

## Maintaining and strengthening Canada's food production and processing sector

June 12, 2020 Ottawa, Ontario - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

COVID-19 has caused significant changes and adaptation in Canada's food system. As a result, Canadian food producers, processors, and manufacturers have taken on unexpected and exceptional activities associated with risk mitigation measures to be able to maintain Canada's food production.

That is why the Government of Canada is taking steps to ensure the resilience of the food supply chain and to provide support to keep the agriculture sector strong.

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, today launched the \$77.5 million Emergency Processing Fund (EPF) as part of the Government of Canada's action to support Canadians and businesses facing hardship as a result of COVID-19.

The program will prioritize projects based on two objectives:

- **Emergency COVID Response** to assist companies to implement changes required by COVID-19 to ensure the health and safety of workers. This funding will assist with:
  - plant retrofits or adjustments to existing operations to accommodate changes to processes and production; and
  - increasing capacity for herd management.
- **Strategic Investments** to assist companies to improve, automate, and modernize facilities needed to increase Canada's food supply capacity.

Eligible applicants include for-profit organizations, cooperatives and indigenous groups. Activities can be retroactive to March 15, 2020 and must be completed by September 30, 2020. Information on the application process is available through the [Emergency Processing Fund](#) or to learn more, please contact [aaac.epf-fut.aac@canada.ca](mailto:aaac.epf-fut.aac@canada.ca) or call: 1-877-246-4682.

### Quote

"Canadian food processors are key to ensuring Canada's food supply chain is protected during COVID-19, and beyond. Our Government understands the challenges that Canadian food processors, producers and manufacturers are facing. This Emergency Processing Fund will help our processors to adapt their activities to ensure the safety of their workers, and to increase their capacity of production."

- *The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food*

## Quick facts

- Applications are being accepted (AAFC Emergency Processing Fund) on a continuous basis until 12:00 p.m. (midnight) EDT Friday, July 31, 2020 or earlier if funding is fully allocated before that date.
- This announcement builds on the measures we have introduced to keep Canada's agri-workforce strong, including:
  - An investment of up to \$9.2 million to enhance the Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP) and fund up to 700 new positions for youth in the agriculture industry.
  - Travel exemptions for all temporary foreign workers, including seasonal agricultural workers and fish/seafood workers.
  - \$50 million to help the farming, fish harvesting, and food production and processing sectors cover the incremental costs of associated with the mandatory 14-day isolation period imposed under the Quarantine Act on temporary foreign workers upon entering Canada.
  - An expanded Canada Summer Jobs program to prioritize agri-food workers.
  - IRCC changes to its process to allow temporary workers with an employer-specific work permit, including in agriculture, to quickly change employers when they find a new job. Workers who used to wait 10 weeks or more to begin a new job, will now only wait 10 days or less.
  - A pilot project for temporary foreign workers who work year-round in the agriculture industry to have a pathway to permanent residency.
  - A 'Step up to the Plate' employment portal and agriculture jobs recruitment campaign.

## Associated links

- [Emergency Processing Fund](#)
- [Supporting Canada's farmers, food businesses, and food supply](#)

## Contacts

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **Supporting Canada's food processing and production sectors**

The **Emergency Processing Fund** was part of the \$252 million suite of initiatives that the Prime Minister announced on May 5, 2020, to respond to vulnerabilities in food supply chains in light of COVID-19.

The Government is putting in place \$77.5 million to incent strategic investments to maintain and increase domestic food production and processing critical to Canada's food supply. Food processors can receive up to \$5 million, per recipient, to help enhance worker health and safety and for domestic food processing.

The Emergency Processing Fund will offer:

- **Emergency COVID Response** - funding to help companies implement changes to safeguard the health and safety of workers, their families, and communities.
- **Strategic Investments** - funding to help companies improve, automate and modernize facilities to increase Canada's food supply capacity.

Eligible costs related to a project will be shared between the Program and the successful applicant. Small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) can receive up to 50 per cent of total eligible costs. Larger companies can receive up to 25 per cent of total eligible costs.

All eligible activities must be completed by September 30, 2020. The program will fund activities retroactive to March 15, 2020.

#### **Eligible activities include:**

##### **Emergency COVID Response**

- Activities associated with adjustments made, as a result of COVID-19, to existing plants to implement added public health protocols and requirements and adapt production processes for the health and safety of workers and their families, such as:
  - non-disposable or reusable personal protective equipment (PPE), including:
    - body temperature screening/fever detection systems
    - washing stations
    - workstation dividers/protective barriers
    - full and half face-piece respirators
    - impact goggles and face shields
  - installation of sanitation stations, protective barriers
  - adjustments to current processes and manufacturing lines to accommodate social distancing
  - rental or purchase of portable buildings and installations/site modifications and/or transportation for social distancing and wellness checks
  - HVAC modifications or upgrades

- training for workers on additional health security measures
  - disinfection and cleaning in the event of a plant closure
  - labour costs only as are needed for the installation of the protective measures
  - other activities that a company can demonstrate are resulting from COVID-19 public health adjustment requirements
- Activities associated with herd management as a result of COVID-19 at processing facilities, such as:
    - retrofits or extraordinary adjustments to facilities necessary to adapt care, transportation and management of surplus animals
    - labour costs only as are needed for the installation of the measures
    - other activities that can be demonstrated are resulting from COVID-19 food supply disruptions

### Strategic Investments

- Activities associated with improvements or modernization of food processing or manufacturing facilities to manage surplus stock; increase production; or that are operating at less than full capacity or closed such as:
  - rental or purchase, shipping and installation of automation equipment new to the plant
  - rental or purchase and installation of additional production or packaging equipment
  - rental or purchase and installation of increased warehousing and/or cold storage capacity
  - equipment technicians fees, travel and accommodation to make installation
  - plant or line retrofits to accommodate the new equipment
  - training of employees on the new equipment
  - other activities, other than labour, that can be demonstrated as needed as a result of the installation of the automation

Activities can be retroactive to March 15, 2020 and must be completed by September 30, 2020.

### **Eligible applicants include:**

- For profit organizations that are incorporated in Canada (i.e. businesses and/or corporations, cooperatives, Indigenous groups);
- Legal entities capable of entering into a legally binding agreement;
- In operation for at least two (2) years; and
- Involved in agricultural food processing or manufacturing in Canada.

Applicants requesting less than \$100,000, depending on the project location will apply as follows:

**Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick**

Perennia Food and Agriculture Inc.

T: 902-678-7722

E: [info@perennia.ca](mailto:info@perennia.ca)

W: [www.perennia.ca](http://www.perennia.ca)

**Quebec**

Conseil de la transformation alimentaire du Québec

T: 1-888-984-2251

E: [fondsurgencecovid@conseiltaq.com](mailto:fondsurgencecovid@conseiltaq.com)

W: [www.conseiltaq.com](http://www.conseiltaq.com)

**Ontario, Manitoba and Nunavut**

Agricultural Adaptation Council

T: 519-822-7554

E: [epf@adaptcouncil.org](mailto:epf@adaptcouncil.org)

W: <https://adaptcouncil.org/program/epf>  
<https://f.adaptcouncil.org/program/fut/>

**Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Yukon and Northwest Territories**

Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC \*

T: 250-940-6150

E: [info@iafbc.ca](mailto:info@iafbc.ca)

W: <https://iafbc.ca/emergency-processing-fund/>

\* The organization will work with Western Economic Diversification Canada to promote and coordinate the program in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Applications requesting \$100,000 or more in funding will be delivered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. To apply please visit [Emergency Processing Fund](#).