



PRESS RELEASE

CPMA leads successful government advocacy event, presses for free and fair trade and food security

June 10, 2026 (Ottawa, ON) — The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) held its 2026 Fresh Future Conference yesterday, a refreshed spring advocacy event that builds on the success of previous Farm to Plate events. The Fresh Future Conference took place in Ottawa and brought together produce industry leaders, Parliamentarians and government officials to address two critical challenges impacting both Canadians and the produce supply chain.

- **Fresh produce trade:** As the CUSMA/USMCA joint review deadline approaches, produce industry members advocated for a robust North American free trade agreement that safeguards the significant gains made for our industry and maintains tariff-free trade for all fresh produce commodities.
- **Investment in critical food security infrastructure:** CPMA members urged the Government to strengthen the entire Canadian agri-food value chain and ensure that all communities across the country have access to a variety of nutritious food by prioritizing the National School Food Program, investing in regional food hubs such as the Ontario Food Terminal, and establishing a dedicated Trusted Trader pilot program for perishable food.

“Canada’s fresh produce industry is an integral part of a global supply chain that is deeply interconnected making international trade essential,” says **David Dubé, CPMA Chair**. “The ongoing trade instability with our largest partner, the United States, puts both Canada’s food security and the long-standing produce trade relationship between the two countries at risk. As the Government reviews the CUSMA agreement, our industry is calling for the protection of free and fair international trade and the removal of regulatory and infrastructure barriers holding back market diversification with other key markets.”

The event also featured a fireside chat between **Ron Lemaire, CPMA President, alongside Steve Verheul and Ken Smith-Ramos, the former chief trade negotiators for Canada and Mexico**, who shared their insights on the future of fresh produce trade in North America. As part of its advocacy efforts, CPMA also hosted a networking reception attended by the Hon. Heath MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, as well as other Parliamentarians, staff and government officials.

CPMA thanks all Parliamentarians, industry members and government officials who attended the 2026 Fresh Future Conference. For further information, [please visit our website](#).



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About the Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that has been supporting a diverse membership made up of every segment of the fresh produce supply chain for over 100 years. CPMA represents more than 900 member companies responsible for 90% of the fresh fruits and vegetable sales in Canada and an industry that contributes over \$18 billion to Canada's GDP annually, supports 188,000 jobs, and improves the health and productivity of Canadians.