

NATIONAL FORUM ON FARMLAND PROTECTION IN CANADA

SUMMARY of PROCEEDINGS

June 20-21, 2016
Ottawa, Ontario

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Project website: blogs.unbc.ca/agplanning

The national forum on farmland protection in Canada took place on June 20-21, 2016, in Ottawa, Ontario. The purpose of the forum was to bring together Canada's leading thinkers on agricultural land use planning to critically assess what we are currently doing and what needs to be done to protect the land base as the foundation of our food system.

Summary/highlights

- This was the first time that representatives from all of Canada's provinces attended a national forum on agricultural land use planning¹.
- Participants expressed great appreciation for the value of a national, in-person meeting and a strong desire among all attendees to re-convene in two years.
- The loss of farmland is a general concern among all provinces and a corresponding desire to improve the quality of the provincial legislative frameworks
- There was general agreement among participants about the assessments of the strength of each provincial legislative framework (Table 1).
- Beneficial practices centred on the following themes:
 - Implementation of provincial legislation framework
 - Interdepartmental collaboration and communication at provincial level
 - State of local land use planning system (from a provincial perspective)
 - Capacity for land use planning at municipal level
 - Provincial-local government relations
 - Provincial assistance and support to local governments
 - Support for farming operations to complement farmland protection
 - Use of additional tools to support legislative framework (cont'd)
 - Measurement, evaluation, and availability of data
 - Presence/absence of political influence
 - Level of public support
 - Taxation
- A lack of firm statistics to clearly define the extent of farmland loss is a problem. There is a clear need for dedicated resources to provide timely, efficient, and accurate information.
- Taxation policy related to farmland is very complicated with a range of approaches used across the country. A compilation of tax policies would be very helpful.

¹ The Territory of Yukon was invited to send a representative but did not attend.

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Overview

The forum was organised by members of a national research project launched in 2013 to study principles and beneficial practices of agricultural land use planning for protecting farmland in Canada. The research team consists of university faculty members and graduate students from six Canadian universities. The aim of the project is to formulate policy recommendations that will protect farmland and promote farming as the highest and best use of these lands. The national forum was the penultimate step of this research effort. More information about the research project is available on-line at www.unbc.ca/agplanning.

The structure of the forum was guided by three general objectives:

- To disseminate results of the national project;
- To advance the project objectives to identify principles and beneficial practices that support the protection of farmland in Canada; and,
- To advance farmland protection as a public priority at all levels of government.

The research project is funded by an Insight Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Participants

In Canada, provincial governments delegate land use planning to municipal governments while exercising responsibilities for establishing provincial priorities and oversight through legislative mechanisms. In this context, the primary focus of the national forum was on provincial-level policy and participants were invited to the forum based on their provincial roles and responsibilities for agricultural land use planning. Most of the participants were staff members from provincial ministries of agriculture and municipal affairs.

Other groups were also invited to the forum in order to have a more diverse representation of perspectives and to engage stakeholders in discussions about farmland protection. We invited representatives from several national organisations, including the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, National Farmers Union, and Food Secure Canada. Other national organisations were also invited but were either unable to attend or did not respond to our invitation. To ensure our work was connected directly with national policy developments, such as the next agricultural policy framework to support federal-provincial-territorial agri-food programs and a national food policy, a representative from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada attended the meeting.

Finally, members of the research team attended the forum, including faculty members and graduate students.

Altogether, thirty-four people attended the forum. A full list of attendees is appended to this report.

Structure of the forum

By bringing together a diverse group of leading thinkers about farmland protection in Canada, the forum presented a tremendous opportunity for discussion. To take full advantage of this

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opportunity, our primary aim was to maximise the amount of time on the agenda for open, critical discussions about the current state of agricultural land use planning and farmland protection. To support free-flowing discussions, the agenda was simple and flexible with the following five components, with most of the time focussed on the first item:

- Comparative assessment of provincial legislative frameworks
- Critical review of beneficial practices
- Moving forward: Issues and opportunities
- Moving forward: advancing farmland protection as a public priority
- Moving forward: continuing the conversation

As well, in order to get the most out of the two days together, a significant amount of work was completed prior to the forum. All invited participants were required to prepare and submit responses to a set of six questions. The questions were based on general knowledge of agricultural land use planning and on case studies of local governments that were completed as part of the national project. All of the participants' responses were compiled and summarised, and then distributed back to all participants prior to the forum. This pre-forum activity had several benefits. It engaged all participants in the project prior to the forum so that everyone had a common point of reference and provided everyone with a national perspective of current issues and opportunities. The responses also assisted the project team to organise the forum.

Provincial legislative frameworks

After a round of introductions, representatives from each province informally presented their provincial legislative framework for agricultural land use planning. The results of the project's assessments of the strengths of provincial legislative frameworks were used as a basis for these discussions, as shown in Table 1. We started at the bottom of the table and worked our way up, an order that opened discussions with the less detailed frameworks (also weaker) and moved to the more complicated frameworks of British Columbia and Québec. Each discussion took about 45 minutes including questions and answers.

Providing this opportunity to share information about each province's legislative framework turned out to be one of the most important activities of the forum. The format enabled discussions to focus on nuances of each framework and generated candid discussions. In conjunction with the materials distributed prior to the forum, such as the case study reports and comparative assessments of provincial frameworks, the in-person presentation proved to be an effective learning mechanism – participants learned more about what makes agricultural planning work in each province across the country.

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Table 1. Summary of assessments of provincial legislative frameworks in Canada

	Maximise stability	Integrate across jurisdictions	Minimise uncertainty	Accommodate flexibility
Québec	*****	*****	****	**
British Columbia	*****	****	***	****
Ontario	****	****	****	***
Manitoba	****	***	**	**
Saskatchewan	**	****	***	**
Newfoundland Labrador	**	***	**	***
Nova Scotia	***	**	**	**
Alberta	**	**	*	*
New Brunswick	*	**	*	**
Prince Edward Island	*	*		

¹ At the time the analysis was completed, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island were developing new policies to support agricultural land use planning. These new developments are not reflected in the assessments.
Legend: * = Very weak; ***** = Very strong

Beneficial practices

To complement the discussions about the provincial legislative frameworks, an exercise was designed as a quick method to capture participants' ideas about weak and strong elements of practices associated with agricultural land use planning. Each participant was asked to record and post on sticky notes up to three points on elements of practice within their province that are weak and three elements of practice that are strong.

All of the posted notes were compiled and analysed after the forum. Through this process, several themes emerged that help to lend insight to important areas of beneficial practice (as presented in Table 2). Please note that further study is needed to improve accuracy and clarity as it is possible that some individual points may have been misinterpreted in the review process or be misrepresented in the table. Points that were related to the contents of legislative frameworks, rather than elements of practice, were not included in the summary table.

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Table 2. Summary of weak and strong elements of agricultural land use planning practices

WEAK ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE	STRONG ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE
<p><u>Implementation of provincial legislative framework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Leap frog' development over greenbelt areas - Slow development of guidelines to implement provincial policies, resulting in more legal costs (e.g., interpretation of non-ag uses) - Number of policy appeals by development proponents and high/prohibitive cost for concerned citizens to appeal inappropriate development proposals (including many cases involving loss of farmland) 	<p><u>Implementation of provincial legislation framework</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry diligently applies policies <u>consistently</u> across municipalities while still taking into account unique local circumstances - Ministry uses opportunity to object and take to the Municipal Board, when required, when consensus cannot be reached - Set review timeline for provincial policy/plans can reduce/channel/direct political concerns - Ongoing provincial investment in Provincial Policy Statements (PPS) and provincial plans renewal and interpretation (OMB, provincial staff, partner ministries); strengthen each round - Consistency of Commission decisions
<p><u>Lack of internal consistency at provincial level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Province does not say where it thinks agriculture is important; some geographical guidance would help define priorities - Competing land use priorities (desire to diversify away from solely ag-based economy) - Government projects that contribute to the loss of farmland and special laws that do not respect the legislative framework - Competition between farmland protection and wetlands - Ability of the province to remove land from the agriculture reserve for the "good of society" - Lack of priority of the planning act and process in cases of applications for urban expansion - Low support for agriculture outside of the agricultural zone - Many ongoing gaps related to taxation, infrastructure investment, topsoil protection, integration with ag economic development, and local food systems - Disconnect between farmland protection and natural heritage protection – we have much in common but instead relationship is combative (e.g., common concern about loss of resource) 	<p><u>Interdepartmental collaboration and communication at provincial level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lots of regulatory and voluntary interdepartmental consultation and opportunities for input/involvement. Ensures that provincial interests specific to each department's area or specialty are upheld. Provides support to indigenous and municipal relations, which is the department Minister, who ultimately makes decisions on DPs, DPAs, and subdivisions. - AGRI-Teams – consisting of ALC planners, Ministry planners, regional agrologists + local government connections - Legislation Development provides governance advice, training recommendations to all agriculture boards and commissions - Legislative Development staff in this branch work with various branch specialists to guide changes to legislation and regulations through approval process - Unofficial technical advisory committees – involve multi-department, consultants and municipal input early in the planning process (background studies, draft phase) to find consensus on policy to reach both municipal and provincial goals while minimising agricultural impacts. Highly educational.
<p><u>State of local land use planning system (from a provincial perspective)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fragmented municipal system - Autonomy of Regional Municipalities creates inconsistent application of ag policy and regional variation of farmland valuation - No zoning in rural areas - Planning not mandatory - Statement of provincial interest apply only to those municipalities that have statutory land use plans - Lack of consistent land use planning framework in the province - Bridging land use policy with incentives for municipalities and developers to implement and exceed minimum policy standards and requirements (e.g., meeting urban development density targets) - Local and regional government decision-making in absence of current, accurate info and data - No requirement or even provision for regional planning <u>unless</u> as enacted by the province for a "special planning area", e.g., inland port special planning area - Nested governance: province – high level principles and guidelines, with specific controls for common issues; regional – municipal oversight at regional level with an official plan and mapping approved by province; municipal – most detailed policies tailored to local needs 	<p><u>State of local land use planning system (from a provincial perspective)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal implementation - Some municipalities rise above provincial standards and in some instances, would score maximum on all principles

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WEAK ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE	STRONG ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE
<p><u>Capacity for land use planning at municipal level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of municipal capacity - Un-incorporated areas - Lack of education among planners about how the legislation works and the tools at their disposal - Periodic failure by municipalities to follow policy - Lack of knowledge of agriculture by front-line municipal staff - Lack of capacity of (a) professional planners to understand agriculture; (b) professional agrologists and ag industry to understand land use planning 	<p><u>Capacity for land use planning at municipal level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local governments who have adopted non-statutory plans and information, e.g., integrated watershed management plans and Agriculture Master Plans, into their statutory plans with the priority for agriculture (land and water) - Local governments that recognise or acknowledge viable modern, sustainable as a key economic driver (multiplier effect + cost of servicing + local and regional economic development)
<p><u>Provincial-local government relations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inability to get local governments to change bylaws even once regulated - Often administering threats and punishment and negative enforcement rather than positive enforcement (strains relationships with local governments) - Inability to move from “expect” to “you shall” → elevate the bar - Inability to directly respond to some expectations of municipalities - No area specifically protected for ag use; these areas are agreed upon between the province and municipality on a municipal basis and boundaries can eventually change (although only by agreement) 	<p><u>Provincial-local government relations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnerships between Commission and local government; good communication - Improving transparency of decision-making process - Evaluation and outreach, particularly planner workshops (regional) - Bylaw and application referrals: not required by local governments take of this service and like the information they receive - Municipal autonomy: decisions remain with those that ‘know’ best; all municipalities treated equally <p><u>Provincial assistance and support to local governments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting guidelines for municipal interpretation and implementation of provincial policy - Ministry provides assistance and support to municipalities during the decision making process. (Help them wear the ‘black hat’) - Guidance material – where it exists – is very effective (e.g., MDS software) - Government planning guidelines that tend to reduce the numbers of applications to the Commission by requesting municipalities to control non-farm uses
<p><u>Support for farming operations to complement farmland protection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greatest strength = greatest weakness: protecting the land begs the question of the farmers: why is 50% of agricultural zone not farmed? Find out who is/is not entering farming: Why? Why not? - No appropriate tools to ensure the agricultural use of farmland in the agricultural zone - Ag and food is chronically under-funded though it has huge multipliers farm→plate as consistent economic engine - We need and don’t have, or have lost, supports for agriculture, including: P.Ag. extension services (only ~12 left); suite of programs to support co-ordination of value chains – farms↔ processors ↔ distributors ↔ markets; land bank of ‘unused’ land + link with farmland trusts; tax-shifting mechanisms, e.g., assess penalty on land held for speculation, remit portion of carbon tax → ag/food - The law sometimes prohibits agricultural development and diversification - Ensuring support for farms – protecting and encouraging farm operations 	<p><u>Support for farming operations to complement farmland protection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of differences in what ‘agricultural’ could mean (both small and large parcel requirements)
<p><u>Use of additional tools to support legislative framework</u></p>	<p><u>Use of additional tools to support legislative framework</u></p>

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WEAK ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE	STRONG ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Incentives for farmers and farm community to proactively and permanently protect land (e.g., agricultural conservation easements) that support/strengthen policy objectives and build farm community support for policy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Strong foreign ownership law. Facilitates agriculture by protecting land availability for SK/Canadian farmers; minimises speculative inflation of farmland prices</i> - <i>Foreign ownership of land: Obtain info on local development plan when considering proposals to see if compatible</i> - <i>Foreign ownership of land: Ask local RMs for comment in support of or in opposition to conservation groups' applications to buy farmland, as this has been controversial.</i> <p><u>Use of additional tools to support legislative framework (cont'd)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Foreign ownership of land: Good networking and open communication with provincial nominee program to verify whether applicants have applied and how likely they are to obtain permanent resident status</i> - <i>Land trusts, e.g., Ontario Farmland Trust, Langford Conservancy (organic farm)</i> - <i>Mandating higher density development and efficient use of land in urban and urbanising areas to limit/prevent urban sprawl</i> - <i>Planning and investment in higher order transit</i> - <i>Metropolitan planning limit urban sprawl</i> - <i>Making the municipalities do agricultural development plans</i> - <i>Integration of agricultural zone/reserves with agricultural development plans that also include input from non-farmers</i> - <i>Lands Protection Act – property review process</i> - <i>Development conditions within agricultural leases, e.g., 2 years – 10%; 5 years – 25%; 10 years – 50%; 15 years – 75%. Non-compliant ag leases would be cancelled then re-allocated.</i>
<p><u>Measurement, evaluation, and lack of data</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Difficult to assess cumulative impacts of non-ag uses, whether those uses are permitted under regulations or approved</i> - <i>No fixed limit on farmland loss (how much farmland is enough?). Need targets. Not currently measured consistently.</i> - <i>Lack of monitoring and performance measurement – challenging to know what is working effectively</i> - <i>Monitoring and tracking of changes to farmland area over time</i> - <i>No efficient, timely, accurate data on ag land</i> - <i>Issue: lack of data to see ag preservation policy → need to define problem to public/politicians</i> - <i>Collecting data consistently, accurately; clear, defensible methodology</i> - <i>Historical lack of data and reporting; none since 1996 until recently; missing significant economic and population growth; unequal policy based on municipalities</i> - <i>Lack of research and info available on who owns land, e.g., how much land is owned by foreign individual or by corporation owned by foreign people</i> 	<p><u>Measurement, evaluation, and availability of data</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Incorporation of ag-related data and info with interpretation to support informed decision making at local government level</i> - <i>Mapping prime agricultural lands and areas</i> - <i>GIS data (measurement)</i>
<p><u>Political influence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Subject to transition based on change in government</i> - <i>Local governments who are pro-development: short term gain; strong presence/influence of developer or UDI</i> - <i>Ministerial approval of by-laws → can be potentially subject to political pressure and change</i> 	<p><u>Absence of political influence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Decisions made by independent tribunal</i> - <i>Members of the Commission are elected for five years and are independent from government</i>

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WEAK ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE	STRONG ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE
<i>of government</i>	
<u>Lack of public support</u> - Issue: lack of data to see ag preservation policy → need to define problem to public/politicians - Misunderstanding of property rights inhibiting progress	
<u>Taxation</u> - 'Change in use' tax not enforced - Tax incentives to develop outside municipalities and on rural-agricultural land	<u>Taxation</u> - Change in Use tax of 20% is a strong policy tool that is <u>available</u>

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Moving forward: Issues and opportunities

At the start of the forum, a set of issues and questions related to beneficial practices were posted on the walls in the meeting room. These materials were based on results of the research project and the responses submitted by participants prior to forum. Participants were invited to add comments to the posted materials throughout the forum discussions. Note-takers for the forum also captured key points throughout the discussions and posted them on the walls under the corresponding issues and questions. A summary of the posted comments is provided in the following tables.

FUTURE OF FARMLAND PROTECTION

What is the future of farmland protection in the face of national and global issues like...climate change, 'land grabbing', malnutrition, economics of agriculture, ageing farmers, population growth, urban expansion, etc.?

Comments:

- *Unauthorised dumping of waste soil and construction waste as urban expands*
- *Proactive community engagement in permanent farmland protection via land trusts and agricultural conservation easements (as a complement to strong policy approaches)*
- *Topsoil conservation*
- *Planting of trees for carbon sequestration or offsets (BC experience)*
- *Farmland/farm activities need to be 'protected' ever more, and at the same time discouraging activities with very negative externalities for the environment and people*
- *Next Policy Framework (NPF or GF3): where does farmland protection fit?*
- *How does reconciliation with First Nations and issues with unceded territories fit into foodlands planning?*

ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

What might a comprehensive evaluation of farmland protection policies and programs look like – efficacy, effectiveness, efficiency, more?

Comments:

- *A need to go even further with identifying compatible uses/functions on farmland already used for farming*
- *LEAR planning tool (Land Evaluation and Area Review) [this is a new method to evaluate the 'value' of farmland that is more comprehensive than capability assessments associated with the Canada Lands Inventory method]*
- *Maps with overlapping jurisdictions – who manages where for what values. BCFSN is thinking mapping 'foodlands' including indigenous/settler approaches*
- *GIS*

PROVINCIAL-LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

How might we improve how provincial and local governments work together?

Comments:

- *Understand municipal funding mechanisms, limitations, and sources; and the 'true' costs of development*
- *Importance of provincial/local partnerships during transition (to new provincial policy)*
- *How much detail should be included in provincial policy?*
- *For the province not to make decisions before consulting with local/regional municipalities, i.e., treat many of the solutions to issues as being co-constructed*
- *Local governments defining 'prime' land*
- *Clarify roles and responsibilities between province and municipalities*
- *Involve local governments (staff and elected officials) in solving the problem.*
- *Understand the local challenges and differences between rural and urban issues.*
- *Need education and training for land use planners*
- *Share information openly and frequently. Be resources for each other.*

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TYPE OF FARMLAND TO PROTECT

What farmland should be protected: prime, specialty, productive, active, all?

Comments:

- *Need for data on what land is being lost; missing in many parts of Canada*
- *Define 'prime' land (flexibility)*
- *The whole range, but perhaps identify land not used for farming in a different category as potentially useful for certain types of farm activity*

TYPES OF GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS

What governance mechanisms (e.g., commissions, advisory committees) work best? At what level? How to make the best of these mechanisms?

Comments:

- *Appointment of members to administrative tribunals: these are appointed by Lieutenant Governor in Council; political connections/appointments; decisions arms-length from government*
- >> *Is there any jurisdiction where there is an application process for appointment of members based on skills?*
- *There should be a reinforcement of the linkages between all levels of government, and as well as farm associations*

ENERGY-BASED NON-FARM USES

How might energy-based uses of farmland (e.g., wind turbines, solar farms, oil/gas) be accommodated within legislative frameworks?

Comments:

- *Anaerobic digesters on farmland*
- *Some are integrated OK. Others (e.g., shale gas) are excluded currently. However, this issue (shale gas) is being considered in several other jurisdictions*
- *Wind turbines: in Nova Scotia, bylaws created province-wide*
- *Wind farms by arrangement in Manitoba*

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF FARMLAND

To what extent is foreign/out-of-province ownership of land and farmland protection inter-related?

Comments:

- *Foreign buyers of land?*
- *Speculation for other uses (non-farm) reduce agricultural production*
- *Not really inter-related*

Note: after a plenary discussion, the consensus was that foreign ownership is an important issue – but not a land use planning issue.

SMALL-LOT AGRICULTURE

Small lot agriculture: Is it a real issue? Should small lot agriculture be accommodated within a provincial legislative framework? How?

Comments:

- *Yes, but not a land use issue. It's a market issue. There are lots of small lots. Young farmers can't pay what non-farmers will.*
- *Less of an issue in many regions, but a real issue in others. Small lot farming of certain kinds (e.g., organic, sustainable) is restricted in areas where there are mainly large property parcels. To allow small lots, perhaps an approach based on splitting up a larger parcel into several parcels strictly for agricultural use would a good solution.*
- *How do we define 'small lot'? Different in each jurisdiction and within agricultural economies.*
- *Yes, absolutely – when facing being overtaken by things like climate change we need all the diversity we can get – manage adaptively → sustainable values*

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FARM TAXES

[added issue]

Comments:

- *Should be based on the actual farm activity of course!*

Note: comments about taxation in relation to farmland were raised throughout the forum. The general consensus was that the issue is complicated and provinces use different approaches.

ACTION: participants will submit information to the project about farm taxes in their respective provinces. The information will be compiled and re-distributed in summary form.

Moving forward: advancing farmland protection as a public priority

The fourth component of the national forum focussed on advancing farmland protection as a public priority at all levels of government – local, provincial, and national. While the forum as a whole contributed to this aim, participants were challenged to think critically about farmland protection in the context of two important areas of current policy development: the next agricultural policy framework (the next GF2) and a national food policy (as stated in the mandate letter for AAFC). Participants were prompted to think about what was needed within their own provinces, the role of the Federal Government in agricultural land use planning, and what might be the primary message to the Federal Government.

Two points are highlighted here that reflect the scope and nature of the challenge. First, the question at hand is not just about what the Federal Government can do, but also about what the Federal Government can do to enable the provinces in their efforts to protect farmland. Second, the loss of farmland is an invisible problem to many people who think that we have an abundance of land. A key issue is that we lack the firm statistics to clearly define the problem. There is a clear need for dedicated resources to provide timely, efficient, and accurate information so that we have a consistent way of measuring land use change across Canada.

The lack of accurate and reliable data about land uses and loss farmland was a recurring issue throughout the forum and was raised again as a critical area in which the Federal Government can assume a significant role. Historically, the Federal Government has played a role in land use planning and monitoring. In 1978, the Canada Land Use Monitoring Program (CLUMP) supported a database of land use change, including rural areas and prime resource lands. The program was delivered by the Lands Directorate of Environment Canada. Currently, there are farmland-related programs funded by GF2, such as agricultural development plans, e.g., PDZAs in Quebec and agricultural plans through the Investment Agriculture Foundation in BC. In addition to data, other outstanding areas of need include bringing climate information into the CLI database and recognising the multi-functional services of agricultural land.

Participants provided a range of responses to the question, “Where does farmland protection fit in an agri-food policy?”

- Agricultural land is invaluable
- Farmland is a finite, non-renewable resource. Once lost to development it is forever lost to food production.
- Whether considering the next agricultural policy framework or a national food policy, protecting farmland is important to both.
- No farmland, no farmers, no food.

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- Canada is one of the few countries that have the potential to be one of the top five exporters in the future. We are in a unique position globally and that’s an important matter of federal interest.
- Climate change is high on the radar of this government and it’s going to be a big issue around the production of food. Climate change is a lever to show the importance of protection of the land so we don’t undermine the ability to produce food.
- This issue is tied to climate change, but separate. In 20 years there won’t be enough food in the world to feed everyone. We have a responsibility in the world to feed them if we have the excess and the fertile land. That’s the broad global problem, so to the Federal Government, what is our role in the world with respect to being responsible world citizens. Our responsibility is to protect the farmland that is needed to feed the world and us.
- A long term view of Canada as a net exporter of food contextualizes climate change, land tenure, etc. This resonates with Canada as a net exporter of food. Being the world’s “breadbasket” appeals to the role we want to play in the world.
 - As the breadbasket, we have to shift from viewing farmland as a land bank and change to think of it as part of a sector
- Economics of food:
 - Agriculture is an economic growth area. Farmland is part of that, and connects to young entrants etc. What can we do to grow the sector? That will trickle down to the provinces. The government plays a big role in opening export markets
 - Ownership/control regarding the mechanics of the food system. Look for economic diversity, because we don’t know what will be most successful in an uncertain future.

Participants also suggested potential avenues for Federal involvement. One strategy is to recognise agricultural land as infrastructure, whereby infrastructure is already recognised as a national priority. Another approach is to consider food as part of the emergency management framework.

In addition, and similar to above, four statements about moving farmland protection forward as a public priority were posted on the walls at the outset of the forum and participants were invited to add comments throughout. The posted statements and comments are presented below.

INCREASE PROFILE OF FARMLAND PROTECTION

How to increase the profile of farmland protection as a priority policy at all jurisdictions?

Comments:

- *Tax-shifting instruments related to food – sell Federal Government on them conceptually, e.g., carbon tax, \$ → sustainable agriculture*
- *Tie to climate risk and economic implications*

ENGAGE IN POLICY DISCUSSIONS

How to engage in national (and provincial) agri-food policy discussions? Who should?

Comments:

- *National food policy should have a nexus at federal level across departments (ag, health, indigenous, environment, others) where land and water resource planning discussions happen*

ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

What is the role of the Federal Government in protecting farmland?

Comments:

- *Consider national food security scenarios regarding peak oil and climate risk; use scenario planning tools*
- *Push on monetising externalised costs across Federal Government and in the next policy framework (GF3) – ecological goods and services; other aspects of multifunctionality*

Moving forward: continuing the conversation

The final component of the forum asked about the level of interest among participants in and means to continue working together. The resounding response was to do this again – **to convene another national forum in two years.**

In addition, participants expressed a very strong desire to stay connected, to make use of the relations that were established at the forum by meeting face-to-face. Most of the people in the room only met each other for the first time at the start of the forum. The group discussed the existing listserv, PAFN (Planning for Agriculture and Food Network) and recognised its value for a broad-based, nation-wide platform. The participants were clear that they would also like to take advantage of knowing each other by having a dedicated means to communicate among themselves. A different listserv and email lists were identified as possible options for this option and will be explored further.

The following are some of the other ideas shared during this part of the forum:

- Another resource: TNOC (The nature of cities) – they run things with researchers/practitioners to give a statement and it goes all around the world.
- Also possible to have regional meetings?
 - Note: Regional workshops can be funded by the project in this fiscal year.
- Possibility of webinars? Show of hands showed considerable support.
 - Question of audience: identify the planner education piece. Give planners professional development credits. Problem with one way nature of webinars. More useful to have interactions. Another meeting would be more useful than webinar. On the other hand, it's cheaper.
- Job swaps? Is anyone interested?

**NATIONAL FORUM ON FARMLAND PROTECTION IN CANADA
SUMMARY of PROCEEDINGS**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Prov	Name	Position, organisation
NL	Richard Carey	Director, Land Resource Stewardship Division, Forestry and Agrifoods Agency
PEI	Janice Harper	Provincial Planner, Municipal Affairs and Provincial Planning
NB	Rob English	Senior Project Analyst, (Deputy Head's Office), Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
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	Jessica McDonald	Director of Planning, Town of Bridgewater President, Nova Scotia Planning Directors Assoc.
	Michael Devanney	Senior Economist, NS Dept. of Agriculture
	Keith Irving	MLA Kings South
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	Pierre-Olivier Girard	Direction générale du développement et de l'aménagement du territoire agricole, MAPAQ
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	Judy Roeland	Program Specialist, Manitoba Farm Industry Board
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AAFC	Charles-Antoine Sirois	Policy Analyst, Market Efficiency Policy, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

NATIONAL FORUM ON FARMLAND PROTECTION IN CANADA
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* Did not attend the forum

Graduate students who attended forum

Prov	Name	Position, organisation
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BC	Michelle Metzger	MA student, University of Northern British Columbia