



March 24, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Canadian consumers expect a reliable, plentiful food supply without disruption, and we have been blessed with an agricultural sector that has been able to meet this challenge. We know that through the actions you have enabled we will overcome the current challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, we are confident that with the support of the Canadian government our country's economic recovery will be led by a resilient agriculture industry. That is why we, the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers (CAAR), are writing to you today.

The members of the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers (CAAR) represent a critical component of the crop input supply chain to farm customers. Agri-retailers maintain crop input inventories that, in many instances, are replenished on a daily or weekly basis. Restrictive measures deployed on manufacturers, importers, provincial or regional transportation will impact Canadian agriculture production directly.

We are now entering the spring season, the busiest time of the year for farmers and the agricultural retailers who supply and support them. The uninterrupted availability of seed, fertilizers and crop protection products delivered by the logistics and distribution network that supports them is vital.

Agricultural retailers have invested heavily in highly skilled people and modern equipment to support Canadian farmers at this time of year. We have done this because experience has proven that, for our customers, losing even one- or two-days during planting, fertilizing or applying crop protection products can have a significant effect on crop production and farm income.

A failure to secure the supply chain starting with the crop input manufacturers and suppliers through to the distribution and retail network, and ultimately to the farm, will critically impact crop production output and lead to food security issues. It is critical that agricultural crop input logistics proceed without interruption. The agricultural input sector must be clearly recognized by all provinces as providing essential products and services.

Canadian crop input manufacturers, storage facilities, distributors and agri-retailers are implementing COVID-19 contingency plans to protect employees and the public while delivering essential crop inputs to Canadian farmers.



As the Federal Government considers additional measures to manage the spread of COVID-19, please consider the unintended consequences to agricultural production. We ask you to keep in mind the importance of the agricultural crop input supply chain to the farmers and the consumers who rely on that productivity. Calls to further shut down segments of Provincial the economies must exclude the industries supporting agricultural production. To ensure the safe transportation, logistics and retailing of crop input supplies, agri-retailers annually employ proactive safety and security protocols, with best management practices including hours of service.

Audits and certification requirements are continuously updated. In many instances, the updates require in-person training and testing. All in-person audits and certification, including hazardous materials endorsement, of agri-retail locations and staff have been postponed until it is deemed safe for instructors and students.

We ask that Federal agencies formally recognize agri-retailers who will honour their commitments to abide by safety and security requirements though certifications may have expired.

Canadian farmers and the agri-retailers that support them are recognized as world class producers and suppliers of safe and sustainable agricultural commodities.

At this important time, we ask for your dedicated support in ensuring that Canadian agriculture will lead in the Canadian economic recovery in 2020 and in the years to come.

Once again, please accept our thanks for the efforts of you and your government in proactively addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely



Mitchell Todd Rezansoff

Executive Director, Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers

cc The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
The Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Transport
The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
The Honourable Filomena Tassi, P.C., M.P., Minister of Labour
The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P., Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion