

## Capital Regional District Recommendations: National Food Policy

October 25, 2017

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### Background

The Capital Regional District (CRD) adopted the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy ([RFAS](#)) on December 14, 2016, to address agriculture and food issues in the region. The strategy takes into account municipal policies and plans that support food and agriculture and sets out 10 key recommendations to support the development and future success of food and agriculture.

Federal leadership and intervention is necessary to:

- Enable a multi-level government approach to complex and persistent problems
- Fill a gap that cannot be addressed at the provincial and local level
- Promote a systems-based approach to considering interconnections between health, environment, nutrition and food security

The CRD has reviewed the opportunity to provide input into the National Food Policy and identifies the following priority issues and their corresponding policy areas and RFAS recommendation. More importantly, it summarizes recommended federal action that should be addressed in a Food Policy for Canada.

- **Food and farmland preservation**

Policy area: Growing more high-quality food, conserving soil

RFAS recommendation: Increase access to agricultural and food lands (#9– Appendix B)

Recommended Federal Action:

- Develop a multi-government jurisdictional approach to protect food and farmlands and ensure a productive agricultural land base in the long term

- **Water management**

Policy area: Conserving water

RFAS recommendation: Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations (#6– Appendix B); Address chronic drainage issues across the region (#4– Appendix B)

Recommended Federal Action:

- Provide funding to municipalities to invest in irrigation and drainage systems in farming areas, formerly supported by Federal-Provincial Agri-Food Regional Subsidiary Agreement

- **Wildlife and invasive species**

Policy area: Growing more high-quality food, improving health and food safety

RFAS recommendation: Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues (#5– Appendix B)

Recommended Federal Action:

- Provide funding to support producers in addressing these issues, such as subsidies for deer fence installation and maintain crop insurance programs for damage to fruit and vegetable crops in Southern BC
- Amend the *International Migratory Birds Convention Act* (1994) to exclude non-migratory/resident geese

- **Food waste and organic matter recycling**

Policy area: Conserving soil, water and air, growing more high-quality food

RFAS recommendation: Support organic matter recycling that benefits food and agriculture (#3 – Appendix B)

Recommended Federal Action:

- Establish and subsidize a multi-stakeholder national food loss and waste reduction campaign for implementation at the regional/local level
- Support the development of technologies and facilities to transform food waste into nutrient-rich organic matter made available to local producers, with the goal of increasing soil fertility and sequestering carbon
- Provide farmer education in areas where the above technologies are currently available

- **Local Food Economic Development**

Policy area: Growing more high-quality food, increasing access to affordable food

RFAS recommendation: Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture (#10– Appendix B)

Recommended Federal Action:

- Increase federal and provincial investment and support for local food systems to sustain a diverse agri-food sector that meets the needs of communities and promotes sustainable practices
- Facilitate adoption of local sustainable food sourcing and serving practices by public institutions (public procurement)

- **Reconciliation with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples**

Policy area: Growing more high-quality food, increasing access to affordable food

RFAS recommendation: Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities (#7– Appendix B); Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events (#8– Appendix B). Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture (#10– Appendix B)

Recommended Federal Action:

- Acknowledge the impact of colonization on Canada’s food systems
- Support natural resource management practices that recognize the importance of lands that were colonized, and facilitate access to foraging, gathering, producing, and consuming foods
- Support Indigenous-led engagement around the food and nutrition issues they face and the solutions they see to addressing food insecurity and health issues in their communities
- Allocate resources specifically for food programs in Indigenous communities that support the long-term development of Indigenous food systems, including hunting, trapping, fishing, and access to traditional foods

- **Sustainable food production**

Policy area: Growing more high-quality food, Conserving our soil, air and water

RFAS recommendation: Improve the CRD’s capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues (#2– Appendix B)

Recommended Federal Action:

- Ensure availability and accessibility of extension services to help farmers adopt sustainable production practices and be productive and profitable in the face of climate change
- Develop and fund training and skills development program for sustainable farming
- Re-establish/ensure funding for food and agriculture research and dissemination to farmers

**Other actions that the policy should address include:**

- Consider poverty reduction and provide increased funding for affordable and supportive housing to address household food insecurity and improve nutrition and health
- Fund improved food education and promote food literacy and access to healthy food
- Create a national farm renewal program to support the next generation of producers and exiting producers
- Develop an inclusive, multi-stakeholder governance mechanism which promotes and supports broad participation in the ongoing development of food policy, for example, convene a national food policy council
- Food governance mechanism is properly resourced, accountable, and transparent, provides opportunities for meaningful participation by stakeholders from across the food system