



FAQs for Farmers

October 5, 2018

Questions farmers can expect from government or media:

1. *The government has promised compensation. Why are you not satisfied?*

I would like to turn the tables and ask: What is the government’s plan for the future of the dairy industry?” Because, the way I see it, this promise for compensation is about ‘buying some good will’ about a past action. I want to make sure the government shows me a strategy for the future that is consistent with their words of commitment to a ‘robust and vibrant’ dairy industry for future generations of dairy farmers.

2. *So does that mean you do not want compensation from the government?*

My family did not get into dairy farming to get compensated. I want to earn a decent living for my hard work like any hard-working Canadian. Clearly the government did not understand the value of supply management – that meant we did not need bailouts. They have made this decision to chip away at the market, to erode the value of our system and forced themselves in a corner of having to compensate because the loss is frankly enormous. It is not only about the access, it is about being squeezed on all sides.

Questions from farmers:

1. *What are your plans in asking government for compensation? Will all farmers see mitigation package or will it be again a program that is insufficient, first come, first serve from which only farmers buying certain equipment will be able to benefit?*

Compensation cannot replace the loss of production farmers will face. But compensation need to reflect the true impact of concessions made here.

We are well aware of the short-comings of the Dairy Investment programs and have relayed your concerns to the federal government. We have also worked on a detailed proposal to discuss with the federal government, after the CPTTP signature was announced.

As the USMCA is now also announced (but not signed nor ratified yet), the conversation DFC will hold with government will reiterate the concerns over the previous program, the need to fully understand the harm done to farmers who never asked for taxpayers’ money in the first place, and who have now paid the price of another trade deal. Farmers also have a hard time understanding why the federal government would give up its right to sovereignty, including food sovereignty – the power to decide the type of agriculture we want in Canada.

2. *Is the federal government allowed to do this? Can provinces stand up to the federal government and not allow the deal to proceed?*

Quebec in particular has powers to vote on a trade deal. As you know, agriculture, and supply management – are shared jurisdictions between federal and provincial governments. We are exploring all avenues – political, legal, others - to minimize the impact of the deal on dairy farmers. As you know, we believe this deal is a nightmare to dairy farmers. Not only do we give greater access to American milk on our Canadian market, but the agreement also jeopardizes our investments and severely limits our ability to export. Provincial governments can help influence the federal government follow-up actions as well.

3. *Do you think the government will take this seriously? Can we really get something out of doing this heavy lobbying?*

Our dairy farmers – part of 221,000 people employed in dairy- simply cannot afford any more negative impacts on their livelihood. This deal is not good for families that depend on dairy for their livelihood.

Today we therefore ask the government: *you* have said *you* saved supply management, that you want a strong and vibrant dairy sector, but the government has given away more access and letting the Americans dictate our dairy policies so that Canada cannot compete against their dairy products on any markets in the world. Please explain to me what is *your government's* vision for the place of dairy in the economic future of Canada?

4. *My Liberal MP has reached out to dairy farmers in the area and he suggested the government could do a few things to mitigate the impact – such as not putting the front-of-pack labels on dairy – that is a good thing, right?*

The Liberal government has begun engaging in a charm offensive with our industry. In light of this, we need to be very careful in our narrative in response to the government's outreach. They are floating the Front of Pack labelling as a possible way to appease us. Let's remember that government created this issue. Also, their big "offer" has been compensation.

We appreciate the issue of front-of-pack labelling is still unresolved, but let's not take the bait too early. On one hand, this could leave them with the satisfaction that they can buy your livelihood; that they could possibly give less for compensation; that they can silence farmers or that farmers would not dare going to the extent of rallying on Parliament Hill over this issue. Some media are already making these kinds of claim (Alberta Farmer, Real Agriculture).

Moreover, on the Healthy Eating Strategy and labels, remind them instead that we have submitted significant amount of scientific evidence that should already serve to exclude nutritious dairy products from these warning labels. They should make the change, but not out of guilt for the impact of this deal.

5. So then we need to reach out to Conservative and other opposition MPs?

Yes, the role of the Opposition is quite important in the Parliamentary system. It is important for Opposition MPs to know they can also help put pressure on the government in support of dairy farmers and the dairy sector, to relay to the Government what this means for farmers, to share farmers' testimonials as part of their government business.

6. So we need to rally then? When is it so I can plan on being there?

A rally is political and as such, we want to choose the right political timing, which we believe is when the House of Commons will be asked to vote on the USMCA deal. We will aim to give plenty of time for all provinces – and allies - to be able to participate.

7. When is DFC launching a marketing campaign to differentiate Canadian Milk? Now would be the time more than ever to leverage proAction, isn't it?

We have already started on social media with answering the immediate question of 'how do I know if a dairy product is Canadian or American?' We will expand in other media very soon. We will keep you updated. Consumers are asking questions about Canadian milk and Canadian standards – so we do want our website and marketing campaign to highlight the good nature of Canadian dairy!

8. So to recap, what are the activities I can do to make an impact?

Here is a short list, to which you can add your own ideas:

- Write a letter to MPs to express your reaction to the deal and to tell your family's story with the role of supply management
- Share this letter with local media, asking them to publish it
- Share it on social media
- Do a short video that you share online with family, friends and the public
- Help consumers to look for the logos that represent 100% Canadian Milk. Encourage them to share the information with their friends. Grow your network of allies and supporters
- Continue showing #theFacesofSupplyManagement, #FacesOfCanadianDairy, etc
- Call or meet your MP – of any party. Ask them to help fix the mess created by the federal government. Use the information we provided.
- Engage with your provincial elected official as well.
- Network with your local processors. They are impacted too.

