



2020 Annual Report

Horticulture Strong.
Reflect. Adapt. Persevere.



Canadian
Horticultural
Council

Conseil
canadien de
l'horticulture

The voice of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers



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**Annual
Report**

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Message from the President



Change comes in many forms - new ideas, innovative technologies, and unexpected challenges. For every industry, including agriculture, COVID-19 has been the latest challenge to demand a rapid and monumental shift in the way we do things. Needless to say, we rose to that challenge.

Over the past year, everyone in our sector has worked tirelessly to support the health and well-being of our farms, horticulture, and Canadian food security. For the work you have done, it brings me pride as President of CHC, and I cannot thank you enough.

As you may know, 2021 is the International Year of Fruit and Vegetables. It is a year that we could argue is “our year.” It is a year in which growers, and all those involved in fruit and vegetable production, can be at the forefront of public awareness. It is a year that provides fresh opportunities to look to the future and to reflect, adapt and persevere. It is a year to showcase our strength.

That strength was on full display in 2020. Farmers, international and domestic workers, as well as governments of all levels across Canada, came together. Growers put forward the knowledge, funds, and grit that kept farms in operation and fresh fruit and vegetables on Canadians’ plates. Workers partnered with us to ensure their safety and the safety of surrounding communities. Industry partners also worked with us to lobby government for essential supports and evidence-based policy that would ensure growers had the labour and financial backing they needed to do what they do best – grow Canada’s fruit and vegetables.

Together, all this collaboration has kickstarted the journey toward a new and emerging model for horticulture – a model that has the adaptability and the resilience to survive long into the future. It’s a model that is constantly evolving and adapting, and that will be part of our country’s broader economic recovery. New technologies, processes and policies have emerged that will leave our farms and our sector looking much different than they did at the beginning of 2020.

Nevertheless, at the heart of that new model we will find the same thing – you, the grower. Your work is multifaceted, challenging, and requires steadfast dedication and expertise. That dedication and knowledge is what has allowed our sector to emerge from recent challenges. Of course, we continue to face many obstacles, and we will be tackling those obstacles in partnership with you, and on your behalf. No industry, including our own, will come out of the pandemic unscathed.

Growing fruit and vegetables is certainly not for the faint of heart. But we are still here - and we will continue to be – regardless of the challenges we face.

So, thank you once again. Thank you for your determination, adaptability and perseverance. These qualities will continue to define growers and everyone in our sector as we look to the future.

Sincerely,

Brian Gilroy
President





Message from the Executive Director

This past year was unlike any other. Little did we know, in March of 2020, as our AGM was drawing to a close, that everything was about to change. It was on the last day of our 2020 AGM that the Prime Minister's wife was announced to have contracted COVID-19. That same day, schools across the country began to be shut down. The reality we were about to face began to present itself.

Suddenly, the priorities set by our strategic plan and 2020 AGM resolutions were about to be set aside so that we could face the crises posed by the closing down of our country's borders and the imposition of new restrictions. Most pressing was how to convince government that international farm workers were critical to Canadian agriculture and food security, and that these workers required exemptions from travel bans, allowing them to enter Canada.

The CHC Board quickly established a COVID-19 Task Force, which met on a daily basis to exchange information, analyse it, strategize, and take action. In the early days, we produced many letters to industry partners and politicians, conducted countless meetings and phone calls, and by the end of the first week, we had secured the exemption we had been requesting for foreign workers - but with conditions.

There were new challenges at every turn. Up next was the fight to get the supports farmers would need to be able to make the necessary arrangements to receive and house workers during the mandatory 14-day quarantine. Once again, success was achieved, with the offer of the Mandatory Isolation Support for Temporary Foreign Workers.

Above all, the challenges presented by COVID-19 demanded that we exercise our ability to engage with policy makers and industry

to ensure that Canadians had access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and that growers could continue to do the important work of ensuring the Canadian food supply. We had adapted quickly. Despite the entire CHC staff working from home immediately following our 2020 AGM, we maintained daily operations without interruption as our focus shifted to ensuring the immediate health of our industry and the Canadian food supply.

Nevertheless, it was growers, and our Members, who kept our industry going. For this reason, we feel particularly privileged to have been working on your behalf throughout the pandemic. And for everything you have done - for providing your support, collaboration, insight and expertise, we cannot thank you enough.

Over the past year, fresh challenges have arisen weekly, if not daily. Different groupings of the agriculture sector have joined to collaborate on causes of mutual interest. We have all experienced a new normal of very long work days, weekends sacrificed, our families pulling together to support us in the work, farmers and organization staff working apart - but also together - to do the utmost to ensure the needed supports were in place so that farmers could do their job.



We recognise that those entering their season in early 2020 were the ones to be hardest hit by the learning curve we all had to go through. Those who had expected to be able to sell the previous year's produce were faced with closures of restaurants and food service. Others did not get the workers they needed in a timely fashion. And many growers faced a loss of product because there was no way to get it to those who needed it.

The challenges are not over, but many of them are past us. Throughout the pandemic, we have been heavily involved in advocating for the industry's needs, to keep borders open and the supply chain moving, allow entry of temporary foreign workers, develop and promote safety protocols, urge government to establish funding to lessen financial burdens resulting from the pandemic, and much more. Your active collaboration has made this possible, helping us to act as the unified voice of fruit and vegetable growers across the country, despite the difficulty in having all the answers, all the time.

AREAS OF FOCUS

While our focus constantly evolved as new and unexpected challenges arose, we can group last year's activities into three main areas of focus. These are:

- Ensuring continuation of operations through remote work for staff, Board and working groups.
- Providing constant, timely and helpful communication with Members.
- Ensuring constant and ongoing engagement with government and industry officials.

To support these goals, we put out almost 100 Member notes, nearly twice our usual number. The aim was to do everything we could to keep Members updated at all times, whether it was new information on government policy, available financial supports, or other pressing issues.

We also engaged with government officials, agencies and committees more than ever before. This included six consultation submissions to government, four submissions/testimonies to House of Commons Standing Committees, nine letters written to Federal Ministers and senior government officials, and seven letters to Ministers and

Joint Statements through collaboration within the agriculture sector. We also conducted regular conference calls with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and other government agencies, along with meetings with Minister Bibeau, the Director and Director General of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, and the Minister of Employment and Workplace Development. And finally, we conducted dozens of media interviews and appearances with outlets small and large to advocate for our sector. This included Thompson Reuters, BNN Bloomberg, National



Newswatch and multiple industry publications, such as The Grower. These interviews were integral in building public trust and getting our message out to the public and policy makers, while addressing issues of misinformation.

ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

Advocacy on key issues helped to support the competitiveness of our sector throughout the pandemic and maintain public trust. There were four main areas where we advocated on behalf of growers and our industry - labour and international farm workers, financial protection, business risk management, and food safety. Throughout this report, you will find many details on the specific activities this advocacy entailed.

Of course, areas such as crop protection, trade, and energy and the environment remain important to us. Nevertheless, much of our time over the past year has been specifically focused on engaging with our partners and, in turn, government officials, to ensure that our industry received the support it needed through sound, evidence-based policy and a response to the pandemic that protected food production and supply chains.

Constant and ongoing engagement with government was our focus. While both written letters and submissions played a key role, conference calls and digital meetings with policy makers were also at the forefront of our efforts this year. Early in the pandemic, we were part of daily calls with AAFC and ESDC. Our efforts paid off, as first, one week into the pandemic, from a situation where no international workers were allowed in when government closed the border to everyone, we were successful within a week in getting government to understand the critical need for these workers. They adjusted the regulation and laid out the conditions. Once again, we went to bat for the sector, and succeeded in getting financial support for growers to help pay for the costs of adjusting their housing installations and paying workers during the two-week quarantine. As more and more foreign workers successfully arrived in the country, we continued to engage each week with government officials at all levels and on a variety of issues.

In regard to Business Risk Management (BRM), the federal agriculture minister did put out an offer to the provinces in late November, following pressure put on by agriculture groups, including CHC. The offer, which did not meet all our requests for improvement to the program, was a small step forward, as it included two of our recommendations: the first, removal of the reference margin limits and second, if partially, increasing the percentage of compensation when support is triggered, from 70 to 80 percent. Furthermore, CHC presented last year to develop a diversity index for the BRM programs, putting forth an idea that diversified farms spread risk and should therefore be recognized for that. We received approval to move forward on the first phase of the project, and that has recently initiated.



Additional areas where we engaged government officials included safe and effective housing for foreign workers, and excess food supply that growers were unable to get to market. In our meetings with government officials, we also discussed the need for accurate and evidence-based policy related to the realities of food safety, and the fact that COVID-19 showed no evidence of being a foodborne illness – a major concern for consumers early in the pandemic.

Altogether, our efforts earned us recognition as #6 on The Hill Times' list of Canada's Top 50 organizations speaking to the government on agriculture, highlighting our ability obtain positive change in support of growers. The only organizations ahead of us were livestock and much larger commodity organizations, highlighting the significant impact our comparatively small organization has had on government policy.



LOOKING AHEAD

This year, our look to the future is more near-term than in previous years. Last year, our anticipated areas of focus were:

- climate change, and its impact on crops around the globe,
- global food security, and the shifting challenges of feeding a growing population with shifting consumer expectations and new international trade complications.
- next generation leadership, and the need for succession planning on farms in Canada, and around the world, and,
- public trust in a changing agricultural landscape at a time when consumers want to buy local, while at the same time we are seeing increasing conglomeration and the disappearance of the small, family-owned farm.

While these long-term areas of focus remain important, the immediate health of our industry remains our priority in the face of COVID-19. Right now, this means ensuring the safe and timely arrival of temporary foreign workers, despite new testing regulations for travellers arriving to Canada from other countries. It also means ensuring that we have a voice at the table as governments of all levels plan for economic recovery. Canadian food security and support for growers is an integral part of this recovery, and we continue to engage with policy makers at all levels, on your behalf, to ensure that Canadian Horticulture is top of mind in economic planning.

Because 2020 was a year unlike any other, this year's annual report does a couple things differently.

First, we've included areas in each section where we specifically address COVID-19's impact on our sector. This may include updates on policy or process changes, or work that was put on hold. But each section also includes reference to future opportunities – of which there are many. While the pandemic certainly presented many challenges and forced us to recalibrate expectations over the past year, it hasn't shifted our focus on supporting fruit and vegetable growers by advocating for practical, evidence-based policy from government and effective collaboration across the industry.

Above all, it is time for new beginnings, new strategies, and new opportunities. And it is perhaps timely that such a rebirth of our industry is taking place in the International Year of Fruit and Vegetables. It is a year to capitalize on the work we have done over the past 12 months, and leverage the relationships we have continued to build with policy makers, government officials, and all of you. As the unified, outspoken voice of Canada's fruit and vegetable growers, CHC will continue to work tirelessly on your behalf. It is work that is only possible thanks to your dedication, collaboration and expertise. On behalf of the CHC staff, chairs, Board, Committees, and the COVID-19 Task Force, please know that it is work we have never been more privileged to do.

Rebecca Lee
Executive Director



In Numbers

100

This year, CHC put out nearly 100 Member notes, almost twice the usual number. The aim of communications has been to keep Members updated at all times, whether it's new information on government policy, available financial supports, or other pressing issues.

6

CHC issued six consultation submissions to government in 2020, focusing on areas such as organic standards, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, carbon offset protocols, the USDA consultation on strengthening organic enforcement, plastics, and foreign worker housing.

4

In 2020, CHC put forward four submissions/testimonies to House of Commons Standing Committees on Business Risk Management (BRM) programs, the Canadian response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Pre-Budget 2021 consultations.

9

CHC wrote nine letters to Federal Ministers and senior government officials over the past year. Areas of focus included COVID-related support for fruit and vegetable growers, safe and timely arrivals of temporary foreign workers, mandatory isolation support, the health and safety of workers, and AgriStability.

7

In 2020, CHC sent seven letters to Ministers and joint statements through collaboration within the agriculture sector on issues such as the impact of COVID-19 on farmers and required action from government, changes to BRM programs, the impact of COVID-19 on Clusters activities and proposed recommendations, fees imposed by large grocery retailers which would impact Canadian consumers and food security, Agri-Stability changes, and more.

41

During this year's annual Fall Harvest advocacy event, which was held virtually for the first time, CHC met with 41 Parliamentarians and other key government officials to advocate for the industry's needs and priorities, including efforts to move forward into post-COVID economic recovery.

986

Almost 1,000 people follow CHC on Twitter, many of them policy- and decision-makers or industry leaders. This number represents nearly a 25 percent increase in CHC's followers from last year, and continues to help CHC actively engage with the most influential individuals and organizations in the sector and around the country, in real time.

6,266

CHC has over 6,200 followers on Facebook, many of whom share our content and updates on a regular basis. This following is helping CHC communicate more effectively with growers and the general public around the country, and beyond.

Business Risk Management

Business risk management (BRM) tools are essential to Canada's agriculture – now more than ever. Over the past year, CHC strongly advocated for better federal government support through BRM programs to help growers manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



COVID-19 IMPACT

The financial strain felt by growers in recent years as a result of pest infestation, weather events and market access issues were even further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A lack of a dependable workforce, workplace shutdowns because of outbreaks or quarantines, closures of supply chains and markets, and many more challenges were extremely detrimental to growers across the country, leaving many of them vulnerable without adequate financial protection.

To address this, CHC pushed for better protections for growers through enhancements to AgriStability and AgriInsurance and access to AgriRecovery, as well as putting forward a proposal for a quarantine support program for growers whose operations are impacted by a COVID outbreak. In CHC's advocacy for better BRM programs, CHC presented to the Standing Committee on Finance, and twice to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, as part of their BRM study and their study on the government's COVID-19 response. CHC wrote several letters to federal Ministers, held meetings with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) officials and with the Minister's office, as well as dozens of meetings with Senators and Members of Parliament. A key win for CHC was the federal government allowing for lack of workforce to be deemed an insurable peril under the AgriInsurance program. Unfortunately, not many provinces took the federal government up on the offer.



CHC also worked with other agricultural stakeholders through the AgGrowth Coalition to establish a unified voice in the push for better protections for farmers across Canada who were impacted by the pandemic.

ENHANCEMENTS TO AGRISTABILITY

CHC's biggest push was on increasing both the coverage amount and trigger for AgriStability to 85 percent (up from 70 percent) and the removal of the reference margin limit (RML). In November 2020, CHC saw a partial win as the federal government presented a proposal to the provinces and territories that would see the RML removed and the compensation rate increased from 70 to 80 percent. Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia have all indicated their support for the proposal, meaning agreement from Prairie provinces is now needed for it to move forward. At the time of writing, decisions by these provinces have not been made, though their discussions with the federal government are ongoing.

CHC and allied stakeholders will continue to push for the increase to the trigger as well.

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CHC AGRIRISK PROJECT

In 2020, CHC's AgriRisk project application was approved with funding to start work on its first activity (Activity 1). The objective of the project proposal was to develop a whole-farm producer-paid top-up insurance product for horticulture producers through the creation of a Diversity Index to provide more equitable and representative coverage for diversified farms, filling a gap and complimentary to AgriStability and AgriInsurance.

Activity 1: consists of a risk assessment and measurement of diversity, primarily through research and surveying growers. Once Activity 1 is complete, CHC will explore options for Activities 2 and 3, as described below:

Activity 2: Data Collection, Development of Diversity Index and Alternative Design Concepts

Activity 3: Actuarial Analysis, Rate Development, and Validation with Stakeholders

LOOKING AHEAD

CHC will continue to push for improvements to the BRM suite of programming that reflect the modern needs of Canadian fruit and vegetable growers. CHC looks forward to providing an update to members on the AgriRisk project in our 2021 Annual Report, as work is currently underway.



Crop Protection

Canadian fruit and vegetable growers rely on crop protection products, such as pesticides, biopesticides, and beneficial organisms, to ensure not only the health of crops, but also the safety of Canadians and Canada's overall food security.

Plant health, biosecurity and availability of crop protection tools are all key components to market access and are important to the protection of the environment. CHC develops and advances crop protection management policies and programs that support market access and that promote the economic viability, sustainability, and competitiveness of Canada's fruit and vegetable growers, while providing safe, healthy food to consumers across Canada.

COVID-19 IMPACT

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many action items related to crop protection issues were delayed. Resources at Health Canada were extremely tight, and many of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's (PMRA) resources were redeployed to pandemic activities. Many re-evaluation, registration, and regulatory consultation documents were delayed and/or prioritized according to risk.

In addition, CHC was unable to host or attend field tours, or to be present at meetings in person, but CHC looks forward to resuming those activities as soon as possible. Many working groups, such as the Horticulture Value Chain Round Table, were put on hold while members dealt with pandemic crisis management, and CHC pivoted and showed leadership with COVID-19 crop protection-adjacent issues such as shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), lack of pollinators in early spring due to the initial March lockdowns, and reduced flights and shipments into Canada.



Due to pandemic restrictions in place, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre (PMC) was only able to complete approximately 40 percent of the work that they had planned for 2020. As a result, 60 percent of the minor use trials were pushed forward into 2021, and only 10 projects could be taken on in the 2020 Minor Use Priority Setting Meeting. The PMC has been in frequent communication with CHC's Crop Protection Advisory Group (CPAG) regarding these changes. The 2021 Minor Use Priority Setting Meetings will again be held virtually, but in a modified format to better promote communication and grower input. CHC continues to support the PMC in their critically important work. CHC is lobbying to ensure sufficient budget and resources are dedicated to PMC to address the research backlog caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and support new registrations/uses of both conventional and biological crop protection products, and new pest management strategies that are critical to fruit and vegetable growers.

RE-EVALUATIONS

CHC monitored and/or submitted comments regarding the re-evaluation decisions for fenhexamid, cyromazine, kresoxim-methyl, pyrethrins and piperonyl butoxide, ethephon, mancozeb, linuron, and chlorpyrifos.

CHC also participated in other important PMRA consultations such as new tank-mix policies (PRO2020-01), cyflufenamid import MRL, and the re-evaluation program renewal.

Current Status: Neonicotinoids

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) had expected to publish many of the neonicotinoid proposed and final decisions in 2020. Instead, the new schedule is as follows:

Proposed decisions:

- Special review Squash Bees (Clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam)
 - April-June 2021
- General re-evaluation (clothianidin, thiamethoxam)
 - April-June 2022

Final decisions:

- Special review Aquatic invertebrates (clothianidin, thiamethoxam)
 - April-June 2021
- General re-evaluation (clothianidin, thiamethoxam)
 - April-June 2021

Current Status: Mancozeb

Previously, a final decision for mancozeb was published in June 2018, which allowed 10 foliar applications on potatoes but cancelled uses unanticipated from the proposed re-evaluation published in 2013. In August 2018, thanks in part to CHC's efforts, the PMRA acknowledged the inconsistencies between the final decision and the proposed decision, and revoked its final decision. In October 2018, the 2013 proposed decision was reissued with clarification that all uses were proposed for cancellation. In 2019, CHC worked with registrants and other stakeholders to clarify the needs for mancozeb in Canadian horticulture, and the PMRA published their final decision in November 2020. The following horticultural uses are acceptable for continued use: foliar applications on potatoes (by ground and aerial application), apples, onion, sugar beets, ginseng, field cucumbers, field tomatoes, grapes, pumpkin, squash, melon (including cantaloupe, excluding watermelon), and in-furrow application to onions.

While the end result was not perfect, it was a vast improvement on the proposed decision and due in part to the tremendous cooperation between registrants, growers, stakeholders, and the PMRA. CHC hopes

CHC is lobbying to ensure sufficient budget and resources are dedicated to PMC to address the research backlog caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

that this remains a model for success in future re-evaluations, and thanks all Members who worked so hard to provide information to support continued use.

Current Status: Linuron

The PMRA published the Final Decision for Linuron in November 2020, and continued use on carrots, parsnips, potatoes, asparagus, and shelter belts is acceptable when used according to revised methods.

Current Status: Chlorpyrifos

In December 2020, the PMRA published their final decision on chlorpyrifos, in which all outdoor horticultural uses were cancelled due to environmental risk. Users will have permitted use until December 2023. However, use on garlic for cutworm control was given an additional two-year period of use extension at the lowest labelled rate due to lack of alternatives.

PMRA'S RE-EVALUATION PROGRAM RENEWAL

A PMRA review of the re-evaluation program was initiated in 2018 with the goal of increasing both the efficiency and the effectiveness of re-evaluations. The PMRA conducted Canada-wide consultations on their proposed model in 2019 and 2020, which were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PMRA's proposal for the re-evaluation program renewal is based on three pillars: efficiency, increased surveillance and data, and engagement and transparency. Overall, CHC is pleased with the direction of the re-evaluation program renewal, and CHC hopes that implementation of these improvements will occur in a timely fashion.

DATA COLLECTION & USE

In recent years, it has become clear that the PMRA requires modern Canadian data in order to make informed re-evaluation decisions. Pesticide use information, national surface water monitoring data, and post application worker exposure data is needed in order to make timely science-based decisions on actual Canadian use of crop protection materials.

CHC continues to collaborate with other stakeholders, and to advocate for specific funding to be allocated to the PMRA and PMC to acquire data for regulatory improvements to support science-based decisions.





CROP PROTECTION ADVOCACY

Advocating for crop protection products and the modern regulatory changes growers require was a high priority for CHC in 2020.

CPAG hosted and conducted a Crop Protection lobbying week in January 2021, where CPAG members and CHC staff met with MPs and other government officials to advocate for three core issues:

1. Improving the regulation and re-evaluation of crop protection products by increasing funding to the PMRA;
2. Generation of contemporary data for use in modernized regulation, such as water monitoring data and post application worker exposure data; and
3. Strengthening the Pest Management Centre with critically-needed funding. Both the Minor Use and Pesticide Risk Reduction programs are critical in the registration of new conventional and biological crop protection tools for use on fruits and vegetables.

CANADIAN PLANT HEALTH COUNCIL

The Canadian Plant Health Council was established in October 2018 to implement the plant-focused priorities of the Plant and Animal Health Strategy for Canada, published and endorsed by all partners, including Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture, in July 2017. The 11-member Council brings together FPT governments, academic and industry representatives from the agriculture, forestry and apiculture sectors to work together on preventive approaches and activities to protect forests, agriculture and other plants from pests, diseases and other risks. CHC is the industry co-chair of the Council and participates in the three working groups: Surveillance, Biosecurity and Emergency Response.

In March 2020, the Council suspended activities to allow partners to manage the impacts and challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. By October 2020, plant health partners were able to resume work and

POST APPLICATION EXPOSURE

CHC continues to chair a working group on issues surrounding post application worker exposure and the lack of data currently affecting re-evaluations. Two meetings were held in 2020, and the group continues to advance plans to conduct studies that would support the risk assessment calculations when PPE is used by workers during post application activities, which could potentially reduce re-entry periods.

MAXIMUM RESIDUE LIMITS (MRLs)

CHC continues to participate in the Industry-Government Working Group on MRLs, which focuses largely on the effect of MRL decisions made by the European Union (EU). CHC also consulted and commented on changes to MRLs in the EU and the United States, emphasizing how changes would affect export of Canadian fruits and vegetables. CPAG formed an MRL subcommittee working to determine the effects of the Canadian General MRL (GMRL) on imports after re-evaluation decisions.

CHC attended the MRL Harmonization Workshop in May 2019, which discussed paths to global harmonization, EU pesticide policies and their impact on North American trade, actions at World Trade Organization (Canada signed a letter requesting that the EU re-evaluates its approach to regulating pesticides), the global economic impact of missing and low pesticide MRLs, and Mexico's new pesticide regulations.

CHC continues to chair a working group on issues surrounding post application worker exposure and the lack of data currently affecting re-evaluation.

the Council agreed to extend its work plan for up to an additional year to complete the selected activities. Considerations for the long-term sustainability of the Council has been added to the plan.

Progress report:

	<p>First Comprehensive Understanding of Surveillance and Monitoring Nationwide survey identified surveillance programs, protocols, practitioners and methods of sharing data. Over 50+ practitioners across 10 provinces provided information on 137 different pests across 90 commodities.</p>
	<p>Established Surveillance Communities of Practice Over 70 surveillance specialists joined insect, disease and weed communities of practice and began to share best practices and discuss protocol harmonization for three pest targets: European corn borer, clubroot and <i>Amaranthus</i> spp.</p>
	<p>Biosecurity Survey Ready to Launch A pan-Canadian survey for producers to understand the extent of awareness and uptake of biosecurity practices has been launched: https://calse.voxco.com/SE/93/biosec/?&lang=en</p>
	<p>Draft Multi-Partner Emergency Response Plan Under Development Response plan with flowchart under development to guide multi-partner communication and action in the event of a pest threat, with an accompanying list of key contacts to ensure the right partners are engaged for collective action.</p>
	<p>Building Awareness Through Multiple Webinars Held four national information sessions to report on progress with over 290 participants from industry associations, academia, FPT and municipal governments. Participants voiced their support and appreciation of work completed.</p>

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON INVASIVE SPECIES

The Canadian Council on Invasive Species (CCIS) serves as a national voice and hub to protect Canada from the impacts of invasive species. With members and chapters from all corners of Canada, along with governments and businesses, the CCIS brings people together to build practical solutions to prevent the spread of invasive species. They are governed by a four-chamber board that made-up of governments, businesses, indigenous groups, organizations and chapters to help guide the CCIS in achieving success. CHC sits on the Board of Directors of the Council. Programs to stop the movement

of invasives, such as PlayCleanGo, Clean Drain Dry, Be Plant Wise, and Buy Local Burn Local, remain strong. Invasive Species Action Week is being planned for February and May 2021, as well as the North American Invasive Species Forum 2021, which will be held May 18-20, 2021.



VIRTUAL INDUSTRY & GROWER MEETINGS

CHC attended a number of online conferences and workshops in 2020 to collaborate closely with like-minded organizations. CHC attended the CropLife Canada's Spring Dialogue Days, MRL Harmonization Workshop, PMC's Minor Use Priority Setting Meeting, the IR-4 meeting, Global Minor Use Priority Setting Workshop, Trilateral Stakeholder Workshop and Coordination Meeting (formerly the NAFTA Technical Working Group on Pesticides), and the Toronto Global Forum.

LOOKING AHEAD

CHC will continue to advocate for increased PMRA funding, to be dedicated to improvements to the re-evaluation process, and for re-evaluation decisions to be made with real Canadian data. One of CHC's highest priorities continues to be data collection – how best to collect data and provide it to the PMRA while investigating ways to facilitate proactive data collection. CHC will also continue to advocate for PMC's eroding funding to be restored, so that they can continue their vital work in support of the Canadian crop protection toolbox.

CHC continues to monitor and respond to the increasing number of re-evaluations. Grower feedback, in the form of anecdotes, comments, concerns, or survey responses remain vital to this process, and we have had demonstrated success in some of the final decisions published this year, such as mancozeb. Looking ahead, CHC will continue to work closely with all stakeholders and communicate clearly on unified messages that will be heard and acted upon by the Canadian government.

Ongoing PMRA Proposed Re-evaluation Decisions Impacting Horticulture (updated: Feb 2021) (Forecasted to: March 2022)

FUNGICIDE

Active Ingredient	Kresoxim-Methyl Group 11	Cymoxanil Group 27	Fenhexamid Group 17
Trade Name	SOVRAN Fungicide	CURZATE, TANOS Fungicide	ELEVATE, DECREE Fungicide
Consultation Status	July 16, 2020 PRVD2020-10	Public consultation (cyclical): Nov 2019 Feb 2021	Public consultation (Cyclical): PRVD2020-01 Final Decision expected: Feb 2021
Re-evaluation Category	1	1	1
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture	Acceptable for continues use, with mitigation: Reduced rates and total application numbers, additional PPE		Acceptable for continued use, with mitigation measures: Increased PPE for mixers/loaders/applicator Increased minimum restricted entry interval (REI) from 4 to 12 hours Increased REIs for some post-application activities in cherry & grape
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Apples, Grapes, Pears	Potatoes, Field tomatoes, caneberries	Grapes, Ginseng, Raspberries, Strawberries, Field tomato transplants grown in GH, GH cucumber, GH lettuce, GH tomatoes, GH peppers, GH eggplant, ornamentals

Tebuconazole Group 3	Difenoconazole Group 3	Iprodione Group 2	Fenbuconazole Group 3
FOLICUR Fungicide	INSPIRE Fungicide	ROVRAL, ID Fungicide	INDAR Fungicide
Public consultation (cyclical): Feb 2020 Spring 2021	Public Consultation (cyclical): Feb 2020 March 2021	Public consultation (Special Review): July 2020 March 2021	Spring 2022
1	2		1
Asparagus	Brassica vegetables, Bulb vegetables, Cucurbits, Fruiting vegetables, Potatoes, Chinese artichoke, Jerusalem artichoke, Edible canna, Sweet potato, Pome fruit, Grapes	Apples, Grapes, Pears	Stone fruit, blueberry (highbush)

FUNGICIDE

Active Ingredient	Pyraclostrobin Group 11	Azoxystrobin Group 11	Zoxamide Group 22	Cyprodinil Group 9
Trade Name	HEADLINE, CABRIO, PRISTINE Fungicide	QUADRI Fungicide	ZOXIUM Fungicide	VANGARD, SWITCH Fungicide
Consultation Status	In review phase Date TBD in 2021	In review phase Date TBD in 2021	Public consultation (cyclical): In review phase Date TBD in 2021	Public Consultation (cyclical): June 2020 In review phase Date TBD in 2021
Re-evaluation Category		1	1	1
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture				
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Edible-podded legumes (Group 6A), Succulent shelled beans and peas (Group 6-B), potatoes, blueberries (highbush & lowbush), bulb vegetables, cucurbits, fruiting vegetables, garden beet tops, radish tops, root vegetables, stone fruit, strawberries, berries, Belgian endive, brassica vegetables, grapes, GH cucumbers, GH lettuce, GH peppers, GH tomatoes, leafy vegetables, pome fruit	Succulent shelled pea and bean, potatoes, field tomatoes, sweet corn, ginseng, asparagus, spinach, carrots, daikon, rutabaga, turnip, garden beet, radish, ground cherries, cabbage, cranberries, celery, strawberries, blueberries, sweet potatoes, cucurbit vegetables, GH and outdoor ornamentals	Potatoes, Grapes, Onion (bulb)	Apple, Stone fruit, Grapes, Onions, Strawberries, Blueberries (high and low), Caneberries (Group 13-07A), Carrots, Mustard greens, turnip greens, Cabbage, Crop Group 5B (ripini, bok choy etc), Crop Group 3-07 (garlic, leek, onion, etc), Saskatoon berries, Crop Group 1B (beet, radish, etc), Celery, Ginseng, Spinach, peppers (field), tomatoes (field), Bushberries (Group 13-07B), Low growing berry (Group 13-07G)

HERBICIDE, PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR AND INSECTICIDE

Active Ingredient	Quizalofop-p-ethyl Group 11	Pyriproxyfen Group 7	lambda-cyhalothrin Group 3
Trade Name	ASSURE II, YUMA Herbicide	DISTANCE Insect Growth Regulator	MATADOR Insecticide
Consultation Status	In review phase Date TBD in 2021	PRVD2019-10 Pending Final decision Feb 2021	Jun 23, 2017 Response Submitted Pending Final Decision Mar 2019 Mar 2021
Re-evaluation Category	1		1
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture		Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures	Cancel all Agricultural Uses
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Peas, snap beans, saskatoon berries, rutabagas, cucurbit vegetables	GH ornamentals, GH tomatoes, GH peppers, GH cucumbers, GH eggplants	Apple Peach/Nectarine Strawberry Potato Tomato Corn (sweet) Bulb Vegetables Lettuce (head, leaf) Choke Cherry Brassica Leafy Vegetables (5A) Celery Legume Vegetables (6) Asparagus (ferns) GH Lettuce Sweet Potato Carrot Saskatoon Berry Cucurbit Vegetables (9)

INSECTICIDE AND MOLLUSCIDICIDE

Active Ingredient	Pyrethrins Group 3	Imidacloprid Group 4	Clothianidin (Aquatic Invertebrates) Group 4A	Thiamethoxam (Aquatic Invertebrates) Group 4A
Trade Name	SAFER'S, BUG-X Insecticide	ADMIRE Insecticide	CLUTCH Insecticide	CRUISER, ACTARA Insecticide
Consultation Status	Public Consultation (reg before 1995): PRVD2020-08 March 2021	Nov 23, 2016 Response Submitted Pending Final Decision Dec-2018 Fall-2020 Spring 2021	Special Review Response Submitted July 2018 Pending Final Decision Jan 2020 Spring 2021	Special Review Response Submitted July 2018 Pending Final Decision Jan-2020 Spring 2021
Re-evaluation Category				
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture	Approved uses limited to the crops and uses specifically identified on commercial class labels: GH peppers, blueberry, grape, raspberry, herbs, spices, pears, pinto, snap and wax beans, tomato. Domestic label uses revoked.	Cancel all Agricultural Uses	Cancel all Agricultural Uses	Cancel all Agricultural Uses
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Asparagus, Blueberry, Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Cauliflower, Celery, Cucumber, Eggplant, Grape, Kale, Lettuce, Mustard greens, GH Peppers, Potatoes, Radish, Raspberry, Spinach, Tomatoes, Turnips	Potatoes, Root Veg (1-B), Tuberos and Corm Veg (1-D), Sweet Potato, Leaves of Root and Tuber Veg (2), Leafy Greens (4-A), Leafy Petioles (4-B), Brassica Leafy Veg (5), Legume Veg (6), Fruiting Veg (8), Cucurbit Veg (9), Pome Fruit (11), Stone Fruit (12), Berry -Small Fruit (13-A,B,F,G), Cranberry, Herbs (19-A), Globe Artichoke Seed Treatments In-Furrow GH (drench and irrigation): Tomato, Cucumber, Pepper, Eggplant, Lettuce, Brassica 5A	Potato (Nipsit seed piece treatment), Sweet potato, pome fruit, grape, strawberry, cucurbit vegetables, stone fruit	Sweet corn, beans, peas, cucurbit vegetables, potatoes, leafy vegetables (group 4), brassica vegetables (group 5), fruiting vegetables (group 8-09), apples, crabapples, pear, oriental pear, root vegetables, cane berries, bushberries, cherries, low growing berries, field pepper, GH peppers

Clothianidin (Squash bees) Group 4A	Thiamethoxam (Squash bees) Group 4A	Imidacloprid (Squash bees) Group 4A	Metaldehyde	Pymetrozine Group 9B
CLUTCH Insecticide	CRUISER, ACTARA Insecticide	ADMIRE Insecticide	DEADLINE M-PS Molluscicide	ENDEAVOR, FULFILL Insecticide
Public Consultation (Special Review): Dec 2018 Spring 2021	Public Consultation (Special Review): Dec 2018 Spring 2021	Public Consultation (Special Review): Dec 2018 Spring 2021	Special Review PSRD2020-02	Special Review PSRD2020-04
			Acceptable for continued use with mitigation measures	Cancel all outdoor uses of pymetrozine. GH veg use approved with: max spray vol of 2000 L/ha, additional PPE, revised label statement prohibiting effluent or runoff into aquatic systems
Potato (Nipsit seed piece treatment), Sweet potato, pome fruit, grape, strawberry, cucurbit vegetables, stone fruit	Sweet corn, beans, peas, cucurbit vegetables, potatoes, leafy vegetables (group 4), brassica vegetables (group 5), fruiting vegetables (group 8-09), apples, crabapples, pear, oriental pear, root vegetables, cane berries, bushberries, cherries, low growing berries, field pepper, GH peppers	Potatoes, Root Veg (1-B), Tuberous and Corm Veg (1-D), Sweet Potato, Leaves of Root and Tuber Veg (2), Leafy Greens (4-A), Leafy Petioles (4-B), Brassica Leafy Veg (5), Legume Veg (6), Fruiting Veg (8), Cucurbit Veg (9), Pome Fruit (11), Stone Fruit (12), Berry -Small Fruit (13-A,B,F,G), Cranberry, Herbs (19-A), Globe Artichoke Seed Treatments In-Furrow GH (drench and irrigation): Tomato, Cucumber, Pepper, Eggplant, Lettuce, Brassica 5A	Cabbage, Lettuce, Tomatoes, Caneberries Low growing berries (subgroup 13-07G), ornamentals	GH tomatoes, GH peppers, GH cucumbers, GH eggplant, GH & outdoor ornamentals, leafy vegetables (Group 4), potatoes, highbush blueberries

INSECTICIDE

Active Ingredient	Naled Group 1B	Cyromazine Group 17	Abamectin Group 6
Trade Name	DIBROM Insecticide	GOVERNOR, CITATION Insecticide	AVID, AGRI-MEK Insecticide/ Miticide
Consultation Status	Special Review PSRD2019-02 PSRD2019-03 Response submitted Pending Final Decision Jul-Sep 2021	PRVD2020-02 Response submitted Pending Final Decision Jul-Sep 2021	Public Consultation (cyclical): Jan 2020 Oct-Dec 2021
Re-evaluation Category		1	1
Proposed Decision Impacting Horticulture	Cancel all Uses	Cancel uses on: Potatoes, leafy veg, celery, leafy brassica veg, GH lettuce, cut flowers, GH ornamentals Acceptable uses: Treated green onion seed, mushrooms	
Horticultural Food Uses Proposed to be Impacted	Beans, peas, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, potato, tomato, strawberry, ornamentals, onion, GH tomato, GH cucumber, GH roses and cut flowers, GH eggplant, GH peppers	Potato, GH ornamentals, outdoor ornamentals, GH lettuce, mushrooms, celery, leafy vegetables (group 4), leafy brassicas (group 5B), onions	GH tomatoes, GH peppers, GH cucumbers, Apples, Pears, Caneberries (subgroup 13-07A), strawberries, celery, potatoes, grapes, bulb onions (subgroup 3-07A), green onion (subgroup 3-07B),

Acetamiprid Group 4A	Clothianidin (general) Group 4A	Thiamethoxam (general) Group 4A
ASSAIL Insecticide	CLUTCH Insecticide	CRUISER, ACTARA Insecticide
Public Consultation (cyclical): Feb 2021 Jan-Mar 2022	Public Consultation: June 2020 Spring 2022	Public Consultation: June 2020 Spring 2022
1		
Leafy vegetables, Cole crops (group 5), field tomato, pome fruit, potato, leafy vegetables (group 4), ground cherry, field peppers, stone fruit, strawberries, blueberries (lowbush and highbush), bushberries (group 13-07B), grapes, sweet corn, rutabaga, succulent shelled pea and bean (subgroup 6B), edible podded pea, asparagus, caneberries (13-07A)	Potato (Nipsit seed piece treatment), Sweet potato, pome fruit, grape, strawberry, cucurbit vegetables, stone fruit	Sweet corn, beans, peas, cucurbit vegetables, potatoes, leafy vegetables (group 4), brassica vegetables (group 5), fruiting vegetables (group 8-09), apples, crabapples, pear, oriental pear, root vegetables, cane berries, bushberries, cherries, low growing berries, field pepper, GH peppers

- ***Category 1** re-evaluations have the longest projected timeframes and typically require the submission of information prior to proceeding with updating the risk assessments. Evaluations could include, but are not limited to review of the new studies and the application of revised toxicology endpoints in exposure assessments. In some cases, an active ingredient with a large number of uses, emerging science issues, and/or extensive monitoring data can contribute to the increased level of effort and longer review timeline required to complete a proposed decision document.
- **Category 2** re-evaluations typically do not require additional information to be submitted to PMRA, yet they may include a detailed evaluation of some areas, such as updating a risk assessment using current assumptions or including additional new information in drinking water estimates.
- **Category 3** re-evaluations are those in which all components may be adequately addressed by previous reviews and a detailed new evaluation is not warranted; however, the outcome of a Category 3 re-evaluation could still require that product labels be updated to meet current labelling requirements.

Energy, Environment and Climate Change

The Canadian Horticultural Council works to inform federal policy in regards to energy and fuel, greenhouse gas emissions, water, and climate change. CHC's Energy, Environment and Climate Change Working Group helps to ensure the competitiveness, growth and investments made by growers into research, technology, and infrastructure are acknowledged and supported.



COVID-19 IMPACT

Following CHC's 2019 annual general meeting, there was a goal to include aspects of climate change, and its impact on crops, into advocacy efforts. This included the need for support for rural agricultural infrastructure projects, as well as issues related to the use of plastics. Unfortunately, this was an area of CHC's advocacy that did not receive as much attention in light of the pandemic. Many future opportunities lie ahead in this area as pandemic's impact on the sector becomes less acute.

As CHC focused on immediate issues, such as labour and financial assistance for growers, CHC found itself putting on hold the development of policies and advocacy efforts related to energy, the environment and climate change. CHC recognizes the importance of these files, and is keen to begin work on these areas moving forward. However, there were two important government consultations in 2020, and CHC was pleased to provide comments on them.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA CONSULTATION ON PLASTICS

CHC submitted comments to the Environment and Climate Change Canada Discussion Paper: *A proposed integrated management approach to plastic products to prevent waste and pollution*. As is well known, packaging plays an important role in protecting the safety and integrity of food and in reducing food waste by extending the shelf life of many products. Therefore, CHC emphasized that it is critical for the government to work collaboratively with the sector to find evidence-based solutions that consider the food safety and food security implications of reducing the use of plastics for fresh produce. This includes a combination of education, innovation, and the development of harmonized, efficient and cost-effective recycling collection within communities across Canada that is critical to support a circular economy.

The federal government must commit to putting in place dedicated funding for industry research and innovation to facilitate the transition away from unnecessary and problematic plastics towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly options, as well as recognize and support the efforts already underway.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPING GREENHOUSE GAS OFFSET SYSTEM

CHC also submitted comments to Environment and Climate Change Canada's Consultation: Carbon Pollution Pricing: *Considerations for Protocol Development in the Federal Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Offset System*.

CHC expressed that Canada's GHG offset system needs to provide meaningful recognition of agricultural activities that reduce carbon and should be user-friendly, easy to apply for, and comprehensive. The ability of the offset system to effectively leverage real and quantifiable GHG reductions also needs to ensure farmers, as land and infrastructure owners, understand the opportunity and have access to the financial incentives that offset credit projects can provide.

Therefore, it is important that Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) work together with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and industry stakeholders to ensure that economic stimulus and resources are provided that allows for national and provincial farm organizations and individual farmers to contribute to the protocol and project development and/or management so that on-farm stewardship activities are both recognized and incentivized.

CHC supports a national system of issuing carbon offset credits that includes farming activities that represent real, quantified, verified and unique GHG emissions reductions or removal enhancements.

LOOKING AHEAD

CHC anticipates ramping up advocacy on this file in 2021 as the government focuses on a "green recovery" from the pandemic.

CHC will be an active participant in the next phase of the work on the Canadian agri-food sustainability index, to ensure that the process includes value to producers.

One important issue in particular that CHC will be working on is consulting with the government on the newly created Canada Water Agency. Consultations on the role the Agency and what work it should undertake are currently underway, and CHC looks forward to presenting ideas on how it can support the horticulture industry.

DEVELOPING CANADA'S FIRST AGRI-FOOD SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

Finally, across the agri-food sector ambitious targets are being set to reduce the environmental footprint of producing and supplying food. CHC has been following the process closely to monitor potential impacts on growers. To date, the practices of over 50 agri-food organizations, sector initiatives, food companies and governments from Canada and abroad have been reviewed to see how they are influencing marketplace and national responses. While not being universally adopted, setting outcomes-based targets is becoming a key tool to add value, compete and deliver societal benefits. Value can accrue across the agri-food sector. Demonstrating responsible and sustainable practices could enable market access, validate food claims, prompt innovation and help meet even stiffer disclosure requirements. Sustainability benchmarking needs to shape Canada's competitiveness strategy and project the country's food leadership at home and abroad. After affirming the need for such an index in 2020, the next phase of work will focus on furthering outreach with stakeholders and ensuring that the index's proposed operational structure is the right one before moving to actual metrics-development later in 2021.



Industry Standards and Food Safety

CHC works with industry and government departments on issues affecting industry standards, plant health and food safety to ensure consumers have access to healthy and fresh produce of the highest quality.

COVID-19 IMPACT

During most of 2020, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) was not actively engaging with industry as their focus shifted primarily to keeping cross-border trade open during the pandemic.

INDUSTRY STANDARDS UNDER THE SAFE FOOD FOR CANADIANS REGULATIONS

Towards the end of 2020, as CHC adapted to the new normal, focus was brought back to some longstanding issues with CFIA, such as Test Market Authorizations and food labelling requirements under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR). Thanks to the efforts of CHC and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, the industry was granted an extension of the requirement for lot code labelling to January 2021, in order to provide business more time to use up existing labels and re-tool their labels to ensure they are compliant.

Another aspect of labelling requirements that was of great focus this past year was Price Look-Up (PLU) labels. Industry have modernized these labels to include information requested by retailers and consumers, including: branding, Country of Origin, in addition

to the SFCR requirement for lot code. Despite clearly meeting and exceeding the SFCR food safety and traceability outcomes, certain elements are still under discussion with CFIA to ensure

the labelling regulations and PLU labels are compliant, practical and modernized.

Given the impact this has on several commodities, CHC, along with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, is working diligently to ensure that growers and marketers can continue to use innovative labels that contain helpful information for both the consumer and for food safety purposes.

CHC has continually voiced concerns to CFIA as they have taken a very rigid approach in implementing regulations that are not outcome-based or practical, and in many cases hinders the industry's ability to market and sell products both within Canada and to trading partners.

CHC continues to work with CFIA on these issues and others that have arisen, particularly import certification requirements for onions, potatoes and field tomatoes into the United States.



One win for CHC this year was the consistent acknowledgement that Canadian products were not the source of food-based outbreaks and subsequent product recalls.

FOOD RECALLS

One win for CHC this year was the consistent acknowledgement that Canadian products were not the source of food-based outbreaks and subsequent product recalls. Previously, when there had been food recalls in the past, CFIA had not made it clear that Canadian-grown products were not implicated, which was very damaging to Canadian growers' reputation and trust from the public. Through working with CFIA, the Agency now explicitly explains in their recall notifications (where possible) to note that Canadian-grown products are not the source of the outbreak and are still safe to consume.

ENSURING CANADIAN GROWERS ARE REPRESENTED IN DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

International Organization for Standardization

CHC has been monitoring activities of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) Working Group in order to voice concerns regarding the possible impact on growers and overlap or redundancy of additional requirements to what is already covered under CanadaGAP.

CHC has expressed the need for broader stakeholder engagement, active participation and appropriate industry representation to provide input to these important discussions. The repercussions of decisions taken by a limited group of stakeholders within this committee will have a significant impact on users of the ISO schemes that are currently recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative. Users of programs such as CanadaGAP include a substantial number of companies from the fresh produce industry, yet there is very little expertise on the committee from the horticulture sector.

In order to ensure CHC's voice is heard and that there is effective input into the decision-making process, the Chair of CHC's Industry Standards and Food Safety Working Group has joined the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) Mirror Committee to influence the work on ISO.

International Federation of Produce Standards

The International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) brings together 10 national produce organizations from around the world to ensure supply chain efficiency of the fresh produce industry. This is achieved by working on the harmonization of international standards and ensuring that issues relating to international standards do not negatively affect the produce industry. The position of Chair rotates among the represented regions and organizations. Starting December 2020, the CHC Executive Director took over the position for Canada.

The IFPS Board members engage in international standardization efforts which this past year included:

- leading efforts to create a guide for use of GS1 DataBar for produce (the "baby barcode" included on PLU stickers),
- revisions of the global guide for produce traceability,
- linkages to the EU revisions on the Sustainable Use of pesticides Directive (SUD),
- representation on the relevant ISO committee with regards to the planned changes to the ISO standards which govern food safety schemes (including CanadaGAP) – IFPS has official recognition by ISO; and
- the ongoing assignment and management of the global PLU list for produce. The IFPS "owns" the PLU list and, given its significance for the fresh produce sector, focuses not just on the assignment of new codes but in improvements to the existing code list which this past year, included efforts to include photos of each product as well as translations of the list into Spanish and further translations to the French PLU list.

ORGANICS

The five-year cyclical review of the Canadian Organics process started in fall, 2018. CHC representatives participated in the Canadian General Standard Board (CGSB) Technical Committee (TC), the various working groups to review and amend the standards.

The 2020 Canadian Organic Standards (32.310 Production Systems, and 32.311 Permitted Substances List) Canadian Organic Standards were published Dec. 11, 2020 (2020 Review – completed)



LOOKING AHEAD

CHC will continue to work with CFIA – as well as industry partners at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association and Dispute Resolution Corporation – on issues relating to industry standards and food safety to ensure that they are practical, outcome-based and, above all, do not hinder competitiveness.

Labour

Access to labour is critical issue for fruit and vegetable growers, and there has likely never been a time where this was more evident than in 2020. As the world grappled with the pandemic, new terms such as “essential workers” were often used. CHC worked closely with the government to ensure that workers essential to food production were able to safely come to work in Canada.

COVID-19 IMPACT

Last year was extremely difficult for growers for a number of issues, but none were more critical than the impact of the pandemic on the sector’s critical workforce. As a result, much of the focus of CHC’s advocacy in 2020 centred around international workers: ensuring they were able to travel to Canada; adhering to quarantine protocols; keeping workers safe; and managing the financial and operational impacts of the interruptions.

At the start of the pandemic, CHC’s biggest effort was ensuring that workers under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program would be able to enter Canada while the country had severely limited travel. Through

CHC’s biggest effort was ensuring that workers under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program would be able to enter Canada.

working with government officials and with the support of several Senators and Members of Parliament, very quickly, international farm workers were exempt from travel restrictions and were able to travel to Canada. Workers were required to undergo the mandatory 14-day quarantine while receiving pay and employer-provided housing. CHC pushed to have the government provide financial support for the quarantine, and were successful in this as the government introduced the Mandatory Isolation Support for Temporary Foreign Workers Program – amounting to up to \$1,500 per worker.

CHC also provided comments and recommendations to the government regarding financial support programs that were introduced, such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). Programs such as the (CEWS) provided welcome support to segments of the supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the CERB created unintended consequences as some chose to apply for the CERB rather than stay in a job that paid a comparable salary. CHC continues to emphasize that, moving forward, government programs need to take a focused approach to reduce unintended consequences and impacts to business, including challenges accessing domestic labour.

CHC is currently working with the government to address logistical issues around travel, worker permits, and transferring of workers. And will continue to focus on address challenges presented by the new requirement for travelers to have a negative COVID test before entering Canada.

CHC would like to thank its Members and allied stakeholders, particularly F.A.R.M.S., FERME, WALLI, as well as the members and Vice Chairs of the Labour Working Group, for their tireless support and collaboration this year.



TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM - GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYER-PROVIDED ACCOMMODATIONS

It is no secret that this year saw a lot of negative attention given to how international workers are housed in Canada. Even though this portrayal was often one-sided and not wholly accurate, it was enough to pressure the federal government to look at introducing mandatory requirements for worker housing. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) launched a consultation process in late 2020. CHC held many meetings with ESDC officials, including the Minister's office, to emphasize the impact mandatory requirements would have on our growers. CHC's advocacy and submission to the consultation centred around three key principles: requirements must be evidence-based; the government must take into consideration provincial and local jurisdiction and authority; and protocols must not be overly prescriptive or specific.

While CHC supports efforts to ensure all temporary and seasonal foreign workers have access to safe, clean and comfortable accommodation, it is evident that the vast majority of employers provide safe and comfortable living conditions for their workers. CHC will continue to work with ESDC throughout 2021 to ensure that any requirements are reasonable, practical, and that growers are given the support they need to meet them.



LOOKING AHEAD

If there is one positive that has come out of the challenges presented by the pandemic, it has been how ESDC, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Global Affairs Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada have been able to work together with agriculture employer stakeholders to streamline processes and share vital information. This is something CHC has been pushing for, and CHC hopes to capitalize on these relations and new processes to make the process more seamless and transparent for employers of temporary foreign workers.

CHC will also continue to educate the public and government officials on CHC's long-standing relationship through the SAWP and TFWP and how workers and employers alike benefit from the programs.

Trade and Marketing

In order to make sure that Canadian horticulture is profitable and competitive globally, CHC advocates for the elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers that impact the horticulture industry, and for science-based regulatory cooperation to ensure the industry can access new markets.

COVID-19 IMPACT

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government was heavily focused on ensuring that trade was able to continue uninterrupted despite ongoing economic turmoil.

Continued cross-border trade between Canada and the United States remained a key priority for CHC throughout 2020, as travel was restricted and CHC saw the shutdown of food service industries throughout both countries. The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (former NAFTA) went into effect in the summer, and CHC was pleased to see that there were no major issues that came up when the new agreement was brought in.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR PRODUCE FARMERS AND SELLERS

CHC continued to push hard for a deemed trust for produce farmers and sellers, most notably through pre-budget consultations and presentations to the Standing Committee on Finance and Agriculture and Agri-Food as part of their studies on the government of Canada's COVID response. The issue was also of key focus during Fall Harvest meetings, with several MPs and Senators championing the issue and pushing for



its inclusion in the forthcoming 2021 budget. CHC – along with CPMA and the technical support of DRC – will continue this push for financial protection through the establishment of a deemed trust.



U.S. TRADE INVESTIGATIONS

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) announced a *Seasonal Produce Plan* on September 1, 2020 to address the alleged threat to American producers posed by increased foreign imports of seasonal and perishable fruits and vegetables including blueberries, strawberries and fresh bell pepper imports, as well as the potential establishment of new marketing orders, a potential new check-off program and, more thorough enforcement of Country-of-Origin Labelling for fresh fruits and vegetables.

While the testimonies and written submissions during the *Seasonal Produce Plan* process primarily focused on Mexico's trade practices, these actions have serious implications for Canadian exporters of seasonal and perishable products. Global safeguard investigations target imports from all sources, regardless of the country of origin.

Further engagement is expected, following the December 7 USTR request for fact-finding investigations for cucumbers and squash. Unlike the bell peppers and strawberries investigations, the USTR request does not suggest that these investigations would be for the purpose of pursuing global safeguard investigations.

CHC and its grower and marketing representatives will continue to work with Global Affairs and legal counsel to provide evidence to prevent the imposition of global safeguards against Canadian imports of these products.

Continued cross-border trade between Canada and the United States remained a key priority for CHC throughout 2020, as travel was restricted and CHC saw the shutdown of food service industries throughout both countries.

LOOKING AHEAD

CHC will continue to advocate for the elimination of non-tariff trade barriers and harmonized, science-based regulations with its trading partners. As part of its ongoing advocacy efforts, CHC will urge the government of Canada to ensure that new and renegotiated free trade agreements create the foundation for mutually recognizing food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements.

CHC will continue to advocate for financial protection for produce growers, particularly in our current minority government, where opposition parties who have supported CHC's efforts will play a critical role.

IMPORTS OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES INTO THE UNITED STATES

In the Fall of 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) began reinforcing import certificate requirements for certain commodities, including potatoes and onions. As this requirement had not been effective for nearly 10 years, CHC and Member representatives collaborated with CFIA to work on addressing concerns for achieving industry compliance with these requirements given the lack of resources at CFIA to provide the necessary inspection and certification services. The focus of the work has been on finding ways to gain efficiencies and compliance in the current export season (short term) and in preparation for next summer (medium term).

With respect to the long term, the industry will work with CFIA and USDA to continue to find further improvement to the verification and system assessment, including the possibility of no longer requiring import certificates on either side of the border.



Sector Support



VALUE CHAIN ROUND TABLES, NOW KNOWN AS THE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT TABLE (SET) MODEL

Over 2019 and 2020, the value chain round tables (VCRTs) were reorganized for greater efficiency into a streamlined engagement model. Clear and achievable targets were developed, linking to the Agri-Food Economic Strategy Table and Ministerial Mandate Letters. The Tables have been divided between those that will deal with systemic sectoral issues (sector advancement tables) and thematic tables, which will study cross-cutting issues. CHC participates in the tables for Horticulture, Agile Regulations, and Sustainability.

CHC APPLE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The CHC Mid-Summer Apple Meeting was held August 5 & 6, virtually. The industry meeting was well attended by growers and representatives from across the country, with discussions on market situations and trends, crop protection, labelling, the National Tree Planting Proposal, the Cluster Research Program Update, the EU Systems Approach, and Agri-Marketing 2020-2021.

Presentations were made on replant disease research, sustainable control practices for apple pests in Canada, and thinning trials.



CROP PROFILES

In partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)'s Pest Management Centre (PMC), CHC coordinates the review and updating of Crop Profiles. These are documents that provide a high-level overview of production and a more detailed look at pest management practices for a variety of agricultural crops in Canada. Each crop profile is updated every three years. In 2020, the

contract was renewed for another three years, and CHC worked with PMC and industry to update the following crop profiles:

- Greenhouse cucumber
- Greenhouse lettuce
- Greenhouse pepper
- Greenhouse tomato
- Highbush blueberry
- Lowbush blueberry
- Potato

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Greenhouse Vegetables

Greenhouse vegetables, primarily tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, lettuce, and eggplants, are grown throughout the year, on 838 farms located across Canada. The sector contributes over \$1.6 billion in farm cash receipts and exports over \$1 billion. The greenhouse sector is the largest agricultural employer with a total of approximately 12,500 Canadian and temporary foreign workers. The Canadian greenhouse vegetable sector is the largest and fastest growing segment of Canadian horticulture, largely driven by Canadian and American consumers' demand for year-round supply of fresh, high-quality, healthy fruit and vegetables.



COVID-19 IMPACT

The global pandemic has heightened public awareness of the critical role farmers play in providing domestic food security, and of the foreign workers who are an essential part of getting Canadian-grown fruit and vegetable to consumer's tables.

For Canadian greenhouse vegetable growers, the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic struck at the beginning of peak production and shipping season. Growers quickly implemented a wide range of preventative public health measures including the mandatory 14-day quarantine of arriving temporary foreign workers, cohorts, testing, and case management of COVID-positives and close contacts in collaboration with public health, with special attention given to workers' needs within congregate living settings.

Workers start arriving in December and January, at the start of the greenhouse growing season. Thus, the sector has been the first to be affected by pre-departure testing requirements, 14-day quarantines, and travel delays in early 2021.

GREENHOUSE VEGETABLE GROWTH STRATEGY

In the midst of significant challenges in 2020, the Greenhouse Vegetable Working Group developed a *Greenhouse Vegetable Growth Strategy*.

In addition to the stress, disruption, fear, illness, and loss of life, caused by COVID-19, growers who endured a COVID outbreak also faced the subsequent isolation of family and employees while their crop stood, jeopardized at its peak, without the necessary farm labour available to maintain or harvest it.

The strategy's three-pronged approach aims to achieve public health objectives while also pointing to policy that can reduce barriers, address gaps and support continued sector growth and ensure domestic food security for Canadians - well into the future:

1. Ensuring solvency through the current global crisis
2. Increased production capacity
3. Market resiliency

The proposed *Farm Quarantine Support Program* continues to be underscored as key support growers desperately need in the context of maintaining their crop while dealing with challenges to business continuity, labour, lack of support from Business Risk Management programs, and overall solvency concerns.

TOMATO BROWN RUGOSE FRUIT VIRUS

Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV; aka “rugose”), is an emerging global pest that predominantly affects tomatoes and peppers, especially greenhouse crops. Infected seed, transplants and fruit pose no threat to human health but can quickly devastate entire crops.

A range of stakeholders across the tomato and pepper industry, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) have been working diligently on internationally-recognized virus testing protocols, on-farm biosecurity measures and effective sanitation products based on emerging science to prevent the virus’ introduction and spread.

Since late 2019, “interim” regulatory measures in the USDA APHIS Federal Order have disrupted the trade of tomatoes and peppers. Bilateral discussions between regulators, and industry-CFIA/AAFC discussions continue. However the APHIS pest risk assessment initiated in early 2020 remains pending, and tomato and pepper fruit have not been removed from the Order.

PROTECTED AGRICULTURE STEWARDSHIP - NATIONAL AUDITABLE STANDARDS, PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION

The Protected Agriculture Stewardship initiative is a collaborative effort of CHC, Flowers Canada, Canadian Nursery Landscape Association, Mushrooms Canada, Cannabis Council of Canada, and CropLife Canada. Following broad industry and public consultation in spring 2020, the National Auditable Standards were finalized in December, 2020, with collaboration from the grower associations, registrants, CropLife Canada, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

The scope of Phase 1 implementation (2021-2023) focuses on greenhouses with closed systems used to irrigate, fertilize and drench-apply pesticides, and their associated waste water management systems. Further guidance documents, technical

work and communication pieces will be developed before facility audits commence. The goal is for all facilities to pass an audit by December 31, 2022.

OTHER IMPORTANT WORK AND COLLABORATIONS

- U.S. International Trade Commission Fact-finding investigations (bell peppers; cucumbers)
- Cleanfarms pilot project, Building a Canada Wide Zero Plastic Strategy for Agriculture
- CFIA Safe Food for Canadian Regulations (SFCR) traceability and labelling requirements
- Canadian Plant Health Council Working Groups
- Fertilizer and Supplements Advisory Committee – Heavy Metal Limits for Hydroponic Fertilizer Working Group



LOOKING AHEAD

Greenhouse vegetable growers are facing a pair of two very serious viruses: one (ToBRFV) that has the potential to damage their crop and market access to the United States; and the other (COVID-19) that has the potential to harm their farm employees, their families, communities, and their livelihoods.

In 2021, more focus is expected to turn to opportunities for automation and increase year-round production capacity, to build upon the successes of the Canadian TFW programs while finding reliable, non-traditional sources of domestic labour, and minimize market disruption, maintain access and develop new international opportunities.

Potato

The Canadian Potato Council (CPC) is supported by the membership of eleven provincial potato grower organizations from eight provinces. Three CPC meetings were held this year, one in-person meeting in Ottawa in March 2020 and two virtual meetings held in July and November.

COVID-19 IMPACT

A major early impact of the pandemic in the spring of 2020 for the potato sector was the uncertainty of demand created by the shutdown of foodservice in North America. Large on-farm stocks of the 2019 contracted processing potato crop were no longer required due to significantly reduced demand for frozen potato products. Additionally, contracts for the 2020 crop were reduced, resulting in fewer planted acres and a surplus of seed potatoes. On May 10, there were 6.8 million hundredweight (\$92 million) of processing potatoes and 0.65 million hundredweight (\$11 million) of seed potatoes remaining in storage. Fortunately, foodservice re-opening (particularly in the US) in the summer allowed resumption of processing and the movement of some potatoes. However, due to delays in processing, significant losses in storage potatoes were evident in Manitoba and surplus seed was destroyed in many provinces due to reduced acreage. Existing AAFC Business Risk Management programs failed to address grower losses.

As in all sectors, the shift to virtual meetings for two CPC meetings in July and November was implemented to continue the work of CPC. Several Working Groups continued to meet virtually and demonstrated progress on objectives. As an exception, export market development activities of Potatoes Canada were greatly reduced since March 2020 and the AAFC Contribution Agreement amended in response to the significant decrease in spending in the AAFC 2020-2021 fiscal year.

POTATO RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Progress continued in eight potato projects (Colorado potato beetle, late blight, necrotic viruses, variety evaluation, smart farming, wireworm, potato early dying) funded under Cluster 3 with the third field year completed. The CPC Research Working Group developed the *Potato Cluster 3 Knowledge Transfer Plan* to articulate the activities that will be delivered to extend the information on results developed under the research projects that can be implemented on-farm by growers.



As a first step in an ongoing activity to engage researchers with grower organizations, Dr. Christine Noronha presented wireworm Cluster 3 research to the CHC Potato Open Meeting in March. The Canadian Potato Research Cluster website was launched in 2020 for growers to access research project highlights and annual reports and to provide information on funding partners and research priority setting (<https://potatoresearchcluster.ca/>). *SpudSmart* magazine published an overview article of Cluster 3 potato research in the summer 2020 issue and will continue to feature a project article in each issue over the next three years. The first CPC webinar (wireworm) was delivered in November 2020 with subsequent project webinars planned each year.

The Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE) is funded by Canadian processing growers (PE, NB, MB, AB) along with US grower counterparts and the major processing companies. Clinical research trials in potato nutrition are funded each year (approximately \$1 million USD). Fourteen funded studies have now been published in peer-reviewed journals with an additional twenty-five studies ongoing.

POLICY AND REGULATIONS

A DRC/Industry Working Group reviewed the Potato Grade Standard with the view of modernizing and aligning where possible with US standards. Significant changes were recommended for revision to a table-based format that will be the basis for the incorporation by reference document.

A CFIA/Industry Working Group including all sectors (grains, oilseeds, forages, vegetables) was established to review the *Seed Regulations* and modernize to current practices. Concurrent with this, a Seed Potato Sub Working Group was established to review Part II (seed potato) of the *Regulations*. As a first step, stakeholder surveys were developed by both Working Groups to identify those areas of the *Regulations* that are adequate, and those that are problematic or could be improved. Surveys will be open for public input in early 2021.

CROP PROTECTION IN POTATOES

Significant CPC efforts in previous years responding to PMRA re-evaluation consultations that proposed to cancel uses in potatoes resulted in positive outcomes in the *Final Re-evaluation Decisions* published in 2020. The submission of use information and/or grower use data for the critical active ingredients, mancozeb fungicide and linuron herbicide and others including thiophanate-methyl potato seed piece treatment supported registrant responses and contributed to the continued use of those critical active ingredients in potatoes.

CPC has continued to advocate that the PMRA continue the registration of bifenthrin (*Capture* insecticide) for wireworm control in potatoes, after the expiry of registration at the end of 2020. CPC is supporting an Emergency Use Registration application of the provincial government in PE for bifenthrin use in potatoes.



LOOKING AHEAD

The CPC looks forward to continuing to implement the activities of the Potato Cluster 3 Research Knowledge Transfer Plan to encourage and demonstrate to potato growers the benefit of adoption of research that they fund. Over the upcoming year, research results will be communicated to growers through published articles and the delivery of CPC webinars by project researchers. The Canadian Potato Research Cluster website will continue to be an important resource for research progress in each of the eight projects.

Looking forward, potato research priority setting for the next funding cycle (2023-2028) will start with provincial consultations in the summer 2021 to be followed by CPC Research Working Group meeting to agree upon national priorities in early fall 2021. A revision of the Potato Research and Innovation Strategy will be presented to the CPC in November 2021.

The publication of PMRA Proposed Re-evaluation Decisions will continue to be monitored to identify those decisions that will negatively impact the potato sector and require a CPC consultation response.

CPC has continued to advocate that the PMRA continue the registration of bifenthrin (*Capture* insecticide) for wireworm control in potatoes, after the expiry of registration at the end of 2020.



Research

CHC supports the Canadian fruit and vegetable sector in part by managing funding applications and subsequent research projects that address the sector's top priorities.

CANADIAN AGRISCIENCE CLUSTER FOR HORTICULTURE 3

With an investment of nearly \$21 million (\$13 million by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and \$8 million by industry) over five years, Cluster 3 brings expertise from academia, industry and government together on 16 projects across five commodity groups (apple, berry, greenhouse, potato and vegetable).

COVID-19 IMPACT & ACTIVITIES

This third field season and project year proved to be challenging for many Cluster 3 participants. In mid-March, federal and provincial governments made the extraordinary decision to shut down many sectors including schools, universities and research centres, effectively allowing only essential services to continue. Even though many research

activities resumed slowly in a number of universities and research centres (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and non-AAFC research centres), the difficulties researchers and project leaders are facing, in order to meet objectives and deliverables, are still being mitigated. Despite all of this, many Cluster 3 activities have moved forward with little to no impact, but it has been a challenging year overall.

As the Hort Cluster manager, CHC has been in continual contact with Cluster participants, through surveys, emails and one-on-one calls. CHC continues to monitor the impacts as the COVID-19 situation evolves and is working closely with researchers and industry partners. CHC knows that the path forward may be challenging for the coming months, and possibly years, but firmly believes that by working together our sector will succeed.

ALL CLUSTERS MEETINGS

Beginning in May 2020, CHC initiated and hosted monthly conference calls and Zoom meetings with representatives of the other 17 Clusters. The meetings have focused on updates from each Cluster, sharing COVID-19 related challenges and discussing possible solutions. A co-signed letter, outlining challenges and recommendations, was sent to the Assistant Deputy Ministers of both Programs Branch and Science & Tech Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on July 31. A response was received September 1, with AAFC acknowledging the leadership of Cluster recipients in coordinating and supporting agricultural research across the sector and assuring Clusters that during this difficult period AAFC will continue to work with the program's recipients to try and limit any impacts on their science plans. AAFC has also indicated that they may host virtual meetings with all Clusters and AAFC in late winter/early spring 2021.



KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER (KT) ACTIVITIES

The Canadian Potato Council's Research Working Group led an initiative to develop the *Canadian Potato Research Cluster* website. The site www.potatoresearchcluster.ca was launched in 2020 for growers to access research project highlights and annual reports and to provide information on funding partners and research priority setting. A KT Coordinator has been contracted to work on updating the Cluster page on the CHC website, further developing a plan for KT for the remainder of the Cluster, and supporting the potato KT activities in progress.



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FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Looking forward in 2021, the Cluster participants and industry will be starting to plan for the next AAFC funding cycle (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2028). A timeline for the application process has been developed and 2021 activities will include:

- Review Cluster 3 activities (progress to date, possible outcomes, ongoing work, etc.)
- Review and update commodity groups' Research and Innovation Strategies
- Initiation of discussions within provinces/regions about possible partners, including researchers, funding contributors, and value chain participation.

The Canadian AgriScience Cluster for Horticulture 3 is generously funded in cooperation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's AgriScience Program (a Canadian Agricultural Partnership initiative), the Canadian Horticultural Council and industry contributors.



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The voice of **Canadian fruit and vegetable growers**

Communications and Outreach

The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC)'s communications service strives to keep members well informed of the organization's activities and important topics in Canadian horticulture. In addition, communications aim to enhance CHC's presence and support advocacy efforts by clearly articulating CHC's position on priority issues using a range of tools and strategic initiatives.

COVID-19 IMPACT

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, several planned communications initiatives were put on hold in 2020. Early in the year, the focus of CHC's communications shifted to ensuring the immediate health of the industry and Canadian food supply. Above all, this included providing timely and helpful communication with Members, while also ensuring constant and ongoing engagement with government, industry officials, and the public.

Given the constantly changing situation, CHC put out nearly 100 Member notes in 2020, nearly twice the usual number. These updates included new information on government policy, available financial supports, or other pressing issues, and were also used to solicit information from Members on the impact COVID-19 was having on them and their businesses. This information was then synthesized and used to inform CHC's engagement with government and industry officials.

The past year also saw CHC conduct more interviews with media than ever before. CHC staff, Board Members and Working Group representatives fielded dozens of media interviews and appearances with news outlets small and large. This included outlets such as Thompson Reuters, BNN Bloomberg, National Newswatch and multiple industry publications, such as The Grower.

GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY

Advocacy on key issues helped to support the competitiveness of the horticulture sector throughout the pandemic and maintain public trust. The four main areas where CHC advocated on behalf of growers and industry were:

- Labour and International Farm Workers
- Financial Protection
- Business Risk Management (BRM), and
- Food Safety



Throughout 2020, CHC engaged with government countless times in support of growers facing one of the most challenging seasons on record. This engagement included six consultation submissions, four submissions/testimonies to House of Commons Standing Committees, nine letters written to Federal Ministers and senior government officials, and seven letters to Ministers and Joint Statements through collaboration within the agriculture sector. Communications covered concerns such as the pandemic's impact on growers, the multiple areas where urgent action was needed, and the changes required to ensure that the government's BRM programs would better reflect the new financial challenges growers were facing.

CHC also took part in regular conference calls with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, as well as AAFC and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Furthermore, CHC was granted meetings with The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture, as well as the Director General of the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, and the Minister of Employment and Workplace Development.

FALL HARVEST

This year marked the ninth annual Fall Harvest event, conducted in partnership with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA). The event has become a political mainstay on Parliament Hill. As has been the case in a multitude of areas in 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic posed major challenges and changes for CHC's advocacy work, particularly in planning the Fall Harvest event.



Despite the many logistical challenges to holding the event in 2020, and drastically increased interaction with government in light of the pandemic, Fall Harvest was still a critical element of CHC's advocacy efforts in 2020. It was essential that CHC reinforce its message to help keep borders open and the supply chain moving, allow entry of temporary foreign workers, develop and promote safety protocols,

urge government to establish funding to lessen financial burdens resulting from the pandemic, and much more.

As a result, Fall Harvest was conducted virtually for the first time. CHC provided issue overviews, panel discussions, team gatherings, and networking, while also leveraging new opportunities to allow a broader membership group to participate and grow CHC's parliamentary audience.

Over the course of the week, CHC met with 41 Parliamentarians and other key government officials to advocate for the industry's needs and priorities, including CHC's efforts to move forward into post-COVID economic recovery.

Special attention was drawn to four priority issues, and recommended measures for government action to support the fresh produce industry. Those areas of focus included:

- Ensuring financial protection for produce sellers in the case of buyer bankruptcy by implementing a deemed trust mechanism in Canada and restoring priority 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.

Despite the many logistical challenges to holding the event in 2020, and drastically increased interaction with government in light of the pandemic, Fall Harvest was still a critical element of CHC's advocacy efforts in 2020.

FRESH THINKING

Fresh Thinking is CHC's free bilingual print publication. It is published twice a year and features high-level industry perspectives and useful tips for growers. Five thousand copies of each issue are distributed across Canada, the U.S. and internationally. The magazine even generates a small amount of revenue for CHC. Each issue of *Fresh Thinking* is themed to strategic priorities.

The Spring 2020 issue, planned before the pandemic, celebrated the International Year of Plant Health (2020), with a focus on the new methods, technologies, and approaches in crop protection that are helping to ensure the horticulture industry has healthy plants and that these plants can, in turn, support healthy people.

The Fall 2020 issue focused on mental health on the farm. In January of 2020, when planning began for this edition of the magazine, the CHC staff had little idea how timely the issue would end up being. The issue explored different ways to think about mental health in relation to horticulture, and included stories on growers' experience, aspects of the science behind mental wellness, some examples of organizations that support mental health in agriculture, and the impact of nutrition and general wellness on mental health.

Mental health among growers and those in horticulture has been a priority for CHC, and even more so in light of the pandemic. Growers are extremely hard-working, and have always been highly susceptible to stress and burnout. This has been even more true throughout the pandemic due to the added challenges growers are facing.



LOOKING AHEAD

The immediate health of the horticulture sector remains CHC's top priority in the face of COVID-19. This means ensuring the safe and timely arrival of temporary foreign workers, despite new testing regulations for travellers arriving to Canada from other countries. It also means ensuring that CHC has a voice at the table as governments of all levels plan for economic recovery. Canadian food security and support for growers is an integral part of this recovery.

Nevertheless, there are key elements of CHC's 2020 Communications Strategy that were delayed this past year, and which will be addressed in the near future. This includes a renewed focus on more personalized engagement with Members, politicians and the public through social media, a new quarterly bulletin to keep members informed of CHC updates and industry news, a new crisis communications plan which will support CHC and its Members in times of industry crises, and added efforts to engage industry publications through editorials and CHC-led articles that feature the grower's perspective.

CHC is a small organization with big ambitions. Lobbying government, building relationships and strengthening CHC's profile among government and the general public are at the heart CHC's communications and outreach efforts.



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