

## NFU Submission to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on the Next Policy Framework

### The Halifax Statement

June 30, 2026

The National Farmers Union (NFU) urges the federal government to prioritize generational renewal, food sovereignty, and diversity in products and farm practices in the Next Policy Framework (NPF). The Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) governments must invest in a food sovereignty policy that supports community-scale, regional food systems and fair prices for food that farmers produce for both domestic and export markets.

To foster a diverse, resilient food and agriculture economy, the FPT governments must acknowledge and address the negative trends in Canada's food and agriculture sector:

- Concentration across the food system, from input suppliers to grocery retailers, has reduced farm net income while escalating income inequality threatens food insecurity in Canada;
- The number of Canadian farmer operators has decreased by 24% since 2001 while the barriers to new entrants, particularly Black, Indigenous, and farmers of colour, have intensified;
- Canada's agricultural policy has prioritized the export of commodities at low prices while importing high-value fresh and processed foods, minimizing agriculture's benefits to farmers, workers and consumers. Our reliance on U.S. food processing has reduced market options, making our food producers less resilient and more vulnerable to market concentration and geopolitical turmoil;
- Climate change is increasing economic and environmental stress on Canadian farms. Prolonged droughts and unpredictable weather have caused crop losses. Crop insurance payments increase each year and AAFC regularly spends more than its projections on the business risk management (BRM) programs. Canadian agriculture policy has not adequately supported farmers to adopt practices that mitigate climate risk;
- Current policies, particularly the BRM programs, structurally subsidize risk-taking, driving farmland concentration and narrowing the types of products grown on Canadian farms, while excluding farms with resilient and diverse production practices.

The NPF should support a new wave of farmers and farmworkers to produce food that is processed domestically for Canadian consumption. Canada's agricultural policy must meaningfully encourage diversification of farm practices, guided by public research, to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate instability, which threatens the viability of farms and our food supply. Resilience comes from investing in a system that supports a diversity of farm practices, farm products, and new farmers. A diverse agricultural economy is the foundation of a sovereign, resilient food system that will provide farmers with economic dignity and Canadians with a stable supply of nutritious food through 2033 and beyond.

**Strong Communities. Sound Policies. Sustainable Farms.**

**Des communautés solidaires et des politiques sensées pour une agriculture durable.**

NFU Principles: **Resilience, Renewal, Sovereignty, Diversity**

**5 PILLARS**

NFU Priorities for the 2028-2033 Next Policy Framework

<b>Generational Renewal</b>	<b>Growing local markets and regional trade</b>	<b>Food security through food sovereignty</b>	<b>Long-term public agricultural research</b>	<b>Climate resilience</b>
<p>The NPF will create resilience through <b>public investment in new and black, Indigenous, and farmers of colour to ensure viable farm livelihoods.</b></p> <p>The NPF will create <b>embedded support for land access, succession planning, start-up grants, and low-interest loans for new farmers.</b></p> <p>The NPF will ensure that <b>new entrant policies provide support beyond startup costs.</b></p> <p>The NPF will <b>explore policy options beyond traditional tax approaches</b> to enable non-family farm succession.</p>	<p>The NPF will build resilience through <b>public investment in regional infrastructure</b> for wholesale and local markets, processing, storage, and public procurement.</p> <p>The NPF will fund <b>regional, co-operatively owned food hubs</b> to provide alternatives to established oligopolies in the food distribution and retail sectors.</p> <p>The NPF will create a funding stream to <b>increase local livestock slaughter capacity and/or on-farm slaughter capacity.</b></p>	<p>The NPF will focus on <b>growing community well-being and rural resilience</b> through food security and fair livelihoods.</p> <p>The NPF will fund the <b>creation of marketing boards</b> to ensure Canadian farmers get the best prices for their produce and create a stable supply of domestically produced food for Canadians.</p> <p>The NPF will fund <b>public grocery stores</b> that provide affordable, locally grown food for Canadians in both rural and urban areas.</p>	<p><b>The NPF will invest in science and research</b> that drives resilience in Canadian agriculture, including sustainable ecological practices and outcomes;</p> <p><b>The NPF will restore funding to the research stations cut by AAFC</b> to continue the Organic and Regenerative Program, research that supports a public seed system, and research that supports diverse production, including livestock.</p> <p><b>The NPF will fund farmer-led research into low-input production practices</b> to encourage and test on-farm diversification.</p>	<p><b>The NPF will reform the Business Risk Management (BRM) programs</b> to require the implementation of best management practices and climate adaptation projects, and to make them accessible and beneficial to small-to-medium and diverse farms.</p> <p>The NPF will create a new publicly funded <b>payment for ecosystem services program to support implementation of on-farm best management practices</b></p> <p>To operationalize the new research funded by AAFC and the provinces, <b>the NPF will fund the creation of a Canadian Farm Resilience Agency (CFRA).</b> The CFRA will operate at regional levels to provide agronomic advice independent of private financial interests and guide farmers in implementing climate resilient and best management practices.</p>