



March 27, 2020

Honourable Lana Popham
Minister of Agriculture, Province of British Columbia

Dear Minister:

Re: Supporting our Agri-Food Industry

We appreciate the continued efforts of yourself and your staff in continuing to work on issues of importance to the agriculture and food industry in British Columbia as we address the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic; the number one priority for all our stakeholders. New issues emerge in response or as a consequence of other actions and measures being introduced.

We appreciate the recognition given to the agri-food industry as part of the critical infrastructure and listing as essential services. Government's recognition is important as industry leaders work to maintain our agriculture and food supply chains to ensure that British Columbians can continue to enjoy fresh, quality, safe agri-food products.

While government recognition is important, there is an urgent need to increase the level of public profile of the importance of supporting and maintaining our agriculture and food sectors in BC. We know that you are aware of the challenges of maintaining producer and worker morale and commitment to continue to work through these troubling times. Without the commitment of the BC agri-food industry and its employees everyone will face food shortages.

We need your support to champion the important role that agriculture and food businesses and their employees make each and every day to deliver quality, safe food to consumers. It is a critical time where worker fatigue and morale within the system is beginning to erode. Absenteeism is on the rise as workers who continue to work are conflicted by the government funding announcements that provide much needed support to the unemployed, while it is assumed that the agri-food industry workers will continue to work without recognition.

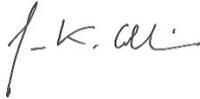
Just as the public has rallied around our health care workers and expressing thanks to them for continuing to work in the face of adversity, we need the public to rally around our agri-food producers, businesses and workers as well. Any measures that you and your Cabinet colleagues can do to promote our sector will go a long way in improving overall morale within the industry.

We have attached a copy of the messaging that the boards have sent out.

Thank you for your continued support.



Harvey Sasaki
Chair
BC Chicken Marketing Board



Jim Collins
Chair
BC Hatching Eggs



Gunta Vitins
Chair
BC Egg Marketing Board



Kevin Klippenstein
Chair
BC Turkey Marketing Board

cc Industry partners