



233 Gilmour Street, Suite 1000, Ottawa, ON K2P 0P2 Tel: (613) 560-4306 Fax: (613) 235-0517

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Cuts to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Harm Workers, Farms and the Planet

For Immediate Release

Ottawa, January 26, 2026 - The Agriculture Union unequivocally denounces the recent job cuts at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), impacting roughly 1043 people across the country. Our union represents 2,500 employees at AAFC, all of whom are essential to the health and resilience of our agricultural sector. 494 of our members are affected by this round of cuts. Our AAFC members are the backbone of Canadian agriculture research. They assist farmers by mitigating the impacts of climate change and drought, performing groundbreaking research, and keeping our food production industries competitive on a global scale.

"These cuts will sabotage important gains we've made in agricultural research and set research on Canadian food products back by decades," says Milton Dyck, National President of the Agriculture Union. "We have been warning the federal government for months about cutting an already-decimated department. There is simply no more room to cut."

While overall the federal service has grown by 30% in recent years, the same has not been true for AAFC. Staffing numbers at AAFC have decreased by 14% between 2012 and 2025.

The cuts to AAFC include the shutting down of seven research farms and centres: the Nappan Research Farm in Nova Scotia, the Quebec Research and Development Centre in Quebec City, the Guelph Research and Development Centre in Ontario, the Portage la Prairie Research Farm in Manitoba, the Scott Research Farm and Indian Head Research Farm in Saskatchewan, and the Lacombe Research and Development Centre in Alberta. Indian Head and Nappan were two of the five original research farms established by the Canadian government in 1887. Shutting down these centres represents the loss of over a century of knowledge and expertise. The research centres slated for closure were responsible for breakthrough discoveries in sustainable beef production, crop sustainability, food safety and nutrition, and no-till farming.

"The way the employer communicated these cuts to our members and to the union was shocking and abrupt. Our members are reeling," continued Dyck. "The union learned about the cuts of research centres at the same time as our members, and we had no advance notice about the details of the cuts. AAFC has an obligation to consult with the union throughout this whole process. These cuts at AAFC damage research into the fast-changing needs of the agriculture sector, whether it be changing environmental conditions, development of new varieties of agriculture products safe from disease, or food safety. While our partner nation to the south is slashing research, we should not be."

For media requests, please contact Aaron Lakoff, Communications Officer for the Agriculture Union: LakoffA@psac-afpc.com, 343-596-4400