



# **What We Heard: Next Policy Framework for Canadian agricultural funding programs**

June 2022



# About the engagement

The Government of Yukon sought input to help guide the development of a new suite of funding programs that meet the priorities and needs of the local agricultural sector and its stakeholders. The new funding program, currently referred to as the Next Policy Framework, will replace the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program that will expire in March 2023.

## Engagement process

The Government of Yukon released a discussion document on April 1, 2022, for public comment. The 60-day public engagement process had a deadline of May 30, 2022, for submitting feedback.

We received three written submissions from the Yukon's agricultural sector. Thank you to everyone who participated and submitted feedback.

## What We Heard

In the [discussion document](#), we provided background information and provided two discussion items to help respondents with providing their feedback.



# 1. Your experience with Canadian Agricultural Partnership Program (CAP)

## *What we asked*

Identify your relationship to the agriculture industry in the Yukon (example: farmer, processor, chef, non-profit, association member, etc.).

Describe your experience with the current CAP funding program. Example: I have never applied for CAP funding, or I have applied and received funding, or I have applied but was not approved for funding.

If you have never applied for CAP funding, please describe why.

Describe your experience with the CAP program. During the application process, what tools did you use? Example: CAP website, or the Yukon CAP programming guide, or the application form, or received support from Government of Yukon's Agriculture Branch during the application process. Were these tools or services useful and how can they be improved?

Are there parts of your experience with the CAP program that were challenging? What are your suggestions for improving these parts of the experience?

## *What we heard*

The Government of Yukon received the following suggestions on the existing CAP program.

### Summary of comments

- “Better guidelines for funding through the research envelope. This includes:
  - Criteria used to adjudicate proposals and making these measurable. This would facilitate better feedback and transparency to applicants.
  - How to address proposals that are not research priorities as stated in the guidelines for YARC.
  - Clear messaging on the maximum allowable that can be granted.



For the successor to CAP, I would like to see whether program objectives are being met by funding grants, and for this to be made publicly available. For example, the Environmental Farm Plan Program's stated objective is "to assist producers in assessing environmental risks on their farm, preparing Environment Farm Plans (EFP), and implementing best management practices (BMP) with the objective to reduce or mitigate the impact of agriculture on the environment and/or to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change on Yukon agriculture." As a member of the public and a tax payer, I would like to know whether the actions funded under this program has measurably reduced or mitigated the impact of agriculture on the environment/climate change."

- "Information for smaller projects available online were adequate. Would call if there were questions. Application process was straightforward, at least for the ones that don't go to committee. Appreciate working with an individual and keeping the process streamlined. Bigger projects have been more difficult, less clear around the approval process and outstanding questions from committee and the final % approval amount."
- "The investment required from applicants in the communities related to the market size and the required capital investment needed from the applicant – there's misalignment. An extra 10% (eligible up to 70% funding) would potentially make a big difference in ability to put forward the capital investment required. Barrier that's hard to overcome for those in the communities."
- "Agriculture and Value Added Development Program which states: "Purchase or construction of sector infrastructure (including storage facilities," AND "Other activities to expand commercial agriculture operations, which may include purchasing equipment and upgrading or leasing facilities, hiring third-party labour". This current wording is NOT being followed. Our application for a storage facility was not approved. All agricultural operations need storage facilities. The committee and agricultural Branch staff confused the food safety program with this program and stated that only items that are listed in the food safety program could qualify like washable walls and



interior components. As well, purchasing equipment to expand commercial agriculture operations was so limited that we were unable to apply for specific equipment required to expand our operations. We were told that a PTO rototiller was "common" equipment so would not be funded. This is specific to turning soil, not something like a truck or trailer that can be used for many purposes. We need a wood chipper to process biomass for mulch. Again not able to be funded.”

- “Increase focus on small producers. These small producers are more resilient to fluctuations in operating costs, therefore are more sustainable long term.”
- “Agroforestry is mentioned in Ag branch literature but not supported. A diverse farm which includes agroforestry is more resilient to climate change impacts.”

## 2. Incorporating priority areas into the Yukon’s funding program

### *What we asked*

- Provide your comments and ideas to the following:
  - Which priority area(s) do you feel is most important for the Yukon’s agriculture and agri-food industry?
  - What do you see as the key challenges for growth of the Yukon’s agriculture sector?
  - What do you see as opportunities for sector growth in the Yukon?
  - Which programs do you think should be continued from the current Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) funding program? Are there any changes you’d like to see to these programs?
  - Which programs should not be continued?
  - Do you have any suggestions for new funding programs for the agriculture industry?



- Provide your feedback on these additional topics:
  - How could the new funding programs support Yukon First Nation agricultural producers?
  - Do you have any other comments to share about either the CAP program or how new funding programs will be developed under the Next Agricultural Policy Framework negotiations?

### *What we heard*

The Government of Yukon received the following suggestions on developing new agriculture funding programs.

### Summary of comments

#### **Which priority area(s) do you feel is most important for the Yukon’s agriculture and agri-food industry?**

- “For Area 1: Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness, priorities are:
  - Pursue economic opportunities through efficiency improvements, reducing and recovering food and other wastes, and growing the bio-economy. Included in this, is better use of land already designated as “agricultural”. Priority needs to go to initiatives aimed at producing food staples for local consumption, as this aligns with the objectives set out in the most recent Yukon Agriculture Policy. The government needs to be clear on what they mean by bio-economy, as this term can easily be misused.
  - Enhance labour attraction and retention, training, and automation. If the next funding program provides subsidies for internships/labour, prioritizing farm operations that produce food staples (e.g. vegetables) for local consumption, and learning opportunities.”
- “For Area 2: Climate Change and Environment:
  - Improve biodiversity and protect sensitive habitat. From the research that I have conducted on Yukon farms, I have found



that Yukon farmers are sensitive to the needs of their local fauna and are willing to make some accommodations.

- Reduce GHG emissions, and improve carbon sequestration. Prepare for and respond to a changing climate by supporting Beneficial Management Practices and accelerating technological adoption. I could not see a clear distinction between the two above statements, so have lumped them. I am also not sure what are the BMPs referred to, and how well they are supported by research.”
- “For Area 3: Science, Research and Innovation:
  - Support research in primary agriculture, agronomy, and value added.
  - Address climate change.
  - I feel that some of the other points stated in this Area are beyond the capacity of Yukon and would be better addressed by institutions with better resources and trained researchers. Yukon could still be a field site, as they have been for a number of studies, with the primary investigators located elsewhere.”
- “For Area 4: Resiliency and Public Trust: Fostering awareness of sector commitment to the sustainable production of safe, high quality food and building public trust, while increasing sector awareness of the expectations of consumers.”
- “For Priority 2: Climate Change: This is high on radar specifically how to manage waste, when so much is being trucked in in terms of soil amendments, and we have a potential resource here.”
- “Priority 1: Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness: The market development piece is important- how do you connect the dots to make local food more available to people – it’s less difficult to access than people might think, but we need to do work to communicate that (logistics, marketing, etc.).”



- “Priority 4: Resiliency and public trust: education of both producers and consumers, specifically the education needed to support the transition to an inspected supply chain. Currently there are stops and starts that people don’t understand or know about – the inspected slaughter is just one piece. This understanding and planning ahead will help with market access and market development and investment in infrastructure, and encourage willingness for producers to invest to support the inspected chain. Important to note that there are currently few that are willing or keen to jump over the hurdles required to get into the inspected supply chain – this is prohibitive for people.”

**What do you see as the key challenges for growth of the Yukon’s agriculture sector?**

- “There needs to be clarity on what the primary objectives of growing the agricultural sector are, and these need to be prioritized, as they can be, in part, competing with each other for funding. These immediately come to mind:
  - Food sovereignty – increasing the ability of Yukoners to have control of their own food production.
  - Food security – increasing the ability for Yukoners to have access to nutritious food.
  - Generating revenues through sale of Yukon products. This includes exports and novelty products. I see this as a lesser priority, and if given too much attention, could compromise the first two objectives.
  - To hopefully make the agriculture sector be economically viable for food sovereignty and food security, we need a better understanding of the cost of providing nutritious meals. The price paid at the till is not a good measure of this. The agricultural industry is heavily subsidized, through tax dollars (such as CAP) or through corporate subsidies (e.g. large chain stores effectively subsidize transport of produce to Yukon by making transport costs the same as their southern outlets).





- For Yukon, the weak links from farm to table needs to be highlighted. To my knowledge, this has not been done in a systematic way and guidance is prone to “the squeaky wheel gets the grease”. No doubt, dependable labour is one of these weak links.
- True cost accounting for food is needed. Although I would like to think that purchasing a local steak is good for the environment and the local economy, I wonder whether the actual nutrients going into the making of the steak are from outside of Yukon, and whether my carbon footprint would be less if I purchased a steak at a grocery store (i.e., less GHG for a steak vs. transporting livestock feed and crop fertilizer).”
- “Access to infrastructure, willingness/ability to invest time and money when the per capita return is limited.”
- “Land availability.”

#### **What do you see as opportunities for sector growth in the Yukon?**

- “There is greater demand for produce than the local market can support. Finding ways to extend the harvest by freezing vegetables such as broccoli, or fermenting products such as cabbage could be opportunities. This would also reduce waste, and possibly lead to some innovative energy efficient storage by taking advantage of the cold winter and cold ground.”
- “Reducing the amount of paperwork and creating easier access to funding, appreciate the ability to stack funding, but then you’re working with more people to make something happen (can be burdensome). In Dawson, farmers are generally less connected with Agriculture Branch, and a liaison to connect the dots with different funders would be helpful.”
- “Sporadic connection with the Ag Branch, overall, if there were a liaison that could be more familiar with the Klondike farmers it would help.”



**Which programs do you think should be continued from the current Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) funding program? Are there any changes you'd like to see to these programs?**

- “For this and the next question, I do not have sufficient information on the outcome of each of the programs to comment on whether they should continue. This goes back to my reply to the first discussion item.”
- “Focus on no till, regenerative agriculture to lower water runoff, lessen chances of flooding, increase resiliency.”
- “Make it easier for new farmers to access funding. Many people I know have given up quickly as they received negative feedback and denied applications. The current scenario requires farmers to have successful projects funded in order to get a better chance on their application. Putting too high of a hurdle before a first application is disheartening. All applicants should be treated equally regardless of prior funding.”
- “Increase availability of affordable farm land for new and expanding farmers. Currently, some well established farmers are every year acquiring new agreements for sale and selling the land at a high profit. Yet a small or new farmer has an incredibly difficult chance of finding land.”
- “Allow CAP funding to be applied towards wages for farm labourers. Especially for a new operation that can not afford to pay employees before crops are sold.”
- “Focus first on feeding the Yukon before expanding export markets.”
- “Fund a higher percentage of project costs for new applicants. These are the producers that need the most help.”
- “Give a higher scoring to applications which demonstrate a reduction or elimination of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. These inputs are increasingly more expensive and damaging to the environment.”
- “Approve small asks through Ag branch staff rapidly without having to go through the committee.”



- “Require complete transparency and full reporting to the applicant from committee decisions.”
- “Tax farmland that is unutilized at a higher rate. Too many Ag parcels being used as country residential.”

**Which programs should not be continued?**

- No comments received.

**Do you have any suggestions for new funding programs for the agriculture industry?**

- “I have already mentioned a few ideas, and if they do not already fit into one of the funding envelopes, then a new funding program may be appropriate. Also, it is not obvious how the pre-existing programs in CAP fit into these latest priority areas. For transparency, this needs to be clear, and likely necessitates revision of the current funding programs.”

**How could the new funding programs support Yukon First Nation agricultural producers?**

- “The Yukon First Nations’ traditional approach to food is different than the western approach of growing food on a fixed parcel of land. Although I cannot speak for the Yukon First Nations, I think that understanding their vision of how agriculture fits into their value system and community is essential. Would FN farms’ primary objective be for food security so that the food they grow is intended to feed their community? Or are these profit-driven enterprises?”
- “Would like to see consideration of cultural items vs. agricultural items, for example tinctures, medicinal products etc., and inclusion of a community health and wellness focus vs. food production focus only. Culturally, this would be good to potentially include and to think of from a different “production” angle.”



**Do you have any other comments to share about either the CAP program or how new funding programs will be developed under the Next Agricultural Policy Framework negotiations?**

- “To re-emphasize, I would like to see better accountability for the funds distributed. Integrating some measure of whether objectives are met in the next round of funding, would help with this.”

## Next steps

The feedback received during the public engagement will be reviewed and considered in identifying the Yukon’s agricultural priorities.

This will be paired with feedback received from a separate direct outreach process coordinated by a contractor hired by Energy, Mines and Resources’ Agriculture Branch.

The agriculture sector’s feedback will be aggregated into a multi-year development plan that identifies the Yukon agriculture sector’s needs and priorities. Once finalized, the multi-year development plan will be publicly available.

The Government of Yukon will use the plan during negotiations with the federal government to develop funding programs under the Next Policy Framework.

