



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 064**

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

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Chair: Mr. Kody Blois





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• (1635)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.)):** I call the meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 64 of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, April 24, 2023, the committee is beginning consideration of the 2023-24 main estimates, specifically, vote 1 under Canadian Dairy Commission, vote 1 under Canadian Grain Commission, and votes 1, 5 and 10 under Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, referred to the committee on Wednesday, February 15, 2023.

Now I would like to welcome the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

On behalf of the committee, Minister, I want to acknowledge your tireless work to support Canadian families and farmers. Thank you for being here today to discuss the main estimates.

[*English*]

Thank you very much, Minister. It's great to see you.

We also have Stefanie Beck, deputy minister of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Let me recognize your new role and congratulate you. We wish you all the best in the days ahead in the name of our agriculture sector.

Also from the department we have Marie-Claude Guérard, assistant deputy minister, corporate management branch.

From the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, we have Sylvie Lapointe, vice-president, policy and programs; and Philippe Morel, vice-president, operations.

Colleagues, you know the drill. We'll allow for an opening statement from our minister of around five minutes.

I can give you a bit of extra time, Minister, if you'd like to finish up, after which we'll go right to questions.

[*Translation*]

The floor is yours, Minister.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are here today to discuss the 2023-24 main estimates for the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

These main estimates total more than \$1.8 billion, for this fiscal year alone, but I expect total expenditures for 2023-24 to exceed \$3.8 billion. These investments illustrate yet again the government's commitment to helping Canadian farmers and food processors manage risk and become more resilient. Through these estimates, we are supporting farmers as they manage the unprecedented risks they have faced in recent years, with \$769 million in funding for business risk management programs.

Keep in mind that these estimates are merely a snapshot in time. Additional investments in the year ahead will demonstrate our ongoing support for the sector, including continued funding for business risk management programs, and the new Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership agreement, supported by a 25% increase in cost-shared programming funded by the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

I also want to highlight that, in budget 2023, we committed to helping farmers deal with the significant financial challenges they face, by increasing the interest-free limit for loans under the advance payments program from \$250,000 to \$350,000 for the 2023 program year. Combined with last year's increase to the interest-free limit, this measure will save farmers a total of nearly \$84 million over two years. This further increase means that farmers will have access to the additional cash flow they need to deal with higher interest rates and input costs.

In addition to supporting economic sustainability, the funding requested through these main estimates supports agricultural resilience and the transition to sustainable agriculture, with nearly \$260 million in funding for the agricultural clean technology program and the agricultural climate solutions program. That funding is part of the \$1.5-billion envelope for climate-smart agriculture programming. The investment includes the on-farm climate action fund, which helps thousands of farmers across the country adopt cover cropping, nutrient management and rotational grazing practices.

These main estimates also attest to the government's strong support for supply management, with more than \$157 million in funding to help dairy, poultry and egg producers and processors cope with the impacts of trade deals with Europe and the trans-Pacific region. That investment is part of our overall commitment to provide \$4.8 billion to supply-managed sectors to offset the impact of the three trade agreements, including the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA.

The support we are providing is already helping Canadian egg farmers invest in new heating, lighting and ventilation systems to improve animal welfare and save energy.

• (1640)

[English]

Since we last met, Mr. Chair, we have also launched our federal programs under the sustainable Canadian agricultural partnership, which will support key priorities for the sector over the next five years, including research and innovation across the value chain, action on climate change and the environment, expanding markets for Canadian exports, creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce, and public trust.

On the international stage, we continue to help our producers and processors to maximize their opportunities in the global marketplace. Last year, Canada's agriculture and food exports reached a record of close to \$93 billion, not far from the target of \$95 billion set by the federal, provincial and territorial ministers for 2028. That's an amazing achievement, given the many challenges farmers are facing.

To help our producers and processors diversify their markets, we will open Canada's first-ever agriculture and agri-food office in the Indo-Pacific region. The region holds significant opportunities for our agri-food sector, and it will account for two-thirds of the global middle class by 2030. Last month, I was able to strengthen our agricultural trade relationships in the region with a mission to Japan and Singapore. I can tell you that the customers there are looking for more of our world-class Canadian agri-food products.

Of course, we continue to strengthen our relationship with our largest trading partner. Last week, I was in Washington and met with Secretary Vilsack. We renewed our commitment to priorities on resilient supply chains and on making sure that trade is based on science and rules. I also raised our industry's concerns that the voluntary "Product of U.S.A." labelling requirements could restrict trade and disrupt supply chains.

Mr. Chair, there is no question that the sector faces significant challenges, but the sector is strong, growing, and has a bright outlook for the future. Our farmers are, and will continue to be, leaders in sustainable production and innovation. We will continue to work together to help farmers keep their businesses strong and growing through investments such as the main estimates that we are discussing today.

Thank you.

• (1645)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

We will now begin the first round of questions.

Mr. Barlow, you have six minutes. Go ahead.

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, have you done an economic analysis, an impact analysis, on the fuel standard and what effect it will have on farms and food prices?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** As you know, our price on pollution is a significant tool for this government and for the country—

**Mr. John Barlow:** There's the new fuel standard tax that's coming out. I'm not talking about the carbon tax; I'm talking about the fuel standard tax that will be coming out—just so we're clear.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** The tools we are putting in place are there to allow this country—and the agricultural sector is part of the solution—to reach our targets to fight against climate change, and we're there to support the farmers.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Have you done an economic analysis of the impact this fuel standard will have on transportation with regard to food prices, yes or no?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** We collaborate with the Minister of Environment, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Finance. However, this tool, once again, is important to enable us to reach our targets, and we support the farmers in this direction.

**The Chair:** Mr. Barlow, I'm going to stop the clock. I appreciate and will be respectful of your time. You asked a question. Let's let the minister respond. I know you have to intervene because you have only so much time, but let's be mindful, okay?

**Mr. John Barlow:** I'm trying to make it even-even. Thank you.

Minister, do you know the amount of beef imported from the United Kingdom last year to Canada?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** We are opening up this market, and I've had the opportunity to speak, to discuss and to challenge the three ministers responsible for trade in agriculture very recently.

I know that we have some challenges in terms of the barriers. They have come here to do some technical studies, and I will keep pushing so we can export more beef over there.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you. The answer is that about 4,400 tonnes of beef was imported into Canada from the United Kingdom last year.

Do you know how much Canadian beef was exported to the United Kingdom last year?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** As I said, I know that we can do better when it comes to our U.K. exports. It's a very important market for us. Not only is it close, but it also has growth potential. I will keep pressing my three U.K. counterparts responsible for agriculture, the environment and trade to ensure that Canada can increase its exports.

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you, Minister.

The answer is zero, so there's a massive trade imbalance. We're seeing a similar trend with pork, which has gone down substantially every single year—that's Canadian pork exported to the U.K.

Why did you not prioritize addressing this trade imbalance before agreeing to the accession of the United Kingdom to the CPTPP, which seriously diminishes our strength in terms of leverage to come into agreement? Are you going to address this, as the Canadian Cattle Association have said, as a failure of this government to address that before agreeing to the accession of the U.K. to the CPTPP?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** It's important to look at the U.K.'s accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP, more broadly, taking into account the various sectors of the economy. Some agricultural sectors, including corn, are benefiting. Pork exports could go up, and frozen pork is already being exported. I know there's tremendous potential, and I'm confident that we will get the non-tariff barriers imposed by the U.K. lifted.

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Have you read the PMRA's analysis on the lambda-cy pesticide?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I work with the Minister of Health on a variety of files involving the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, or PMRA.

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** If you have read the report, you can clearly see that the PMRA has admitted that it made substantial mistakes in the science to delist or ban the lambda-cy pesticide.

Will you tell the PMRA to immediately do a reassessment on its evaluation of the lambda-cy pesticide?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** The agency operates independently and makes science-based decisions. I can't tell the agency what to do, as you are well aware. Nevertheless, to the extent my position allows, I am encouraging the agency to do that, within reasonable limits. I wanted to understand why the decision was made, so we did our own analysis.

Canada's environmental, climate and risk landscape is different from the U.S.'s.

• (1650)

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Your colleague, Jenica Atwin, had a press conference asking the government to ban glyphosate in Canadian agriculture. As you know, under your government, Health Canada did a re-evaluation of glyphosate in 2017 and stated that glyphosate is safe.

When are you going to schedule a press conference to debunk the comments made by your colleague Jenica Atwin and ensure that the message is out there that glyphosate is safe for Canadian farmers to use?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I can assure you I understand how important it is for farmers to have access to the inputs they need to operate, including pesticides. All the studies done by the agencies show that glyphosate is safe when used as directed.

I agree with that position. I am working with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Health on the matter.

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thanks, Minister. I have time for one last question.

In the budget, the foot-and-mouth vaccine bank is there. It's good to see, but there is some wording that is concerning in terms of this being a cost share with the provinces and territories.

Is there some assurance you can give us that if the provinces cannot afford the cost sharing or do not agree to a cost share, this vaccine bank will go ahead through funding from the federal government alone?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** We want to move ahead, and we have the money, but I think it's important... From the first conversations we've had with the provinces, we see that there is an interest and they want all of us together to make good use of the money and to increase the money, so that we can have even more powerful action on this front. This is because it is more important for some provinces than others.

I don't necessarily expect the same level of participation, but I see interest.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister Bibeau, and thank you, Mr. Barlow.

We'll now turn to Ms. Taylor Roy for up to six minutes.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister Bibeau and all of the department officials, for being here today. Thank you for the hard work you're doing at the ministry to support our agricultural sector and to move toward more sustainable agriculture as well.

I want to talk about another area where I think there's potential for growth, which is the plant-based food market.

I recently met with World Animal Protection and a young woman, Nika Moeini, who works with Youth Climate Save. She's also an ambassador for the Plant Based Treaty, which advocates for a transition to sustainable agriculture.

Plant-based food is an area where there's a lot of potential for growth. It's also an area where we can build on the incredible sustainability work that's being done through our agriculture sector, because a transition to the consumption of more plant-based foods has the potential to close the gap in reaching the climate targets that we currently have in our emissions reduction plan. It's about nine megatons. It's quite impressive, when you look out to 2030.

I'm wondering what the government is doing and what the department is doing to support the growth of that plant-based food sector, which I believe is a huge export market for our agriculture community as well.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I think we have huge potential. We are already positioning Canada as a leader in terms of innovation in plant-based food. With one of our superclusters, with Protein Industries Canada, we have already invested \$353 million. I have had the opportunity to visit a certain number of these projects that are being rolled out from the supercluster and the PIC program. It is just amazing what is developing in there. I'm talking about food, directly around food, but also the residue, if I can call it that, of certain transformations that are developing into alternative fertilizer as well, organic fertilizer. It's not only around food. The whole supply chain, the whole sector, is extremely promising.

We're talking about 52 projects with the industry. With our investment, but with the private sector investment as well, we're talking about \$478 million involving 430 organizations and 633 products already, since 2017 alone. This is a very, very exciting sector that is developing. I think we're very well positioned to be a world leader in this sector.

• (1655)

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Thank you so much. That is exciting.

I'm wondering what role the government can play here too. We have the new Canada food guide, which, as you know, has really emphasized plant-based foods and consuming more of those. Hopefully, we're going to have the school lunch program introduced soon. Do you see a greater opportunity for us to try to move consumption in that direction?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I will leave this analysis to our colleagues from the Department of Health. I think there will always be space for animal and plant protein, but with a growing world population, we have to be open to innovation. Everything around plant protein is extremely promising.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Yes. I agree. I think there's always going to be the demand for animal protein as well, but when you look at the world hunger situation, the amount of water used and the amount of other inputs used to create animal protein, I think having the balance between both will allow us to address a lot of things—environmental sustainability, world hunger and our climate targets. I very much appreciate the work you're doing on that.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** You still have a little time remaining. You have 90 seconds.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** That's fantastic. I'll ask another question.

I'm also wondering about this in the numbers. The on-farm climate action stream has of course a great deal of money allocated, more than \$87 million. Are there any new directions coming out over the next year in this program, or is there still a lot of pent-up demand for that program in terms of the initiatives under way?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** We launched a program a year and a half ago, more or less, mainly for last summer and this summer. We have 12 partners, I would call them, or program managers all across the country who are rolling out this program, mainly for cover cropping, rotational grazing and better management of nitrogen fertilizer. We will analyze the results and the impacts. We will try to measure the impacts on emission reductions, because this is what we are looking for, and making our farms more resilient, of course.

Then we will launch the second call for proposals or go for a second phase for the summer of 2024. We might realign some different things, but I can't tell yet. We have to look at the results first.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

We now go to Mr. Perron for six minutes.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I'd like to thank you and the other witnesses for being with us today.

I have a lot of questions, so I will try to be brief.

As you know, we did a study on poultry imports from Ukraine. Officials from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada told us earlier this year that the first 10 poultry shipments from every establishment would undergo full inspection.

Can you tell us whether CFIA's inspections revealed any substances that are banned in Canada?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I'm going to ask Mr. Morel to provide more information on that.

**Mr. Philippe Morel (Vice-President, Operations, Canadian Food Inspection Agency):** Since the tariffs were reduced, we've received 24 containers of poultry from Ukraine, 11 of which were fully tested. The testing is complex and can take up to a month to complete.

As you mentioned, Mr. Perron, the first 10 shipments are undergoing a comprehensive inspection. Of the lots received, three portions were found to be non-compliant and had to be destroyed or shipped back out of the country. The rest, however, were found to be compliant. I should point out that the samples were very detailed, as per the requirements and our policy for the first 10 shipments.

If the poultry from a given establishment is found not to comply with Canadian standards, we increase the number of shipments we test to 15, and that testing is just as rigorous.

• (1700)

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you.

That was one of the things we had expressed concerns over. We sent the minister a letter about it, including our recommendation not to renew the order.

June 9 is approaching fast, Minister.

Can you tell us what you plan to do about the order? Of course, I'm talking about supply-managed sectors.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Yes, I realize that you're talking about supply-managed sectors. As you know, we strongly condemn Russia's attack against Ukraine, so we want to impose whatever sanctions we can. You also know what a staunch defender of supply management I am, and I will continue to keep a very close eye on this issue.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** My understanding is that a decision hasn't been made yet.

Is that correct?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I'm not the one who makes that decision, as you know. The decision hasn't been made yet.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Certainly, we will continue to press for the decision that was recommended by the committee. Thank you.

In budget 2023, the government announced that it would establish the dairy innovation and investment fund. That's great, but we still don't have any details. We don't know what the amounts are or when the fund will be rolled out.

Can you give us any information on that? When will the funding be available? Processors are eager to apply.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** A total of \$333 million has been earmarked for the sector. We are actually in talks with dairy farmers and processors. The purpose of the program is to create new market opportunities that leverage the surplus of non-fat dairy solids. We want to promote innovation in that area to see what's possible.

In fact, I recently visited a company in Quebec City that's using non-fat dairy solid surpluses to produce bioplastics. It's a market that holds tremendous potential. The company representatives even said they didn't think Canada's surplus was big enough to meet their demand, so there's incredible potential with that market and others.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** When will the program be rolled out?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** It's always tricky to give an exact date, as you know. I think we can reasonably expect the program to launch in the fall. That's an approximate time frame, because it's

important to note that we are still in talks. I don't want to set a date that's unrealistic. We have to work with members of the industry on designing the program.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** I'm sure you can understand that I would spend a lot more time on the subject, but I have to move on.

The members of the Union des producteurs agricoles called on the government for help a while ago. I asked you about it at the time, in the House. I sensed that you were open to the idea, but perhaps I'm just an optimist. You tell me.

Extending the deadline for repaying the Canada emergency business account loans could prove helpful from a cash flow standpoint. On May 11, the Quebec government took action, announcing \$100 million to help with loan interest for three years, among other things.

Agriculture is an area of shared jurisdiction, and my feeling is that you would like to help out. Do you plan to help Quebec in its efforts to provide more support to our farmers, if only providing 60% of funding? That's common practice with business risk management programs, for instance.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Cost-shared programs fall under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Funding is available in that the measure is consistent with the direction we've agreed on.

I spoke with Mr. Lamontagne, the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, just yesterday, and I've had that same discussion with all of my provincial counterparts. I could hardly give Quebec a 60% share of funding without doing the same across the country.

Right now, we are assessing where help is needed most and what those needs look like countrywide. We are figuring out whether we can provide support through the business risk management programs or under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. We are also considering whether other options are available.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Perron.

We now go to Mr. MacGregor for six minutes.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome back, Minister. To you and to all your officials, thank you for joining us today.

I also want to stay on the subject of supply management. My colleague Monsieur Perron asked about Ukraine. I want to ask about future trade deals. India, of course, looms large right now. India has indicated very publicly through its high commissioner to Canada that agriculture is going to be a big thing.

Now, at the same time, Parliament is in the middle of debating a private member's bill, Bill C-282, which is going to put in force and effect a legislative firewall on the ability of the Department of Foreign Affairs to negotiate on tariff rate quotas. I think that's there because Parliament's trust, at least on the opposition side, was broken three times by your government, if I'm speaking frankly, through three successive trade deals. Yes, you can talk about the compensation, but on that third pillar of supply management—import controls—some things were given away there.

Minister, Bill C-282 still has a little bit of a journey ahead of it. It does need to go through the Senate before it receives royal assent, and you have that legislative constraint in place. In the meantime, if the trade deal with the Indo-Pacific region, with India specifically, marches ahead at a pretty rapid pace, can we have your assurance that supply management is not going to be on the table and that you're not going to take advantage of the time between now and when Bill C-282 comes into force and effect?

• (1705)

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** First I want to say that our commitment was to protect the system and to compensate, and we've done what we said. The compensation has all been announced.

Now, our commitment is different. Our commitment is not to allow any additional share in any other trade agreements. I can assure you that supply-managed products will not be on the table in any way in our discussions with India.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Okay. Thank you for that.

You probably thought you were going to be safe from a PACA question today, but I'm going to prove you wrong. I was very happy to see the vote today on Bill C-280. This has been a long time coming. I guess my question is this. It's been a long journey. In the 42nd Parliament both this committee and the Standing Committee on Finance made recommendations. In this Parliament this committee and the Standing Committee on Finance again made recommendations.

I guess after seven and a half years of your government being in power, it's taken the opposition—it's taken us—to get this bill up front, debated and sent to committee. In other words, the initiative lay with us. Every time we tried to convince your government that this is what people wanted and needed and that this was what was needed to protect our perishable fruit and vegetable sector because existing tools did not work—and they have been explaining this to your department time and time again, ad nauseam—they lost their preferential access in the United States, which I sure hope came up in your discussions with your U.S. counterparts.

Why now? Why has your government now done an about-face, and why is it now going along with what has been demanded for so long?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** As you know, when you're in government you have to make a list of priorities that will impact Canadians—

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** We're talking about taxpayer dollars though.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** It takes a lot of time in the House, in the parliamentary agenda.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** It's not a government bill though.

**The Chair:** Mr. MacGregor, you asked a question. I'm quite interested in the minister's response, and then you can engage.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** We were not against it, but it did not get the priority spot, so we'll do that with a private member's bill, and at the end of the day it will be good for our farmers.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Okay. It's better late than never.

You may be aware that our committee, of course, spent one of its meetings looking at the recent plant closure by Olymel in the region of Quebec. That happened in Quebec. Tomorrow it could be in the region of my home province of B.C.

The irony, of course, is that our committee has completed a study on processing capacity in Canada. We have identified some of the major deficiencies in the system, such as that too much of our processing capacity is tied up in large corporations. When they go under, they leave our primary producers in a really very difficult spot.

This is a private company. I understand that we can't get too involved in the private affairs of a single company, but from the system as a whole, what have you learned from what has happened with Olymel, and what steps do you plan on taking in the immediate future to address that processing capacity and those weaknesses that exist throughout the country?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** You're right, and COVID has shown us even more how depending on two big ones, the beef industry and a few more, and the pork industry, makes us more vulnerable. That's why it has been identified as a priority in the sustainable Canadian agricultural partnership.

If you look at the Guelph statement, you will see that the supply chain is there. That is also why there is funding available through the provinces, with 60% federal funding to strengthen our regional supply chains.



As you said, these are private affairs, but this is something I witness when visiting farmers all across the country. It is an issue that we're looking at with the provinces. Obviously, the CFIA stands ready to support newcomers who would like to put in place or implement new processing facilities in the country.

• (1710)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much to you both.

[*Translation*]

Now it's over to Mr. Lehoux for five minutes.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, Minister.

You were just discussing the closure of the Olymel plant in Vallée-Jonction, which is in my riding. I have to tell you how disappointed I was about that, especially because the plant generated a lot of jobs. Farmers are also very worried. Canada exports 70% of its pork, as we know. Quebec is a major exporter of pork. The plant closure is going to affect the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario and perhaps even Manitoba.

Ms. Bibeau, you're a Quebecker and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Why haven't you said anything about the closure? It was announced four weeks ago.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I'm following the situation closely, to be sure. I had a long talk with Minister Lamontagne yesterday. The plant closure was a business decision, but I understand how stressful it is for workers and farmers. The situation at Olymel is serious, and we are looking at how we can provide support. Mr. Lamontagne is keeping a close eye on the situation in Quebec, and he knows he can count on me, depending on the potential measures that emerge.

Funding is available under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, and supply chains are the priority.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Minister, the current business risk management programs don't offer any funding for this. I've heard from a number of farmers on the subject.

The plant is closing, and we may feel the impact sooner than we think. The hogs are in the fattening period as we speak, but the plant could close before it's time for slaughter.

Have you considered creating new programs? Do you have anything you want to announce to businesses?

Most of them are family-run, and farmers are very worried given how tough the past year has been.

Does the government intend to create a business risk management program to address this problem specifically?

Canada is a pork-exporting country, after all.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I understand your concerns, and I have to tell you that I share them.

I also understand the stress on farmers and the people who work at the plant. I repeat, it was a business decision.

The first response has to come from the province, so Quebec in this case. I have to let the people in the industry do their jobs. Pork producers and buyers have agreed to reduce regional production. Certain steps have to be followed.

As the saying goes, you can't put the cart before the horse.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** I don't want you to put the cart before the horse, Minister, but the plant is going to close.

I realize it's a private company, but keep in mind that there's a monopoly in the sector. The plant's closure will affect not only Quebec, as I said earlier, but also other provinces in the country.

Personally, I think the federal government has to put its foot down and do something quickly to help farmers. Last week, we heard from Ontario hog farmers, and they talked about how worried they were.

That means the government needs to establish a program right away to help get these businesses through the crisis. It won't fix everything, but it will at least give them some support.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** There's already Quebec's farm income stabilization insurance program, or ASRA. The program I meant to refer to earlier was the regional slaughterhouse competitiveness support program, or PACAR. That program, administered by Quebec and 60% funded by the federal government, helps companies in cases such as plant takeovers. As for risk management programs, once again they are dedicated to cases of lost income.

• (1715)

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** However, we're talking about loss of income due to the need to move the hogs several hundred kilometres when the plant closes. Producers need help now, not six years from now.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I understand the situation very well. I'm following the file very closely with Mr. Lamontagne, but things must be done in order. It's premature for me to confirm any measures the federal government might take.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Very well.

With regard to importing chickens from Ukraine, it was mentioned earlier that some of the products had been tested.

Are you able to reassure Canadian consumers about the domestic impact of these products? How will these products end up in the Canadian food chain?

Among the chickens that were tested, those that didn't meet our standards were withdrawn. Can you reassure the public that the chickens that were not tested do meet standards?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** The first 10 shipments of chickens, from each company, are tested thoroughly and comprehensively. In addition, when a container is revealed to contain substandard chickens, we test fifteen shipments. I believe that after three instances of non-compliance, the company is rejected.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Thank you, Minister.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but your time is up, Mr. Lehoux. I added a bit more time for the response, but now it's expired.

Ms. Valdez, you have five minutes.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to all the witnesses for joining us today, as well as you, Minister Bibeau, and your officials.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I'll direct all my questions to Minister Bibeau.

You mentioned in your opening the Indo-Pacific strategy. With the opening of the very first Indo-Pacific agriculture and agri-food office in the region, can you tell us more about how the Indo-Pacific strategy and upcoming office have been received by our Indo-Pacific partners as well the overall agriculture sector?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** It went very well. I was in Japan not so long ago, and in Singapore. I had the chance to discuss it with my counterparts, with the representative of Canadian businesses over there and with buyers of Canadian agricultural and agri-food products. They were all very excited about that. I think the strong presence of a team located in the region from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, trade commissioners and people from CFIA will help us develop new markets, manage even more efficiently some challenges that we might have, and reassure our partners. It is very promising.

While I was in Singapore, I was at a food show as well. I witnessed the rollout of our new Canada brand, and I was very proud of what I saw.

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** Thank you.

How do our Indo-Pacific partners anticipate that these initiatives will contribute to the advancement of Canada's agri-food exports?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I've been there, and I've seen and heard what they want. The Japanese, for example, want more Canadian products. They trust our system. They know that we offer high-quality products, so we have a closer relationship.

In Japan, our Canadian ambassador has been named as special envoy to the Prime Minister. It's kind of a second high-level representative as well.

We have opportunities with the CPTPP to open up new markets and increase market share.

Here in Canada, the beef sector, the pork sector and the grain sector are all looking forward to being there and joining forces as well. One of the objectives of our office there is to work even more

closely with provincial representatives and industry representatives in the field.

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** I appreciate your perspective, and I'm really looking forward to when the study on the Indo-Pacific strategy comes here, to committee.

Going back to the main estimates, can you elaborate on the three major transfer payments related to the cost-shared programs, and how these programs will aim to support farmers here in Canada and enhance the resilience of our agriculture sector? You can speak to the Canadian agriculture partnership, the on-farm climate action fund or any of those.

● (1720)

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** In the main estimates right now—as you know, the budget comes in a few tranches—we have the business risk management portion, which is not full at this date. As always, it's an estimation depending on the disasters we might have to face or the trade disruptions.

We don't know exactly how much will have to be distributed to farmers, but I can assure you that these programs are ready to be rolled out when a disaster happens, such as a drought, floods or a hurricane. Right now, we are following closely the fires in Alberta and, in B.C., maybe floods as well, I'm in contact with Minister Horner and Minister Alexis on that.

The agri-environmental programs, the on-farm climate action fund and the agricultural clean technology program.... Actually, we just launched a second call for proposals on the agricultural clean technology program. I would invite farmers to apply, and to apply fast, I would say, because the first call for proposals was subscribed to very rapidly. Farmers are eager to benefit from these programs and to increase the efficiency of their equipment.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Ms. Valdez.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Perron, you have two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you, Chair.

Minister, I'd like to address the issue of genome editing monitoring and traceability. As you know, last year, the industry was fairly unanimous in calling for mandatory traceability, as I understand it, managed by the government.

But what you announced at the beginning of the month was traceability handled by the industry. There have been several reactions from groups who are not necessarily satisfied. No one is trying to block the technology. People just want it to be monitored, particularly in the organic industry. What do you have to say to those people?

Representatives of the Union des producteurs agricoles reacted by saying, among other things, that they were disappointed that traceability was not mandatory. You can't rely on it if it's not compulsory. How can you reassure us on this point?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I understand that the organic sector has concerns, but the vast majority of the agricultural sector in this country is delighted with our announcement.

The grain and seed sector has made giant strides. The traceability database is going to be complete and significantly more detailed. We're going to make sure it includes all seeds that have undergone genetic manipulation, whether it's genome editing or genetically modified organisms, or GMOs. This will be properly catalogued. We've set up an advisory committee that will closely monitor the situation and make recommendations.

As for the government, it will ensure monitoring. The industry is committed to having a comprehensive, regularly updated and easy-to-use database.

If you look at what's being done in the United States or elsewhere, you'll find that Canada offers the most transparent system. When I recently spoke to my colleagues in other countries, including Japan, Singapore and the United States, particularly in Washington, they told me they thought our system was based on common sense and they were looking at it closely.

The standards will therefore be imposed by industry, as is the case for many other agricultural standards.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** I'm sorry to interrupt, but I don't have much time left.

You say the industry is delighted with the announcement. Certainly, but it will still be delighted if the government manages traceability. No one would be disappointed by that.

How will you ensure that the database is comprehensive if the industry is in charge of it?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Representatives of the organic sector sit on the advisory committee that will do the monitoring. I think that's a solid guarantee. If the committee discovers any flaws in the system, action will be taken. I have faith in the committee, because there are already several standards applied by the sector. The industry is committed to being transparent in this regard, and I'm sure it will be. We'll be following this closely and taking it very seriously.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

Mr. MacGregor, you have two and a half minutes, please.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Minister.

Over the last number of years, I have been fortunate to establish a great working relationship with the Deans Council—Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Medicine. We have some fantastic institutions right across Canada. They see a lot of potential in making Canada's place in the world even better than it already is. However, in order to do that, of course, they are going to need some significant investment.

I think they are looking at the demographic crunch that is approaching and the ability of Canadian universities to bring forward people with the expertise and technical skills to find a place in 21st-century agriculture. They have come forward with a number of proposals, but a lot of them centre on establishing a funding program for some of the very dire infrastructure that Canada's agricultural universities have and need.

First of all, are you aware of their asks, and how have you, as minister, been advocating with your counterparts around the cabinet table to see that what they're asking for is met?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Was it in the last budget or the budget—?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** It was in the most recent submission.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Yes, but I'm thinking of the budget.

We have a \$100-million investment in science that is specially dedicated to universities.

I could follow up with you with more details, unless Marie-Claude has more details on this one.

**Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard (Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Management Branch, Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** That's a program where the lead is with ISED and NSERC. That's where the \$100 million is, but we're working jointly with them.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Okay. If you can submit further information, that would be great.

I have a quick one.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture asked about how the Canada Grain Act review is going.

This is a question that seems to come up every single time. Where are we with the Grain Act review?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** It's almost there. I'm almost there.

I hate to give dates; my team wants to kill me when I give dates. However, my personal target is to be able...let's say before Christmas, okay? I want to table it before Christmas.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. MacGregor, and thank you, Minister.

We'll go to our final round of questioning, five minutes to the Conservatives and five minutes to our Liberal colleagues.

Mr. Steinley, you have up to five minutes.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Madam Minister, what is Canada's rate of efficiency for fertilizer usage compared to other countries? Do you have that number?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** You take great pleasure in asking me for very precise figures.

Personally, what I'm striving for is really to give our agricultural producers the necessary means not only to reduce emissions arising from their production, because that's important for the fight against climate change, but also to increase their resilience. That's what concerns me.

[English]

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you. I can help you, actually.

Meyers Norris Penny did a report that showed that our producers are 70% more efficient than those in all other jurisdictions in the country. That's seven-zero, 70% more efficient.

What would the cost be to our economy of the fertilizer reduction targets that you have? Do you have a number of what that will cost the Canadian economy?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I believe that this is going to be good for our economy. Canadian consumers and consumers around the world are looking for products that are increasingly sustainable. We're investing in that.

As you know, I'm always out in the field, travelling to every region of the country. Saskatchewan farmers visited me to thank me for helping them to improve. We have a shared vision for the future to ensure that they can meet consumer expectations and be more resilient to climate change.

[English]

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you, Madam Minister. I've talked to a lot of producers in Saskatchewan who might have a different opinion.

I'm not making these numbers up. They're from Fertilizer Canada's press release. They said, "Cutting fertilizer use to reduce on-farm emissions could cost growers nearly \$48 billion over the next eight years". That was a study done by Meyers Norris Penny. That's \$48 billion that this fertilizer reduction target could cost the economy.

If you were the Prime Minister, and a minister in charge of a portfolio cost the economy \$48 billion, what would you do with that minister?

• (1730)

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Once again, this information is part of the analysis. It's an investment in the future, in our economy and in our farmers. They need to be resilient. They know this very well, because they are the first to adhere to these practices. They're grateful to us for supporting them.

When I'm out in the field, touring farms, and I visit businesses that are turning to innovation, I'm very encouraged and I think we may even exceed our goals.

[English]

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** I think any CEO who would lose \$48 billion would be fired, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to switch gears. Talking about the new amendments put forward by CFIA on traceability, I had a conversation with both the CEO and the president of Canadian Western Agribition. They see this as being very cumbersome to add these new traceability regulations onto fairs, counties, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. Agribition sees this as a big amount of red tape that it's going to have to cut through, making it much more cumbersome to track animals on and off yard, which it didn't have to.... They're also very concerned about actually having to tag animals at these fairs...if something goes wrong and they lose their tag.

Do you guys have any consultations with any fairs or exhibitions? This is really going to hurt 4-H and small town shows as well, because it's going to put a lot of pressure on these volunteers.

Who did you consult with before you brought in these new traceability amendments?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** I will ask Ms. Lapointe to answer that question.

[English]

**Ms. Sylvie Lapointe (Vice-President, Policy and Programs, Canadian Food Inspection Agency):** We haven't yet put the regulations in place. We are out consulting under Canada Gazette, part I. There is a tremendous amount of opportunity for fairs and other interested parties to give us feedback, which we are getting. Then we will take that feedback and again engage with people. There will also be a second round of consultations.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you very much.

I have a few right here, so please take a look at what they're saying, because it's making it very hard for on-the-ground volunteers to try to keep these shows running if these amendments are put forward. That's the feedback we've had so far.

My last question is going to be around electronic logging devices and transporting of livestock. As predicted, the animal transportation regulations your government implemented are causing havoc, because there aren't the safe rest stops to load and unload cattle when using these electronic logging devices.

Have you heard feedback from the transportation companies? Are you looking at changing some of these regulations? They're creating unsafe atmospheres for both drivers and the animals that are being transported.

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** We are currently discussing that issue with the departmental team and the Minister of Transportation.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Minister and Mr. Steinley.

Last, but not least, we'll start with Mr. Louis online. I think he might be splitting or sharing with Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair. Yes, I will be splitting my time with Mr. Turnbull.

I want to thank the officials for being here.

Thank you, Minister, for being here today, and for visiting my riding in Kitchener—Conestoga recently for this year's first local harvest, which was by maple syrup producers. I appreciate that.

We all know that one of the challenges for farmers is the need to pay up front for various inputs and expenses. Returns on farmers' investments typically come in the fall, after the harvest is complete and crops are sold. The time gap between expenses and revenues can sometimes cause financial strain for farmers. They have ongoing costs that need to be covered throughout the growing season, which is why the advance payments program is such an important and popular loan program for farmers, helping to alleviate that burden of upfront costs.

In our latest budget, the government once again raised the interest-free portion of the advance payments program.

Through you, Chair, can the minister share more details about the advance payments program—its importance and the positive impact it can have for our hard-working farmers in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga or anywhere in Canada?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Yes, of course I can.

[English]

The advance payments program is exactly meant to provide a loan in the beginning of the season and then give them an interest-free portion, which has been increased up to \$350,000 this year. If we add it to last year's, it reaches about \$84 million in savings for farmers. They can get the loan early in the season and then proceed with their reimbursement later on, when it's the right time for them to sell. It's a really great program. I wish that we all could promote this program. It could be used by more farmers.

I've been told recently in Ontario, actually, that young farmers particularly appreciate the program. It brings them into AgriStability at the same time. It's helping new farmers as well.

• (1735)

**Mr. Tim Louis:** Thank you. It's nice to know it has been increased, so I appreciate that.

I'd like to share my time with Mr. Turnbull.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.):** Thanks, Mr. Louis, and thanks, Minister, for being here.

I have a few short-answer questions for you, if you don't mind.

One of them is, what is the size of the typical farm in Canada?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** The typical farm could be seen in different ways in different regions. If we say "the average", it's 809 acres.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** It's 809 acres. Okay.

What percentage of Canadian farms are 5,000 acres or more?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** It's 3%.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** It's 3%.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Yes.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** That seems like a very small number. Are the farms of 5,000 acres or more typical farms in Canada? I guess the answer is, obviously, no.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Yes, that's why I told you...if it's typical in one region, I don't know. However, I wouldn't call it "typical" when I know the average farm is 809 acres.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** When some people use the example of a 5,000-acre farm to demonstrate the impact of the price on pollution, do you think that's a little misleading?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** When we are calling a typical farm one of 5,000 acres and projecting to 2030, without taking into consideration all the new practices and innovations that will take place between now and then, I don't think that reflects what the reality will be when we get there.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Okay. Thank you.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** It's definitely not for an average 809-acre farm.

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** I appreciate that. Thank you for the clarification.

You mentioned innovation, which relates to another line of questioning I want to pursue with you.

This week is Canadian Innovation Week. We know how important technological innovation is to our agricultural industry. It allows farmers to be more productive and competitive. It also provides solutions to make their production more sustainable. I understand we're working on these issues with our allies in the G7 and G20. One of the latest forums is the agriculture innovation mission for climate, or AIM4C, which is a U.S.-U.A.E. initiative that brings together over 50 countries to discuss agricultural innovation initiatives.

Minister, I understand you were in Washington and participated in this summit. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

**The Chair:** Minister, we are wildly over time on the five minutes, but—

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull:** Wildly...?

**The Chair:** —as your chair, I will give you a brief moment to reflect on your trip to Washington.

Thank you.

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau:** Very quickly, it was very impressive. I came back from this mission thinking we would not only reach but surpass our climate objectives.

I also took the opportunity to meet with Secretary Vilsack, of course, and with farmers and processors in the beef sector, because I wanted to be clear that.... No one has mentioned COOL, but I want to say this is something I'm following very closely. I wouldn't want any mandatory COOL in the U.S. Secretary Vilsack keeps reassuring me in terms of voluntary.... Still, depending on the way it's being done, it could impact our supply chain.

I took the opportunity to be there and enjoy all the innovation, but also to have this honest conversation.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister. That ends our period of questions.

I know you have to run, Minister, so we're going to let you do that.

Unfortunately, I have to go, as well.

Mr. Barlow, I know you're going to take the chair for the second hour, for the officials.

We're going to suspend for two or three minutes; then we'll get our second round of questioning started.

Thank you very much, Minister.

Thank you to all the officials for being here. We'll see you in just a few minutes.

• (1735) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1745)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Colleagues, we have an issue with Ms. Collins' sound. I'm not sure if it's her headset. We're going to go ahead and start, but when it comes to Ms. Collins' turn, we'll have it resolved, hopefully, and the NDP will be able to get their slot.

For the sake of time, we'll get started. Hopefully, we'll have Ms. Collins' sound issues resolved when we get to her spot.

We've had introductions. We know most of our guests.

Thank you very much to the officials for sticking around and providing your time this afternoon.

We'll get right to the rounds of questions.

We'll be starting with the Conservatives and Mr. Epp for six minutes, please.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the officials for being here.

How many farms are affected by the underutilized housing tax?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck (Deputy Minister, Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food):** Unless one of my colleagues knows, I'll have to say that we don't know. We could get back to you.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Okay. Can I ask that you table that with the committee?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** Yes, we will do that.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** On the exemptions for that tax, the fines of \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for entities have been exempted for a six-month period. Will the corporations, the entities, be exempted completely from this tax after that?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** I'll have to look into the program for you and get back to you.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** The farms are in a rural area. It's designed to address housing prices, particularly in our urban centres. Can you ask how applying this tax to our rural areas would impact...? Is this not collateral damage or unintended damage?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** Rural housing of course is a larger matter for our farmers, who are looking for temporary foreign workers to come in and assist in running their farms, so it's certainly a matter of great importance.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Thank you.

The minister supported Bill C-280 today. That was good to see. In the past she has provided information that there are only negligible losses in the fresh market sector, and I just had a bankruptcy in my region that affected a producer to the tune of \$1 million.

May I ask to what extent the banking sector has lobbied AAFC and/or the minister regarding Bill C-280?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** I can't speak for the minister, but I can tell you for certain that the banking sector has not lobbied me since my time here in the department. Perhaps, though, since the lead on that is our colleagues at the finance department, it's more likely that any discussions would have been had there.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** That's exactly where I was going with my next question.

May I ask what representations AAFC has made to Finance around the implementation of Bill C-280 once it's passed and, in particular, the speed it can happen at and how quickly we can lobby the U.S. for recovery for our Canadian sellers under PACA?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** It does need to continue through the parliamentary process. I think that depends more on how fast that process is before we can put in place the necessary actions.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Thank you.

I'm going to switch over to our CFIA folks.

Is the chief redress officer still operational?

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** No. The position does not exist anymore.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** The position does not exist. Do you know when it was eliminated?

• (1750)

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** No. I don't have that information with me.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Can you table with this committee how many complaints were received since 2015, while that office was in operation, how they were broken down by subject matter and by province, and the outcomes of those complaints?

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** What we have right now is a complaints and appeals office that takes complaints from regulated...or even from citizens, and this office still exists. We receive some complaints/questions and even congratulations on our services or actions. What information would you like to have?

**Mr. Dave Epp:** It's just exactly what came in from the provinces and exactly what the outcomes were of those complaints.

Thank you.

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** I don't have that with me, but we can provide that.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** You can table it with the committee. Thank you very much.

The minister is co-chairing the grocery code of conduct committee. I have two questions here.

First, can you provide the timelines for when it's estimated that it's going to be completed?

Second, what advice did the department provide the minister from the U.K. and Australia, two of our allies that have gone down this road? On their failed initial attempts, what advice was given to the minister?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** My understanding is that they are in fact very near the end of the discussions on the code of conduct. We are very hopeful that it will be implemented shortly. I believe the likely time frame is over the summer.

What we expect to see then is full onboarding by all the big companies in Canada, the grocery stores in Canada, and that is where we will be able to tell how well this is working. I'd like to note that we have the full support of all the provincial and territorial governments as well, and the grocery companies we have been meeting with have assured us that they are going to be part of it.

Do you want me to answer the second part?

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Yes, please.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** It's a very good point, because we have indeed consulted with our colleagues in the United Kingdom and Australia and have followed closely what worked for them. It's very

useful learning, including that it is not a quick process. We can put in a first round. How well does that work? Is tweaking required? Is it necessary to put in more, let's call them, forceful measures? That is what they ended up doing.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Thank you.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has provided all kinds of challenges. This came up earlier, on fertilizer.

What steps has AAFC undertaken to make Canadian sources of fertilizer more available? Particularly in eastern Canada and Atlantic Canada, on my own farm, over my lifetime, I've actually used more Russian and Belarusian potash than potash from Saskatchewan, for economic reasons.

**An hon. member:** It's shameful.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** It's shameful. I agree with my colleague.

What steps has AAFC taken to help Canadians, particularly with respect to fertilizers, on the east coast?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** It's an important question. Thank you for raising it.

This is something that's extremely important, not only to farmers in the east, but in the west as well. We have been in conversation with the industry ever since the tariffs were announced, to ensure there would be enough supply for this year and indeed ongoing. We have been informed, just for the record, that there is ample supply for this coming year.

What we've seen is a shift in behaviour as well. We are confident that going forward there will be enough for Canadian farmers, not only in the west but in the east as well.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you very much, Mr. Epp, and thank you, Ms. Beck.

We'll now switch over to the Liberals. Ms. Taylor Roy, you have six minutes, please.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you again to our witnesses. Congratulations, Ms. Beck, on your position.

I have some questions around the price on pollution, the agricultural climate solutions program and the impact those have had on our farms and the emissions that have been coming from the agricultural sector. We have a carrot-and-stick approach here in Canada, where we have the price on pollution, but we also have this great agricultural climate solutions program, worth about \$4 billion, to help farmers adapt.

We've been hearing a lot about the price on pollution, how it's going to hurt farmers and what it's going to cost, but there's been no incorporation of behavioural change on the part of farmers, as Mr. Turnbull was mentioning earlier. We just heard from Minister Guilbeault that we've had a 53-megatonne reduction in greenhouse gases, which is amazing. That's the equivalent of 11 million cars on the road. It wasn't broken down by sector.

My question is for anyone. Do we have any estimates of how much greenhouse gases have been coming down in the agriculture sector or what the projections are, given both the price on pollution and the agricultural climate solutions program that we have in place?

• (1755)

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** We have been very heartened by the changes we have seen, in particular in behaviour. The programs that have been in place have been deliberately designed to target changes in behaviour. We know, though, that Canadian farmers have been doing a fabulous job on this for, frankly, decades, in different parts of the country. What we're seeking is greater adoption of those techniques more broadly to see an increase in the kinds of reductions you have been mentioning, with which we're very pleased.

There are discussions right now around the sustainable agriculture strategy. We're in the process now of consultations across the country. The differences among small farmers and the kinds of crops they grow or the livestock they raise are the kinds of things that will make a difference in how we make the final design for our strategy.

Already we've seen differences in the kinds of approaches farmers are taking. We're spending a lot of money, as I think you know, on research and development, again, depending on the region and the kind of crop that's being grown or the livestock, and then a whole other section of work is being done on adoption. We have all kinds of other incentives to procure things like biodigesters, which also make a difference.

We're very comfortable that we are headed in the right direction. I have actually seen a number on what the GHG emissions could be, but I don't have it with me right now. I'd be happy to table that later.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** That would be great. Thank you.

It sounds like you're fairly confident that even though farmers have been doing this for ages, a greater adaptation of these techniques is going to further decrease the greenhouse gas emissions from this sector.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** If I may elaborate a bit, from a research perspective, what we're seeing, for instance, is that as new seeds are developed that are more drought-resistant—or these days, frankly, that can deal with drought and flood in the same year, unfortunately—we're making big progress there.

For instance, on something like vertical farming, we know that seed companies are developing—and this might sound a little odd—shorter crops that can be grown in different ways. This would help reduce GHG emissions and enable them to produce higher yields from a smaller acreage.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** You may not have this number either, but I am wondering.... Within the department, have there been any estimates done on the cost of these climate events to the agricultural sector?

The droughts we saw across the Prairies, the flooding in B.C., the east coast.... There have been so many things happening.

Have there been any estimates done on what this has cost our agricultural sector and what it has done to our farmers?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** It has been terrible and devastating for our farmers.

Perhaps, to give two relatively straightforward numbers, we know that we spent \$600 million in Alberta after the droughts of 2021. That's one province alone, and one terrible, catastrophic event.

For hurricane Fiona, we're looking at \$300 million, at least, for agriculture alone.

These are big numbers, and we're not expecting them to diminish any time soon, unfortunately. That means, though, that we're looking at more mitigation and what it is that we can provide to farmers in terms of innovation, be it in equipment, practices or seed, that will make a difference in the future.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** That's great. It would be really interesting to see some of these numbers broken down in terms of the impact on a 5,000-acre farm to see what the costs are of the damage that's happening and what it's costing our government, our agricultural sector and our farmers, as well as the change in behaviour.

Thank you very much.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** Thank you.

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy:** I have 30 seconds.

I just want to thank you for the work you're doing on this.

I think having some of these facts and some of these numbers around.... We can't make projections without putting assumptions in.

I think some of the assumptions have been that behaviour is not going to change among our farmers. We're seeing that our farmers have always been at the forefront and have done so much, and they are continuing to do that, so I'd really like to see some of the numbers around how their behaviour is changing, how that is impacting and how both the carrot and the stick are contributing to this change in behaviour of the farmers.

They're at the forefront of climate impact, as we always say, so it's going to be benefitting them in terms of the climate events. Hopefully, we can manage them and mitigate them as well.

• (1800)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you, Ms. Taylor Roy. I appreciate that.

Colleagues, we have Ms. Collins back. We're going to suspend for a second here and test Ms. Collins' sound again to make sure that she is able to join us.



I will let the clerk deal with that and test her sound. Give us one second.

Excellent. I'm glad that worked out.

Now we will go to Mr. Perron for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank the four witnesses for staying with us so abidingly.

I'll continue where I left off. We were talking about genome editing. I did like the end of the minister's reply, when she said that if a problem arose, action would be taken. What worries the community is that we don't know how we're going to ensure that the database is complete and that proper monitoring is being done.

So you say you'll take action if there's an issue, but can you give us more details on the timeline? How often will consultations take place between industry and the committee, among other things? I'd like you to keep your answer brief.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** You would like me to keep my answer brief, is that right?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Yes, because we only have six minutes.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** The frequency has not been determined yet. I know that during consultations surrounding the implementation of the upcoming process, they took place every single week. I don't think they'll be as frequent in the weeks and months to come, but that will be determined as needed.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** At any rate, we're counting on your rigour and prudence.

Earlier, Mr. Lehoux asked about the closure of the Olymel plant in Vallée-Jonction. Over the course of several studies, the committee has been able to observe significant concentration in the sectors, particularly the slaughtering sector, but in the processing sector in general.

Can we envision additional support for smaller processing units that would be better distributed across the regions and could constitute a kind of ancillary network capable of absorbing this kind of shock?

Have you had discussions on that?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** We had just such a discussion in recent weeks. My colleagues have been speaking directly with business representatives.

I know the companies have considered the impact this will have on the region, and I know they've already started talking to producers in other provinces, for example, to accommodate them at different plants. As we know, the decision to close the plant wasn't made overnight, because people were aware of the consequences it would have.

I myself spoke with my colleagues at Farm Credit Canada to see what more we could do to lend a hand. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada doesn't have a specific program to help the industry recov-

er. However, there are Canadian banks that are perfectly capable of doing so, since they have the authority and mandate to do so.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Very well. We'll work on that.

I would now like to come back to the Ukraine issue.

When the minister answered a question about renewing the order, I got the sense that she was somewhat sympathetic to the cause. However, as she said, she's not the one making the decision.

Madam Deputy Minister, which department makes the decision to renew the order?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** As far as I know, it's the Department of Finance.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** We know where we need to apply pressure.

We often hear virtuous rhetoric about climate change. However, when I look at the figures, I realize that they're not very high. For example, an amount of \$87,390,000 is being proposed for the farm action for climate plan. This number may seem high, but it really isn't, since it applies to all regions of Canada.

Are you planning further investments? Will there be other application cycles?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** According to the data I have, the amount is \$1.5 billion for just two years. That is a significant amount. In fact, in the three months since I became deputy minister, the number of applications has increased. We've already renewed one of the programs and added \$200 million to it.

• (1805)

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Is the amount you just gave us only for the on-farm climate action component?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** It's for climate change in general.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** I was talking about that specific program.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** As there are many and differing needs, we seek to develop programs that, while not covering all possibilities, will at least address the needs of various producers and regions of Canada.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Very well, thank you very much.

Can you tell me about temporary foreign workers, or are you going to tell me that your department is not responsible for this file? We've long been promised an in-depth reform of the temporary foreign worker program. Producers are having great difficulty hiring temporary foreign workers.

Can you tell me when the government will make an announcement on the trusted employer program? The intentions seem good and noble, but people have been waiting a long time for this program to be implemented.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** Unfortunately, no date has been finalized. You are right when you say that the department is not responsible for this file. We are, however, developing our own strategy for agricultural workers. Of course, this includes people from abroad, who are needed all over the country, not just in Quebec.

We have also consulted various producers, farmers and processors, among others, on this topic. Interesting points arose from these discussions. For example, we asked them whether temporary foreign workers should have a specific visa to work at a particular plant or company. Some said yes, while others said no.

Once the person has arrived in Canada, he or she might work in a specific sector for six months, which equates to one season. But what could they do for the rest of the year? I'd say there's a diversity of opinion on that.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you very much, Mr. Perron.

Thanks, Ms. Beck.

Now we go to Ms. Collins for six minutes, please.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** I want to thank all the witnesses and our officials for being here.

My first questions are for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Back in February, my colleague Alistair MacGregor presented a petition with more than 36,000 signatures to the House, calling for a ban on exporting live horses for slaughter. There was a huge outpouring of support from Canadians across the country. It was in the top 20 for the highest number of signatures ever for any petition to the House of Commons.

The government responded on March 29. Presumably, officials from CFIA had some involvement in the drafting of that response.

The last paragraph states:

To conclude this answer, the Government would like to thank petitioners for this opportunity to reiterate that the Government takes the issue of animal welfare seriously. We remain engaged in working diligently to implement the mandate letter commitment to ban the live export of horses for slaughter.

I'm curious as to whether the department officials can share with the committee what the holdup is with implementing this section of the Prime Minister's mandate letter to the minister.

**Ms. Sylvie Lapointe:** We are taking very seriously the mandate commitment that is in Minister Bibeau's letter. We are continuing to analyze and look at ways forward. We will be getting back to members as soon as we can on this one.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Do we have any sense of a timeline?

**Ms. Sylvie Lapointe:** I don't think I would be able to commit to a timeline, but I can certainly say that while we are looking into how we can implement that mandate commitment, the CFIA continues to hold very high animal welfare standards and to inspect all the shipments using measures that are in place that are based on very strong science international standards.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** On that note, also in February, four days after my colleague presented this petition, Animal Justice sent a letter

to the minister, signed by eight other organizations, bringing it to her attention that a shipment of live horses had been transported out of Winnipeg on December 12, 2022. The letter talked about how the duration of travel had been far beyond the 28-hour limit for live animal transport. At least three horses had collapsed and died during transport. They also noted that CFIA had been alerted to this and responded, acknowledging that the 28-hour limit was not met.

If you are committed to animal welfare and you continue to state that you're reminding the parties involved about their responsibilities, why is it that this practice continues to happen? Why is it that the CFIA allows this to happen?

• (1810)

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** On this one, if my recollection is appropriate.... When horses are boarded onto a plane, we ensure that we have the travel trajectory and that the time of arrival is less than 28 hours, or else they have to stop and be fed, watered and rested. Sometimes it happens that there are weather issues or plane issues. If I recall correctly, this plane had to land in Alaska for a couple of hours for refuelling and some repairs. After that, it left for Japan.

It was an exceptional situation, but we make sure that before they leave they have the right plan to—

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** I'm going to interrupt for a moment, just to clarify.

Before leaving from Winnipeg, they were delayed by 16.5 hours. There was no way the 28-hour limit would be met by the time they flew out. Those involved proceeded with the shipment anyway. Then there were further delays in Seattle, resulting in an even longer journey.

This kind of arduous trip means that we lose animals, and it is extremely taxing on the other horses who do survive. How many times is this going to happen before CFIA steps in and takes measures to ground flights arranged by companies that are profiting off this practice?

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** I don't have with me the specifics of that flight, but I can assure you that we always have inspectors on site to ensure that the flight plans can be respected. If there are delays at the airport, it means that the horses should not be boarded on the plane. They have to be provided with feed and water and a place to rest before they are boarded for the trip to their destination, which has to take less than 28 hours.

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** That clearly didn't happen in this case.

Thousands of horses have been shipped since the minister received the mandate letter committing to a ban of these exports. I'm curious; other than this small number of companies that are profiting from the export of live horses, who else stands to benefit in this? Who are you consulting with? Who are the other stakeholders involved in ensuring that we rapidly ban the export of live horses?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thanks, Ms. Collins. Your time is up.

I'm not sure if it would be Mr. Morel or Ms. Beck, but maybe you could give a quick answer, if you can, just so that Ms. Collins gets her response.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** Clearly, it's a very distressing circumstance that you're raising there. My colleagues at CFIA are obviously doing their best to inspect and make sure that horses are in good shape before they get on any kind of aircraft for travel abroad.

It is not a large industry, as you have already mentioned, so in terms of consultations, we've been reaching out all across the country to find out where the producers are and where the people who source the horses are. It's not, of course, just the transportation companies; it's where the horses come from initially. That is under way right now.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you, Ms. Beck.

We have time for the final round.

I will go to the Conservatives for five minutes, please.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to go back, just for a second, and revisit the conversation around COOL. The U.S. Department of State has proposed new regulatory rules that are "voluntary-ish". I'm wondering where we are with that discussion. I know that the WTO ruled in favour of us in the last COOL dispute that we had. Where are we on making sure we're on top of this and our producers aren't going to get hit with extra costs?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** We followed very closely—as, clearly, you did—and the moment the news came out of the United States, we were studying carefully what exactly the proposition was. We were looking right away to see what kind of impact that might have, on Canadian producers in particular.

I would note that our colleagues to the south, in Mexico, have similar concerns. In every case, we have raised these directly with our American counterparts. At the moment, we're actually working on the official formal response in consultation with all of the stakeholders. It will be a united response, if I can frame it that way.

• (1815)

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you very much.

I'm going to go back to the CFIA for a second.

Just to reiterate, I'm a 4-H kid. I grew up on a dairy and beef farm. Going to livestock shows was a huge part of my growing up and really learning more and more about agriculture. These volunteers who put on these shows.... Please review these traceability regs that you're putting forward, because it's going to shut down a lot of these shows.

The problem I see right now with part of what's going on in agriculture is that there is a disconnect between rural and urban Canadians. So many Canadians in Toronto, Regina and all urban centres really, for the first time, get to see animals and learn about animals at these smaller shows, and big shows such as the Toronto winter fair. It's something that's a really big part of our agriculture heritage.

To put these onerous new regulations on volunteers and these shows is going to be very taxing on them. You need to listen to their feedback. I think we can take a step back and review what's going on.

That's the final pitch from me.

Perhaps you could make a couple of comments on that, please, Ms. Lapointe.

**Ms. Sylvie Lapointe:** We are definitely very aware of the concerns that the fairs are raising, and we are actively working with them to find solutions.

I just want to say that traceability is incredibly important to prevent foreign animal diseases from coming in. Fairs are places where animals congregate and then return back to their farms, for example.

**Mr. Warren Steinley:** Thank you very much.

If you could table documents that show how much disease has been spread from fairs, that would be great.

This also has to do with producers who don't show. There are lots of producers who think that these renewed traceability regs are going to be onerous, as well.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Beck, we've heard all sorts of figures about chicken from Ukraine, and the committee would like to have them confirmed.

At present, we're told that over 700,000 kilograms of chicken from Ukraine have entered Canada.

Is that true? How much chicken comes from Ukraine?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has the exact numbers, but for now, I can assure you it is not 700,000 kilograms.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** All right.

Did you wish to comment, Mr. Morel?

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** Currently, 285,000 kilograms of chicken have entered Canada, and the chicken has undergone intensive testing.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** All right.

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** Through increased and intensive testing, we ensure that the chicken that goes on the market is of the same quality as Canadian poultry.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** The committee is aware that the agreement on the conditions for importing meat products from Ukraine is valid until June. We do not know if this agreement will be renewed or not.

Do you know how much chicken will be imported into Canada over the next few weeks or months?

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** We don't know exactly, because the importers are the ones who make those decisions.

At this time, we have no indication that any more chicken will be exported to Canada, and no indication that we have been asked to inspect any more incoming chicken. All chicken that has arrived in Canada has been tested. If more chicken has been exported to Canada, it may have been returned elsewhere.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux:** We know that chicken from Ukraine could be exported to Canada until June. Do you know how much more could be exported to Canada? Has anyone calculated the impact this could have on our chicken producers? After all, we're talking about supply management here.

**Mr. Philippe Morel:** Perhaps I'll ask my colleagues at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to answer. Nevertheless, I can tell you that at the moment, we have received 14 deliveries of chicken, and only 9 more deliveries are expected. However, those deliveries have not yet been announced.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you, Mr. Lehoux, and thank you, Mr. Morel.

I don't know, Ms. Beck, if you were going to try to complete his.... Mr. Morel is maybe passing the answer over, but if you have a quick answer, maybe you can provide that.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** It's just that we do have a number, and I don't want to say the wrong one.

[Translation]

We will send you the information. It is indeed a very small percentage.

• (1820)

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** You can just table that with the committee when you have an opportunity.

Thank you.

We go now to Mrs. Valdez for five minutes.

Go ahead, please.

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to try asking a question to each of you.

Can you provide some detail or insight on the significance of the services provided by the Canadian Grain Commission? Perhaps you can touch on the terms of inspection, weighing and assessment services, particularly if the projected revenues are about \$61 million, which is what I read in the estimates.

I'm not sure who's best able to answer that one.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** I'm not sure anybody is, in fact, unfortunately. Are you looking for the number of inspections that are made on a regular basis?

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** Exactly. With the number that's in the estimates, how are you going to use those funds? Where are they going to go?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** You mean the revenue from the inspections.

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** Yes.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** The revenue from the inspections goes towards the operating funds necessary for the Canadian Grain Commission. Those are spent largely on operating dollars, for instance, for the laboratories in the inspection facilities and the running of the actual facilities themselves—the operating and electrical bills and things like that, as well as salaries. Those are the main things.

While my colleague is looking for numbers, I would just add that the research done and the tests run in those laboratories are done jointly with the grain producers, companies and processors, and priorities are assigned on the basis of consultations.

Did that give you enough time to find any numbers?

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard:** Thank you for the question.

Most of the revenue is used to pay for the operating costs of the Canadian Grain Commission. A large portion of these expenses is related to grain regulation activities, and the rest is for internal services.

[English]

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** Can you share with us how the commission ensures transparency or accountability in utilizing these revenues?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** It's in table 2. Is that right?

**Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard:** It is in table 2. I don't have that detail.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** They would table it in the main estimates, as everybody else does, so it would have the same transparency the rest of government has.

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** Thank you.

Could you provide a breakdown of the key areas or initiatives the proposed expenditures of \$1.8 billion, I think, for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada will support within the department?

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** The \$1.8 billion we have tabled in the main estimates, and then, of course, we hope there will be more funds coming in the supplementary estimates.

Our chief financial officer has the details.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard:** The main estimates will provide \$769 million to producers in ongoing business risk management programs.

Through the agricultural climate solutions program and the agricultural clean technology program, \$259.3 million will help producers find ways to reduce their emissions, and will also help bolster the sector's resilience.

Another \$157.6 million is earmarked to support dairy, poultry and egg producers and processors while they adapt to the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Finally, to help Canadian wineries adapt after the excise duty exemption on all-Canadian wine was repealed, we have funding totalling \$82.4 million this year.

[English]

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez:** Thank you for the details.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you very much, Mrs. Valdez, and thank you to our officials for spending some time with us.

Mr. Perron, we don't have two and a half minutes for you and Ms. Collins, but you have time for maybe one question for the officials.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** It's going to be tough.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** One question doesn't include a five-minute preamble.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** All right.

I have a question for the folks at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. What is the status of revising the bovine spongiform encephalopathy standard for cattle producers?

Will the electronic truck registration be implemented in a flexible way, so that there's a little leeway in the transportation of animals, for their welfare?

• (1825)

**Ms. Sylvie Lapointe:** As Minister Bibeau said, we are working with our colleagues at Transport Canada. We understand the concerns expressed by people in the industry.

[English]

We don't want to have any safety issues.

[Translation]

We are having discussions with Transport Canada officials to try to explain our regulations in relation to theirs, and to find a pragmatic solution for carriers.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you very much, Ms. Lapointe. That was very succinct.

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Mr. Perron.

[English]

Ms. Collins, did you have a final question for the officials?

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Maybe just quickly, I noted the budget balance for the Grain Commission was negative, with a surplus of almost \$12 million. I'm just curious about the change in the Canadian Grain Commission's budget balance.

I'm also wondering if you folks are working with Transport Canada on reducing carbon emissions when it comes to shipping grain.

**Ms. Stefanie Beck:** Perhaps I can answer the second one while my colleague is looking up numbers. For the Grain Commission I suspect it's a timing issue, but we'll look into that for you.

On reducing emissions in the supply chain, and in particular through transport, we're absolutely working with our colleagues in Transport Canada, *inter alia*, to find out if there are cheaper, faster or better ways of moving grain, for instance, across the country. We're seeing what alternatives are in place where we can be assured that there will be fewer emissions during the transportation of any of our agri-food products destined for export.

I would look, too, at the investments being made, for instance, in the port of Vancouver, which have been recently announced. They will take some time to take place, but the goal there as well is to reduce emissions in that part of the transportation process.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you very much.

Did you want to add to that?

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard:** Regarding the first question, I will have to consult the CFO of the Canadian Grain Commission to know the details. I'll get back to you later.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Thank you very much.

[English]

Thank you to the officials for your time today. We will now excuse you and we will just do a quick vote here with my colleagues.

Colleagues, we have five or six votes here, but I'm going to ask for unanimous consent to condense the first five into one vote. Is everyone okay with that?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** I'll read it off. I have a pretty good feeling what the answer is going to be.

For the main estimates, shall vote 1 under Canadian Dairy Commission, vote 1 under Canadian Grain Commission, and votes 1, 5 and 10 under Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, less the amounts voted in the interim supply, carry?

CANADIAN DAIRY COMMISSION

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$4,222,621

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

CANADIAN GRAIN COMMISSION

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$5,467,952

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$463,606,864

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$31,963,435

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....\$513,062,360

(Votes 1, 5 and 10 agreed to on division)

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Shall the chair report the main estimates 2023-24, less the amounts voted in the interim supply, to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. John Barlow):** Thank you very much, team.

It's great to see everyone. Please enjoy your break back in your constituencies. I know everybody will be busy.

We'll see everyone in 10 days.

The meeting is adjourned.









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