

November 14, 2024

Senate of Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada  
K1A 0A4

**RE: Bill C-293, *An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness***

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the undersigned representatives of Canada's more than 190,000 farm families, including commodity and general farm organizations from coast to coast to coast, we write to express the **agricultural sector's deep concern with elements of Bill C-293, *An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness*, due to the Bill's potential consequences on the animal agriculture sector**. We ask for your support in amending Bill C-293 to address these significant concerns.

***Concern with the Bill's impact on the Canadian animal agriculture sector***

We support the overall objective of Bill C-293, *An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness*, which is to support pandemic preparedness, including measures that aim to enhance transparency regarding readiness levels and efforts that seek to strengthen Canada's domestic manufacturing capacity with respect to any products relevant to pandemic production. The COVID-19 pandemic clearly illustrated the importance of strong domestic supply chains which ensure a continuous supply of essential goods to Canadians.

However, we have significant concerns with Bill C-293's impact on the Canadian animal agriculture sector. While the primary objective of the Bill is pandemic prevention and preparedness, it contains provisions and language that will negatively affect/ harm Canadian farmers and ranchers if passed in its current form. Specifically, we are concerned by the Bill's language around livestock farming, the promotion of alternative proteins, and the focus on animal agriculture in the context of antimicrobial resistance rather than within the more comprehensive One Health perspective.

***Irrelevant focus on alternative proteins, in the context of pandemic preparedness***

Section 4 (2) (l) of Bill C-293 diverges from the tone and language used throughout other sections of the Bill and instead, includes language promoting the production and use of alternative proteins and the regulation of animal agriculture, and the phase-out of high-risk species.

Where the remainder of the Bill is seen as allowing the Advisory Committee the flexibility to “assess” the capability of the Public Health Agency of Canada to respond and “analyze” the health, economic and social factors *relevant* to the impact of the pandemic, Section 4 (2) (l) pivots to the incorporation of strong language such as “regulate” and “phase out”. The tone of such language suggests that the Bill has pre-emptively made the incorrect and unsupported assumption that animal agriculture in Canada has been the cause of pandemics. In our view, this is inconsistent with the mandate of the Advisory Committee and the objectives of Bill C-293.

Animal-based proteins, including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and milk products are considered high-quality protein sources that provide essential nutrients required for healthy body and brain functioning. Moreover, animal protein foods provide key essential vitamins and minerals which are commonly missing in the diets of many Canadians and in a form that can be well absorbed by the body. Notably, there is no evidence that supports the notion that animal-based proteins are the cause of pandemics and require phasing-out, as the Bill suggests.

### ***Biosecurity in Canadian agriculture***

Furthermore, section 4 (2) (l) of the Bill suggests antimicrobial resistance is an issue specific to agriculture; this is not the case. Antimicrobial resistance is an issue which needs to take the One Health approach that recognizes that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment, as discussed elsewhere in the Bill.

Finally, Bill C-293 does not take into consideration that the Canadian animal agriculture sector rigorously monitors animal health and wellness and operates under a high level of biosecurity and regulations. Canadian farmers closely monitor their animals and follow stringent biosecurity protocols and standards to protect their animals from disease. Programs such as, [Verified Beef Production Plus](#), [Raised by a Canadian Farmer](#) On- Farm Food Safety Program, [Start Clean-Stay Clean®](#), [proAction](#), and the [Canadian Hatching Egg Quality \(CHEQ™\) program](#), and the [PigSAFE](#) program are acknowledged by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Such programs and protocols are designed to reduce the risk of pathogens and diseases through evidence-based practices and are consistently and effectively delivered across Canada.

### ***Proposed amendments to Bill C-293***

If the Bill is to proceed, the following specific amendments to the Bill are necessary to avoid any unintended consequences for Canadian agriculture producers.

- **Recommendation #1:** That Section 4(2) (l) be removed to allow the Advisory Committee the flexibility to undertake its mandate and to focus its attention on pandemic prevention and preparedness.

Specifically, our concerns relate to the use of the words “regulate” and “phase out.”

- **Recommendation #2:** That the Bill include language that encourages continued support and enforcement of existing biosecurity initiatives, including industry-led initiatives.
- **Recommendation #3:** That the reference to “high-risk species” in Section 4 (2) (I). iv. be clearly defined.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Brodie Berrigan, Senior Director of Government Relations and Farm Policy at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture ([brodie@canadian-farmers.ca](mailto:brodie@canadian-farmers.ca)).

Sincerely,

Canadian Federation of Agriculture  
Canadian Cattle Association  
National Cattle Feeders Association  
Canadian Meat Council  
Canadian Pork Council

