



# YOUNG AGRARIANS

## CALL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL NEW FARMER FRAMEWORK



### CANADA'S FARM RENEWAL CRISIS BY THE NUMBERS

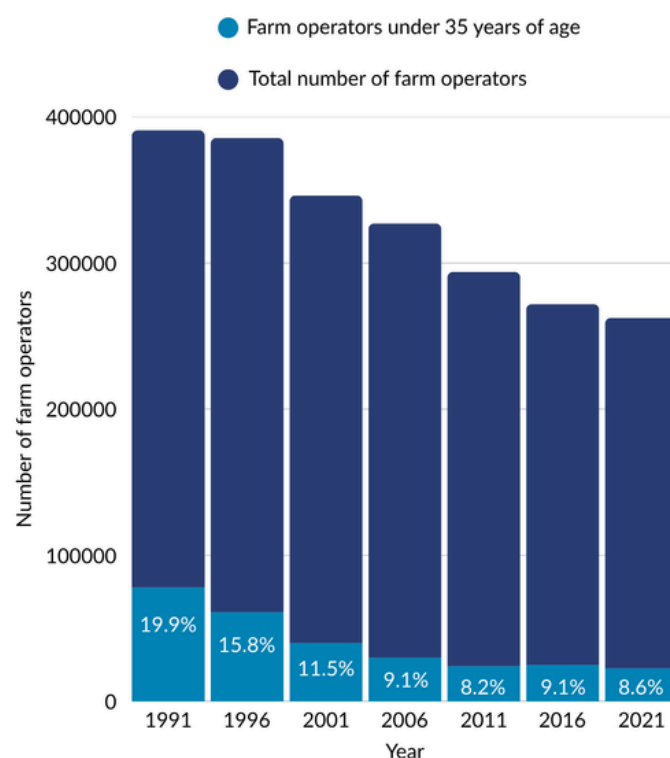
Agriculture is a cornerstone of Canada's economy, playing a critical role in food security, rural community vitality, and job creation. However, the sector faces a significant farm renewal crisis as Canada's farming population continues to age and decline. Currently, only 1.3% of the Canadian population is involved in agriculture and Canada is losing young farmers at more than double the rate that it is losing farmers<sup>1</sup>.

Since 1991, Canada has lost one third (32.8%) of its farm operators and over two thirds (70.9%) of its young farmers. As of 2021, only 8.6% of farm operators, or 22,635 farmers, are under the age of 35<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1). The total number of farms has declined over the same period, from 280,043 in 1991 to 189,874 in 2021, a loss of over 90,000 farms.

What's more, 40% of Canadian farmers are expected to retire by 2033 with the average age now 56<sup>3</sup>. As of 2021, only 12% of farms report having a formal succession plan in place (up from 8.4% in 2016), while 47% have no plan at all<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 1. Number of farm operators in Canada, 1991 - 2021.

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0230-01



### DEFINING NEW & EQUITY-SEEKING FARMERS

Agriculture and Agri-food Canada define a young farmer as those under 35 years old, and new farmers as people who have been farming for 6 years or less. However, many new farmers in start-up may not break even until years 6 to 10. For that reason, this brief defines new farmers as those farming for 10 years or less, regardless of background, age, or previous experience. This brief will use the term "equity-seeking farmers" to refer to farmers who identify as Indigenous, Black, racialized, newcomers to Canada, women, youth (18-34), 2SLGBTQ+, second language minority groups, and people living with disabilities (Under Represented and Marginalized Groups or URMGs as defined by the Federal Government).

<sup>1</sup> Qualman, D., Akram-Lodhi, A., Desmarais, A., and Srinivasan, S. "Forever young? The crisis of generational renewal on Canada's farms," Canadian Food Studies 5(3) 100-127 (2018)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, [Table 32-10-0230-01 Characteristics of farm operators, Census of Agriculture historical data](#) (2024)

<sup>3</sup> RBC [Farmers Wanted: The labour renewal Canada needs to build the Next Green Revolution](#) (2020)

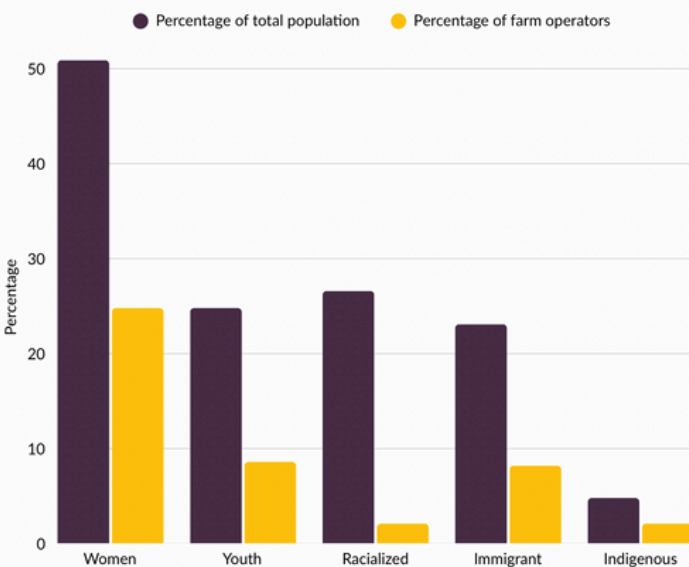
<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada, [Table 32-10-0244-01 Succession plan for the agricultural operation, Census of Agriculture](#) (2021)

## BARRIERS TO ENTRY FOR NEW & EQUITY-SEEKING FARMERS

Equity-seeking groups have historically been excluded from the agricultural sector and still face major barriers to entry. These groups remain significantly underrepresented within agriculture compared to the broader population<sup>5</sup> (Figure 2). Furthermore, ethnocultural diversity of farm operators decreases as farm revenue class increases. In other words, equity-seeking groups are more represented amongst smaller, lower-revenue farm operations than larger, higher-revenue farms<sup>6</sup> (Figure 3).

**Figure 2.** Representation of equity-seeking groups amongst farm operators vs total population of Canada (2021)

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0230-01



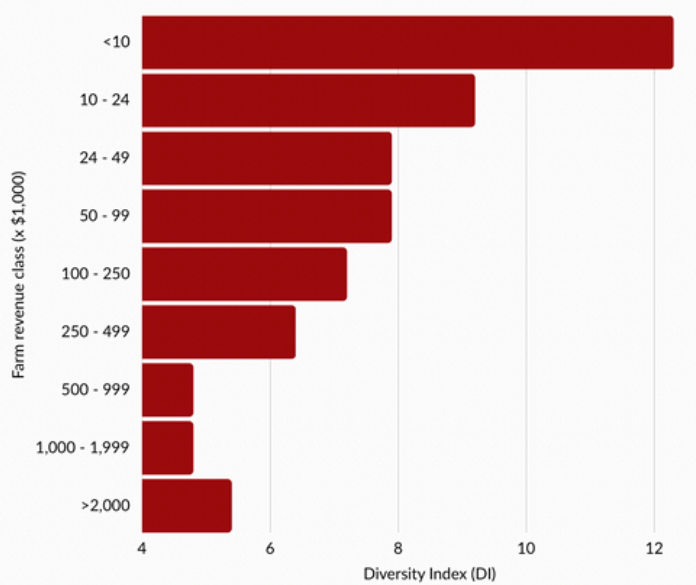
A range of barriers prevent new and equity-seeking farmers from successfully entering the industry and growing new farm businesses, including access to land, capital, knowledge and training, as well as rural community development and infrastructure.

Existing federal agricultural programs often favour large, export-oriented farms, excluding many new farmers. New farmers often start small and sell to domestic markets because that is the scale of operation they can afford in start-up. The current policy landscape fails to address the capacity and needs of both start-ups and of new and equity-seeking farmers. Given current geopolitical pressures on the food system, investing in new farmers is essential to ensure that Canada has farm renewal and food sovereignty for the future.

A National New Farmer Framework is urgently needed at the provincial, territorial, and federal levels, to meet this challenge and grow the next generation of farmers. This framework would address the most pressing barriers facing new farmers today to ensure that our agricultural system can thrive. The development of a National New Farmer Framework could propel the next Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (2028) creating a “new deal” with more responsive and targeted investments in new and equity-seeking farmers.

**Figure 3.** Ethnocultural diversity of Canadian farm operators by farm revenue class (2021)

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230825/...>



<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, [The socioeconomic snapshot of Canada's evolving farm population, 2021](#). (2023)

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, [A story about the diversity of Canada's farm operators](#). (2023)





## ACCESS TO LAND

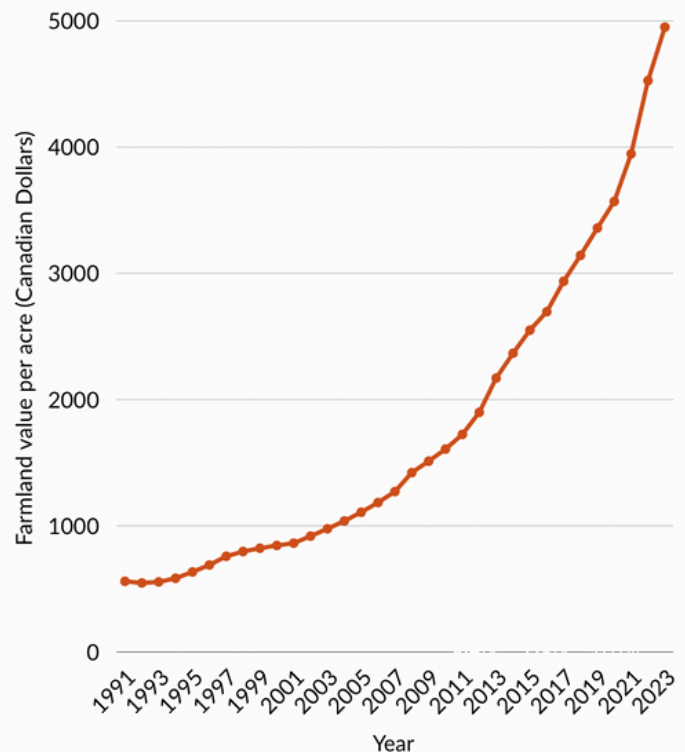
Access to land is a top barrier identified by new farmers<sup>7</sup>, particularly as rising land prices make ownership less attainable. Since 1991, the value of farm land and buildings has increased by over 850%<sup>8</sup>. Farm Credit Canada reported that 2022, 2023, and 2024 saw the greatest price increases since 2015, with 12.8%, 11.5%, and 9.4% increases in cost per acre<sup>9</sup>. Skyrocketing land prices are one of the greatest drains on farmer capital, with agricultural land costs continuing to climb.

High land costs are driving market failure conditions, where the cost of land and production exceed what can be earned farming. This makes it prohibitive for new farmers to start and sustain profitable farms<sup>10</sup>. Farmland prices are being driven not by the productive value of the land, but rather by forces such as land grabbing (foreign investment), speculative investment and financialization of farmland, as well as urban and industrial development<sup>11</sup>. Ensuring land access for future generations requires adequately protecting farmland and addressing the root causes of the land affordability crisis.

Many new and equity-seeking farmers face extra barriers to access land. They can have less-established rural networks to identify available farmland for rent or purchase, which is often transferred through social networks. Technical assistance to navigate and de-risk land access agreements and land succession opportunities is also lacking. This is key since farmers under 35 are leasing land at higher rates than older farmers (50.6% compared to 35.1% overall)<sup>12</sup>.

**Figure 4. Farmland value per acre in Canada, 1991 - 2023.**

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0047-01



Agricultural zoning policies and short-term land leases can also be hindrances because of restrictions on on-farm infrastructure - especially housing. This can mean affordable housing near or on farm is often inaccessible, impacting the long-term viability of the farm. Despite urban agriculture being a more accessible entry-point to new and equity-seeking farmers, there is limited stable land access and support from municipalities in urban and peri-urban contexts.

<sup>7</sup> National Farmers Union. ["Who Will Feed Us? New Farmer Perspectives on Agriculture For the Future."](#) (2021)

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada. [Table 32-10-0047-01 Value per acre of farm land and buildings at July 1](#) (2024)

<sup>9</sup> Farm Credit Canada. [FCC 2024 Farmland Values Report](#) (2024)

<sup>10</sup> Serebrin, J. ["High costs putting farming out of reach for young people, affecting all Canadians."](#) The Canadian Press (May 07, 2023)

<sup>11</sup> National Farmers Union. ["Losing Our Grip, 2015 Update"](#) (March 2015)

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada. [Portrait of a 21st century agricultural operation](#). (2017)

Access to operating capital is a primary barrier for new farmers. The inflation of critical start-up costs such as inputs, equipment, infrastructure, livestock, fencing, and insurance, on top of high farmland prices, places a heavy burden on farm start-ups.

Many new farmers, especially those from equity-seeking groups and non-farming backgrounds, often don't have land and assets that can be used to guarantee loans. They also face compounding challenges such as limited credit history and lower credit scores. This means that lenders often identify them as "high risk", making loans unattainable. Very few loan products are geared to early borrowers and start-up operations. This issue is exacerbated by the broader market failure conditions and housing affordability challenges that impact the ability to manage competing loan repayment schedules, high debt and increasing input costs.

For equity-seeking groups, discrimination in lending practices can further exacerbate access to capital. Women receive less funding and higher rates of rejection than their male counterparts; this limits them to smaller operations leading to lower profits<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, under the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act, Indigenous farmers living on-reserve are not eligible for loans; a clause in the Indian Act prevents on-reserve property use for security for loans<sup>14</sup>. This emphasizes the need for financial lending options that are culturally safe, start-up scale appropriate, and do not require collateral, as well as loan officers that are trained to understand the needs of new and equity-deserving farmers.

New entrants entering into supply managed sectors have identified that purchasing quota is prohibitively expensive, and scaling up without the necessary capital is a major obstacle<sup>15</sup>.

Income stabilization measures are also essential to ensure the long term sustainability of farm operators, and to create retention and viable career pathways for farm workers. In the start-up phase, income instability due to climate and market fluctuations often leads to business failure. Farm business start-ups have significantly higher rates of failure compared to other types of businesses<sup>16</sup>; in British Columbia, only 30% of small farms continue to operate successfully after five years<sup>17</sup>.

Many new farmers do not qualify for Business Risk Management (BRM) government programs, leaving them vulnerable to extreme weather events, production losses, and unstable markets. Farms in start-up are often small, diversified, and sell direct to consumers, and do not meet eligibility criteria for BRM programs. Access to operating capital is a fundamental building block for any business in start-up, acting as a "make or break" lever. It can unlock critical resources, from land access, on-farm infrastructure, marketing and other start-up costs. Otherwise, it creates a gulf between a new farmer and their farming potential.



<sup>13</sup> Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. *Evaluation of the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act Program*. (2024)

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> National Farmers Union. *Strengthening Supply Management: Defending Canadian control of our market space and advancing food sovereignty*. (2016)

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada. *Failure Rates for New Canadian Firms: New Perspectives on Entry and Exit*. (2000)

<sup>17</sup> BC Ministry of Agriculture. *Growing Your Farm Enterprise: A Supplement to the New Farm Start-Up Guide*.





## KNOWLEDGE & TRAINING

While some training and mentorship programs are available to new farmers, these programs are not adequately funded or accessible across Canada. New and young farmers cite farmer-to-farmer hands-on experience as the most valuable form of farming education, and as more critical than farming education offered by formal educational institutions<sup>18</sup>. However, new farmers face various obstacles to access hands-on training in their communities. Gaps in access to farmer-to-farmer mentorship programs leave many without critical, experienced guidance. For immigrant and newcomer farmers, this gap further complicates the process of navigating Canada's regulatory landscape and securing land and capital. Formal educational programs for farmers can be costly and difficult to access due to geographical barriers. As well, many institutional programs cater to conventional farming models, lacking diversity of farming methodologies such as ecological, regenerative or culturally appropriate approaches, which limits access to knowledge on a range of farm scales and models. As a result, these programs often do not meet the needs of many new and equity-seeking farmers.

Beyond initial training, new farmers require ongoing support in the form of professional, unbiased (publicly funded) and evidence-based extension services. Federal investment in extension programs has been declining since the 1970s, and there is currently no coordinated national extension service, leaving coordination of services primarily to the private sector, which can fail to provide adequate knowledge transfer related to climate resilient, ecological, and scale-appropriate production<sup>19</sup>.



<sup>18</sup> Laforge, J. et al. "New farmers and food policies in Canada," *Canadian Food Studies* 5(3), 128-152. (2018)

<sup>19</sup> Brewin, D. et al. "Overview of Canadian Public Agricultural Extension and Advisory Service," *North American Agricultural Advisory Network* (2023)





Broader investments in rural communities are needed to build farm resilience. Rural community development challenges include lack of affordable housing, childcare, public transit, and internet connectivity - these challenges make it difficult to build local communities, find farm labour, and access local markets. Rural communities also suffer from a lack of local and scale-appropriate agricultural support infrastructure such as processing facilities, abattoirs, markets and distribution hubs. Investment in rural infrastructure can support community revitalization and job creation while also providing essential services to farmers. Regulatory barriers such as water licensing (B.C.) and scale-inappropriate regulations that don't consider the needs of start-ups create further barriers to starting new farms.

Declines in mental health are often driven by the financial stressors faced in the sector. In rural areas, high rates of isolation hinder the ability to build networks. Equity-seeking farmers face additional mental health challenges related to racism, violence, and increasing political polarization in rural areas<sup>20</sup>. Recently, crucial mental health programs for farmers have begun to be funded in various provinces. These programs are important, and there is a growing need for more robust policies that target the root causes of the accelerating mental health crisis on farms.

Farm succession is an important tool that could be better harnessed to support new and equity-deserving farmers to continue operation of existing, successful businesses. When farmers have predetermined successors, business knowledge, managerial and leadership skills are transferred. This leads to more confident farmers, and long-lasting, successful operations<sup>21</sup>. With up to two thirds of new farmers coming from non-farm backgrounds<sup>22</sup>, more programs and information dissemination are needed to facilitate and make non-family succession options viable<sup>23</sup>. Thirty percent of farm workers report that poor management practices were their main reasons for leaving agricultural jobs<sup>24</sup>. This underlines further need for HR and management training accessible to new farmers to foster successful retention in the sector.



<sup>20</sup> Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. *Field Notes: Looking upstream at the farmer mental health crisis in Canada*. (2023)

<sup>21</sup> Earls, A. and Hall H. "Lessons for Succession Planning in Rural Canada: A Review of Farm Succession Plans and Available Resources in Haldmand County, Ontario," *Journal of Rural and Community Development*. (2016)

<sup>22</sup> Laforge et al. (2018)

<sup>23</sup> Earls et al. (2016)

<sup>24</sup> Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council. *Sowing Seeds of Change: Agriculture Labour Market Forecast 2023-2030*. (2024)



## BUILDING SECTOR CAPACITY

Non-profit farmer support organizations and membership associations play a vital role in shaping sustainable agriculture in Canada as primary delivery agents for new farmer programs. These organizations deliver low-barrier, free or low-cost programs, which provide education, resources and advocacy to adopt innovative techniques that prioritize farm renewal and agricultural resilience. This work is a primary reason why access to knowledge was identified as the least pressing barrier in a 2015 national survey of new and young farmers, despite being identified as one of the most effective and valued areas of support<sup>25</sup>.

Through collaborative efforts and partnerships, non-profit farming organizations are driving positive change through promising programs across key barriers, including the following examples:

- **LAND ACCESS:** The Treaty Land Sharing Network links landholders and Indigenous peoples to facilitate land sharing and access to advance Indigenous food sovereignty and practices. Through Quebec's L'ARTERRE and the B.C. Land Matching Program, delivered by Young Agrarians, government-funded land matching services have supported hundreds of new farmers to secure suitable land for lease for their new businesses, or enter turn-key operations.
- **ACCESS TO CAPITAL:** There are notable capital programs with a focus on equity-seeking groups, including The Fair Finance Fund's African Canadian Farmer Fund, which provides targeted investments for African Canadian farmers in Ontario, and the Nourish Fund, which offers financing options for Ontario urban farms and food processing businesses, with a focus on Indigenous and racialized farmers and organisations.
- **KNOWLEDGE & TRAINING:** Young Agrarians provides knowledge and training, including a paid on-farm Apprenticeship Program, virtual Business Bootcamps and a Business Mentorship Network. These programs connect paid farmer mentors to new farmers to provide practical experience and tailored guidance on their farming journeys. The National Farmers Union hosts The Exchange, a national peer-supported cohort program, supporting diverse new and young farmers from across the country through in-person and virtual capacity building, and funding professional development for participants. Tailored to participant goals and needs, this program builds farm skills based on priorities identified by participants, while also cultivating a network that operates like an informal mentorship program. The Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario offers farmer-to-farmer training essential to new farmers, and has developed a BIPOC caucus, which connects racialized farmers with shared experiences in agriculture to support each other by sharing advice, experiences, and information.

While these innovative programs may be effective and impactful, many rely on annual, short-term grants and philanthropic funding to cover expenses for sectoral challenges that will take decades to solve. Furthermore, regional priorities, capacity limitations and inconsistent funding for farmer organizations can result in uneven geographic access to programs and support for new farmers. Long-term investment and a National New Farmer framework are required to scale these types of programs to ensure equitable access for new farmers across Canada and work to reverse farm loss and renew the sector.

Systemic change is needed to realize the full potential of any individual program. Initiatives like land matching, business mentorship, and on-farm training are less effective if new entrants can't access capital to operate businesses, build equity through land ownership or other mechanisms, transfer apprenticeship learnings to new farm ventures, or access local infrastructure to grow businesses. The barriers that farmers face are interconnected and require an integrated approach to proactively address the distinct obstacles faced.



<sup>25</sup> Laforge, J. et al. "New farmers and food policies in Canada," *Canadian Food Studies* 5(3), 128-152. (2018)





## CALL FOR A NATIONAL NEW FARMER FRAMEWORK

### INVEST IN NEW FARMERS FOR A SECURE FOOD FUTURE

A National New Farmer framework is needed to deliver a targeted approach that coordinates action, leadership and resources to meet the challenge of Canadian farm renewal. Focused on addressing critical barriers and facilitating increased opportunities, the framework would create a more inclusive new farmer category, expanding the definition of new entrants to those farming for 10 years or less, and a broader range of farm sizes, structures, production practices and scales. Most significantly, a New Farmer Framework would tackle primary issues, with the following five intersectional themes, and 20 policy recommendations across four pillars. We call on the federal government to take action by prioritizing new and equity-seeking farmers in the next Canadian Agricultural Partnership, prioritizing access to land and capital.

**INVEST in New and Equity-Seeking Farmers:** Recognize that market failure conditions related to the cost of land have created a crisis in agriculture, so significant, long-term and increased investment is required to ensure a viable, resilient and sustainable Canadian agricultural sector for the future. Public spending in agriculture should be focused on long-term capacity building, rather than short-term reactionary stop-gap solutions.

**PRIORITIZE Indigenous Food Sovereignty:** Work with Indigenous nations to fund and facilitate Indigenous Food Sovereignty and land stewardship, including but not limited to wild harvesting, hunting, ceremony, farming, knowledge-sharing and medicine-keeping, as well as incentives to facilitate farmland access for Indigenous uses. As a starting point, Canada must implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and respect existing treaty and land rights.

**DEVELOP a New Farmer Database:** Improve access to information on new and young farmers by working in collaboration with national, provincial and territorial farmer organizations and institutions (banks, universities, etc.) to collect disaggregated demographic data to fill gaps in information not found in the Census of Agriculture. The information should help to understand the lived experiences and challenges of new and equity-seeking farmers and be able to identify and analyze trends and patterns to measure and inform a responsive New Farmer Framework.

**FUND Farmer Organizations:** Enhance the capacity and stability of the new farmer ecosystem by providing operating funding for farmer organizations that work directly with new and equity-seeking farmers. These organizations can act as co-ordinated and integrated referral networks that provide comprehensive guidance through start-up. This funding needs to support staff capacity to deliver existing programming including new farmer training, education, mentorship, business planning, financial assistance, land access and wrap-around supports tailored to the diverse needs of new farmers.

**EXPAND Program Accessibility:** Conduct a comprehensive review of federal agricultural programs and services to assess their accessibility, and adjust eligibility criteria and program design as needed to ensure that they meet the needs and are accessible by new and equity-seeking farmers. This process should include consultation with new farmers and new farmer support organizations.



## ACCESS TO LAND

### 1 IMPLEMENT UNDRIP & RESPECT TREATY AND LAND RIGHTS:

Ensure that Indigenous peoples have access to land and territory for food production by implementing both the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as treaty and land rights. Directly support Indigenous food sovereignty and leadership in food systems.

### 2 FUND REGIONAL LAND MATCHING PROGRAMS:

Fund the delivery of land matching programs in every province and territory, modelled after the successful L'ARTERRE program in Quebec and the B.C. Land Matching Program in British Columbia, while increasing support to expand existing programs.

### 3 PROTECT FARMLAND AND INCENTIVIZE ACCESS:

Protect farmland and ensure availability to the next generation of farmers by restricting development, speculative investment, and consolidation. Create incentives for landholders selling or leasing land to new and young farmers. Include capital gains exemptions, land transfer tax exemptions, farmland protection incentives and tax credits to encourage existing landholders to prioritize land transfer to new entrants.

### 4 FACILITATE HOUSING SOLUTIONS ON FARMLAND:

Develop a stream of low-interest loans to build or buy on-farm housing for farm operators and workers. Remove barriers to intergenerational housing, cooperative housing arrangements, and seasonal housing on farms. Support zoning regulations to facilitate the diversification of housing on farmlands, using farm protection approaches (such as the "home plate" model), and align these regulations amongst regional municipalities.

### 5 EXPAND PUBLIC LAND LEASING:

Expand, promote and fund Crown/public farmland leasing, such as the National Capital Commission Agriculture Lease program, and non-market farmland acquisition with targeted streams for new and young farmers. Include streams focused on equity-deserving and landless farmers, and on the layering of farms and enterprises to create more business opportunities on the same acreage, supporting start-ups looking to manage smaller parcels of land.





## ACCESS TO CAPITAL & INCOME STABILIZATION

6

### REDUCE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA BARRIERS:

Conduct a review of existing federal loans and grants to identify and remove eligibility barriers for new and equity-seeking farmers, with a focus on updating existing lending to include scale-appropriate and scalable funding, more loan flexible terms for low-credit applicants, debt forgiveness, in-kind investment considerations, and early-stage loans that don't require collateral.

7

### DEVELOP EQUITY-FOCUSED MICRO-LOANS AND GRANTS:

Increase access to low-barrier, tiered operating capital by developing microloan products tailored to start-up farmers. Micro-loans would provide zero interest financing from \$10,000 to \$150,000 to support equipment, on-farm infrastructure, and other start-up costs. Start-up grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000 could be made available to new farmers to establish or expand their farming operations and infrastructure, access training and extension, mentorship, business development and networking opportunities.

8

### CREATE A LOW-INTEREST START-UP MORTGAGE PRODUCT:

Offer 0-1% interest rates on mortgages for new farms in start-up. Create a team of lenders that have the training needed to deliver this product and work with new and equity-seeking farmers in culturally safe and scale appropriate ways. Cap interest rates for mortgage renewals as a method of investing and incentivizing the sector.

9

### ALLOW LABOUR AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AS COLLATERAL

Consider labour and ecological services as in-kind matching or 'collateral' for loans and grants. Cost-share programs that require matching funding could accept in-kind contributions to increase eligibility, and should remove or reduce minimum income requirements, which are often too high for start-ups. New farmers are often cash-poor but contribute a great deal of labour and investment in the land to advance their operations.

10

### ENHANCE BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS:

Provide targeted adjustments to BRM programs, specifically to enable better access for new and equity-seeking farmers to support income stabilization in start-up.

11

### IMPLEMENT A NEW FARMER INCOME STABILITY SUPPLEMENT:

Create a new income stability supplement<sup>26</sup> program for seasonal farmworkers to improve retention in the sector, and for farm operators in the first ten years of their operations to ensure an income floor that will allow them to survive start-up.







## KNOWLEDGE & TRAINING

12

### FUND FARMER-TO-FARMER TRAINING & RESEARCH:

Make training and knowledge transfer accessible locally to new farmers through direct subsidies for virtual and in-person training costs. Provide core funding for organizations offering on-farm training, farmer-led research, Indigenous knowledge transfer, and farmer-to-farmer exchanges to expand new farmer knowledge, capacity, and skills.

13

### BOLSTER MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS:

Expand and develop farmer-to-farmer learning, mentorship and training opportunities that support new entrants and mentors. Embed farmer mentorship in existing training programs and develop new paid mentorship programs.

14

### GROW ON-FARM APPRENTICESHIPS:

Increase access to paid hands-on training and experience in all provinces and territories by working with farm organizations and farmers to fund and scale on-farm apprenticeship programs. Increase partnerships with diverse farm types and models, including small- and medium-scale farms, farms that use ecological practices, as well as Indigenous and cultural food ways.

15

### RESTORE COORDINATED EXTENSION SERVICES:

Improve on-farm technical advice for new and young farmers by funding a coordinated national extension service, including both production and business support that provides on-demand tailored advice to problem-solve farming challenges.





## RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

### 16 FACILITATE RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND RETENTION:

Expand agricultural labour wage subsidy programs so that farm operators can afford to hire and train new entrants regardless of age or experience. Attract and retain farm labourers by incentivizing farm operators and owners through tax credits and benefits to leverage business equity to create pathways for new entrants to become stakeholders in the farm business. Expand human resources and management training opportunities for farmers to improve retention of farm workers in the sector.

### 17 GUARANTEE CITIZENSHIP FOR MIGRANT WORKERS:

Protect an invaluable, skilled workforce and a key demographic of potential farm operators by creating pathways to citizenship for migrant agricultural workers.

### 18 SUPPORT FARM SUCCESSION PLANNING:

Continue to create and deliver resources and programs to support farmer succession planning, including non-family farm transition. Ensure that tax policy is equitable for all farm transfers to new entrants, whether the new entrant is a family member or not.

### 19 INVEST IN LOCAL FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE:

Provide capital funding for the creation of accessible, local infrastructure for new farmers, including shared and co-operative facilities such as abattoirs, processing and storage facilities, community kitchens, markets, and more. Continue and expand the Local Food Infrastructure Fund while removing barriers such as cost-share requirements and inequitable eligibility criteria.

### 20 INVEST IN RURAL COMMUNITIES:

Fund rural community organizations to offer community building events, shared public spaces, and community programming to reduce rural isolation. Invest in rural infrastructure such as high speed internet, rural public transportation, childcare and education.

### 21 ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS:

Increase support to existing organizations providing mental health support, advocacy and research for farmers while targeting the root causes of the farmer mental health crisis including poor capital and land access, economic instability, discrimination and rural isolation.



## CONCLUSION

A National New Farmer Framework is a critical priority for Canada's next generation of agricultural producers and rural communities. Building support for new farmers today means we are investing in better Canadian food systems by bolstering domestic and local food production, reducing dependence on long supply chains, mitigating carbon emissions, and cultivating resilience against climate change and geopolitical uncertainties. While important work is underway, it is not enough to meet the growing needs of the next generation. Targeted investments and federal leadership will be decisive in ensuring equal opportunities for new farmers across Canada, and delivering a promise for food sovereignty, food security and vibrant rural and urban communities for all.