



# ***Is Canadian food sustainably-produced?***

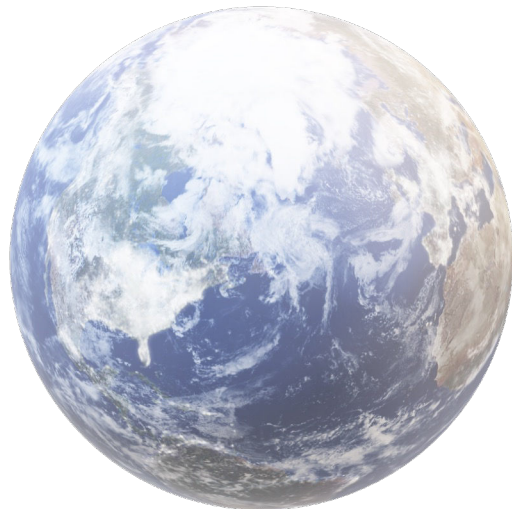
**Ontario Federation of Agriculture: Policy Advisory Council**

Sept. 6, 2023

David McInnes

One of the most pressing issues facing humanity:

**producing food more sustainably – and showing it**



With urgency comes **opportunity**

Leadership is being **redefined**

“...Canada is recognized as a world leader in sustainable agriculture and agri-food production...”

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## Canada's federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Agriculture set the direction for the next agricultural framework

From: [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#)

### News release

Today, Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture wrapped up their annual conference by issuing the "[Guelph Statement](#)". Their shared vision for the next agricultural policy framework will position our agri-food producers, processors and others in the sector for continued success as world leaders in sustainable agriculture, and will enable a globally competitive sector. Ministers also acknowledged and recognized the hard work of everyone involved in maintaining the strong food supply chain for Canadians during COVID-19.

Ministers agreed on the sustainable agriculture approach needed to help shape the next policy framework, which includes environmental, social and economic considerations in all priority areas. Ministers agreed on the following five priority areas for the next framework: (1) climate change and the environment; (2) science, research and innovation; (3) market development and trade; (4) building sector capacity and growth; and (5) resiliency and public trust.

The vision agreed upon by Ministers for the next agricultural policy framework charts an ambitious path for the sector. It states that "Canada is recognized as a world leader in sustainable agriculture and agri-food production and drives forward to 2028 from a solid foundation of regional strengths and diversity, as well as the strong leadership of the Provinces and Territories, in order to rise to the climate change challenge, to expand new markets and trade while meeting the expectations of consumers, and to feed Canadians and a growing global population."

Ministers also agreed to continue to improve the suite of business risk management (BRM) programs to make them timely, equitable, and easy to understand, while supporting the competitiveness and sustainability of the sector.

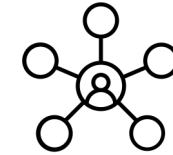
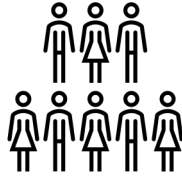
*Guelph Statement, November 2021*

So... how do we know if Canadian agriculture & food is **sustainable**?

Are we **doing enough** for a fast-changing food world?

How can measuring sustainability be the **opportunity** to drive-up **value**?

# | Redefining Canadian leadership



**An unprecedented coalition**

**A new benchmarking tool**

**A concrete plan to use it**

# | 135 partners



National Index on Agri-Food Performance

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Statistics Canada are ex-officio partners. Contributors include cash and in-kind support. The coalition gratefully acknowledges advice provided by other experts and Birds Canada on the biodiversity indicator.

Big global shifts → New response

# | Positioning & market access

Canada – show global leadership: agri-food sector’s first sustainability index 

U.S. – producer-led coalition: become the first carbon negative sector in the economy 

Australia – Brand Australia’s agricultural sustainability & stewardship for exports 



Norway – aquaculture industry: be “the world’s most environmentally friendly production of healthy food”



Ireland – sustainability dashboard “pioneered” world’s first national food & drink sustainability program



Netherlands – “be a leader in circular agriculture”



EU – agri-food sustainability: a “competitive advantage”. *Green deal diplomacy* for global trade



New Zealand – agricultural sustainability dashboard to verify its “clean-green assertions” – being “the most trusted”



## | Target-setting: sustainable sourcing

### McDonald's



- **100%** responsibly source priority ingredients
- Regenerative farming: soil, inputs, biodiversity
- Net-zero emissions: **2050**

### General Mills



- Sustainably source **10** priority ingredients
- 2030: **1 million acres** of regenerative farmland
- Net-zero emissions: **2050**

| Meeting targets: collaboration

### **Companies need to commit their supply chains**

**89%** of food & beverage companies' total GHG emissions (scope 3) found in company supply chains

### **Producers need to engage the food system**

Getting to net-zero **2050** requires working w/ ENGOs, researchers & companies to address system impacts



## | Being benchmarked

# 64<sup>th</sup>



### “Agriculture sustainability”:

Indicators: Sustainable Nitrogen Management Index + sustainable pesticide use

40 indicators in total beyond agri-food

Overall Canada: 49<sup>th</sup> / 180 countries

# 36<sup>th</sup>



**Food Sustainability Index**

### “Sustainable agriculture”:

Indicators: water & land use, fertilizer, pesticides, soil, GHGs, biodiversity, fisheries, animal care, etc.

2 other indicators: Food loss & waste, Nutritional challenges

Canada: 3<sup>rd</sup> / 78 countries

# 29<sup>th</sup>



**SDG Index**

### “Sustainable development report”:

Indicators: based on 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Agriculture-related sub-indicators: Sustainable Nitrogen Index, cereal yield, exports of pesticides, emissions, biodiversity, etc.

Canada: 29<sup>th</sup> / 163 countries

| Climate risk = credit risk

## REGULATORS:

Disclose climate-related risks



## BANKS:

Commit to Net-Zero



## BORROWERS:

Assess bank portfolios



Canada's financial & securities regulators align with global Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures

Align portfolios to UN Net-Zero Banking Alliance goals; new ESG metrics

Assessments extend to supply chains "scope 3" emissions

| Mandatory ESG disclosures

**ESG:** Environmental, social, governance assessments

**G-7:** Global baseline for corporate disclosures

**CSSB:** New standards, 2024

(Canadian Sustainability Standards Board)

**Beyond climate:** Standards accounting for water, biodiversity & labour



# | Benchmarking sustainability is redefining *leadership*



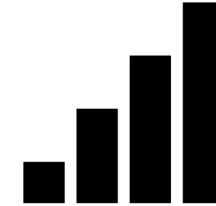
| Requires a new response



Whoever defines  
sustainability “wins”



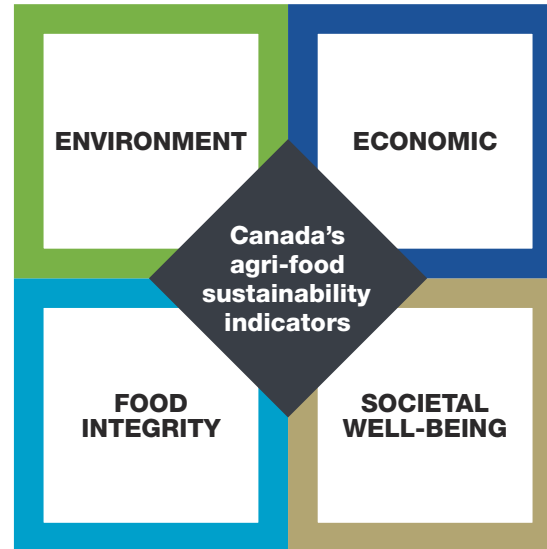
Measure or be  
measured



The bar is only rising

# | Canada's 1<sup>st</sup> agri-food sustainability index

**National Index  
on Agri-Food  
Performance**





# | Portraying sustainability credentials

## ***What it is:***

- ✓ **Consolidated** national picture: production to retail\*
- ✓ **Systems view** of sustainability (4 blocks)
- ✓ Pilot: **20 indicators & 130 metrics**
- ✓ **Outcomes based** or highest quality evidence (metrics)
- ✓ A **framework to align** entire sector
- ✓ **Inspire reporting: leadership & needed progress** (national / global goals)
- ✓ Basis to agree on **data gaps**

National Index on Agri-Food Performance 



## ***What it is not:***

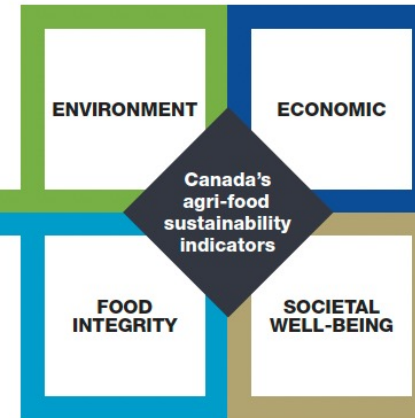
- ✓ Not prescriptive
- ✓ Not collecting data directly from producers or companies
- ✓ Not comparative
- ✓ Not scoring producers, companies or Canada
- ✓ Not measuring consumer diets (matters of social/health policy)\*
- ✓ Not (yet) providing complete disaggregated views – by province, sub-sector, etc.

# National Index on Agri-Food Performance pilot

INDICATORS	METRICS
1. Climate change & GHGs	1. Emissions 2. Sequestration/loss 3. Mitigation
2. Soil health	1. Soil cover 2. Soil erosion 3. Soil organic carbon
3. Water stewardship	1. Water quality 2. Water use
4. Biodiversity & agrobiodiversity	1. State of biodiversity & habitat change (interim for 3 & 4) 2. Conversion of farmland to urbanization 3. Composite view: state of biodiversity & habitat change 4. Disaggregated views: state of biodiversity & habitat change
5. Crop inputs use / management	1. Responsible pest control use (pesticides) 2. Responsible nutrient use (fertilizer)
6. Food loss & waste	1. Reduce 2. Repurpose
7. Packaging & waste	1. Reduce / recycle 2. Reuse

INDICATORS	METRICS
8. Safe food	1. Overall safe food supply 2. Recalls & safety alerts 3. Compliance with maximum limits for contaminants
9. Health: Nutrition information	1. Provision of nutrition information 2. Mandatory fortification 3. Promoting Indigenous country foods
10. Health: Antimicrobial stewardship	1. Antimicrobial use & resistance
11. Health: Zoonotic disease mitigation	1. Risk surveillance: rate of animal disease outbreaks
12. Traceability implementation	1. Traceability scope
13. Transparency & accuracy	1. Labelling of packaged food products 2. Health claims 3. Food misrepresentation

## National Index on Agri-Food Performance



INDICATORS	METRICS
14. National economic contribution	1. GDP 2. Employment 3. Trade balance
15. Financial vibrancy & resiliency	1. Financial performance 2. Investment 3. Labour 4. Infrastructure 5. Supply chain resiliency
16. Innovation	1. R & D 2. Regulatory approvals 3. Innovation adoption
17. Sustainable finance	1. Market-based sustainable capital / investment 2. Government / NGO-sourced climate solutions funding

INDICATORS	METRICS
18. Decent work for people	1. Workplace mental health 2. Workplace safety 3. Inclusive & progressive workplace 4. Attractiveness of sector as a place to work
19. Food security	1. Monitoring food insecurity: food affordability 2. Increasing access to nutritious foods
20. Animal care	1. Farmed animal codes of conduct

Part 2 Final Report,  
May 2023

National Index on  
Agri-Food Performance

Applicable UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

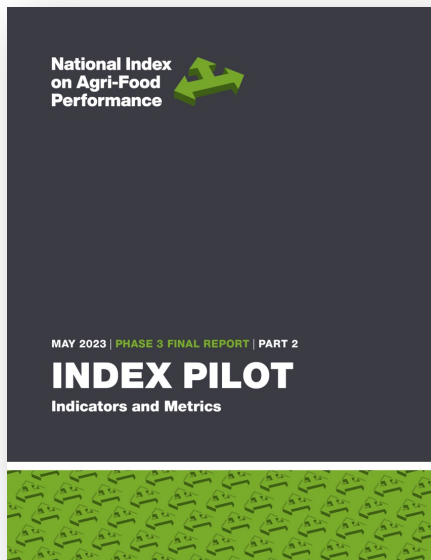


| Hallmarks of a sustainable sector...?

It's about the *metrics*

# | Balanced reporting

## 130 metrics & global context

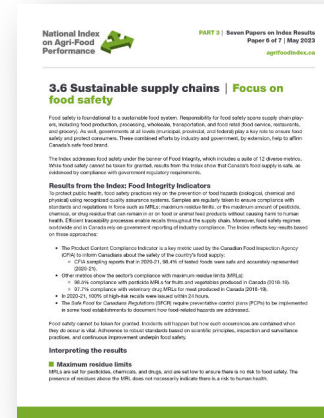
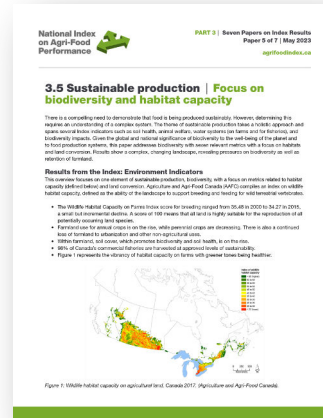
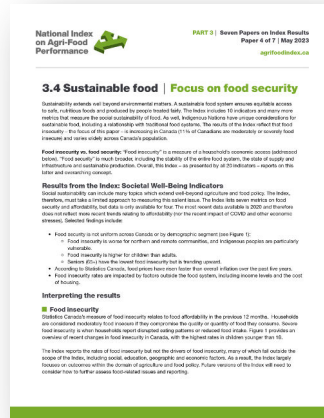
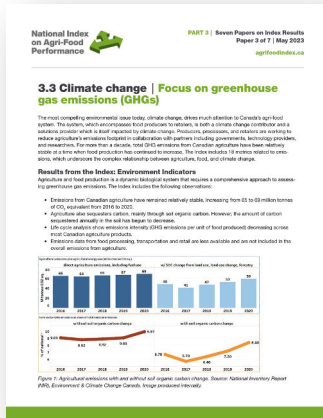


## 7 interpretive papers on results



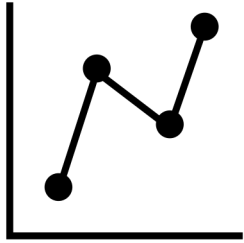
# | Hallmarks of a sustainable for food sector

## The *metrics* tell one part of the story



- Agriculture GHG emissions:
  - Absolute: **65 to 69 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>** (2016-20)
  - Relatively stable since **2005** while the sector's contribution to GDP **rising**
  - Emissions intensity **decreasing** for major food products
  - **Limited** sector-wide view
- **11%** of Canadians are moderately or severely food insecure
- Wildlife Habitat Capacity on Farms: a small but incremental **decline**. Data may underrepresent habitat loss
- **98%** commercial fisheries harvesting at approved levels
- **98.4%** tested foods: safe & accurately represented
- Compliance with MRLs (maximum residue limits):
  - **98.5%** (pesticides)
  - **97.7%** (veterinary drugs)

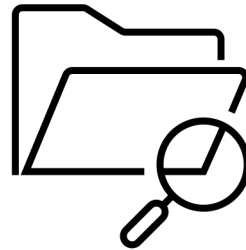
## | Three “learnings”



### **Big limitation:**

*Data we have*

Insufficient data for reporting on breadth of sustainability priorities



### **Big opportunity:**

*Data we need*

Evidence to better show leadership & progress by seeking out new & better data sources



### **Big caution:**

*Data we use*

Presenting & interpreting findings risks greenwashing perception

| Hallmarks of a sustainable sector... for a changing food world?

It's about the *metrics* and the *method*

# | Hallmarks of a sustainable for food sector

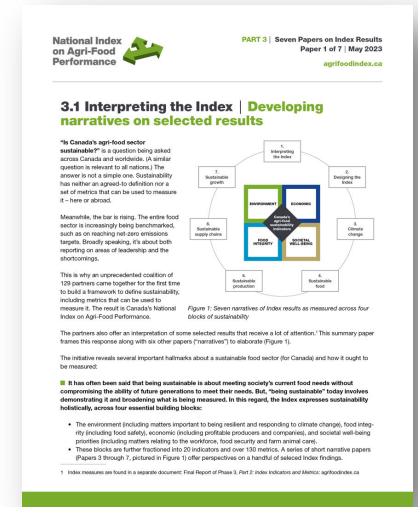
The *method* (or approach) reveals a fuller story

## Being a sustainable food provider means...

**A**ligning on a holistic framework

**B**enchmarking areas of leadership & shortcomings







**C**ollaborating across sector + food system to harness support & generate value





# | Global context

Tailor for the Canadian context but be globally relevant

Selected Reporting Standards		
 World Benchmarking Alliance <i>World Benchmarking Standards (WBA)</i>	 Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)	 Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA)
Selected Global Indices		
 Environmental Performance Index <i>Environmental Performance Index (EPI)</i>	 United Nations' Sustainable Development Report (SDR)	 <i>Sustainability Food Index (SFI)</i>

- **Approach:**
  - Canada's Index emphasizes 'outcomes' vs. 'practices'
- **Intent:**
  - Global schemes emphasize ranking individual organization performance / are prescriptive
  - Index: a common framework for consolidated results
- **Alignment:**
  - Some global schemes' metrics exceed the Index & vice versa: e.g.
    - Global schemes: water risk, child labour
    - Index: Indigenous agriculture, mental health

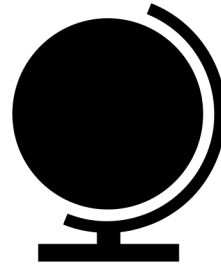
## | Index opportunities



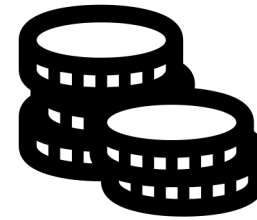
✓ Support **claims**



✓ Enhance **trust**



✓ Access **markets**



✓ Align with **ESG**



✓ Inform **policy**

## | Partner views...

“...will help **advance our sector's sustainability...**”

Canadian Canola Growers Association

“...help Canada **solidify** its position as a **global leader...**”

Pulse Canada

...this will **empower farmers**”

CropLife Canada

“help...**meet** regulatory, market and consumer **demands**”

Canadian Pork Council

“...a roadmap for **effective trust-building**”

Canadian Centre for Food Integrity

“...CRSB intends to **contribute** regular beef sector metrics...”

Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef

“...help **inform the broad claims...**”

Global Pattison Food Group [Save-on-Foods]

“... an **unprecedented** coalition... to measuring sustainability”

Global Institute for Food Security

“...puts numbers behind the claim that Canada’s food and agricultural systems are among the **most sustainable** in the world”

Cereals Canada

“...better metrics... **inform** supporting **policy, innovation...** priorities”

Fruit & Vegetable Growers of Canada

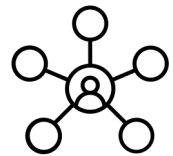
## | Moving forward



- Build on **coalition** momentum



- Improve the **Index** – *version 2.0* – and continue to be a leader!



- Launch the **Centre** for Agri-Food Benchmarking to take this forward, if funded

## | Phase 4 – selected highlights of proposed work plan

### **Index plan...**

1. Address priority **data gaps** across Index pilot & evolve the Index to 2.0
2. Advance the **process & method** to identify new/better sources of data
3. Apply the Index across the sector to **build momentum & learn** from use (about value)
4. Consider suitability of **global assurance schemes** to step up Canada's Index & ensure global relevance
5. Assess **ESG requirements** & leverage the Index to advance sector interests
6. Through greater outreach, inform **sustainability dialogues** & project Canadian leadership

| Thank you

[agrifoodindex.ca](http://agrifoodindex.ca)

