



June 30, 2026

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Next Agriculture Policy Framework Consultation
Sent via: aaafc.npf-pcs.aac@agr.gc.ca

Re: CWRC Feedback to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Next Policy Framework Consultation

On behalf of the Canadian Wheat Research Coalition (CWRC), please accept the following feedback to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC's) consultation on the Next Policy Framework (NPF).

The CWRC is a collaboration between Alberta Grains, Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission and Manitoba Crop Alliance aimed at increasing the long-term profitability and sustainability of wheat for Canadian producers through leadership in identifying, co-ordinating and supporting innovative research. The CWRC facilitates a collaborative approach to producer funding of regional and national research projects in variety development and agronomy, including the Canadian National Wheat Cluster under AAFC's Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

Canada is a world leader in high-quality wheat production and exports. In 2025, Canada produced just short of 40 million metric tonnes of wheat, with the Prairie provinces producing over 36 million metric tonnes alone¹. Wheat production in Canada is vital to the economic success of farmers, rural communities and Canada as a whole. The Canadian cereals sector leads the country's agriculture exports, with annual exports to over 80 countries with an estimated value of \$11.5 billion².

A large portion of Canada's wheat production and export success is due to strong investments into public breeding institutions. Farmers recognize this success, and continue to support public plant breeding, investing \$70.5 million since 2020 alone into AAFC and university wheat breeding programs³. Public plant breeding provides significant benefits to the public as well, with a recent study from the University of Saskatchewan finding that for every dollar invested in

¹ Statistics Canada, 2026. Table 32-10-0359-01 Estimated areas, yield, production, average farm price and total farm value of principal field crops, in metric and imperial units.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3210035901>

² Cereals Canada, 2025. Production. <https://cerealscanada.ca/production/>

³ CWRC, 2026. Securing the Future of Wheat in Canada. <https://wheatresearch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/CWRC-Wheat-Breeding-Report-Feb-26-2026.pdf>



Alberta Grains



MANITOBA
CROP
ALLIANCE



wheat breeding, farmers and taxpayers receive over \$30 in benefits⁴. However, this success story has been put at risk by the recently announced Comprehensive Expenditure Review (CER) cuts, which threaten the long-term effectiveness of farmer investments in public research.

Despite the high rates of return on public investments in agricultural research, Canada's public investment in agricultural knowledge and innovation has declined in real terms over the last decade. Canada's total public agricultural R&D spending fell from \$860 million in 2013 to \$680 million in 2022, placing Canada last among the top seven OECD countries⁵. This reduction in public R&D spending directly impacted Canada's agricultural productivity growth, which has fallen to roughly 1 per cent per year from 2 per cent in previous decades⁶.

AAFC plays a foundational role in Canada's agricultural research network, linking together producers, universities and the private sector. AAFC's network of research centres spread across diverse agroecological zones is a tremendous asset to the development of elite, widely adapted varieties and agronomic best management practices. Farmers want to continue to partner with AAFC, investing their private dollars to ensure the continued availability of elite, field-ready varieties. However, the sector needs predictable and sustained investment from government to keep the pipeline full of new innovations and prevent technology gaps.

Of the current priority areas under Sustainable CAP, Science, Research and Innovation continues to be critical to support agricultural research that enhances productivity and competitiveness. Funding provided through federal programs under this priority area is vital to ensuring farmers have access to new varieties and technologies to support their profitability and sustainability.

The AgriScience program is an essential research program that brings together expertise across Canada and creates strong collaborations within the agriculture sector. The AgriScience Clusters component provides a co-ordinated framework for industry, researchers and government to work together. Research delivers the most value to farmers and the public when the entire value chain works together. However, the AgriScience Cluster program needs to be

⁴ Bolek-Callbeck and Gray, 2022. The Benefits and Costs of Producer and Public Investments: Wheat Varietal R&D in Western Canada 1995 to 2020. [FinalBenefitsandCostsWheat2022.pdf \(saskwheat.ca\)](#)

⁵ Gulab and Lhermie, 2025. A Case for Reinforcing Agri-food Research and Development Spending: Where Does Canada Stand Internationally? <https://www.policyschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/JSC44-ReinforcingAgrifood-Final.pdf>

⁶ FCC, 2025. Propelling agricultural productivity in Canada: Sustainable growth to feed the world. <https://www.fcc-fac.ca/en/knowledge/economics/agricultural-productivity-canada-sustainable-growth>



Alberta Grains



MANITOBA
CROP
ALLIANCE



refocused on industry priorities to ensure producers continue to see value in the program and to generate the greatest benefits for the sector.

Prescriptive funding requirements for the AgriScience Clusters under Sustainable CAP for environment and climate change research forced commodity groups into zero-sum trade-offs between competitiveness-oriented research and compliance with mandatory environmental allocations. These requirements further diluted Cluster funding, which has not significantly increased over time. Additionally, there is a lack of available researchers capable of carrying out this specialized area of research. This has been further exacerbated by layoffs at AAFC and research centre closures as a result of CER cuts. Exterior departmental objectives/targets should not drive the direction of programs that are intended to focus on industry priorities. The success of the NPF will depend on AAFC realigning with industry priorities that support sector resiliency, growth and competitiveness, productivity, and profitability for the sector.

We appreciated the opportunity to participate in the recent AgriScience Program Working Groups organized by AAFC to inform the development of the next iteration of the program and look forward to further discussions on how the Working Groups' recommendations will be implemented. We strongly support the recommendations for improving program timelines, as it takes significant lead time to organize a national, multi-organizational application, and industry partners need to receive clear application and program guidelines much earlier in the process. AAFC should also work with Cluster leads on ways to improve the application process, as it is very complex and must be simplified. AAFC also needs to work with Cluster leads on how to reduce the administrative burden of the AgriScience Program. Instead of streamlining access to funding and maximizing scientific research output as the program was intended, additional administrative layers continue to reduce the program's effectiveness and limit the benefits for farmers and the entire sector. Growing administrative requirements are consuming resources that could otherwise fund research, in a program where the overall funding envelope is already too small relative to increasing demand. Regarding program objectives and priorities, the CWRC strongly supports the recommendation made to include priority areas identified by industry.

The NPF presents an opportunity to prevent further erosion of public research funding and capacity, supporting organizations that are growing research capacity and engaging industry to better target funding to where it will have the greatest impact. To maximize its impact, the AgriScience Cluster Program should eliminate rigid quotas and unnecessary administrative activities, allowing industry and researchers to focus on high-quality, priority-driven science.





The CWRC appreciates this opportunity to provide initial feedback for the NPF, and we look forward to future consultation. We invite you to reach out if you wish to discuss any of these points further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P de Rocquigny", written in a cursive style.

Pam de Rocquigny
President, CWRC



Alberta Grains



**MANITOBA
CROP
ALLIANCE**