

Three strategic pillars for a National Food Security Strategy

Food security is a critical component of environmental sustainability, community resilience and national security. A National Food Security Strategy could set an audacious yet achievable vision for our country, such as: **Within the next 10 years, Canada should be the world's primary food producing nation while reducing food insecurity and greenhouse gas emissions domestically.**

This should be pursued through three strategic pillars: resilience, equity and productivity.



PILLAR 1: RESILIENCE

Ensuring Canada's food supply lines can withstand political, economic and climatic volatility.

The problem

- Most of Canada's fruits and vegetables either come from, or transit through, the United States.
- Many other critical agri-food inputs are sourced from, or transit through, the U.S., such as eggs/chicks for laying hens.
- Canadians are eating more fish (~4 percent increase year over year), but 75 percent of fish we eat is imported.
- Climate change is already impacting agri-food systems. Sustainable practices will protect our ability to eat, while reducing agricultural impacts on the planet.
- Given political and climatic volatility, Canada's strained supply chains are vulnerable to rapid deterioration.

The opportunity

Canada should establish multi-use infrastructure (e.g. strategic multi-use corridors, dynamic supply chains, community-use greenhouses) that supports local communities and national priorities, while minimizing climate impacts. Policies should reinforce food systems that can better withstand political, economic and climatic volatility. Investments in resilient infrastructure should strengthen communities and food sovereignty, particularly in regional, rural and Northern areas; meet global environmental commitments; and strategically connect with national defence strategies.

Recommended actions for resilience

1. **Conduct a thorough risk assessment. Map out all critical dependencies to guide strategic investment in Canada's domestic capacity.**
 - Develop coordinated mapping and digital integration of domestic agricultural production, ingredient manufacturing and processing infrastructure.
 - Link this information through national data platforms and product passport systems. This approach can better allocate resources, strengthen supply chain coordination, support the development of complete, nutritionally balanced foods made from Canadian-grown ingredients and help Canadian producers meet increasing sustainability and traceability requirements in international markets.

2. Provide Federal support to address critical vulnerabilities in Canada's food supply.

- Recognize that advanced technologies such as AI, robotics and genomics are already being deployed to support controlled environment agriculture. With these technologies, Canada can enhance the capacity and sustainability of local and regional food production, processing and distribution. This can be achieved by ensuring that agri-food enterprises (including social enterprises) have access to preferential electricity rates, improved zoning permissions processes, and access to targeted innovation funding.
- Commit to the modernization, decentralization and expansion of food processing and storage infrastructure to address a “missing middle” in Canada's food processing and storage infrastructure: commercially viable operations suitable for local/regional producers and early-stage entrepreneurs. This middle tier **would enable** local and regional producers to add value, extend shelf life and access institutional markets.
- Coordinate with Provincial and Territorial counterparts, industry and communities to better support regional and distributed processing capacity; improve transportation corridors; and develop and deploy modular, mobile and automated processing systems that can operate close to production sites.

3. Launch an Agriculture and Food Investment Agency, with a mandate to ensure food security is embedded in government policies, and to stimulate and direct investment in multi-use infrastructure projects.

- Modelled on the Defence Investment Agency, this strategic coordination office could provide coordination for cross-governmental and intergovernmental processes (including Federal-Provincial-Territorial processes).
- Multi-use infrastructure should include trade corridors used for defence purposes, dynamic supply chains, community-use greenhouses, community food hubs and other investments that strengthen the resilience of communities across Canada.
- This agency would support food sovereignty, including for Indigenous communities, rural communities and in remote areas, especially in the North, in ways that also underpin defence strategies of communities across Canada.



“Food is national security. Agriculture is being treated as a sector, and what it really is, is our strategic infrastructure.”

Alison Sunstrum, Nya Ventures

Further reading

- [Community food systems are critical to Canada's national security, Policy Options](#)
- [You can't have national security without food security, The Toronto Star](#)
- [In Carney's new world order, Canada's opportunity is as a breadbasket, The Globe and Mail](#)
- [Canada's Reliance on the U.S. for our food is a recipe for disaster, The Globe and Mail](#)

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