



Grown-in-Canada Label: Marketing Alberta's Agri-Food

Issue

The Canadian Chamber has been advocating for the government's initiative to update the voluntary federal (Competition Bureau) guidelines governing the use of the "Made in Canada" and "Product of Canada" labels. The updated guidelines will allow Canadian consumers to more easily identify the Canadian content in food and manufactured products and allow goods "made" or "produced" in Canada to be the sole beneficiaries of Canada's international reputation for high quality production.

Background

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recognizes the contribution of agriculture to the provincial economy and that enhancing the strength of the sector is an important priority. Several organizations, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, have initiated "branding Canada" proposals to enhance our country's image and advantages.

It is particularly important for Alberta's agricultural sector to join in this drive to overcome the effects of adjusting currency values, provide a market-based incentive to increase value added in the farm and food processing industries, and to provide a marketing link between grown-in-Canada product and the very strong Canadian standards for food safety and environmental stewardship.

In August 2006, Meyers Norris Penney was commissioned to do a market assessment of consumer demands for a Canadian label. Some of the significant results were:

- 90 per cent of Canadian consumers felt Canadian-grown products should be easily identifiable in stores
- 95 per cent of consumers would prefer to buy Canadian-grown products that are competitively priced
- 80 per cent of those surveyed felt a "Canadian label" concept was a good/very good idea, with the most appealing aspects being its connotation of quality attributes and ease of identification
- 46 to 50 per cent of consumers were willing to pay premiums for "labelled" beef, pork, poultry, grain, vegetable, and fruit products
- 73 per cent of consumers were willing to pay more of a premium if they knew the premium would go to Canadian farmers

Overall the results showed strong support by Canadian consumers for Canadian-grown products.

Further, the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) and Growing Forward 2 policies of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments both feature branding Canada as a theme. However, much more progress needs to be made on this file.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in its January 2008 report *Easing the Burdens, Unleashing our Potential: Fostering Growth and Investment in the New and Changing Global Commercial Environment* states that our position in the world and export growth should be tied to “a pan-Canadian brand, with common logos, images and themes.”

Alberta’s agricultural sector is an ideal place for the Government of Alberta to start vigorously implementing the mandate of APF and Growing Forward 2 to label Canada, promote locally grown and processed product, and brand our exported agri-food products.

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends the Government of Alberta:

1. Work to achieve the goal of the Agriculture Policy Framework and Growing Forward 2 to create a voluntary “Grown-in-Canada” label, logos, images, and themes that would identify with a 100-per-cent Canadian-grown product.
2. Limit protectionist agendas and technical barriers to trade, especially within the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade rules and Codex standards.
3. Ensure that government policy works to develop branding skills and knowledge among farmers and processors.
4. Support the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in advocating a bold initiative by the federal government to create a Canadian brand in the international market.