



what you should know about

AGRICULTURE CANADA

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What you Should Know About Agriculture Canada

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Agriculture is Canada's most basic industry; without it Canadians would be totally dependent on other countries for food and, consequently, for survival. From the days of the earliest settlers who grew their own food, agriculture has played a vital role in the development of the nation.

Agriculture Canada was established by Act of Parliament in 1868, one year after Confederation. At that time, the main concern of farmers was to safeguard the health of their livestock. This led to the establishment in 1869 of a veterinary branch, which later became the Health of Animals Branch and assumed the additional responsibilities of meat inspection and research on animal diseases.

Development of the west hinged on agriculture. The vast areas of rich prairie farmland attracted settlers by the thousands from abroad in the latter half of the 19th century. But experience with agriculture in their homelands did not prepare them for farming in a country of unfamiliar soils, short growing seasons and rigorous climate. To overcome their problems and those of farmers elsewhere in Canada, federal legislation was passed in 1886 for the establishment of five experimental farms to carry on experimental and investigational work to determine the farming methods, livestock breeds and plant varieties best suited to the different parts of Canada. The central farm, at Ottawa, was to serve Ontario and Quebec; the others were to be located at Nappan, N.S., Brandon, Man., Agassiz, B.C., and Indian Head in that area of the Northwest Territories that later became Saskatchewan. The Experimental Farms Service was the forerunner of the Department's Research Branch, which today operates 48 establishments across Canada.

Agriculture, the 'pioneer' Canadian industry, remains an essential part of our economy today. Although levels may vary from year to year, the export sales of our agricultural products contribute impressively to our economic health. In 1977, for example, the total value of our exports of agricultural products amounted to \$4.3 billion. Of this, wheat accounted for \$1.8 billion, flaxseed and rapeseed for \$441 million, and meat for \$222 million.

The scope of activities of the Department has grown over the years to meet the needs of the agriculture and food industry. Indicative of this is the number of Acts of Parliament that provide the authority for departmental activities — from a single Act in 1869 to 38 today.

Reorganized periodically over the years to better serve Canadians and to meet the challenges of the times, Agriculture Canada's basic aim today is, in cooperation with provincial

governments, to develop and assist the agriculture and food system to provide for the needs of Canadians, for export markets and for international aid commitments.

The Department comprises seven branches (Research; Food Production and Marketing; Health of Animals; Policy, Planning and Economics; Intergovernmental and International Services; Finance and Administration; Personnel Administration) and public information services. In addition, several closely associated agencies are responsible to the Minister of Agriculture: Agricultural Products Board, Agricultural Stabilization Board, Canadian Dairy Commission, Canadian Grain Commission, Canadian Livestock Feed Board, Farm Credit Corporation and the National Farm Products Marketing Council.

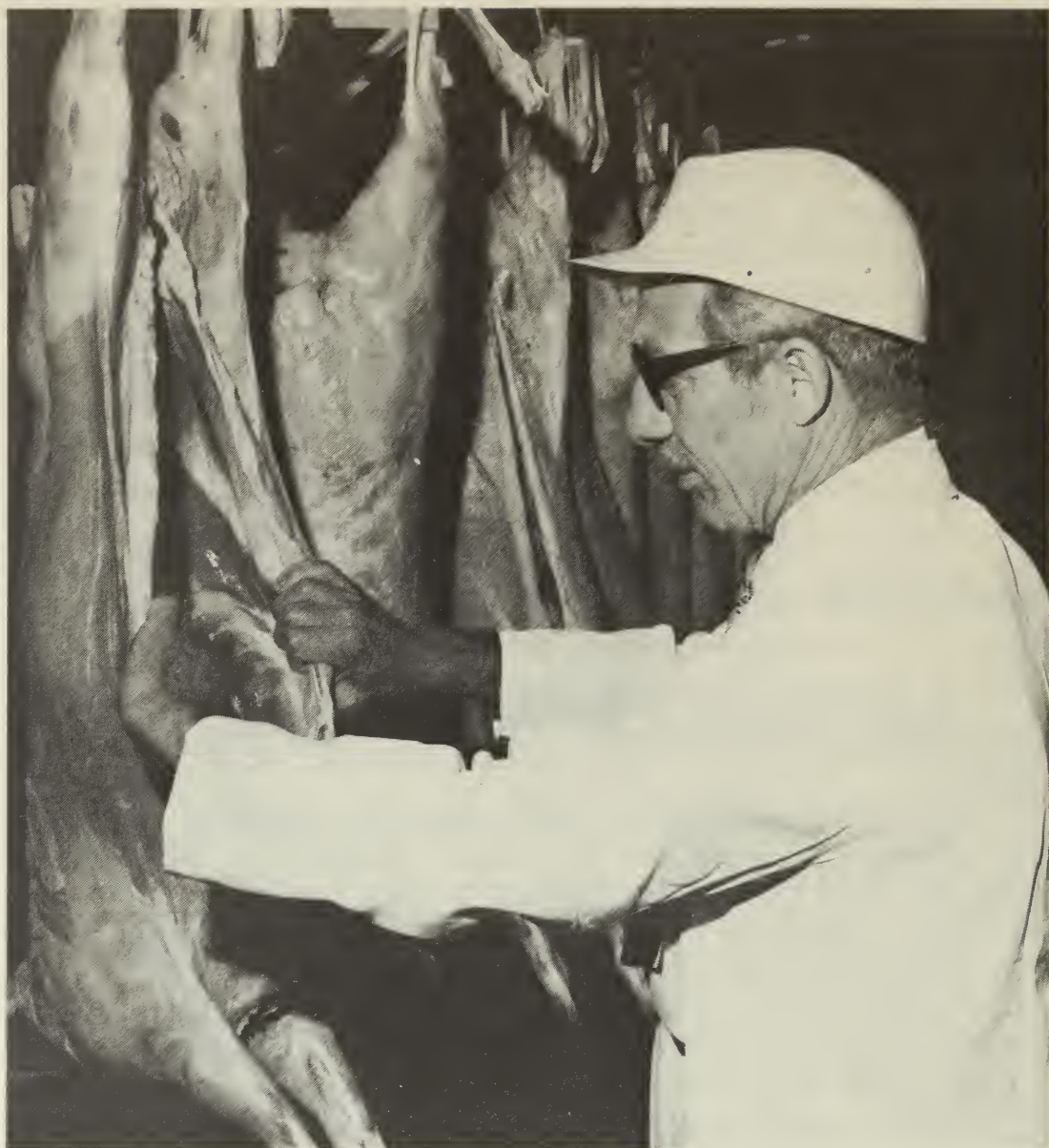
INSPECTION AND GRADING

The variety of inspection and grading services carried out by Agriculture Canada cover most of the agricultural products sold in Canada.

Fresh and processed fruits and vegetables produced in Canada are subject to inspection to ensure compliance with grade, packaging and marking regulations if they are moved from one province to another or are exported abroad. Imported produce must also be inspected and meet similar requirements.

The high quality of manufactured dairy products is assured by another group of departmental inspectors. In carrying out their duties, these officers inspect dairy plants and inspect dairy products (for composition, weight and labeling) at wholesale and manufacturing levels and at exporting and importing points. Inspection also ensures uniform application of grade standards for creamery butter, cheddar cheese and skim milk powder.

The Department's meat inspection service ensures that meat and poultry products sold in Canada or exported are wholesome and suitable for human consumption. Federal law requires that meat slaughtering and processing plants dealing in interprovincial or export trade must operate under federal veterinary inspection. Although the law requires inspection only in those plants whose products move interprovincially or to foreign markets, a number of others have voluntarily come under inspection. In 1978, more than 800 packing plants, meat storages and rendering plants were registered and under inspection. The inspection program also extends to hygienic practices in the plants.



In addition to veterinary inspection to ensure wholesomeness of red and poultry meats, the Department is also responsible for implementing and maintaining quality (grade) and labeling standards for beef, pork, veal, mutton, shell eggs, egg products and eviscerated poultry.

Other quality-control measures of the Department include inspection of agricultural seed for compliance with grade and labeling standards, and sampling, analysis and registration of fertilizers, pesticides and animal feeds. The sampling and grading of grain delivered to or shipped from licensed terminal elevators is a function of the Canadian Grain Commission.



CROP AND LIVESTOCK PROTECTION

Insect pests and diseases of plants and livestock, if left unchecked, could severely cripple or possibly wipe out Canada's agricultural production. To avoid such a disaster, various measures are enforced by Agriculture Canada to guard against their introduction into or their spread within Canada. The safeguards not only help to protect farmers from losses, but are important in ensuring that the doors of foreign customers remain open to healthy plant material and livestock from Canada.

Tight security measures govern the importation of livestock and livestock products to prevent 'exotic' diseases (those not established in Canada, such as foot-and-mouth) being carried into the country. The measures include the requirement for permits to import livestock from any country other than the United States; the restriction of imports to those from countries where serious diseases of livestock are adequately controlled; health certification of the animals before being shipped; and entry only through special Canadian port facilities for inspection and quarantine. Programs to control or eradicate diseases already existing in Canada may

involve quarantine and treatment, or slaughter of infected livestock. Owners are compensated for livestock slaughtered in tuberculosis, brucellosis and other disease-eradication programs.

Import permits, and inspection and quarantine procedures are also among the measures used to protect our agricultural crops and forests from attack by insects and plant diseases. To prevent these destructive pests being carried into the country, plant material from abroad may only be imported under permit and must be inspected on arrival. Incoming material found to be infested may be fumigated, destroyed or returned to the country of origin. Permission is denied for imports from countries known to be infested with plant pests not found in Canada, and generally the importation of soil or plants with soil adhering to them is not permitted. Domestic quarantines are enforced to prevent the spread of insect pests and plant diseases not widely distributed within Canada. Where feasible, eradication measures are undertaken in the areas of infestation.

AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION

The Federal Government supports the prices of agricultural commodities to ensure a fair return to farmers for their labor and their capital investment in their enterprises. Moreover, price stabilization programs enable farmers to stay in business during periods of depressed prices and thus assure stability in food supplies for consumers — urban and rural alike.

Under the Agricultural Stabilization Act, price support is mandatory for cattle, hogs, sheep, milk and cream used for making butter and other dairy products, corn, soybeans, and oats and barley grown outside the Prairie Provinces and the Peace River district of British Columbia, which are covered by Canadian Wheat Board operations. The support price for each of these commodities is at least 90% of its average market price for the previous 5 years, indexed for changes in the cash cost of production. Price support is not limited to the nine commodities; it can be, and often is, extended to others. Another stabilization measure, the Western Grain Stabilization Program, is aimed at protecting the net returns of grain growers in the Canadian Wheat Board area. The program applies to growers of wheat, oats, barley, rye, flax, rapeseed and mustardseed.

The agencies involved in price support operations are the Agricultural Stabilization Board, Agricultural Products Board,

Canadian Dairy Commission, and Agriculture Canada's Food Production and Marketing Branch, which administers the Western Grain Stabilization Program.

CROP INSURANCE

Although any industry will feel the pinch of a depressed market, agriculture alone faces an additional risk each year — crop losses caused by such perils as hail, drought, insects, wind, frost and plant disease. Provincially operated crop insurance programs, to which the Federal Government contributes, enable farmers to protect themselves from severe financial setbacks. The premium cost to farmers is modest. In the fiscal year ended March 31, 1978, federal contributions to provincial programs amounted to \$73 million.

LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT

Several livestock improvement programs are administered by Agriculture Canada for the benefit of producers. These include the Record of Performance (R.O.P.) program for dairy cattle and, in cooperation with the provinces, R.O.P. programs for beef cattle, sheep and swine. The objective of these programs is the selection of genetically superior breeding stock. Other improvement programs include a sire-loan plan in which above-average sires are lent to farmer groups for use in beef cattle, swine or sheep improvement projects; and, for poultry, a national program of pedigree selection.

ANIMAL HEALTH DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Important to the control of animal diseases are the diagnostic services which are available, without charge, to veterinarians and livestock owners through the Department's animal pathology laboratories. The diagnostic services apply to diseases of wildlife as well as those of domestic animals.

A cattle blood-typing service is also available, on a fee basis, to help in verification of breeding records.

MARKETS AND MERCHANDISING

Many of the Department's activities are concerned with marketing and merchandising, and include the administration of public stockyards across Canada and the maintenance of the 'showcase' herd of beef and dairy cattle on the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa to show prospective buyers from abroad examples of the good cattle to be found on Canadian farms.

Market information is important to producers, processors and others involved in the agriculture and food industry. To help them in their decision making, the Department collects data on the marketings of livestock, fruits and vegetables, and dairy and poultry products, and uses the data to compile a wide range of statistical market reports for the industry.

Departmental economists play an important role in the development of marketing policies. Their work covers all areas of agricultural economics, and includes forecasts of supply, demand and prices of commodities, services and inputs (fertilizer, feed, etc.); identification of market opportunities at home and abroad for Canadian farm products; and review and evaluation of trade policies of Canada and other nations relating to tariff and nontariff barriers.

CONSUMER INFORMATION

Food and nutrition specialists with the Department provide information on buying, preparing, preserving and nutritive value of foods. The information is relayed to household consumers, institutional food-service managers, educators and others by means of press, radio, television and publications. The specialists also carry out studies to improve cooking and preserving methods, and they offer guidance to consumers on federal grading and inspection regulations.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

A broad public affairs program to inform Canadians about the policies, programs and activities of the Department is carried out by its Information Services. Information about markets, foods, research and all other facets of departmental activities is provided

by means of publications; press, radio and television services; exhibits; films; tours, and seminars. Information is also provided directly to individuals by telephone, correspondence, and personal contact. More than 3 000 000 copies of departmental publications are distributed annually in response to requests.

INSECT AND PLANT IDENTIFICATION

Identification of insects, plants and fungi is an important service provided by departmental scientists. In an average year, more than 20 000 zoological, plant and fungal species are identified for agricultural scientists, other government agencies and the general public. Identification of mushrooms involved in cases of poisoning is an important part of the work of these specialists.

RACETRACK SUPERVISION

Responsibility for the supervision of racetracks and pari-mutuel betting rests with Agriculture Canada. The Department assigns pari-mutuel race dates, approves betting systems; provides drug-testing, race patrol and photo finish services, and supervises and audits all pari-mutuel betting. The cost of providing the services is met by a levy on betting.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Federal Government, through the Department, provides financial assistance for a variety of agriculture-related purposes. These include grants to agricultural exhibitions and fairs to help meet operating or improvement costs; grants to universities, provincial agencies and producer groups for development of new crops and plant varieties, and financial support to 4-H clubs for their work in providing leadership and citizenship training for young people, especially those living in rural areas. In addition, the Federal Government pays part of the cost of moving feed grains from the prairies to British Columbia and some parts of Eastern Canada, and it provides financial incentives to increase feed-grain storage capacity and feed production in Ontario and Quebec.

LOANS

Long-term mortgage loans are available through the Farm Credit Corporation (FCC) to help farmers establish profitable farm enterprises. Loans made under the Farm Credit Act may be used for a variety of purposes, but most are used to buy land to enlarge an existing farm or to buy a farm. The FCC also administers the Farm Syndicates Credit Act, under which groups (syndicates) of three or more farmers may borrow to buy machinery, buildings and equipment that will be used jointly by members of a syndicate.

RESEARCH

Agriculture has played a dominant role in Canada's development and, in very large measure, this was made possible by research.

The importance of research was recognized early with the establishment of the Experimental Farms Service in 1886 and results were not long in appearing. Among the early and notable contributions of departmental research was Marquis wheat which, because of its early ripening characteristic, greatly extended the area where wheat could be grown. Initiated from a cross made in



1896, Marquis was introduced shortly after the turn of the century and by 1917 accounted for 90% of Canada's wheat acreage.

Research Branch scientists have maintained a flow of new and improved varieties of wheat, oats and other cereals, each offering some particular benefit — earlier ripening to push back agricultural frontiers, bigger yields, or better resistance to drought, insect damage and plant disease.

Rapeseed is another outstanding example of the value of research. Production of the crop began in Canada during the Second World War to provide a source of lubricating oil, but in the following years only limited production was maintained. In the 1960s, departmental scientists began a major research program on rapeseed and in 1973 achieved a major breakthrough with the introduction of Midas, a variety which produced a high-quality vegetable oil for human consumption. By 1978, three more varieties had been developed, giving increased yields, improved vegetable-oil quality and improved quality of rapeseed meal for livestock feed. Often referred to as the 'Cinderella' crop, rapeseed today ranks second to wheat as Canada's most valuable export crop and it is the source of 38% of vegetable oils consumed in Canada.

Research on livestock has contributed to breed improvement, better livestock nutrition and improved husbandry methods. Horticultural research has produced many new varieties of fruits and vegetables suitable for specific areas or for broader production.



Examples of these is the Spartan apple, a variety developed at Summerland, B.C., and now widely grown in that province and elsewhere, and the strawberry variety Redcoat, which was developed at Ottawa and now dominates strawberry production in Eastern Canada.

The work of the Research Branch touches all aspects of agricultural production, including soil fertility; irrigation techniques; weed, insect and disease control; and food processing and storage technology.

The Branch's 48 research establishments are located across Canada, from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island. They include several institutes at Ottawa whose work has national application — Animal Research, Biosystematics Research, Chemistry and Biology Research, Engineering and Statistical Research, Food Research, and Land Resource Research. The Ottawa Research Station and other similar establishments across the country carry out research that is largely directed to solving the problems of farmers in the areas surrounding the stations, although in many cases the research findings have much broader application. Among the Branch's research specialists are representatives of all biological, chemical and agricultural sciences, as well as physicists, mathematicians and engineers.

Research on animal diseases began in 1902 when a biological laboratory was established at Ottawa and made part of the Health of Animals Branch. The Branch today operates nine laboratories across Canada and their work is directed at diseases that cause serious economic loss in livestock and those diseases that can be transmitted to humans, such as tuberculosis, brucellosis and rabies. The work includes studies of the organisms that cause animal diseases and their transmission, the development and improvement of tests for detecting diseases, and the production of diagnostic reagents used in disease-control programs.

LEGISLATION

The Minister of Agriculture is responsible to Parliament for administration of the following statutes, copies of which may be obtained from Supply and Services Canada, 270 Albert Street, Ottawa K1A 0S9:

Advance Payments for Crops Act

Agricultural Products Board Act

Agricultural Products Co-operative Marketing Act

Agricultural Products Marketing Act
Agricultural Stabilization Act
Animal Disease and Protection Act
Canada Agricultural Products Standards Act
Canada Dairy Products Act
Canada Grain Act
Canadian Dairy Commission Act
Cheese and Cheese Factory Improvement Act
Cold Storage Act
Crop Insurance Act
Department of Agriculture Act
Experimental Farm Stations Act
Farm Credit Act
Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act
Farm Syndicates Credit Act
Feeds Act
Fertilizers Act
Fruit, Vegetables and Honey Act
Grain Futures Act
Hay and Straw Inspection Act
Humane Slaughter of Food Animals Act
Inspection and Sale Act
Livestock and Livestock Products Act
Livestock Feed Assistance Act
Livestock Pedigree Act
Maple Products Industry Act
Meat Inspection Act
Milk Test Act
Pest Control Products Act
Pesticide Residue Compensation Act
Plant Quarantine Act
Prairie Farm Assistance Act
Seeds Act
Wheat Co-operative Marketing Act
Criminal Code, Sec. 188, Racetrack Supervision

