

PART III, SECTION V

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL

DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Chapter 14 of Agenda 21 focuses on sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD). The main objective of SARD is to increase food production in a sustainable way and to enhance food security. Priority must be given to maintaining and improving the capacity of higher potential land to support an expanding population, while at the same time avoiding further encroachment on land that is marginally suitable for cultivation.

Agenda 21 recognizes that sustainable agriculture involves much more than increasing productivity. For success it needs the support and participation of rural people, governments, the private sector, and international co-operation. This is consistent with the Canadian approach to achieving sustainable agriculture.

Growing Together

The Canadian vision of sustainable agriculture was laid out in Growing Together, the discussion paper that initiated the comprehensive Agri-Food Policy Review in 1989. It provided a framework to integrate economic, social, and environmental goals. The vision was endorsed by governments and stakeholders.

Building on the framework, the 1990 Report of the Federal/Provincial Agriculture Committee on Environmental Sustainability worked to translate the concept of integration into more concrete terms. The report's recommendations included adjustments to agricultural practices, and policy and program reform to strengthen economic viability and environmental sustainability.

The 1990 Report incorporated many of the concepts of sustainability later discussed in Chapter 14 of Agenda 21. It identified eight main environmental and natural resource issues facing Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector: conservation of soil resources,

"Sustainable agri-food systems are those that are economically viable, and meet society's need for safe and nutritious food, while conserving and enhancing Canada's natural resources and the quality of the environment for future generations."

-1990 Report of the Federal/Provincial Agriculture Committee on Environmental Sustainability