

# **FARMERS’ PRIORITIES AT THE BALLOT BOX: ASSESSING POLITICAL ALIGNMENT ON TRADE, TAXATION, LABOUR, AND SUSTAINABILITY AHEAD OF THE 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION**

**FOOD,  
AGRICULTURE,  
RESEARCH  
& POLICY.**

# FARMERS' PRIORITIES AT THE BALLOT BOX

***ASSESSING POLITICAL ALIGNMENT ON TRADE, TAXATION, LABOUR, AND SUSTAINABILITY AHEAD OF  
THE 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION***

Briefing Paper  
April 26, 2025.

Ohi Ahmed\*, Guillaume Lhermie

The Simpson Centre, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

\* Corresponding author: [ohi.ahmed@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ohi.ahmed@ucalgary.ca)

**Acknowledgment:** We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Robert Falconer from the School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary for his expert guidance in developing the survey questionnaire. We also wish to express our appreciation to Stratus Ag Research for their leadership in the survey rollout and data collection, as well as their dedicated partnership and support throughout the project.

ISSUE .....

BACKGROUND .....

CURRENT STATUS .....

KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....

NEXT STEPS .....

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....

APPENDIX.....

1

1

3

5

15

16

21

## **ISSUE**

As Canada prepares for the 2025 federal election, agricultural producers face a rapidly evolving political and policy landscape shaped by shifting economic conditions, climate challenges, and labor market pressures. With agriculture occupying a unique space at the intersection of economic productivity and environmental responsibility, understanding how political parties address farmer priorities on trade, taxation, labor, climate adaptation, and water management is essential. Given the centrality of these issues to farm operations and rural livelihoods, they are poised to become key determinants of electoral decisions within the agricultural community. This Policy Trends Briefing explores the critical policy areas that farmers identify as central to their decision-making in the upcoming election.

## **BACKGROUND**

Over the past two decades, successive federal governments have implemented various economic and fiscal measures with varying implications for Canadian farmers. Liberal and Conservative administrations have emphasized small business tax relief and targeted financial support for agricultural producers, though their approaches differ in scope, timing, and design.

Liberal governments from 2015 to the present continued a commitment to reduce the small business tax rate to 9% ([Department of Finance Canada, 2017](#)), introduced reforms to the Canada Pension Plan that increased employer contributions ([Capstick, Lambert-Racine, & Perez-Leclerc, 2018](#)), and enacted pandemic-era supports like the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) ([Canada Revenue Agency, 2020](#)). Changes to intergenerational farm transfers were made through [Bill C-208](#), which amended the Income Tax Act to allow capital gains exemptions when transferring farms to children or grandchildren. The Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption was raised to \$1.25 million. However, changes to the capital gains inclusion rate (before the eventual cancellation of the proposed hike) raised concerns among producers about succession planning and tax burdens, particularly for family-run farms ([Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 2024](#)).

In contrast, the Conservative government (2006–2015) focused on lowering EI premiums ([Government of Canada, 2014](#)) and corporate tax rates ([Government of Canada, 2015b](#)), expanding capital cost allowances for productivity-enhancing investments, and raising the capital gains exemption to \$1 million for farm and fishing enterprises ([Government of Canada, 2015a](#)). Additional credits and deductions, such as the Hiring Credit for Small Business (HCSB), aimed to ease financial pressures on smaller agricultural employers ([Government of Canada, 2013](#)).

Canada's trade policy has followed a trajectory of deepening global market integration over the past two decades, often placing agricultural producers, particularly those in supply-managed sectors, at the heart of domestic policy debates. Liberal and Conservative governments have advanced trade liberalization agendas, with varying emphasis on protections, compensation, and sectoral engagement.

Under the Liberal government (2015–present), Canada ratified several high-profile trade agreements, including the [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership \(CPTPP\)](#) and the [Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement \(CUSMA\)](#), while implementing agreements previously negotiated by the Conservatives, such as the [Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement \(CETA\)](#).

These agreements expanded foreign market access and opened domestic markets to foreign agricultural products, heightening pressure on Canada's dairy, poultry, and egg sectors. In response, the Liberals introduced compensation programs to support producer adaptation and modernization. Structural legal protection for supply management gained momentum through initiatives like [Bill C-282](#), a Private Member's Bill supported across party lines, which aims to make protections for supply-managed sectors explicit and binding in future trade negotiations.

The Liberal government also revised Canada's Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (FIPAs) model to reflect contemporary concerns about environmental safeguards, labor rights, and sustainable development. The agreements' investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions were maintained while the policy scope was broadened ([Global Affairs Canada, 2021](#)).

The preceding Conservative government (2006–2015) prioritized market liberalization and competitive trade frameworks, negotiating major agreements like CETA and the original Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). These efforts often involved concessions on supply-managed sectors in pursuit of broader trade benefits ([Nickel, 2015](#); [Binkley, 2018](#)). Compensation plans under CPC leadership were generally less detailed ([House of Commons, 2022](#); [Senate of Canada, 2024](#)), and the party was more focused on accelerating Canada's global trade footprint, including through FIPAs such as the Canada-China agreement ratified in 2014 ([Global Affairs Canada, 2024d](#)).

Immigration policy has played a critical role in shaping Canada's agricultural labor force, particularly through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and associated seasonal and economic streams. Across federal administrations, both Liberal and Conservative governments have relied on foreign labor to meet sectoral demands, though their priorities and policy mechanisms have diverged.

Under the Liberal governments from 2015 onward, the TFWP and International Mobility Programs have continued to expand, with Temporary Foreign Workers comprising nearly half of Canada's paid agricultural labor force as of 2019 ([Lu & Hou, 2023](#)). The Liberals have also emphasized agricultural expertise in permanent immigration pathways, including through the Agri-Food Pilot and preferred classifications within the Express Entry system ([Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024a](#)). The 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan reinforces this focus, maintaining consistent allocations for economic-class immigrants with agricultural experience, despite overall reductions in permanent resident targets ([Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024b](#)). Additionally, bilateral agreements under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) have strengthened access to labor from Latin America and the Caribbean, reinforcing the sector's seasonal labour pipeline ([Falconer, 2020b](#)).

By contrast, the Conservative government (2006–2015) prioritized short-term labour solutions with less emphasis on creating permanent pathways for agricultural workers. While they oversaw a dramatic increase in temporary foreign worker numbers—more than doubling the population on Canadian soil between 2006 and 2012—fewer targeted efforts were made to channel agricultural expertise through permanent immigration streams ([Carlow, 2018](#)). This emphasis on temporary, flexible labor increased reliance on externally sourced, often non-resident, agricultural workers without long-term settlement options.

Environmental sustainability and climate adaptation have increasingly become central to Canada's agricultural policy agenda. Successive federal governments have approached these issues with differing

priorities, ranging from voluntary, innovation-driven frameworks to regulatory and pricing-based mechanisms to reduce emissions and enhance land stewardship.

Under the Liberal governments since 2015, environmental policy has been shaped by Canada's commitments under the [Paris Agreement](#) and a push toward net-zero emissions by 2050. The [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change \(2016\)](#) and the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (2023–2028) ([Sustainable CAP](#)) have emphasized support for clean technologies, soil health, water management, and biodiversity. Complementary programs, such as the \$250 million Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program ([RALP](#)) and expanded [AgriStability](#) compensation, further incentivize ecosystem services and climate resilience. The [Clean Fuel Standard \(CFS\) \(2021\)](#) and the [Food Policy for Canada \(2019\)](#) promote sustainability and economic diversification through biofuel and local food systems. However, enacting the [Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act \(2018\)](#), which introduced a national carbon tax, has drawn concern from producers due to increased input costs, despite limited exemptions for on-farm fuel use. This is because the trickle-down effect of carbon tax and environmental compliance manifests as higher market retail prices. A carbon tax is directly related to higher commercial feed, farm labour, interest, and depreciation costs ([Olale et al., 2019](#)).

The Conservative governments (2006–2015) focused on voluntary environmental practices and economic growth, avoiding carbon pricing in favor of programs like Growing Forward and Growing Forward 2 ([Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2009b](#)), which supported [Environmental Farm Plans \(EFPs\)](#), nutrient and water management, and conservation practices. While the CPC signed the Copenhagen Accord and supported GHG reduction through the Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program (AGGP), agriculture was largely exempt from formal emissions reduction mandates ([Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2014](#)). Renewable energy incentives, such as the [Renewable Fuels Regulations \(2010\)](#), created biofuel market opportunities for producers but were framed primarily as commercial rather than environmental initiatives.

Recent federal trade, taxation, labor, and sustainability policies have profoundly shaped Canadian agricultural producers' operational realities and political perceptions. Divergent approaches across party lines—whether supporting supply-managed sectors, tax and succession planning, immigration pathways, or climate resilience have contributed to a complex policy landscape that directly affects farm viability and long-term planning. As producers weigh economic pressures against regulatory demands, these issues emerge as defining electoral concerns. In the lead-up to the 2025 federal election, aligning party platforms with farmers' priorities across these domains will be crucial in shaping political support and policy expectations across rural Canada.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

As the 2025 federal election approaches, Canadian political parties have begun defining their positions on agriculture, rural development, and food policy issues that are front and center for producers (used interchangeably with farmers here) nationwide. For farmers facing pressure from global trade instability, domestic regulatory shifts, and climate volatility, the emerging party platforms represent ideological commitments and concrete signals of how their operations and communities will be supported or challenged in the following policy cycle.

The Liberal Party of Canada (LPC), under the leadership of Mark Carney, has taken a strong protectionist tone in response to geopolitical threats such as U.S. tariffs. The party has positioned itself as a defender of Canadian agricultural sovereignty, especially for supply-managed sectors like dairy, poultry, and eggs. Explicitly stating that “Canada’s dairy sector is off the table” in any negotiations with President Trump, the LPC pledges to protect domestic producers from international shocks and ensure food produced in Canada reaches Canadian plates. Their proposed measures include doubling revenue protection under AgriStability from \$3 million to \$6 million per farm, expanding the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act guarantee limit to \$1 million, and creating a \$200 million Domestic Food Processing Fund. Additional commitments include new funding for clean technology adoption and a \$30 million boost to the AgriMarketing Program to help producers access new markets. These initiatives reflect a platform anchored in economic resilience, rural investment, and strong regulatory safeguards for Canadian producers ([Liberal Party of Canada, 2025](#)).

The Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) has released a comprehensive 2025 platform that presents a deregulatory, growth-oriented vision for the agriculture sector. Central to this agenda is the repeal of policies they argue have increased producer costs and limited operational flexibility. The party promises to scrap the proposed food packaging tax, framed as a potential 30% cost driver on produce, and repeal the federal plastics ban, allowing farmers and agribusinesses to continue using affordable packaging solutions. To support interprovincial commerce, the Conservatives propose fast-tracking amendments to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and introducing a “Free Trade Bonus” to incentivize provincial cooperation. Their platform also includes tax relief measures: rolling back the capital gains tax hike and eliminating taxes on domestic reinvestment to support farm succession and expansion. A proposed Farmland Protection Act would also bar foreign governments and corporations from buying Canadian farmland, reflecting a commitment to food sovereignty and long-term rural stability. The CPC also supports reforming Investment Tax Credits to benefit producers adopting clean Canadian technologies, positioning their platform as one that aligns with environmental and economic goals without increasing regulatory burdens ([Conservative Party of Canada, 2025](#)).

The New Democratic Party (NDP) maintains a policy orientation that prioritizes fairness for farmers, food system sustainability, and cooperative rural development. Although there isn’t much mention of the agricultural sector in the 2025 party platform ([NDP, 2025](#)), the NDP’s 2021 platform called for restoring the Canadian Wheat Board, preserving and strengthening supply-managed sectors such as dairy and poultry, and introducing a payment protection program for produce growers ([NDP, 2021a](#)). The party emphasizes protecting small producers, ensuring farmers receive fair incomes, and promoting sustainable farming practices, including organic agriculture, crop diversity, and pesticide reduction ([NDP, 2021a](#)). It also proposes working with provinces to enhance business risk management programs and attract younger generations to agriculture through training and mentorship ([NDP, 2021a](#)). In its “Ready for Better” document, the NDP articulates a vision for a Canadian Food Strategy focused on regional resilience, rural economic support, and high-speed broadband access to bridge the rural-urban digital divide ([NDP, 2021b](#)). The party’s support for agricultural cooperatives and local food systems reflects a commitment to grassroots-driven reform.

The Bloc Québécois presents agriculture as a key pillar of Quebec’s identity and autonomy, aligning its platform with the province’s unique needs and agri-food priorities. The Bloc is unequivocal in its defense of supply management, opposing any erosion of protections in future trade negotiations. Recently, they

reiterated their support for supply management in the face of threats from the USA (Cabrera et al., 2025). The party supports increased slaughter capacity to reduce market concentration, enhance food system resilience, and improve animal welfare outcomes (Bloc Québécois, 2021). In recognizing the multifunctionality of agriculture, the Bloc advocates for expanded federal financial support to acknowledge the ecological, economic, and cultural contributions of small producers in Quebec's rural economy. Environmental health and consumer transparency have been strong themes in the Bloc's platform. The party calls for mandatory labeling of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), a national seafood traceability plan, a \$300 million investment in alternatives to neonicotinoid pesticides, and investigations into potential regulatory capture within Health Canada (Bloc Québécois, 2021). These positions are closely tied to the Bloc's overarching objective of protecting Quebec's sovereignty, food systems, and environmental standards from federal decisions that may disproportionately reflect other regions' priorities.

Together, these platforms frame the political context in which Canadian farmers will vote. Whether centered on protectionism and investment (LPC), deregulation and domestic competitiveness (CPC), or cooperative and regional equity (NDP and Bloc), party platforms are increasingly reflective of the complex mix of economic, environmental, and sovereignty issues that shape rural Canada. Understanding these platforms is essential to interpreting the ballot-box issues that matter most to farmers in 2025.

## **KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In anticipation of the 2025 federal election, a national survey was conducted to identify ballot box issues and the factors that make these issues significant to Canadian farmers and assess how these producer priorities align with the current political landscape. The purpose of the survey was to determine: (1) how farmers perceive their political representation at the federal level, (2) which policy issues are most likely to influence their vote, and (3) how well federal party platforms reflect these policy preferences.

To achieve this, a national survey was conducted across all ten provinces from March 26 to April 13, 2025, targeting a representative sample of at least 50 Canadian farmers operating with a Gross Farm Income (GFI) for each segment between "Less than \$100,000" (on the lower end) and "2 million and over" (on the higher end). The Simpson Centre and Stratus Ag Research collaborated on developing the survey instrument, which was translated into French for Quebec respondents and administered online following extensive internal and pre-field testing to collect necessary data. A portion of the data summary and associated survey questions used can be found in the appendix. It should be noted that Stratus Ag Research is Canada's leading market research company focused entirely on agriculture. The Stratus database includes several thousand commercial farmers participating in surveys annually.

979 completed responses were collected, representing 0.52% of 189,874 Canadian farms per the last farm census 2021 (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2021). Provincial quotas were set based on Statistics Canada's distribution of farms above the GFI threshold to ensure geographic representation. Overall, the study offers a robust snapshot of farmer sentiment, stratified by region, farm size, and commodity type, enabling a nuanced understanding of political alignment and policy demands in Canadian agriculture. We received the following number of responses from the respective provinces:



Alberta (AB)	Atlantic Canada (comprising of Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick)	British Columbia (BC)	Manitoba (MB)	Ontario (ON)	Quebec (QC)	Saskatchewan (SK)
222	22	46	124	225	103	237

The survey's findings provide critical insight into the political and policy preferences likely to influence farmer voting decisions in the 2025 election and serve as a lens to evaluate the alignment between party platforms and producer priorities.

Notable Findings include:

**Ballot Box Issue: Trade-off between Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability.**

Survey responses indicate that most producers believe federal policies favor environmental sustainability over economic growth. Figure 1 shows that 30.13% of respondents indicated that policies somewhat prioritize environmental sustainability, and 25.84% reported that policies strongly prioritize environmental sustainability. Conversely, 19% of respondents reported that policies prioritize economic growth, and only 5% claimed that policies strongly support economic growth.

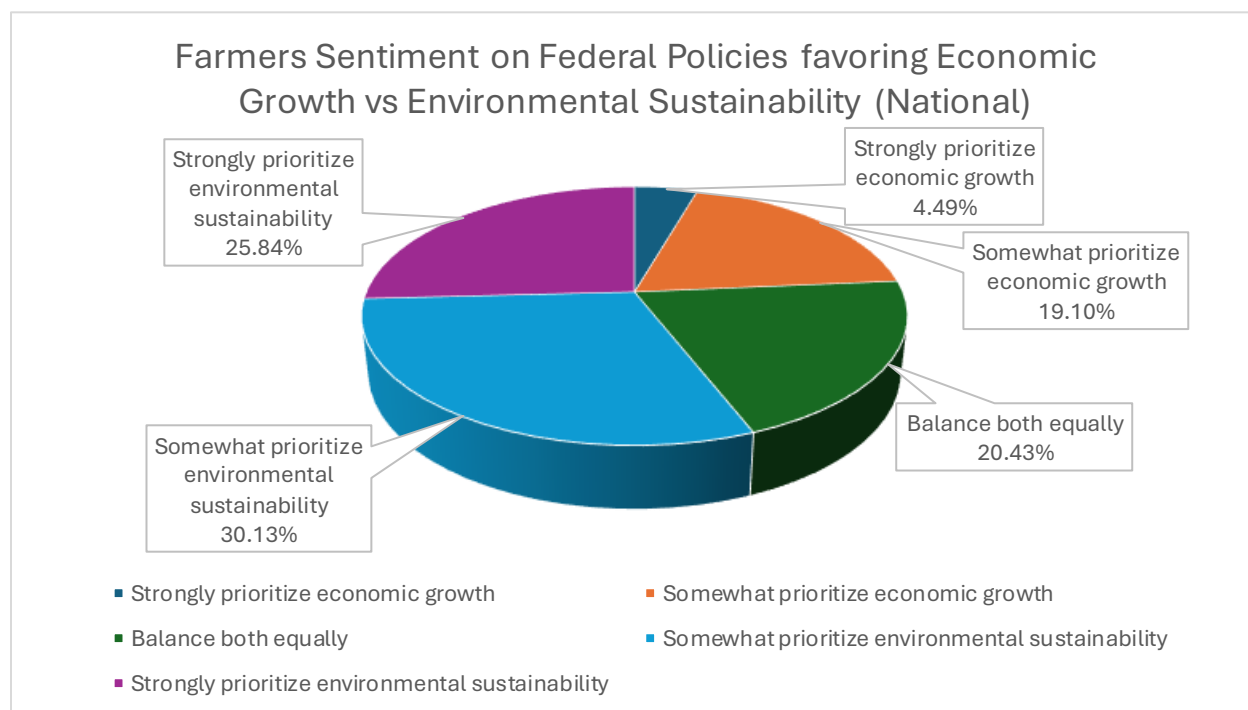


Figure 1 (Please refer to Table 1 of the Appendix for more details)

Please refer to Figure 2. At the provincial level, the results reveal notable regional contrasts. For example, Quebec had the highest percentage of producers (45.63%) who felt policies balance both equally, while Alberta showed the highest share of producers (38.29%) who felt policies strongly prioritize environmental sustainability. Conversely, regions like British Columbia and Atlantic Canada showed more substantial support for economic growth, with 23.91% and 27.27%, respectively, believing policies somewhat prioritize growth. These findings underscore a general perception that environmental priorities dominate the current policy landscape. However, this view varies by region, suggesting differing perceptions of the balance between sustainability and economic opportunity in agriculture.

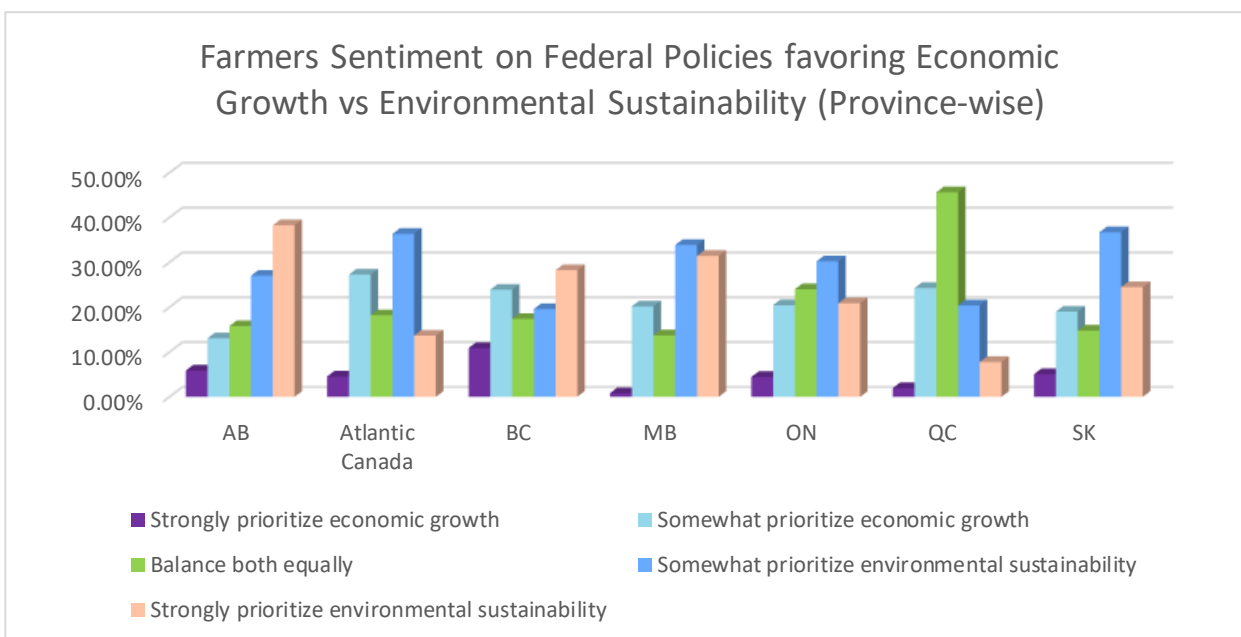


Figure 2 (Please refer to Table 1 of the Appendix for more details)

### **Ballot Box Issue: Environmental and climate priorities of farmers**

As shown in Figure 3, the 979 farmers who responded to the survey were asked to identify their top three environmental and climate-related priorities. Farmers emphasized financial support, conservation, and risk preparedness. The most frequently cited issues were disaster relief for farmers impacted by extreme weather (54.95%) and federal financial support to mitigate climate risks (48.42%), highlighting the urgent need for risk management tools and financial resilience in the face of increasingly volatile climatic conditions.

Soil health (47.5%) and water conservation (26.35%) were closely followed, which, along with regenerative agriculture practices (24.62%), reflect a strong emphasis on land stewardship and environmental conservation. These selections point to a widespread interest in preserving natural resources while maintaining productive capacity.

Meanwhile, investment in advanced agricultural tools (25.33%) and incentives for renewable energy adoption (23.90%) fall into a forward-looking technology and mitigation category, with lower prioritization. Carbon pricing (22.47%) and research funding for climate adaptation in agriculture (17.67%) received the fewest mentions among structured options, suggesting that while producers recognize their relevance, on-farm resilience and adaptive capacity remain more immediate concerns.

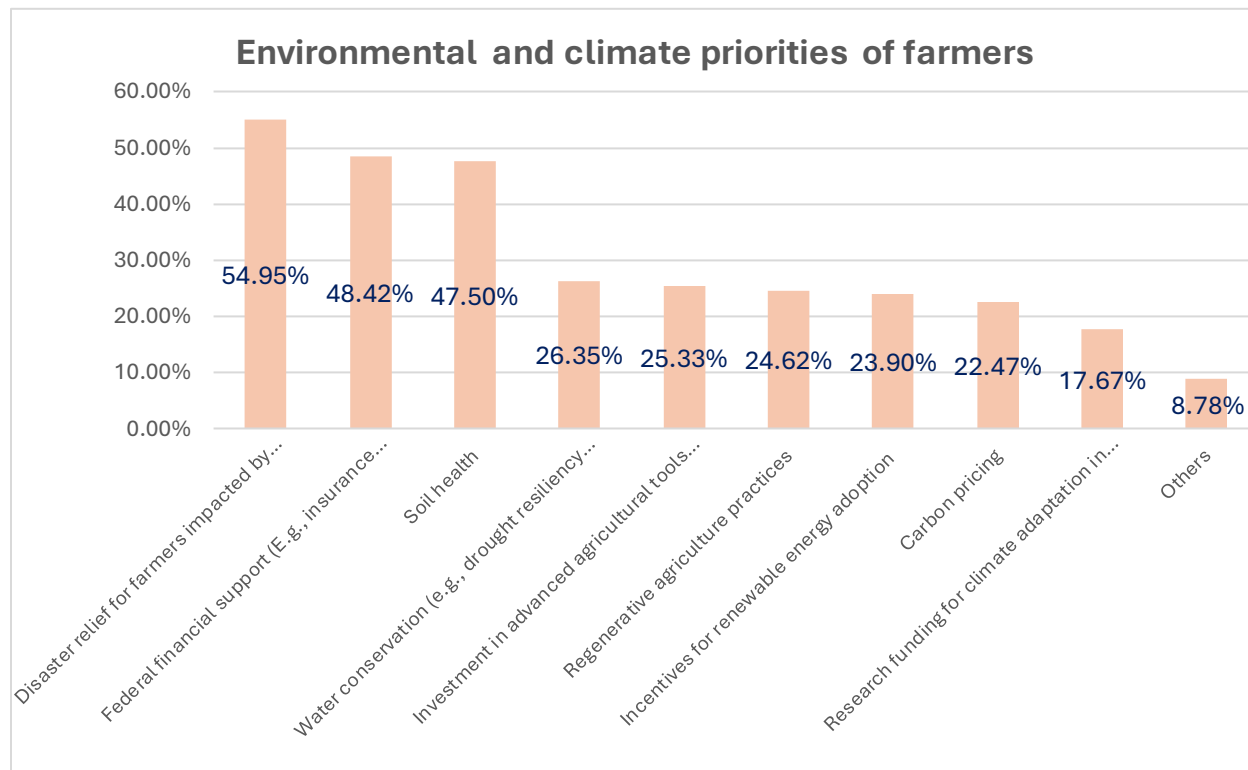


Figure 3 (Please refer to Table 2 of the Appendix for more details)

#### Ballot Box Issue: Water management policy interventions prioritized by farmers:

Among farmers who expect the change in water availability to be negative for their farming operations, below are their desired policy interventions concerning Water Management (when asked to pick up to 3 options) as shown in Figure 4:

Among producers expecting water availability to worsen, there is strong support for policy interventions that simplify governance and promote innovation. The most frequently selected priorities were simplifying and harmonizing water regulations across jurisdictions (48.42%) and supporting research and innovation in precision water use technologies (42.88%), indicating a clear desire for regulatory clarity and future-facing solutions.

Investments in smart, technology-driven irrigation systems (28.23%) and integrated weather forecasting tools (28.63%) also ranked highly, emphasizing the value of tech-enabled, adaptive water use. While financial incentives (20.05%) and public-private partnerships (24.54%) received moderate support, options like education and technical support (13.98%) and data governance frameworks (23.75%) were

less emphasized, suggesting that producers currently place higher priority on immediate infrastructure and innovation over capacity-building or regulation.

These preferences call for coherent, innovation-driven, and technology-supported water management policy, grounded in local realities but scalable for broader impact.

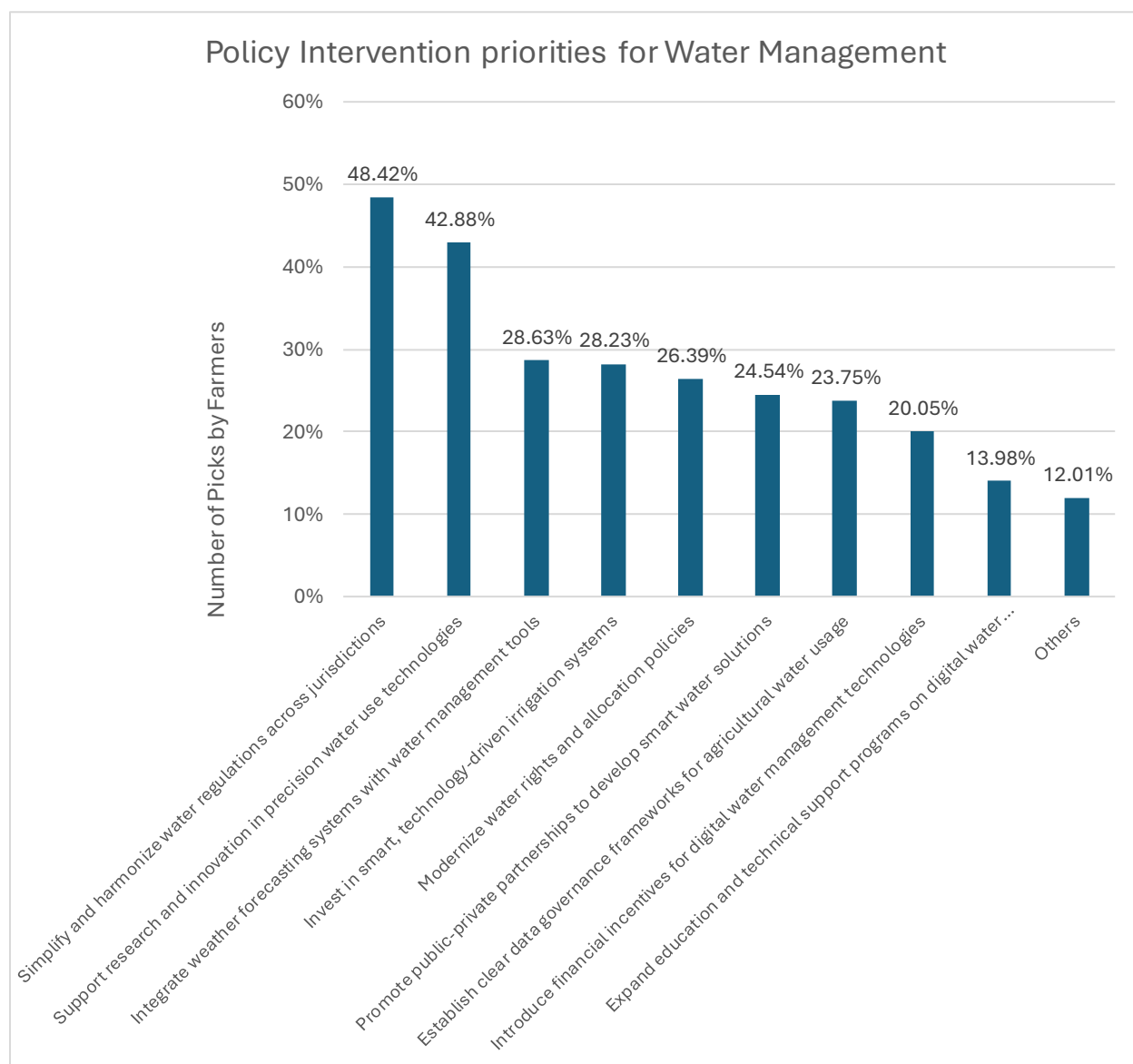


Figure 4 (Please refer to Table 3 of the Appendix for more details)

### Ballot Box Issue: Taxation and Financing Support:

As policies related to taxation and financial support were among the most prioritized by farmers, we examined which avenues of tax and financial policies farmers emphasized the most. 979 Farmers were asked which of the commonly debated tax issues they were familiar with and given a choice to pick up to three they perceived as most critical.

As Figure 5 shows when producers were asked about their familiarity with specific tax-related policies and asked to identify the most critical ones (up to three options relevant to their operations), they identified tax exemptions for fuel and energy (48.42%) as the most vital tax policy for their operations, underscoring the central role of energy affordability and input cost management in agricultural sustainability. This was followed by the capital gains inclusion rate for farm sales (37.39%) and small business and corporate tax rate reductions (30.95%), reflecting concerns around farm succession, liquidity, and long-term financial viability.

Support for Accelerated Capital Cost Allowances (ACCA) (29.1%) and tax incentives for sustainability investments (25.03%) indicates that while traditional financial levers remain top of mind, there is growing interest in tools that encourage capital renewal and climate-resilient upgrades. In contrast, fewer respondents prioritized simplified tax reporting processes (4.09%) and intergenerational farm transfers (3.17%), possibly suggesting that producers are more immediately focused on cost containment and asset transition planning than administrative reforms.

These insights point to a policy environment where tax relief, generational equity, and reinvestment capacity are central to business continuity and producer confidence.

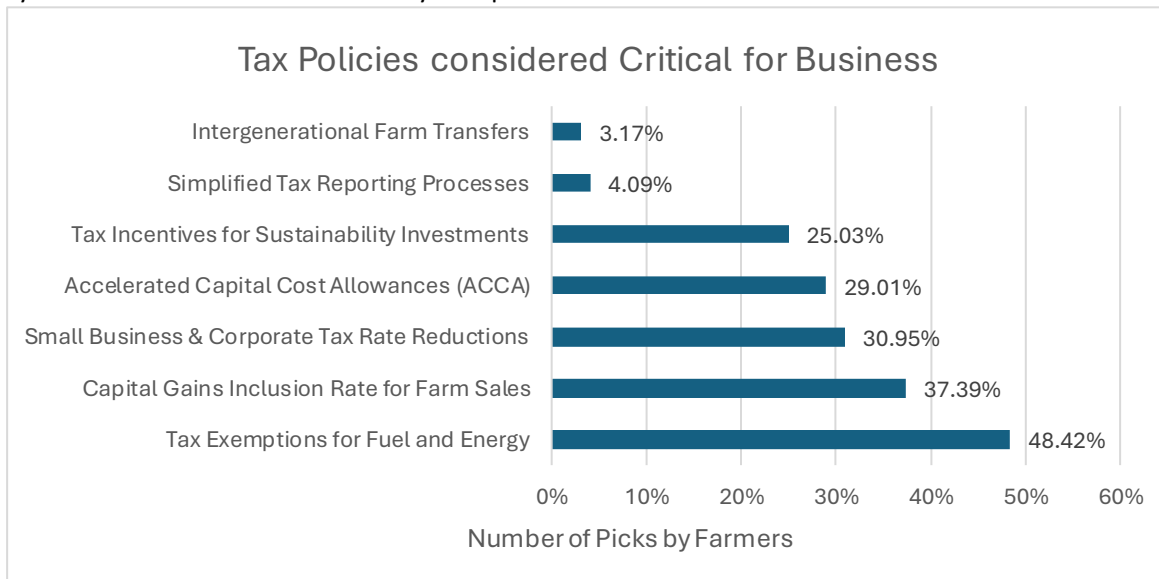


Figure 5 (Please refer to Table 4 of the Appendix for more details)

### Ballot Box Issue: Trade and Market Access:

When asked to pick up to 3 measures to address trade-related issues, Producers identified diversification of export markets (50.56%) and expanding domestic processing and value-added production (43.41%) as the most important strategies to mitigate the impact of potential tariffs, as shown in Figure 6. Closely following were developing new trade agreements with emerging markets (41.06%) and dismantling inter-provincial trade barriers (32.28%), indicating a strong desire to reduce international and domestic trade frictions. Financial support measures, infrastructure improvements, and dispute resolution mechanisms were seen as helpful but secondary. At the same time, retaliatory tariffs (11.44%) received relatively low support, suggesting that producers prefer constructive over reactive trade policy solutions.

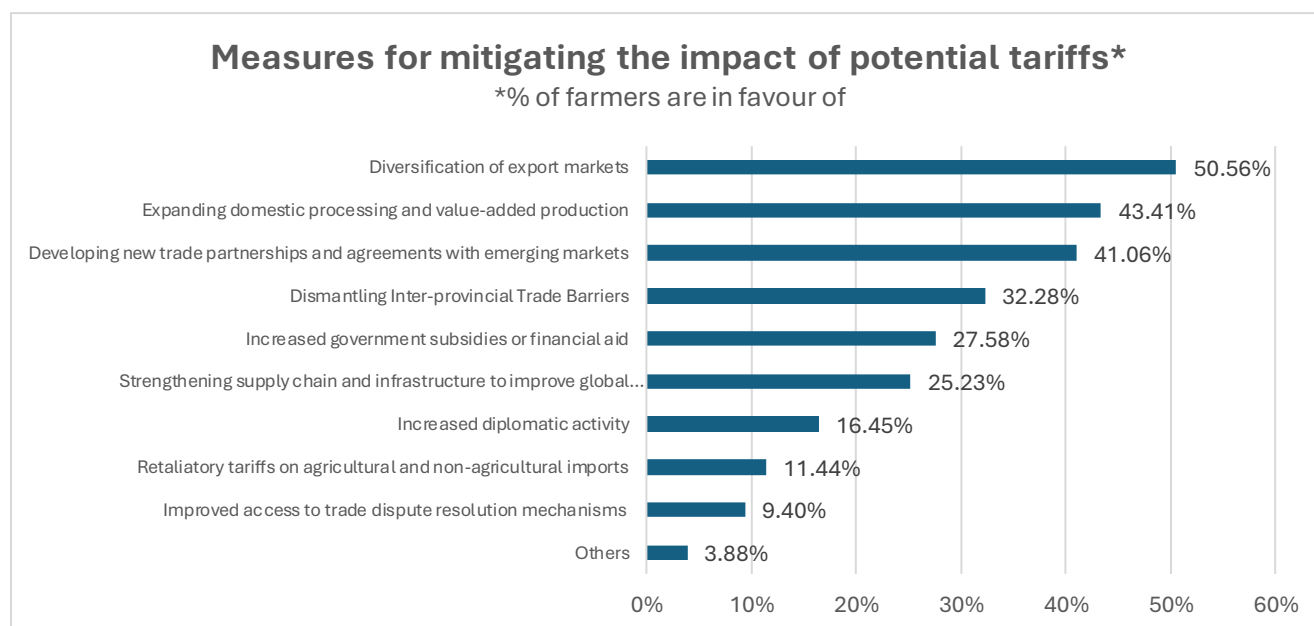


Figure 6 (Please refer to Table 5 of the Appendix for more details)

When asked which international market should be prioritized for reducing agricultural trade barriers, 39.53% of respondents indicated the United States, followed by China and the EU with 29.62% and 15.63%, respectively, as shown in Figure 7. This reflects producer interest in maintaining and expanding access to primary, high-volume trading partners where tariff and non-tariff barriers can significantly impact export performance.

These findings suggest that producers seek long-term trade resilience through diversified markets, improved domestic value chains, and better-aligned trade agreements, rather than short-term fixes or retaliatory measures. They also highlight a preference for policy stability and predictability, particularly in key markets like the U.S. and China.

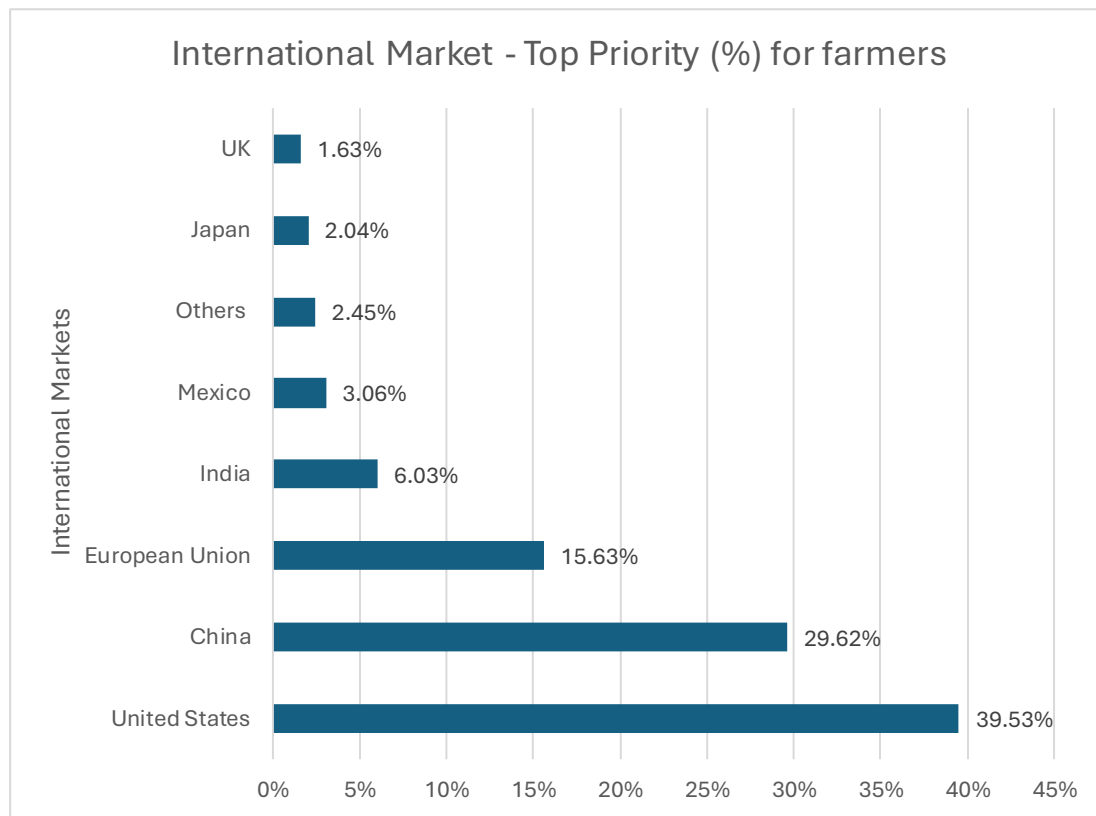


Figure 7 (Please refer to Table 6 of the Appendix for more details)

#### Ballot Box Issue: Labour and Immigration:

Responses to whether Canadian citizens or permanent residents can meet labour needs reveal a mixed outlook, influenced by farm income level. Figure 8 shows that only 33.6% of producers strongly agreed that their labour needs can be met locally, with another 24.9% somewhat agreeing, while 25.8% remained neutral. 8.48% Strongly Disagreed, while 7.15% Somewhat Disagreed with the local labour market being sufficient.

Notably, 36% of respondents with mid-to-high gross farm income (\$500,000 to \$1.99M) indicated strong agreement. In comparison, those earning under \$100,000 showed more disagreement, and respondents earning over \$2 million reported more of a neutral response.

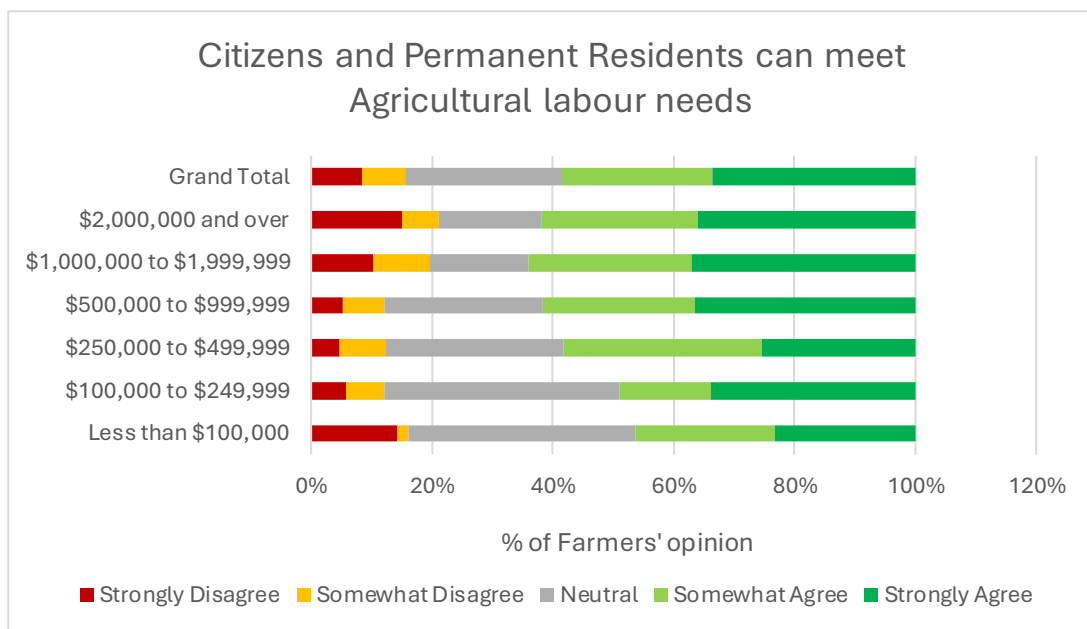


Figure 8 (Please refer to Table 7 of the Appendix for more details)

In terms of immigration policy, opposition to increasing residency opportunities is relatively low (10.2%), though Alberta (15.3%) and Saskatchewan (12.2%) showed higher concern levels than other provinces, as shown in Figure 9. Meanwhile, 29.4% of respondents favor maintaining current levels. Support for increasing permanent residency opportunities for Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) stands at 24.4% nationally, with the strongest regional backing in Atlantic Canada (40.9%) and British Columbia (39.1%). 36% are unsure, highlighting a lack of consensus or clarity on the long-term role of immigration policy in agricultural labour planning.

Together, these findings suggest that while many producers are satisfied with existing labour options, a meaningful share of the sector is seeking more robust, permanent pathways for TFWs, especially in regions with persistent labour gaps. The high level of uncertainty across provinces indicates a potential opportunity for policy clarification and outreach to ensure producers are thoroughly informed on the implications of immigration reform.



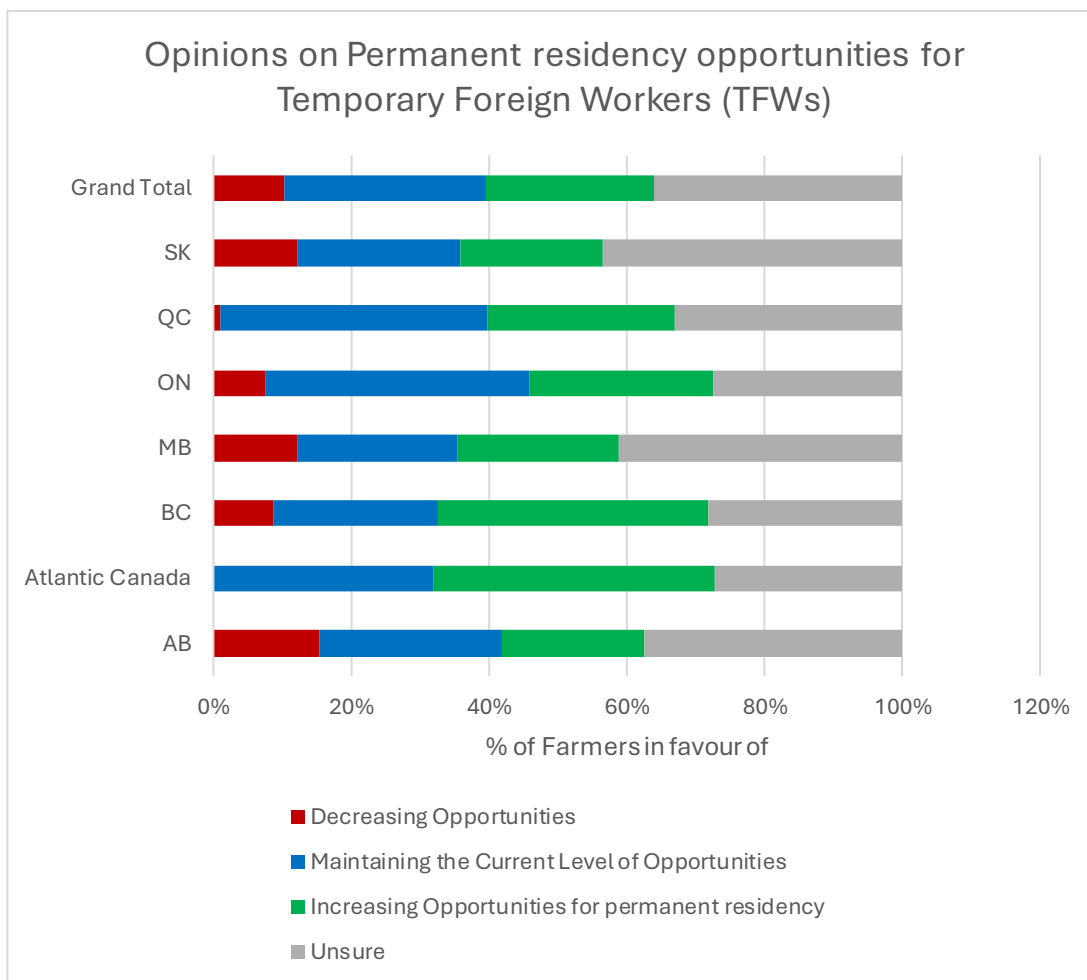


Figure 9 (Please refer to Table 8 of the Appendix for more details)

## ***NEXT STEPS:***

Building on the findings of this policy trends study, the Simpson Centre will continue to analyze, communicate, and mobilize knowledge that empowers Canadian agricultural producers and informs electoral and policy decision-making. The next phase of work will include the development of additional briefing notes and full-length research papers that further explore critical ballot box issues such as trade, taxation, labor, and environmental sustainability, disaggregated by region, commodity, and farm income, to offer more targeted insights for stakeholders and decision-makers.

To ensure findings are broadly accessible and practically useful, the research team will produce interactive knowledge mobilization tools such as infographics, visual dashboards, and digital briefs tailored to the needs of producers, policymakers, and advocacy organizations. These resources will help translate survey data into actionable formats that clarify where key policy gaps exist and which issues resonate most strongly at the grassroots level.

In addition, a detailed Index Scoring exercise is underway. This tool will synthesize farmer perceptions, issue prioritization, historical policy satisfaction, and an evaluative review of party platforms and legislative performance. The resulting index will offer a comparative framework to assess the alignment between federal political parties and producer policy preferences, providing a meaningful metric for farmers, advocacy groups, and legislators even after the 2025 federal election.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2009. *Growing Forward: Program Guide for the Food Safety Systems Development Component of the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative (CIFS)*.

[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2010/agr/A34-11-2009-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/agr/A34-11-2009-eng.pdf).

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2011. "Environmental Farm Planning in Canada: A 2006 Overview."

[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/agr/A125-15-2011-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/agr/A125-15-2011-eng.pdf).

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2019. "Food Policy for Canada." Last modified February 14, 2025.

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/departement/initiatives/food-policy/food-policy-canada>.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2023. "Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership." *Government of Canada*. <https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/departement/initiatives/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership>.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2024. "Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP)." Last modified July 16, 2024. <https://www.canada.ca/en/agriculture-agri-food/news/2024/07/resilient-agricultural-landscape-program-ralp.html>.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2025. "AgriStability." Last modified January 17, 2025.

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/programs/agristability>.

Binkley, Alex. 2018. "TPP II Hits Supply Management with No Warning." *Manitoba Co-operator*, February 13, 2018. <https://www.manitobacooperator.ca/news-opinion/news/tpp-ii-hits-supply-management-with-no-warning/>.

Bloc Québécois. 2021. "Plateforme Politique Bloc 2021." <https://www.blocquebecois.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/blocqc-Plateforme-2021.pdf>.

Cabrera, Holly. 2025. "Compare the Election Promises of Canada's Major Parties." *CBC News*, April 22, 2025. <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/features/2025/federal-party-platforms/#federal-2025-climate-change-energy>.

- Canada. 2010. *Renewable Fuels Regulations*, SOR/2010-189. Justice Laws Website. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2010-189/index.html>.
- Canada. 2021a. *Bill C-208: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act (Transfer of Small Business or Family Farm or Fishing Corporation)*, 2nd Sess., 43rd Parl. <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/43-2/c-208>.
- Canada. 2021b. *Bill C-282: An Act to Amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (Supply Management)*, 1st Sess., 44th Parl. <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/44-1/c-282>.
- Canada Revenue Agency. 2020. "Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy – Application." *Government of Canada*. Accessed January 12, 2025. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/news/2020/04/canada-emergency-wage-subsidy-application.html>.
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business. 2024. "Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption." *Canadian Federation of Independent Business*. <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/tools-resources/lifetime-capital-gains-exemption>.
- Capstick, Laura, Guillaume Lambert-Racine, and Katia Perez-Leclerc. 2018. "Legislative Summary of Bill C-26: An Act to Amend the Canada Pension Plan, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act and the Income Tax Act." *Library of Parliament*. [https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en\\_CA/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/421C26E](https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/421C26E).
- Carlow, Jordan. 2018. "Authoritarian Populism and Canada's Conservative Decade (2006–2015) in Citizenship and Immigration: The Politics and Practices of Kenneyism and Neo-conservative Multiculturalism." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 51 (3). <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.2017-0054>.
- Conservative Party of Canada. 2025. "Canada First. For a Change." [https://canada-first-for-a-change.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/20250418\\_CPCPlatform\\_8-5x11\\_EN\\_R1-pages.pdf](https://canada-first-for-a-change.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/20250418_CPCPlatform_8-5x11_EN_R1-pages.pdf).
- Department of Finance Canada. 2017. "Backgrounder: Reducing the Small Business Tax Rate." *Government of Canada*, October 16, 2017. [https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2017/10/backgrounder\\_reducingthesmallbusinesstaxrate.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2017/10/backgrounder_reducingthesmallbusinesstaxrate.html).

- Environment and Climate Change Canada. 2014. "Canada's Emissions Trends." <https://www.ec.gc.ca/doc/publications/cc/COM1374/ec-com1374-en-es.htm>.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada. 2016. *Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change: Canada's Plan to Address Climate Change and Grow the Economy*. Accessed January 12, 2025. [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2017/eccc/En4-294-2016-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/eccc/En4-294-2016-eng.pdf).
- Environment and Climate Change Canada. 2022. "Clean Fuel Regulations." Last modified February 17, 2023. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-pollution/energy-production/fuel-regulations/clean-fuel-regulations.html>.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada. 2025. "The Paris Agreement." *Government of Canada*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/paris-agreement.html>.
- Falconer, Robert. 2020b. "Grown Locally, Harvested Globally: The Role of Temporary Foreign Workers in Canadian Agriculture." *The School of Public Policy Publications* 13. <https://doi.org/10.11575/sppp.v13i0.70510>.
- Global Affairs Canada. 2021. "2021 Model Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA)." *Global Affairs Canada*. [https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/fipa-apie/2021\\_model\\_fipa-2021\\_modele\\_apie.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/fipa-apie/2021_model_fipa-2021_modele_apie.aspx?lang=eng).
- Global Affairs Canada. 2024a. "Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)." *Global Affairs Canada*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/ceta-aecg/index.aspx?lang=eng>.
- Global Affairs Canada. 2024b. "Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)." *Global Affairs Canada*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cusma-aceum/index.aspx?lang=eng>.
- Global Affairs Canada. 2024c. "Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)." *Global Affairs Canada*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cptpp-ptpgp/index.aspx?lang=eng>.

Global Affairs Canada. 2024d. "Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA) between Canada and China." *Global Affairs Canada*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/china-chine/fipa-apie/index.aspx?lang=eng>.

Government of Canada. 2013. "The Hiring Credit for Small Business Has Been Extended." *Government of Canada*, January 24, 2013. <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2013/01/hiring-credit-small-business-has-been-extended.html>.

Government of Canada. 2014. "Backgrounder: The Small Business Job Credit." *Government of Canada*, September 11, 2014. <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/09/backgrounder-small-business-job-credit.html>.

Government of Canada. 2015a. "Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance for Manufacturing." *Government of Canada*, May 21, 2015. <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2015/05/accelerated-capital-cost-allowance-manufacturing.html>.

Government of Canada. 2015b. "Harper Government Welcomes Royal Assent of the Economic Action Plan 2015 Act, No. 1." *Government of Canada*, June 24, 2015. <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2015/06/harper-government-welcomes-royal-assent-economic-action-plan-2015-act-no-1.html>.

Government of Canada. 2018. *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, S.C. 2018, c. 12, s. 186. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/G-11.55/page-1.html>.

House of Commons. 2022. *Debates of the House of Commons, 44th Parliament, 1st Session, Sitting 128*, November 16, 2022. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-128/hansard#11921830>.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. 2024a. "Express Entry Year-End Report 2023: Fact Sheet." *Government of Canada*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/express-entry-year-end-report-2023/fact-sheet-2023.html>.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. 2024b. "Supplementary Information for the 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan." *Government of Canada*, October 24, 2024.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2025-2027.html>.

Liberal Party of Canada. 2025. "Liberals Release Plan to Protect Canadian Agrifood Workers and Build a Stronger Agrifood Sector." *Liberal Party of Canada*, April 2, 2025. <https://liberal.ca/liberals-release-plan-to-protect-canadian-agrifood-workers-and-build-a-stronger-agrifood-sector/>.

Lu, Yuqian, and Feng Hou. 2023. "Foreign Workers in Canada: Distribution of Paid Employment by Industry." *Statistics Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2023012/article/00005-eng.htm>.

New Democratic Party of Canada. 2021a. "Policy of the New Democratic Party of Canada." <https://xfer.ndp.ca/2022/Documents/2021-POLICY.pdf>.

New Democratic Party of Canada. 2021b. "Ready for Better: New Democrats' Commitments to You." <https://xfer.ndp.ca/2021/Commitments/Ready%20for%20Better%20-%20NDP%202021%20commitments.pdf>.

New Democratic Party of Canada. 2025. *Ready for Better: New Democrats' Commitments to You*. <https://www.ndp.ca/commitments>.

Nickel, Rod. 2015. "Canada to Pay Farmers for Any Losses under TPP Deal, Ritz Says." *AGCanada*, September 30, 2015. <https://www.agcanada.com/daily/canada-to-pay-farmers-for-any-losses-under-tpp-deal-ritz-says>.

Olale, Edward, Emmanuel K. Yiridoe, Thomas O. Ochuodho, and Van Lantz. 2019. "The Effect of Carbon Tax on Farm Income: Evidence from a Canadian Province." *Environmental and Resource Economics* 74 (2): 605–623. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10640-019-00337-8>.

Senate of Canada. 2024. *Debates of the Senate, 44th Parliament, 1st Session, Issue 247*, December 10, 2024. [https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/441/debates/247db\\_2024-12-10-e](https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/441/debates/247db_2024-12-10-e).

## APPENDIX:

Table 1:

Province	Strongly prioritize economic growth	Somewhat prioritize economic growth	Balance both equally	Somewhat prioritize environmental sustainability	Strongly prioritize environmental sustainability
AB	5.86%	13.06%	15.77%	27.03%	38.29%
Atlantic Canada	4.55%	27.27%	18.18%	36.36%	13.64%
BC	10.87%	23.91%	17.39%	19.57%	28.26%
MB	0.81%	20.16%	13.71%	33.87%	31.45%
ON	4.44%	20.44%	24.00%	30.22%	20.89%
QC	1.94%	24.27%	45.63%	20.39%	7.77%
SK	5.06%	18.99%	14.77%	36.71%	24.47%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4.49%</b>	<b>19.10%</b>	<b>20.43%</b>	<b>30.13%</b>	<b>25.84%</b>

Table-2:

Environmental Priorities	Number of Mentions
Disaster relief for farmers impacted by extreme weather	54.95%
Federal financial support (E.g., insurance programs) to mitigate climate risks	48.42%
Soil health	47.50%
Water conservation (e.g., drought resiliency initiatives, irrigation changes, etc.)	26.35%
Investment in advanced agricultural tools for adapting to changing weather patterns	25.33%
Regenerative agriculture practices	24.62%
Incentives for renewable energy adoption	23.90%
Carbon pricing	22.47%
Research funding for climate adaptation in agriculture	17.67%
Others	8.78%



Table 3:

Policy Intervention for Water Management	Number of Picks
Simplify and harmonize water regulations across jurisdictions	48.42%
Support research and innovation in precision water use technologies	42.88%
Integrate weather forecasting systems with water management tools	28.63%
Invest in smart, technology-driven irrigation systems	28.23%
Modernize water rights and allocation policies	26.39%
Promote public-private partnerships to develop smart water solutions	24.54%
Establish clear data governance frameworks for agricultural water usage	23.75%
Introduce financial incentives for digital water management technologies	20.05%
Expand education and technical support programs on digital water management	13.98%
Others	12.01%

Table 4:

Tax Policies considered Critical for Business	Number of Mentions
Tax Exemptions for Fuel and Energy	48.42%
Capital Gains Inclusion Rate for Farm Sales	37.39%
Small Business & Corporate Tax Rate Reductions	30.95%
Accelerated Capital Cost Allowances (ACCA)	29.01%
Tax Incentives for Sustainability Investments	25.03%
Simplified Tax Reporting Processes	4.09%
Intergenerational Farm Transfers	3.17%

Table 5

Measures for mitigating the impact of potential tariffs	% of farmers in favour
Diversification of export markets	50.56%
Expanding domestic processing and value-added production	43.41%
Developing new trade partnerships and agreements with emerging markets	41.06%
Dismantling Inter-provincial Trade Barriers	32.28%
Increased government subsidies or financial aid	27.58%
Strengthening supply chain and infrastructure to improve global competitiveness	25.23%
Increased diplomatic activity	16.45%
Retaliatory tariffs on agricultural and non-agricultural imports	11.44%
Improved access to trade dispute resolution mechanisms (e.g., WTO appeals, bilateral mediation)	9.40%
Others	3.88%

Table 6

International Market	Top Priority (%) for farmers
United States	39.53%
China	29.62%
European Union	15.63%
India	6.03%
Mexico	3.06%
Others	2.45%
Japan	2.04%
UK	1.63%

Table 7:

Income Group	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Less than \$100,000	14.29%	1.79%	37.50%	23.21%	23.21%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	5.76%	6.47%	38.85%	15.11%	33.81%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	4.58%	7.84%	29.41%	32.68%	25.49%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	5.34%	6.80%	26.21%	25.24%	36.41%
\$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999	10.28%	9.35%	16.36%	27.10%	36.92%
\$2,000,000 and over	14.97%	6.12%	17.01%	25.85%	36.05%
Prefer Not to Answer	7.81%	7.81%	29.69%	18.75%	35.94%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8.48%</b>	<b>7.15%</b>	<b>25.84%</b>	<b>24.92%</b>	<b>33.61%</b>

Table-8:

Row Labels	Decreasing Opportunities	Maintaining the Current Level of Opportunities	Increasing Opportunities for permanent residency	Unsure
AB	15.32%	26.58%	20.72%	37.39%
Atlantic Canada	0.00%	31.82%	40.91%	27.27%
BC	8.70%	23.91%	39.13%	28.26%
MB	12.10%	23.39%	23.39%	41.13%
ON	7.56%	38.22%	26.67%	27.56%
QC	0.97%	38.83%	27.18%	33.01%
SK	12.24%	23.63%	20.68%	43.46%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10.21%</b>	<b>29.42%</b>	<b>24.41%</b>	<b>35.96%</b>



**THE  
SIMPSON  
CENTRE.™**

The Simpson Centre mobilizes research for better policymaking and decision-making to realize a more sustainable agricultural industry. Strengthening the sustainability of agri-food and agri-business means increasing food production to feed a growing global population, while attending to social and health impacts and the natural environment.

We connect researchers, everyday people, industry stakeholders and government actors to scientific issues critical to the future of Canada's agricultural and food industry.

For more information visit  
[simpsoncentre.ca](http://simpsoncentre.ca)

The Simpson Centre  
906 8th Ave SW, 4th Floor  
Calgary, AB, Canada T2P 1H9



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY**