

CFA sets position on sustainable agriculture

Canadian agriculture operates across an extremely broad range of climatic, geographic, and resource conditions producing a wide range of plant and animal products. It is a complex industry, in some cases capital intensive, in others land extensive, but in all, dependent on wise and efficient resource utilization. In this broad context, sustainable agriculture should be defined as "economically viable agriculture capable of producing stable supplies of high quality, safe food, while ensuring the long-term preservation and enhancement of natural resources" says the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Recommendations to facilitate the objectives of sustainability include the following:

- * Agricultural policies must ensure the conservation and enhancement of the land base with respect to preventing soil degradation and protecting the environment. This should include an assessment of existing policies to ensure that they do not negatively impact upon the long term productivity of our natural resources.
- * Soil and water conservation must be addressed by all levels of government and resource-based industries through the development of a comprehensive national soil and water conservation strategy. The National Soil Conservation Strategy is a step in the right direction, but still lacks a serious commitment in terms of long term core funding.
- * An acreage reduction program such as a conservation reserve promoting good soil management and diverting highly erodible or degraded areas from the production of annual crops should be undertaken. *Development and implementation of conservation education programs along with incentives to encourage conservation oriented land use.
- * Further research into the causes and effects of soil degradation and the development of practical and economic methods for dealing with it.
- * Voluntary participation in conservation initiatives is more desirable than establishing conditions that would place constraints on the availability of other government assistance programs.

An improved pesticide registration system will enable farmers to have prompt access to safe crop protection materials while ensuring the health of Canadians and safety of the environment and further research is needed for farmers to be able to establish Integrated Pest Management Programs.

Agriculture Canada should provide increased funds to research institutions for enlarged programs of agricultural research related to modern confinement rearing of animals. Research is needed to establish objective criteria to assess the quality of animal life in modern confinement housing as well as in alternative production systems.

Copyright © 1990 *REAP Canada*