

**CANADIAN JOURNEY
TO
SOCIAL LICENSE
PUBLIC TRUST**



***A 'Pre-May 31st Session'
Discussion Document***

Background

Food is receiving heightened interest and importance with many Canadians. Increasingly, people are taking more responsibility for the food they eat. Along with this increased interest, they are raising questions about how their food is produced.

Canadians aren't just asking questions and showing an interest, many are expressing their opinions and expecting a say. New tools (social media) have allowed people who previously may have been isolated to find others, build coalitions, and drive change.

With this, the industry's 'social license' or the freedom to operate with the trust and support of the general public that the industry has traditionally held, may be at risk.

This is relatively new ground for most of the Canadian food system. It is also an area that the industry is beginning to take seriously. From farmers to food companies, from those involved in the feed, fiber and biofuels industry, from those directly involved to those that support the agri-food industry, everyone recognizes that trust is important, and actions must be taken to maintain and/or regain the confidence and trust consumers have in their food and the Canadian food system.

Almost all sectors of the food system are involved in some aspect of social license and trust building. But there is a belief that more needs to be done, and a more coordinated, 'broad-industry' approach is required.

In July 2015 at the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Ministers Meeting in Charlottetown two meetings were held with 'social license' a key theme. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture held an input session with industry leaders. Social license was also an agenda topic when the FPT Ministers of Agriculture met with several industry roundtable co-chairs the next day.

On October 27th, a group of industry leaders from across the Canadian food system met in Winnipeg to discuss the need for a national conversation on social license. This meeting resulted in consensus that such a conversation is needed and a draft national 'trust framework' was developed.

Throughout the spring of 2016 a series of regional input sessions were held to expand the conversation and seek input from a cross-section of the national food system. Input and good discussion occurred at sessions in Moncton, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina and Longueuil, Quebec. Approximately 250 leaders from all sectors of Canada's food system participated in these discussion sessions, and the momentum and desire to become more involved was evident at every session. This process of input and discussion has been called the 'Canadian Journey for Social License/Public Trust'.

On May 31st in Ottawa, the Journey will hold a 'summary session' where the input from the regional sessions will be summarized and a series of recommendations on a path forward will be presented to a larger group of food and agriculture industry and government leaders from across the nation.

This 'Pre-May 31st' discussion document contains a summary of the thoughts and ideas that will be reviewed and openly discussed at the May 31st session in Ottawa.

Definitions

Agriculture in the Classroom – a national communications initiative focused on the education system

Agriculture More Than Ever – a national communications initiative with industry partners primarily focused on the encouraging the agri-food industry to speak up and tell its story

Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) - Canada's largest general farm organization representing 200,000 farmers and farm families with the mandate to provide a unified industry voice at the national level

Canadian Food System or 'system' is a term used to describe the entire Canadian agriculture and food system including participants in the food supply chain, industry/sector associations, value-chains, sustainability roundtables, academia, eNGO's, and governments (federal, provincial, agencies, board, and crowns)

Canadian Centre for Food Integrity – a membership-supported resource initiative that proactively assists and supports its members (food and agriculture) and other national agri-food organizations with research, strategic information and messages in a language that the general public understands. Also aligned with the US-based Center for Food Integrity

Farm & Food Care Canada – a national communications initiative focus on dialoguing with general public / consumers and building trust in food and farming

Commodity groups - national agricultural organizations composed of producers from a specific sector/commodity with the purpose of advancing a broad sector of issues and initiatives for the benefit of the commodity. Examples include Canadian Pork Council

eNGO (environmental non-governmental organization) - non-governmental organizations (NGO) in the field of environmentalism. Examples include the WWF, Greenpeace, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy

Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) - a meeting involving Ministers and senior department leaders from federal, provincial and territorial ministries of agri-food

Food & Consumer Products of Canada (FCPC) - the national industry association in Canada representing the food, beverage and consumer products industry

Hub is the term used to describe one of the proposed structural components of Canada's social license journey process. The Hub is the coordination and governance arm that provides objective guidance and support to Canada's social license journey

Industry Associations are member-driven organizations advancing broad sector issues and initiatives to advance the interests of its members – farm, processor,

retailer, restaurant/food service. Examples include the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), Retail Council of Canada and CropLife Canada

Network is the term used to describe one of the proposed structural components of Canada's social license journey process. This group of leaders from *all* components directly and indirectly involved in the Canadian food system provides a forum for idea exchange and an advisory service for collectively advancing the social license journey

Restaurants Canada (formerly CRFA) is the association of the restaurant and foodservice industry that directly employs more than one million Canadians

Retail Council of Canada – a not-for-profit association representing stores of all retail formats, including grocers, independent merchants, regional and national mass and specialty chains, and online merchants

Social License is the privilege of operating with minimal formalized restrictions (regulation, legislation or market-based mandates) based on maintaining public trust. Social license in the context of agriculture and food refers to a community's acceptance or approval of a supply chain's production and marketing approaches

Supply Management involves the groups for policies that control the price, supply and issues of milk, cheese, eggs and poultry in Canada through marketing boards. Supply management have taken the producer leadership role in social license activities for these commodity sectors in a similar way that value chain roundtables and sustainability roundtables have done for commodities

Sustainability Roundtables involve participants from across a specific sector/commodity supply chains with a focus on sustainability practices. eg. Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops (CRSC) or Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB)

Value Chains is a term used to describe participants in a specific food supply chain including technology players, producers, agribusinesses, processors, food companies, retail and food service. Note: as it relates to the Journey process, "Value Chains" is the term used to combine commodity group, supply management and all members of a sector supply chain. These 'Value Chains' also comprise one of the proposed structural components in advancing Canada's social license journey

Value Chain Roundtables (VCRTs) a meeting of government and key industry leaders from across a commodity value chain to share information, influence policy and address issues related to the commodity. The 'All-Chairs Forum' is a continuation of the VCRTs and involves a meeting of the industry and government co-chairs from each of the VCRT roundtables to discuss cross-sectoral issues.

The "Trust Framework"



Regional Session Points of Agreement

Robust dialogue occurred at the six (6) regional sessions with over 250 leaders from a cross-section of the Canadian food system. There was general agreement that:

- Social license/public trust is an important issue and one that must be addressed seriously and proactively
- Social license is an issue that impacts the entire food system, and one that needs to be addressed collectively by the entire system ... including governments
- Social license belongs to everyone – it should be integrated into individual enterprise operations, value-chain roundtables and industry initiatives ... and not segregated or handled separately
- The 'Trust Framework' model contains the building blocks to advance social license/public trust. The Trust Framework involves three core pillars (Doing the Right Thing, Trusted Assurance, and Communications) operating on a foundation of transparency and a commitment to continuous improvement, and with a structure that provides governance, coordination and support (see the Trust Framework – page 6)
- The pillar of Trusted Assurance requires considerable thought and discussion. Defining if, where and how government should be involved, where certification and/or regulation applies, and the expectations of domestic and international customers are important areas requiring extensive thought and discussion
- Structure and governance are essential to the success and progress of Canada's social license journey. Robust discussion occurred at the regional sessions on the proper structure. The May 31st Summary Session should devote considerable time to determining the appropriate structure and governance model required
- Social license isn't a marketing campaign; it's a long-term (25-year) journey to build public trust
- Social license is about coordination and not competition – there's plenty of space for product and corporate differentiation while also capitalizing/leveraging our collective investment for the betterment of the industry and all participants
- Social license can only be obtained if those groups outside Canada's food system – the environmental and labour movements, animal welfare groups, health professionals, etc. – must support what the system is doing. It's not enough for the system to have confidence in itself and tell its story, but the food system needs people from outside the system to say that Canada's food system is on the right track
- Social license is not unique to agriculture or Canada. There's much to be learned from other industries and countries
- Social license in Canada's agricultural industry includes food, feed, fibre and biofuels. Each of these face their own social license pressures

- An ‘umbrella’ communications strategy to address the social license challenge is a desired approach ... but this does not replace the opportunity for individual, corporate and sector initiatives
- There is a role for government to be an active participant in social license. Identifying the specific role for governments requires expanded thought and discussion although there is strong support that governments need to stand up publicly and robustly for their regulatory systems and build public confidence in the Canadian food system’s processes and practices. There is also strong support for governments to focus on science and evidence – not public opinion – especially when that opinion and position may in fact be a small minority of voices amplified by social media
- There is recognition that Canadian agriculture is domestic and global -- we don’t operate in isolation. There is also recognition that international access is affected by social license
- There is recognition that companies and sector organizations are guided by specific mandates that need to be respected
- A series of **‘Principles’** emerged from the regional session discussions that should guide Canada’s social license journey. These include:
 - *Collectively we are stronger* - the African proverb “*If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together*” is applicable to advancing social license. Collaboration builds strength and efficiency – the social license journey is about ‘sharing not shouting’; about being ‘helpful’, and it’s about building a spirit of trust within the Canadian food system *and* with the public
 - *Transparency* – Canada’s social license journey will be built on transparency ... transparency related to food safety, impact of food on health, environmental impact, labour and human rights, animal well-being, and business ethics
 - *Commitment to Continuous Improvement* – recognizing that the Canadian agri-food industry has come a long way in all aspects of social license, and recognizing that “we can’t change yesterday but we can learn from it”, there is an industry-wide commitment to continue the progress ... in all aspects and among all stakeholders in the Canadian food system
 - *Communications* – open, regular, straight-forward communications within the value-chain, among the entire Canadian food system, and with consumers and the general public is critical, valued and a principle that will be measured
 - *Shared values* - earning and maintaining social license and public trust begins by demonstrating ways in which “industry values” align with “consumer values”. Connecting with the public at the values level, and underpinning the commitment with science, facts and solid research delivers the desired results
 - *Integrity and Honesty* – all stakeholders adhere to integrity, honesty and respectful conduct that aligns with Canadian values
 - *Accountability* – the Canadian social license framework is dependent on stakeholder accountability. Together we will have a strengthened ability to hold others accountable

- *Measurements matter* – measurements can support social license and improve performance. Measurements need to be meaningful and efficient, and align with globally accepted programs
- *Consistency and Harmonization* – national consistency and harmonization whenever possible ... between value chains; in 'codes of practice' indicators/drivers; in regulations; in verification and validation; and in communications
- *Simple and Inexpensive* – the framework supports lean, efficient operations focused on supporting the initiatives of the value chains and the pillars of the Trust Framework
- *Proportional Responsibility* – all stakeholders in the Canadian food system are expected to do their part and share proportionally in social license enhancement
- *Science-based* – social license is strengthened when science-based/proven practices are the base
- *Choice is good* – product and corporate differentiation is good ... but not at the expense of endorsed practices
- *Speed & timeliness* must align with accuracy and accountability.

Articulating the Social License Journey

The Problem: The social license, the freedom to operate that we, the Canadian agri-food industry, has enjoyed is at risk... this risk could intensify as a growing group of stakeholders raise questions about whether today's food system is worthy of public trust; as new technologies are introduced; and as the connections between consumer and industry dissipate

The Challenge: How does the Canadian industry maintain and/or regain the trust of the consumer and the general public?

The Cost: What's the cost of public trust? Ask Volkswagen; ask someone whose business enterprise has been interrupted or altered by an event. The cost could be large. The cost of prevention, doing the right thing and earning a high level of trust, is deemed worthy of the price

The Common Goal: To demonstrate to Canadians and our food/ingredient customers that Canada's food system is a system they can trust to deliver healthy, safe, affordable food in a way that reflects short- and long-term sustainability and global competitiveness

The Desired Outcome: A Canadian public that trusts the food they eat ... and the processes and practices the agri-food industry follows to produce it

The Timeline: Building public trust is a long-term, every day commitment ... one that starts now and must continue for at least 25 years

Specific Topics for Discussion, Input and Approval

A series of recommendations on specific topics will be presented at the May 31st Journey Summary Session in Ottawa for review, discussion and approval. Subject areas include:

#1: Trust Framework and Pillars

The simplistic 'Trust Framework' model provides the building blocks to advance social license/public trust. Is it appropriate? Is there support for the directional recommendations (to be articulated at the May 31st session) for each of the pillars?

#2: Structure and Governance

Structure and governance are key elements to the success of Canada's social license journey. Recommendations will be outlined aimed at: formalizing the responsibilities and tightening the social license components that exist within the value chains; creating a structured 'Network' forum for cross-sector/complete industry/system input that delivers greater collaboration and collective actions; and creates a simple, cost-effective governance-focused 'Hub' for advancing social license progress.

#3: Research

Research is a cornerstone to building and maintaining trust and social license. Consumer perceptions, trend and hot-spot identification, value chain sector performance, communication relevancy, etc. – all require research support. How is research best provided and coordinated?

#4: The Role of Governments

Governments are important and valuable components of Canada's social license journey. What role do governments play in leadership, 'trusted assurance', funding, and federal/provincial alignment?

#5: Role of the Academia

The academic community is important in teaching, researching, developing and testing new technologies. What is the role of the academic community?

#6: Funding

The Canadian social license journey must be properly funded. How can the model of "Shared responsibility + Shared benefit = Shared cost" be effectively mobilized?

#7: What does 'success' look like?

#8: What's next?

After the May 31st session, what's the path forward?

See you the Journey Summary Session at the Delta Ottawa on May 31st.

The session begins promptly at 8:00 a.m.