



# *The Farm Products Council of Canada*

1972-2022  
*A History*



2021-2022



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Written by Jodey Nurse, Research Assistant Professor

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# The FARM PRODUCTS COUNCIL of CANADA

**1972–2022: A History**

**by Jodey Nurse**

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## FOREWORD

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In preparation for the Farm Product Council of Canada's (FPCC) 50th anniversary in 2022, the Council began working to facilitate a review of the FPCC's history. In doing so, Council members and staff quickly realized that even though the FPCC's history spanned five decades of significant social, political, and economic change in Canada, no detailed or extended examination of the Council's history during that period had been written. We felt the first 50 years of the FPCC activities needed to be highlighted, and as many of the Council's pioneers had already passed away and their stories lost, the urgency of this project became clear.

To write this history, the Council engaged historian Jodey Nurse, Research Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Waterloo, who was already writing about Canada's history of orderly marketing and is a passionate researcher of Canadian agricultural and rural history. As Nurse was set to begin this work, however, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Despite the challenges of completing an institutional history of the Council during a period when archival collections were closed and travel restrictions were in place, Nurse has been able to use the sources available to her to construct a comprehensive account of the important events, people, and developments at the FPCC from its creation in 1972 to present day.

One of my biggest regrets when I began my tenure as FPCC chair was not having a detailed account of the Council's history to review. Undoubtedly, this history will prove to be invaluable to current and future Council members and staff who wish to learn more about the Council's history and the changes that have occurred. The book will also serve industry and government stakeholders and the broader public by providing them with a better understanding of the Council's roles and responsibilities in providing oversight of the national supply management agencies for poultry and eggs and supervising the national promotion and research agencies for farm products. The book reveals how FPCC has played an important role in ensuring that Canadians have affordable and continuous access to the foods they need while maintaining fair market prices for the farmer.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to recognize and thank everyone who made this book possible, including the author, Jodey Nurse, and the coordinator of this project at FPCC, Bill Edwardson. I would also like to express my thanks to the previous and current FPCC chairs and vice-chairs who agreed to be interviewed for this project. It is my hope that this history not only serves to inform us about the Council's past, but that it also helps inform and influence Council decisions in the future.

Brian Douglas

Chair and Deputy Head, Farm Products Council of Canada



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Jodey Nurse is a research assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of Waterloo. She is also a past L.R. Wilson Assistant Professor at the Wilson Institute for Canadian History at McMaster University and a former University of Waterloo postdoctoral fellow. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Guelph. Her present work focuses on the history of Canada's supply-managed dairy, egg, and poultry industries. Nurse has authored a number of scholarly articles on the topic. Central to this research is an examination of the asymmetrical power relations that exist among stakeholders in agricultural marketing systems and the polarized agricultural policies that have emerged in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Nurse also studies and writes about women in agricultural organizations and rural society more generally. Her first monograph, *Cultivating Community: Women and Agricultural Fairs in Ontario*, was published by McGill-Queen's University Press in February 2022.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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First and foremost, I would like to thank the Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC) for giving me the opportunity to tell its history. As a historian specializing in rural and agricultural history, I was immediately drawn to this project. Canada's history of supply management is an important one that needs to be told, and the role and responsibility of FPCC in ensuring that this system continues to serve Canadians in the egg and poultry sectors is especially significant. Also critical is the work they do to support the research and promotion of other agricultural sectors, including beef and pork, a responsibility that promises to be enlarged in the future.

Shortly after agreeing to this work, however, the COVID-19 pandemic began. Even as I write this acknowledgement, new COVID-19 protocols have been implemented to combat the new Omicron variant. Because of the pandemic, accessing sources was extremely difficult. Archival institutions and universities were closed, and travel was restricted. Even when some institutions reopened, full access to materials did not return. Despite this, I was still able to collect many valuable sources, including annual reports and newspaper articles, and interview past and current Council chairs and vice-chairs. I am deeply grateful for the generosity of these Council members in making time to speak with me and ensure the proper story was told. I am also incredibly appreciative to Bill Edwardson, the coordinator of this project at FPCC, for his support and patience throughout.

Despite the challenges, I am pleased that this book provides a comprehensive account of the important changes, events, individuals, and groups in the Council's history. Since the Council began in 1972, its members have made continuous efforts to strengthen Canadian agriculture and balance the interests of consumers and producers. I am proud to have had the opportunity to write this history, and I look forward to witnessing how the Council evolves in the years ahead.

Jodey Nurse  
Research Assistant Professor  
Department of History  
University of Waterloo

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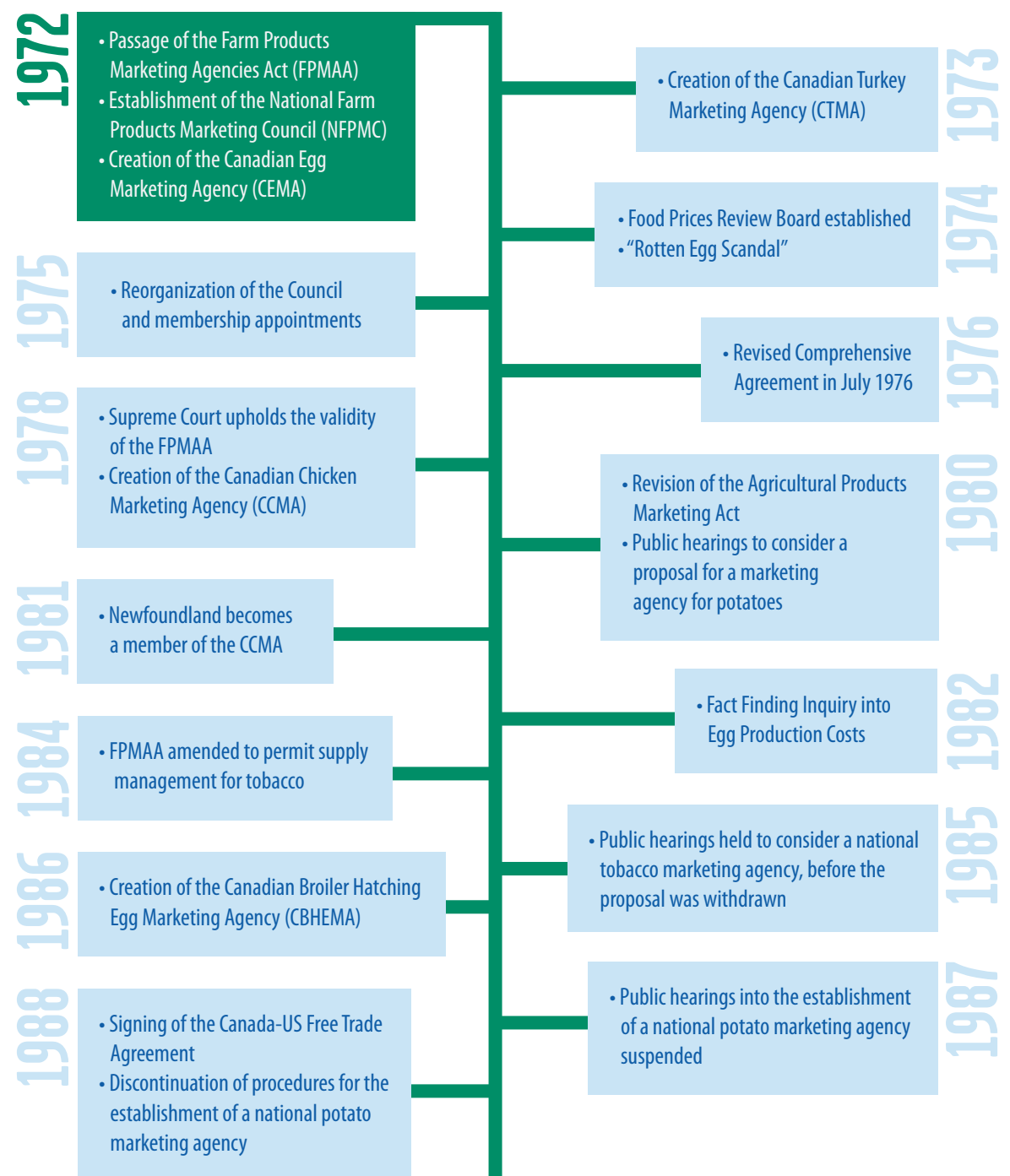
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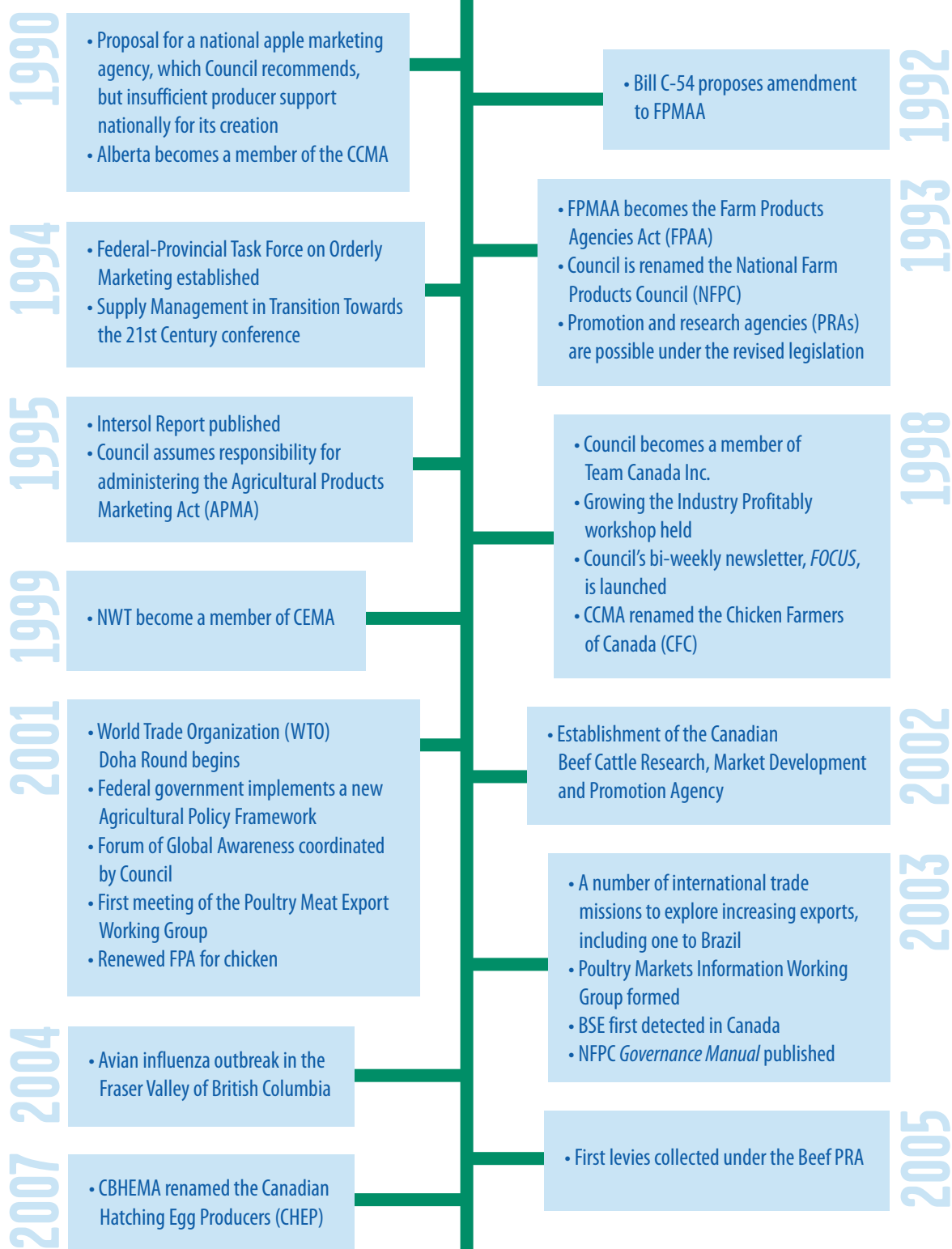
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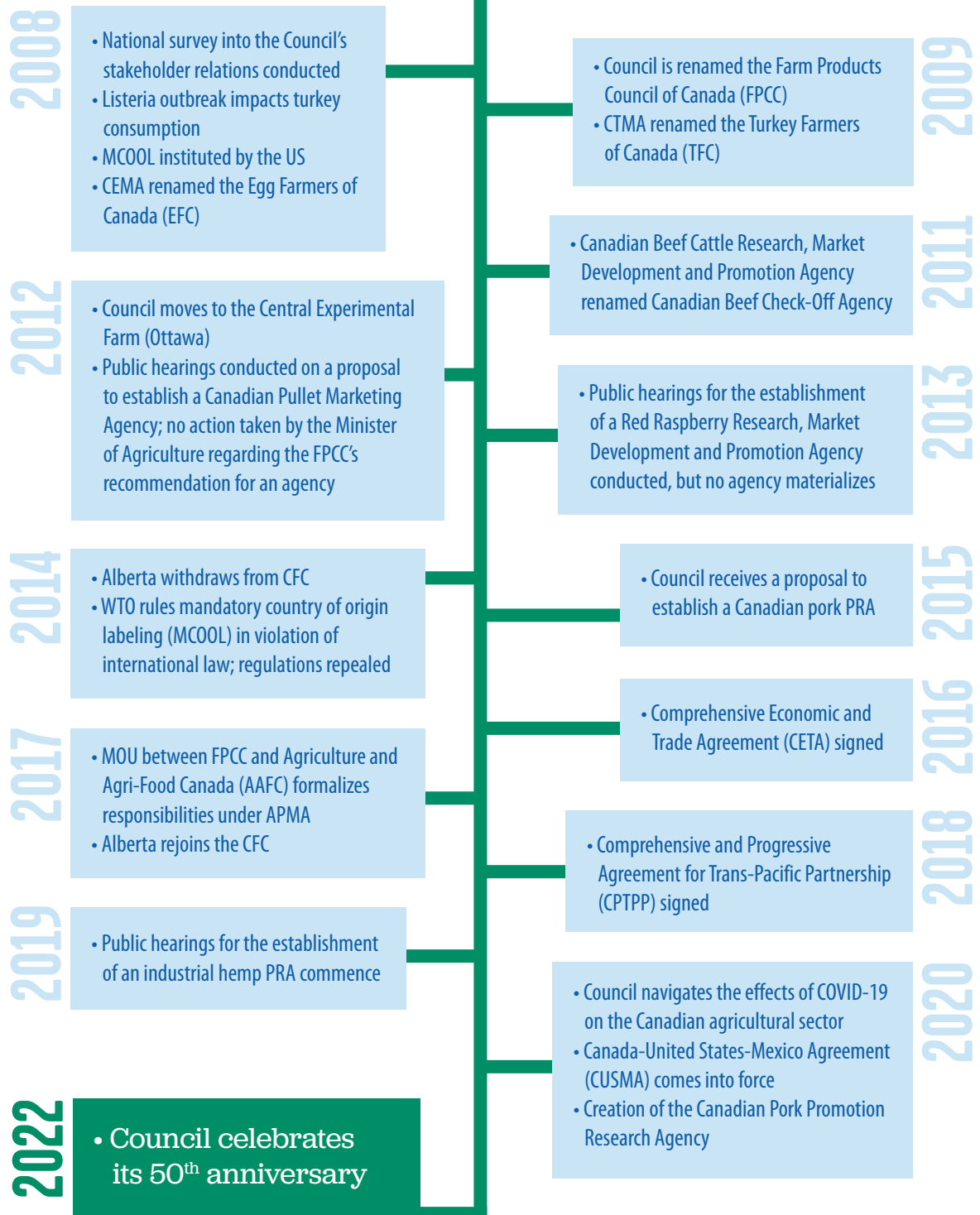
<b>AAFC</b>	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
<b>ADR</b>	alternative dispute resolution
<b>AI</b>	avian influenza
<b>APMA</b>	Agricultural Products Marketing Act
<b>BC</b>	British-Columbia
<b>BIC</b>	Beef Information Centre
<b>BSE</b>	bovine spongiform encephalitis
<b>CAC</b>	Consumers' Association of Canada
<b>CAP</b>	Comparative advantage of production
<b>CBEF</b>	Canada Beef Export Federation
<b>CBHEMA</b>	Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency
<b>CCA</b>	Canadian Cattlemen's Association
<b>CCMA</b>	Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency
<b>CEMA</b>	Canadian Egg Marketing Agency
<b>CETA</b>	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement
<b>CFC</b>	Chicken Farmers of Canada
<b>CFIA</b>	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
<b>CHEP</b>	Canadian Hatching Egg Producers
<b>COP</b>	cost of production
<b>CPEPC</b>	Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council
<b>CPTPP</b>	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
<b>CPRC</b>	Canadian Poultry Research Council
<b>CRA</b>	Canada Revenue Agency
<b>CTF</b>	Canadian Turkey Federation
<b>CTMA</b>	Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency
<b>CUSMA</b>	Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement
<b>CUSTA</b>	Canadian-United States Trade Agreement
<b>CWB</b>	Canadian Wheat Board

<b>ECC</b>	Economic Council of Canada
<b>EFC</b>	Egg Farmers of Canada
<b>EFRP</b>	Early Fowl Removal Program
<b>FPA</b>	federal-provincial agreement
<b>FPAA</b>	Farm Products Agencies Act
<b>FPCC</b>	Farm Products Council of Canada
<b>FPMAA</b>	Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act
<b>FPOCQ</b>	Fédération des producteurs d'œufs de consommation du Québec
<b>FPPQ</b>	Fédération des producteurs de porc de Québec
<b>FPRB</b>	Food Prices Review Board
<b>FSEP</b>	Food Safety Enhancement Program
<b>FTA</b>	Free Trade Agreement
<b>GATT</b>	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
<b>HACCP</b>	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
<b>IEC</b>	International Egg Commission
<b>IPP</b>	industrial product program
<b>MCOOL</b>	mandatory country-of-origin labelling (American)
<b>MOU</b>	memorandum of understanding
<b>NAASA</b>	National Association of Agri-Food Supervisory Agencies
<b>NAFTA</b>	North American Trade Agreement
<b>NAPA</b>	National Pricing and Allocation Agreement
<b>NFPC</b>	National Farm Products Council
<b>NFPMC</b>	National Farm Products Marketing Council
<b>NWT</b>	Northwest Territories
<b>OFA</b>	Ontario Federation of Agriculture
<b>PRA</b>	promotion and research agency
<b>PSC</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>SAGE</b>	Sectoral Advisory Group—Eggs
<b>TFC</b>	Turkey Farmers of Canada
<b>UPA</b>	Union des producteurs agricoles
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

# TIMELINE HIGHLIGHTS









## COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

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### Chair

Paul Babey (1972–79)  
S. June Menzies (1979–85)  
Ralph Barrie (1986–91)  
Cliff McIsaac (1991–97)  
Cynthia Currie (1997–2006)  
Gordon Hunter (2007)—*Acting Chair*  
Bill Smirle (2008–10)  
Brent Montgomery (2010)—*Acting Chair*  
Laurent Pellerin (2010–17)  
Mike Pickard (2017–18)—*Acting Chair*  
Brian Douglas (2018-incumbent at the time of publishing)

### Vice-Chair

Réal Roy (1972–74)  
M.E. (Jerry) Pringle (1975–76)  
James Boynton (1976–84)  
Ralph Barrie (1985–86)  
Lise Bergeron (1986–92)  
Laurent Mercier (1992–97)  
Linda Boxall (1997–99)  
Ron O'Connor (1999–2007)  
Brent Montgomery (2007–15)  
Mike Pickard (2015–19)  
Ron Bonnett (2019-incumbent at the time of publishing)

## Members

Ralph Ferguson (1972–76)  
J. Adrien Lévesque (1972–83)  
Hector Hill (1972–80)  
Albert Vielfaure (1972–93)  
Maryon Brechin (1975–89)  
George Home (1975–79)  
Jules Thibaudeau (1976–86)  
Malcolm Bryson (1983–84)  
Max Thompson (1983–84)  
Larry Moynahan (1981–93)  
Eric Hammill (1984–93)  
Nigel Taylor (1985–90)  
Dale McIntosh (1985–87)  
Glenn Flaten (1986–94)  
Gordon Hunter (1987–90)  
Peggy Smith (1990–97)  
Roy Miske (1992–97)  
Reta Moyer (1993–97)  
John Vissers (1993–97)  
Linda Boxall (1994–97)—*later served as Vice-Chair*  
Anne Chong Hill (1998–2004)  
Raymond Cloutier (1998–2001)  
David Coburn (1998–2002)  
John A. (Sandy) McCurrach (1998–2004)  
Ron O'Connor (1998–99)—*later served as Vice-Chair*  
Paul Ouellette (1997–2001)  
Michel Veillette (1997–2008)  
Lorraine Arnett (1999–2003)  
Félix Destrijker (2001–04)  
Maurice Giguère (2001–07)  
Roger Richard (2004–07)  
Susan Johnson (2005–08)  
Juliann Blaser Lindenbach (2004–09)  
Stewart Affleck (2004–07)

Larry Campbell (2004–05)  
Brent Montgomery (2007)—*later served as Vice-Chair and Acting Chair*  
Ed de Jong (2007–2013)  
Marjorie Donnan (2007–10)  
Patrick James (2007–10)  
Lise Bergeron (2007–11)  
John Griffin (2008–15)  
Phil Klassen (2009–13)  
Jim Chatenay (2010–12)  
Tim O'Connor (2011–15)  
Mike Pickard (2013–18)—*later served as Vice-Chair and Acting Chair*  
Debbie Etsell (2013–17)  
Chantelle Donahue (2014–17)  
Kimberley Hill (2015–18)  
Yvon Cyr (2018–2022)  
Maryse Dubé (2015–incumbent at the time of publishing)  
Morgan Moore (2019–incumbent at the time of publishing)

## INTRODUCTION

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This book provides an institutional history of the Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC). In 2022, the Council celebrates its 50th anniversary, and it is my hope that this work provides a useful account of the major changes, important events, and central individuals and groups in the Council's history.

When the Council, first named the National Farm Products Marketing Council, was created under the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act (FPMAA) in 1972, it was a ministerial Council that reported to Parliament through the federal Minister of Agriculture. It was tasked with advising the Minister on the merits of establishing national marketing agencies for proposed regulated farm commodities, which, once established, were the Council's responsibility to supervise. Not only did the Council provide oversight for these agencies' operations and advise the Minister on the need for amendments as required, but it was also charged to work with these agencies to promote an effective marketing system for these commodities in domestic and international trade and to investigate the merits of expanding the scope of the agencies' activities. By the 1990s, the Council also became responsible for administering the Agricultural Products Marketing Act (APMA) through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at the request of the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). It continued to provide oversight of the national supply management agencies for eggs and poultry, but it was also now tasked, under the legislative addition of Part III of the FPAA, with establishing and supervising the national promotion and research agencies for farm products. While the essential roles of the Council remained the same or expanded, the mandates given to the Council and the approaches Council members have taken to fulfill their obligations under the legislation have shifted over time and in light of new challenges and opportunities.

The Council's history reveals its continuous efforts to ensure all industry stakeholders benefit from the national agencies under its supervision and do so through affordable and stable access to farm products, all the while simultaneously supporting fair farmer prices. In ensuring this aim, FPCC has worked to strengthen the egg and poultry sectors, provide leadership in agricultural research and promotion, foster communication and cooperation among industry stakeholders, and provide oversight that ensures the interests of producers and consumers are met. Today, the Council continues to support the legislated objectives of national agencies in promoting and maintaining a strong, efficient, collaborative, and expanding Canadian agricultural industry.

# CHAPTER 1

## Before the Farm Products Council of Canada

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### Introduction

A number of milestones occurred throughout the twentieth century that led to the passage of the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act (FPMAA) and the creation of the National Farm Products Marketing Council (NFPMC) in 1972. Most significantly, the modernization of agriculture—specifically, technological and biological innovation, improved farming methods, and greater specialization—over the course of the twentieth century increased agricultural productivity; although, as noted below, it also contributed to an increased volatility of agricultural markets. Farmers and their advocates championed cooperatives and marketing boards as a means by which they could combat these issues and improve their bargaining power in the food supply system. Ultimately, the limited participation of voluntary cooperatives and the inadequate legislative authority given to provincial marketing boards meant that other means of more effective, orderly marketing were sought. The increased government intervention in food supply chains during the Second World War led to a new appreciation of production control and helped facilitate farmers’ intensified efforts to stabilize producer incomes in the postwar period. These early developments, as well as escalating market crises in the 1960s and early 1970s, led to the passage of legislation that permitted a national system of supply management in the Canadian poultry and egg sectors and the creation of the NFPMC as the oversight body for national marketing boards.

### Early Efforts at Organised Marketing

The development of marketing legislation in Canada was a protracted process and rose from the needs of a changing agricultural landscape. Even before the twentieth century, advancements in the scientific management of agriculture and technological innovations, both mechanical and biological, were substantially increasing farm output. The result was increased production, but also heightened volatility in agricultural markets due to the increasingly globalized nature of these commodity exchanges that saw “the headlong integration of world commodity and capital markets on a scale and with an intensity then without precedent.”<sup>1</sup> By the twentieth century, these changes accelerated and Canadian agriculture became closely tied to what political scientist Peter Andr  e identifies as a “globalizing food regime”

that emphasized the “intensification and expansion across borders of the industrial model of agriculture based on capital-intensive equipment, energy-intensive inputs of fertilizers, pesticides, water, and seeds, and favouring large-scale production, often oriented towards export markets.”<sup>2</sup> Clearly, agriculture was on the cusp of tremendous change.

And yet, Canadian farmers recognized that low incomes and fluctuating farm prices did not necessarily improve with costly farm investments. Only innovative marketing solutions, including cooperatives and marketing boards, could offer solutions. Ironically, farmers found the basis for these solutions in the past. Previously, in the second half of the nineteenth century, farmers had come together to found the Granger Movement, which lobbied to restrict the monopolistic practices of rail companies and banks. During this period, farmers also organized local cooperative stores and grain elevators and mills, as well as advocated for the farm community more broadly in the political arena.<sup>3</sup> These developments encouraged the first true cooperative agricultural development in Canada when in 1913 tree fruit growers in the Okanagan Valley organized a venture that would fail after the First World War ended as it had no legal means of restricting product supply and blocking non-members from entering its markets.<sup>4</sup> Similar cooperative ventures were attempted throughout the 1920s, including the creation of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Poultry Producers in 1925, which signed up 4,282 producers and established 175 candling stations in the province. By 1927 the organization was re-incorporated and opened a new egg pool to handle producers’ eggs.<sup>5</sup> Similar efforts materialized in Alberta and Manitoba, and in 1928, Saskatchewan and Manitoba worked together to create the Canadian Co-operative Poultry Marketing Association. In 1929, Alberta and British Columbia collaborated with Saskatchewan and Manitoba to create the Canadian Poultry Pool, a short-lived experiment as the price of eggs plummeted after the events of 1929.<sup>6</sup> Like other cooperative efforts, the scheme ultimately failed because of the voluntary nature of the organization; non-members flooded the market with their produce, further depressing already low farm prices.

In contrast, marketing boards allowed a system of compulsory cooperation that required all producers of a certain product in a specified region to be compelled by law to adhere to the regulations of a marketing plan. Although those plans could vary significantly, typically the goal was to stabilize, maintain, or increase—even equalize—the income of producers.<sup>7</sup> The success during the First World War of wartime grain price stabilization through the Board of Grain Supervisors, renamed the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), made a lasting impression on producers. Although the board was disbanded in 1920, it was later resurrected during the Great Depression because of the stability it provided the industry, as well as a sense of fair play.<sup>8</sup> Even before the reinstitution of the CWB in 1935, however, Canadian farmers and their representatives had become suspicious of the increasing consolidations in agricultural service and food industries in the 1920s and they questioned the ability of supply and demand to meet their needs. For instance, after a period of depressed poultry prices in 1923, the President of the Ontario Agricultural College, J.B. Reynolds, lamented that “the capitalistic system that

governed the economic conditions of the modern era was inexorable and demanded ‘human sacrifice’,” and he encouraged farmers to organize, deploring the fact that agriculture was “the only unorganized and unprotected industry.”<sup>9</sup> For Reynolds and the many like him, farmers needed to cooperate in order to improve their position in a food system where they were disadvantaged as price takers with little negotiating power. The 1920s continued to witness periods of extreme price fluctuations in eggs, which caused instability in the egg market and fear among producers about the future of the industry. Instead of market interventions, however, most government officials and industry representatives tended to promote increased consumer education, improved husbandry and quality control, greater specialization, and increased export sales as the solution, as they wished to see the market take care of itself.<sup>10</sup>

Egg farmers were not the only producers who witnessed unstable farm prices and incomes over the course of the 1920s. The volatility of many agricultural commodity markets resulted in the passage of a large number of pieces of legislation, both national and provincial. One example, the British Columbia Produce Marketing Act passed in 1927. The Act was an attempt to institute producer-controlled marketing organizations, and the province’s Dairy Products Sale Adjustments Act followed it in 1929. It was believed that such legislation was needed to strengthen the bargaining position of farmers in the marketplace and allow for the better coordination and distribution of farm produce.<sup>11</sup> In 1931, however, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled the British Columbia Produce Marketing Act *ultra vires*, as it interfered with interprovincial trade, and the levy imposed on producers constituted an indirect tax, both of which fell within federal jurisdiction. In 1932, the Dairy Products Sale Adjustments Act also suffered the same fate.<sup>12</sup> These BC acts, however, provided encouragement to farmers to seek amended legislation and demand orderly marketing from their governments as conditions worsened in the 1930s. Soon other provinces followed suit.

## The Great Depression and National Marketing Legislation

A significant turning point in agricultural marketing across Canada came with the Great Depression because governments around the world took on a much greater regulatory role, including in agricultural sectors. Indeed, many farm families were hit hard during the Depression because most produced commodities that relied on international trade, which had collapsed.<sup>13</sup> Farmers in the prairies also dealt with drought and extreme weather conditions, and even those farms located in regions spared the worst of these weather conditions still contended with falling farm prices that made farm incomes decline drastically.<sup>14</sup> As historian Ruth Sandwell explains, rural households across Canada were “well integrated into ever-growing global, capitalist networks of mercantile and industrial relationships through the sale of labour for wages and the sale and purchase of commodities for cash or credit.”<sup>15</sup> As the effects of the Depression worsened, this system of exchange was greatly disrupted and producers in many agricultural

sectors throughout Canada exerted pressure on the federal government to create national legislation to regulate the marketing of farm products.

Many countries began introducing price support structures for their agricultural industries, and in Canada the Conservative government of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett was no different. In 1934, the National Farm Products Marketing Act (patterned on the British Agricultural Marketing Acts of 1931 and 1933) gave agricultural commodity and other natural resource groups the authority to establish regionally based marketing schemes, subject to government approval. This act produced the Dominion Marketing Board, which was tasked not only with regulating markets and controlling trade, but also delegating regulatory power to local commodity boards. By 1935, some 22 marketing plans had been recommended to the Governor-in-Council. However, the movement had a bumpy start as in 1937 the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal in Canada until 1949, found the Act unconstitutional for infringing on provincial jurisdiction.<sup>16</sup> Again, as with earlier agricultural marketing legislation, the national act was disputed over matters of property, civil rights, and intra-provincial trade.<sup>17</sup> Still, many of the provincial marketing boards created during this period were able to survive under revised legislations, and while their powers were diminished and uneven, their existence signalled a recognition that state intervention in the marketplace, especially in the nation's food systems, was gaining acceptance. By the end of the 1930s, farm leaders were vocal about the need for marketing regulations at both the provincial and federal levels. By 1940, all provinces except Québec had passed marketing legislation,<sup>18</sup> but it would take the challenges of the Second World War and the postwar period before the federal government was willing to extend even greater powers of regulation and control.

## The Impact of the Second World War

The Second World War and the invocation of the War Measures Act gave the federal government greater regulatory powers to control food prices. These powers were much more far-reaching than those proposed in previous marketing legislation.<sup>19</sup> The unprecedented state intervention in a range of commodities, as well as increased subsidies and price controls, were central pillars of Canada's wartime command economy.<sup>20</sup> But despite some resistance, generally Canadians accepted these interventions as important for Canada's ability to supply soldiers and wartime allies with food, as well as necessary to achieve an "equality of sacrifice" at home.<sup>21</sup> In addition to the previous marketing board interventions and the producer support many of these boards received, regulatory interventions by the federal government in agricultural and food sectors during the Second World War helped many Canadian consumers mobilize around the need for greater governmental control in managing these sectors in the postwar years. Still, it was not until later in 1945 that Canadian farm leaders and government officials began work on the Agricultural Products Marketing Act (APMA) that eventually passed in 1949.



Although a significant piece of legislation, ultimately this act was unable to stem the economic distress in the broiler and egg industries and new legislation was needed.

## Efforts at Agricultural Stabilization in the Postwar Years

The APMA enabled the federal government to authorize provincial marketing boards to regulate inter-provincial and export trade in various products. After amendment in 1957, it also delegated authority for marketing boards to raise levies on a provincial basis.<sup>22</sup> Provincial marketing boards were empowered by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to facilitate and assist in the establishment of commodity boards, but how these provincial boards were established varied. In several provinces, the establishment of local boards required producers to vote for their creation, while in Québec, a marketing plan allowed for a professional syndicate to control marketing. In Manitoba, marketing commissions were to represent producers, marketers, and other stakeholders, including consumers. A common limitation in all legislation, however, was the inability of local boards to control the inflow of farm products from other provinces to a local market, thus frustrating efforts at market stabilization.<sup>23</sup> The propensity to overproduce caused frustration among government officials, while other changes in the agricultural landscape, including the increased commercialization, consolidation, and narrower price margins, only intensified the situation.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, by the postwar period, concerns about population increases and farmers' need to produce more food to support the world's citizens existed, but the issue of overproduction, not under-production, was the dominant concern of many industrialized countries. Despite the relatively steady Canadian economy in the 1950s and 1960s, agricultural markets were anything but stable. Farmers faced a cost-price squeeze that saw their margins rapidly diminishing. For instance, in 1964, prices for both eggs and broiler chickens hit new lows and caused significant financial distress among producers who had been advised to make substantial investments in their farms in order to compete.<sup>25</sup> Despite predictions of increased sales, demand did not pick up and producers were losing money at an alarming rate.<sup>26</sup> Low poultry and egg prices led the federal government to transfer significant sums of money to producers; support payments exceeded C\$14 million between 1958 and 1970 (over C\$100 million today).<sup>27</sup> These conditions caused egg and poultry farmers in a number of provinces, including British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Québec, to establish marketing boards, but as previously discussed, orderly marketing mechanisms were limited by the existing legislation. Although federal legislation regulating the marketing of milk and wheat had been created by the 1970s, no comprehensive, national legislation existed to regulate marketing for all agricultural products.<sup>28</sup>

The problems that arose from these limitations in the provincial legislation were clearly witnessed during the so-called Chicken and Egg War that occurred in 1970 and 1971. The “war” began when the Québec government established the Fédération des producteurs d’œufs de consommation du Québec (FPOCQ) in 1970, a marketing board that began to restrict the price, grading, and sale of all eggs in

Québec, including egg imports from other provinces. This resulted in disrupted sales in Manitoba and Ontario in particular. These provinces instituted their own retaliatory measures in response to Québec's actions, including strict import controls and the seizure of out-of-province produce. This battle represented a new level of competition where, instead of individual producers fighting for market share, provincial marketing agencies were battling each other for the Canadian egg and chicken markets. This episode also had serious political ramifications, including fractured relationships among farmers, consumers, other industry stakeholders, and politicians. It also heightened tensions surrounding the legality and authority of provincial agricultural marketing boards.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, the Chicken and Egg War provided the motivation the federal government needed to create and pass national legislation that could, in conjunction with provincial legislation, enable producers to establish national marketing agencies to manage supplies through a system of supply management based on the pillars of import control, controlled production, and fair producer pricing. However, the passage of this legislation was not without its challenges.

## The Passage of the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act in 1972

The FPMAA was passed on January 6, 1972, four years after it was first introduced as legislation in the House of Commons in March 1970. When the legislation was first proposed as Bill C-197, then Minister of Agriculture Horace Andrew (Bud) Olson viewed the legislation as a response to the issues of low farmer income and declining political influence.<sup>30</sup> The Federal Task Force on Agriculture concluded that “supply management could be useful in stabilizing incomes and supplies,” and this belief was heeded in the legislation, which provided for the creation of national commodity marketing boards with the authority to allow for production to be geared to effective demand.<sup>31</sup> It was not long, however, before the joint opposition of the New Democratic Party and Progressive Conservative Party to the Liberal government's legislation was sufficient to delay passage of the bill. While delays were initially requested to allow for farm organizations to make submissions on the bill to the Agriculture Committee, soon the very concept of a national marketing board with supply management powers was being questioned.<sup>32</sup> Of course, debates about marketing boards and controlled production schemes were not new and had caused significant disagreement among individual producers and producer groups, not to mention other stakeholder parties. With Bill C-197, however, the principal opposition to the concept of supply management came from cattle commodity organizations, especially the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. These groups wished to see cattle excluded from the bill because, according to political scientist Grace Skogstad, “to the individualistic Western Canadian rancher whose scale of operation [was] large enough that [they could] afford to ‘ride out’ the recurrent slumps in the beef cycle, orderly marketing and supply management [were] anathema.”<sup>33</sup> The federal Progressive Conservative Party also opposed the legislation because



**Hon. Horace  
Andrew (Bud)  
Olson, Federal  
Minister of  
Agriculture,  
1968–72 (Figure 1.1)**

*Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.*

Born in Idlesleigh, Alberta, in 1925, Olson was a farmer, rancher, and merchant, but also served in Parliament for over 30 years.<sup>1</sup> Olson was the federal Minister of Agriculture who negotiated the passage of the FPMAA and the first minister to which the National Farm Products Marketing Council reported. Olson's support for the FPMAA resulted from his conviction that supply management was an effective system to ameliorate the market chaos that existed in the egg and poultry sectors. Although Olson was conservative Alberta rancher and businessperson initially elected as a Social Credit MP for Medicine Hat, he later became a Liberal MP. As P.E. Trudeau's first Agricultural Minister in 1968, he recognized the need for orderly marketing as a means to support domestic agriculture. Olson acknowledged that low-income crises, a movement toward provincial marketing boards, and a demand from farmers for national legislation required a response. The "Chicken and Egg War" demonstrated the need for federal legislation to coordinate provincial efforts, and ultimately, he saw it as "an industry problem rather than an ideological issue and agreed with proposals for national enabling legislation."<sup>2</sup> In the 1972 election, Olson, like the other three Liberal MPs in Alberta, lost his seat, but was subsequently appointed by Trudeau to the Senate of Canada and later returned to Cabinet. Olson was recognized as one of Trudeau's most powerful ministers as Minister of Economic and Regional Development from 1980 to 1984. Olson eventually resigned from the Senate and was appointed Alberta's 14th Lieutenant-Governor in 1996, serving in that position until 2000.

1 Parliament of Canada, "The Hon. Horace Andrew (Bud) Olson, P.C., M.P., Senator," Parliament of Canada, Parlinfo, [https://lop.parl.ca/sites/ParlInfo/default/en\\_CA/People/Profile?personId=6212](https://lop.parl.ca/sites/ParlInfo/default/en_CA/People/Profile?personId=6212) (accessed 29 July 2021).

2 Barry Wilson, "Bud Olson," *The Western Producer*, 27 December 2007, <https://www.producer.com/news/bud-olson/> (accessed 29 July 2021).

they believed it allowed too much governmental intervention in the marketplace and control over farmer's businesses.<sup>34</sup>

The intensity of the Chicken and Egg War, however, encouraged all sides to come to the table and create national legislation that would encourage interprovincial cooperation. Ultimately, amendments were introduced to Bill C-176 in order to reach consensus. The changes included: the majority of the members of the Supervisory Council (NFPMC) were to be producers; Council members were to proportionately represent the three regions of Western, Central, and Atlantic Canada; the option of producer election or governmental appointment of marketing board members was introduced; the requirement for Council to demonstrate that the majority of producers were in favour of a marketing agency to regulate a given commodity; and boards with powers to manage supplies were limited to those marketing poultry and poultry products. This last amendment meant that the extension of supply management to other commodities required an amendment of the FPMAA. Although the basic principles of national supply management and federal ministerial appointment of Council were retained, the legislation was not the comprehensive plan the government originally desired.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, the passage of FPMAA in January 1972 and the creation of NFPMC to coordinate the development of marketing plans and promote interprovincial and export trade was a historic event. This Act and the Council were the culmination of decades-long activity on the part of farmers who sought a greater say in a

food system where they were typically disadvantaged as price takers. As the oversight body responsible for ensuring that the national supply management system of poultry and eggs works in the interest of producers and consumers, NFPMC had an especially important role to play in ensuring the success of this legislation.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, NFPMC was tasked with advising the Minister of Agriculture on all matters relating to the establishment and operation of agencies under the Act, reviewing the operations of these agencies to make certain they met the intended objectives of the legislation, working with the agencies to promote farm products in interprovincial and export trade, and consulting with provincial governments and other governmental bodies regarding intra-provincial trade.<sup>37</sup> The first Council was to consist of not less than three but no more than nine members, with at least equal representation of primary producers appointed by the Governor-in-Council. Either the appointed chair or vice-chair were to be a primary producer and Council members were to be appointed equally between the western provinces, the central provinces, and the Atlantic provinces. And no member was to be older than 70 years.<sup>38</sup>

Since its creation in 1972, the Council has evolved. Some of those changes were the natural evolutions of a maturing institution, while others were necessary to respond to the circumstances of broader social, economic, and political change. In the following chapters the evolution of the Council's roles and responsibilities as well as the challenges and successes it encountered in the preceding decades will be highlighted to demonstrate both the development and the resiliency of the organization. When assessing the importance of FPMAA (now the Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA)) and NFPMC (now the Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC)), the historical context in which NFPMC was founded and in which it has evolved must be recognized. Despite the challenges the Council and the agencies it has supervised have faced, the stability and value the Act offered the Canadian agricultural sector in the past and the benefits it allowed for producers and Canadians over time are demonstrated in the strength of the supply-managed farm sectors today.

## CHAPTER 2

### Establishing the Council in the 1970s

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#### Introduction

The 1970s saw dramatic political, economic, cultural, and social change. These changes were no less significant in agriculture as crop failures in many important trading countries led to increased grain and livestock feed prices, and a world energy crisis significantly raised many agricultural input costs for producers across agricultural sectors. This tumultuous period was a time of learning and adjustment for the National Farm Products Marketing Council (NFPMC) as it navigated the creation of three national marketing agencies: the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency (CEMA) in 1972, the Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency (CTMA) in 1973, and the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency (CCMA) in 1978. By the time the first national marketing agencies in eggs and turkey were created, producers were facing unprecedented feed, labour, capital, and energy costs. The energy crisis in particular had a significant effect on egg and poultry producers because of their reliance on petroleum-based energy for heat, fuel, and other agricultural inputs.<sup>39</sup> It was during this period that the problem of stagflation plagued major world economies and concerns about food supplies grew.

The Council reported on these challenges in their annual reports and highlighted international efforts. For example, NFPMC noted that in response to crises in the food system, the first World Food Conference was held in 1974.<sup>40</sup> At this conference the imbalance between world food supply and current demand was emphasized and, despite the rise in issues related to overproduction in the postwar period, the immediate concerns over scarcity in the world grain market, soaring prices, and famine in several Asian and African countries were highlighted as examples for why more production was needed. Although a number of scholars have since argued that the resolutions for food aid agreed to at this and subsequent conferences only served to reinforce the processes of social differentiation that had contributed to the famines, at that time many countries in the Global North were asked to increase aid supplies. These supplies, however, were often less than useful products, and food aid was used commonly as a method of surplus agricultural commodity disposal rather than an effective source of famine relief.<sup>41</sup>

Even as the cost of livestock feed improved in 1975, farmers in the poultry sectors continued to face rising costs in farm production, and overall, farmers in Canada continued to experience low wages in comparison to workers in other sectors of the economy.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, as the prices of many

commodities continued to rise over the course of the 1970s, greater scrutiny came from consumer advocates who generally argued that less regulation, rather than more, was needed to improve food prices.

It was in this context of volatile agricultural prices and fears about food scarcity and security that the newly created NFPMC was navigating the establishment of the first-ever national marketing agencies in the egg and poultry industries. This was no easy task. Early on, the Council recognized a number of operational issues among the agencies, especially in the egg sector. These problems required active participation by the Council to ensure that the national marketing agencies corrected course and implemented the appropriate solutions. This initial period of development was a challenging one, and while a number of issues remained by the end of the decade, the Council witnessed achievements in the industry, including their work in helping the national marketing agencies navigate uncharted waters to ensure Canadian egg and poultry producers enjoyed the benefits and responsibilities associated with supply management.

## The Establishment of the National Farm Products Marketing Council

As stipulated in section 6 of the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act (FPMAA) (1972), the duties of the Council were to advise the Minister of Agriculture on all matters relating to the establishment and operation of agencies. The goal was to maintain and promote an efficient and competitive agricultural industry, review agency operations to ensure they carried out their work in accordance with the Act, and work with agencies in promoting more effective marketing in interprovincial and export trade.<sup>43</sup> The Council was also responsible for consulting with provincial governments and their respective provincial supervisory agencies to coordinate industry efforts.<sup>44</sup> In conducting this work, the Council also had to demonstrate that “due regard for the interests of both producers and consumers” was practised.<sup>45</sup>

### *The First Members of Council*

After the legislation was passed in January 1972 and the Council created in principle, the Minister of Agriculture Bud Olson announced the appointment of six members to the NFPMC, effective April 1, 1972. The first Council Chairperson was Paul Babey, the Vice-Chair was Réal Roy, and other Council members were Ralph Ferguson, J. Adrien Lévesque, Hector Hill, and Albert Vielfaure. Each Council member was a leader in the farming community prior to their appointment and all had served in executive offices in various farming and commodity organizations. When accepting the chair position, Paul Babey expressed his hope that formerly divided industries would come together under the national legislation, predicting that this would not only benefit producers, but consumers and processors as well, who would be assured “the availability of high-quality, Canadian-produced food at stable and





### **Paul Babey, Chair, 1972–79**

(Figure 2.1)

Before becoming the first NFPMC chair in 1972, Babey was a long-time leader in the farming community. He had served as a president of the Farmers' Union of Alberta, held various roles in the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, National Farmers' Union, and Unifarm, was the vice-chair of the Environment Conservation Authority of Alberta, and a member of the Economic Council of Canada.<sup>1</sup> Until his appointment as NFPMC chair and his move to Ottawa, he also operated a farm near Beaverdam, Alberta.<sup>2</sup> In 1979, he resigned his post after being appointed vice-chair of the Farm Credit Corporation. He is remembered for his commitment to supply management and his leadership during the Council's formative years of existence.

### **Réal Roy, Vice-Chair, 1972–74**

A resident of Boucherville, Québec, Roy served as a director of LeGrade, a packing company operated by the Co-op Fédérée de Québec. He was also prominent in several other operations of the Co-op before being appointed to NFPMC in 1972. Roy's other leadership activities before his appointment included serving as president of both the Meat Packers' Council of Canada (Québec) and the Eastern Feed Grain Manufacturers' Association, and vice-president of the Agricultural Institute of Canada.<sup>3</sup>

### **Albert Vielfaure, Founding Member, 1972–93**

Vielfaure was a founding member of the Council and its longest serving member (21 years). Born in La Broquerie, Manitoba, in 1926, Vielfaure was involved in a number of farm and farm related businesses over the years. He also served in many community roles, including as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Co-op store, Caisse Populaire, and Church Board. Vielfaure was elected to the Manitoba Legislature from 1962 to 1969, a period in which he remained active in agriculture production and farm management, and from 1970 to 1975 he served on the Manitoba Hog Marketing Commission. In 1970, Vielfaure was appointed as a member of an advisory board to the federal Minister of Agriculture, and in 1972, he was appointed as a founding member of NFPMC. He served on the Council with distinction and was remembered for his significant contributions to the agricultural industry.<sup>4</sup>

1 NFPMC, *Annual Report of the National Farm Products Marketing Council, Fiscal Year 1972—1973* (Ottawa: 1973), 7.

2 Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame, *Inductees Yearbook* (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Government of Alberta, August 2019), <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/bce91134-1336-41e6-bd58-0017813afc4a/resource/e5a436fa-396f-4e80-9d45-5707e50e3152/download/alberta-agriculture-hall-of-fame-inductee-yearbook.pdf> (accessed September 25, 2021).

3 NFPMC, *Annual Report of the National Farm Products Marketing Council, Fiscal Year 1972—1973* (Ottawa: 1973), 7.

4 "Albert Vielfaure, 1923—2007," Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame, <http://www.manitobaaghalloffame.com/ahofmember/vielfaure-albert/> (accessed September 15, 2021).

reasonable prices."<sup>46</sup> The first Council members were also advocates of the supply management system. For instance, when Council member Ralph Ferguson addressed the New Brunswick Poultry Council in 1973, he observed that the legislation finally gave farmers the ability to cooperate and produce in "an orderly manner" and emphasized the benefits of allowing producers a fair price for their products and greater opportunity to participate in industry decisions.<sup>47</sup>

Over the following decade the makeup of the Council changed as calls for non-producer representation increased. This was particularly the case after the "Rotten Egg Scandal" (described later in this chapter), which saw consumer advocates and politicians apply pressure on then federal Minister of Agriculture Eugene Whelan to have more consumer representation on the Council. In 1975, new appointments were made, which increased NFPMC membership to eight people. This included the appointment of a vocal opponent of supply management, Maryon Brechin, who was well known

for consumer advocacy work and an immediate Past President of the Consumers' Association of Canada. As the first consumer representative ever appointed to the Council, Brechin quickly made newspaper headlines, both for her continued opposition to supply management while serving on the Council and her public statements that NFPMC had a vested interest in the success of national agencies as their success guaranteed its own existence. She was also critical that the Council did not have more power to institute change.<sup>48</sup> Also appointed at this time was George C. Home of Ottawa, a representative of the Canadian Labour Congress, and M.E. Pringle of Chilliwack, British Columbia, a former MP and once an active member of the poultry industry.<sup>49</sup> This diversification in the Council's membership was seen as an attempt by NFPMC and the Minister of Agriculture to provide more accountability to the various stakeholders of the egg and poultry industries and to give more consideration to the concerns of diverse sectors of the Canadian public.<sup>50</sup> While this also meant more differences of opinion at Council meetings, and sometimes controversy, the diversity of members also ensured more stakeholder interests were represented.

Still, fundamentally the Council had the support of Whelan, who, as Minister of Agriculture, was a significant driving force for the creation of national marketing boards during this period. As NFPMC

### ***Hon. Eugene Whelan, Federal Minister of Agriculture, 1972–79, 1980–84***

Whelan was among the strongest supporters of organized marketing during his tenure as federal Minister of Agriculture. Before entering politics, Whelan was a farmer and had also worked various blue-collar jobs in manufacturing industries. He grew up in a poor family in Amherstburg, Ontario, and although he did not complete high school, he went on to serve in local politics prior to being elected an MP in 1962. Whelan complained that many politicians and bureaucrats knew very little about the challenges farmers faced and was a staunch supporter of supply management because he recognized the need for farmers to receive a reasonable return for their labour and costs.<sup>1</sup> During his tenure as federal Minister of Agriculture, Whelan proclaimed national supply management for eggs, chicken, and turkeys. He also fought hard, advocating for more farmer support programs, to support farmers of unregulated commodities during a period of heavy American and European subsidies. Whelan is remembered as one of Canada's outstanding ministers of agriculture and a dedicated spokesperson for the Canadian agricultural industry.<sup>2</sup>

### ***M. Ervin (Jerry) Pringle, Vice-Chair, 1975–76***

Before being appointed as the vice-chair of NFPMC in 1975, Pringle had served as a Member of Parliament for Fraser Valley East. In his maiden speech in Parliament in 1968, Pringle highlighted the increasing concerns about the retention of farmland in his region and the growing food requirements of British Columbia's increasing urban population, and he expressed his support for the proposed federal marketing legislation that gave farmers more control over their markets.<sup>3</sup> A previous hatchery owner and an active member of the British Columbian poultry industry, Pringle was well aware of the difficulties farmers faced in the period before supply management. He resigned his position at NFPMC to become the chair of CEMA in October 1976.<sup>4</sup>

1 Eugene Whelan with Rick Archbold, *Whelan: The Man in the Green Stetson* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1986), 72.

2 "Hon. Eugene Whelan (1924—2013)," The Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame, <https://www.oahf.on.ca/inductee/hon-eugene-whelan/> (accessed September 25, 2021).

3 "House of Commons Debates, 28th Parliament, 1st Session: Vol. 1, p. 224—25," Canadian Parliamentary Historical resources, [https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates\\_HOC2801\\_01/226?r=0&s=1](https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.debates_HOC2801_01/226?r=0&s=1) (accessed September 26, 2021).

4 NFPMC, *Annual Report of the National Farm Products Marketing Council, Fiscal Year 1974—1975* (Ottawa: 1975), 7.





Minister of Agriculture Eugene Whelan and Council member Jerry Pringle at the annual convention of the BC Federation of Agriculture. (Figure 2.2)

*Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.*

member Adrien Lévesque commented when speaking to the Manitoba Turkey Marketing Board in Winnipeg in March 1974, Whelan was himself “a genuine farmer who has never backed away from the principle that the farmer is entitled to a reasonable return for his work.”<sup>51</sup> As Lévesque noted, generally Council members believed strongly that “the principle that prices of commodities should reflect cost of production plus a reasonable return [would] bring more stability,” and thus, be “an advantage to both the producer and the consumer.”<sup>52</sup> Also in

1974, Jerry Pringle, NFPMC vice-chair, noted that for too long worldwide, low-cost food policies had “influenced agricultural producers to ignore costly surpluses while denying producers the right to place a price on their products.”<sup>53</sup> The supply management system offered an alternative whereby farmers were able to better influence production and receive a fair return for their labours.

### *Establishing Council Operations*

In accordance with the FPMAA, the City of Ottawa was designated as the headquarters of the NFPMC. While the Council initially occupied a temporary office space in the Varette Building on Albert Street, they eventually moved to a permanent office space located on the seventh floor of the Booth Building on Sparks Street by July 1972.<sup>54</sup>

After the Council’s first meeting in April 1972, its members quickly began discussions on creating the first national marketing plan. The Canadian egg producers were the first producers to seek to establish a national marketing plan given the increasing volatility in the sector and low egg prices, and Canadian turkey producers were eager to begin similar discussions. Because of the urgency of these discussions and the work involved in the creation of national marketing plans, Council members admitted to having had little time or attention for developing an extensive administrative organization for the Council.<sup>55</sup> Because of this, they relied on the assistance of a small but competent group of staff members, including Executive Director Hugh V. Walker, Administrative Services Director Lawrence P. Kavanagh, and Legal Counsel Raymond Roger. Most staff members were seconded from other government departments and agencies, such as the Canada Department of Regional Economic Expansion, Canada Department of Agriculture, the Economic Council of Canada, and the Canadian Livestock Feed Board.<sup>56</sup> For instance, Walker had previously served as the Director of Economic Research at the Canadian Livestock Feed Board and was a past manager of Natural Resource Studies, Canada Department of Regional Economic Expansion, while Kavanagh had been the Assistant Chief of

Administration at the Economic Council of Canada.<sup>57</sup> The position of Executive Director was especially important, as the Council's professional, technical, and clerical personnel all reported to Walker, who was a public service appointee, but also acted as Secretary to the Council and participated an ex officio member in the policymaking deliberations of Council as well.<sup>58</sup>

There were important considerations for Council staffing. Of immense importance in the 1970s was the implementation of Official Languages Regulations in the organization. Substantial progress was recognized over the years, as members and staff took language training courses to ensure compliance with the new regulations and new bilingual staff were hired.<sup>59</sup>

Then, given the newness of the legislation and efforts to solve the problems associated with establishing, monitoring, and enforcing national marketing plan regulations, competent legal counsel was also important. The Council's legal personnel was provided by the Department of Justice as part of the Department's obligations to support the Minister of Agriculture with counsel for the Department of Agriculture and related bodies, including NFPMC.<sup>60</sup>

The early staffing of NFPMC was designed to meet Council's needs for administration, information, research, liaison, and consultation expertise across various agricultural and related governmental sectors. But it was also clear from the first annual report that NFPMC members and staff were also appreciative of the assistance they had been provided by other government officials, farm organization representatives, members of producer groups, and the farming community more generally.<sup>61</sup>

### *Cooperation, Communication, and Public Information*

During the first years of the Council's operations, initiating and maintaining close contact with various federal and provincial government departments and agencies involved in the production and marketing of Canadian farm products was essential. Meetings with national producer groups and other farm organizations, as well as private institutions involved in marketing Canadian farm products were also critical. Council members and staff participated in various meetings, seminars, conferences and workshops that had direct or indirect implications for the objectives and functions of NFPMC. These opportunities to meet with industry representatives and partners also gave the Council the opportunity to communicate their purpose and responsibility to the farming and marketing community. Other initiatives supported these efforts to bring a wider awareness to NFPMC activities, including advertising the Council's undertakings through brochures, radio and television interviews, and seminars.<sup>62</sup> These activities continued throughout the decade, and by 1976 an official media relations program for promoting and explaining the Council's objectives and programs was established.<sup>63</sup>

Over the years the Council sponsored marketing seminars among federal and provincial partners. In 1974, the Council held such a seminar in Banff, Alberta, and reported that the event enabled the Council to share information and hear from provincial boards about their roles, functions, activities,

and supervisory practices. The event also facilitated greater understanding of the intent and application of marketing legislation and the functions and operations of various commodity boards. And it was a moment to discuss marketing problems experienced by these boards and review the objectives of national marketing plans. The seminar also gave each participant the opportunity to suggest improvements in the existing marketing plans and programs.<sup>64</sup> The 1974 annual report made it clear that the objectives of those present were vast and multifaceted. They included the following objectives:

[the] continuity of adequate supplies of high-quality farm products, economic stability, a national approach to export market development, product promotion and development, upgrading the quality of information, fostering a spirit of mutual trust, cooperation and accommodation, adoption of the concept of comparative advantage in allocating future market growth, strengthening the liaison and consultations between the National Farm Products Marketing Council and its provincial counterparts, consumer participation in national marketing programs, and collaboration in research activities between all marketing institutions such as the National Farm Products Marketing Council, Provincial Farm Products Marketing Boards, Council and Régie, the National Marketing Agencies and Provincial Commodity Boards.<sup>65</sup>

This crowded agenda meant that the Council continued to host federal-provincial marketing seminars in order to discuss problems encountered in the implementation and administration of the national marketing programs and develop appropriate solutions. The issues discussed included how to effectively estimate market demand, assign quota and quota values, implement appropriate pricing policies, and communicate the purpose of marketing boards and agencies.<sup>66</sup>

In 1977, a particularly significant event was the International Egg Commission meeting, held in Canada for the first time, in Calgary, Alberta. Attended by more than 300 delegates from 22 countries, participants at this meeting gained greater insight into the national marketing programs adopted in Canada to stabilize the poultry industry, and Council members became more aware of the conditions and systems of egg production around the globe.<sup>67</sup>

Over the years the Council continued to work to initiate, maintain, and strengthen its contacts and encourage a stronger understanding among the farming and marketing community about NFPMC's functions and duties. The Council recognized in 1975 that the "concept of national marketing is a fairly new and complex one, hence considerable effort and energy is devoted by Council to explaining it to interested parties in society."<sup>68</sup> The Council's roles and responsibilities, however, were ostensibly under negotiation during this period. While the fundamental mandate seemed clear enough, there was certainly room for interpretation. In 1979, the Minister of Agriculture issued a press release that outlined guidelines for the Council to follow in the supervision and regulation of national marketing agencies

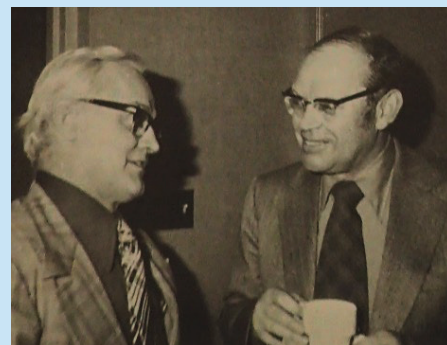
and instructed the Council to set out and make known the procedures it used to handle appeals and complaints and to redress legitimate grievances and the reasons for its decisions.<sup>69</sup>

By the end of the 1970s, NFPMC reported that, “in most instances,” the Council and its national marketing agency partners “enjoyed a spirit of co-operation and shared objectives,” and that considerable progress has been made toward “improving council’s relationship with all the agencies under its supervision.” It reported it was eager to see “this co-operative effort...maintained and strengthened” in the years to come.<sup>70</sup>

### *Research and Market Development*

Another important element of the Council’s work was research and market development. In terms of research, this included analyzing existing data, as well as searching for new sources of information that could help the Council make decisions about the industries under its supervision. NFPMC staff spent a good deal of time during the 1970s assembling and analyzing data about provincial and national egg and poultry production, marketing outlets, sales figures, exports, and imports. They also considered the wider agricultural context, especially the related commodity sectors such as feed grains.<sup>71</sup> Although the Council had limited means to pursue a comprehensive economic research program, over the years it was able to acquire more staff to help investigate the pressing concerns in the poultry sectors and other important domestic and international developments. Generally, this research was conducted through small scale internal projects and limited numbers of contracted studies.<sup>72</sup> It became clear early that the Council needed to foster excellent cooperation with the Economics and Poultry Divisions of Agriculture Canada and the Agricultural Division of Statistics Canada in order to ensure its research staff had the economic and statistical information required to complete their work. A number of important research projects were conducted during the 1970s that provided the Council with the information needed to make policy and operational recommendations about everything from establishing a new national marketing agency to everyday administrative issues with the national agencies.<sup>73</sup>

A number of hearings were also held to assess cost-of-production formulas and matters related to the interprovincial and export trade of regulated commodities.<sup>74</sup> By the end of the decade, the Council contended that one of its most important responsibilities was “to foster and maintain an objective, creative, and analytical research capacity,” as NFPMC felt that it “should be able to function as an equal



Council member J. Adrien Lévesque and  
M. Tessier of Agricultural Canada in 1975. (Figure 2.3)

*Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.*

contributor in technical discussions with the agencies or any other organizations and individuals” and provide “more significant input into a number of issues affecting the agencies under its jurisdiction.”<sup>75</sup> The Council understood that a strong research capability was essential to its mandate.

Research into the operation and related conditions facing domestic producers was important, but so too was research about international conditions. When the Council was created it was tasked with ensuring that the national agencies were effective in marketing farm products for domestic and export trade. Council members were regularly involved in international trade missions meant to assess the development of export markets for Canadian products during this period. Early on, Council members took trips to the United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland in an effort to develop markets for egg and poultry products.<sup>76</sup> The Council’s market development efforts intensified by mid-decade, when discussions between federal and provincial trade departments also involved export managers, brokers, and processors. At the time, the Council believed there were promising opportunities to increase exports of Canadian egg and poultry products to places such as the Caribbean, South America, Asia, Western Europe, and the Middle East.<sup>77</sup> In 1974, NFPMC, along with CEMA and Agriculture Canada, also participated in a trade mission to Austria and Iraq to assess the market potential of these countries. In terms of actual trade, exports of fresh table eggs to Hong Kong rose in the latter half of 1974 and early 1975, and more market potential was identified. Trial orders were also placed by firms in Austria, another market the Council hoped would develop.<sup>78</sup> And as noted earlier in this chapter, Canada was among the countries that participated in the World Food Programme that served as an outlet for poultry products, including egg powder, which was shipped to a number of countries with food insecurity.<sup>79</sup>

Ultimately, however, exports of Canadian poultry products declined. While efforts to secure new markets abroad continued, by the late 1970s, total egg exports had decreased, and imports were controlled under the allowable guidelines stipulated in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Egg imports continued in accordance with the numbers permitted in GATT and increased supplementary imports were not uncommon, but controls were implemented to protect the domestic supply program.<sup>80</sup>

Although the Council admitted that it did not have the mandate or resources needed to aggressively explore and exploit new market opportunities in concert with producers and processors during this time, it still believed that it performed an “important coordinating function of bringing prospective buyers and the agencies together.”<sup>81</sup> Although national marketing agencies had been created to protect domestic producers and ensure a fair price for their products, the government had not given up hope of expanding exports either, and NFPMC was tasked with investigating and encouraging new market opportunities whenever possible.<sup>82</sup>

# Coordinating the Establishment and Operation of National Marketing Agencies

NFPMC published its first annual report on March 31, 1973, detailing the Council’s activities and expenditures during the first year of operation. The Council’s main concern after organizing its formal structure and staff was beginning the necessary procedures to establish national marketing agencies. In its first year of operation, the Council received applications to form national marketing agencies from the producers of eggs and turkeys. The following sections describe how, by 1980, three national marketing agencies were established in the egg, turkey, and chicken sectors, and how the Council worked with these agencies to establish stable and efficient systems of operations.

The Council refined its duties and responsibilities during this decade as well, especially in light of the specific problems agencies encountered. All agencies under the Council’s supervision saw pressures rise from issues related to import policies, quota levels, jurisdiction problems, and the disturbing effects of increasing inflation and interest rates.<sup>83</sup> These issues were handled with varying degrees of success during these years, but throughout the period the Council remained steadfast in its commitment to improve the industries under its supervision, and members were reassured by the government support, federal and provincial, that they received in order to ensure agencies could grow and prosper in the future.

## Canadian Egg Marketing Agency

The first submission to NFPMC came from the Canadian Egg Producers Council on August 9, 1972. As noted in Chapter 1, recurrent cycles of boom and bust in farm prices caused volatile conditions for egg farmers, and the proposal for a national marketing agency was meant to eliminate these problems and secure a more stable and prosperous farm sector. The central elements of the plan called for a national agency that could exercise authority over and administer a national plan to involve the existing provincial egg boards. The national agency was also to allocate market share among the provinces, adjust those shares as required, determine the conditions under which eggs could be traded within and between provinces and for export. Further it would create an orderly management of product to market, regulate egg imports with federal authorities as necessary for the protection of the plan, and coordinate trade more generally. This would include the imposition of levies and the assignment of administrative responsibilities to the respective provincial and federal authorities.<sup>84</sup>

After receiving the egg plan proposal, the Council held public hearings into its merits in Ottawa, Moncton, and Calgary during September 1972. Holding public hearings was an important responsibility of NFPMC, as hearings were meant to provide an opportunity for interested citizens and other stakeholders to express their views on any proposals under consideration by the Council. In order to ensure adequate participation in these hearings, NFPC held a press conference in August to announce



the hearings and advertised them in the *Canada Gazette* and several daily and weekly Canadian newspapers, as well as through radio announcements made by the information division of the Canadian Department of Agriculture. Farm organizations, consumer groups, and relevant university personnel also were notified about the hearings and encouraged to participate. Forty-five submissions were presented at these hearings, and after an in-depth study of the proposal, the submissions, and other consultations undertaken, the Council determined that most citizens participating in the process were in favour of the egg plan, and it recommended to the federal Minister of Agriculture that such an agency be created.<sup>85</sup>

CEMA was established by Order-in-Council with effect on December 15, 1972. To help defray expenses during its first year of operation, CEMA was awarded \$100,000 in January 1973 and later became operational on June 4, 1973.<sup>86</sup> At that time, the agency had a number of challenges to contend with. First, it began operations when there was a surplus of eggs on the Canadian market. In an effort to stabilize the domestic situation, the agency initiated an interim surplus removal program, but it was not long before significant problems in this program arose. The Council had anticipated that “the surplus removal program could pose some difficult problems to the Agency,”<sup>87</sup> and while export contracts were pursued and some 250,000 pounds of egg powder was part of the Canadian pledge to the World Food Programme, the agency was unable to successfully manage the surplus egg supply, which resulted in the need to store millions of eggs.<sup>88</sup>

The Council tried to help CEMA correct operational issues and facilitate export trade opportunities. And it also established a formal Consultative Committee to CEMA in November 1973 that included representatives from the Canadian Feed Manufacturers’ Association, the Canadian Hatchery Federation, the Canadian Poultry and Egg Council, the Retail Council of Canada, the Canadian Egg Producers’ Council, and the Consumers’ Association of Canada to ensure industry stakeholders’ interests were all considered when determining solutions to general industry issues.<sup>89</sup> The Council also appointed a Supply Management Committee, which consisted of a representative from each province, one producer representative named by the Canadian Egg Producers’ Council, and a chairperson chosen by the Council. This committee was to deal with matters relating to supply management for eggs, allot the national quota, develop criteria for establishing the amount of unregulated production in each province, and provide measures for more accurate accounting and monitoring of the regulated production in each province.<sup>90</sup> The Council recognized that CEMA was “pioneering in a new area of marketing,” and therefore, it had expected problems to materialize, but it also emphasized that to overcome these issues, “cooperation, understanding, accommodation and trust” were needed from all participants.<sup>91</sup>

While the Council believed in the principles of CEMA’s plan, operational issues continued, and in 1974 a number of events occurred that brought both the agency and the Council under public scrutiny. First, early in the year the Food Prices Review Board (FPRB), chaired by economist Beryl Plumptre, a staunch opponent of the supply management system, issued a report that expressed concern about high

egg prices. Her opposition to supply management was obvious, as she ignored the fact that egg prices, although they had risen, had not done so to the same extent as many other commodities, including other sources of protein such as beef, pork, and fish. The Council found FPRB's criticisms of CEMA and egg prices unjustified, and egg prices did decline later that year, but before that could occur another significant event pointed to CEMA's challenges in managing national egg supplies. As discovered in 1974, and known as the "Rotten Egg Scandal," CEMA had failed to properly store the millions of eggs it had needed to remove from the market, resulting in huge quantities spoiling. As the first national marketing agency established under FPMAA, CEMA faced intense scrutiny, and this mistake was costly to the agency's image, as well as to the public's faith in the supply management system more generally. The Council and the Minister of Agriculture Eugene Whelan were also criticized for not having provided proper oversight. Highly publicized debates between government officials, industry stakeholders, and the public resulted as wasted food in a period of famine and scarcity elsewhere in the world was seen as particularly outrageous.<sup>92</sup>

In response to the scandal, emergency meetings were held, and the Council and other industry stakeholders discussed ways in which CEMA could be restructured and placed on a sounder operating basis. An Interim Management Committee was tasked with revising the surplus removal program, but as public outrage continued over the course of the year, a Provincial Ministerial Committee was formed with representatives from the federal

Department of Agriculture, NFPMC, and provincial supervisory boards to study CEMA's problems more closely and improve CEMA's structure, administration, pricing policies, and quota allocations.<sup>93</sup>

The chronic egg surpluses and increasing debt associated with the cost of the surplus removal program were clear indicators that change was needed. The Council and the appointed Supply Management Committee outlined the need for more effective mechanisms in all matters related to supply management, including quota allocations, the amount of unregulated production in each province, and accounting and monitoring practices.<sup>94</sup> This crisis facilitated a number of changes in the agency and its policies, including cutbacks in production, more rigorous penalty and levy collection systems, and better accounting of production and marketing across the country.<sup>95</sup> In reflecting on the spoilage that occurred, the Council noted how CEMA had not had the proper mechanisms in place, including enough representatives in the field to handle surplus removal, marketing, and storage operations, and thus these tasks were handed over to provincial boards that were unequipped to handle the surplus eggs. Beyond the losses borne by producers, the widespread criticism by the press and various other organizations representing consumers' interests harmed the industry. By October, a Special Parliamentary



Round table discussion with Maurice Touchette, Robert L. Gamelin, Paul Babey, and Beryl Plumptre in 1974. (Figure 2.4) Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.



Committee on egg marketing held hearings that lasted until December. The Committee's report revealed that the Council had actively tried to acquire more information from CEMA regarding the surplus eggs and had made numerous recommendations and established investigative committees into the matter, but that, ultimately, the Council's limited authority under FPMAA limited the effectiveness of these inquiries. Nonetheless, the Committee recommended that the Council increase its supervision of CEMA's operations, especially as it worked to ensure the agency met the interests of both producers and consumers. It further recommended that the Council increase communication with all industry stakeholders and share information more consistently. And it noted that the egg plan and the legislation should be reviewed to ensure adequate powers were provided to the Council to fulfill its statutory duties.<sup>96</sup>

The Committee also made several observations and recommendations with respect to CEMA. It was clear that proper quota allocations and enforcement regulations were needed and that a permanent import-export control policy was required to ensure proper supplies were meeting the market. Ultimately, this episode resulted in the creation of a number of further measures to help guarantee more effective agency operations and more oversight opportunities for the Council. It became obvious to Council members that, given the newness of CEMA and the problems faced by the egg industry, more adequate information and communication was needed at this crucial period of agency development.<sup>97</sup>

In a March 1975 meeting of provincial Ministers of Agriculture, the Council submitted a policy position paper that explained that for the national egg plan to be effective, "there had to be mutual trust, co-operation and accommodation on the part of all signatories." It noted, on the basis of a two-year performance period, "that these essential ingredients were not forthcoming from many of the signatories" and that "it was obvious that a strong central agency was mandatory if CEMA was to develop in order to benefit Canadian producers and consumers."<sup>98</sup> The Council felt strongly that the lessons learned during the agency's first years of operation demanded a reworking of the principles of the egg plan. The Council put forward recommendations that reflected the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on Egg Marketing's proposed restructuring of CEMA to include an independent chairperson appointed by the federal government and an executive committee drawn from the agency's board of directors. This restructured entity would deal with policy matters and plan for the short-term and long-term agency goals. It was recommended that a general manager direct the daily operations and administration of CEMA. The Council further advocated a transferring of the administration of provincial powers for the agency's supply management program, as well as a transfer of provincial powers in the area of pricing. It noted that "the management of quota is an area of critical importance if the agency is to succeed and it is necessary that provincial and federal powers in the area of allocating, monitoring, enforcement and transfer of quotas be delegated to the Agency." Overall, the Council expressed its commitment to vigilance in its supervisory role and continuing to aid CEMA with its market development programs.<sup>99</sup>

By the mid-1970s, it was apparent that instituting supply management in the egg sector was, and continued to be, a difficult process. But the Council took heart in the fact that federal and provincial governments and producers from across Canada were committed to ensuring the system worked. As CEMA improved its practices and most of the immediate issues abated, public criticism also lessened. The agency's financial situation improved, debts were settled, levy collection organized, export controls were set, and most importantly, production was under better control.<sup>100</sup> The Council noted this was a period of major developments in the innovation and reorganization of CEMA. These developments included a new pricing system, centralization of pricing and selling operations, improved domestic production control, and the establishment of import quotas on imported eggs and egg products—all measures that were necessary to strengthen the supply management system.<sup>101</sup> The effects of chaotic and unequal marketing conditions across the country, a lack of trained and experienced staff to manage the national plan, heavy debts, continued egg imports despite domestic surplus supplies, and a lack of personnel to enforce policies and quotas had all caused significant problems for CEMA. Still, the Council recognized the progress CEMA had made to address these issues. Indeed, it congratulated the agency on “transforming a financially crippled agency into a financially sound one within the year.”<sup>102</sup>

The agency's problems, however, were not over. Administrative changes were still needed, as well as a strengthening of existing policies and practices, including penalties for overproduction, and increased public relations and promotional efforts were necessary. But the Council saw themselves as having an important leadership role in facilitating this change in the industry, and members continued to consult with industry stakeholders about best practices and to offer recommendations regarding improved egg production control. Overall, it was clear that superior information, monitoring, and control systems were required to ensure the effective application of supply management to the egg sector.<sup>103</sup>

The Council was pleased to report in 1976 that CEMA was entering a phase of progress and consolidation after signing a revised federal-provincial comprehensive agreement for the marketing of eggs on July 29, 1976. The agreement improved federal and provincial relations and promised to achieve “a greater measure of stability than was previously possible in Canada's egg industry.”<sup>104</sup> The signing was significant because it meant that the provinces had agreed to work cooperatively and allow CEMA to determine the national producer price for Grade A Large eggs based on a cost-of-production formula. Other provisions of the agreement included regular signatory meetings, at the request of the Council, to review the operations of the plan and the agency.<sup>105</sup> Investigations into cost-of-production formulas also took place during these years and changes implemented, including those necessary to adhere to Anti-Inflation Board guidelines. As in earlier years, the Council continued to monitor and guide CEMA regarding the cost-of-production formula for eggs and advise on the methodological aspects of the procedures in place.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, in implementing the federal-provincial agreements for provincial allocations and inventories of layers, the Council was tasked with monitoring compliance. Later in the 1970s, disputes among signatories materialized. In 1977, for example, the Council held two hearings and

arbitrated two other disputes between Québec and CEMA, and participated in one arbitration involving CEMA and Ontario.<sup>107</sup> The Council was also tasked with monitoring CEMA's financial statements weekly (for surplus removal, trading and administration and promotion) and making suggestions, when appropriate, especially about its promotional outlays and its budget.<sup>108</sup> While these monitoring and supervisory roles had always existed, CEMA's earlier missteps resulted in a new urgency in relation to these matters. A number of operational reviews were conducted to better ensure the effective management of the agency and its provincial boards, and in 1978 the Supreme Court rendered judgment on CEMA's surplus disposal prerogatives and levy powers. Indeed, it upheld the validity of FPMAA.<sup>109</sup> Ultimately, a consensus was reached whereby CEMA would impose an interprovincial and export levy on all producers at a specified rate on all eggs produced, minus the quantity produced for local or intra-provincial trade. Further, each provincial board would also impose a levy at the same rate on all eggs produced, minus the quantity produced for extraprovincial trade. Acting as an agent for the agency, each provincial egg board would collect two levies: one to be used by the egg board and the other to be used by CEMA to defray surplus removal and administration costs.<sup>110</sup> NFPMC commended the provinces for the "speed and effectiveness" with which they dealt with these issues. It reported that the "goodwill which prevailed at this time was enhanced by the participants' willingness and desire to make national marketing plans function effectively" and forecast "harmonious federal-provincial cooperation; thereby strengthening national unity."<sup>111</sup>

Despite these achievements in the agency's practices, in 1979 another crisis occurred when CEMA's appointed chair resigned. The *Globe and Mail* reported in 1980 that the chair, Murray McBride, objected to a board of directors dominated by farm representatives and controlled by the General Manager Max Roytenberg, who he alleged was exceeding his authority, made judgmental improprieties, and tried to usurp the duties of the chief executive officer—duties assigned by law to the chair.<sup>112</sup> The Council prepared the report that suggested Roytenberg had overstepped his authority and showed some poor judgment, but they also credited him with instituting the needed changes to rescue "a troubled CEMA from the brink of bankruptcy." They also questioned why McBride did not make his complaints to the Minister of Agriculture sooner.<sup>113</sup> While the Council was concerned that the resignation of McBride "resulted in the loss of the only public interest representative on the CEMA's board of directors," they were still committed to seeing the organization move forward.<sup>114</sup>

In general, throughout the 1970s the Council had to work with CEMA to ensure the organization was putting effective measures into place to limit levels of excess product and ensure proper management of supplies. Ensuring proper production levels was difficult as markets continued to shift throughout these years, but by the end of the decade, prices were reasonably stable throughout the industry chain.<sup>115</sup>

### *Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency*

The next proposal for a national marketing agency came from the National Turkey Coordinating Committee in November 1972. The plan sought the establishment of a national turkey agency that could better determine the quantity of turkey meat needed for consumer demand, establish an equitable system for allocating market share among participating provinces, provide for fair and stable producer prices, and help plan for the development of the turkey industry as a whole.<sup>116</sup> Similar to the public hearings for the egg plan, public hearings were held across the country in February. The hearings in Ottawa, Truro, and Vancouver heard 36 in-person submissions and considered other mailed-in submissions. After review, NFPMC concluded that most participants favoured a national agency and recommended this to the federal Minister of Agriculture. An Order-in-Council proclaiming CTMA was passed on December 18, 1973, and the agency was established shortly after. CTMA held its first meeting on January 25, 1974, at its head offices in Winnipeg. Provincial boards already existed in Alberta, Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, and Saskatchewan, which represented more than 98 percent of the total Canadian production. These were the original members of CTMA, while Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick were considered unregulated areas. In November 1974, New Brunswick also became a full member.<sup>117</sup>

Important elements in the original plan were multifaceted. They included the agency's determination and allocation of market shares to producers; creation of policies to ensure compliance; monitoring and adjusting of shares as required; establishing, regulating, and coordinating the conditions under which interprovincial and export trade would take place with the respective authorities; establishing orderly pricing and flow of product to market; regulating imports as necessary for the viability of the plan; and coordinating the administrative duties of CTMA and the provincial turkey boards.<sup>118</sup> Having witnessed the issues with CEMA during 1974, CTMA spent considerable time and energy on issues related to quota allocation. As the Council noted in its report about CTMA in the 1974–75 fiscal year, “the level, timing and issuance of quota orders constitute the heart of supply management.”<sup>119</sup> Similar to eggs, turkey was being overproduced during this time, and it was recognized by the majority of CTMA members that there “was an urgent need to develop a method that would ensure penalization of individuals who produced above their quota.”<sup>120</sup> In response to CTMA plans, the Council emphasized the need to establish adequate machinery for working out quota allocations. To that end it monitored production and marketing, including interprovincial movements and exports. It further outlined proper pricing-formulation policies, as well as policies about surplus removal and pricing. And it worked on product promotion, effective industry consultation, and public relations.<sup>121</sup>

In 1975, CTMA instituted a production cut to better coordinate supply with demand and reduce existing surplus inventories. But similar to CEMA, CTMA encountered issues in its first years that required coordinated efforts to find solutions. The application of effective policies to ensure a successful

system of supply management was still underway in the mid-1970s. And questions on whether more processed turkey products should be included in the regulation of imports continued.<sup>122</sup> In 1976, further recommendations refined quota allocation in turkey production and the Council recommended the agency conduct further studies on their cost-of-production calculations. The Council also developed guidelines to ensure turkey producers were meeting the market needs of processors.<sup>123</sup> Unlike eggs, however, turkeys were priced by each provincial board, so initially the cost-of-production models developed for turkey were not intended to be a pricing formula but rather a benchmark from which prices would “respond to market realities above or below a recognized cost of production.”<sup>124</sup> The Council advised CTMA on industry matters as they arose during this decade, including the issues of the cost-of-production structure and overproduction penalties, and the Council continued to suggest improvements that could benefit the industry, including developing more robust forecasting models and exploring new market opportunities.<sup>125</sup>

### *Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency*

Negotiations for a national marketing plan for broiler (chicken) production were held among the various provinces as soon as FPMAA was enacted in 1972. Despite this action, and the consensus that existed among the provinces for the need for a national agency, it took longer for a proposal for a national chicken marketing plan to arrive at Council than with eggs and turkey. Despite the circumstances of the Chicken and Egg War described in the first chapter of this book, initially chicken producers were more divided about whether greater regulation was desirable. Ultimately, however, in 1974, producers submitted a formal national agency proposal to NFPMC. Similar to the egg and turkey plans, the proposal was designed to eliminate the instability of supply, prices, and income that had long prevailed in the industry and maintain order in the domestic broiler market.<sup>126</sup> However, after receiving the proposal and reviewing its provisions carefully, NFPMC recognized that it needed more evidence that the majority of producers favoured establishing an agency, particularly as a significant number of producers, especially those in Québec, appeared not to have endorsed the plan.<sup>127</sup> The Council formed a Special Committee to ensure Québec’s participation and examine the differences between the provinces with respect to the various provisions of the plan.<sup>128</sup>

After more revisions, another proposal was submitted to the Council and public hearings were held in St. John’s, Ottawa, and Winnipeg in May 1974. Thirty-seven submissions from across all provinces were made. After careful consideration of the submissions made, the Council suggested more changes to the proposal, which was again put back to the Canadian Broiler Council for review.<sup>129</sup> A revised proposal for the formation of a national chicken marketing agency was once again submitted to NFPMC in August 1976, and after conducting a review of the proposal, the Council held more public hearings, this time in Edmonton, Moncton, and Ottawa during November. Sixty-three submissions were



made from provincial departments of agriculture, producers, and special interest groups such, as the Canadian Restaurant Association and the Consumers' Association of Canada, and corporations, such as Kentucky Fried Chicken. After this process, the Council made further suggestions to the Canadian Broiler Council "to ensure protection of the public interest," including ensuring that advisory committees dealing with quotas and pricing were operating effectively in every province. It also worked to ensure that a system of ensuring quota adherence and proper pricing practices was in place.<sup>130</sup> Having dealt with these issues in the egg and turkey industries, it was clear that they did not want to repeat any of the mistakes made with previous agencies. They also stipulated that the plan would be reviewed after two years of operation.<sup>131</sup>

On June 14, 1977, the federal Minister of Agriculture announced that Cabinet had approved the creation of a national chicken marketing agency in principle and NFPMC began a series of consultations and negotiations with the provinces concerning the elements of the revised plan.<sup>132</sup> By the end of December 1978, the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency (CCMA) was proclaimed by Order-in-Council. Eight provincial governments and producer organizations joined the new agency by 1979, with Newfoundland expected to sign within the year following the creation of a provincial board. Alberta did not sign on at that time but agreed to cooperate.<sup>133</sup> Although consensus materialized to enable the creation of CCMA, Alberta's

refusal to join the national agency was the first sign that cooperation in the chicken industry was fragile.

By the end of 1979, British Columbia served notice of its intention to withdraw from the agency, citing the belief that "its interests and market requirements had not been fully considered by the agency when national quota was distributed."<sup>134</sup> Although British Columbia withdrew its notice in 1980 after some negotiation regarding allocations and licensing orders, early disagreements among provincial boards would only be heightened in the following decade. Furthermore, by the end of the 1970s, CCMA was still working intensely to draft a number of regulations and guidelines to satisfy the federal-provincial agreement and ensure the effective operation of the agency.<sup>135</sup>

### Other Commodities

As soon as the legislation was created, NFPMC undertook regular consultations and discussion with various commodity groups who wished to investigate and assess the potential for a national marketing



Public hearings for a national chicken marketing plan in 1974; Ralph Ferguson, Paul Babey, and Albert Vielfaure. (Figure 2.5)  
Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.

plan under FPMAA. During this decade, producer groups from a diverse group of commodity producers expressed interest in the Act, including sheep, vegetable (white beans, tomatoes, potatoes), fruit (apples, peaches, pears, plums, and cherries), corn, oilseeds, canola, forage seeds, grass seeds, tobacco, and pregnant mares' urine, wild rice, and soybean producers. Although the Council had identified a number of commodity sectors that "might logically become part of national or regional supply management programs," and NFPMC was prepared to undertake the necessary work to formulate the development of these plans, only the supply-managed egg, turkey, and chicken agencies emerged.<sup>136</sup> Still, many Council members, including Vice-Chair James Boynton, brought their experience from other commodity sectors and worked to expand the number of national marketing agencies.

### **James Boynton, Vice-Chair, 1976–84**

A resident of Chesley, Ontario, Boynton had had a long career serving as the executive secretary of the Ontario Pork Producers' Marketing Board before his appointment as Council vice-chair.<sup>1</sup> Although no national hog marketing agency materialized during his tenure, significant discussions were had about the benefits of orderly marketing for pork and other farm commodities, especially during the early years of the 1980s during the farm crisis.

<sup>1</sup> NFPMC, *Annual Report of the National Farm Products Marketing Council, Fiscal Year 1976—1977* (Ottawa: 1977), 1.

## **Conclusion**

By the end of the 1970s, NFPC was undertaking a range of activities to ensure they were able to fulfill their role of advising the Minister of Agriculture and supervising the national agencies, and the Council emphasized its role of providing "a balance of power and persuasiveness so that orderly supervision can be exercised over the agencies within the act."<sup>137</sup> Indeed, the Council emphasized its responsibility not only to producers, but to processors, marketers, and consumers as well. The Council had not shied

away from its obligations during this decade, but it also recognized that key issues in regulated industries still needed solutions. Quota allocation issues and pricing formulas appeared to be the most pressing. But the Council also understood that some of the national agency missteps, from spoiled eggs to chair resignations, had caused considerable harm to the image of national farm product marketing agencies and that more effort in promoting the benefits of these groups was needed. Furthermore, in 1979–1980 the Council was dealing with an increasing number of formal appeals and complaints. This included complaints lodged between CEMA and provincial boards (in New Brunswick and Québec) and complaints filed between CCMA and provincial boards (in Québec, Ontario, and British Columbia).<sup>138</sup> The issues related to price spreads, payments, penalties, and quota allocations. It was during this time that the Council recognized the need for stronger guidelines for conducting complaints. NFPMC enacted a wide range of standard principles to follow. They included that any signatory was entitled to initiate an appeal, that that complaint must be submitted in writing, that, unless under unique circumstances, all signatories and their advisers would be allowed to participate in or observe the appeal process,

proceedings would be conducted in a timely fashion, and that all proceedings were to be informal and not bound by legal or quasi-legal restrictions concerning rules of evidence and procedure.<sup>139</sup> As the Council and the agencies under its supervision matured, the challenges also became more apparent and more procedures were put into place and roles better defined.

This was a period in which the foundations of the supply management system in the egg and poultry sectors were established. But it was also a time when other commodity groups considered what FPMAA meant for them. Overall, the Council faced several external and internal challenges and policy issues. But despite the difficult economic conditions and tremendous social change taking place in Canadian society, the groundwork was laid that allowed domestic producers a greater role and, indeed, more responsibility in the management of their commodity sectors and broader farming communities.



## CHAPTER 3

# The Challenges of Expansion in the 1980s

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### Introduction

The existing national marketing agencies and the National Farm Products Marketing Council (NFPMC) met with increasing challenges in the 1980s as politics shifted and neoliberal ideology emphasized deregulation and greater free trade policies across all economic sectors. At the same time, the farm crisis of the 1980s—the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression—resulted in turmoil for many farm families and the impact was felt throughout rural communities in North America.<sup>140</sup> Canadian farmers in the regulated commodity sectors were not unscathed by these events, but they fared better than those farmers in deregulated sectors. The result was an increased interest in NFPMC and the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act (FPMAA) which helped lead to the creation of a fourth national marketing agency, the Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency (CBHEMA) in 1986.

Other significant patterns during this decade included the decline in both the number of farms and farmers. The Canadian census showed that between 1971 and 1981 the number of farms dropped from 366,000 to approximately 318,000, while the number of farmers declined by 13 percent. The Council noted these changes in 1983, but emphasized that the independent farm was still the “foundation stone” of rural communities, and that the marketing board system had continued to help keep people on the farm:

The marketing board system has been successful over the last 50 years in helping keep many people in the business of farming. While the majority of the boards and agencies provide services such as market information, promotion and price negotiation, a few – notably in the dairy, poultry and egg industries – practice supply management to enable farmers to exercise some semblance of control over pricing at the farm-gate. While supply management has its share of critics and is certainly difficult to administer, the primary sectors under this system are among the strongest financially in the agricultural industry. The erosion of family farms has not been totally stopped in these sectors but it has certainly been markedly slowed. In eggs and poultry, this has been achieved without direct subsidy from the public treasury.<sup>141</sup>

The Council understood the challenges and complexities of national marketing agency plans, but members also recognized that these agencies themselves offered important benefits, including bringing

stability and financial security to agricultural sectors that had previously been in constant crisis and drains on the public purse.

By the end of the decade, greater emphasis was placed on market responsiveness and the need to adapt and change. NFPMC chair Ralph Barrie noted how “changes in both domestic and international markets...raised new questions for players in the Agri-food business,” including “what new challenges the current environment will bring to supply management.”<sup>142</sup> Indeed, there was a perceptible shift in Council members’ language regarding the egg and poultry sectors and their need to adapt to the current economic and political climate. Although an emphasis of industry competitiveness and efficiency was not new, by the late 1980s the Council emphasized that national marketing agencies must adapt their policies and programs to the changing needs of the marketplace.

## The Development of the National Farm Products Marketing Council

The 1980s were also a period of development for the Council and the industries under its supervision. Despite the challenges, however, the national agencies remained intact and the Council continued to negotiate its roles and responsibilities. NFPMC continued in its supervisory role, as well as continuing to advise the Minister of Agriculture on all matters related to these agencies and their respective industries and work to promote more effective marketing of the regulated products in interprovincial and export trade. But it was also clear that the mandates assigned to NFPMC during this period by ministers of agriculture were ones that expected Council members to drive change, not just monitor existing states of affairs. Reports such as Agriculture Canada’s 1981 publication, *Challenge for Growth: An Agri-Food Strategy for Canada*, advocated a large increase in agricultural production and exports, greater market development, more “mission-oriented research,”<sup>143</sup> themes representative of the focus the Council was taking to “place increased emphasis on monitoring efficiency at the primary production level and analyzing and monitoring developments in processing, distribution and trade in the regulated products.”<sup>144</sup>

### Watershed Years

In the 1980–81 fiscal year report, the Council stated that the year had “been an active and fulfilling one” for Council members and staff as new members joined NFPMC, and improved and expanded professional and technical services were introduced to improve the Council’s supervisory capacity.<sup>145</sup> The first few years of the 1980s were considered by NFPMC to be “watershed” years in the development of national marketing systems, and although they were also a period in which the system of supply management was under greater attack by some, the general distress caused by the farm crisis in North America had “increased interest by producers in hardpressed [sic], unregulated farm sectors, in



**S. June Menzies,  
Chair, 1979–85**

(Figure 3.1)

Photo credit:

Canada Poultrymen.

June Menzies was appointed as NFPMC chair in 1979. Born in Arcola, Saskatchewan, Menzies served with the Canadian Armed Forces, where she worked as an intelligence officer during the Second World War. She completed her PhD in economics and worked as a volunteer chair of the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women before moving to Ottawa.<sup>1</sup> She served as a vice-chair of the Anti-Inflation Board and the vice-chair of the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women before being appointed to the Council.<sup>2</sup> During her tenure as NFPMC chair, Menzies regularly attended industry events, including the 1980 Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council Convention in Calgary, where she advised producers on the benefits of marketing boards.<sup>3</sup> Menzies' presence on NFPMC was significant because the position held substantial influence on the direction of Canadian agricultural policy and she was one of the few women in such an important agricultural leadership position at that time. When Menzies left the Council in 1985, she was remembered for the progress and achievements the Council made during her time as chair, including a greater formalization of the roles and responsibilities of the different participants in the national supply management system and more effective and visible supervision through the refinement and clarification of the Council's own authority under the FPMAA.<sup>4</sup>

1 "June Susanna Menzies," *Terrace Standard* (August 10, 2020), <https://www.terracestandard.com/obituaries/june-susanna-menzies/> (accessed September 22, 2021).

2 NFPMC, *Annual Report of the National Farm Products Marketing Council, Fiscal Year 1978—1979* (Ottawa: 1979), 1—2.

3 June Menzies, "The Whys and Wherefores of Controlled Marketing," *Canada Poultryman* (February 1980): 4—5; 36.

4 NFPMC, *National Farm Products Marketing Council Annual Report, 1985—1986* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1986), 4.

the possibility of achieving a higher level of stability of production and income through national marketing agencies."<sup>146</sup> Indeed, Minister of Agriculture Eugene Whelan repeatedly pointed to the crisis to "hammer home" his message that marketing boards that secured prices tied to costs of production helped to protect farmers and their communities.<sup>147</sup>

During the previous decade, the Council had helped facilitate many adjustments to strengthen the national marketing plans for eggs, turkey, and chicken. By the end of 1979, the original chair, Paul Babey had been replaced by June Menzies, who was an economist from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and had previously served as the vice-chair of the Anti-Inflation Board for the three years prior to her appointment to NFPMC. She had also served as the vice-chair of the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women.<sup>148</sup> Menzies acted as chair of NFPMC until the mid-1980s, and during this time she emphasized ways in which the Council introduced changes in order to "achieve more effective and more visible supervision of the national marketing agencies."<sup>149</sup>

For instance, in 1980 the Council's agency review directorate was strengthened to improve their research and monitoring capabilities. The directorate's operational staff included a director, five commodity officers, a senior economist, two statistical officers, and clerical support. It was at this time that each agency was assigned a commodity officer to monitor its activities, to liaise with the agency, to provide technical advice to an agency when required, and to report to the Council on agency operations. Other officers undertook

research projects and special studies to provide additional background information to NFPMC for the development of policy initiatives or to address particular Council issues.<sup>150</sup> Technical studies were periodically conducted by staff at Agriculture Canada as well. Indeed, the Council reported in 1982 that it was “now almost fully staffed,” and that “plans [were] underway to relocate the Council to larger premises to accommodate the increased person strength.”<sup>151</sup>

Another significant change in the 1980s was the series of arbitrations and hearings undertaken by the Council regarding violations to existing agreements. The Canadian Egg Marketing Agency (CEMA) in particular was involved in disputes with provincial boards regarding pricing practices and other operational issues.<sup>152</sup> As detailed in the sections below, various national agencies were coming into conflict with provincial boards. Meanwhile, the Council was distressed by the strains within the system, specifically the increasing reluctance of some national agencies and provincial boards to “accept appropriate levels of supervision,” and some participants’ emphasis on “purely provincial or producer interests, rather than the broader interests of the agencies as national entities with responsibilities to the public at large.”<sup>153</sup> Particularly annoying to the Council was that some signatories were attempting to “subvert the broader national interests of the producers themselves through threats of withdrawal and resistance to penalty assessments,” and some participants demonstrated “indifference...to the obligations they have undertaken in return for the benefits of the system.”<sup>154</sup> The Council also reprimanded all three agencies for their failure “to arrive at a reasonable, economically justifiable basis for allocating quota in excess of the original, historic base.”<sup>155</sup> Indeed, it was the Council’s position that a number of signatories were failing to recognize or carry out their responsibilities under the legislation in return for the benefits they were awarded through supply management. The need for all parties—the federal Minister of Agriculture, the provincial ministers of agriculture of the participating provinces, the NFPMC, the provincial supervisory boards, the agencies, and the provincial commodity boards—to cooperate was emphasized.<sup>156</sup>

The Council recognized the strengths of national marketing for all stakeholders’ interests, but it also emphasized “the importance of effective and visible supervision of national marketing agencies.” It explained that the privileges enjoyed by producers in the poultry and egg industries, such as setting national production and prices and allowing for import controls, required all parties to fulfill their commitments. As Council noted, “[i]t is naïve for anyone to believe—as some appear to do—that failure of supervision or even resistance to supervision, can be anything but destructive of the system over the long haul.”<sup>157</sup>

NFPMC’s sentiments were echoed by Eugene Whelan in 1983. He called the signatories of the national plans to a meeting in Ottawa where he cited several problems being experienced within the agencies and attributed the paucity of progress to a lack of commitment by agency directors to their overall national responsibilities. The minister, a strong supporter of supply management, was frustrated by the internal conflict in these industries, which was leading provincial boards to threaten to withdraw

their membership in the national agencies and thus jeopardize the whole system. He noted the issues regarding poorly enforced quota regulations and penalties and a failure to agree on over base quota distribution policies as symptoms of larger issues of disunity among provincial signatories. Ultimately, the parties at the meeting in 1983 agreed with the minister's assessment. They agreed that improved discipline and cooperation was needed to hold the system together and committed to improving their operations and relationships, but they also noted the difficulty of setting aside provincial interests on matters such as over-base distribution and effective penalty systems. Indeed, these problems would continue, despite periods of progress and change.<sup>158</sup>

### *Renewed Criticism of Supply Management*

Another event that the Council had to contend with early in the 1980s was the publication of the Economic Council of Canada's (ECC) working papers on various agricultural sectors, including the egg and poultry sectors, as a part of an overall assessment of government's influence on the Canadian economy. Marketing boards and agencies, especially those with supply management powers, were already a controversial issue with the public, and the ECC papers were highly critical of the supply-managed system. They also called into question the effectiveness of NFPMC as a supervisory agency, arguing that the Council possessed inadequate powers to identify abuses and ensure they were dealt with effectively. In addition, the ECC papers were critical of the high values that production quotas had reached over the years. While the Council did not endorse the findings of ECC, it did note that their points needed "further consideration."<sup>159</sup> The Council also contended that some of the issues identified had already been acknowledged by NFPMC, and "where it is within the authority of the Council to do so, measures [had] been taken to correct them." But it was clear more work needed to be done to ensure that "certain abuses" were corrected. The concern was that such abuses might "jeopardize the future of the existing supply management sectors, not to mention other agricultural sectors that may wish to avail themselves of the benefits and responsibilities of controlling their own production and marketing." The Council proposed that some consideration of revisiting FPMAA to clarify and extend the statutory powers and authority of NFPMC was warranted. The aim was to "ensure that the interest of both producers and consumers of the commodity(s) continue to be safeguarded, and to extend producers of commodities in addition to poultry products to participate in supply management systems."<sup>160</sup>

The Council believed that amendments to the Act seemed necessary to make it an effective supervisory body. While it emphasized that it was not a regulator, it did worry that "its presence as a signatory to the federal-provincial marketing agreements...leads to confusion regarding its role as the supervisory agency." The Council was decisive and declared that "in order to leave no question as to its authority and its essentially arms-length relationship with the marketing agencies under its supervision, it intends to request that its name be withdrawn as a signatory to the agreements."<sup>161</sup> Overall, the ECC

papers pointed out some concerns that NFPMC had already expressed, but whereas ECC wanted to dismantle the system and used their platform to generate media criticism for the principles of orderly marketing, the Council wished to address the present problems in order to secure the future of national marketing agencies. NFPMC suggested that some of the criticism directed toward them stemmed from a misunderstanding of the Council's role within the national marketing system, and it noted that its procedures for achieving the objectives of the Act had "evolved from a highly flexible and subjective approach in the early development of national marketing agencies, towards a more demanding and objective approach based on experience in the operation of national agencies and on its perception of some of their problems."<sup>162</sup>

Among the steps NFPMC took to strengthen its supervisory role during these years was publishing guidelines for the updating of the cost-of-production (COP) formulas during the normal two-year interval between national on-farm surveys. The Council noted that it was perhaps "not surprising that the more active role assumed by the Council as manifested in the application of the guidelines, has engendered a certain amount of stress in agency-Council relations," but insisted the purpose behind the guidelines was critical. Specifically, the guidelines produced by the Council were to be used to ensure uniformly high standards of the national surveys conducted by the consulting firms hired by agencies, guarantee all producers of regulated commodities were treated fairly, confirm that the system continued to work for the benefit of both producers and consumers, and respond to agency requests for greater predictability as to what procedures must be followed to receive Council approval.<sup>163</sup> The Council expressed concerns that, prior to the new guidelines, the inclusion of "inflation accounting" was being used to establish the COP formulas, which the Council, supported by the Minister of Agriculture, believed had expensive implications, especially if similar practices were also applied to formulas used for stabilization programs.<sup>164</sup>

Ultimately, public hearings were called to investigate the matter, which reflected a general trend during the 1980s whereby NFPMC used the public hearing process to resolve industry problems. Within this process, NFPMC had the powers to subpoena witnesses, compel answers under oath, demand any relevant documentation, retain independent consultants to perform detailed audits or assist Council in reaching its decision, and use its legal authority as would any court of law in a civil case.<sup>165</sup> Although the Council also expressed an interest in enhancing its powers under FPMAA, it still believed its existing authority was sufficient to ensure public accountability existed in the system, and it noted in 1982 that "at this point in the evolution of the system, however, the greater possibilities seem to lie in more effective use of Council's powers of inquiry and in greater emphasis on the practice of internal review...in combination with the public hearing process...the Council intends to enhance its supervision of the national agencies and provincial supervisory and commodity boards."<sup>166</sup> The Council set out to strengthen its internal resources and create a small economic advisory group to make further policy recommendations. Although public criticism for marketing boards abated over the course of the



decade, due in part, the Council suspected, to stabilized or declining prices in regulated commodity sectors, they also believed that their more “visible regulatory activity”—such as the egg cost inquiry that had been conducted—helped to ease public concerns.<sup>167</sup>

The supply-managed sectors and the national agencies were still experiencing growing pains during this decade, and in response to industry issues and agency operational concerns, by March 1984, the Council established a written policy respecting the financial accountability of agencies and the information NFPMC required before levy orders and agency budgets would be approved. The Council also created a series of papers on the procedures to be followed by agencies when approaching the Council to use its powers to obtain information relating to interprovincial and export trade and on licensing and pricing.<sup>168</sup> In 1985, the Council reported that it had “crossed a watershed in articulating its authority and responsibility under the Act,” and that by articulating a clear understanding of its powers and the powers of the supervised agencies, it was confident that an “improved and effective operation of the complex marketing systems of cooperation” would emerge.<sup>169</sup> By the mid 1980s, the Council congratulated itself for its efforts towards “greater formalization of the roles and responsibilities” of participants in the supply management system and its moves toward “more effective and visible supervision of the national marketing agencies through the refinement of its own authority under the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act.” The Council noted that this had been achieved through several means, but that better communication and liaison with the agencies and the provincial governments, the clarification of the hierarchy of authorities in the FPMAA, and the ongoing development of standards and guidelines for the agencies in their operations was significant. It reported in 1986 that NFPMC would “continue its efforts to promote the smooth operation and greater public credibility of the national supply management system,” and that it was “confident that by placing greater emphasis on the consultative approach, by working closely with the agencies and the provincial governments, on-going issues will be resolved more quickly, and the national marketing systems will operate—and will be seen to be operating—more equitably for all those concerned, from producers to consumers.”<sup>170</sup>

Despite these achievements, the Council continued to receive criticism from groups opposed to supply management, such as the Consumers’ Association of Canada (CAC), which regularly questioned the Council’s powers and operations and called for more public accountability.<sup>171</sup> Like the ECC, the CAC suggested legislative changes were needed that would further clarify and strengthen the Council’s supervisory powers, and operationally, the CAC believed the Council needed to be more transparent. In response to a 1986 CAC report, the Council explained that it had “made great strides in the development and implementation of policies that ensured the effective supervision and public accountability of the national marketing agencies,” but “on the question of openness, in dealing with difficult and contentious problems, the Council leans towards the view that more can be accomplished through quiet persuasion than by public hearing and debate, which, too often, lead to unproductive posturing, and are very costly and time consuming.”<sup>172</sup> The Council was satisfied with its approaches, and

while it recognized there were still agency problems, which it credited in large part to structural faults in federal-provincial agreements, it believed that by “establishing and maintaining close working relationships with the agencies, it has been possible to ease many of these problems.”<sup>173</sup>

### *External and Internal Pressures*

In 1986, a new chair came to Council, Ralph Barrie (who had been serving as acting chair), along with a new vice-chair, Lise Bergeron. The pair witnessed the proclamation of the CBHEMA in November 1986, which “marked the culmination of several years hard work by the Council and hatching egg producers.”<sup>174</sup> External events, such as the Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations and the signing of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) in 1988, caused the Council to question the future of the supply management system periodically, but generally, the continued support it received from industry and government lessened these fears. For example, while CUSFTA increased import quotas for poultry and eggs from levels negotiated at the time each agency was established, these new levels were more representative of the actual imports (import quota plus supplementary imports) that were arriving during this period. And while there



### **Ralph Barrie, Chair, 1986–91**

*Ralph Barrie at the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors' Convention in*

*1986. (Figure 3.2) Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.*

Before coming to the Council, Barrie was first a dairy farmer near Balderson, Ontario. He became involved in local farm organizations and eventually served as the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture from 1980 to 1984. During this time, he travelled across Canada and abroad as an agricultural spokesperson.<sup>1</sup> Barrie was appointed vice-chair of the Council in March 1985 before being appointed to acting chair in September 1985 and then confirmed as chair in November 1986.<sup>2</sup> He navigated an important period of the Council's history when increasing pressures were mounting for greater deregulation in Canadian agriculture.



### **Lise Bergeron, Vice-Chair, 1986–92** (Figure 3.3)

Bergeron was appointed as the vice-chair of the Council in 1986 after serving on the Québec hog board, la Fédération des producteurs de porc du Québec, as general manager. She also previously served as the coordinator of research and communication for the dairy division of the Co-operative Fédérée de Québec and studied agricultural cooperatives and marketing boards academically, producing several studies on the subject for the federal and Québec governments.<sup>3</sup> Although Bergeron completed her vice-chair position in 1992, she later returned to the board as a member in 2007 after serving La Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec from 1996 to 1999 and acting as the organization's vice-chair from 1999 to 2007. In addition, Bergeron was a member of the Canadian International Trade Tribunal from 1991 to 1995.<sup>4</sup> Both of her tenures with FPCC benefited from her substantial experience in the collective marketing of agricultural products in Quebec and across Canada.

1 “Obituary for Ralph James Barrie,” In Memory of Ralph James Barrie, 1928—2016, <http://blairandson.frontrunnerpro.com/book-of-memories/2800670/barrie-ralph/obituary.php> (accessed September 22, 2021).

2 NFPMC, *National Farm Products Marketing Council Annual Report, 1984—1985* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1985), 5.

3 NFPMC, *National Farm Products Marketing Council Annual Report, 1986—1987* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1987), 5.

4 NFPC, *National Farm Products Council, 2007 Year in Review* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2008), 6.



were concerns about the future impact of GATT negotiations for the marketing agencies, industry stakeholders were comforted somewhat by government reassurance that it intended to retain the basic underpinning of the supply management programs.<sup>175</sup>

It was perhaps the direct internal pressures that resulted from changes in international politics, such as Agriculture Canada's increasing focus on developing export markets for Canadian products and other inquiries into supply management in eggs and poultry, that were putting increasing pressure on marketing agencies and NFPMC to "adapt their policies and programs to the changing demands of the market-place, and to respond to expressed needs for more accountability."<sup>176</sup> When Agriculture Canada published a commodity strategy for poultry highlighting several long-standing concerns about the system, including high quota values, quota transfer policies, and the effects of supply management on market growth and export opportunities,<sup>177</sup> NFPMC responded by holding biannual policy forums with provincial supervisory boards to discuss industry issues.

The Council recognized that greater discipline in the supply management system was needed and made a number of efforts over the course of the 1980s to make the "system more efficient and defensible."<sup>178</sup> While existing concerns continued, the Council also used the final years of the decade to draft guidelines for the mediation of disputes to help resolve arguments before they evolved into a formal complaint to the Council.<sup>179</sup> Overall, as with the 1970s, the 1980s continued to demonstrate the pressures inherent in orderly marketing, but the promise that these agencies demonstrated and their significant results in improving the lives of producers and rural communities more generally, meant that the Council remained committed to advancing the system of supply management and improving its practices and the practices of the agencies under its supervision.

## The National Marketing Agencies in the 1980s

By the beginning of the 1980s, three national marketing agencies were established, one each for eggs, turkey, and chicken. At this time, not all provinces were members of these agencies. While CEMA represented all 10 provinces, the Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency (CTMA) represented 8, as turkey production was not significant in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency (CCMA) initially only represented eight provinces, although Newfoundland was granted membership in 1981 (Alberta had declined membership). Each of these agencies' plans had their own particularities that reflected the differences in the industries and the market situations and objectives. Administrative distinctions also existed. For instance, at the beginning of the 1980s there were two federal appointees to the board of directors of CEMA, one being the chair, while CCMA had two appointees to the board of directors: a consumer representative and a processor representative. No federal board appointees existed for the turkey agency at that time.<sup>180</sup>

Despite these differences, most of the national marketing agencies faced similar issues over the course of the 1980s, the most consistent of which was instituting Council-approved COP formulas. Indeed, ensuring accurate and appropriate COPs was among the top priorities for Council, and much time and attention was devoted to developing guidelines, monitoring, and improving these calculations.<sup>181</sup>

Another Council concern was the high and steadily increasing value of producer quotas. As the Council explained, “in any system where production is limited through the issuance of quota rights, quota will always have some intrinsic value.” Yet the Council was worried, explaining that “the magnitudes of values at which quotas change hands are of considerable concern, not only to the consumer public but to producers themselves” who knew of “the negative impact of excessive quota values on the overall efficiency of an industry.” The Council identified that it intended to work with provincial governments and provincial supervisory boards “to identify measures that might be taken to arrest a trend which is disturbing to both consumers and producers alike.”<sup>182</sup>

Finally, a third, long-standing problem area was effective production control. The Council noted in 1981 that “in any marketing scheme where the right to produce a commodity is restricted by quota, it is imperative that a penalty system be provided for production in excess of quota. To do otherwise is to negate the control that is necessary under supply management.”<sup>183</sup> The Council still needed to encourage national agencies and provincial boards to adopt effective policies and practices, including penalties, to deal with overproduction so as not to undermine the credibility of supply management.

As noted earlier in this chapter, to address these issues the Council reminded the national agencies and provincial commodity boards about their responsibilities under the legislation and their need to cooperate and consider the greater good of the industry. And that the national goals in this respect must take precedence over provincial concerns. As June Menzies explained in 1983,

the continued provincial and producer orientation of most provincial nominees on the agency boards is the source of much of the internal stress in the national supply management systems and of a public perception that they too often fail to act in the public interest. It is vital to future success, and perhaps to the very survival of the agencies that board members recognize that once they accept nomination to the national board, their provincial producer interests are subordinate to their responsibility to operate the agencies effectively and efficiently in accordance with their *national* objectives...<sup>184</sup>

The Council continued to encourage closer liaison with the provincial commodity boards to help achieve the level of responsibility and cooperation necessary to make the national system work. NFPMA warned that “without a strong spirit of cooperation, these complex federal-provincial arrangements cannot serve the best interests of the nation or even the producers themselves.”<sup>185</sup>

## Canadian Egg Marketing Agency

One of the most important issues the Council wanted to resolve regarding CEMA's operations was the egg-pricing system. As the Council reported in 1980, members had "been concerned for some time that the present pricing structure for determining the producer price for eggs in each province required revision." The issue was that, while producer prices for Grade A Large eggs were based on a national COP formula, CEMA also applied allowances for freight and handling, using Manitoba as the base. The practice resulted in overpayments to egg producers on a national basis, at the same time that disparities in returns among producers was in excess "of any reasonable amount under a managed system." In the simplest of terms, this meant "consumers in some areas might be paying too much for eggs while consumers in other areas might be paying too little."<sup>186</sup> After various discussions and meetings, the Council decided that it was necessary to make full use of its power of inquiry and initiated a major public investigation of the basis for the national pricing system for eggs.<sup>187</sup> By 1984, many of the recommendations of the 1982 Fact Finding Inquiry into Egg Production Costs had been implemented, but the major outstanding recommendation was for a pricing system based on provincial costs. This recommendation did not receive unanimous support when it was proposed in 1983, so renewed efforts were made in 1984 to find agreement among signatories.<sup>188</sup>



Dr. Trant of Agriculture Canada, legal counsel for NFPMC, Eugene Whelan, June Menzies, and Jim Boynton in 1982. (Figure 3.4)  
*Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.*

Maintaining adequate supply forecasting also continued to be challenging during this period. When Council and CEMA could not agree on the use of inflation accounting in 1981, for example, the Council called a public hearing to examine the adequacy of the formula relative to real costs and reasonable return.<sup>189</sup> Meanwhile, issues between the provinces and the national organization continued. Indeed, the Council often had to remind "signatories that provinces were obliged to meet their full financial obligations to the national agencies, according to the federal-provincial agreements that they signed."<sup>190</sup> Quota policies continued to be up

for debate among signatories as well, specifically in regard to CEMA's consideration of comparative advantage when allocating quota above levels specified in the original marketing plan.<sup>191</sup>

Another important event in the 1980s was the Northwest Territories' application to CEMA for egg production quota. This application was initially made for a proposed project by the Dene in Hay River (K'at'l'odeeche First Nation), but at the time, the NWT were not a member of the CEMA, nor did they have historical production records.<sup>192</sup> In May 1985, existing signatories rejected the NWT proposal

to become a signatory mainly because of disagreements about the amount of quota the NWT had requested—initially 200,000 laying hens—and what CEMA was prepared to acknowledge for local needs, which was estimated to be 30,000 to 40,000 laying hens. Although NFPMC encouraged the parties to continue discussions outside of court, ultimately the NWT government brought the matter to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories and charged that the FPMAA was unconstitutional and that section 24 of the Act was “illegally restrictive on the NWT.”<sup>193</sup> Both legal action and negotiation was pursued by these parties throughout the 1980s, but it would not be until the late 1990s that a resolution emerged that resulted in the award of egg quota to the NWT.

Generally, most of Council’s ongoing concerns relating to CEMA during the 1980s were related to signatory disagreements. These included: provincial quota allocations, new pricing proposals, long-term levy policies, advertising and promotion programs, and long-term budget planning.<sup>194</sup> As noted above, despite the need for cooperation in these matters, the expression of provincial interests were more common. Related to some of these concerns were the high egg surpluses that occurred in the later years of the 1980s, which put that agency into deficit through its surplus removal program.<sup>195</sup> While CEMA’s financial situation improved quickly in the following years, overproduction remained and some provinces became increasingly agitated by its policies. The full expression of that dissatisfaction was expressed in the following decade.

### *Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency*

A main concern of the Council regarding turkey production early in the 1980s was the high levels of the commodity stored during a period where high interest rates created significant additional costs that processors had to pass on to consumers. The Council recognized the difficulties the industry

had in determining optimum storage stock levels to ensure the ability to meet demand, but NFPMC instructed the agency to do more to work with processor groups to arrive at policy and procedural mechanisms that would resolve this issue.<sup>196</sup> The Council continued to stress that producers and processors needed to better coordinate supply with seasonal demand to avoid costly inventories.<sup>197</sup>

Working to improve and create a stronger turkey-pricing system was also on the Council’s agenda. Similar to CEMA, early in the decade CTMA engaged a firm of consultants to update the existing COP information on a provincial basis to ensure that the pricing was current, accurate, and defensible and met Council COP guidelines.<sup>198</sup> But CTMA found that achieving consensus regarding COP formulations was not easy. Furthermore, controversy also existed in the industry regarding agency quota allocation. For instance, in 1981 the British Columbia Turkey Marketing Board gave notice of



CCMA Signatory Meeting; June Menzies, Gaetan Lessier, Doug Headley, Archie LeVasseur, and John Kierans in 1980. (Figure 3.5)  
*Photo credit: Canada Poultrymen.*

intention to withdraw from the national turkey marketing plan after arguing that BC's turkey production quota under the plan had not kept pace with their growth in population or demand.<sup>199</sup> While the board ultimately withdrew its notice, it continued to insist that its production quota had not kept pace with provincial growth.<sup>200</sup> Similar threats of withdrawal came from other provinces during this period, including the Nova Scotia Turkey Marketing Board, which also maintained that its allocation of production quota had not kept pace with population and demand.<sup>201</sup> Similar to BC, the Nova Scotia Turkey Marketing Board ultimately voted to remain as members of the agency and withdrew its notice after receiving some concessions from the national agency. But these notices of withdrawal appeared to many to be a dangerous bargaining tool used to acquire more quota during allocation disputes.<sup>202</sup>

Generally, the Council also continued to work with CTMA regarding concerns about the formula used to distribute over-base quota and enforce penalties for overproduction.<sup>203</sup> Part of the problem was the need to seek an amendment to the FPMAA and the federal-provincial agreement to allow CTMA to update the base market shares and bring them closer to current allocations. Because the Act required the base to reflect production during the five-year period immediately preceding the establishment of an agency and signatories did not unanimously approve of the amendments sought by the agency, little progress could be made.<sup>204</sup> Finally, in July 1988, a new policy for over-base quota allocations was approved by Council. This policy enabled the agency to "adjust more quickly to provincial and regional market changes by dividing the over base allocation into two parts and weighing the criteria used in allocating over base quota differently."<sup>205</sup> Further changes were needed in the industry, which required amendments to the federal-provincial agreements, but the conditions needed for signatories' support were not always agreed upon.

### *Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency*

By the 1980s, all provinces except Alberta were members of CCMA. The agency continued to consult with officials of the Alberta chicken industry to determine a working agreement, but the province expressed no interest in joining CCMA at that time. Another issue expressed early in the decade was that a number of producers in member provinces were producing without quota. A situation emerged in eastern Ontario where chicken producers were marketing their chicken without quota, and an appropriate solution could not be agreed upon. In November 1980, a group of these producers had approached CCMA requesting interprovincial quota for approximately 3.5 million pounds of chicken, but the agency turned down their request based on the fact that it had delegated authority to grant both interprovincial and export quota to the individual provincial commodity board. The Ontario board had declined to grant these producers quota, so an urgent solution was needed.<sup>206</sup>

While the issue of interprovincial quota for eastern Ontario farmers was eventually resolved, over-base quota allocation continued to be a point of contention between CCMA and the Council. The



fact was that the Council wanted to see the agency adopt “an acceptable methodology” that would “be consistent with the criteria outlined in the federal-provincial plan, particularly with respect to incorporating the principle of comparative advantage,” instead of relying on historic allocations to determine shares.<sup>207</sup>

The problem of unregulated or “illegal” chicken production continued, and finally amendments were made that gave CCMA more authority to police production and marketing, but other problems, including Alberta’s refusal to join or enter into a working agreement with CCMA, continued to cause regulatory concerns.<sup>208</sup> Greater degrees of cooperation and support were needed from provincial commodity boards to implement many of the agency’s programs, and because this cooperation was not always forthcoming, the national agency’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities under the legislation was undermined.

Some promising achievements were made, including the working agreements CCMA was finally able to secure with the Alberta Broiler Growers’ Marketing Board in lieu of its membership in the agency, and in 1984, Council reported the illegal production was again “under control” and greater stability realized.<sup>209</sup> That said, similar to other poultry sectors, NFPMC continued to hear complaints from provincial boards about quota allocation decisions.<sup>210</sup> By 1986, the need for the development and implementation of periodic quota allocation policy was also obvious, and the elimination of poundage penalties for overproduction and updating base shares in the federal-provincial agreement were of ongoing concern for the Council.<sup>211</sup>

The end of the 1980s was particularly contentious for CCMA. In 1988, the British Columbia board submitted a withdrawal notice to end its membership after long-standing disputes regarding overproduction penalties and the quota allocation system. Then in late September 1988, the Alberta Broiler Growers Marketing Boards (Alberta was still not a signatory) advised Council that it was cancelling its contract with CCMA due to the agency’s handling of the BC dispute.<sup>212</sup> Such internal controversies brought media attention and public criticism of the boards and fuelled further criticisms of the supply management system during a period when external and internal pressures in favour of free trade were mounting.<sup>213</sup> The Council was concerned about these developments and continued to encourage CCMA to engage with and encourage Alberta and British Columbia to become full members of the agency and deal with the issues related to the over-base allocation process, and more effective periodic penalty enforcement policies, but these issues would follow the agency into the next decade.<sup>214</sup>

### *Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency*

Challenges existed in the national marketing agencies in the egg and poultry sectors, but supply management continued to expand. During 1982, the broiler hatching egg producers began to organize to form an agency, and by October 1983, a formal proposal was made to NFPMC for a national

marketing agency with supply management powers.<sup>215</sup> Public hearings were held in Ottawa and Calgary in December 1983, and an additional public examination took place in January 1984 to allow for more information and submissions to be made. Concerns about the impact of US imports on traditional markets were expressed, and the proposal had the general support of the three existing national agencies and hatchery representatives. Opposition to the proposal came from such sectors as the Bureau of Competition Policy of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and the CAC, which asserted their usual arguments against supply-managed commodities—that they generated high quota values, increased consumer prices, had excessive powers, and that NFPMC did not have sufficient authority to monitor the agencies and protect consumer interests.<sup>216</sup> Despite these objections, by June 1984 the Minister of Agriculture approved the Council’s recommendations for the establishment of a national agency, and potential signatories to a federal-provincial agreement met for the first time in September to consider the proposed marketing plan, and again in January and March 1985 to review revisions to the draft documents.<sup>217</sup> Although the plan underwent revision and further negotiations between the provinces, the CBHEMA was finally proclaimed on November 27, 1986.

The agency was tasked with regulating the marketing of eggs hatched and grown for chicken meat and ensuring that hatching egg production met the demands and needs of the Canadian chicken industry. The agency also agreed to pay “due respect to historical provincial production patterns.” The signatories to the federal-provincial agreement for the plan were the federal and provincial ministers of agriculture, the supervisory bodies, and the hatching egg marketing boards of Québec, Ontario, and Manitoba. These three provinces represented 68.6 percent of national production. Other provinces, including Alberta, which refused to sign on because of their belief in the “principle of free trade,” were non-signatory provinces. The agency was empowered to regulate interprovincial and export trade in hatching eggs produced in signatory provinces and the trade in hatching eggs from non-signatory provinces into signatory provinces, but it could not regulate the trade in hatching eggs between non-signatory provinces or the export trade from these provinces. There were also no import controls on hatching eggs at this time, and the responsibility for setting producer prices was left to the provincial commodity boards.<sup>218</sup>

By the end of the decade, British Columbia and Alberta joined Québec, Ontario, and Manitoba as members of the CBHEMA, resulting in almost 90 percent of broiler hatching egg production under supply management.<sup>219</sup> The problem for CBHEMA, however, was the agency’s early deficit and need to improve its financial planning and cost control. During this period the Council monitored the agency closely, but it would take more time before these problems were fully addressed.<sup>220</sup>



## Other Commodities

Supply management continued to be a system that interested farmers outside of the dairy, egg, and poultry sectors. At the beginning of the 1980s, a number of conversations with various commodity sectors occurred, and a regional marketing agency for potatoes in eastern Canada was under active consideration.<sup>221</sup> By September 1980, the Council held public hearings to consider the proposal put forward by the Eastern Canada Potato Producers Council to form a regional marketing agency for potatoes. It envisioned an agency with the power to set provincial marketing quotas and minimum prices and control the domestic and international marketing of table, seed, and processing potatoes.<sup>222</sup> Although an amendment to FPMAA was necessary for such powers to be awarded a commodity outside of the egg and poultry sectors, more than 400 people attended the hearings that were held in Charlottetown, Perth, Andover, Toronto, and Montreal. Fifty-five briefs were submitted, and upon review, the Council recommended the establishment of an Eastern Canada Potato Marketing Agency, but without the powers of supply management.

The Council found that while a majority of producers would accept and agree to the formation of an agency, there was insufficient evidence to support the granting of supply management powers. The Council contended that more time was required for the industry. It needed to become familiar with the functioning of a national marketing agency and, for the provinces to gain experience in working together, it also needed a better understanding of where changes and innovations were required within the present marketing system before those additional powers were to be considered.<sup>223</sup>

The development of a marketing plan for potatoes in eastern Canada in cooperation with the Eastern Canada Potato Producers Council and the provincial governments of Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island continued. But the Council noted that progress had been slow and that the “final outcome [was] by no means clear.” The Council expressed its support for the plan and wish to see the signatories recognize the benefits of working together to achieve the objective of a prosperous and competitive potato industry in Eastern Canada.<sup>224</sup> But negotiations among the provinces were ultimately unsuccessful because of lack of cooperation and no plan materialized.<sup>225</sup>

Later in the 1980s, the Council was again tasked with investigating the merits of a potato agency, but this one would be national in scope. In March 1986, a task force was established to investigate the orderly marketing of potatoes under a supply management program. Again, the issue was that FPMAA restricted supply management powers to eggs, poultry, and tobacco (which had recently been added through an amendment to the Act). But it was still the Council’s responsibility to hold a public hearing on any proposal for an agency, regardless of the powers requested. By December 1986, the Minister of Agriculture, then John Wise, announced that he planned to seek an amendment to the Act to include potatoes among the named commodities.<sup>226</sup> However, public hearings into the establishment of a national agency were suspended after a number of parties in opposition to the proposal sought an

injunction to adjourn the hearings. The Council was able to resume hearings and concluded that an industry-wide approach to orderly marketing was needed. The challenges were many in the table stock and seed sectors: the lack of good market information; interprovincial competition; poor scheduling of market deliveries; and varietal, quality, storage, and phytosanitary issues. Thus the Council supported the creation of a national potato agency to “give potato producers in Canada a well-funded central organization to help them develop a long-term marketing strategy and, if it was their wish, an acceptable and workable supply management plan for table stock and seed potatoes.”<sup>227</sup> Ultimately, however, the agency never happened.

By mid-February 1988, the Minister released the Council’s report and, along with his provincial colleagues, began drafting a federal-provincial agreement, which was required in advance of the Governor-in-Council establishing a national agency by proclamation. However, later that month, before the proclamation occurred, the Canadian Food Processors Association filed an originating notice of application, under section 28 of the Federal Court Act, seeking an order to review and set aside the Council’s report to the Minister.<sup>228</sup> The potato saga continued and on April 19, 1988, the court ordered the report nullified on the grounds that it did not show proof that a majority of registered potato producers were in favour of the recommendations, as was required by FPMAA. In May 1988, a task force was initiated to conduct a mail-in plebiscite of producers to determine whether it should continue to work toward establishing a national supply-managed potato agency. Sixty percent of producers in eight provinces (Alberta and Saskatchewan did not participate) participated, with 72 percent in favour of the task force continuing its work, but ultimately the agency never came to fruition.<sup>229</sup>

The Council also continued ongoing discussions with the Ontario Flue-cured Tobacco Growers Marketing Board about the possibility of establishing a marketing agency. From the time the legislation came into existence, interested tobacco growers were in regular discussion with the Council about establishing an agency. And in November 1984, FPMAA was amended to permit supply management for tobacco, but no agency was achieved. Initially when the plan was brought to NFPMC the proposal was for a one-province agency with provisions for other tobacco-producing provinces to opt in.<sup>230</sup> But the Council advised the board that, while the Act did not preclude a one-province agency, it believed Ontario growers should seek the support of other tobacco-producing provinces.<sup>231</sup> After the legislation was amended to permit national supply management for tobacco, the Council began an inquiry into the merits of establishing a national agency.<sup>232</sup> The Council held public hearings in April and May 1985 in London, Charlottetown, Montreal, and Ottawa. But in September, only days before the Council was to present its findings to the Minister of Agriculture, the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council applied to the federal Court of Canada for an injunction to invalidate the report and force NFPMC to reopen the hearings to examine further evidence on costs of production. The Tobacco Manufacturers Council opposed the creation of a national agency and charged that the Council inquiry had treated them unfairly and had not allowed a closer examination of tobacco prices and COPs.<sup>233</sup> After a series

of legal actions, the Council was ordered to reopen the public hearing, but delays and ongoing industry discussions ultimately led to the withdrawal of the tobacco growers' request.<sup>234</sup>

## Conclusion

The failed attempt to create national potato and tobacco agencies after what appeared to be strong initial support from the government and Council seemed to demonstrate a number of issues. Certainly, support for marketing agencies continued, but the producers needed to be organized and the broader industry engaged in the discussion of these plans. Despite the increasing liberalization of trade during these years and the significant transformation of international politics and broader ideological shifts, many farmers and their representatives were well aware of the perils of the market. They were also aware of the disappointment that promises of export opportunities had held in the past.

Although new marketing agencies in other sectors outside of the poultry industry did not emerge, the creation of CBHEMA in 1986 was a significant accomplishment for its producers. The existing agencies also worked hard during this period to help producers weather the difficult economic times, although long-standing issues in agency operations continued to harm the egg and poultry industries. While the Council played an active role in encouraging more change in agencies' practices and attempted to foster deeper understanding and cooperation among the signatories of the national marketing plans, more work was needed by all parties by the end of the decade. This period was challenging for the Council and the national agencies, but despite internal and external pressures that sought to dismantle supply management during these years, enough support for and belief in the benefits of the system safeguarded its survival. More challenges and opportunities were to come for the Council in the following decade.

## CHAPTER 4

# Negotiating Change in the 1990s

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### Introduction

The 1990s was a period of review for Canadian agriculture. Between 1981 and 1991, some estimates suggested farm costs had risen as much as 31 percent, while prices for many commodities, but especially for field crops, had decreased significantly. As noted in the last chapter, the 1980s had been a period of “recession, inflation, exorbitant interest rates, and declining commodity prices [that] forced thousands of [farmers] with low equity and high debt to give up farming.”<sup>235</sup> In Ontario alone, between August 1986 and June 1991, banks and other creditors issued 4,641 notices of intent to sell indebted farms. Many recognized that the only reason thousands of more farmers did not “go belly up” was because of marketing boards and supply management, which enabled most dairy farmers and poultry farmers to earn a reasonable income, even during this difficult period.<sup>236</sup>

Many people scrutinized agricultural policies during these years, and with the 1989 publication of Agriculture Canada’s *Growing Together: A Vision for Canada’s Agri-Food Industry*, the government warned those engaged in farming and the agri-food industry about the trials that faced them as they approached the twenty-first century:

We have much to be proud of when we look at how far the industry has come in recent decades, despite some major difficulties. Looking ahead to the 1990s, we can see more challenges. The pace of change is accelerating, and change is likely to occur on even wider and more complex fronts. If we do not respond effectively, the Canadian agri-food industry will be left behind in a rapidly changing world.<sup>237</sup>

Despite the fact that the most successful sectors of farming had been supply managed in recent years, the report emphasized that the federal government’s vision for the agricultural industry was one that was market-oriented and self-reliant. Indeed, they sent the message that they were committed to putting in place national policies to reduce regulatory barriers.<sup>238</sup>

The tone of this message was similar to the arguments National Farm Products Marketing Council (NFPMC) Chair Ralph Barrie put forth in 1990–91 that called for greater competitiveness and greater tools for self-help in the agri-food industry.<sup>239</sup> The 1990s was a period of federal and provincial cutbacks that reflected both the reality of efforts to reduce governmental deficits and governments’ embrace of

neoliberal ideology.<sup>240</sup> The Council was tasked with helping the egg and poultry industries negotiate these changes and prepare for what lay ahead. Greater trade liberalization in the future was considered by some members as “inevitable,” and they believed more market responsiveness was required. While the Council remained committed to seeing supply management continue, they also realized adjustments were needed in present practices for that to happen. For many at the National Farm Products Marketing Council (NFPMC) (which would be renamed the National Farm Products Council in 1993), this was a “time of introspection and planning for the future.”<sup>241</sup>

## The Council Negotiates a Changing Agricultural Environment

The creation of agricultural task forces that reported to the Minister of Agriculture was a central part of agricultural policy planning in the 1990s, including those created for the supply management systems for poultry and eggs. The Council’s more activist role in the 1980s continued and grew during these years. The Council reminded stakeholders that it was not a regulatory body, but rather a supervisory body that monitored, reviewed, and reported to the federal Minister of Agriculture on all operations of an agency. Indeed, only some aspects of agency operations had to be approved by the Council, specifically orders and regulations related to quotas, licences, and levies. Still, it was empowered to adjudicate disputes between the agencies and signatories to the federal-provincial agreements and hold public hearings on any aspect of agency operations deserving of attention. And during these years the Council’s responsibility of ensuring the agencies respected and used the powers provided to them under the Act to promote “strong, efficient and competitive” sectors was pursued.

This is not to suggest that the Council was not committed to the creation of more national marketing agencies. For instance, in 1990, NFPMC recommended the establishment of an apple-marketing agency with supply management powers.<sup>242</sup> As described below, an apple agency never materialized, but the Council was still committed to national marketing systems that empowered producers. Nevertheless, various factors related to the world market situation—including General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations, the ongoing consultations under the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA), and the pending discussions on a North American Trade Agreement—contributed to a perceptible change in environment.<sup>243</sup>

### *Task Forces and Legislative Change*

An important development related to larger political and ideological shifts was a set of changes made to the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act (FPMMA) through Bill C-54. Introduced to Parliament on December 12, 1991, Bill C-54 allowed for the establishment of special agencies for the promotion and research of agricultural commodities.<sup>244</sup> This change in legislation also resulted in the renaming of

the Act to the Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA) and the Council to the National Farm Products Council (NFPC), as it was no longer just marketing agencies that could be established. As noted below, promotion and research agencies were considered a self-help solution by government and industry that gave farmers more tools to achieve competitive and efficient production without the degree of intervention assumed by a marketing agency.

Following the GATT agreement reached in December 1993, federal and provincial ministers worked together to establish another task force on supply management renewal. On January 10, 1994, ministers gave the task force the mandate to identify key issues in supply management and the processes needed to deal with them before the updated GATT agreement was to be implemented in July 1995. Chaired by Lyle Vanciel, then Parliamentary Secretary to the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the task force established ad hoc committees for each of the poultry industries and NFPC staff served on the secretariat of each of these ad hoc committees.<sup>245</sup> Of particular concern was creating more effective dispute mechanisms and the development and approval of a framework for amending the federal-provincial agreements governing each of the agencies.<sup>246</sup>

### *The Intersol Report and Facilitating Change*

Another important event was the Intersol report of 1995–96. The Council contracted the consulting group Intersol to undertake an informal review to determine the needs of participants in the poultry sector and the most appropriate role for Council.<sup>247</sup> Various stakeholder representatives, including those from commodity agencies, provincial marketing boards and supervisory commissions, producers, processors, grocery distributors, industry and agricultural associations, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada were interviewed for the report. Overall, the report noted that most participants interviewed had “expected Council to play a pivotal role in facilitating change and transition as the industries adapted to the new trade order.” And they proposed that NFPC “accept a new role of convenor/facilitator to bring the various stakeholder interests together around the key issues which would shape the industry.” According to the report, many in the industry felt that the Council needed to “re-create its supervisory role in line with its real powers and provincial responsibilities and take the lead in clarifying a framework for problem-solving that could serve the interests of all stakeholders.”<sup>248</sup>

The general tenor of the report was that agriculture was changing. The drivers included the continuing process of trade liberalization, the devolution of power to the provinces, rationalization and integration of industry, the shifting focus of government policy, provincial political trends, the dominance of provincialism in supply setting, and governments’ fiscal policies. Overall, the Intersol report expressed a strong belief that the NFPC should help to provide a coherent strategy and policy framework with which stakeholders in the egg and poultry industries could navigate this change.<sup>249</sup> The report itself reveals a great deal about the anxieties of industry stakeholders. Producers, for example, worried about



increasing individualism, re-enforced by government policies at the federal and provincial levels. They feared that the federal government's trade policies and drive to greater competitiveness would cause people to "scramble for position... [and] be hurt, and important aspects of the supply management system would be lost."<sup>250</sup> Most industry members, producers and processors alike, commented that the "American system did not represent the desired future." And many recognized that "all stakeholders should participate in the evolution of the Canadian industry, such that its strengths were retained and adapted to prosper in the new environment."<sup>251</sup>

The report and the resulting discussion highlighted some key concerns for the Council, including that its limited powers meant there was no real mechanism in place to shape and guide this process. Stakeholders believed that the NFPC was "the only institution which had the neutrality and credibility to address the dual needs of mechanism for collaboration and planning and a framework and forum for problem solving." But the reality was that, while the Council played an important role in facilitating broader industry discussions and encouraging change, their powers to enforce recommendations in these matters were limited.

Overall, the report emphasized that stakeholders understood that "communication, collaboration, and consensus-building" were needed. It also pointed out that, generally, producers, processors, and consumers believed the Council could provide valuable policy leadership, from helping shape industry policies to facilitating resolution of problems and building consensus among stakeholders.<sup>252</sup> It revealed that, regardless of the current legislative authority, stakeholders in the egg and poultry industry believed that the Council's role should be more forward thinking and provide producer and other stakeholders with a forum to engage in a strategic planning process for the future.<sup>253</sup>

Another significant change in 1995 was that NFPC assumed responsibility for administering the Agricultural Products Marketing Act (APMA). This change allowed provincially legislated commodity groups, through the delegation of federal authority, to regulate and levy farm products in interprovincial and export trade, as they were able to do intra-provincially.<sup>254</sup>

Despite the expansion of Council's roles and responsibilities, it remained very much occupied with supervising the national marketing agencies and helping find solutions to some of the long-standing issues in the egg and poultry industries. In 1996, NFPC Chair, Dr. Cliff McIsaac, noted with frustration that "provincialism has been the bane of these systems since they were established, and for the most part it is still alive and well."<sup>255</sup> McIsaac lamented the fact that many provincial boards were more interested in "maintaining [their] share of the pie rather than [meeting] the obligation of developing national competitive industries." He also contended that the large number of signatories (over 30 in some agencies) meant that finding solutions and making any significant changes to governing structures were near impossible. The Council deemed revision of federal-provincial agreements a necessity, and McIsaac emphasized that the future success of the agencies would depend on their ability to create "a spirit of trust and flexibility."<sup>256</sup>





**Joseph Clifford (Cliff)  
McIsaac, Chair,  
1991–97** (Figure 4.1)

Born in Mount Herbert, Prince Edward Island, in 1930, McIsaac graduated from Truro Agricultural College in 1950 and the Ontario Veterinary College in 1955, after which he moved to Unity, Saskatchewan, and established a veterinary practice. In 1964, McIsaac was first elected to the Saskatchewan Legislature, later serving in a number of ministerial positions, before resigning his seat and successfully running in the 1974 federal election. McIsaac served in the senior Trudeau's government as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. He held a number of committee roles and acted as Liberal Party whip. After he was defeated in the federal elections of 1979 and 1980, McIsaac became a commissioner of the Canadian Dairy Commission from 1981 to 1991, before being appointed as chair of NFPMC from 1991 to 1996.<sup>1</sup> During his time at the Council, McIsaac oversaw a number of changes, including the expanded legislative roles and responsibilities of the Council in 1993 and 1995.



**Laurent Mercier, Vice-  
Chair, 1992–97** (Figure 4.2)

Laurent Mercier was a leader in the poultry industry before his appointment as vice-chair on May 19, 1992. Mercier was the chair of the Québec provincial poultry agency, Les Éleveurs de volailles de Québec, from 1976 to 1989, before serving as chair of CCMA from 1989 to 1991. An advocate for all farmers, Mercier believed that, regardless of the commodity, all farmers deserved “a fair shake and a fair return on their products,” and he used his time at the Council to promote farmer interests. After his tenure with the Council, Mercier was elected to the Québec Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2001.<sup>2</sup>

1 “A Guide to the Records of the J.C. McIsaac fonds (F 134),” Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (2011, rev. 2015), <https://search.saskarchives.com/downloads/j-c-mcisaac-fonds.pdf> (accessed September 25, 2021).

2 “Laurent Mercier, Former CFC Chair, Passed Away in Late 2014,” *The Chicken Farmer* 17, no. 1 (February 2015): 8.

McIsaac contended that new approaches were needed for the future. He recognized that “nobody wants to import the U.S. system with its huge operations of millions of hens or thousands of dairy cows as individual production units.” But he insisted that “this view, however, should not be used to maintain the status quo in Canada.” Citing the increase in farm sizes and the federal government’s endorsement of globalization and competition, McIsaac urged that “cooperation among all sectors and a timetable for adaptation of the existing supply management structures to the realities of tomorrow” was necessary.<sup>257</sup>

Not everyone agreed with McIsaac about what those realities would look like. Yet, it is unsurprising that he believed, as many did, that both external pressures (including greater trade liberalization) and internal pressures (such as the fiscal realities of government deficits and debt) meant that few Canadian industries, and indeed, Canadian families, were not affected in some way. Similar sentiments of the need for “change and renewal” were expressed by the following NFPC Chair, Cynthia Currie, who was appointed in May 1997. Currie arrived at the chair position after a successful tenure as the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency (CCMA) General Manager where she and the board had instituted significant changes in the agency. She saw her role at the NFPC similarly—an opportunity to move the Council and the national agencies forward to meet the new challenges of the times.<sup>258</sup> Although Currie was not the first woman appointed to as the chair at the NFPC, when she took her role it was at

the same time that egg producer and long-time industry leader Linda Boxall was named vice-chair of the Council.<sup>259</sup> Currie later reflected that she was particularly proud to be one of the few women in agricultural leadership roles at this time and that she worked hard to establish credibility and the trust of producers for both herself and the Council.<sup>260</sup>

In the 1998 NFPC annual report, Currie noted that the Council's mission moving forward was "ensuring the supply management system works in the balanced interests of all stakeholders." She made it clear that the movement required the Council to adopt "a proactive, results-oriented stance."<sup>261</sup> She emphasized that Council had a "role of communicator, facilitator, and agent of change," and that it remained committed to building stronger relationships with all industry partners in order to "help promote the growth of the poultry and egg sectors in the domestic and international markets."<sup>262</sup>

The Council worked to achieve this mission in many ways, including convening numerous meetings, workshops, and conferences over the years. One particularly successful event held by NFPC was a national workshop under the theme "Growing the Industry Profitably."<sup>263</sup> Held in Toronto in October 1998, the workshop was organized by Council to explore ways that the egg and poultry industries could be profitable and competitive in both domestic and export markets. The approximately 100 industry representatives focused on clarifying the supply management policy environment, determining greater sources of efficiency and reducing unnecessary costs, and expanding domestic and



### **Cynthia Currie, Chair, 1997–2006** (Figure 4.3)

A native of Georgetown, Guyana, Currie came to Canada in 1969. After travelling and working abroad for a period, Currie returned to Canada and came to work as an executive assistant to the chair of the CEMA. She found this work incredibly interesting and learned about the importance of Canadian agriculture and the challenges farmers faced at that time. Eventually, Currie was given the opportunity to work at CCMA and, ultimately, had a long and successful tenure as the general manager of CCMA until her appointment as the chair of the NFPC in 1997.<sup>1</sup> Before her appointment, Currie also served as a member of the Canadian Agri-food Marketing Council and the Agriculture, Food and Beverage Sectorial Advisory Group on International Trade.<sup>2</sup> During her time with CCMA, Currie gained trust and credibility among producers and worked with the agency to institute innovative, even revolutionary, change. Currie was proud of the work she completed during her tenure with the agency, and this work was noticed by the Minister of Agriculture, who contacted Currie directly to ask her to consider the position of NFPC chair. Currie worked hard to balance the interests of all parties in the system and focus on the bigger picture of the industry, and during her tenure at Council she remained committed to improving and innovating Council's work during a particularly transformative period of the group's history.<sup>3</sup>

1 Cynthia Currie, interview by author, August 24, 2021.

2 NFPC, *National Farm Products Council Annual Review, 1998* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1999), 9.

3 Cynthia Currie, interview by author, August 24, 2021.

export markets.<sup>264</sup> The workshop report published by the Council outlined a series of “future actions” that should be taken, including the increased sharing of knowledge and resources and developing international benchmarks to remain competitive in efforts to increase exports. It also noted that the NFPC committed itself to continuing its supportive role as a facilitator and advisor in these discussions.<sup>265</sup>

By 1999, the Council identified some key priorities it wished to continue to tackle in the following decade. These goals included “ensuring overall policy direction and stability; exploring improved methods of dispute resolution; developing coordinated and strategic approaches to export promotion; undertaking benchmarking studies to promote greater cost efficiency; facilitating trade policy discussions in preparation for the next round of WTO negotiations on agriculture; and encouraging the development of pricing mechanisms to promote product quality.”<sup>266</sup> Council members saw themselves as leaders with an active mandate to facilitate change, not simply act as supervisors of existing systems. Reflecting on this period, Currie noted the Council was not “afraid to open our eyes to realities, to wake people up to problems or opportunities—even when they may have preferred to keep their eyes comfortably shut!” She noted that the marketing structures in place “must not be viewed as a given for the future. The supply management system and the sectors that operate under it must be, and are, in constant renewal. Ideally, the sectors will renew themselves with a clear and shared vision. We want to help them do that.”<sup>267</sup>

### *International Visits and Export Discussions*

When the Council was first created in the 1970s, a concerted effort was made to increase Canadian poultry and poultry product exports. Ultimately, those opportunities did not materialize. Fewer rather than more exports was the general trend as developing nations such as Brazil began to challenge the traditional leaders in the industry, namely the United States and, as it was called until 1993, the European Community.<sup>268</sup> Still, Canadian governments encouraged a renewed effort to develop international markets and the Council was encouraged to investigate export opportunities by the late 1990s.

Part of this investigation required Council members to participate in international conferences and trade missions. As members of the newly created federal trade promotion agency Team Canada Inc., a number of trips to Asia and South America were undertaken. Team Canada Inc. was founded in 1997 through the joint efforts of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Industry Canada as a way to provide a “single point of access for international business development services available from the federal government.” The NFPC joined this agency in 1998, believing the relationship would help poultry sectors develop their export market potential and create successful joint initiatives between government and industry. As part of this group, NFPC Chair Cynthia Currie participated in an agri-food mission to South America in 1998 before later that

year travelling to China for the 20th anniversary annual general meeting and policy conference of the Canada-China Business Council.<sup>269</sup>

Council members also continued to participate in international meetings, such as the International Egg Commission (IEC) meeting, in addition to policy and trade conferences held in the United States.<sup>270</sup> Despite the Council's emphasis that Canadian poultry and egg industries needed to evolve and increase their exports to ensure future success, it is perhaps telling that at the IEC meeting attended by Vice-Chair Linda Boxall in South Africa in 1998, Canada and India were the only two member countries to report positive situations in their poultry sectors. In fact, at this meeting the United States called for a greater need to balance supply and demand, and the European Union reported issues with overproduction, excess imports, lower prices, and unhealthy competition between producers.<sup>271</sup>

Efforts to develop international markets for Canadian products continued, and in 1999 the major project in export promotion was the first-ever Canadian Poultry Meat Export Awareness Mission to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo, and Osaka. The Council organized the mission in cooperation with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council, and Canada's embassies and consulates in the region. The aim of the mission was to assess the potential of Asian markets for expanded sales of Canadian poultry meat products. And the aim was met as the Council reported that the members who attended these trips gained considerable knowledge about meat markets in China, Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan, and were "surprised by the sophistication and pace of change in the poultry meat industries and markets of these countries, both in terms of production capacity and technological development and in terms of consumer trends."<sup>272</sup>



**Linda Boxall,  
Vice-Chair,  
1997–98 (Figure 4.4)**

Born and raised in Regina Saskatchewan, Boxall had a lifetime of experience in the egg industry before her appointment to Council. Before becoming a Council member on July 30, 1994, and vice-chair in May 1997, Boxall had served as the first female marketing board member in Canada when she was elected by her fellow producers to the Saskatchewan Commercial Egg Producers Marketing Board in 1975.<sup>1</sup> Boxall's relationship with NFPMC began during this time when she was the only woman to present a brief to NFPMC supporting CEMA and the COP formula at a CAC enquiry in 1976.<sup>2</sup> Boxall was a strong proponent of a national marketing system for eggs, including its ability to ensure a fair farmer price that made farming "attractive to the ambitious young people who are looking for an interesting and challenging career."<sup>3</sup>

- 1 "Linda Boxall, Carol Teichrob... the history-makers," *Canada's Who's Who of the Poultry Industry, supplement to Canada Poultryman* (1976): 122.
- 2 "Linda Boxall, Carol Teichrob... the history-makers," *Canada's Who's Who of the Poultry Industry, supplement to Canada Poultryman* (1976): 122, 124.
- 3 "Linda Boxall, Carol Teichrob... the history-makers," *Canada's Who's Who of the Poultry Industry, supplement to Canada Poultryman* (1976): 126.

Although the Council circulated the findings of the trips among industry stakeholders, the trips themselves seemed to have limited impact on Canadian production.<sup>273</sup> Although by the end of the 1990s, the Chair Cynthia Currie and the Vice-Chair Ron O'Connor saw the trade trips and missions as valuable and useful for gaining new knowledge about the global landscape and found they benefited processors in particular, the challenges of competing on the international market were also clear.<sup>274</sup> Processors and further processors saw some success as a result of these missions, including new opportunities for niche products, but it was obvious that the sale of raw product, such as whole chicken, would be difficult. At this time, countries like the United States had export enhancement programs and other incentives and subsidies against which Canada could simply not compete.<sup>275</sup>

### *Improving Communications*

During this decade, efforts continued to increase the Council's "visibility and presence, and to improve communications with its members, with government, and with industry."<sup>276</sup> Council members continued to participate in media interviews, attend conferences and meetings as guest speakers, and seek new ways of reaching out to its industry partners. Currie and other members used these opportunities to focus "on the Council's proactive agenda, its role as facilitator and as convener, as well as on the importance of building partnerships to help develop a more profitable industry."<sup>277</sup> In late 1997, a corporate communications strategy was developed and a communications manager was appointed to coordinate and implement these strategies, which included raising the Council's profile by putting together a corporate identity package and launching its biweekly newsletter, *FOCUS*, in 1998. The newsletter was intended as a tool to "keep members and stakeholders informed about Council business in-between meetings, and to highlight relevant political and industry developments," and was sent to the Council members, national agencies, provincial supervisory boards, and to industry and agri-food organizations.<sup>278</sup> The Council believed that enhancing its role as a source of information and advice to both industry and government stakeholders would benefit the egg and poultry sectors in particular. The reason was clear; as it explained, it was "in a unique position to provide the Minister and Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food with timely and relevant insights into the [poultry] sector and its concerns. Conversely, Council provides a window into the federal government for poultry and egg industry stakeholders."<sup>279</sup>

## *The National Marketing Agencies in the 1990s*

Despite the many external concerns brought to the Council's attention during the 1990s, industry issues remained and attempts to resolve them required a great deal of effort by NFPC. Throughout this period the Council continued to encourage the national agencies to strengthen their operational and



policy measures; however, cost-of-production (COP) formulas remained an issue. Despite the guidelines and recommendations the Council developed, not all agencies accepted them, oftentimes because of disagreements among provincial boards about implementing any changes.

Despite the Council's vision for change during this period, facilitating real action was difficult because of the Council's limited legislative power to do so, as noted in previous chapters. For instance, in the 1992–93 annual report, the Council contended that not enough progress had been made to address the major issues that were reported by the poultry task force, including updating costs of production, despite their advisory efforts.<sup>280</sup> And again, the Council was concerned with the lack of progress in revising the federal-provincial agreements. Despite the urgency in this matter, the requirement of unanimity among signatories remained a significant obstacle in instituting the measures the Council deemed necessary to have the flexibility required to respond to changing market circumstances.<sup>281</sup>

The Council reassured the national agencies of its commitment to the success of supply management but was consistent in its belief that greater evolution was needed for the system to continue. In 1994, the Council helped to organize a conference themed Supply Management in Transition Towards the 21st Century. Held at McGill University's Macdonald Campus, the conference examined various issues related to supply management in order to better assess the state of these systems and their futures.<sup>282</sup> Throughout the early 1990s, the Council reported "signs of changing attitudes" toward agricultural protection, and supply management in particular. As already discussed, it was clear that the Council believed that national agencies had to evolve in order to make easier "the inevitable transition to a world with declining border protection."<sup>283</sup> NFPC Chair Cliff McIsaac was particularly forceful in his 1995 message that these objects had "been diluted by such non-legislative aims as regional development, enhanced income protection, and provincial economic interests." He admitted that "such an evolution is not necessarily wrong or unusual," but that there was "a real opportunity in the next five or six years to focus on basic objectives to build industries that will survive."<sup>284</sup>

This is not to suggest that no consensus could to be found during these years and that change was impossible. In 1996, for instance, a number of amendments were made to existing agency proclamations to enable a more balanced representation of industry stakeholders on the boards of the national marketing agencies, which the Council endorsed. Generally, the number of non-producer directors, mainly processor or food-service representatives, were increased on agency boards, which was deemed a positive change.<sup>285</sup> Also, the Council was particularly congratulatory to CCMA for the changes the agency instituted during this decade. But the issues surrounding federal-provincial agreements and the continued provincialism expressed in some industries continued to cause concern.



### *Canadian Egg Marketing Agency*

The 1990s presented some significant challenges for the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency (CEMA). Perhaps the most pressing issue for the agency was its financial situation. CEMA had a budgetary deficit as a result of its surplus removal program in 1990, and although the agency's financial situation soon improved, the surplus egg situation needed to be resolved. The situation surrounding the program led to both Ontario and Québec announcing their intention to withdraw from CEMA's national surplus removal program in 1990. Although they were not withdrawing from CEMA, they argued that the current method of removing surplus eggs, which was termed industrial product, through an increasing levy was not acceptable and that an alternate method must be developed.<sup>286</sup> The Council was increasingly concerned about CEMA's ability "to resolve the serious disagreement among signatories regarding the management and sharing of responsibility for the removal of surplus table eggs." However, efforts continued between the Council and the provincial supervisory boards to develop a process that would ensure compliance with, or secure amendments needed for, the federal-provincial agreement.<sup>287</sup> The issue of surplus eggs was related to the other problem of a declining table egg market in many provinces during the early 1990s, while a growing market for eggs for processing was destabilizing traditional processes.<sup>288</sup> The Council was also tasked at this time to facilitate negotiations between the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors' Council (CPEPC) and CEMA about the establishment of an acceptable grading and handling allowance for surplus eggs. Previous negotiations had failed, and the Council worked hard to help the parties reach a temporary agreement in July 1990 and fund an impact study by Price-Waterhouse regarding the actual costs of grading and handling.<sup>289</sup>

In addition to issues between producer and processor groups, the 1990s also witnessed regular "conflicting interpretations" of the national egg marketing agreement, which highlighted, in the Council's view, an underlying issue of a "lack of common vision among signatories across Canada about what the plan is intended to achieve." As the Council noted, many provincial signatories had "difficulty considering the national point of view or the national market. Rather, they focus on the narrower perspectives of their own constituencies – which tend to be ones of provincial self-interest and producer income support. Nevertheless, Council is convinced there is enough goodwill and desire to warrant a second attempt to revamp the federal-provincial agreement."<sup>290</sup> It was difficult to get signatories to adhere to and agree on amendments for federal-provincial plans, and this was compounded by challenges to the very authority of the national agency. For example, in 1990 the Alberta Egg and Fowl Marketing Board made a federal court challenge to the Council's powers in relation to its dealings with CEMA.<sup>291</sup>

The Council's relationship with CEMA also became increasingly strained during these years because CEMA implemented three major programs that were not endorsed by the Council. In the Council's opinion, these programs were not consistent with the objectives of the agency, the direction of the Poultry Task Force, or the Egg Review Committee. The programs related to the COP formula,

new levy structure, and quota buyout. The Council recognized the pressures CEMA faced since the provinces could not agree on a solution to the surplus egg removal problem, but NFPC was not convinced that these new programs demonstrated the level of review or legislative consistency that was necessary for their implementation.<sup>292</sup> A lack of agreement among signatories continued to be an issue for effective egg marketing, and thus concerning for NPFC. In 1995, the Council urged CEMA, with its direct involvement in buying and selling eggs, to work with retailers, graders, and processors. The aim was to “really address the future potential of the market for eggs and egg products,” and it warned that only “time [would] tell if C.E.M.A.’s energies can be redirected to the future after so many years of wrestling with the past.”<sup>293</sup>

International events, including the impact of the GATT Uruguay Round, also led the federal government to create new task forces to identify key issues in the supply management system and determine appropriate processes to address them.<sup>294</sup> Various ad hoc committees were established for each poultry industry. And the Ad Hoc Review Committee on Eggs, also referred to as the Sectoral Advisory Group—Eggs (SAGE), which comprised representation from CEMA, allied industry such as graders and processors, hatcheries, the food-service industry, grocery distributors and provincial governments, met on a number of occasions in 1994 to come to an agreement for a proposal to restructure CEMA’s surplus removal program and its associated levies.<sup>295</sup> The committee achieved a number of things, including capping the existing consumer levy, creating a price discrimination and pooling system compatible with international commitments, and establishing a process to renew the federal-provincial agreement, for which Council assumed a lead role.<sup>296</sup> But the Council continued to have concerns about the “market responsiveness and efficiency” of CEMA’s plans.<sup>297</sup> At times, the tension between the Council, CEMA, and other signatories was palpable and the disagreements seemingly insurmountable.

Another long-standing concern for Council was the inability of CEMA to come to an agreement with the Northwest Territories for its entry into the national egg marketing plan. The NWT continued to challenge CEMA in court, having refused CEMA’s proposed entry quota number.<sup>298</sup> Court cases involving Alberta and the NWT continued to absorb industry attention. These legal cases, as well as the issues surrounding the renewal of federal-provincial agreements, demonstrated to NFPC that “provincialism remains and mistrust among certain blocks of provinces continues,” and that the “legalistic approach which has proven unsuccessful in resolving differences of view in the past needs to be replaced by negotiation and a spirit of compromise.”<sup>299</sup>

Another persistent concern of the Council during this decade was, in their view, CEMA’s “reluctance to undertake the kind of strategic long-range planning needed to create industry cohesion and market opportunity.”<sup>300</sup> The Council contended that the agency’s members had seemed “to have been lulled into a false sense of security by the wall of high protective tariffs.” The Council wanted to see CEMA make more changes and develop “an orderly marketing structure to carry the industry into the future.”<sup>301</sup> The Council’s messaging at this time showed their desire to lead CEMA in new policy directions that

aligned with their vision (and the government's) of a more competitive industry. The cooperation that had been necessary for the establishment of marketing plans in the early 1970s seemed to have broken down, and without renewed efforts at collaboration, it was feared the whole system would not survive.

Finally, in 1998, CEMA and the NWT came to an agreement regarding the Territories' initial allocation of quota, and the NWT became a member of the national agency. Although the road had been a long one—14 years—the completion of the NWT marketing plan was an important moment for the agency and the Council. The Chair, Cynthia Currie, reflected on the NWT's entry as a particularly significant event because for so long many thought “it could not be done.”<sup>302</sup> Still, it did not resolve existing tensions between signatories of the national plan.<sup>303</sup> The Council continued to express concerns about industry cohesion and the long-standing issues that remained as the industry approached the twenty-first century.

### *Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency*

At the start of the 1990s, the Council was satisfied with the Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency's (CTMA) operations, but some remaining issues from the previous decades included the agency's COP formula and its quota enforcement policies.<sup>304</sup> The Council congratulated CTMA for improving its operational structures and policies to “improve their competitive position,” but noted that more work was needed.<sup>305</sup> Similar to the ad hoc committee tasked to review the egg industry, a Turkey Ad Hoc Committee was established with representatives of CTMA, primary and further processors, the food-service industry, grocery distributors, and provincial governments. Their task was to develop “a workable, market-responsive quota allocation system and implementation of legislative changes.”<sup>306</sup> The results of this committee included the creation of the Canadian Turkey Federation (CTF), which was a joint advisory organization between CTMA and CPEPC with regional representation. This organization facilitated an Agreement on Organization Changes and the Allocation System, which included an agreement to add two non-producer members to the agency's board of directors—a primary processor and a further processor, both appointed by CPEPC.<sup>307</sup> CTMA also agreed to complete a review of the current quota allocation methodology.<sup>308</sup>

The turkey industry was dealing with the increasing trend toward fresh turkey purchases, which resulted in high levels of whole frozen product in storage. Some progress had been made in revising the quota allocation processes to meet this trend, but some of the provincial boards remained anxious “to have market realities more adequately reflected, further processing requirements met, and differences in cost structures and shifts in consumer recognized.”<sup>309</sup> NFPC congratulated CTMA for demonstrating “the capacity and willingness to break new ground”<sup>310</sup> through such initiatives as the creation of a new market advisory committee that allowed associated industry partners a more active role in formulating

quota recommendations. But it remained concerned that the provincial boards often still wished to maintain “the status quo” rather than “considering the national industry as a whole.”<sup>311</sup>

In 1999, CTMA celebrated its 25th anniversary, and the Council looked favourably on the new quota allocation policy and joint promotional activities with CPEPC, such as the “Turkey Tuesday” promotion campaign that saw increased domestic consumption.<sup>312</sup> Overall, the Council celebrated the turkey industries’ promising degree of cooperation across the sector, which they believed would benefit all.<sup>313</sup>

### *Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency / Chicken Farmers of Canada*

Perhaps the agency that underwent the most significant change during this period was CCMA. In August 1990, Alberta finally became a member of CCMA, and the NWT expressed their interest in joining the agency.<sup>314</sup> CCMA made many strides early in the 1990s to correct existing issues, including revising its contingency quota policy and establishing a national quota pool to improve market responsiveness.<sup>315</sup> While the Council was not without its concerns about the chicken industry, it believed that the CCMA was taking the steps necessary to improve the overall competitiveness of the sector.<sup>316</sup>

Indeed, by 1995 the Council considered CCMA to be the leader among the national agencies in terms of members’ willingness to adapt and be a “strong component of Canadian agriculture and agri-food.” NFPC cited CCMA’s new approach to allocating production that gave primary processors an enhanced role in determining requirements as the reason for a resulting increase in production and consumption. Although it also noted that an overestimation of demand in the fall of 1994 adversely affected the bottom line for the processing sector initially, it was hopeful that with greater discipline and more experience, a more stable industry would emerge that benefited everyone.<sup>317</sup> The Council contended that “1995 was a landmark year for the CCMA.” It noted that it had “led the way in refocusing and restructuring itself for a future of globalization and reduced tariffs, and in doing so has been somewhat of a model for the other commodities. Its approach has been innovative and pragmatic, focused on results rather than paralysed by outmoded structures and conflicting needs.”<sup>318</sup>

Similar to the other poultry ad hoc committees, the Ad Hoc Committee on Chicken focused on operational and program issues, the structure of the agency, and ways in which the federal-provincial agreements could be revised to “provide for greater market responsiveness and sustainability.”<sup>319</sup> The National Pricing and Allocation Agreement (NAPA) and the introduction of additional safeguards and discipline to the allocation system were the results of this committee, which was applauded by Council.<sup>320</sup>

The Council’s initial optimism for these changes was somewhat short-lived, however, as the new quota allocations soon caused disagreement among provincial signatories. NAPA had put in place what the Council deemed a “ground-up” approach to quota allocation, transferring responsibility for

establishing market supply to provincial bodies and the industry. However, these changes, as well as the agency's strategic plans and export policies, did not have unanimous support, and Council noted that, "not all provinces are convinced that the Agency is moving in the right direction."<sup>321</sup> The change from allocating quota based on historical market shares to one based on provincial market requirements affected provincial interests, and NAPA's principle of considering provincial processors' requirements at acceptable producer prices led to worries that downstream buyers concerns were not being heard.<sup>322</sup> While the Council considered these changes necessary for a more "flexible and market driven" system, and "NAPA to be a positive step toward achieving that objective," the disagreement among provinces and the failure to revise the federal-provincial agreement to reflect these new policies were problems that required solutions.<sup>323</sup>

In 1999, the Council was pleased to report that the "chicken sector reached a milestone with the signing of a new National Allocation Agreement by all 10 provinces and the Chicken Farmers of Canada." CCMA, now the Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) was congratulated by Council for its efforts in the 1990s to respond to changes in Canadian agriculture, but it was not long before NFPC was once again concerned about agency operations. By 2000, the Council contended CFC had been setting periodic quota allocations without enough supporting evidence of demand, and concerns rose about industry cohesion when the BC and Alberta boards threatened to withdraw from the plan following conflict concerning BC's export program.<sup>324</sup> No new federal-provincial agreement materialized, and despite the success of the decade, continued challenges lay ahead.

### *Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency*

Early in the 1990s, the Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency (CBHEMA) was on more stable financial footing and by improving its allocation of production quota had successfully reduced the level of supplemental imports that caused conflict in the 1980s.<sup>325</sup> As the newest national marketing agency, CBHEMA was going through the growing pains that had been (and in many ways continued to be) experienced by other agencies. But by 1993 the Council was pleased to report the progress the agency had made in eliminating its outstanding debt and improving its accuracy of market demand projections.<sup>326</sup> Although NFPC encouraged efforts to improve the working relationships of producers and hatcheries, generally the Council's concerns at the beginning of the decade were limited.

An ad hoc committee for broiler hatching eggs had also been created during the 1990s, and three fundamental issues were identified that needed to be addressed: the blend of domestic production and imports in each province, the quota allocation methodology, and assurance that the allocation commitments would be honoured. The committee concluded that before any meaningful changes could be made at the national level to address these issues, more progress was necessary provincially. They also

believed that developing acceptable arrangements between hatcheries and producers was the key to addressing these problems.<sup>327</sup>

Another concern for CBHEMA during this period was the effect that the new chicken allocation process had on production projections. There was an unexpected demand for hatching eggs in 1994 as a result of NAPA. And while Council noted that this was a “welcome challenge” for the broiler hatching egg industry, there were some complications in determining global hatching egg requirements. The difficulty was insufficient lead time needed to meet the timely requirements for hatching eggs and chicks. Preliminary allocations were continually reviewed, revised, and then finalized in the latter part of the production year.<sup>328</sup> The CCMA’s new system of quota allocations eliminated the requirement for yearly production forecasts from the downstream demand sectors upon which the CBHEMA had traditionally based its allocation process. To a certain degree, this move compromised the agency’s ability to plan. Council was concerned about underproduction in some provinces, and it supported the CBHEMA’s request to amend the federal-provincial agreement to include disciplinary measures for unfilled quota.<sup>329</sup>

In 1999, the Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission brought a formal complaint to Council against CBHEMA, about how the agency accounted for imports in its allocations, which resulted in the initiation of formal hearings. By September 1999, the Council was unable to prior-approve CBHEMA’s proposed quota order for 2000 because it did not conform to the findings and recommendations from the hearings report.<sup>330</sup> Although a tentative agreement was formulated among the five members of CBHEMA’s Board of Directors by the end of the year, it was not submitted in time for new orders and regulations to be considered by the Council. The agency started the twenty-first century without quota and levy orders or other regulations in place.<sup>331</sup>

Ultimately, the issue was that industry members could not agree on how to account for imports when allocating production quota among the member provinces and staying within the total national production quota. Although everyone recognized the importance of finding a solution, the conflicting interests of some parties meant that achieving agreement was not readily forthcoming. It would take the real risk of losing their orderly marketing system to bring industry members to consensus in the next decade.

### *Other Commodities*

A significant event for the Council was the initiation of an inquiry into the merits of establishing a national apple marketing agency. After years of crushing debt, rising production costs, inadequate insurance coverage for extended periods of losses due to disastrous weather, and government plans to remove production subsidies, many Canadian apple growers were desperate.<sup>332</sup> Exacerbating the concern, subsidies continued in the United States, Europe, and some countries in South America



that were growing competitors. Many growers across Canada believed that the future of the industry depended on the creation of a national marketing agency that could manage the supply. As British Columbian grower Russell Husch noted in 1990, many apple growers believed that an orderly market was “the only way [they] could compete against the imports that are killing us...we don’t want to keep going to governments for handouts and the only way out of that is through the markets.”<sup>333</sup>

In February 1990, a task force of apple growers came forward with a proposal to establish an agency for fresh apples. Public hearings were held in various locations in British Columbia, Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia during the summer of 1990, resulting in the Council’s recommendation that an agency with supply management powers be created for fresh market apples.<sup>334</sup> Despite the Council’s recommendation, however, the proposal had insufficient support by the time a national vote of apple growers was taken in February 1993.<sup>335</sup> Of the 3,832 apple growers who were eligible to vote, only 59.9 percent returned ballots, of which 52 percent were opposed to the establishment of a national marketing agency with supply management authority. Provincially, only British Columbia and New Brunswick favoured the establishment of an agency, while the majority of growers voting in Ontario, Québec, and Nova Scotia rejected the proposal. The opposition to a national marketing agency was particularly strong in Ontario where approximately 73 percent of growers who voted did not support the plan. Ultimately, the results of this vote led the Council to recommend to the Minister that the process be terminated.<sup>336</sup>

### *Promotion and Research Agencies*

Undoubtedly, one of the most significant developments for the Council in the 1990s was the revision of the FPMAA to allow for new promotion and research agencies. In February 1993, Bill C-54 became law and amended the former FPMAA for the establishment of national promotion and research agencies (PRAs) covering one or more farm products.<sup>337</sup> While a marketing agency was empowered to establish and allocate quota, promote products, raise funds through levies, license markets, and remove surpluses, a PRA was empowered to “raise funds through a national check off system, and may levy imports of raw and processed products.”<sup>338</sup> PRA funds were to be used to conduct primary production research, new product development, nutrition research, advertising and promotion, and consumer education.<sup>339</sup> The amendments were the result of requests that a national “check off” system be available to producers. These checkoffs or levies were paid by domestic producers and, where included in a research and promotion plan, applied to imports. All farm products were to be eligible for checkoffs, including those regulated under the Canadian Wheat Board Act. The existing provisions of the Act that concerned national supply management were not revised.

To reflect the expanded scope of the Act and the Council’s authority, the word “marketing” was removed and the new FPAA and the NFPC emerged.<sup>340</sup> As with the establishment of a marketing

agency, PRAs could only be established if the majority of producers, or a combined majority of producers and importers, of a particular farm product(s) were in favour. The Council viewed these new agencies as a welcome addition to their mandate, as they believed that checkoffs offered “a stable base of funding” and promoted “a more self-reliant agricultural sector.”<sup>341</sup>

Soon after the passage of Bill C-54, several groups reportedly progressed to the drafting stage of PRA plans, including an apple committee under the Canadian Horticultural Council, the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association (CCA), the Canadian Nursery Trades Association, and the Flax Growers of Western Canada, but no proposals were immediately forthcoming. While the Council met with more than 20 farm commodity groups interested in the agencies, progress beyond these initial explorations was limited. The Council investigated why most of these groups did not end up pursuing the creation of PRAs and found that it was largely due to the steps involved in getting an agency operational. As the Council explained, “industry would prefer an alternative to the current necessity, to link up to 10 provincial bodies to the agency through some type of federal-provincial agreement. Most groups only want a national agency, they view the provincial bodies as too costly to put in place and administer.”<sup>342</sup> The Council noted that these groups understood that this legislation provided an opportunity to put in place the long-term, stable funding of market promotion and research. Such funding was needed to remain competitive with producers in other countries who already had such systems in place. Still, groups wished to see more federal and provincial cooperation in “providing a streamlined approach to agency creation.” The Council admitted that it was not an easy task “to harmonize or simplify the legalities inherent in a federal state such as Canada.” But they were optimistic that all provinces could amend legislation in order to facilitate the successful implementation of these agencies. NFPC pointed to Nova Scotia as a province that had amended its legislation to facilitate agency creation, and noted that the Customs Division of Revenue Canada was in the process of planning policy and administrative changes to enable their department to collect levies on imports, a process commodity groups had promoted for some time.<sup>343</sup>

Although the process was slow, by July 1999 the Council received confirmation that CCA intended to submit a proposal for a Canadian beef cattle promotion and research agency. Council staff also began work with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada to produce a user-friendly information kit on PRAs, but it would not be until 2001 that the first such agency would be created.<sup>344</sup>

## Conclusion

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Council promised its industry stakeholders that it would continue to ensure that supply management worked for all groups. To that end it instituted the policy changes that were necessary to align these systems with government efforts to create a more competitive, market-oriented agricultural industry. The results of these years were mixed. Progress was made in addressing

some of the national agencies operational and policy issues, while other problems proved challenging and remained at the decade's end. In many ways, the necessary cooperative spirit that had been required for the creation of the national agencies in the 1970s had to some degree been eroded. The Council was generally unsympathetic to most provinces' protests over national agencies' practices and policies because the Council believed that these provincial interests were harming industry competitiveness. Competition was the language of this period, and while the Council made efforts to facilitate the building of trust and collaboration during these years, the results were not always as desired.

The Council itself had also evolved. While still an important supervisory body, it also saw itself as playing a greater leadership role in directing industry initiatives that were aligned with the governments' visions for the egg and poultry industries, agriculture, and the economy more generally. In the 1999 annual review, NFPC Chair Cynthia Currie reiterated the Council's desire for this expanded role, noting that the NFPC "intended to push the envelope of what the Council could contribute to the sector." Looking back, she noted that Council members had "set goals to go beyond the legislative requirements and took more of a leadership role."<sup>345</sup> Indeed, Currie explained that Council members "saw our role as more than just what is set out in an act of legislation or an organization chart. We saw ourselves in a position to point to ways forward for the sector, to point to ways of solving problems for the sector, and to point to ways of better cooperation among stakeholders in the sector."<sup>346</sup> Despite the challenges, Currie reflected on the strength of the Council members during this time and their ability to gain support for NFPC and a number of its initiatives. She believed strongly that during these years the Council and its actions brought significant value to the minister and to the industries under their supervision.<sup>347</sup> However, the Council also felt strongly that more work needed to be accomplished to prepare these industries for the increasingly complex marketplace of the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 5

New Collaborations and the Council in the 2000s

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Introduction

The 2000s were another transformative period for agriculture in Canada and around the globe. Farms were becoming fewer but larger, and world agriculture was for the most part one sector of a global industrial economy.<sup>348</sup> Because of this, more and more governments sought ways to reduce agricultural subsidies and other protections that existed to support the expanding international free trade agreement and World Trade Organization (WTO) regimes. Yet, despite continued international pressure for greater trade liberalization, the uniqueness of food production, and the riskiness of relying on a global system to ensure national food needs meant that few countries were willing to sacrifice any existing controls they had over agricultural production and domestic supports. Furthermore, this period also witnessed increased consumer attention on the impact of livestock farming and agricultural practices on the environment, and consumers expressed more and more concern about animal welfare and food safety programs. During this decade, the unforeseen disease outbreaks—avian influenza (AI) and bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE)—had devastating industry effects, particularly BSE on the beef industry, as animals were lost, markets closed, and consumer choices uncertain.

In this context, the Council stressed the need for cooperation more than ever as the national agencies worked to improve and adapt their plans and policies to meet the challenges of the era. This period was an important one for the Council. The creation of the first promotion and research agency (PRA) was a significant achievement, and while the process of establishing a national levy for promotion and research in the beef industry was a protracted one that suffered because of the BSE crisis, the foundations were set for greater growth in the following decade. In the egg and poultry sectors, the Council stressed collaboration as a central theme. Still, the reality was that this was a contentious period among the signatories of the national egg and poultry plans who did not agree on some of the new policies and directions taken by the national agencies, especially in relation to shifting methodology for quota allocations. Although the national agencies adopted new names and outlined their strategic action plans for the new era, long-standing operational issues and policy debates continued. Still, progress was made during this decade, and the Council was eager to see industry partners address the challenges, but also take advantage of future opportunities. The Council reminded stakeholders early in the decade that, Canadian agriculture, and the poultry and egg industry in particular, was facing “enormous challenges

from a global economy that is poised to alter the competitive landscape in Canada.” It also noted that opportunities existed for industry partners to work together to take advantage of new market growth and “ensure that Canada’s industry does not let those opportunities slip by.”<sup>349</sup>

## New Challenges for the Council in the Twenty-First Century

At the beginning of the decade the Council operated under the label of the National Farm Products Council (NFPC), but by the fall of 2009, it became the Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC). This was part of a broader governmental directive to include the word Canada in all department and organization names.<sup>350</sup> The FPCC Chair at that time, Bill Smirle, also explained that the name change coincided with FPCC’s new vision for providing “more expertise and stimulating innovative thinking and solutions.”<sup>351</sup> Responding to ever-changing realities in the industry, the Council saw this decade as one of transition and transformation. The Council’s central objectives continued to be to ensure that the national agencies worked in the balanced interests of stakeholders and to strengthen the industries under its supervision. But it continued to push those industries to be more innovative in their approaches to meeting market needs, and proactive, rather than reactive, to the challenges of the era.

To begin the new century, the Council developed what they believed to be a progressive strategic vision that charted the way for the beginning of the 2000s. Its strategic objectives were to ensure the system continued to work in the balanced interests of all stakeholders; promote “strength, competitiveness, and profitability” in all sectors; improve the agencies’ “market-responsive capacity;” and ensure all groups demonstrated “efficient, transparent, and responsible management” in their operations.<sup>352</sup> NFPC Chair, Cynthia Currie, reflected on these years at Council as a time where its members believed the organization could be more dynamic and “think bigger” about the role NFPC could play in the industry.<sup>353</sup> Although most national agencies did not want to deviate from the status quo and some believed that the Council’s plan was too ambitious, Currie and other Council members recognized that change was needed. Indeed, they looked to help—not hinder—the evolution of these organizations, which they believed was necessary for future success.<sup>354</sup>

Change, a significant theme for the Council in the 1990s, continued to be important in the 2000s, but the Council also recognized that stability was at the heart of supply management. While forces of change, including consumer preferences, advancing technology, and trade relations, influenced NFPC to seek ways to adapt and improve industry conditions, the Council recognized that stability was needed in order to ensure consumers had access to high-quality food at reasonable prices and allow predictability in the market for producers and processors.<sup>355</sup>

Part of creating that stability was ensuring that agency plans were supported by both the legislation and federal-provincial agreements. The core of the Council’s work continued to be its supervision of the national marketing agencies, specifically reviewing and approving their proposed quota and

levy orders.<sup>356</sup> But the other important element of NFPC’s work with the agencies was determining what modifications were required for the federal-provincial agreement proclamations and marketing plans. Indeed, a significant preoccupation for Council during these years was urging turkey, egg, and broiler hatching egg agencies to renew their federal-provincial agreements. While the chicken industry renewed its agreement in 2001, and the Council gave “much encouragement and advice” to the other agencies, many groups continued to struggle to find the consensus needed to make amendments to existing agreements.<sup>357</sup> The Council argued that the new agreements were not only necessary for legal reasons, but also because they provided opportunities for innovation, transparency, and “a fair allocation system that allows disproportionate market growth.”<sup>358</sup> Although the Council was eager to see the process completed, and more flexible agreements in place, progress regarding these agreements often stalled and no changes were forthcoming. The Council was frustrated throughout the 2000s as federal-provincial agreement renewals were stymied among egg, turkey, and broiler hatching egg industries, typically because of issues relating to quota allocation.<sup>359</sup>

### *A New Era for Agricultural Policy in Canada*

A significant milestone came for the Council in 2002 when it celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. Then Minister of Agriculture, Lyle Vancilief, congratulated the Council for working closely with the poultry and egg industries to help “reduce business risk and stabilize Canada’s supply of high-quality, safe, and affordable food.” He also congratulated NFPC for the new beef cattle PRA that would help grow markets and develop new opportunities for beef producers.<sup>360</sup> And he acknowledged that the Council was doing its part to contribute to the success of the government’s new Agricultural Policy Framework that had been created to ensure “the strength and competitiveness of Canadian agriculture in the 21st century,” to which federal and provincial governments agreed in 2001.<sup>361</sup>

This framework was touted as necessary for Canada to become “the world leader in food safety, innovation, and environmentally-responsible production,” and the central themes were to be food safety and quality, the environment, science and innovation, renewal, and business risk management.<sup>362</sup> NFPC agreed to work with all stakeholders to achieve these principles.<sup>363</sup> Beyond supporting agency policies and practices that bolstered these general themes, the Council also hosted its own events and helped support other symposiums and workshops that brought together researchers from government, universities, and private institutions to tackle important industry issues. This aim included supporting groups such as the Canadian Poultry Research Council (CPRC) in hosting symposiums on topics related to efficient marketing.<sup>364</sup> It also meant organizing workshops to help facilitate an expansion in Canadian exports, such as the Middle East Workshop held in Toronto in 2002 for processors and food-manufacturing representatives to learn more about the growing halal market.<sup>365</sup>



### *Integrating Efforts with Government and Industry Partners*

Collaborative efforts between NFPC and its industry and government partners were important as the Council developed strategies to implement the Agricultural Policy Framework. Although innovation and competition continued to be slogans for the era, the Council recognized that supply management was an effective system to reduce business risk, a key principle of the framework. The Council worked to strengthen existing partnerships in an effort to work toward shared goals. As the Council noted early in the decade, a number of government agencies' interests and work intersected with their own, and they wished to better coordinate these efforts rather than duplicate them or "leave gaps in the value we bring to the public and the commodity groups Council deals with."<sup>366</sup> Maintaining a strong relationship with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) was especially important for the Council so that it could understand the federal government's plans for Canadian agriculture and to contribute to conversations about international developments and trade negotiations and programmes. The Council was often called upon by the AAFC to present information regarding orderly marketing systems to foreign agricultural delegations and provide the AAFC minister with "the best advice and information possible."<sup>367</sup>

Another important partnership for the Council was its membership in the National Association of Agri-Food Supervisory Agencies (NAASA). This "federal/provincial/intergovernmental group" of supervisory agencies, which included NFPC, the Canadian Dairy Commission, and the supervisory agencies in each of the provinces, enabled ideas and information on issues of common concern to be shared. Meetings were held regularly to discuss issues and priorities related to supply management and to facilitate coordinated efforts among organizations.<sup>368</sup>

Indeed, the sharing and improvement of policy and market information was a central goal of NFPC during the 2000s. The incredible growth in internet services and data collection meant that the Council continually had to work to improve the reliability, accuracy, and timeliness of its market information. It also had to ensure coordinated policy actions were taken among industry partners. Accurate information was particularly important for the success of supply management, since the goal of the system was to match domestic production and imports of farm products to the level of demand. When working properly, the system ensured a stable supply of high-quality, fairly priced food products and allowed producers to manage their business risk by working with processors and others to meet the anticipated needs of consumers. Therefore, accurate and timely market information was critical.<sup>369</sup> The Council found, however, that because much of the information used to manage supplies was drawn from various sources that used different methodologies, some inconsistencies in the data analysis and use became apparent.<sup>370</sup> To improve this information, in February 2003 NFPC announced the formation of a Poultry Markets Information Working Group, which consisted of industry representatives, Council staff, and staff from other government agencies and departments involved in collecting and interpreting data. The

goal of the group was “to ensure the capture of credible, timely information about the marketplace and distribute it through a common national database available to all industry participants.”<sup>371</sup> The Council understood that more coordinated data-sharing efforts between producers, processors, marketing agencies, and government—particularly AAFC, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Statistics Canada, International Trade Canada (ITCan), the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)—was needed for the success of the supply management system.<sup>372</sup>

### *Modern Comptrollership*

Another important concern for the Council during these years was the institution of modern comptrollership at NFPC. The Council pledged to “improve its effectiveness and the integrity of its administration,” noting that “as a public institution, the Council will ensure that its internal operations meet the standards of accountability and communication that are expected of the modern public service.”<sup>373</sup> The Council saw this effort as necessary for creating “strategic leadership, sound business planning, risk management, shared ethics and values, motivated people, integrated performance information, clear accountability and rigorous stewardship.”<sup>374</sup>

In 2003, the Council seemed pleased that the Public Service Commission reported to Parliament that NFPC “provided a good example of a small agency linking human resources directions, learning needs, staffing and employment equity strategies with business lines and organization performance.”<sup>375</sup> The Council expressed pride in its dedicated, experienced staff who supported Canada’s egg, poultry, and beef industries,<sup>376</sup> but it also reiterated its belief that more work could be done to develop its governance and operational procedures. In 2003, the Council conducted a governance session and an internal policy review, which culminated in the publication of the *NFPC Governance Manual*. The manual outlined the Council’s structure, processes, duties, and responsibilities and was designed to help new Council members and stakeholders understand the mandate, mission, and structure of the NFPC, as well as the processes, ordinances, and procedures used by Council. It also clarified the quasi-judicial responsibilities of Council regarding quota, levy, and complaint-handling procedures.<sup>377</sup>

By 2005, NFPC Chair Cynthia Currie reported that the Council had greatly improved its business practices as a result of these initiatives:

We streamlined complaint procedures and developed a set of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. We revitalized corporate management by implementing modern comptrollership and the planning and performance measurement framework. We also improved the governance manual and launched a process to streamline the administration of the Agricultural Products Marketing Act. And, having achieved most of the objectives in the 2003–2006 Strategic Plan, we renewed the Plan and charted our course through 2009.<sup>378</sup>

During the 2000s, the Government of Canada began instituting new legislation, such as the Public Service Modernization Act and the Public Service Employment Act. The Acts saw government institutions, departments, and agencies such as NFPC implement new policies, approaches, and tools to support the new measures and ensure public servants benefited from sound human resources practices and processes. NFPC reaffirmed that it remained committed to developing “strategic leadership principles, sound business planning processes, risk management principles, integrated performance management and learning objectives.” At the same time, it explained that “the core values of merit, non-partisanship, excellence, representativeness, and the ability to serve the public with integrity, in their official language of choice” remained.<sup>379</sup> The process continued in 2009, when, among other administrative changes, the Council completed a management accountability framework assessment report, developed a new and improved HR plan, and completed the Public Service Commission (PSC) Departmental Staffing Accountability Report. Continuing to improve the FPCC’s corporate component “remained an integral part of core FPCC operations.”<sup>380</sup>

### *Agricultural Products Marketing Act*

As noted earlier, the Council was mandated with administering the Agricultural Products Marketing Act (APMA), and it realized that this element of its work needed more attention. While the Council was tasked with overseeing the poultry, eggs, and beef industries, by the early 2000s its work also engaged with other commodities as well. Wood, canola, flax, alfalfa, hog, sheep, potatoes—all of these commodities and others either had APMA orders that the Council’s staff worked on.<sup>381</sup> As noted in the last chapter, the APMA allowed the federal government to grant a farm product group certain powers over the marketing of a product across provincial or territorial borders so long as a provincial government had already granted that group that power over marketing within the province or territory.<sup>382</sup> The Council continued to work in cooperation with AAFC and the Department of Justice on ways to make the APMA application and amendment processes simpler for commodity sector groups.<sup>383</sup>

### *Explaining the Council’s Role*

Beyond improving procedures and creating clearer guidelines, the Council also built on its earlier communications efforts to strengthen its visibility among, and value to, the sectors it served. By the 2000s, the Council believed it could provide important “value-added information” that could not be found elsewhere, and help direct industry inquiries to the appropriate sources.<sup>384</sup> The NFPC continued to use the *FOCUS* newsletter to reach stakeholders, and in 2004 it updated the design of the newsletter and included a new section on international news and a new electronic delivery method was introduced.<sup>385</sup> Throughout the decade the Council worked to improve its website’s design, function, and information to attract more attention to NFPC and continue ongoing communication with all stakeholders.<sup>386</sup> And

the Council continued to provide monthly updates to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and to other industry and governmental members, conduct media interviews, publish articles in the industry press, publish guidelines, and attend and present at various meetings, workshops, and conferences.<sup>387</sup>

### *International Concerns*

Although the Council was preoccupied with administrative, legislative, and operational concerns and implementing broader policies that reflected the government's vision for agriculture, it remained an outspoken supporter for orderly marketing and continued to be vigilant regarding international developments in agricultural policy and practice, especially in the poultry sector. Still, as noted before, Council members also wanted Canadian producers to be aware of these international circumstances. NFPC Chair Cynthia Currie noted that it was important for Council "to make farmers aware that there is a world outside of Canada and the U.S." that was changing and going to have significant impacts for the future of the Canadian agricultural industry.<sup>388</sup>

The Council was preoccupied with two main international concerns in the early 2000s: tracking and participating in WTO developments and negotiations and increasing export awareness and readiness in the egg and poultry sectors.<sup>389</sup> In 2000, the Council participated in the first meeting of the Poultry Meat Export Working Group, which had been established in late 1999 and brought together chicken and turkey producers, processors, traders, and government officials.<sup>390</sup> In 2001, the Council facilitated a Forum of Global Awareness—a series of meetings on trade and other international trends that affected the egg and poultry industries. Held in seven cities across the country, the Forum enabled leaders to "take stock of industry developments and to discuss their implications for Canada."<sup>391</sup> During these forums, it became clear that Brazil had become one of the major international producers of poultry. With a recent agreement on a veterinary protocol between the two countries, Canada's market became open to Brazil's poultry products, and so more interest was generated about the country. In 2003, the Council travelled to Brazil to "take stock of [its]...agriculture development and competitive potential." The NFPC led a two-week mission, which included representatives from the Chicken Farmers of Canada and the Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency. Participants visited farms and processing production facilities, met industry and government representatives, and attended the SIAL Mercosul/ABRAS show, the largest food show in South America.<sup>392</sup> Currie remembered this trip as incredibly eye-opening, not only in the way that Brazil was producing poultry, but also in the long-term vision the country's processors had for meeting new market opportunities, such as the growing halal market around the globe.<sup>393</sup> Council members attended other international food shows to acquire more knowledge about growing Canadian exports in the egg, poultry, and beef industries.<sup>394</sup> Council members continued to attend industry events in Europe, Asia, and the Americas as a means of improving industry

knowledge, and representatives were regularly sent to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Outlook Conferences during these years.<sup>395</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the WTO negotiations were of critical importance to the Council, which worked hard to stay engaged with government and industry to represent industry interests. Agriculture was a main area of negotiation interest during the Doha Round, which began in 2001. The central elements of these discussions were market access, subsidies, and export subsidy schemes.<sup>396</sup> The Council understood that the focus of the negotiations was on achieving substantive improvements in market access, elimination of export subsidies, and the reduction of domestic support for agriculture. While several of these objectives were supported by Canada, Canada's supply-managed poultry and egg producers voiced concerns about the impact these negotiations might have for domestic support, market access, and tariff levels.<sup>397</sup> Although no agreements were reached by the end of the decade, the industry was preparing itself for further attempts to restructure existing agricultural systems.

### *BSE, Avian Influenza, and On-Farm Food Safety*

While the Council faced many challenges during the 2000s, perhaps there was no greater test for the beef and poultry sectors than the unforeseen outbreaks of disease that created significant crises. The AI disaster in British Columbia's poultry industry and elsewhere and the closure of markets for Canadian beef exports as a result of the incidence of BSE had long-lasting impacts. Food safety measures were already an important part of the Canadian agricultural industry, but these disease outbreaks meant that further efforts to improve measures and lessen consumers' fears were required.

After the confirmation of BSE in Canada in the spring of 2003, BSE became a major concern for governments and the cattle industry. Upon news of the discovery, the United States immediately closed its border to Canadian beef and cattle exports and approximately 40 other countries followed suit.<sup>398</sup> The crisis had a major impact on Canadian exports of live cattle and beef and negatively affected the entire agriculture and agri-food sector. While the federal government provided some compensation to producers and worked internationally to reopen market access, cases of BSE continued to be discovered over the course of the decade and many markets remained restricted or closed during this time. In its role as overseer of the Canadian Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency, the Council monitored the evolution of the BSE situation and worked with the industry to regain markets by liaising with government officials and industry partners. But the situation continued to be a challenging one that impacted the newly established PRA's ability to establish levies, as will be further explained later in this chapter.<sup>399</sup>

Not long after the discovery of BSE in the beef industry, in February 2004, a highly pathogenic AI outbreak occurred in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. The outbreak spread from farm to farm and did considerable damage to the egg and poultry industries before the spread of disease was

controlled through industry and government action. Based on recommendations from the CFIA, the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Bob Speller, announced the depopulation of all commercial poultry flocks and other backyard birds in the control area of British Columbia's Fraser Valley. Initially, to contain and eradicate the virus, 410 commercial poultry farms and 553 backyard flocks were depopulated, totalling 14.9 million commercial and 18 thousand backyard birds.<sup>400</sup> That fall, the Council sponsored a Canadian Poultry Industry Forum in Abbotsford, BC, to reflect on the crisis and discuss plans to ensure that any future poultry disease outbreaks would be properly handled.<sup>401</sup>

By 2005, AI remained a worldwide concern as highly pathogenic strains of the H5 virus were identified. The Canadian poultry and egg sectors again went on high alert when a low pathogenic H5 strain of AI was found on a British Columbia commercial duck farm in November of that year. Fortunately, quick action by the producer and the industry and government prevented an industry-wide crisis similar to the one experienced the year before, and continued surveillance was implemented.<sup>402</sup> The national agencies and other industry partners worked with CFIA to develop effective and efficient AI protocols and a coordinator was hired by the industry to liaise with CFIA and AAFC and focus on projects such as compensation, a pre-emptive cull program, general emergency management, and a national foreign animal disease preparedness plan.<sup>403</sup>

The Canadian agricultural industry was already committed to producing safe food and protecting food quality at the farm level, and since the early 1990s the Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP) was in place to motivate and maintain the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) practices and standards. Yet, these crises encouraged producers and their organizations to further develop and improve food safety and quality control initiatives.<sup>404</sup> The HACCP program was especially important, as it was an internationally recognized system consisting of seven basic principles that enabled all federally registered meat, dairy, shell egg, processed egg, poultry hatchery, and other food sector establishments to prevent and control potential food safety hazards. This on-farm safety program was considered important to Canada's domestic and international reputation for food safety and quality and future market growth.<sup>405</sup>

### *Working for All Stakeholders*

Other initiatives were taken to improve the Council's service to its stakeholders, including a 2008 national survey to find out how they could better assist agri-food industries to change and prosper in the years to come. From the survey and meetings held across Canada, two clear messages emerged: a need for more communication, cooperation, collaboration, and coordination; and for the NFPC to be more proactive in supporting the national agencies in the management of the system. The Council continued to work to improve both its internal operations and its relationships with industry partners, but these efforts—as noted in Chapter 6—would be ongoing. Again, the Council emphasized the need





**Ron O'Connor,  
Vice-Chair,  
1999–2007 (Figure 5.1)**

Raised on a mixed farming operation in Perth County, O'Connor was always interested in farming. While he worked in various industries, including in construction and for the Ministry of Highways, he was eventually able to purchase his own farm in 1977 after having worked for a feed company and hatchery, and managing and supervising egg layer operations. O'Connor and his wife established their egg and hog farm in Lucknow, Ontario, while he also continued working for New Life Mills. In 1984, they sold their first farm and purchased a broiler operation in Shelbourne, Ontario. In 1992, he was elected to a director position at the Ontario Chicken Producers Marketing Board, and later served as vice-chair and chair of the organization. Although O'Connor decided not to run again in 1997, he was approached in 1998 to consider an appointment to NFPC.<sup>1</sup> He was appointed as a member to the Council 1998, and later vice-chair in 1999.<sup>2</sup> O'Connor served on various egg and chicken committees over the years, and during that time he witnessed the growth in the national marketing agencies and how the system matured to provide a balanced representation of stakeholder interests. O'Connor joined the Council because of his interest in participating in an agricultural organization at the national level and the obvious importance of the work the Council was doing at that time. During the challenges of the late 1990s and 2000s, O'Connor's direct approach and farming background garnered him respect and support. O'Connor remembers his tenure as being an incredibly rewarding and enjoyable experience and was proud of what he and his fellow Council members achieved during that time.<sup>3</sup>

1 Ron O'Connor, interview by author, August 20, 2021.

2 NFPC, *National Farm Products Council Annual Review, 1999* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2000), 9.

3 Ron O'Connor, interview by author, August 20, 2021.

to further foster the cooperative spirit that lay at the heart of the system that had been created many years ago and the need for increased flexibility for meeting the challenges of a new era.<sup>406</sup>

The Council continued to take seriously its commitment to make decisions that were “neutral, credible and equitable in balancing the interests of producers, processors and consumers.”<sup>407</sup> In 2008, the new NFPC Chair, Bill Smirle, reminded industry partners that they needed to take this cooperation even further, remembering that “open and honest discussions lead to increased understanding and action.”<sup>408</sup> These efforts were reflected in the Council's decision to no longer hold automatic hearings into complaints from stakeholders, but instead offer voluntary participation in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes to settle complaints. The Council hoped that more informal discussion, rather than a formalized process, would help disparate parties find resolution. This was particularly important during this decade as the number of complaint hearings between signatories was significant and occupied a great deal of Council members' time and effort.<sup>409</sup> Smirle later recalled that at times signatories needed to be reminded of “the broader picture,” which included cooperation among producers, but also with other stakeholders, including consumers.<sup>410</sup>

The Council also celebrated efforts to improve consumer-focused collaboration during this period, including bringing stakeholders together by hosting such events as the 2004 Forum on Grocery and Food Service Trends, which took place in Ottawa. This event brought together leaders of the poultry and egg industry,

representatives from the grocery, food service, and distributors sectors, interested academics, as well as federal and provincial representatives, to discuss trends in the marketplace and the impact on today's consumer.<sup>411</sup> Such efforts demonstrated the Council's recognition that a strong supply management system had to function in the best interests of all parties.

## The National Marketing Agencies in the 2000s

During the 2000s, the Council looked for ways in which they could provide leadership and play an active role in improving how the four orderly marketing systems in the poultry industries functioned effectively and efficiently. This involved continued efforts to implement best practices, including accurate cost-of-production (COP) calculations, but the Council



### **Gordon Hunter, Acting Chair, 2007**

(Figure 5.2)

Born in 1943, Hunter grew up and worked on one of the original egg farms in Florenceville, New Brunswick. Hunter went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts and then a Bachelor of Civil Law in 1968 before beginning his law career as an associate with Moncton's Murphy, Murphy and Mollins. He later became an associate and partner at Crocco Hunter. In 1985, Hunter and his wife Brenda assumed ownership of Hunter's Poultry and grew the operation to include a registered egg-grading station, an egg transportation and delivery system, and a feed milling plant. Hunter then served as a director of the New Brunswick Egg Marketing Board before being appointed to NFPMC as a member in 1987. After his tenure as a member ended, Hunter was selected as a director to CEMA in 1993, where he served for 14 years. Hunter was an active representative of the Canadian egg industry at international events and during WTO negotiations in the 2000s.<sup>1</sup> He was later called upon to act as acting chair of NFPC in 2007. Throughout his career, Hunter was recognized for his tremendous service to the agricultural community.



### **Bill Smirle, Chair, 2008–10** (Figure 5.3)

A resident of Morewood, Ontario, Smirle grew up on a mixed-dairy farm. While he went on to become a teacher and principal and worked in the educational system for 37 years, 21 of which were spent as a principal with the Ottawa Board of Education,<sup>2</sup> he also remained involved in farming. When his father passed away in 1983, he purchased the family dairy farm and maintained it with the help of a manager and eventually his son. Smirle held a number of service roles in his community before his appointment to FPCC, including his service as a volunteer member of the Morewood Fire Department, a board member of the Chesterville and District Agricultural Society, and a chair of the board of the Winchester District Memorial Hospital. He was also active in municipal politics, with terms as deputy mayor of North Dundas and as councillor for the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry between 2003 and 2006.<sup>3</sup> Smirle was appointed as Council chair in 2008. Smirle accepted the appointment because he was extremely committed to maintaining a strong supply management system and wished to support the institutions that sustained this system. He applied his educational and administrative skills in this work and worked hard during these years to facilitate important operational changes and strengthen industry relationships. Smirle remembered this time at FPCC as an outstanding period in his professional career. He was proud of the directions the Council took, the relationship that were developed, and the work that was completed during this period.<sup>4</sup>

1 "D. Gordon Hunter," Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame, <https://www.dal.ca/diff/aahf/inductees/gordon-hunter.html> (accessed September 25, 2021).

2 NFPC, *National Farm Products Council, 2007 Year in Review* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2008), 5.

3 NFPC, *National Farm Products Council, 2007 Year in Review* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2008), 5; and Bill Smirle, interview by author, September 1, 2021.

4 Bill Smirle, interview by author, September 1, 2021.

was still committed to exploring ways that exports could be increased. In 2001, the Council noted the many changes within the four national systems and the agencies in recent years, including how they moved from “a tight focus on how to produce within Canada to a more market-responsive focus on how to meet differing user and consumers needs at home and abroad.”<sup>412</sup> Despite the Council’s optimism, however, increasing exports for the regulated commodities proved difficult and, ultimately, more of the Council’s attention was needed on ensuring that agencies continued to meet their legislative obligations and strengthen relationships among the existing signatory members of their respective plans. The Council “grappled with an unusually high number of complaints” lodged against the marketing agencies that they oversaw during this period, and it was clear to all parties that more cooperation was needed if the system was to continue in the future.<sup>413</sup> Still, Council members made great efforts to build trust among industry partners and gain credibility among producers and other stakeholders, and demonstrate their commitment to seeing the system continue to prosper in the future.<sup>414</sup>

### *Canadian Egg Marketing Agency / Egg Farmers of Canada*

The start of the twenty-first century was not an especially easy one for the egg industry. Despite significant accomplishments in developing industry on-farm food safety programs, marketing campaigns, and nutrition and animal care programs, as well as winning an International Egg Commission first-place prize for its advertising campaign in 2001, the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency (CEMA) continued to be bogged down by quota allocation conflicts and issues related to its industrial product program.<sup>415</sup>

Although the financial difficulties related to the industrial product program improved as market conditions improved by 2003, the enduring structural issues inherent in this program concerned the Council.<sup>416</sup> Furthermore, signatory complaints to NFPC were common during these years as provinces, such as Saskatchewan, criticized CEMA’s new quota allocation methodology, namely for failing to adhere to its proclamation and consider comparative advantage of production when assigning new allotments.<sup>417</sup> Often, these complaints resulted in judicial reviews and placed the Council in the position of having to deny approvals for quota and levy orders until matters were resolved.<sup>418</sup>

The increase in egg consumption was a positive trend for the industry, and while fresh shell egg sales were rising, egg sales for the processing sector were also increasing at a significant rate. Traditionally, the processed egg market was primarily supplied by egg production in excess of table requirements and by processed egg imports as required under Canada’s trade obligations. However, during these years, the processed egg sector often required a large number of supplementary imports of shell eggs and processed eggs in order to have a sufficient supply of eggs to meet customer requirements. Part of the issue with increasing quota orders needed to meet this need was the lack of cooperation among signatories, especially those who believed CEMA had failed to consider the comparative advantage of production (CAP) criterion in the allocation methodology. For example, Saskatchewan signatories

initiated judicial reviews against CEMA quota orders,<sup>419</sup> and despite the Council’s encouragement for the parties to find a resolution, action was stymied by the signatories’ fundamental disagreements regarding quota allocation.<sup>420</sup> Disagreements among signatories also meant that long-awaited renewals of federal-provincial-territorial agreements were not possible.<sup>421</sup>

As noted earlier in the chapter, another significant issue for CEMA was the effects of the AI crisis. Although the agency was actively involved in ensuring the needs of the BC market were met and the situation was managed effectively, the orderly repopulation of layer barns was no easy task.<sup>422</sup> The management of and surveillance for AI came to be an ongoing concern for CEMA during this decade.

In 2008, CEMA became the Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) and adopted a new logo and the motto “Dedicated to Quality.” The Council was pleased with EFC’s efforts toward addressing animal welfare and food safety, two categories that were increasingly important to consumers. But it was the structural issues related to quota allocations, COP methodology, the industrial product program, and outdated agreements that concerned the Council most during this time.<sup>423</sup> The FPCC continued to monitor these issues and encourage the agency to develop strategies to address these concerns, but they remained at the end of the decade and often overshadowed some of the significant successes the agency had made during this time and strain Council relations.<sup>424</sup>

### *Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency / Turkey Farmers of Canada*

For the turkey industry, the main goal at the beginning of the twenty-first century was increasing the consumption of whole turkeys and turkey products. The Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency (CTMA) continued to work to develop its “Turkey Tuesdays” promotional campaigns and made a concerted effort to move consumers beyond the long-held custom that turkey was only served for festive occasions. In 2004, the agency launched a revamped marketing program that encouraged consumers to think of turkey as a year-round meal choice.<sup>425</sup> Although initially these efforts proved disappointing, by 2005 the Council was pleased to report that turkey consumption was on the rise, in no small part due to further processed products and several fast-food marketing initiatives. The popular consumption of turkey subs and deli sandwiches at fast-food restaurants was driving this change.<sup>426</sup>

Still, despite improved market prospects, like other agencies, CTMA was preoccupied by allocation issues, and complaints were brought to NFPC. This impacted the Council’s ability to approve quota orders at various times, which became a serious matter.<sup>427</sup> For instance, in 2003 the BC signatories filed a complaint with the Council that charged that CTMA failed to take into account comparative advantage of production as required by the Act and certain criteria set out in the marketing plan in their quota allocation process.<sup>428</sup> While the Council encouraged parties to meet and discuss these issues outside of formal hearings, it was often difficult to find resolutions.<sup>429</sup> The same issues of provincialism that had affected the system in the past continued.

In December 2006, CTMA approved a new national commercial turkey allocation policy that was created to allow for more flexibility regarding market changes, an initiative encouraged by the Council. The policy introduced a division of quota between the whole-bird and the processed/parts markets, which was designed to provide stability to the whole-bird market while allowing for increased supply to the further processed sector. Initial reactions to the application of the new policy were positive and facilitated other regulatory reviews in the agency, including reviews of the quota and licensing regulations, as well as levies and delegation orders. The agency also created a monitoring and enforcement policy agreement that clarified how the various quota classes were monitored, audited, enforced, and the respective responsibilities of CTMA and provincial boards with respect to quota allotments and payment of levies. These were all positive developments in the Council's view.

In 2008, the turkey industry had a record year in terms of production and continued to develop its policies and operations in collaboration with its provincial commodity boards.<sup>430</sup>

In 2009, CTMA changed its name to Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC). A number of achievements were realized by the turkey agency, and despite challenges, including the economic downturn in 2008–09 and a listeria outbreak that impacted markets, most industry partners were optimistic about the future opportunities in the industry. Still, the federal-provincial agreement (FPA) remained unrevised and greater cooperation among the various signatories continued to be an issue, as was the case in all agencies during these years.<sup>431</sup>

### *Chicken Farmers of Canada*

Unlike the egg, turkey, and broiler hatching egg industries that failed to see renewed FPAs put into place during the 2000s, the Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) was the only agency that succeeded in renewing its agreement. After some initial concerns that the process had stalled following Alberta serving notice of its intent to withdraw from the chicken FPA,<sup>432</sup> extensive discussions and close collaboration between NFPC, CFC, and the provincial supervisory boards resulted in a renewed FPA that was signed in 2001.<sup>433</sup> The Council had been enthusiastic about the chicken industry's overall accomplishments in the 1990s, and it continued to point toward the CFC's policies and practices in the early 2000s as examples of what the other agencies should strive to achieve. This included the CFC's Market Development Policy that helped to alleviate the need for supplementary import permits and the CFC's on-farm food safety program for chicken producers.<sup>434</sup> During the 2000s, CFC was also focused on increased research, funding both its own agency projects and donating significant funds to the Centre for Poultry Research in Montreal.<sup>435</sup>

While the Council continued to congratulate CFC for changes it instituted regarding food safety and market expansion during the first years of the decade, in late 2003 a number of conflicts between producers and processors emerged. Again, these issues resulted from disagreements on market



requirements and quota allocations.<sup>436</sup> While the CFC's new FPA was lauded by the Council for allowing "the poultry industry the necessary flexibility to adapt quickly to changing market conditions and trends," including rises in consumer demand for further processed chicken, quota allocation issues remained as Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council (CPEPC) disagreed with the amended allocation-setting process CFC had adopted in 2005. The Council worked to bring the parties together and provide suggestions for improving the process and a working group with CFC and CPEPC members was formed to identify the most important market indicators to consider in determining quota allocations, but disagreements continued.<sup>437</sup>

Indeed, the allocation-setting process caused a significant degree of conflict in the industry, and approximately one third of CFC's allocation led to complaints by 2008. The Council was concerned that these issues had "grown and become systemic in nature," and it held a special joint meeting in October 2008 to engage industry stakeholders in a dialogue to seek industry solutions. An oversight committee was created to continue discussions and explore options for solutions, which they proposed in 2010.<sup>438</sup>

The good news for the chicken agency was that the popularity of chicken as the meat of choice was growing in Canada. The agency was also proactive in ensuring the quality and safety of its products through on-farm programs, and in 2005, a pilot project on animal care was initiated as part of a comprehensive program for Canadian chicken production.<sup>439</sup> Despite these successes, however, in 2009 the Council noted that "catering to the changing preferences of Canadian consumers and fostering a competitive chicken industry capable of adapting to an increasingly competitive environment will continue to be an ongoing challenge for the CFC in 2010." It encouraged the agency to continue to work to build relationships and foster trust between stakeholders as it continued its efforts to improve the allocation-setting process and other agency practices.<sup>440</sup>

### *Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency / Canadian Hatching Egg Producers*

The beginning of the decade was an uncertain one for the Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency (CBHEMA). At the start of 2000, the agency was without quota or levy orders in place. By the end of that year, however, CBHEMA had NFPC's approval for four quotas, two levies, and one orderly marketing regulation.<sup>441</sup> As described in the last chapter, little consensus regarding quota allocations could be found in the industry at the end of the 1990s. However, after extensive discussion and NFPC pressure, and recognizing that without some level of cooperation the system was in danger, signatories found agreement on the way to treat imports in its quota allocation and the Council was able to approve orders. This also allowed CBHEMA to turn its attention to other tasks, including the renewal of the broiler hatching egg FPA.<sup>442</sup>



Further changes came in 2001, when the Council assisted CBHEMA in creating a data retrieval system that would provide deeper production analyses and better respond to market demands, which had been a challenge for the industry.<sup>443</sup> And over the course of the decade the strong chicken market meant that hatching egg production increased, with the largest increases seen in Alberta and the Atlantic provinces.<sup>444</sup> Still, the broiler hatching egg industry was not without its issues during the 2000s, which included the withdrawal of Alberta as a signatory in 2004 because of disagreements over the distribution of the tariff rate quota in CBHEMA's allocation-setting formula.<sup>445</sup> The Council encouraged the agency to continue to work toward an agreement with Alberta to see the province rejoin the agency, as well as encourage other provinces, such as Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, to join the national plan. The Council believed that negotiating Alberta's re-entry and Saskatchewan's entry into the agency were especially important for strengthening its presence and increasing producer stability.<sup>446</sup>

In the summer of 2007, the agency's name changed to Canadian Hatching Egg Producers (CHEP) and a penalty system regarding import allocations was implemented.<sup>447</sup> In 2008, both Saskatchewan and Alberta signed a service agreement that gave the provinces representation at CHEP directors' meetings and the opportunity to participate in all discussions.

Although the Council seemed to have fewer issues with CHEP during this decade, its FPA remained outdated. While CHEP continued to work with some provinces to increase its membership, and the Council noted that the signing of the service agreements by both the Alberta and Saskatchewan boards boded well for the agency, CHEP ended the decade with concerns about trade negotiations and a challenge to the CFIA for not properly compensating some producers for the value of their birds following an outbreak of AI in Saskatchewan in 2007.<sup>448</sup>

## Promotional and Research Agencies

In 2000, the Council had the excitement of receiving its first proposal to create the first-ever promotion and research agency (PRA) under the revised Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA). The beef industry, with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) taking the lead on preparing, presenting, and working through the evaluation and approvals process, made their proposal to the Council in January 2000 after years of consultations and industry discussions.<sup>449</sup> The Council held public hearings in May and June 2000 in Calgary, Etobicoke, and Pointe-Claire, and determined that there was merit in and support for the creation of the agency and sent its recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.<sup>450</sup> With but little opposition, Canadian producers looked to match the parameters of a similar program that already existed in the United States; indeed, the move was seen as an important measure in creating a situation where Canadian producers had a fair and equal chance with their competitors.<sup>451</sup> Although ensuring all provinces were on board was no easy task, in 2001 the final stages

of the creation of a beef cattle PRA were underway, and in 2002 the Canadian Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency was established.<sup>452</sup>

### *Canadian Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency*

After its establishment in 2002, the Canadian Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency went through the process of drafting levy and service agreements with the provinces. As the agency worked to finalize these agreements, a single case of BSE was discovered in Canada, which put a temporary hold on all of the agency's work. Not only did this result in a funding crisis for the new agency, but it also signalled the challenges of the decade to come.

The central function of the agency was to collect levies that would fund research and promotion to allow the Canadian beef industry to be competitive in domestic and international markets. However, the BSE crisis meant that the voluntary levies the agency had been collecting were cut and the agency's funding dropped by 75 percent. Although the NFPC worked with the industry during this difficult time and implemented an administrative arrangement with the agency's executive director to ensure the necessary funding to allow the agency to finalize the levy and service agreements and make it fully operational, this was an extremely challenging period for the new group.<sup>453</sup> The levy orders continued to be delayed, and it was not until 2005 that the Council prior-approved the agency's first domestic levy order. The national levy, set at one dollar per head, was collected on interprovincial marketing of beef cattle. In 2005, four provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick) collected the levy based on signed agreements. However, the other provinces were collecting the levy voluntarily and remitting it to the agency to support its promotion, research, and market development business plan activities. Some provinces, including Ontario and Québec, retained some of this funding for provincial efforts. While the agency continued to work with its provincial counterparts to implement the national levy collection system on the basis of signed agreements, not all provinces were immediately accommodating given the difficulties their producers were facing. Another concern for the agency was to develop and finalize the required documents necessary to establish a levy on imported beef cattle, beef, and beef products, and inquiries were made into the option of collecting a levy on exports.<sup>454</sup>

Despite the best efforts of the agency, however, the dire conditions that resulted from BSE meant that the industry was more concerned with surviving the BSE crisis than it was with imposing duties on producers. Efforts to ease restrictions and reopen markets were earnest but the progress was slow during this decade.<sup>455</sup> Another blow for the Canadian beef industry came in the form of a mandatory American country-of-origin labelling (MCOOL) policy. The Government of Canada challenged the policy since both the WTO agreement and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) stipulated that, while origin of labelling of meat is allowed, the label must indicate the country where it

became meat, not where the animal was born or raised.<sup>456</sup> But the United States still brought MCOOL into force in 2008, which resulted in a further decrease in Canadian cattle and hog exports.<sup>457</sup>

During this decade, the agency saw its role as helping in the Canadian beef industry's immediate challenge of winning back the markets lost because of BSE. It developed new international markets, further expanded the Canadian market, and helped the domestic beef industry counter the effects of the American MCOOL policy. The intent of the Canadian Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency was to finance promotion, research, and market development initiatives to make Canadian producers more competitive under these conditions. While the domestic levies were important, the agency recognized that the import levies needed to be used. The procedures required for the implementation of these import levies were still being pursued at the end of the decade, while the difficulties experienced by the beef industry, as well as the change in the nature of some provincial levies, affected the funding available.<sup>458</sup> More progress was needed in the next decade before the agency could successfully fulfill its mandate.

## Conclusion

The new era of the 2000s was one of significant challenges. Yet, it also resulted in some important accomplishments for the Council as well. Under difficult circumstances the first-ever PRA was established and maintained during these years, and the national marketing agencies worked to further improve their procedures and policies and respond to the changes in market conditions. In his last year as Chair in 2010, Bill Smirle reflected on the accomplishments that materialized during the previous decade. The Council was proud of the progress that had been made, but also cognizant that more progress was needed. Smirle encouraged industry partners to “reinvent the spirit of co-operation” in their dealings with one another, reminding them that cooperation was an indispensable value “in developing and cementing compromises that [were] needed for the industry to evolve properly and to benefit from new opportunities.” He contended that “differences of opinion must be dealt with and the prosperity of the industry should be the true focus of all our actions. We must work to improve trust, which is essential to the future of successful partnerships.”<sup>459</sup>

During the 2000s the Council believed that not only was supply management good for producers, it was also “exceptionally good for the country.”<sup>460</sup> Canadians trusted the system, and the Council wanted to ensure that that trust was maintained. In order for the system to continue to evolve, however, the Council called for more flexibility and cooperation moving forward. Smirle later recalled that a significant goal of the Council was getting the national agencies and other signatories to realize that change was inevitable, and that to maintain the value of the supply management system, it needed to evolve with the times, just as any other system needed to do to continue to thrive.<sup>461</sup> FPCC was committed to “reinventing itself through cooperation and leadership,” and it expected the signatories of the national plans to demonstrate the same commitment to industry improvement and development.<sup>462</sup>

# CHAPTER 6

## Achieving Stability in the 2010s

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### Introduction

During the 2010s, the Council worked to ensure that the successful operation of Canada’s supply-managed egg and poultry sectors continued and more improvements were made for both the marketing and promotion and research agencies (PRAs) under its supervision. This was not an easy task, as many of the problems of the previous decade, including the consequences of bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE) and avian influenza remained for the beef and poultry sectors, and new outbreaks of H5N2 threatened the poultry and egg industries again. Moreover, trade agreement negotiations, including those for the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), also concerned producers and threatened to undermine the supply management system. Still, generally the system was responsive to these issues and demonstrated the effectiveness of the national agencies and the Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC). And while the efficiency and competitiveness of Canada’s farming agencies remained an important focus of the Council, increasingly discussions also considered the sustainability of agriculture and how, as a public policy, supply management provided much-needed stability and predictability within previously volatile industries.

Although the Council faced similar challenges to previous decades, new opportunities also emerged. Even before FPCC moved to the Central Experimental Farm in 2012, a repositioning of the Council was underway. Council members renewed their efforts to resolve long-standing issues in the egg and poultry industries, including disagreements about quota allocations and outdated federal-provincial agreements (FPAs), but they also sought greater opportunities to grow the supply-managed sectors and create more PRAs. The value of existing systems was recognized, but, as noted by FPCC Chair, Laurent Pellerin, in 2013, it was “not just about maintaining the status quo” but also “about constantly improving the performance of the system so that producers, processors, further processors and consumers reap the benefits of orderly marketing.”<sup>463</sup> As before, FPCC continued in its mission to ensure that all Canadians had continuous access to affordable, quality foods while farmers received a fair market price.



### **Laurent Pellerin, Chair, 2010–17**

(Figure 6.1)

Born in Trois-Rivières, Québec, Pellerin began farming when he and his wife bought a farm in 1972 while still attending university.

They invested in their hog business early on and grew the farm over the years to build an expanded, multigenerational hog and grain farm operation. Pellerin farmed full time until the mid-1980s, when, during the period of high interest rates, low producer prices, and little provincial marketing organization, Pellerin became involved as a member of the Fédération des producteurs de porc de Québec in an effort to improve the situation for pork farmers. During his work with FPPQ, improved administrative processes were put into place, including a more effective computerized system for conditional hog sales.<sup>1</sup> Pellerin chaired FPPQ from 1985 to 1994, before serving as with the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) from 1993 to 2007, and becoming president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture from 2008 to 2010.<sup>2</sup> He had also been president of UPA Développement international from 1996 to 2009 and AgriCord, a network of agricultural associations dedicated to international development, from 2006 to 2010. Pellerin's service was recognized when he received the Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Québec in 2005.<sup>3</sup> It was this wealth of experience and knowledge that Pellerin brought to the Council as its chair in 2010. During his tenure, he recognized the need to strengthen the operational and policy objectives of FPCC. Pellerin focused on improving Council operations, providing effective supervision of the national agencies, and ensuring that a strong, accountable system was in place. Pellerin later recalled how active the Council was during these years in reviewing their procedures as well as further promoting the opportunities that PRAs had for more farmers in a range of commodities.<sup>4</sup>

1 Laurent Pellerin, interview with author, September 3, 2021.

2 FPCC, *Farm Products Council of Canada 2012—2013 Annual Report* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2012), 9; and Laurent Pellerin, interview with author, September 3, 2021.

3 "Laurent Pellerin," Order National du Québec, <https://www.ordre-national.gouv.qc.ca/membres/membre.asp?id=2101> (accessed August 16, 2021)

4 Laurent Pellerin, interview with author, September 3, 2021.

## **The Evolution of the Farm Products Council of Canada**

The Council continued its role as a supervisory body that guaranteed that the national marketing and promotion and research agencies carried out their operations in accordance with the Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA) and worked in the balanced interests of producers and consumers. Similar to previous decades, this supervision was done through the approval of quota regulations, levy orders, licensing regulations, and a review of each agency's annual business plan, budget, and policies to ensure a strong system for producers and a safe, stable, and reasonably priced supply of chickens, turkeys, and eggs for consumers.<sup>464</sup> The Council continued to work with provincial governments regarding the existing legislation and provided the Minister of Agriculture with information and advice on issues related to the agencies and industries under its purview, and FPCC looked for ways to improve their operations and the operations of the national agencies.<sup>465</sup>

In 2010, the newly appointed Chair, Laurent Pellerin, sought to build on the Council's previous progress. Pellerin noted the previous Chair's (Bill Smirle) efforts in developing "a culture of change based on collaboration, rigor and proactivity,"<sup>466</sup> but also noted the need to continue to examine and build on the Council's relationships with industry stakeholders. He contended that frank discussions needed to occur to address concerns in the industry and coordinate efforts toward improvement, and he was supported by existing members who also wanted to



see a strong industry supported by a well-managed, proactive Council.<sup>467</sup> Various operational guidelines, including the Guidelines for the Disposition of Complaints, the Agency Auditors Appointment Guidelines, and the Agency Inspectors Designation Guidelines were approved and implemented, and renewed efforts began to improve the communication and coordination of FPCC, the national agencies, government departments, provincial partners, and other industry participants. Pellerin noted in his annual message in 2010 that, although the twenty-first century was an “age of fast and easy communication... this sort of communication does not always allow us to listen carefully or develop the mutual understanding needed if progress is to be made. Constructive communication is essential for moving forward, and for the good of the industry.” Pellerin tasked Council members, elected agency officials, and all stakeholders to improve their communications, noting that “communication is a value that should be promoted, just like integrity, respect, and professionalism.”<sup>468</sup>

During these years, FPCC was directed by Gerry Ritz, the then Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, to continue its leadership role in ensuring that supply management was “flexible and able to meet future challenges.” Ritz also tasked the Council with encouraging the creation of more PRAs, as only the beef agency existed at that time and was still developing its structure and policies. Cooperation, transparency, and communication were central to this process, and the new FPCC Chair made it clear that the next decade was to be a period in which “clear, honest and transparent language” was needed to improve the system in the interests of producers, processors, and consumers alike.<sup>469</sup> The fair treatment of all of these groups was a priority of the Council, and members worked hard to ensure a strong, accountable system was in place.<sup>470</sup>



**Brent  
Montgomery,  
Vice-Chair,  
2007–15**

(Figure 6.2)

Born and raised in Saint-Gabriel-de-Valcartier, Québec, Montgomery grew up on a turkey farm. While he went on to become a teacher and school principal, after the retirement of his father from the family farm in 1986, Montgomery entered a farm partnership with his brother. In 1987, Montgomery became the regional representative for the provincial turkey board, and in 1990 joined CTMA, where he served as the chair until his appointment as a FPCC member in 2007 and later as vice-chair.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, Montgomery also served as acting chair before resuming his duties as vice-chair. Since 1988, he has also served as the Mayor of the Municipality of Saint-Gabriel-de-Valcartier.<sup>2</sup> Montgomery believed strongly in the strength of the supply management system, and when he was approached about joining the Council, he believed he could contribute his administrative skills and industry knowledge to the organization. During his time with the Council, Montgomery thoroughly enjoyed the work and remained dedicated to ensuring the successful operation of the Council and the industries it supervised and sought to ensure all industry stakeholders’ interests were represented.<sup>3</sup>

1 Brent Montgomery, interview by author, August 20, 2021.

2 NFPC, *National Farm Products Council, 2008 Year in Review* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009), 6.

3 Brent Montgomery, interview by author, August 20, 2021.



### *Celebrating 40 Years*

In 2012, the Council celebrated the 40th anniversary of the FPAA and FPCC. The Council was proud of its role in ensuring that the Act served the industry and the country well, but it expressed to stakeholders that the original mechanisms of the legislation had to evolve to meet the current challenges and opportunities. The Council sought to review the practices and policies in place and confirm that the rules were still relevant and meeting the present needs of the industry. The need to encourage an efficient and competitive system continued to be emphasized, and more work modernizing the system, including the agencies' legal frameworks, specifically the FPAs, was highlighted as a priority for the Council. Of course, FPCC understood this required cohesive approaches and teamwork, which had previously been difficult in many instances. For instance, disagreement among some provinces had stifled efforts to renew FPAs that proposed changes to quota allocation methodology among the egg, turkey, and broiler hatching egg sectors. And even though the Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) had renewed their FPA, not all of the adopted policies were implemented. The Council made it clear that it intended to review the operational systems of the national agencies and bring "forward recommendations to the Minister on how these practices could be improved."<sup>471</sup> Given the climate of greater economic deregulation during this period, the Council reminded regulated commodity producers that this environment caused some questioning of the legitimacy of supply management, and therefore it was critical that industry partners worked together to demonstrate that the system still resonated with the public interest. In his 2012–13 annual report, Laurent Pellerin emphasized that "supply management is not a right, but a privilege; in return for this privilege, producers must be responsible, accountable and transparent if they are to continue to have the support of Canadians."<sup>472</sup> These objectives and the themes of collaboration, innovation, fairness, respect, and transparency continued to be emphasized by Council as central values of the organization as it moved forward in the decade.

### *Dispute Resolution and Finding Consensus*

One area of concern for the Council was improving the dispute resolution process between industry participants. Often FPAs could not be updated and operational changes implemented because of disagreement among industry partners. The Council wanted to determine more effective means of dispute resolution. In 2010, the Guidelines for the Disposition of Complaints were approved in principle and shared with industry stakeholders.<sup>473</sup> At the start of the decade, a number of complaints were brought to FPCC, and while these complaints were resolved, disagreements among industry stakeholders developed that required confrontation at varying levels. Sometimes complaints were negotiated and resolved in informal discussions, but some complaints led to calls for judicial reviews.<sup>474</sup> FPCC encouraged all parties to continue to develop collaborative solutions to address the issues at the root of the complaints,

but Council members also believed that the complaints often signalled broader industry issues that needed to be addressed.<sup>475</sup>

By 2015, four complaints by provincial boards against their respective national marketing agencies were submitted to FPCC within a matter of months—a record. The Council Chair noted that the handling of these complaints was no small task and required a great deal of time and effort to resolve,<sup>476</sup> and generally Council members were spread thin between their various duties at this time.<sup>477</sup> Processing complaints and applications was a lengthy process, and beyond improving the guidelines for these procedures, FPCC also believed that the increase in complaints during this period signalled greater tensions in supply-managed systems, particularly the interprovincial conflict over marketing and quota shares, that were systemic in nature. Pellerin believed that the increased demands on FPCC were prompted by the Council’s insistence that agencies review their legal and governance frameworks, including their FPAs. Pellerin argued that “in some instances, the agencies have reached a point where a prudential and collaborative restatement of common goals and issues ha[ve] become necessary.” And he promised FPCC support in working with all parties within the system “to ensure that the system’s legal framework, including the FPAs, [were] up-to-date and reflect[ed] current business practices and policies.”<sup>478</sup>

### *Regulatory Affairs and Communicating FPCC’s Roles*

In providing oversight and assistance to national agencies, provincial supervisory boards, provincial commodity boards, and other stakeholders, FPCC encouraged groups to update their guidelines and improve their practices. These measures included ensuring that submissions, revisions, and analysis of regulatory documents and instruments were conducted in a timely and effective manner. The Council noted that the integrity of its regulatory functions was a matter of public interest and any improper performance of regulatory functions could undermine the overall process and create unwarranted delays. Therefore, it was FPCC’s responsibility to strengthen its own corporate culture as well as provide leadership in guiding and guaranteeing that regulatory proposals were navigated appropriately, and that inquiries and requests from central agencies such as Justice Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Privy Council Office were addressed effectively, and that regulatory advice was provided to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the Minister’s Office regularly.<sup>479</sup>

FPCC Regulatory Affairs staff provided technical advice and expertise to staff and Council members with respect to regulatory issues and processes in the administration of FPAA and the Agricultural Products Marketing Act (APMA). But it was also necessary to communicate this information to all industry partners. Indeed, the Council wished to create a stronger common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of FPCC and its partners within the supply management system by developing useful interpretation documents for the FPAA, reports that featured comparative analyses of

the marketing agencies' remuneration practices, operational policies and methodologies, and other best practices and recommendations. The goal was to ensure that "the supply management system is administered in a sound and transparent manner which can withstand public scrutiny."<sup>480</sup> The Council continued to develop tools that they believed would assist the agencies in their work, whether that was by developing guidelines for adopting comparative advantage in production or in sharing new guidelines for cost-of-production monitoring.<sup>481</sup> The Council believed that the integrity of FPCC's regulatory function was a matter of public interest, and FPCC understood that it was contributing to the whole-of-government regulatory process and helping limit unwarranted delays of needed amendments to orders and regulations that affected either marketing quota allocations or levies orders of national agencies. By working with governmental partners and other supervisory agencies, including the National Association of Agri-Food Supervisory Agencies and provincial commodity boards, FPCC was ensuring that the legal and regulatory framework that underpins the functioning of supply management for poultry and eggs was secure.<sup>482</sup>

As noted earlier, the Council believed that this process could be improved by creating greater cooperation among industry partners. In 2017, a memorandum of understanding between FPCC and AAFC formalized the responsibilities of both parties on the management of the APMA. The administration of the APMA was outside Council's mandate under the FPAA, but the Council agreed to provide its experience in dealing with provincial commodity boards in the administration of orders under the APMA in collaboration with AAFC. This agreement ensured that FPCC and AFCC had a shared understanding of their roles and worked together in a structured approach. This included a long-term strategy to streamline regulatory instruments under the APMA.<sup>483</sup> Simplifying the lengthy administrative processes for the APMA remained a priority. While FPCC administers the APMA and prepares the required regulatory documentation for review and approval by the Treasury Board and the Department of Justice Canada, AAFC is responsible for obtaining ministerial approvals for new delegation orders and provides policy oversight on the APMA. Additionally, the Council works closely with provincial supervisory boards, as well as in collaboration with the National Association of Agri-Food Supervisory Agencies and provincial commodity boards, regarding the processing of new delegation orders at the provincial level as well as amendments to existing orders.<sup>484</sup> A review of this regulatory framework led to the development of a modernization project whereby both FPCC and AAFC collaborated to address inconsistencies and other issues related to the administration of the APMA.<sup>485</sup> Addressing these regulatory issues and improving the functioning of both the Council and the overall system was a priority for FPCC.<sup>486</sup>

Meetings, workshops, and other conferences continued to be pursued in order to improve the Council's relationships with stakeholders, gain more industry information, and better communicate its role and what was possible under current legislation. The Council made a point of working toward improving communications and relationships with its partners by increasing information-sharing with

partners and shifting its “focus from operational and legal matters to more strategic issues by increasing the frequency of meetings with agencies and industry stakeholders.”<sup>487</sup>

FPCC also wanted to educate all farmers about the opportunities associated with the establishment of PRAs. In 2010, Council members made visits to farm organizations across Canada, which stimulated more interest in information about PRAs. Groups such as the Canadian Pork Council, the United Potato Growers of Canada, the Canadian Horticultural Council, the Association des producteurs des fraises et framboises du Québec, and the affiliates of the Union des producteurs agricoles all expressed interest in knowing more about the establishment of PRAs.<sup>488</sup> Creating awareness around the PRA concept was a central focus of FPCC, and a PRA awareness campaign was developed to encourage agricultural commodity groups to make greater use of this legislation.<sup>489</sup>

The FPCC newsletter, *FOCUS*, continued to be produced and distributed to partners and stakeholders in order to share valuable information on Council business and decisions, as well as “insights into portfolio, departmental and industry news and, from time to time, related issues on the international scene.” The newsletter was made available via email and on the FPCC’s website, which was also updated to provide more detailed information on industry guidelines, and activities and offer new intranet pages for the specific use of FPCC members.<sup>490</sup> Through its website the Council continued to release updated versions of industry handbooks, such as *Canada’s Poultry and Egg Industry Handbook*, which provided useful statistical information about the sector for government departments and industry stakeholders.<sup>491</sup> These efforts were all a part of a larger commitment that FPCC made to increasing the transparency and accountability of the organization and the systems for which it existed.

### *Enhancing Cooperation*

Increasing its visibility was also important to the Council’s goal of enhancing cooperation. As noted earlier, stakeholders could not always find consensus, but FPCC recognized that collaboration was required before change could materialize. The Council took an active role in helping support industry partners in instituting changes it believed were necessary for the improvement of the system.<sup>492</sup>

When Brian Douglas, the new FPCC Chair and Deputy Head, took office in 2018, he noted in his first annual report that the Council had demonstrated impressive teamwork in many of its undertakings, especially regarding the increased cooperation it had with AAFC and the national agencies, which he argued had emerged through “continuing dialogue, promoting transparency, and a collaborative culture.” These efforts demonstrated FPCC’s ability to adapt as an organization and respond in an efficient and flexible way to deal with industry issues.<sup>493</sup> Not dissimilar to previous chairs, Douglas emphasized the importance of public confidence in the Council and its operations. He outlined how the FPCC’s new strategic plan for the 2019–2022 period, titled *Efficiency through Dialogue*, sought to “move the organization ahead by strengthening FPCC’s adaptability to the needs of our stakeholders, promoting



**Brian Douglas, Chair,  
2018–present** (Figure 6.3)

Before being appointed as chair in 2018, Douglas enjoyed a public service career that spanned over 37 years. A graduate of the University of Guelph, Douglas held senior-level positions in the Prince Edward Island government, including Deputy Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and Deputy Minister of Agriculture. He spent many years at the province's Department of Agriculture, where he served as Director of the Agriculture Resource Division and Manager of the Farm Extension Services. He also served as a member and representative for Prince Edward Island on various boards and committees related to agriculture, transportation, and infrastructure at the provincial and national levels. From 2015 to 2016, Douglas was the Clerk of the Executive Council and Secretary to Cabinet for the Government of Prince Edward Island. He also serves as general manager of the World Potato Congress Inc. His work in agriculture gave him an appreciation and understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing Canadian producers.<sup>1</sup> While Douglas had had little experience with FPCC, his knowledge of government institutions and procedures and the broader agricultural industry were valuable assets that he brought to his position as chair when he started in 2018. When Douglas came to the Council, he understood his role and responsibility as a deputy head of the organization well, and quickly worked to develop his relationships with industry partners.<sup>2</sup> Douglas played an important role in developing his team and overseeing the creation of a new strategic plan and vision for the Council. Despite the challenges experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council continued to successfully manage their operations and institute important changes, including establishing the pork PRA in 2020. Douglas is proud of the increased understanding, trust, and teamwork that has developed among industry stakeholders and is excited about the opportunities the Council has to expand its work with industry partners in the future.<sup>3</sup>

1 FPCC, *Farm Products Council of Canada 2018—2019 Annual Report* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2018), 4.

2 Brian Douglas, interview by author, August 23, 2021.

3 Brian Douglas, interview by author, August 23, 2021.

the understanding of FPCC's responsibilities to preserve the balance in the supply management system, supporting agricultural research and marketing, and continuing to build trust in our organization."<sup>494</sup> FPCC took pride in encouraging better coordination across the supply management system, and acknowledged that it had "consistently worked to build consensus on the need to bring greater transparency to the system."<sup>495</sup>

Douglas came to the Council at a time when greater coordination among industry and government partners was needed. Indeed, his extensive public service career, in addition to his other service roles in the agricultural community, was helpful as it enabled him and the organization to work toward greater cooperation. As Douglas noted, his role was not just that of FPCC Chair, but he was also Deputy Head of the organization. Douglas's knowledge of government bureaucracy and procedural practices meant that he was well adapted to his role and the important inter-governmental relationships that were central to the functioning of the Council. With the help of existing Council members, including the Vice-Chair Mike Pickard, who had served as Acting Chair for a time and came to the position with a wide-ranging knowledge of the poultry industries and was well-respected by his peers, and existing and new FPCC staff, Douglas was able to navigate these relationships effectively and apply his organizational knowledge to help the Council forward at this time.<sup>496</sup> Indeed, by the end of the decade, Council members were proud of the teamwork



that had developed at FPCC and how far their partner relationships had progressed.<sup>497</sup> The overall improvement in members' understanding of the various roles and responsibilities they shared in strengthening the system held tremendous promise for increased progress in the years to come.

## The National Marketing Agencies in the 2010s

In 2010, the Council continued to supervise the operations of the four national supply management agencies (Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC), Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC), CFC, and CHEP). The agencies themselves continued to improve their operations in an environment where trade agreement negotiations threatened domestic production and continued concerns about food safety and animal welfare necessitated increased regulations and protocols.<sup>498</sup> And yet, while all of these agencies were interested in monitoring key industry issues and the status of the various trade agreements, operational issues created the most conflict among industry partners. The Council had a significant role to play in helping to facilitate collaboration and devise mutually agreeable policies and approaches, as was the case in allocation setting. Over the 2010s, some of the agreements among industry partners faltered, as was the case with Alberta's withdrawal from the national chicken plan in November 2012. Council members accepted it as their job to apply their influence to create agreement among stakeholders about the need to standardize and regularly upgrade their reporting practices so that it was clear to all partners and the public that the system operated in a transparent and responsible manner.<sup>499</sup>



**Mike  
Pickard,  
Vice-Chair,  
2015–19**

(Figure 6.4)

Originally from Saint John, New Brunswick,

when Pickard was first appointed as a member of the Council in 2013, he had owned a chicken farm in Wynyard, Saskatchewan, for over 25 years. His passion for farming was reflected by the Saskatchewan Broiler Producer of the Year award he received in 2004. Pickard served with the Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan from 2007 to 2013, as well as with CFC from 2008 to 2013. While with CFC, he served on its Consumer Relations and Finance Committees. He also held a director position with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture from 2011 to 2012.<sup>1</sup> After serving as a Council member from 2013 to 2015, Pickard was appointed as vice-chair in 2015. He also served as acting chair in 2017, before returning to his position as vice-chair. During his tenure at the Council, Pickard was able to use his farmer background and direct approach to build trust and communication with producer stakeholders. Pickard later reflected on the importance of building relationships during this period and the success the Council had in developing greater understanding among stakeholders by the end of the decade.<sup>2</sup>

1 FPCC, *Farm Products Council of Canada 2013—2014 Annual Report* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2013), 4.

2 Mike Pickard, interview by author, August 18, 2021.





**Ron Bonnett, Vice-Chair,  
2019–present** (Figure 6.5)

Although born near Kincardine, Ontario, Bonnett and his family later moved to northern Ontario, where he continues to live today. Although first involved in the trades, Bonnett bought a small dairy farm in 1975, which he expanded over the years. During the farm crisis in the 1980s, however, the difficulties farmers faced stimulated his work in establishing and serving as the founding president of the Algoma Federation of Agriculture. The group was created to lobby on behalf of local farmers who faced a number of pressing issues at that time.<sup>1</sup> It was during this period that Bonnett realized the importance of cooperation in the farming community. Bonnett also participated in municipal politics and served as a councillor and reeve of the Township of Plummer where, among other things, he advocated for rural economic development and a strong agricultural sector. Bonnett served as an executive member of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and held the position of vice-president before serving as president of the OFA. During his time with OFA he sat on the Canadian Federation of Agriculture Council and executive, before becoming vice-president and then president. Bonnett also helped establish the World Farmers' Organization and sat on the board of directors as the North American representative and acted as interim president.<sup>2</sup> Bonnett and his wife, Cathy, dairy farmed between 1975 and 1995 before switching to a cow/calf farm. Bonnett later served as the president of Beef Improvement Ontario and planning committee chair for Ontario's Agricultural Management Institute.<sup>3</sup> In a long and varied career, Bonnett supported the Canadian system of orderly marketing and highlighted the benefits of the system for international audiences. It was because of this experience and knowledge that Bonnett came to be appointed as vice-chair of the Council in 2019 after completing his presidency of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. Bonnett joined the Council because he saw the value of the beef PRA and believed other farmers could benefit from establishing such agencies in their sectors. He also felt strongly about the need for stakeholders—producers, processors, further processors, and others—to work together to create a strong and stable agricultural industry. During his current tenure, Bonnett has worked to encourage communication among industry partners, and despite the difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, he has used his industry relationships and experience to help facilitate resolutions to difficult industry issues. He is proud to serve alongside a diverse group of members with a shared sense of purpose to improving Canadian agriculture.<sup>4</sup>

1 Ron Bonnett, interview by author, September 9, 2021.

2 FPCC, *Farm Products Council of Canada, 2019—2020 Annual Report* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Services and Procurement, 2019), 4.

3 FPCC, *Farm Products Council of Canada, 2019—2020 Annual Report* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Services and Procurement, 2019), 4.

4 Ron Bonnett, interview by author, September 9, 2021.

*Egg Farmers  
of Canada*

The oldest of the marketing agencies and the one that had perhaps seen the most challenges was the EFC. Still, the prospects of the industry and the agency were strong in the 2010s. The consumption of eggs significantly increased over the course of this period and Canadian farmers were supplying higher levels of domestic table eggs as well as eggs for processing.<sup>500</sup> Despite the increasing production, however, EFC continued to face challenges. Most of these challenges were met with success, including the agency's proactive efforts to establish animal welfare and food safety policies, as well as social responsibility programs, including a national traceability project.<sup>501</sup> Other challenges, however, remained issues.

A central concern for FPCC regarding the egg industry was EFC's management of its industrial product program (IPP). The Council believed that the EFC's current model for managing the industrial product program had been stretched to the limit and Council members supported EFC's efforts to develop a more

sustainable and flexible way to supply processors and manage the surplus without relying on increasing levies.<sup>502</sup> Issues related to this program led to disagreements between the Council and EFC when the Council refused to approve EFC's initial quota and levy increase requests early in the decade.<sup>503</sup> These disputes were also reflected in disagreements among stakeholders. For instance, in August 2011, CPEPC filed an official complaint with the Council on behalf of egg processors with respect to the national agency's new pricing policy for eggs sold to processors.<sup>504</sup> Although the parties were able to meet and come to an agreement on pricing in 2012, the Council was still concerned that, while the new agreement would reduce EFC's reliance on a levy to cover its costs, it would "make only a limited contribution to the costs of the IPP and additional changes are needed to ensure its financial sustainability."<sup>505</sup> Improving the financial sustainability of the IPP and identifying alternative ways to supply the growing demand for eggs by processors was a significant concern among Council members during these years.<sup>506</sup>

FPCC continued to have intense deliberations over quota and levy requests from EFC. Council members were in regular communication with the EFC Chair and Executive Committee in an attempt to resolve priority industry issues.<sup>507</sup> Indeed, Council members assigned to the egg industry profile worked hard during this period to foster greater cooperation and communication among industry partners.<sup>508</sup> Part of the problem was establishing a new formula for quota allocations that all signatories could agree on; the allocation formula EFC used since 2001 had never formally been approved by all the signatories of the egg FPA. The Council often expressed its concerns that EFC needed to control IPP costs while meeting processors' needs, accurately allocate eggs according to market needs, and place birds already allocated.<sup>509</sup> FPCC encouraged EFC to develop other avenues for supporting and directly supplying the market for processed eggs, for instance, through a combination of the egg for processing quota and a price pooling system.<sup>510</sup> In 2017, CPEPC and EFC agreed on a new industrial pricing structure for processors, to be implemented in 2018.<sup>511</sup> And later in 2018 the Council supported the EFC's Integrated Solution Project, a new initiative meant to develop principles and guidelines for revenues and expenses of the Pooled Income Fund that developed as a result of these discussions, but consultations about EFC's allocation methodology and how to best supply the growing processing market continued.<sup>512</sup>

Another important matter that needed revising was the industry's FPA. The last major amendments to the FPA for the marketing of eggs were made in 1976, and despite significant changes in the industry and agency policies and practices, all the signatories could not agree to a new FPA. The Council conveyed its belief that the FPA needed to reflect the agency's current practices, and while EFC established committees to review the agreement in 2010 and returned to this issue with more determination in 2017, more work was needed for all parties to find consensus.<sup>513</sup> Regulatory meetings and new approaches to updating the FPA continued to be pursued into the next decade.<sup>514</sup>

### *Turkey Farmers of Canada*

The main challenge for TFC during the 2010s was increasing consumer demand. Initially, the industry was concerned with regaining the market opportunities that were lost because of the 2008 listeria outbreak and the economic recession from 2007 to 2009, but consumer habits, including the holiday consumption of turkey, especially at Thanksgiving, was also changing relative to the broader demographic changes of the country.<sup>515</sup> While the industry was active in its marketing campaigns and worked hard to increase consumers' confidence in Canadian turkey products and address animal welfare and food safety issues, turkey farmers experienced a decline in production in contrast to the growth in production by egg and chicken farmers during this decade.<sup>516</sup>

Council members and staff continued to attend TFC events and meetings and engage with the turkey industry on FPCC's priority areas for the agency. These measures included improving transparency through improved reporting, updating the FPA, improving COP calculations, and examining whether the establishment of a promotion and research agency (PRA) would be viable as a means of funding market promotion as well as research to increase turkey consumption in Canada.<sup>517</sup> During this period FPCC also encouraged the TFC to continue to work on its allocation policy, specifically the challenge of addressing processor-specific whole-bird growth opportunities.<sup>518</sup>

### *Chicken Farmers of Canada*

Despite the advances CFC had made in the previous decade in terms of updating its FPA and the increased growth in the industry, finding agreement among signatories to implement change remained a challenge. The Council noted in 2010 that "building relationships and fostering trust between industry stakeholders remain an ongoing challenge for CFC, especially with regard to the improvement of the allocation-setting process."<sup>519</sup> Disagreements about the concept of differential growth (the application of comparative advantage when determining quota allocations), the increase in interprovincial movements of live chickens, the premiums paid by processors to secure supply, and the moratoriums that were in place in Ontario and Québec on sales to out-of-province buyers continued to be ongoing concerns for the industry.<sup>520</sup>

The most significant concern was applying the concept of differential growth. An ongoing priority for the Council was monitoring CFC's quota allocations, including the agency's attempts to apply comparative advantage of production (CAP), or differential growth, to these allocations. Under this plan, provinces were to be allocated different percentage rates of growth for domestic quota allocation. Although CFC had provisions for differential growth in the operational agreement (Schedule B) of the revised FPA, these provisions were not being used and instead domestic quota allocation in all provinces increased or decreased on a historical market share basis. Some provinces believed that recognition of differential growth was necessary to take into account the regional changes in market conditions related to economic

and population growth, per capita consumption differences, and markets shifts by processors or further processors. Others believed the historical market share basis was fundamental to the original intent of the legislation. The Council noted that “for some years, there has been mounting pressure from some provinces to incorporate some mechanism for differential growth,” and while CFC intended to incorporate differential growth into the allocation formula, a lack of consensus among signatories stifled efforts.<sup>521</sup>

As a result of this lack of progress in applying differential growth to CFC quota allocation calculations, in November 2012, Alberta’s Minister of Agriculture sent a letter of notice of intent to withdraw from the FPA for chicken, effective January 1, 2014. FPCC was actively involved in trying to find a resolution to this matter, including by developing a document, *Guidelines for the Consideration of Comparative Advantage of Production*, which was shared with a number of stakeholders including CFC. It also undertook other projects on the subject of how comparative advantage methodology could be employed in chicken quota allocation setting,<sup>522</sup> and addressed the inability of the industry to reach an agreement on how to incorporate the concept of differential growth. Although CFC and the provincial chicken boards developed alternative allocation methodologies to the current practice, none of the methodologies garnered support from all 10 provincial chicken boards, which led to Alberta’s withdrawal as a member from the national agency.<sup>523</sup>

All parties recognized that interprovincial collaboration was needed to find a resolution, and despite these setbacks, CFC and its partners continued to work to overcome interprovincial differences about the fairness of the allocation process.<sup>524</sup> Building consensus among the provinces was not easy, and it was a prolonged process since unanimous consent was required among signatories, however, progress was made. In 2016 and 2017, FPCC supported CFC’s and provincial commodity boards’ work to develop a new allocation methodology that would allow for differential growth to be applied in a way that would be acceptable to all provinces, including Alberta. After amendments were proposed and reviewed by FPCC, the Council agreed that it did not require Governor-in-Council approval and could be implemented. As a result, the amendments were realized, and Alberta rejoined the FPA for chicken during CFC’s November 2017 meeting.<sup>525</sup>

Beyond changes to quota allocations, CFC also sought help in improving border predictability and effective border controls for imports of chicken and chicken products during this period, which required coordinated efforts from various industry and government partners.<sup>526</sup> Continuing to improve the operations of the agency and create policies and practices that grew and developed the industry were a priority of all stakeholders during this time.

### *Canadian Hatching Egg Producers*

Similar to the egg and turkey agencies, CHEP worked on redrafting its FPA at the beginning of the decade with the goal of modernizing the agreement to reflect the agency’s current practices and to

include Alberta and Saskatchewan as signatories to the agreement.<sup>527</sup> While amendments were made, soon signatories were requesting FPCC review the section of the FPA operational agreement that outlined allocation methodology. Again, increases in interprovincial shipments of broiler chicks and interprovincial conflict over quota allocations prompted the need to build provincial consensus.<sup>528</sup> After complaints against CHEP were received by FPCC regarding CHEP's application of quota allocations, the Council urged CHEP to deepen its review of the allocation methodology in order to resolve industry disputes.<sup>529</sup>

Generally, however, the broiler hatching egg industry benefited from strong consumer demand for chicken, and the main concern of CHEP during these years was revising practices and policies as needed, included redrafting its Liquidated Damages Agreement, which set out the penalties for over-production and the methodology for calculating them.<sup>530</sup> CHEP worked throughout 2010 with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) on the methodology employed by the CFIA to determine the level of compensation that a broiler hatching egg producer would receive under the Health of Animals Act if the producer's flock were to be ordered depopulated, as avian influenza continued to be a concern in the industry.<sup>531</sup> Continued vigilance on part of FPCC, the national agencies, and the provincial boards and supervisory bodies was required to ensure that all regulated commodity sectors continued to function in an effective and responsible manner.

### *Other Commodities*

No new marketing agency had been created since the establishment of a national broiler hatching egg agency in 1986, but during 2012, public hearings were held after a request was received by FPCC from the Pullet Growers of Canada to establish a Canadian pullet marketing agency.<sup>532</sup>

FPCC held two public hearings in Ottawa and Winnipeg to receive input from industry stakeholders. Similar to other supply-managed commodities, those who opposed orderly marketing were vocal in their criticism,<sup>533</sup> but the official FPCC report recognized the merits of such an agency. The Council recommended the establishment of the agency to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food; however, it was not to be.<sup>534</sup> Ultimately, the Pullet Growers' application was turned down, but the process and effort of coordinating and submitting the request to the minister brought pullet growers closer together and encouraged collaboration in their industry. It also led to important industry discussions about improving the sustainability of the system. Moreover, responding to the Pullet Growers' request compelled FPCC to revive and renew its processes for hearing and processing requests for the establishment of marketing boards.<sup>535</sup> Although the political and economic environment of the time did not support the creation of additional supply-managed sectors, the need to continue to ensure measures of fairness in the food chain remained.



## Promotional and Research Agencies

While creating new marketing agencies was a difficult proposition at this time, greater efforts were made by the Council to promote and facilitate the process for the creation of PRAs. This was an important mandate for Council during this decade, as the government also saw PRAs as effective means for supporting producers in the marketplace. In order to facilitate more PRAs, FPCC improved its guidance materials, especially with smaller commodity groups in mind,<sup>536</sup> and made visits to farm organizations across Canada to create awareness of the possibilities of these agencies.<sup>537</sup>

FPCC actively worked to highlight the benefits of PRAs to farmer groups and industry associations. These efforts encouraged several producer groups to propose such an organization.<sup>538</sup> In 2012, a proposal from the British Columbia Raspberry Industry Development Council to establish a red raspberry PRA to be funded by levies applied on fresh and processed red raspberries marketed domestically and imported was made.<sup>539</sup> Public hearings were arranged in 2013 in Abbotsford and Ottawa, and FPCC had to develop new processes for managing these formal requests to conform to current regulatory and operational requirements and meet evolving governance standards.<sup>540</sup> Although no agency was created for raspberries (despite a similar one existing in the United States), nor was one created upon a later request for a strawberry PRA, the process helped the Council streamline procedures for future public hearings. Despite the failure to create these agencies, FPCC continued to emphasize the potential of the PRA model, noting that “intra-industry collaboration in innovation and market development often determines the competitiveness of individual firms. By reinforcing competitiveness, PRAs helped to establish an environment that leads to increased sales and better products.”<sup>541</sup>

In 2015 the Council received a proposal from the Canadian Pork Council to establish a Canadian pork PRA. FPCC organized public hearings in Calgary and Montreal in January and February 2016 where Council members heard input from a wide range of participants from the pork industry.<sup>542</sup> The Council approved the panel’s report into the merits of establishing a Canadian pork PRA and made recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in favour of its establishment. For some time FPCC worked with the departments of Justice Canada and of Agriculture and Agri-Food to draft a proclamation that would establish the PRA,<sup>543</sup> and finally, in 2020, FPCC obtained authorization from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to present the regulatory documentation for the proposed Canadian Pork Promotion and Research Agency (Pork PRA) to the Treasury Board for approval, which ultimately led to the proclamation and the establishment of the proposed agency in December of that year.<sup>544</sup>

During the 2010s, FPCC continued to improve its guidance documents for commodity groups so that they would be better prepared when submitting proposals for the establishment of new PRAs and to avoid delays.<sup>545</sup> Council members were persistent in promoting these agencies and later in the decade the Council began to investigate the merits of establishing a Canadian industrial hemp PRA.<sup>546</sup> Public



hearings for an industrial hemp PRA began in January 2019 in Winnipeg, and the Council was able to conclude its report in February 2020, based on the public hearings and research and analysis conducted by FPCC staff in collaboration with other federal government departments, including AAFC, Statistics Canada, Health Canada, and the CFIA. The Council submitted its recommendation to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in 2022.<sup>547</sup>

### *Canadian Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency / Canadian Beef Cattle Check-Off Agency*

Although the early 2010s continued to be a challenging time for the beef industry, some positive changes occurred as more and more countries lifted restrictions on Canadian beef, which had been caused by BSE, and farmers gained greater foreign market access for Canadian cattle and beef products.<sup>548</sup> While the dispute with the United States over country-of-origin labelling continued in the early years of the decade,<sup>549</sup> in 2014 the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled in favour of Canada and Mexico after finding the practice violated international law,<sup>550</sup> and American lawmakers repealed the regulations in 2015.<sup>551</sup>

As the cattle industry continued to adjust to these changes, the Beef PRA worked to improve its operations. An independent study conducted by Dr John Cranfield of the University of Guelph confirmed the economic benefits of the levies for cattle producers by demonstrating that, on average, every dollar invested in national research and marketing activities earned back nine dollars for producers.<sup>552</sup> The current funding available, however, was limited to monies collected by a national levy on domestic cattle. The agency worked during this period to develop the administrative process necessary to collect an import levy on imported beef and beef products.<sup>553</sup> In the meantime, the funds generated from the existing levy were allocated to three organizations for research and promotion: the Beef Information Centre (BIC), the Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF), and the Beef Cattle Research Council. Provincial boards also had the option of retaining some of the levy collected to fund provincial programs. The Canada Beef Working Group, which comprised representatives of the national agency, the BIC, the CBEF, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA), the Canadian Cattlemen Market Development Council, and the National Cattle Feeders' Associations, were tasked to investigate and develop a new organizational structure to maximize efficiency and effectiveness for domestic and international marketing activities. Ultimately, as part of its recommendations, the group endorsed the creation of a single organization by combining the BIC, the CBEF, and the agency.<sup>554</sup> After some deliberation, the merger was approved, and the agency's name was eventually changed to Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency.<sup>555</sup>

The Council worked closely with the beef agency, AAFC, Justice Canada, and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat to finalize the regulatory amendment to the agency's proclamation to indicate this

new structure, as well as to include the amendment to the Beef Cattle Research, Market Development and Promotion Levies Order that allowed the addition of an import component.<sup>556</sup> Overall, the agency continued to investigate ways in which it could better serve its producers and expand Canadian beef markets and sales. It made significant strides in researching and promoting its products both nationally and internationally and providing consumers and overseas buyers with increased information about the quality and nutritional profile of Canadian beef.<sup>557</sup>

## Conclusion

During the 2010s, the Council's commitment to improving all aspects of its work and the systems it supervised remained. Similar to earlier periods of the Council's history, Canada's supply management system faced domestic and international challenges, including greater demands to market access from trading partners and fluctuating global prices. While some adaptation was needed, the system of supply management was maintained because of its worth, both to producers and the public. Council members supported a system that had proven to be effective in providing Canadians with high-quality food at reasonable prices and allowed farmers a fair return for their work. FPCC noted that the stability of supply management also created "healthy, sustainable industries where farmers can reinvest with confidence in their communities and businesses."<sup>558</sup> The value of supply management was clear, and despite the challenges to the system over the years, FPCC understood that, if managed correctly, its value would "only increase in importance in years to come."<sup>559</sup> Similarly, the Council remained committed to promoting the establishment of PRAs, as the initial one had demonstrated its value in supporting innovation and product promotion in the beef sector, and promised to do the same for pork and other commodities.

At the end of the decade, FPCC Chair Brian Douglas reflected on this period as one of "growth, accomplishment and challenge."<sup>560</sup> But this period should also be recognized as one that achieved greater stability and sustainability. Despite nearing its 50th anniversary, the Council continued to develop and evolve as it faced new challenges and opportunities. FPCC's long-time efforts to create open and constructive dialogue between industry partners continued to be an important part of the reason why solutions to industry problems were generally found. In September 2019, FPCC launched a new three-year strategic plan. In the presence of various officials and staff members of national agencies, senior officials from the departments of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Justice, and Global Affairs, and other key partners, the Council reconfirmed its pledge to promote greater awareness of FPCC's roles and responsibilities, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and foster organizational sustainability in the years to come.<sup>561</sup>

Douglas later reflected on the intentional straightforwardness of the plan and its three central goals as representative of the Council's understanding by the end of the decade that FPCC's focus needed to

be on the oversight of regulations and fostering understanding and trust between industry members, rather than trying to “reinvent the wheel” or change regulations to suit a desired plan.<sup>562</sup> Promoting the existing tools available to producer organizations through the legislation and improving stakeholder relationships were central to accomplishing future achievements for both the FPCC and the agricultural industries under its supervision. This commitment to ensuring the success of the system and helping farmers work cooperatively to achieve benefits for their industries has continued to motivate Council members in the years to come.<sup>563</sup>

# CONCLUSION

## The Council Today

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Over the course of 50 years, the Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC) has worked hard to support a range of stakeholder interests in various Canadian agricultural sectors. It has been an effective administrator of the Farm Products Agencies Act (FPAA) and the Agricultural Products Marketing Act (APMA) and supervisory body for the four national supply management agencies in the egg and poultry sectors. The Council has supported these groups in their establishment and development and ensured that they remained effectively managed and accountable to farmers, processors, and the general public. The Council’s responsibilities have also grown during this time to include the creation and supervision of promotion and research agencies, specifically for beef and pork, and it has continued to advocate for the creation of more of these agencies in a range of other commodity sectors in order to help support Canadian farmers. The Council’s efforts to strengthen these national agencies in the face of both domestic and global pressures, including changing consumer preferences, international trade agreements, fluctuating markets (including market changes as a result of COVID-19), and other new market demands, has required a large degree of cooperation. Cooperative work with the federal and provincial governments and industry partners has been necessary to resolve issues, build stronger relationships, and meet new opportunities, but it has not been without its challenges. Ultimately, however, the Council’s commitment to supply management and promotion and research agencies can be witnessed by FPCC’s actions to balance the interests of producers, processors, and consumers and strengthen the regulatory and operational framework of these systems.

In reflecting on this period, previous and current members of the Council have noted the efforts made to ensure that the national agencies have carried out their operations in accordance with the Act, but they have also recognized the various approaches the Council has taken to facilitate changes when needed and provide leadership among industry stakeholders. Fostering deeper levels of understanding among the various signatories of these national plans has been especially important to the stability of these systems. Part of this understanding has been communicating a clear vision of how the Council and the broader system of which it is a part should operate. Of course, the Council and the agencies it supervises are not static, and changes have been made over the years to meet shifting conditions—market or otherwise—but the Council remains dedicated to working with industry and

government partners to ensure the strength of the supply management system and provide additional tools to improve farmers' position in the marketplace.

One significant theme that emerges from the history of the Council is the dedication of its members. Council members have taken their legislative responsibilities seriously and often gone above and beyond in their efforts to ensure a balanced and fair system existed and that amendments were implemented when needed. These efforts were not always without conflict, but they were often necessary for the further improvement of the Council and the systems it supervised. Many FPCC chairs and vice-chairs reflected on their time with the Council as among the best years of their professional lives. They thoroughly enjoyed their work because of its obvious importance for the future of Canadian agriculture and because of the challenges it entailed. As noted throughout this book, the accomplishments of the Council are many, and Council members expressed pride in the achievements they made and relationships they built during their tenures. As noted earlier as well, the level of cooperation required for the successful operation of a supply management system is no small feat. Council members recalled the work they did with the tools available to them to facilitate important discussions, improve industry conditions, and work cooperatively with stakeholders to help ensure dynamic and responsive agricultural sectors in the years to come.

Today, the Council continues to face challenges, not least of which has been undertaking its daily operational and supervisory tasks during a global pandemic. During 2020 and 2021, COVID-19 placed significant strains on food supply chains and the various actors in these systems. As FPCC Chair Brian Douglas noted in the most recent annual report, COVID-19's impact was "felt by all players in the food industry who had to deal with the market disruptions caused by this crisis," but producers were especially affected "by stoppages at processing facilities and constant changes in demand in food service and retail markets."<sup>564</sup> Indeed, COVID-19 challenged members of the Canadian agricultural industry to be increasingly flexible and find new ways of operating given the rapid changes to food markets for their products during the pandemic. For example, the Egg Farmers of Canada had to introduce an Early Fowl Removal Program in response to the pandemic and the decreased demand for eggs for processing in the food service sectors, while turkey and chicken farmers also had to adjust to the lower market demand that resulted from pandemic conditions.<sup>565</sup>

The Council has also made some significant changes to respond to market shifts during the pandemic, including alternative ways of keeping in regular contact with industry partners, strengthening relationships with stakeholders, and ensuring its work continues, be that through virtual meetings and revised processes that serve to streamline and improve its procedures. Although the opportunity to meet in person was missed during office closures and travel restrictions, Douglas also noted that virtual meetings offered opportunities to increase communication and cooperation, as "without the costs and logistics of travel, more people were included in discussions for an enhanced exchange of information."<sup>566</sup> No doubt these changes will have lasting consequences for how Council members conduct their work;

virtual meetings, for example, will continue to be employed with a blend of communication methods and approaches to ensure the greatest efficiency and enhanced exchange of information as possible.<sup>567</sup>

Indeed, the creation of the Canadian Pork Promotion and Research Agency in November 2020 and the successful updating of FPCC complaint by-laws and other guidelines are evidence of the effectiveness of the Council's work during these circumstances.<sup>568</sup> The pork promotion and research agency (PRA) was especially exciting, as the Council worked closely with the Canadian Pork Council through the rigorous process of creating the new agency. Similar to the beef PRA, the pork PRA promised to enhance the promotion of the Canadian pork industry "by developing and expanding markets for producers and importers, and by supporting research activities that increase production, solve problems, and develop new products for consumers."<sup>569</sup> The Council is currently working with the agency to establish its levy order.

The Council has also been busy during this time processing an application to establish an industrial hemp PRA. After considering the Council's earlier findings into the merits of an industrial hemp PRA, as well as an in-depth analysis of the evidenced presented in the public hearing on the proposed agency, the Council made its recommendation to the Minister of Agriculture, Marie-Claude Bibeau.<sup>570</sup>

Another significant recent accomplishment relates to the APMA. The Governor General approved amendments to the British Columbia Vegetable Order on December 4, 2020, and therefore the first of 90 delegation orders has completed the regulatory process under the APMA Modernization Project the Council is pursuing in collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.<sup>571</sup>

The Council continues to encourage national agencies to respond to and plan for changing market conditions in a collaborative and coordinated way. For example, it has hosted numerous meetings, including National Association of Agri-Food Supervisory Agencies videoconferences, that have led to important discussions about the impacts of COVID-19 on the dairy, poultry, and non-supply-managed sectors, as well as how processors have managed market disruptions, supply adjustments, and relationships with producers and their workforce.<sup>572</sup>

Despite the turmoil caused by COVID-19, significant resilience has been demonstrated by Canadian agricultural sectors, especially among supply-managed commodity sectors. The Council has remained committed to improving its operations and the operations of the national agencies,<sup>573</sup> and it continues to pursue the goals of its most recent strategic plan to promote awareness of its roles and responsibilities, strengthen stakeholder relationships, and foster organization sustainability.<sup>574</sup> Its successes are noteworthy. For instance, the beef PRA has proven to be an effective promotional and marketing tool for Canadian beef farmers since its inception, while the supply-managed poultry and egg sectors remain strong. Furthermore, the renewed interest among farmers outside of Canada for alternative systems of farm marketing, specifically supply management, suggests that the Canadian system's successes have not gone unnoticed by the international farming community, despite simultaneous efforts toward greater deregulation. Perhaps most telling is that most Canadians remain supportive of supply



management and the benefits of a system that ensures stable, safe, and healthy domestic foodstuffs at a fair price. There is little doubt that more challenges will arise in the future; however, it is also certain FPCC will continue to work on behalf of the Government of Canada and all other industry stakeholders to ensure Canadians benefit from a strong system of national supply management and promotion and research agencies for farm products in the years to come.



The Honorable Marie-Claude Bibeau Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with FPCC Chair, Brian Douglas. (Figure 7.1)



FPCC Council members with Turkey Farmers of Canada. Left to right: Darren Ference, Morgan Moore, Maryse Dubé, Yvon Cyr, Brian Douglas, Ron Bonnett, Brian Ricker and Phil Boyd. (Figure 7.2)

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The Farm Product Council of Canada  
celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022 and  
this book commemorates this milestone.

*The Farm Products Council of Canada  
1972-2022: A History*, provides an  
institutional history of its establishment and  
the subsequent five decades which saw  
significant social, political, and economic  
change in Canada's agriculture sector.

