the urgent need for supports to fruit and vegetable growers. As I had stated, Canadian food supply is at risk.

Without the much-needed supports, Canadians' supply of fresh, processed and frozen produce this year and into subsequent years is under severe threat. While our domestic supply will dwindle, so too will our imports as our trading partners grapple with the same challenges.

The time to act is now if we are to ensure growing operations can continue and our food supply can be maintained.

We appreciate the great efforts of government in exempting international agricultural workers from travel restrictions, and fully support all the government requirements for isolation of workers upon arrival and guidelines for keeping workers safe. However, the ongoing delays have created intense anxiety for many growers.

At this very moment, growers are making critical decisions about their business: what to plant, how much to plant - or if they will plant at all. Greenhouse growers have the imaginable choice to get workers or remove sections of their crop while it is heavy with fruit. They wonder how they can possibly recover the costs of production when there is so much uncertainty of what the future holds.

As each day passes, more and more growers are deciding that they cannot bear the risks and will not be planting, or will be significantly reducing their volume.

We can already see the effects: A Quebec grower who normally provides 40 percent of Canadian field green peppers has already cut his production by 20 percent. In Nova Scotia, an onion grower has been seriously considering cutting his acreage in half, a 700,000-pound loss of product. There are numerous other examples.

We need immediate government assurance that growers will receive support if the labour situation becomes untenable mid-season or at harvest. Our growers want to do their part to grow food for

Since • Depuis 1922

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Canadians. It's what we do best. But we can't fairly be expected to do so without any assurance that Canada will back them in the face of this unprecedented uncertainty.

We provided details of our recommendations in the letter sent March 31 (attached), including the recommendation for immediate financial support to alleviate the impact on employers from the required 14-day isolation period. The letter also included specific recommendations for improvements to the Business Risk Management (BRM) program. We do not believe another type of loan will be the solution.

Growers cannot wait any longer.

Fruit and vegetable production, under normal circumstances, is full of risk. And under these unprecedented circumstances, growers, now more than ever, need to know that their government has their back. Government has shown its ability to implement rapid support for other vulnerable sectors of the economy. It's time to show the same support for farmers who are putting their livelihoods on the line to feed the country.

Sincerely,



Brian Gilroy
President
Canadian Horticultural Council

Cc:

The Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister
The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, British Columbia
The Honourable Devin Dreeshen, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta
The Honourable David Marit, Minister of Agriculture, Saskatchewan
The Honourable Blaine Pederson, Minister of Agriculture, Manitoba
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ontario
L'honorable André Lamontagne, Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation, Quebec
The Honourable Ross Wetmore, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, New Brunswick
The Honourable Keith Colwell, Minister of Agriculture, Nova Scotia
The Honourable Bloyce Thompson, Minister of Agriculture and Land, Prince Edward Island
The Honourable Gerry Byrne, Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources, Newfoundland and Labrador

Attachments:

CHC_Hon. Min. Bibeau_Support for FFV.pdf