

Weekly Report – Week of April 15, 2002

1. Statistical Summary

1.1 Overview									
Number of Events	5		Number of Participants		111		Number of Observers		48
Participants by Category	62 Producer	7 Processor/ Exporter	3 Distributor	2 Retailer	1 Consumer	9 Academic	4 ENGO	23 Other	

1.2 Event Summaries				
Cattle	<u>23 participants</u> 7 producers 1 processor 3 distributors 2 retailers 1 consumer 2 academics 1 biotech 2 environmentalists 4 other stakeholders	<u>10 observers</u> 5 federal 4 provincial 1 portfolio	Guelph, ON	15 April 2002
	<u>31 participants</u> 20 producers 2 processors /exporters 4 academics 2 environmentalists 3 other stakeholders	<u>11 observers</u> 5 federal 4 provincial 2 portfolio	Lethbridge, AB	18 April 2002
Dairy	<u>15 participants</u> 9 producers 1 academic 3 biotech 2 other stakeholders	<u>10 observers</u> 3 federal 4 provincial 3 portfolio	Guelph, ON	16 April 2002
Pork	<u>18 participants</u> 10 producers 1 processor/exporter 1 academic 6 other stakeholders	<u>10 observers</u> 3 federal 5 provincial 2 portfolio	Edmonton, AB	16 April 2002
Poultry	<u>24 participants</u> 16 producers 3 processors 1 academic 4 other stakeholders	<u>7 observers</u> 3 federal 4 provincial	Halifax, NS	15 April 2002

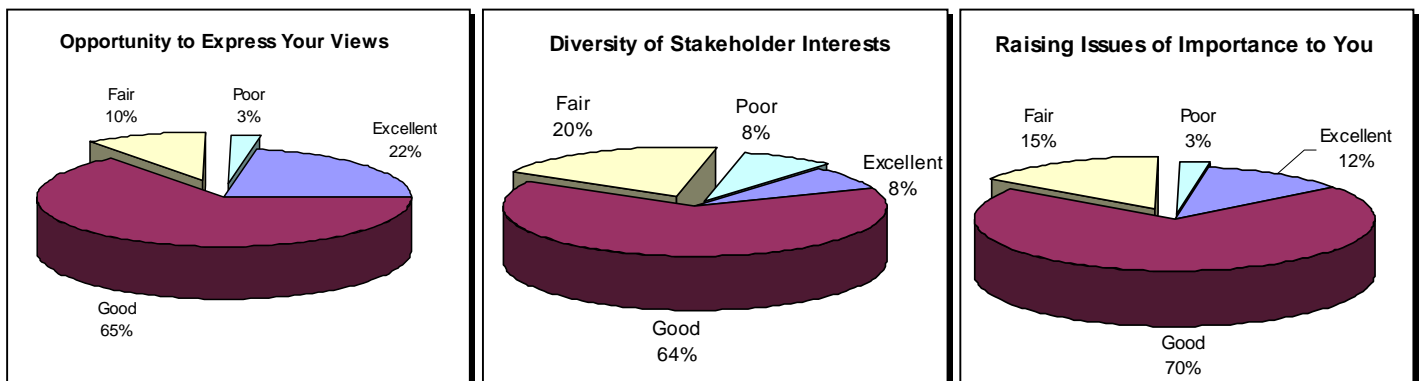
2. Participants’ Evaluation

2.1 Views on the Consultation Process

- Participants in this period were generally positive about the consultations, providing constructive comments on the APF. Participants at all events asked to be kept involved in the process and requested copies of the reports from their events as well as from the consultations as a whole. Participants at all events indicated their interest in being involved in further consultations on a new agricultural policy for Canada.
- Participants at only one of the five events expressed concerns regarding the notice period for the consultations, however skepticism about the degree to which participants’ views would be considered was more widespread.

2.2 Views on the Consultative Meeting

- Participants were asked to complete an Exit Survey at the end of the day. Despite some initial concerns and criticism of the process, respondents rated the consultative meetings very positively, with the following results:
- When asked to rate the value of the workshop:
 - 87% rated the event GOOD or EXCELLENT as an effective forum for providing them with an opportunity to express their views;
 - 72% rated the event GOOD or EXCELLENT as an effective forum for bringing together diverse stakeholder interests, and
 - 82% rated the event GOOD or EXCELLENT as an effective forum for raising issues of importance to them.



2.3 Changing Views on the APF

- Participants were asked to indicate to what degree their views on the APF had changed as a result of the consultation. Just under half of the participants in this period indicated that their views changed “somewhat or a great deal”, with the remainder indicating “not very much or not at all.”

3. Discussion Summary

3.1 General Comments	
Positive Observations (top three)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants were generally supportive of the policy direction outlined in the APF, in many cases indicating that industry is already leading in these areas. ▪ Participants regarded the consultations positively, feeling that they were provided an opportunity to voice their opinions and contribute to the APF. ▪ Participants agreed with the emphasis on education and communication in the APF and strongly supported joint industry/government campaigns aimed at improving public awareness of the agriculture and agri-food sector.
Negative Observations (top three)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants were concerned that the inter-departmental and inter-governmental cooperation needed for the APF to succeed would be difficult to achieve. ▪ Participants at all sessions requested greater clarity on the APF, citing funding, implementation and business risk management as priority areas where more detail is required. ▪ Many participants were concerned that international issues such as trade and foreign agricultural policies did not appear to be sufficiently addressed in the framework.

3.1 Discussion Summary – Cattle

While the Lethbridge cattle event was attended primarily by producers (with some academics and environmental representatives), the Guelph meeting had excellent representation from across the sectoral chain, including retailers, consumers and environmental groups. In general, participants at both events were supportive of the APF, but wanted more detail regarding the components of the framework.

Food safety and food quality issues were identified as priorities for both groups, with participants agreeing that Canadian agriculture is high quality and safe. The challenge remains communicating that fact to consumers in Canada and abroad. There was a sense that the branding Canada initiative in the APF may be helpful in this regard. Some were concerned, however, that the government may not be willing to sufficiently fund this program. Some participants argued against further government regulation, in favour of incentives to encourage industry to meet new standards.

Other topics discussed included: the need for more applied research in addition to the work being done on pure research; concern regarding Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s limited role in the Science and Innovation Agenda; harmonization of regulatory requirements between jurisdictions, and the need for the APF to take into account regional differences. Participants were also concerned that the business risk management component of the APF does not inspire confidence in the sector and does not adequately resolve issues relating to farm splitting.

3.2 Discussion Summary – Dairy

The dairy event in this period was well attended by producer representatives, with participation from the biotech and academic communities as well. Participants agreed, in principle, that the APF was comprehensive and on the right track, with some indicating that the dairy industry is already ahead of government in respect of the five components of the APF. Support for the APF was tempered, however, with calls for more details regarding funding and implementation plans.

Participants were generally supportive of the food safety and food quality component of the APF, although costs and return on investment for producers remained important qualifiers. Specifically, many commented on the need for governments to compensate farmers for producing safe, environmentally friendly food, or alternatively to develop cost-sharing plans between consumers, government and the agriculture and agri-food sector. Participants also supported the environmental protection component, but indicated that greater clarity on the policy, education of the public and incentives for industry were needed.

Participants raised concerns regarding cuts to agriculture-related education programs, intellectual property rights, the degree to which Canadian industry receives the benefits from research, and the need to maintain safety net and other support programs as Canada moves toward a new agricultural policy.

3.3 Discussion Summary – Pork

The pork event was comprised mostly of producer representatives, with a few researchers and other stakeholders in attendance. While most participants considered the APF to be a sound policy, a few remained skeptical that their views would be considered by decision-makers and stressed that their participation in the process does not constitute an endorsement of the policy.

Participants agreed with the notion of branding Canadian products internationally. However, there were a number of questions regarding the details of implementation, additional costs to producers, and the impact of international trade on the sector. Participants indicated that the pork industry is already leading the way on food safety and environment issues, stressing the importance of these issues to the sector and the APF. Some took issue with the fact that the framework suggest that the agricultural needs to change its environmental practices as opposed to recognizing the good work that is being done by the sector.

Participants raised a number of issues regarding the business risk management component, including the need to incorporate international trade considerations into planning and policy development and the need to ensure that governments are able to increase funding for new programs, without cutting back in other areas. There were also concerns about how risk management tools and funding are targeted, with some indicating that the government needs to distinguish between small “hobby farms” and large farm operations. Other issues included the need for increased public education about the value of agriculture, the role of government in research, and the importance of ensuring that all levels of government support the new policy direction for agriculture in Canada.

3.4 Discussion Summary – Poultry

The poultry event was attended primarily by producers and processors. Some participants were concerned about the short notice provided for the event. While participants were generally supportive of the APF, many were skeptical that the policies outlined in the framework would be implemented. They noted that for the APF to succeed, there must be a fundamental shift in thinking among government decision-makers and the public at large.

Participants were generally supportive of the food safety and food quality, environment and science and innovation components of the APF, but funding issues were identified as the primary concern. Some participants felt that Canada’s “cheap food policy” works against the APF in these areas inasmuch as consumers would be unwilling to pay higher prices to cover the costs associated with the components cited above.

In respect of business risk management and renewal, participants indicated that supply management was the most effective policy instrument to support producers and help with succession planning. Some were concerned that the APF does not address supply management. That said, participants were interested in improvements to current programs that would better compensate producers with multi-commodity farms. Many also expressed concern with the emphasis on export markets in the APF, suggesting that the framework should attach higher priority to addressing domestic issues.