



PRESS RELEASE

CPMA and CHC Host Successful Virtual Fall Harvest Event with Parliamentarians and Industry Stakeholders

November 9, 2020 (Ottawa, ON), — From November 2-5, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) and the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) hosted virtual meetings with industry representatives and Parliamentarians to discuss the needs and priorities of the fresh fruit and vegetable sector.

Fall Harvest 2020 kicked off with a virtual session with the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. The Minister expressed her support for the industry, and spoke about [three new AgriRisk projects](#) to benefit the sector, totalling \$387,000, as well as the government's work with CPMA under the Surplus Food Rescue Program. The Minister also answered questions from industry participants.

Among the more than 40 officials who met with groups over the course of the week, notable discussions took place with MP Neil Ellis, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food; the Honourable Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Official Opposition; the office of the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food; senior staff at Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), as well as the agriculture critics for the Conservative party, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Quebecois.

The meetings particularly focused on four key issues, including the ways in which they have been made more apparent by the COVID-19 pandemic, and recommended measures for government action to support the fresh produce industry:

- **Ensuring financial Protection** for produce sellers in the case of buyer bankruptcy by implementing a deemed trust mechanism in Canada and restoring access to protection for Canadian produce sellers under the *Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act* in the United States;
- Supporting **sustainability** efforts in the fresh produce sector and working collaboratively to find evidence-based solutions to tackle environmental challenges, including in reducing the use of unnecessary and problematic plastics;
- Addressing short- and long-term **labour** challenges to ensure food security and to maintain the integrity of the food supply chain in Canada;
- Improving **Business Risk Management (BRM)** programs to provide better coverage for growers, particularly through AgriStability and production insurance.

“We are encouraged by the willingness of the more than 60 industry participants, as well as the Parliamentarians and government officials, to adapt to the circumstances of 2020 and ensure that the voices of the Canadian fruit and vegetable sector are heard, even when we cannot meet in person,” said Rebecca Lee, Executive Director of CHC. “Partnership, consultation and cooperation between industry and policy makers will ensure that agriculture plays a key role in Canada’s COVID-19 recovery.”

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A notable addition to this year's Fall Harvest schedule were education panels for Parliamentarians, including *COVID-19 Challenges for Canadian Growers and the Produce Supply Chain* and *The Produce Supply Chain in Your Neighbourhood*. These education panels gave participants the opportunity to hear the first-hand experiences of the Canadian supply chain, and suggestions for meaningful support that would make positive impacts in the Canadian fruit and vegetable industry.

"Collaboration is key to our sector," stated CPMA President Ron Lemaire. "The relationships that we have formed with Members of Parliament, Senators, and many other government officials are invaluable to the success of the Canadian produce industry – and will continue to be so as we navigate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank our members for making our first-ever virtual event such a success."

CPMA and CHC look forward to continuing the conversations that took place online this week with Parliamentarians and ensuring that Canadian fruit and vegetable growers continue to be represented in Canadian policy developments.

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About the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA):

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, CPMA is a not-for-profit organization that represents a diverse membership made up of every segment of the produce industry supply chain who are responsible for 90% of the fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada. CPMA is fortunate to represent a sector that is both a significant economic driver for communities and that also improves the health and productivity of Canadians.

About the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC):

The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) is an Ottawa-based voluntary, not-for-profit, national association that represents fruit and vegetable growers across Canada involved in the production of over 120 different types of crops on over 14,237 farms, with farm cash receipts of \$5.4 billion in 2019. Since 1922, CHC has advocated on important issues that impact Canada's horticultural sector, promoting healthy, safe and sustainable food, and ensuring the continued success and growth of our industry.

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