

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

Agenda 21's vision of sustainable agriculture and rural development is consistent with that adopted by Canada. Beginning with a vision outlined in a 1989 discussion paper, *Growing Together*, Canada seeks to preserve the natural resource base, integrate the environment and the economy, foster rural diversification, and maintain a safe and nutritious food supply.

With support and encouragement from governments, farm organizations, and other participants in the agriculture and agri-food sector, producers and processors are following through on this vision. They are using more environmentally sustainable practices. They are working with governments and other interested groups to address issues related to soil, water, wildlife conservation, and pollution and waste management. Research has resulted in new technologies and practices, including many that can be transferred through international development co-operation activities. A new National Environment Strategy for Agriculture and Agri-food in 1995 should continue this momentum.

Managing, Conserving, and Sustainably Developing Forests

Forests support a wide range of values, such as wildlife, biodiversity, watersheds, recreation, fisheries, and wood supply, and Canadian laws, policies, and practices increasingly reflect a forest ecosystem management perspective that encompasses these dimensions. Proof of Canada's commitment to be at the forefront of sustainable forest management is found in its national forest strategy and in provincial strategies that contain concrete measures to reach this objective.

Governments and industry are strengthening the rules that govern forest activities to achieve greater sustainability, and domestic efforts to more clearly define the concept of sustainable forest management are nearing completion. In this regard, six criteria and related indicators have been developed for Canada's forests and will be submitted shortly to the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers for approval. Moreover, many provinces and private woodlot owners have updated or recently adopted forest practices codes in which sustainability figures prominently.

Research is key to better forest management and Canada's Model Forest Program, consisting of ten working-scale forests, is instrumental in developing and applying innovative concepts and techniques. Model sites also incorporate a variety of forest values and are managed in partnership with, among others, governments, industry, local residents, and environmental groups.

Internationally, Canada is active on several fronts. Besides conducting joint research projects, it is working with the global community to advance priority forest policy issues. It has played a leading role in the development of criteria and indicators for forests in boreal and temperate regions outside of Europe and participated in a similar process for forests in Europe. With Malaysia, it sponsored the Intergovernmental Working Group on Forests, which examined priority issues at two meetings in 1994 with a view to presenting options and approaches for the consideration of the CSD in 1995.