

Weekly Report – Week of April 22, 2002

1. Statistical Summary

1.1 Overview										
Number of Sessions	10		Number of Participants			153		Number of Observers		30
Participants by Category	96 Producer	13 Processor	1 Distributor	0 Retailer	2 Consumer	5 Academic	6 ENGO	30 Other		

1.2 Session Summaries				
Cattle	<u>15 participants</u> 10 producers 1 consumer 2 environmentalists 2 other stakeholders	<u>1 observer</u> 1 federal	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
	<u>15 participants</u> 10 producers 1 academic 4 other stakeholders	<u>3 observers</u> 2 federal 1 provincial	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
Dairy	<u>12 participants</u> 8 producers 1 consumer 1 biotech 2 other stakeholders	<u>5 observers</u> 3 federal 1 provincial 1 portfolio	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
	<u>14 participants</u> 8 producers 1 processor 1 academic 4 other stakeholders	<u>2 observers</u> 1 provincial 1 portfolio	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
Grains & Oilseeds	<u>27 participants</u> 18 producers 3 processors 1 environmentalist 1 biotech 4 other stakeholders	<u>5 observers</u> 2 federal 2 provincial 1 portfolio	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002

1.2 Session Summaries				
Horticulture	<u>15 participants</u> 9 producers 2 processors 1 academic 1 environmentalist 1 biotech 1 other stakeholder	<u>2 observers</u> 2 provincial	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
	<u>11 participants</u> 4 producers 2 processors 1 distributor 1 biotech 3 other stakeholders	<u>2 observers</u> 1 federal 1 provincial	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
Pork	<u>20 participants</u> 11 producers 4 processors 1 environmentalist 1 academic 1 biotech 2 other stakeholders	<u>6 observers</u> 3 federal 3 provincial	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
Poultry	<u>20 participants</u> 15 producers 1 processor 1 academic 1 biotech 2 other stakeholders	<u>2 observers</u> 2 provincial	Montreal, QC	23 April 2002
Floriculture	<u>4 participants</u> 3 producers 1 environmentalist	<u>2 observers</u> 1 federal 1 provincial	Moncton, NB	30 April 2002

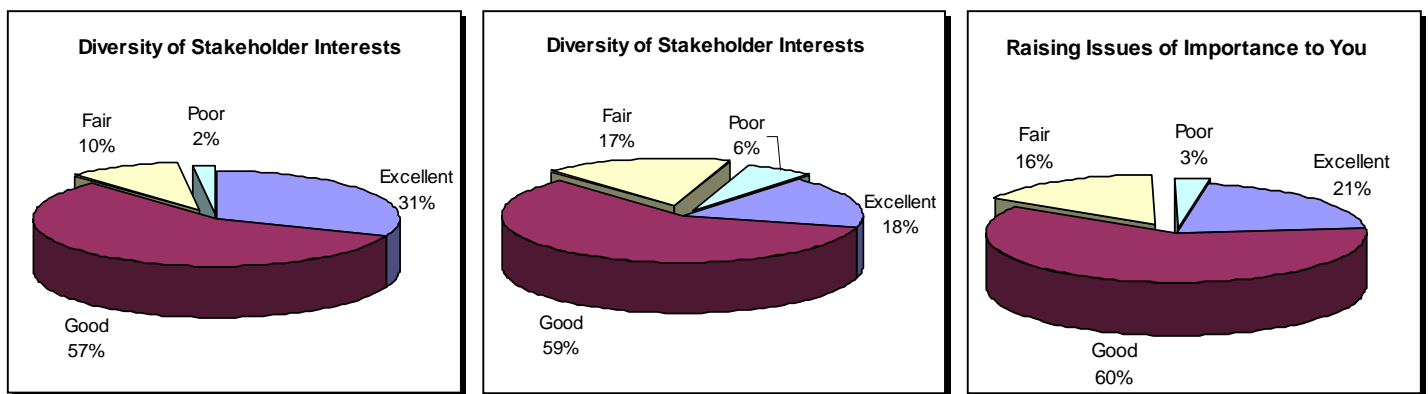
2. Participants’ Evaluation

2.1 Views on the Consultation Process

- A summary of the written comments from the Exit Surveys, includes:
 - a number of participants felt the consultation process came too late in the development of the policy;
 - participants were hopeful yet skeptical that their opinions, input and feedback on the policy framework would be taken into consideration;
 - there was concern that the new policy will not reflect the Quebec situation and existing policy;
 - participants felt that the policy framework must recognize and adapt to changes in the industry; and
 - participants wanted to receive follow-up information on the sessions and are willing to meet again for further consultation.

2.2 Views on the Consultative Meeting

- Participants were asked to complete an Exit Survey at the end of the day. In general, respondents rated the consultative meetings very positively, with the following results.
- When asked to rate the value of the workshop:
 - 88% rated the event GOOD or EXCELLENT as an effective forum for providing them with an opportunity to express their views;
 - 77% rated the event GOOD or EXCELLENT as an effective forum for bringing together diverse stakeholder interests, and
 - 81% 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. Over 40% of the participants at the Quebec event 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 pleased to be consulted and hoped their views are heard and will make a difference. Interest was expressed in a true partnership with government on the development of the framework. ▪ They supported the development of a long-term policy framework and the government’s leadership in its development. They believed that the components identified are important and, in particular, applauded the business risk management, environment and renewal elements. ▪ Participants strongly supported the concept of improved communication and public education on the value of the agriculture and agri-food sector.
Negative Observations (top three)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants highlighted that while a national policy is important, it must be flexible enough to accommodate the differences that exist from province to province. ▪ Participants indicated that supply management and cooperatives were valued structures and should be maintained and enhanced in the APF. ▪ Many participants raised concerns regarding how the APF would be funded and what types of transition programs would be put in place.

3.1 Discussion Summary – Cattle

The majority of participants at both cattle sessions were producers, however there were also environmentalists, a consumer, an academic and other stakeholders in attendance. In general, participants were supportive of the five components in the APF and the need for a national policy, although many indicated that more details regarding funding were necessary. While most participants were pleased to be consulted, some were concerned that these discussions have come too late in the policy development process and others were concerned that the framework does not take into account the areas in which industry is already leading the way.

Participants at both sessions reached a broad consensus on the direction of the food safety and food quality and environment components, with calls for harmonization of standards across all levels of the food chain, a focus on adding value, and better communication. Participants indicated that business risk management should be the basis of the new policy, rather than just one of the five components. Many argued that Quebec’s model should be adopted by other provinces as the APF moves toward national programs. Finally, participants stressed the need for more details regarding funding and transition programs.

3.2 Discussion Summary – Dairy

The dairy sessions were reasonably well attended by representatives from across the sectoral chain, with the exception of retailers, consumers and environmentalists. Participants viewed the APF as a positive step toward improving the agriculture sector, but were concerned that their views would not be considered by decision-makers. They supported improved communications and public education on the value of agriculture.

Renewal was identified as one of the most important issues for the dairy sector, with participants pleased to see attention given to growth and sustainability issues. Many indicated, however, that the APF must include additional funding and tax incentives to encourage and assist new entrants. Participants also highlighted the importance of supply management as the key to risk management in the sector, but noted that federal/provincial programs should be updated and harmonized.

Participants were supportive of a food safety and food quality system that is applied to all farm types, domestic as well as international products and is national in scope, taking into account regional differences. There was some concern about the lack of inter-departmental and inter-governmental coordination. Participants indicated that their sector is already leading the way on environmental issues, but noted that they would benefit from less onerous bureaucracy regarding this subject. Finally, participants supported the APF approach to public/private research partnerships, they wanted to ensure the continuation of pure research alongside more applied projects, and they noted the need for better vehicles to share knowledge with producers.

3.3 Discussion Summary – Grains & Oilseeds

The grains and oilseeds session had strong representation from producers as well as some processors, an environmentalist and other stakeholders. Participants were generally supportive of the APF, viewing it as ambitious, but necessary. Many expressed their appreciation at being consulted and indicated that they would like to continue to be involved throughout the policy development process.

There was strong support for food safety and food quality, with many noting that Canada is already a world leader in these areas and needs to do a better job at communicating that message to Canadians and international markets. Science and innovation and environmental protection were seen as being key to the future growth of the sector. Renewal and business risk management were identified as the foundation for the industry. Participants indicated, however, that the APF needs to provide much more detail regarding these initiatives. Profitability and sustainability of the sector were fundamental issues to participants, who felt they should be addressed more fully in the APF.

Many participants stressed the importance of government and industry working together in a partnership to achieve the goals outlined in the APF, including continued financial support from government. There was doubt about governments' ability to work together to develop national programs, but participants clearly wanted greater harmonization nationally and internationally.

3.4 Discussion Summary – Horticulture

The horticulture sessions were attended by a mix of producers, processors, distributors, academics and other stakeholders. Participants expressed general agreement with the five components of the APF, but noted that much of the framework duplicated earlier discussions between industry and the provincial government. While some of the participants were concerned about the lack of connection between these earlier efforts and the APF, others indicated that they were pleased to be consulted.

The food safety and food quality, environment and science and innovation components were generally acceptable to most participants, however both sessions agreed that the APF needs to pay greater attention to international issues and invest more money in these areas. On renewal and business risk management, participants were looking to governments to provide additional funds, make changes to tax laws, and suggest implementing other measures to support the family farm. Participants voiced strong support for collective marketing and cooperatives in the horticulture sector and wanted to see them addressed in the APF.

Other recurring themes included: the need for harmonization of regulatory requirements between provinces and with the U.S. – specifically, Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and pesticide approvals; improved communications and public education on the value of the agriculture sector; and the importance of recognizing and addressing differences between provinces.

3.5 Discussion Summary – Pork

Producers and processors were well represented, with academics, environmentalists and other stakeholders also attending. The discussion was constructive, with participants generally agreeing with the direction of the APF and providing suggestions for improvement. Many were skeptical that governments would be able to work together to develop programs that could be implemented across the country, yet take into account regional differences.

Participants supported a national system for traceability and food safety with approval controls at all levels of the food chain, but insisted that measures be applied to imported as well as domestic products. On the environment, participants tended to support an incentives-based approach with national guidelines, rather than moving to more stringent regulations. They also wanted to see APF initiatives integrated into existing programs in Quebec.

Other issues raised by participants included the need to build a research consortium to improve access to science and innovation; the lack of clarity around the renewal component, which participants considered to be a key part of the APF, and the importance of developing business risk management programs that help provide security and stability for producers. Finally, there was general support for the concept of branding as participants agreed that communicating the message to domestic and international audiences is key.

3.6 Discussion Summary – Poultry

The poultry session was well attended by producers, with a processor, an academic, an environmentalist and other stakeholders also present. While many were concerned that the APF does not adequately address supply management and collective marketing, participants were generally supportive of the overall direction outlined in the APF, particularly in the areas of food safety and food quality, environment and science and innovation.

Participants highlighted that Quebec poultry is already leading the way on food safety and environmental issues and recommended that this be considered when national standards are considered. When it comes to food safety, participants were clear that standards must apply domestically and internationally. They also noted that the APF should include animal welfare.

There was some concern expressed regarding the renewal and business risk management components. Specifically, participants indicated that the APF does not do enough to encourage and support new entrants to farming, however there was support for the framework's emphasis on skills enhancement for producers. Participants tied continued support for supply management and collective marketing to the success of the business risk management component.

3.7 Discussion Summary – Floriculture

The floriculture session in New Brunswick was attended by only four participants (three producers and an environmentalist). Participants were generally supportive of the overall direction of the APF, but cautioned that government may be trying to move too quickly and that it must be careful to recognize that one national policy may not be appropriate for all stakeholders. They also emphasized the importance of taking into account the entire food chain in the continued development of the policy.

Participants raised a number of issues regarding business risk management, including the need for farming to be more self-sufficient and programs to respond to business interruptions due to weather. They indicated that they do not require subsidies, but would like to see additional government investment in the sector. On renewal, participants underscored the need for tax laws in order to support intergenerational transfers. In respect of science and innovation and food safety and food quality, participants indicated that new intellectual property laws should be considered to ensure that the public benefits from research and development (R&D), and that standards should be established in areas such as GMOs and integrated pest management. Participants noted that harmonization with the US on pesticide regulations is needed.

Other issues included strong support for enhanced education of the general public and farmers, as well as a recommendation for governments to consider re-establishing marketing boards as a means of sustaining the agricultural sector.