



## SOIL CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF CANADA CONSEIL CANADIEN DE CONSERVATION DES SOLS

*The face and voice of soil conservation in Canada  
Le visage et la voix de la conservation des sols au Canada*

# It's time for a soil health strategy in Canada

When multiple partners come together for a common goal – it's hard not to listen to what they have to say. That is the case now as a broad-base of stakeholders from across Canadian agriculture have partnered to drive the future of farm sustainability forward. This group is standing out as leaders in soil health, and they are advocating for a list of pragmatic recommendations that our country's decision-makers can act on now.

Embracing climate-resilient practices, nature-based solutions and enhanced productivity is the vision that the Soil Conservation Council of Canada along with our partners at Ducks Unlimited Canada, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Canadian Cattle Association, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, CropLife Canada, Canadian Forage and Grassland Association and Fertilizer Canada presented to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada as they developed the next Agricultural Policy Framework. And at the heart of this is soil.

"Agriculture and a sustainable food system relies on the health and resilience of our soils," says Jim Tokarchuk, executive director of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada. "We are asking, along with our partners, for the government to prioritize the resilience, productivity, and carbon storage potential of Canada's soils by developing a National Strategy for Soil Health. This strategy will help address climate change, enhance biodiversity above and below ground, and increase on-farm profitability and productivity."

In addition to a national soil health strategy, the partners want action taken:

- to limit the conversion of prime agricultural land and natural areas;
- to optimize water use through sound agricultural policy and programming;
- to fund a National Perennial Forage Conversion Program;
- to establish a Marginal Areas Program;
- to bolster tech transfer to accelerate the adoption of BMPs;
- to support research to quantify the economic and environment benefits of BMPs;
- to develop a market-based system for valuating environmental benefits from the agricultural sector.

And the Soil Conservation Council of Canada and our partners are committed to seeing these actions through. Farmers and ranchers are ready, the plant science industry is ready, conservation organizations are ready, and we are demonstrating that agriculture is well positioned to be a solutions provider to meet the needs of Canadians here at home and of a growing population around the world.

Soil health has not been a national focus since the 1980's when the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture commissioned a report called "Soil at Risk: Canada's Eroding Future." More recently, Senator Rob Black recommended that the Standing Committee on Agriculture commission a new study on soil health, engaging researchers, scientists, agronomists, farmers and agricultural organizations to deliver a comprehensive list of achievable recommendations to maintain



and improve Canada's soils. Immediate action by industry partners to develop a national soil health strategy will complement the work proposed by Senator Black as well as build on the current state of soil health that we address in our Soil Health Report Card. This annual report card highlights our current soil health successes, but also identifies areas for improvement.

Canada has the potential to be a global leader in sustainable farming practices and food production, but the time for action is now. We have the will, now it's time to find the way.

The Soil Health Report Card can be found on [soilcc.ca](http://soilcc.ca).



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