

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

Mr. Speaker, the availability of healthy, affordable food is a fundamental requirement for a good quality of life and a strong, healthy territory. The Government of the Northwest Territories mandate reflects this and commits to addressing food security while also investing in NWT agriculture as a growing sector of our economy.

Since 2003, the GNWT has partnered with the federal government to provide financial resources and cross-jurisdictional supports to encourage the growth and sustainability of the agricultural and agri-food sector in the NWT.

A succession of formal five-year agreements has resulted in renewed agriculture development in the NWT, evidenced by the growth and diversity of producers and processors, and a rise in local production and sales.

On April 1, the fifth such bilateral agreement will come into effect titled the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership, or the Sustainable-CAP.

The Sustainable-CAP will see an investment of \$7.6 million in the NWT agriculture and agri-food sector over the next five years. Canada will provide 60 percent of this funding annually with the GNWT making up the difference.

Overall, the new agreement represents a 25 percent increase in the government's investment in agriculture across Canada with funding organized in five priority areas: Climate Change and Environment; Market Development and Trade; Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness; Resiliency and Public Trust; and, Science, Research, and Innovation.

The Sustainable-CAP emphasizes a commitment to strengthening relationships and increasing Indigenous participation in the sector while improving access to funding.

As with previous multilateral agriculture agreements, the Sustainable-CAP confirms the exemption of the NWT from requirements of proportionate spending and from the accounting of federal attributed funding, where required.

Mr. Speaker, the summer flooding of 2022 was devastating for many residents in the South Slave and Dehcho regions and among them, members of our territory's agriculture sector. With that in mind, and in response to what we heard from engagements with the NWT's agriculture community last year, the GNWT with this new agreement will leverage its participation in the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership to provide access for NWT producers to two key Business Risk Management programs.

AgriStability is a whole-farm, margin-based income stabilization program that aims to protect producers against large declines in farming income due to production loss from unpredictable weather, crop or animal disease, poor yields, increased costs or adverse market conditions.

AgriInvest is a self-managed producer-government savings account designed to help manage small income declines and make investments to manage risk and improve market income.

Coming out of last year's tragedy, Mr. Speaker, we hope that the addition of the AgriStability and AgriInvest programs will serve to increase the confidence of NWT producers and agri-food businesses as they look to rebuild what was lost.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT's support for regional agriculture programs is doing more than encouraging local food production. It is promoting economic development and diversity and, in time, will help us to address food security especially in our small and remote communities.

The Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership, Mr. Speaker will help us realize this vision.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.