



WGEA

**Western Grain Elevator
Association**

Conseil de
l'orge du
Canada



Barley
Council of
Canada



Canadian Seed Trade Association
L'Association canadienne du commerce des semences

April 2, 2020

Chris Forbes
Deputy Minister
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Room 349, 9th Floor, Tower 7
1341 Baseline Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5

Dear Deputy Minister:

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Canada, each of our organizations have stressed the importance of defining agriculture and food value chains as essential services. It is important that this definition is carried by all levels of government and that the definition of "essential" is consistent across the country.

Canada's food and feed workers are central to efforts to provide essential goods and are a key part of Canada's critical infrastructure. Canadians and people around the world desperately need a stable supply of food and feed products from Canada in this time of crisis. In order to maintain food security, it is critically important that we create the conditions that allow workers in our food and feed businesses and supply chains to come to work.

For the most part, this has occurred with provincial essential services listings including agriculture and food value chains. We welcome the Government of Canada guidance document on the definition of essential services look forward to reviewing and discussing this guidance with you further.

All published Canadian definitions of "essential" include food production as an essential service. Some of the provincial definitions of "essential service" specifically include businesses and organizations that maintain research facilities (or engage in research).

We are seeking assurances from you that the critical research being carried out across the country by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) technicians and scientists will continue in 2020 and clarity on how this will be accomplished given the environment created by the pandemic.

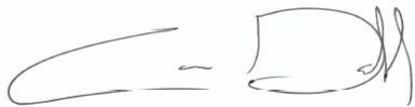
This is a concern to us because the suspension of research during the COVID-19 pandemic would be set back, in some cases up to five years, both public and private research programs. For example, it is our understanding that critical decisions must be made by mid-April to make sure that AAFC's 2020 field season is not lost. Given AAFC's many collaborative relationships with the private sector and university

research programs, the impact of losing a year of fieldwork would have a significant ripple effect throughout the industry.

The health and safety of all workers is paramount. The goal of our request is to ensure that critical research can continue with necessary precautions. Private research organizations would welcome a message from the Government of Canada that facilitates carrying out the work necessary to advance Canadian agricultural innovation. We wish to provide certainty to researchers and technicians, in both public and private organizations, that they will be able to continue their critical work in an environment that keeps them safe.

Research activities are essential to ensure the continued competitiveness of Canadian products and by-products as part of the global marketplace as well as delivering to our countries GDP. Ensuring that research activities continue in the coming months will help safeguard Canadian agriculture's ability to continue to deliver innovative varieties and products that help drive the Canadian economy.

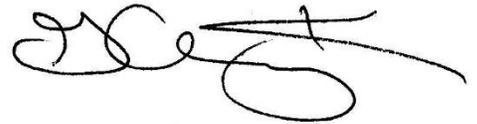
Sincerely;



Cam Dahl, President
Cereals Canada



Jim Everson, President
Canola Council of Canada



Greg Cherewyk, President
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CC: Gilles Saindon, Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Technology Branch
Liz Foster, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Technology Branch
Fred Gorrell, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Affairs Branch
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