



Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

November 18, 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of Canada's fresh fruit and vegetable sector, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) would like to express our thanks for your government's tireless engagement in working with industry throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We greatly appreciate your government's recognition of our sector as essential and the support provided to protect workers and to keep the fresh produce supply chain running. Your commitment is crucial in ensuring that Canadian families can continue to put our safe, healthy, and nutritious products on their tables throughout this crisis and afterwards.

As the pandemic continues to impact us, Canadians can still count on our food supply chain workers to be on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. With that in mind, we would like to emphasize the critical nature of the fresh fruit and vegetable sector to ensure food security and to urge your government to take this into consideration when prioritizing access to vaccination when approved for Canadians. This request is in addition to our request for the availability of rapid testing for essential workers in our sector (e.g. on-farm, packhouses, food distribution).

Once a vaccine for COVID-19 is developed and approved, it is crucial that it be available to all Canadians, with vaccine prioritization among key population groups. We therefore ask that essential fruit and vegetable sector workers and all other food sector workers be considered as one of these key prioritized groups. Health Canada's *Preliminary Guidance on key populations for early COVID-19 immunization*¹ highlights the prioritization of the key groups included in the following paragraph:

The guidance considers prioritizing four groups: 1) Those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19; 2) those most likely to transmit COVID-19 to those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 and workers essential to maintaining the COVID-19 response; 3) those contributing to the maintenance of other essential services for the functioning of society; and 4) those whose living or working conditions put them at elevated risk of infection and where infection could have disproportionate consequences, including Indigenous communities.

As described in Health Canada's guidance, we strongly support prioritizing vaccination for key population groups and believe that food sector workers should be designated among those that contribute to the maintenance of essential services for the functioning of society. During these

¹ Health Canada. *Preliminary guidance on key populations for early COVID-19 immunization*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci.html>



unprecedented times, it is essential that we ensure the continuity of Canada's food supply, especially fresh fruits and vegetables known to be a key part of healthy eating. Prioritizing vaccinations amongst food sector workers is critical to their health and to ensure that agricultural and food supply chains continue to operate.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association

Cc: Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health
Hon. Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement