

For Immediate Release

Four million copies of *The Real Dirt on Farming* reach Canadians

May 28, 2018 – (Guelph) A milestone total of four million copies of *The Real Dirt on Farming* booklet have now been distributed to Canadians from coast to coast. *The Real Dirt on Farming*, available in English and French, is a national publication produced by Farm & Food Care (FFC) as part of its mandate to answer consumers' questions about food and farming.

The Real Dirt on Farming is designed to help Canadians connect with their food and the farmers that produce it. Using results from consumer testing to shape the content, the booklet addresses common questions and misconceptions about Canadian agriculture using both stories and science. It provides credible and accessible explanations of topics like antibiotics, pesticides, food labelling, genetic engineering, animal welfare and animal housing, and urban agriculture. It also highlights the innovations that support our diverse food system, and shares personal experiences of farmers from coast to coast. *The Real Dirt on Farming* provides consumers with the tools and information to make informed choices about their food.

This latest publication is the fourth edition since the project's inception in 2006. Canada's agriculture landscape is changing and the latest edition includes new data from Statistics Canada's 2016 Census of Agriculture, and new topics have been included to reflect questions asked in a survey of 2,500 non-farming Canadians. Other subjects have also been expanded to incorporate advances in science, changes to regulations and standard practices and new consumer questions. Substantial effort is made in each edition to ensure all information sources are credible and accessible to readers and the booklet is fact checked by a national expert review committee before it goes to print.

Christine Schoonderwoerd, Chair of Farm & Food Care Ontario said, "The success of the booklet continues to please us. When we first produced the booklet more than a decade ago, we had no idea that the entire country's agricultural community would adopt it as their own and help take on the monumental task of getting copies into the hands of people who want this information."

Distribution of the booklet varies from someone ordering a single copy to answer a neighbour's questions to ordering thousands for their local event. Supporters leave them in plane seat pockets, at doctors' offices, with their lawyers, for their church groups or book clubs, etc. Thousands of copies are ordered by farmers, agribusiness and partners across the county. Kelly Daynard, Executive Director of Farm & Food Care Ontario said, "It really has been a project that the whole country has embraced."

Since the release, copies have also been mailed to elected officials across Canada, Registered Dietitians, libraries, media, grocery store and butcher shop owners and other target audiences.

The booklet is also used as a resource for many post-secondary students in culinary arts and agribusiness programs. Recently, the digest was inserted in the *Globe and Mail* reaching 200,000 households across the country. Each copy came with the invitation for readers to share their comments and questions with FFC staff. One reader of the *Globe and Mail* recently wrote to say, “Thank you for distributing the *Real Dirt on Farming*. I will use this in talking with my grandchildren about this important part of Canadian life.”

Another reader wrote, ““Thank you for the excellent publication I received in my *Globe and Mail* yesterday. It is full of interesting information. I've read it through once, so far, and plan to keep it to re-read and share with others.”

Other key distributions have included inserts in the *National Post* and *Toronto Sun* with plans for similar insertions in the future.

Farm & Food Care would like to thank all of the partnering companies and organizations that have supported each of the four editions. Their continued support has helped to make this milestone possible. *The Real Dirt on Farming* is perfect for anyone interested in food and farming or engaging with others in conversations about Canadian agriculture. To read *The Real Dirt on Farming*, find out more about the project's supporters and order copies go to www.RealDirtonFarming.ca.

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Farm & Food Care cultivates appreciation for food and farming by connecting farm gates to our dinner plates. With offices in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, Farm & Food Care brings farmers, agricultural professionals, related businesses and other groups together with a mandate to provide credible information on food and farming in Canada. For more information visit www.FarmFoodCare.org

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