FPT Ministers Roundtable – A Vision to 2033
What We Heard Report
August 2026

Introduction

On July 15th, 2026, the FPT Ministers Roundtable brought together representatives from across Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector with federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Agriculture to discuss a shared vision for the Next Policy Framework through 2033.

Discussions were organized around three questions addressing the outcomes the NPF should seek to achieve by 2033, priority investments to strengthen long-term competitiveness and growth, and the risks facing the sector and potential changes to Canada's risk management system.

The following summary reflects the key themes and priorities that emerged through these discussions, based on feedback provided by participants.

Discussion Summary

Discussion Question 1

Looking ahead to 2033, what measurable outcome or sector-wide goal should the Next Policy Framework help Canada achieve?

Participants identified a range of potential outcomes and measures, but discussions consistently pointed toward an overarching objective: a more profitable, competitive, resilient and growing Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector by 2033.
Several areas were identified as important measures of progress, including.

- Growth, profitability and competitiveness
- Domestic production, processing and value-added growth
- Succession and workforce planning
- Innovation and technology adoption
- Resilience and food security
- Measuring progress

Growth, profitability and competitiveness

Participants emphasized that success should be reflected in stronger economic performance at both the farm and sector level. Key indicators identified included:

- **Farm-level performance:** Farm profitability and farm cash receipts.
- **Sector growth:** Agriculture and agri-food GDP and productivity growth.
- **Investment:** Increased private-sector and capital investment.
- **Global competitiveness:** Canada's share and ranking in global agriculture and agri-food trade.
- **Trade:** Export growth, market diversification and maintaining Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner.
- **Value-added growth:** Increased domestic processing and value-added production.

Participants also highlighted the importance of benchmarking Canada's performance against international competitors and using a range of indicators to assess overall sector performance.

Domestic production, processing and value-added growth

Participants saw opportunities to strengthen Canada's domestic food system while capturing more of the economic potential of Canadian agricultural production:

- **Processing capacity:** Expand domestic and regional processing, address gaps in existing capacity, and capture more value from Canadian agricultural production.
- **SME growth:** Support small and medium-sized businesses to scale and contribute to regional economic development.
- **Domestic production:** Increase opportunities to produce foods domestically that Canada currently imports.
- **Food systems:** Strengthen local and regional food systems while maintaining Canada's role as a major agricultural exporter.

Succession and workforce planning

Participants consistently identified people as central to the sector's long-term growth. Potential outcomes and indicators included:

- **New entrants:** Increase the number of young and new producers entering agriculture.
- **Succession:** Improve farm succession rates and reduce barriers to intergenerational transfer, while supporting the financial health of the next generation.
- **Access to land and capital:** Create more viable pathways for new entrants to establish and grow farm businesses.
- **Workforce:** Improve attraction, retention and availability of skilled workers across agriculture and food processing.
- **Skills:** Strengthen mentorship, training, upskilling, reskilling and financial literacy.

Measures such as the average age of farmers, succession rates, employment and retention rates, and job vacancies were suggested as ways of tracking progress.

Innovation and technology adoption

Participants emphasized the importance of translating Canada's research strengths into practical and commercial outcomes:

- **Technology adoption:** Increase the uptake of new technologies and innovations on farms and across the value chain.
- **Commercialization:** Improve Canada's ability to move innovations from research to market.
- **Farmer-led research:** Strengthen producer involvement in setting research priorities and developing solutions.
- **Extension and knowledge transfer:** Improve the connection between research, innovation and practical implementation.
- **Data:** Improve agricultural data collection and benchmarking while recognizing farmer ownership and control of data.
- **Long-term research:** Provide consistent, long-term funding for agricultural research that extends beyond individual policy framework cycles.

Resilience and food security

Participants also identified broader measures of sector health alongside traditional economic indicators:

- **Sector resilience:** Strengthen the ability of producers and businesses to prepare for, adapt to and recover from climate, market, geopolitical and other disruptions.
- **Food security:** Strengthen domestic food production and Canadians' access to a reliable and affordable food supply.
- **Agricultural land:** Protect Canada's productive agricultural land and the resources needed to support long-term food production.
- **Public trust:** Strengthen public confidence in Canadian agriculture and the food system.

Measuring progress

A consistent message was that the framework needs clearer measures of whether it is achieving its intended outcomes:

- Establish **clear baselines** at the beginning of the framework.
- Develop **meaningful and measurable targets** that reflect sector priorities.
- Track external outcomes rather than focusing primarily on program participation or spending.
- Reflect **regional, commodity, and production-system differences** when assessing performance.

- Consider economic indicators (e.g. sector growth, competitiveness, economic contributions) alongside food security, resilience, workforce, public trust and other measures of sector health.
- Improve data collection to support ongoing assessment and evidence-based decision-making.

Discussion Question 2

What one specific project or investment would most effectively strengthen Canada's long-term agricultural and agri-food competitiveness and growth?

While participants were asked to identify one project or investment, the discussions generated a range of priorities. The strongest areas of convergence centred on:

- Strategic infrastructure
- Innovation, research, and commercialization
- Processing and value-added capacity
- Access to capital and investment
- Workforce development and succession

Strategic infrastructure

Infrastructure was consistently identified as an investment priority:

- **Trade and transportation:** Support investment in ports, rail, roads, bridges and other trade corridors needed to move agricultural products and inputs reliably.
- **Rural infrastructure:** Improve rural water management and access, electricity, broadband and cellular connectivity.
- **Water and irrigation:** Expand irrigation and water-management infrastructure to support production and climate resilience.
- **Food-system infrastructure:** Strengthen storage, cold-chain, distribution and other enabling infrastructure.
- **Supply-chain resilience:** Identify and address critical infrastructure vulnerabilities that could disrupt access to domestic and international markets.

Participants emphasized that these investments require agriculture to be integrated into broader infrastructure and economic development strategies across governments and governmental departments.

Innovation, research, and commercialization

A recurring theme was the need to close the gap between research and practical implementation:

- **Innovation pipeline:** Better connect research, commercialization and on-farm adoption.

- **Technology adoption:** Provide mechanisms that reduce the financial risk producers face when adopting new technologies.
- **Demonstration and extension:** Invest in demonstration farms, extension services and practical knowledge transfer.
- **Digital agriculture:** Invest in digital infrastructure, connectivity, sensors, AI and other technologies that support productivity and decision-making.
- **Agricultural data:** Develop stronger data infrastructure to enable benchmarking, research, and knowledge transfer.
- **Public research:** Maintain long-term investment in agricultural research.

Processing and value-added capacity

Participants repeatedly identified domestic processing as an opportunity to strengthen competitiveness and retain more value in Canada:

- **Processing capacity:** Address regional gaps and bottlenecks in slaughter, food processing, and other value-added infrastructure.
- **Business scale-up:** Help Canadian processors and agri-food businesses move from small to medium and larger-scale operations.
- **Strategic investment:** Identify processing and food-system gaps nationally and target investment toward areas of greatest need and opportunity.
- **Domestic value chains:** Strengthen Canada's capacity to process Canadian agricultural products domestically.

Access to capital and investment

Participants emphasized both direct access to financing and the broader conditions needed to attract investment:

- **New entrants:** Improve access to capital and financing for young and beginning farmers.
- **SMEs and processors:** Expand financing options for smaller businesses seeking to grow or innovate.
- **Long-term financing:** Consider financing mechanisms that better reflect the long-term nature of agricultural investments.
- **Private investment:** Create conditions that attract greater domestic and international private-sector investment.
- **Regulatory environment:** Reduce unnecessary regulatory burden and improve the predictability and timeliness of approvals.

Workforce and generational renewal

Participants also identified investment in people as fundamental to long-term competitiveness:

- Develop a coordinated generational renewal strategy addressing land, capital, skills and mentorship.
- Invest in workforce attraction and retention across agriculture and food processing.

- Expand training, upskilling and reskilling to support emerging technology adoption and changing workforce needs.
- Strengthen financial and business management skills for producers and new entrants.
- Consider agriculture's workforce needs alongside competing labour demands from other strategic sectors.

Discussion Question 3

What is the most significant risk facing your constituency under the current policy framework? What changes to Canada's risk management system would best strengthen its ability to address that risk?

Participants identified a range of risks facing their sectors and regions, alongside opportunities to strengthen how those risks are managed. Key themes identified included:

- Climate and production risks
- Market, trade, and geopolitical risks
- Animal disease and catastrophic risks
- Gaps in BRM coverage and flexibility
- Timeliness, simplicity, and predictability
- Proactive risk management and resilience

Climate and production risks

Extreme weather and increasingly unpredictable production conditions were among the most consistently identified risks:

- **Extreme weather:** Drought, flooding, wildfire, and other events are increasing production and financial risk.
- **Regional differences:** Climate and production risks vary significantly by region, commodity, and production system, requiring sufficient flexibility in program design.
- **Production insurance:** Coverage should better reflect the range of commodities, production systems, and emerging risks facing producers.
- **Resilience:** Greater emphasis should be placed on investments that help producers prepare for and mitigate weather-related risks before losses occur.

Market, trade and geopolitical risks

Participants highlighted the growing impact of market and geopolitical events that are largely outside the control of individual producers:

- **Market volatility:** Price fluctuations, rising input costs, and changing demand can create significant financial uncertainty.

- **Trade disruptions:** Tariffs, market-access disruptions and geopolitical events can create sudden and significant losses.
- **Over-reliance on certain export markets:** Expanding and diversifying markets can help reduce exposure to individual export markets.
- **Poor program responsiveness:** Risk management tools need greater flexibility to respond to major market and trade disruptions that do not fit within traditional production-risk models.

Animal disease and other catastrophic risks

Participants identified foreign animal disease and other large-scale events as risks requiring greater preparedness:

- **Disease preparedness:** Strengthen government-industry planning and coordination before an outbreak occurs.
- **Financial preparedness:** Establish more predictable mechanisms to address the financial impacts of catastrophic animal disease events.
- **Responsiveness:** Ensure support can be deployed quickly enough to maintain business continuity during a major disruption.
- **Sector-wide risks:** Recognize that some catastrophic events affect entire sectors or regions and cannot reasonably be managed by individual producers.

Gaps in BRM coverage and flexibility

Participants emphasized that existing BRM programs do not consistently reflect the diversity of Canadian agriculture:

- **Coverage gaps:** Address gaps in production insurance and income support across commodities and production systems.
- **Diverse operations:** Better accommodate mixed and diversified farms, livestock, horticulture, greenhouse, aquaculture, and other operations that may not be well served by existing programs.
- **Regional flexibility:** Allow greater flexibility to reflect different regional production systems and risk profiles.
- **Inequitable outcomes:** Maintain common national objectives while allowing different approaches where regional or sector circumstances warrant them to realize equitable risk coverage.

Timeliness, simplicity and predictability

Program delivery was identified as an important factor in the effectiveness of Canada's risk management system:

- **Payment timeliness:** Reduce delays in AgriStability and other BRM payments. Make greater use of interim payments where producers face immediate financial pressures.
- **Program Complexity:** Reduce paperwork, duplication and unnecessary program complexity.

- **Predictability:** Provide greater certainty around when and how support will be available following significant losses.
- **Accessibility:** Make programs easier for producers to understand, access and navigate.

Proactive risk management and resilience

A recurring theme was the need to shift from primarily responding to losses toward helping producers manage and mitigate risks before they occur:

- **Risk mitigation:** Support investments in irrigation, water management, infrastructure, technology and other measures that reduce exposure to risk.
- **Preparedness:** Strengthen planning and adaptive capacity for weather, disease, market and supply-chain disruptions before crises occur.
- **Technology adoption:** Reduce the financial risk associated with adopting technologies that can improve productivity and resilience.
- **Long-term planning:** Consider emerging risks over longer time horizons rather than focusing primarily on immediate pressures.
- **Investment confidence:** Ensure risk management provides producers with the confidence to invest, innovate and grow.

Participants viewed BRM as an essential backstop but emphasized that it should form part of a broader approach that combines risk mitigation and preparedness with effective insurance, income stabilization and disaster response.

Conclusions

Across the three discussion questions, participants described a vision for 2033 centred on a **profitable, competitive, resilient and growing Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector**.

The discussion highlighted three broad requirements for achieving that vision:

- **Clear outcomes and accountability:** Establish meaningful targets and indicators that demonstrate whether the sector is becoming more profitable, competitive, resilient, and attractive to the next generation.
- **Strategic investment in growth:** Prioritize infrastructure, innovation, value-added processing, research, people, and the conditions needed to attract private investment.
- **Modernized risk management:** Build a more proactive, flexible and responsive system that reflects today's risks and gives producers confidence to invest and grow.

Across these areas, participants also emphasized the importance of sufficient flexibility to reflect regional, commodity, and production-system differences.

The discussions also highlighted opportunities for greater coordination between agricultural policy and broader government priorities, particularly in areas such as infrastructure, investment, labour, trade, innovation and economic development.