

9.7 Provincial services

Provincial departments responsible for agriculture have regional offices and extension programs with qualified professional representatives working in rural centres to provide advice on farm management, farm labour, home design and home economics, education and development for 4-H and youth groups. Advice is available in veterinary services, livestock improvement and crop management.

Engineering services provide advice on rural water and sewer systems, farm machinery and such projects as irrigation and land drainage in the Prairies and in parts of Ontario.

Marketing activities are carried out to expand domestic and foreign markets and encourage increased food processing. Market development programs supplement those of the federal government.

In several provinces, loans and grants are available to farmers to enable them to upgrade or expand their operations. For example, in Newfoundland, grants may be used for land clearing, building, or buying farm equipment. Quebec provides a centre at St. Lambert for the artificial insemination of swine, a potato production centre at Manicouagan, a maple products centre at St. Norbert and beekeeping centres at Deschambault and Saint-Hyacinthe. Among the many services provided by Ontario are financial assistance programs for farmers, education and research programs at five colleges of agricultural technology, and veterinary laboratory services for livestock producers and veterinarians. The Prairie provinces all conduct substantial market development activities, and programs to assist farm families. In British Columbia, funding and advice are available to increase food processing capabilities.

9.8 Product and marketing controls

Numerous measures have been enacted by both federal and provincial governments over the years to encourage a productive agricultural sector. Originally emphasis was on production increases and control of pests and diseases. As production and farm specialization increased, problems in marketing began to emerge.

Grading procedures and standards were established to ensure quality but periodic price collapses were caused by bumper crops and intensified by the general inability of producers to bargain on an equitable basis with far fewer buyers.

Voluntary marketing co-operatives were organized to provide bargaining power to producers. All provinces eventually passed legislation for incorporating co-operatives, and most of them provided assistance. Federally, the Agricultural Products Co-operative Marketing Act provided financial guarantees to producers willing to market their crops

on a pooling-of-returns basis. More information on co-operative organizations is given in Chapter 17.

Co-operative marketing was initially successful, but the voluntary aspect was a weakness. In good times many members dropped out to make their own deals. Needed were marketing organizations with the legal power to control all producer output of certain products in certain areas. As a result, marketing control legislation was adopted providing for various types of boards, agencies and commissions.

9.8.1 Product standards

Federal and provincial departments of agriculture co-operate in enforcing quality standards for various foods. Agriculture Canada has some control over size and types of containers used and the consumer and corporate affairs department enforces regulations on weights and measures.

Standards related to health and sanitation in food handling are developed at all levels of government. Examples are provincial and municipal laws pertaining to milk pasteurization, slaughter house inspection and sanitary standards in restaurants. Federal inspection of all meat carcasses traded interprovincially is required by the agriculture department; the health and welfare department has wide responsibility for food composition standards; and the consumer and corporate affairs department has jurisdiction over advertising.

9.8.2 Marketing controls

The Agricultural Products Co-operative Marketing Act (RSC 1970, c.A-6) was passed in 1939 to assist orderly marketing by encouraging establishment of pools for selling the product at the optimal time of year to give the producer the maximum sales return for his product.

The act aids farmers by guaranteeing initial payments and processing costs. The government may undertake to guarantee a certain minimum initial payment to the producer at the time of delivery of the product, including a margin for handling selling and processing; sales returns are made to the producer on a co-operative plan. Amount of the initial payment is set at the discretion of the minister of agriculture taking into account current and estimated market prices. This act has enabled many farmers to market their crops at a fair return in an organized and systematic manner. All agricultural products, except wheat produced in the area under Canadian Wheat Board jurisdiction are eligible for such marketing assistance.

The Canadian Dairy Commission, established in 1966, was the first new national marketing agency since the Canadian Wheat Board was created in 1935. The commission has the power to stabilize the market by offering to buy major dairy products, butter and skim milk powder, at fixed prices and to package, process, store, ship, insure, import, export or sell or otherwise dispose of these and other dairy