

agriculture depends, as well as an important component of food security in Canada and abroad. This monograph describes Canadian developments toward sustainable agriculture, acknowledging the three-fold nature of sustainable development — social, economic, and environmental — but concentrating on advances being made with respect to environmental sustainability. It concludes with a list of the next steps that can be taken to move Canada further along in stabilizing and building rural communities and ensuring that agriculture can be practised profitably and in an environmentally sound way in the years to come.

Canada is a vast dominion, divided into ten provinces and three territories and bordering three oceans. It has three levels of government — federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal — along with emerging Aboriginal government structures. The federal government has jurisdiction over matters of national interest, and the provinces and territories over matters of particular interest, such as health and education. Thus, both the federal and provincial/territorial governments have an interest in rural development and the practice of agriculture. The discussion in this monograph focuses mainly on federal initiatives for rural development and sustainable agriculture, but illustrates provincial activities along these lines and occasionally draws from municipal and industry examples to show community-level efforts.

Many federal and provincial government agencies, civil groups, and individuals helped guide the development of this monograph, contributed material, or provided insightful reviews. This cooperation aptly illustrates the importance of partnerships in all efforts to achieve sustainable rural development and agriculture in Canada, from the planning stages to its realization in the field.

For Canada, sustainable development is best represented as a journey, not a destination. The monographs described above, as well as the other monographs in the Sustainable Development in Canada Monograph Series, are milestones on this journey, and we invite you to join us and share our experiences.