

# agriculture is food



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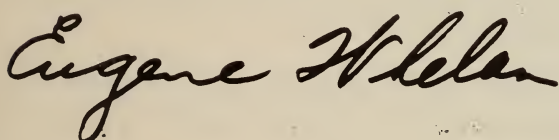
*Many people think of Agriculture Canada as the "farm department" of the federal government. But this is only part of the picture.*

*We are also involved in the rest of the system that brings food to the consumer. After all, agriculture is food and that makes us a "food department".*

*Our work touches every Canadian every day. Our plant breeders have shaped the potatoes you buy. Our inspectors likely have checked the meat you eat.*

*Agriculture Canada with industry and other federal departments have set the standards you have come to expect when you open a tin of peaches or a bag of frozen peas.*

*This pamphlet outlines what we do in the food sector. It will help explain how Agriculture Canada is working for you.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eugene Whelan". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of "Eugene" being a large capital "E".

*Eugene Whelan  
Minister of Agriculture*

Agriculture Canada has been concerned with food production and marketing since 1867. Throughout its long history, the agriculture department has worked closely with farmers, meat packers, fruit and vegetable processors, wholesalers and sometimes with retailers. In spite of this, most people are not fully aware of just how much the department is involved in getting food to Canadians.

Did you know, for instance, that Agriculture Canada has developed special high-protein oats for breakfast cereals?

Or know that Agriculture Canada works with Consumer and Corporate Affairs and National Health and Welfare to set standards for the protein and fat content in sausages and other meat products?

Did you know that Agriculture Canada checks most imported food products to make sure they meet Canadian standards?

Here are some things Agriculture Canada does for the agriculture and food system and for you, the consumer.

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## HELPS YOUR FOOD PRODUCER

Canada has a lot of land. But only a small portion is suitable for food production.

Agriculture Canada helps the nation's farmers make efficient use of the land — to feed Canadians and, where possible, to produce a surplus for export and food aid.

The department has scientists, engineers and technicians conducting research at some 50 locations across the country. They are breeding better crop varieties, finding ways to control weeds and insect pests, developing new machinery and coming up with improved methods of livestock management.

Besides adding to farming know-how, the department works to protect food producers from the uncertainties of their business:



- A crop insurance program (in cooperation with the provinces) to counter the worst effects of the weather.
- An animal diseases control program to check the spread of contagious diseases.
- A program to guarantee advance payments on stored crops so farmers don't have to sell their whole crop at harvesttime when prices are often the lowest.
- Stabilization programs covering more than 90% of all the crop and livestock sales in the country. (Although these stabilization plans don't guarantee farmers a profit, they do provide support payments when farm prices are low or when production costs rise rapidly.)

Programs to help the farmers benefit all of us. By keeping farming an attractive occupation, the department seeks to ensure a continuing supply of food for Canadians.

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## WHOLESOME FOOD

Agriculture Canada is one of the departments entrusted with a responsibility for ensuring that Canadian foods are clean and wholesome.

Many foods are subject to Agriculture Canada inspection and regulation. Agriculture Canada inspects meat and poultry slaughter, fruit and vegetable processing, dairy product manufacturing and processing of egg products in federally registered plants. Both the sanitation of the plant and the quality of the product are checked.

Agriculture Canada also regulates pesticide use through a registration program for pesticides and other chemicals used in farming. Working with Health and Welfare Canada, the agricultural authorities ensure that hormones and drugs given to animals and pesticides applied to crops don't leave harmful residues in food products.

Animal health is another departmental responsibility. By working to control and eradicate contagious animal diseases, Agriculture Canada ensures that your meat and dairy products come from healthy animals. These programs help prevent animal diseases such as undulant fever, rabies or tuberculosis from spreading to humans.

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## SETS THE GRADE

Food grades are your mark of quality.

They tell you what you're getting. When you buy Grade A beef, you have the right to expect it's from a young steer or heifer and not from a 10-year old cow.

When you buy Canada Fancy canned cherries you know they will be colorful, well-sized and unblemished.

Agriculture Canada's graders rate a wide variety of products from poultry to honey to frozen corn. The grading system provides an incentive for farmers to produce higher quality produce. It also simplifies shopping because the consumer can tell from the label the quality of the food being bought.

The grades are reviewed and changed from time to time to stay in line with market requirements, including consumer preferences.

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The department improves food quality in other ways. Its researchers are developing plant varieties with higher nutritional levels and better storing qualities. They are working on new processing methods. And, the production specialists run programs such as Record of Performance (ROP) to help farmers select their best breeding stock to sell, for example, leaner pork cuts or other livestock products that meet consumer demands.

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## WORKS TOWARDS REASONABLE PRICES

Agriculture Canada has numerous programs aimed at stabilizing prices of farm products.

For example, in 1977-78, \$263 million was paid in subsidies to dairy farmers for milk processed into butter, cheese, yogurt and skim milk powder.

Stabilization programs for other farm commodities are designed to provide reasonably steady prices. By making payments to farmers in years of low returns, the department reduces the impact of boom and bust cycles in agriculture.

These cycles cause retail food prices to fall when farmers are overproducing. But then prices skyrocket when farmers lose money and cut back production.

Stabilization programs encourage balanced production and stable prices.

The department's research also affects food prices. By developing higher-yielding crops, fighting pests and diseases and finding ways to save energy, Agriculture Canada's scientists reduce the cost of producing food.

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## FARM PRODUCTION FOR THE FUTURE

Agriculture Canada looks beyond Canada's immediate food requirements. The department is involved in planning Canada's food aid, developing export markets for Canadian farm products in cooperation with other departments, and ensuring that our future food production meets the needs and demands of Canadians.

The department's researchers develop and test new farm products. The new Crop Development Fund assists private groups and universities to develop new crops, varieties and production methods. The Fund has supported research into peanut growing in southern Ontario, utility wheats in western Canada, mustard seed in eastern Ontario and blueberries and baby carrots in Quebec.

Departmental plant breeders and animal geneticists shape tomorrow's agricultural products. Higher protein yields per hectare, crop varieties that can be grown in northern areas, larger turkeys, leaner hogs — these are just a few of their goals.

The department is also responsive to public concerns about energy use and the environment. It is studying ways to use sewage to fertilize crops, solar energy to dry grain, and food processing wastes to make edible products.

When the year 2000 arrives, the Canadian food and agriculture industry should be ready for the challenges of that new era, thanks in part to the plans Agriculture Canada is making right now.

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## ADDS TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Agriculture Canada helps the agriculture and food industry make an important contribution to the quality of Canadian life. Not only does the department work to ensure abundant food supplies and reasonable prices, it also helps the food industry play a stronger part in the entire Canadian economy.

The food industry is one of the nation's largest employers. One Canadian in four is employed in food production, marketing, or transportation.

And agriculture earns money for our balance of payments. Agricultural exports have traditionally made up about 12% of total commodity exports. For the last several years, Canada has had a positive trade balance in agricultural products. This trade surplus amounts to almost \$1 billion annually.

Agriculture Canada supports the family farm unit. There are limits on many of the department's support programs to ensure that the benefits go to genuine farmers and their families. The department supports fairs and exhibitions to promote competition among farmers and give them the opportunity to show their products to their neighbors and to urban families as well.

In this way, the department helps to keep rural traditions alive and helps the rural community play its part in the overall fabric of Canadian life.

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## ADVICE FOR THE FARM AND HOME

Agriculture Canada provides a wide variety of information and advice to the general public.

The department distributes nearly three million publications each year. Many of these are written especially for consumers to explain how to buy, prepare and store foods; how to grow vegetables; collect mushrooms; make wines; understand food grades, and so on. Films on many topics are also available for loan to schools or organizations.

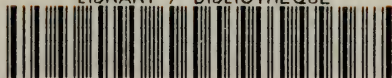
In addition, the department puts out news releases, radio programs and film clips to keep the public informed about recent developments.

The department's food advisory staff test food products and food preparation and storage methods. They also develop recipes to help Canadian consumers make tasty and economical meals. They advise consumers how to get the most for their food dollar.

Hundreds of individual questions and requests for information are answered every week by staff in Ottawa and in the district offices and research stations across Canada. Consumers ask the department how to care for house plants, how to can fruits and vegetables, how to cook buffalo meat and just about anything else you could think of.

You can get answers to your questions about agriculture and food by writing to: Information Services, Agriculture Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0C7, or by phoning 613-995-5222.

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