

Canada Food Brand Project

Overview //

“We call for the government to work with industry in our six key sectors to develop a globally recognized Canadian brand.”

Report from Canada's Economic Strategy Tables: September 2018

Global food production is being seriously scrutinized & evaluated here & abroad, including on factors that implicitly form part of Canada's brand (trust, safe, clean). Global benchmarks are measuring a host of company & supply chain environmental, social & governance criteria. The push to fulfill the U.N. 2030 Sustainable Development Goals will intensify. Many companies, sectors & countries are positioning themselves by linking competitiveness to sustainability performance. With a growing global population, increasing demand for quality food & rising consumer expectations about how food is produced, food systems everywhere are being challenged to respond.

Does this matter to Canada? With its natural advantages & positive reputation, are we in good shape or is it time to express & validate what stands behind the “Canada food brand”? If so, can the brand actually become an essential tool to assess policy choices & take decisions – thereby improving our future competitiveness & benefitting society?

The window of opportunity is now:

1. Canada 2020 & its partners have launched a project to frame-up the Canada food brand advantage
2. This will be industry-led & deeply collaborative with the broader food system, advanced technology & other adjacent sectors & government

“By 2025, Canada will be one of the top five competitors in the agri-food sector, recognized as the most trusted, competitive & reliable supplier of safe, sustainable, high-quality agri-food products to feed the dynamic global consumer.”

Report from Canada's Economic Strategy Tables: Agri-Food, September 2018

Mission //

To articulate the Canadian food brand advantage.

1. This pre-competitive collaboration will scope out essential brand attributes & drivers, including the link between competitiveness, the country's advantages & social responsibility claims, as a basis to differentiate Canada. (This is not about developing a “tagline” or “promo” campaign.)
2. A series of labs over 2018-2019 will be held to build momentum on how to express, validate & steward the brand (at a high level), culminating in a national forum in Nov. 2019
3. **Project Goal:** industry, government & food system champions adapt this work as a must do priority in 2020

Broader Objective //

“We’re punching way below our weight. Canada’s agri-food sector needs a big ambition! We need to bring people together in a lab & be disruptive so we can solve big challenges & truly aim to achieve 10x growth.”

Dominic Barton, Canada 2020 symposium, June 1, 2018

Canada’s agri-food brand will be a catalyst to:

1. Elevate the agri-food sector’s stature as a **national priority** in the next policy agenda
2. Affirm that food brand stewardship is increasingly essential to Canada’s global **competitiveness & societal well-being** – which must shape policy choices & stakeholder actions
3. Establish new accountabilities to ensure greater **policy/regulatory alignment**, industry pre-competitive **collaboration** & to inform **research priorities**.

Process // Framing-up the Canadian Food Brand Advantage

Phase One		Phase Two		
Sept / Oct 2018	Dec 2018	Feb 2019	Feb 2019	March 2019
Roundtables: Concept & Program	Lab: Brand 2.0	Lab: Digital Food	Roundtable: Marketplace	Lab: Quality Food
Ottawa, ON	Ottawa, ON	Olds, Alberta	Saskatoon, Sask.	Ottawa, ON
Should we launch a relevant, useful & timely brand project? What is an effective program to inform the Canada food brand?	How should affirming "brand claims" advance competitiveness & societal priorities? How is Canada being assessed & how should we measure performance?	How can our agri-food advantages & global best practices be validated & add more value via advanced technologies?	How can substantiating brand claims enable Canada's credibility & marketplace positioning?	How is nutritional quality, health & food safety evolving & what does this mean for the reputation of our ingredient/food supply?
Phase Two (cont'd)			Phase Three	
April 2019	May 2019	Sept 2019	Nov 6 - 7, 2019	Nov / Dec 2019
Lab: Trusted Food	Lab: Sustainability	Lab: Brand is a Promise	National Forum: Competing in a New World Order	Sharing Outcomes
TBD	TBD	TBD	Ottawa, ON	TBD
How can Canada differentiate itself when others are conforming to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) & global supply chain goals?	What does the global emergence of "sustainable finance" & growing interest in valuing natural capital mean for distinguishing Canada's competitiveness?	How can the brand: 1. Create new accountabilities in policy-making (i.e., whole-of-gov't alignment)? 2. Incent greater industry pre-competitive collaborations? 3. Inform research/innovation priorities?	TBD	Ottawa audiences Arrell Food Institute (U. of Guelph) National audiences/media Other: TBD

Details subject to change. "Roundtables" are smaller events to help frame future work. Other meetings may occur.

For reference, EDC's six Canada brand attributes: land of clean/pristine natural spaces, resource-rich, good reputation, innovative, trustworthy, multi-cultural (<https://edc.trade/canadian-brand-advantages/#step1>)