

Report says Canada needs sound carbon accounting system

The country's different production regions need to be taken into account

BY ALEX BINKLEY
Ontario Farmer

Ottawa - Two key steps are required for Canada to have a workable system for farmers to record their progress at reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, says a report from the Simpson Centre for Agricultural and Agri-Food Innovation and Public Education at the University of Calgary.

The different regions across the country have unique challenges and capacities to deal with GHG emissions, the report said. "There is no one solution that will effectively mitigate GHG emissions in all regions.

"Guidelines, programs, policies, and best management practices need to consider these regional differences to ensure their success. They also need to support sustainable development, food security, poverty eradication, justice, and equality."

To be successful, government policies must enable increased

farm net income while reducing GHG emissions in Canada.

"A few modeling tools are currently available to producers to assess GHG emissions of a variety of land uses and farm activities. The more user-friendly the models are, the more producers and businesses will use them, and the more data will be captured and used to improve GHG emission estimations and predictions, and mitigate GHG emissions from Canadian agriculture."

The key steps in making carbon accounting programs effective tools are ensuring they take the regional differences into account and that producers are willing to use them, the report said. Existing accounting programs "are not consistent and have limited monitoring and verification of actual carbon reductions."

In the past producers have been reluctant to use emissions accounting programs because of the large amounts of paperwork and small economic benefit. "Regularly monitored, seamless carbon accounting programs can be adopted within subsectors of the agricultural industry and

within similar climatic regions to help determine potential carbon sinks and opportunities to minimize GHG emissions, as well as identify best policies for each region and subsector."

The report also calls for data from carbon accounting programs to be shared and communicated to help align industry and government GHG inventory programs. "These data need to be included in the National Inventory Report for a better overall view of GHG emissions and the effects on them of programs and policies."

While the carbon tax can be successful at reducing emissions, "there must be increased communication between policy-makers, agri-businesses, and the general public to help identify contexts and barriers to its adoption.

"Successful measures and practices for reducing agricultural GHG emissions tend to support technological solutions and do not face significant barriers to uptake, such as no-till practices, optimizing animal feed and additives, feed grain processing for improved digestibility and genetic selection and breeding, to name a few."

Measures proposed to better assess railway performance

Similar action is underway in the U.S.

BY ALEX BINKLEY
Ontario Farmer

Ottawa - The main freight railways operating in Canada would have to file detailed freight handling information with Transport Canada under changes proposed by Transport Minister Omar Alghabra.

The information on waybill, traffic, and service and performance would show their customers and government how well the carriers are moving freight across the country, he said.

A 60-day public consultation period on the proposed amendments to the Transportation Information Regulations will be held to gauge the impact the changes would have. The feed-

back from them will be considered in the development of the final regulations.

These new reporting requirements would provide rail users and the public with much more relevant and precise information relating to rail service and performance, Alghabra said. The amendments reflect the government's commitment to strengthening Canada's supply chains in support of the broader economy.

"Having access to more detailed service and performance information for Canada's rail sector would contribute to even more productive exchanges among supply chain members, as they work to move Canadian goods in support of Canada's future economic success."

The six railways affected by the order are Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, BNSF, CSX, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern.

The move follows months of complaints from shippers about the railways' performance during the past winter, Transport Canada said. It is "imperative to have the enhanced indicators available to stakeholders as early as is practicable to increase transparency and accountability.

The railways are facing a similar action in the U.S. where the Surface Transportation Board (STB) is requiring railroads to submit service recovery plans, additional data and regular progress reports on rail service, operations and employment.

The information will inform STB's assessment of further actions that may be warranted to address the acute service issues facing the rail industry and to promote industry-wide transparency, accountability and improvements in rail service, the agency said.



The 2022 FFCO Champion Award presentation included, from left: George McNaughton, Floradale Feed Mill Ltd., Crispin Colvin, FFCO vice-chair; Champion Award winner John Drummond; Anne and Kevin Snyder, Snyder Heritage Farms; and Christine Oldfield, executive director, 4-H Ontario.

4-H volunteer named Food & Farming champion

John Drummond was honoured for his agricultural advocacy work

BY LILIAN SCHAEER
Ontario Farmer

A dairy feed specialist from Waterloo Region has been honoured for his long-time volunteer work with 4-H and innovative approach to agricultural advocacy.

John Drummond received the Food & Farming Champion Award at the recent Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) annual conference, an honour presented annually in recognition of significant commitment to public outreach and support for Ontario's farming community.

Drummond, who works for Floradale Feed Mill Ltd., has been a 4-H leader in Waterloo Region and in clubs across the province for close to 40 years. During the last two years, he's been instrumental in keeping 4-H activities going virtually as the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted in-person meetings and clubs.

"I'm absolutely gob-smacked about this and absolutely humbled by this award," Drummond said in his acceptance speech. "To teach the next generation of agriculture is such an important job and the more we do it, the more we have to do it."

Drummond received his award from Senator Rob Black, who attended virtually, and Farm & Food Care Vice Chair Crispin Colvin.

Since the spring of 2020, Drummond has been helping 4-H clubs adapt to running activities online, and helped open up meetings to members across Ontario, with some clubs having over 100 members participating.

Particularly popular has been his online cooking club, where participants make recipes from around the world, as well as comfort foods, Disney foods, and more. He's also invited guests from different countries to share their personal perspectives of life in their home nations and help with food preparation tips.

"John's impact is unmatched, and I couldn't agree more with the people who have spoken about you," Colvin said in his remarks. "It's a pleasure to give you the Champion Award this year."

Senator Black noted Drummond has received awards nationally for his significant contributions to 4-H and his commitment to young people, calling him "a legend within the 4-H community both locally and nationally."

Drummond was nominated for the award by Kevin and Anne Snyder of Snyder Heritage Farms; letters of support were submitted by Angela Fairfield from Floradale Feed Mill and Christine Oldfield of 4-H Ontario.

The Food & Farming Champion Award was initially launched in 1999 as the Friend of OFAC Award by Farm & Food Care Ontario legacy organization Ontario Farm Animal Council.