USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Global Agricultural Information Network

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution **Date:** December 22, 2022

Report Number: CA2022-0039

Report Name: Canada to Develop Its First Sustainable Agriculture Strategy

Country: Canada

Post: Ottawa

Report Category: Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security

Prepared By: Mihai Lupescu

Approved By: Tyler Babcock

Report Highlights:

On December 12, 2022, Canada's federal government launched consultations on its first Sustainable Agriculture Strategy. The Strategy is meant to be a comprehensive tool to provide an integrated and coordinated approach for addressing environmental issues in the agricultural sector. Facilitating the process is an Advisory Committee co-chaired by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, comprised of industry experts, academics, producers, and associations. Comments are accepted until March 31, 2023.

On December 12, 2022, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) announced the launch of consultations to develop a Sustainable Agriculture Strategy (SAS), meant to help farmers "recover quickly from extreme events, thrive in a changing climate, contribute to world food security, while also contributing to Canada's overall efforts to cut emissions".

SAS development will be a collaborative process among a multitude of stakeholders, including provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous communities, and representatives from the agriculture sector. To facilitate public consultations and workshops, there will be an Advisory Committee co-chaired by AAFC and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA). The committee will be comprised of industry experts, academics, farmers, and representatives of associations and non-governmental organizations.

To guide the consultation process, AAFC published a comprehensive Discussion Document. Interested stakeholders can share their input either by completing an on-line survey, or by sending contributions to the following email address: aafc.sas-sad.aac@agr.gc.ca. Comments are accepted until **March 31, 2023**.

The federal government proposes seven principles as foundational in the development of SAS:

- Farmer-focused (considering farmers' needs and concerns, maintaining the economic resilience of farming sector, and recognizing regional diversity and that there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to addressing environment and climate issues)
- Evidence-based (ensuring that decision-making is based on scientific principles, empirical data, accepted methodologies, and professional standards)
- Coordination (among federal and provincial governments, industry, farmers, and other stakeholders)
- Circularity (relying on circular economy principles for an agri-food system that is regenerative and resilient)
- Additionality (complementing existing initiatives by new actions)
- Transparent and accountable (sharing records of decisions and actions with the public)
- Supports Reconciliation (working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to advance their rights and support implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

Additionally, the government lists several benefits pursued in developing and implementing SAS:

- Strengthening collaboration on climate and environment action in the sector
- Supporting the long-term business vitality of the sector
- Proactively managing risk of climate change impacts
- Leveraging economic opportunities for the sector
- Maintaining public trust
- Contributing to Canada's international commitments on environment and climate
- Advancing agricultural research and innovation that support environment and climate outcomes

SAS will focus on five priority issue areas:

- Soil health (recognizing healthy soils as fundamental to the sustainability of agriculture)
- Climate adaptation and resilience (the need for agricultural systems to adapt to a new series of climate change impacts, while considering the interaction with economic and social pressures)
- Water (considering water quality and quantity in agricultural production, and the wider impacts on ecosystems)
- Climate change mitigation (considering agriculture's role in lowering greenhouse gas emissions, increasing carbon sequestration, and reducing food loss and waste)
- Biodiversity (recognizing the need to maintain biodiverse ecosystems when farming, as these ecosystems are, in turn, beneficial for agricultural production)

Finally, SAS is meant to bring climate and environment action on agricultural land under one umbrella, support improved coordination of public and private action, address gaps by informing climate policy and programming, and build upon the current suite of government measures that support environment and climate outcomes in the agricultural sector.

Attachments:

No Attachments.