

June 30, 2021

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food  
1341 Baseline Road Tower 7, Floor 9, Room 149  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

The Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., C.C., C.D., M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
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Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0G2  
Canada

The Honourable Karina Gould, P.C., M.P.  
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Dear Ministers,

In 2015, Canada adopted the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – 17 important goals aimed at ensuring a better, more sustainable future for our planet. Recognizing the centrality of agriculture and food and the Decade of Action for delivering these goals, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called for a Food Systems Summit in 2021 to seek transformative action and wide-spread commitment to change. Momentum has been building worldwide and will culminate at the UN General Assembly meeting this September (Summit date to be determined).

The Food Systems Summit provides a unique opportunity to engage on the different dimensions of sustainability - people, planet, and profit - and to establish meaningful actions to collectively chart the future for agriculture and food. Signatories to this letter provide the inputs, grow, raise, process, market and distribute Canada's supply of grains, animals, fresh produce and food and beverage products. Canada's agriculture and agri-food is a major contributor to the Canadian economy responsible for one in eight Canadian jobs and over seven percent of the GDP (2018). Our sectors have advanced significantly over the last few decades, and are leaders in sustainability, innovation, and safe and nutritious food. We recognize that further advances are critical to create a more sustainable future but believe this leadership must be leveraged as an important foundation to inform these advances.

We each have a role to play in shaping our food systems and our sectors look forward to playing our part. Canada has a strong agriculture and food base that offers various solutions on which to build and improve to address the challenges we face domestically and internationally. The UN's pursuit of better systems is noble, but the outcomes should consider existing measures, thereby reflecting inclusivity,

complementing the work of others, and avoiding unintended or negative consequences - all of which are established Food System Summit Principles for Engagement.

Canada's plant, animal and food sectors are committed to working with the Government of Canada to ensure a coordinated, clear response that showcases Canada as a leader in innovation and sustainability. With the July 26 to 28 Pre-Summit fast approaching and the expectation that it will set the stage for September's meeting,

The Food System Summit must embrace the following priority solutions.

- 1) **Embrace science and innovation.** *The Food Systems Summit must adopt science-based approaches and fully embrace innovation as a lever of change.* Innovation will drive the transformations required to address the challenges faced by our food systems. It provides new knowledge, tools and practices that are integral to advancing the five Action Tracks – 1) ensure access to safe, nutritious food; 2) shift to sustainable consumption patterns including food waste and loss; 3) boost nature positive agriculture; 4) advance equitable livelihoods; and 5) build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress. Accelerating access to best management practices (i.e., 4R nutrient stewardship, sustainable grazing practices, precision agriculture, integrated pest management, food packaging innovation) and cost-effective innovation and technology will empower food system decision-making and advance sustainable production throughout our respective value chains.
- 2) **Recognize an effective, resilient trade ecosystem.** *The Food Systems Summit must support a resilient trade ecosystem to ensure stable food supplies and food security.* Canada needs both a global perspective, as well as a national one. Complementary to strong regional and domestic markets, international trade will play a central role in addressing some of the challenges experienced by our food systems. Trade connects farmers, processors, and food manufacturers to multiple market opportunities, creates resilient value chains, and ensures a diversified agriculture and food sector. Resilient trade ecosystems require predictable rules of trade, recognition of global standards for food safety, such as Codex, and initiatives to facilitate trade.
- 3) **Champion sustainable agriculture and production practices.** *The Food Systems Summit must recognize and leverage existing sustainability practices and leadership to offer solutions that ensure our competitiveness while enabling a framework for further improvements.* Canada's agriculture and food sectors are committed to producing sustainable food and to being partners in Canada's climate change goals. We employ various practices that advance nature positive agriculture, and many of our sectors have developed or are working on sustainability indexes and measurements to further enhance our contributions. For example, farmers employ best management practices and precision technology to reduce and recycle carbon lowering greenhouse gas emissions; to manage inputs ensuring efficient use of resources; and to reduce food loss maximizing available production.
- 4) **Focus on outcomes, not prescriptive solutions.** *The Food Systems Summit must reflect the complexity and multifaceted nature of our food systems, and that no one solution will advance the Sustainable Development Goals.* Agriculture and agri-food occurs locally and the environment, weather, culture, infrastructure, and farm practices can differ both within Canada and especially globally. Any outcome must respect different contexts, farm and

business sizes and types, and practices. Advancing singular production practices and tools fails to recognize their contribution and detracts from the larger goal of bettering our food system, ensuring balanced nutrition, and addressing food insecurity.

- 5) **Take into account the importance of all proteins.** To achieve the goals of improving global food security, the Summit must recognize the importance of all protein sources. Healthy eating and sustainability are both all about balance – animals and plants have a symbiotic, complementary relationship in terms of both the environment and human health and nutrition. Canada’s position should reflect the importance of all proteins, that both animal and plant-based protein sources contribute to healthy nutritious diets.
- 6) **Respect an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach.** *The Food Systems Summit must respect multi-stakeholder inclusivity, and the Secretary General’s intended purpose of holding a “people’s summit”.* Canada’s approach needs to adequately represent the different stakeholders that comprise our food systems. Our associations have all engaged in Summit preparations - hosting or participating in dialogues, advancing game changing solutions, working to elevate farmers’ voice or through membership in a global association – and would welcome further inclusion in the Canadian process.

In conclusion, our respective associations are calling on the Government of Canada to champion a coordinated and representative Canadian approach to the Food Systems Summit and increased leadership to advance the above priority solutions. Canada’s statement to Summit leadership in July should acknowledge the role Canada’s plant, animal and food sectors plays in ensuring a sustainable, resilient, and efficient food system. We would welcome the opportunity for a small group of our representatives to meet with you and your offices to further discuss and ensure Canadian agriculture is well positioned for the Summit and beyond. Additionally, we look forward to further collaboration on mutual sustainability goals, bettering the food system and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature page follows]

CC: The Honourable Mary Ng, P.C., M.P., Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade  
The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P., Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Chris Forbes, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Leslie MacLean, Deputy Minister of International Development  
Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs  
John Hannaford, Deputy Minister of International Trade  
Christine Hogan, Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Natasha Kim, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy Branch, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada



Curt Blades, Senior Vice President,  
Ag Services and Safety & Product Leadership

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Bob Lowe, President

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Mary Robinson, President

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Brian Bilkes, Chair

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Rick White, President & Chief Executive Officer

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Jim Everson, President

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Tyler Bjornson, Executive Vice-President

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Rebecca A. Lee, Executive Director

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Rick Bergmann, Chair



Ron Lemaire, President



Dean Dias, Chief Executive Officer



Benoît Fontaine, Chair



Pierre Petelle, President & CEO



Pierre Lampron, President



Roger Pelissero, Chair



Karen Proud, President & CEO



Kathleen Sullivan, CEO

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Erin Gowriluk, Executive Director

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Ryan Greir, Chair

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Greg Cherewyk, President

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Darren Ference, Chair

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Michael Graydon, Chief Executive Officer

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Casey G. Vander Ploeg, Vice President

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Bill Greuel, CEO

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Ellen Sparry, President

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