





CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

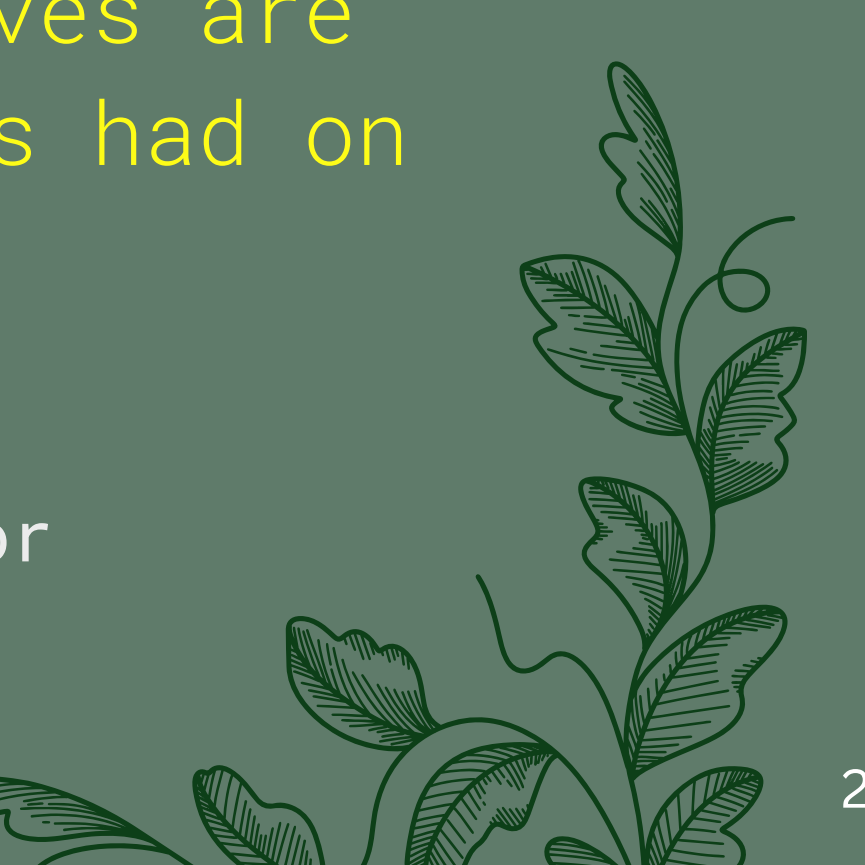

FROM THE
NEW MILLENNIUM TO
PRE-PANDEMIC

1
PRESENTATION BY ANDREA KOBETIC

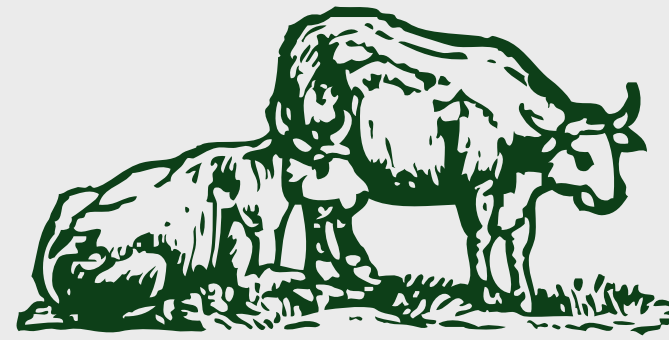


There are many policies and agreements discussed
in Modules 1-3.

Please take your time going through them: pay
special attention to which areas are discussed
in each policy, what subjects/perspectives are
missing, and reflect on what effects this had on
contemporary policy.



You can either jot down your reflections or
simply bear them in mind!



This module is intended to give you a broad understanding of how agricultural policy developed over the course of Canadian history.

If any of the topics discussed pique your interest and you would like to explore them more thoroughly, you can refer to the number in the top right-hand corner that corresponds with a journal article cited in the final 'References' slide. There is a lot of interesting and useful information in these articles that is not presented here for the sake of concision.

Happy learning!

NEW MILLENNIUM,  NEW MILLENNIUM,
2000 2000



The early 2000s saw a continuation of the state assistance paradigm and agricultural exceptionalism rhetoric in public policy.

This was further facilitated by the continued ability of lobbying groups (including government workers) to influence policy before it is enacted and the degree to which policy is enforced effectively.

However, there are some indicators that the lobbying power of farmers began to erode in this era. Some of these indicators are discussed on the following slide.

- 1) Along with the decreasing amount of farm workers, agriculture workers' interests have diverged and their representation has also become less uniform and united.
- 2) Food processing and manufacturing has taken over the lion's share of the industry with the majority of jobs and profits (economic power) along the supply chain becoming concentrated in these operations. This diminished power in primary production is not only economic but also political, especially as the power of transnational enterprises has risen.
- 3) The producer-centric emphasis of policy in the 20th century has shifted to consider perspectives from a broader community, including consumers and sustainability experts.

Farm workers' decreased lobbying power is important when considering how policy changes.

In order for policy change to occur, the discourse surrounding the policy issue must first be changed in both internal and external circles. This has been especially difficult to coordinate since the creation of the internet because of the wealth of information everyone is confronted with each day.

Large-scale policy change occurs most often due to changes within the external environment, that is, based on the actions taken by external groups. These systemic outsiders are also responsible for much small-scale policy change, but only when they have sufficient power, resources, and are able to effectively coordinate their efforts.

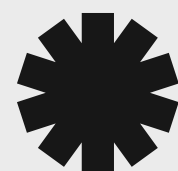
Paradigmatic policy change can be prompted by change of the party in power.

For instance, the 2006 installation of a federal Conservative government resulted in the adoption of more liberal economic policies impacting the grain industry. Although this change was programmatic, if they had been able to garner greater formal power, paradigmatic change may have occurred.

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CONSUMER AWARENESS
HAS INCREASED SUCH
THAT THE POLICY-
BASED, SIZEABLE
PRICE INCREASES IN
2007 AND 2008
RESULTED IN PUBLIC
REACTION BY
CONSUMERS.

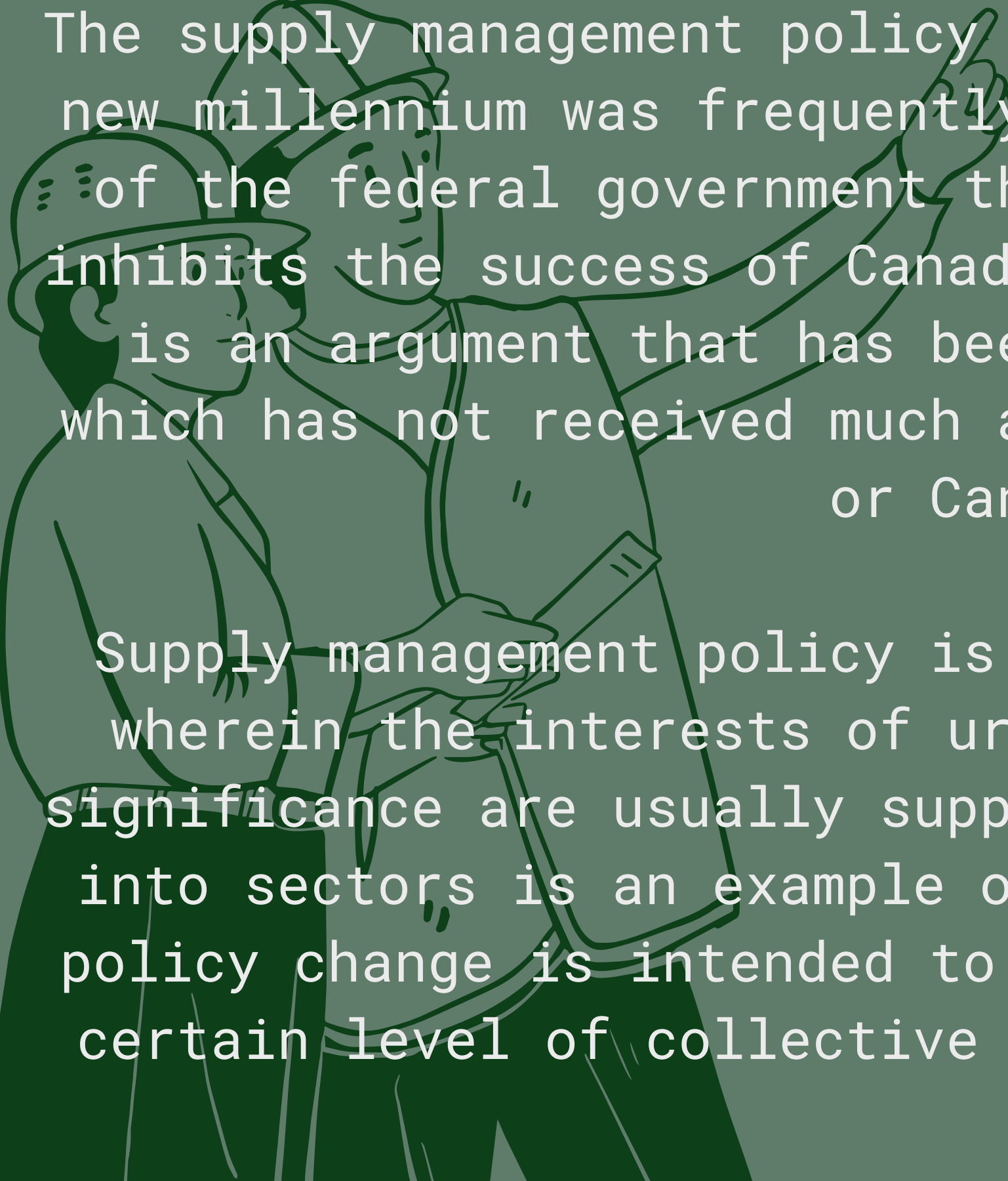
PAUSE



Take a moment to reflect on the importance of producer-consumer relationships for small-scale producers, and how consumer-oriented policy may restrict or deepen this dynamic.

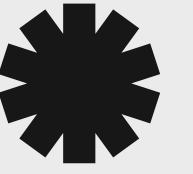


Supply Management Policy, 2000-2010

An illustration in the bottom left corner shows two men wearing hard hats. The man in the foreground is holding a large sheet of paper and pointing at it with his right hand. The man behind him is also looking at the paper. They appear to be in a professional or construction setting.

The supply management policy that came out of the first decade of the new millennium was frequently denounced as a protectionist mechanism of the federal government that undercuts natural market forces and inhibits the success of Canada's agricultural industry. However, this is an argument that has been put forth by agricultural academics which has not received much attention or support from the government or Canadian consumers.


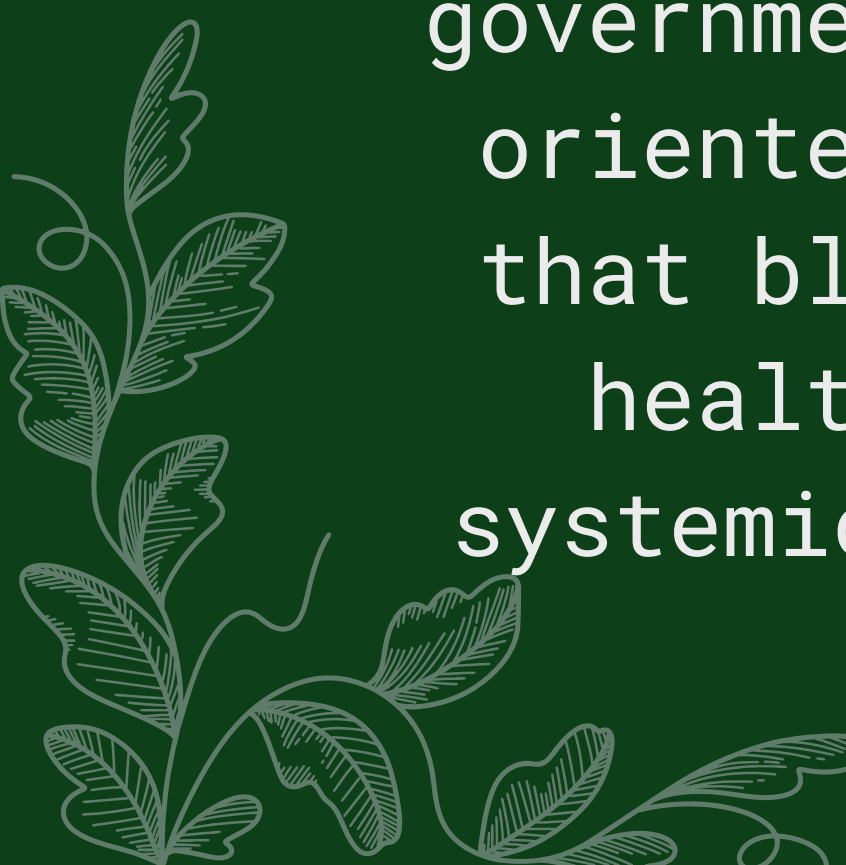
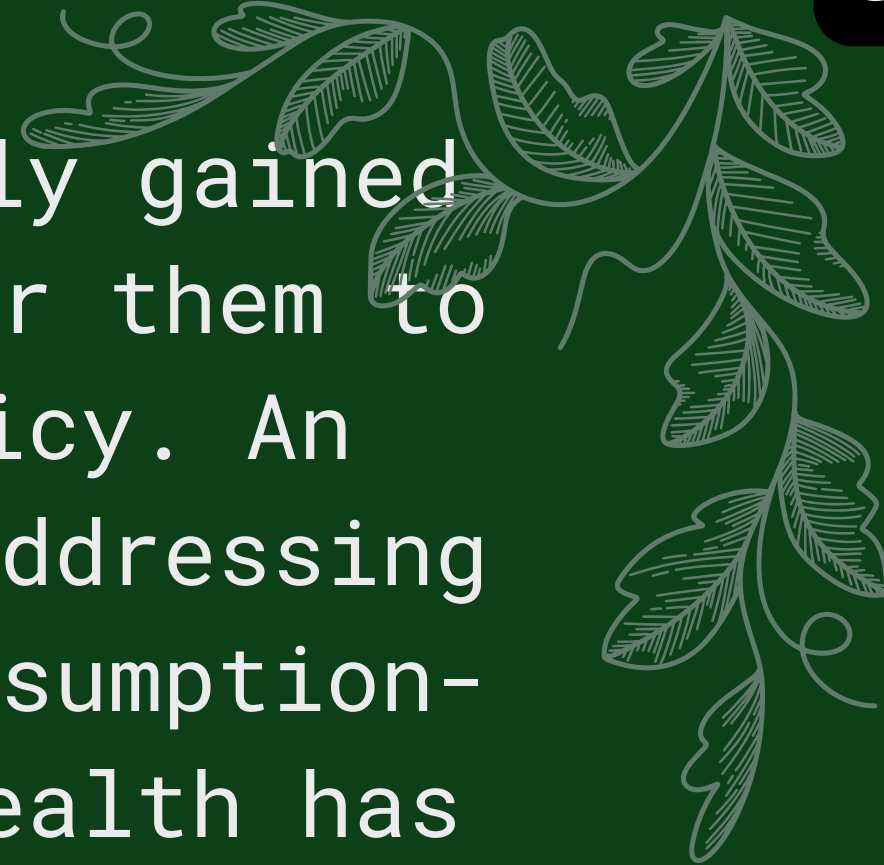

Supply management policy is also separated into geographic sectors wherein the interests of urbanized sectors with greater political significance are usually supported by the government. This separation into sectors is an example of how the structure allowing for public policy change is intended to promote slow change that must achieve a certain level of collective agreement in order to come to fruition.¹⁰



**PRE-PANDEMIC,
2010-2019**

PRE-PANDEMIC,
2010-2019





Post-2010, peripheral issues increasingly gained attention and there was a strong push for them to be addressed through agricultural policy. An important one of these issues concerns addressing health issues through production and consumption-oriented policy. The public nature of health has resulted in it being seen as an issue that is the government's responsibility, though consumption-oriented policy has famously taken an approach that blames individuals for their food-related health concerns (rather than acknowledging systemic inequalities that often play a crucial role in food accessibility).



Bilateral and Regional Agreements

Canada established
numerous bilateral
and regional
agreements by 2015:

Israel 1997,
Chile 1997,
Costa Rica 2002,
European Free Trade Association 2009,
Peru 2009,
Colombia 2011,
Jordan 2012,
Panama 2013,
Honduras 2014,
Korea 2015



In retrospect, establishing these bilateral trade agreements relatively early on was very important in supporting Canada's agricultural industry. There is great competition between countries to secure such agreements with their potential to support either defensive or offensive market goals.

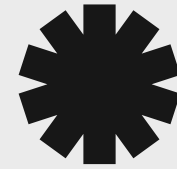
However, the 2010s also found the emergence of a global trend among formal leadership against liberal trade policies. It seems that this was due to the rising awareness that the benefits of these endeavours were never distributed equally among countrymen, and the benefits that were intended for those who did not benefit from the deal itself were unsatisfactory (if they appeared at all).



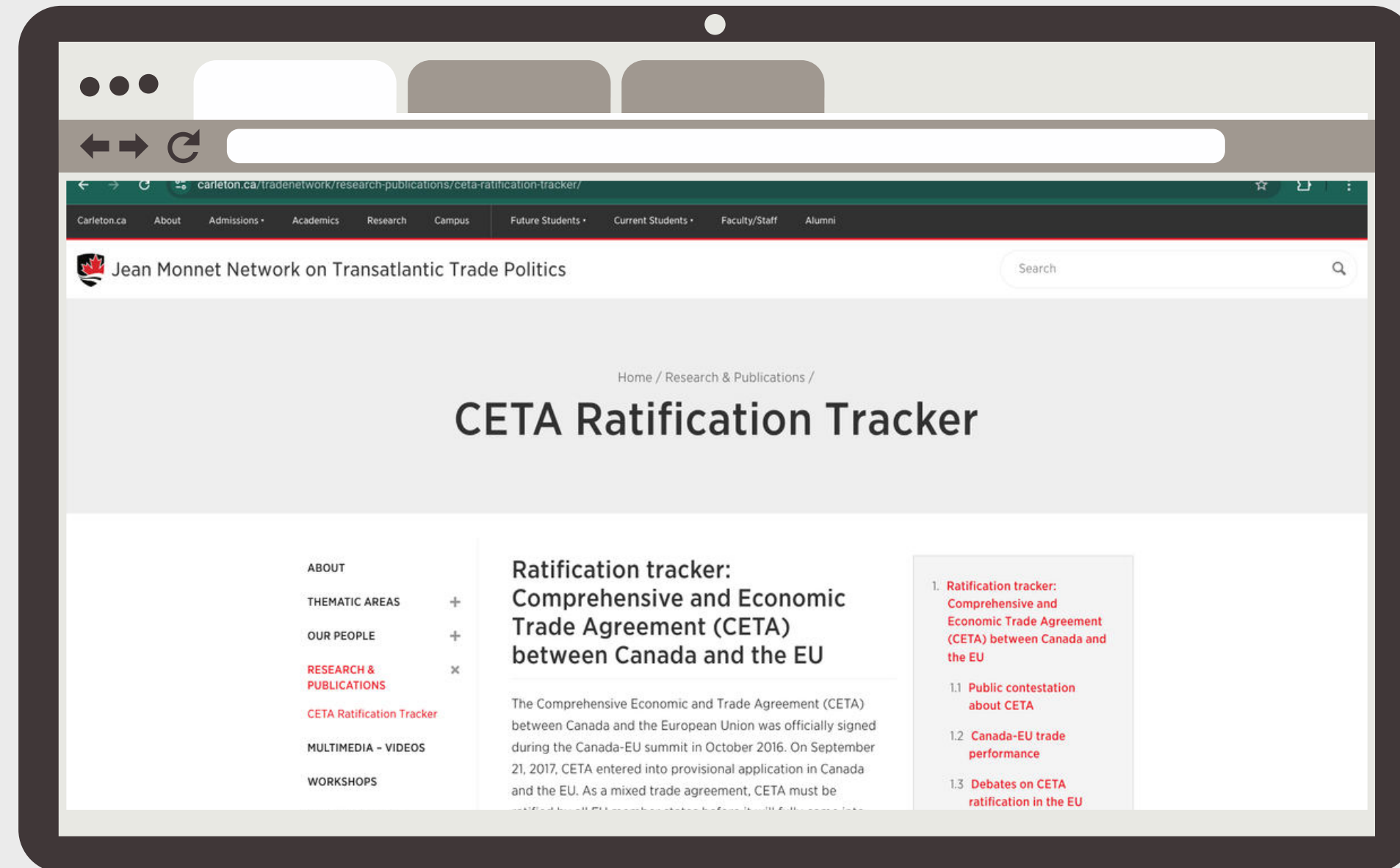
CETA, 2016

The Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) was established between the European Union and Canada in 2016 and is still awaiting ratification from some of its member states. Although trade has increased since the agreement's creation, its impact on the Canadian agricultural industry has only been moderate.

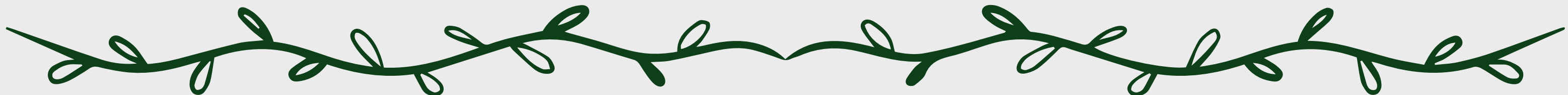
PAUSE



Double click the image to the right and explore Carleton University's CETA Ratification Tracker tool on your own for a few minutes.



Reflect upon any patterns you notice in the objections of member countries who have not yet ratified the agreement.



Another trend seen during this decade (2010-2019) in Canada's agricultural policy is the continuation of the state assistance paradigm, despite formal acknowledgement that an alternative approach would be preferable. The longevity of this approach is not necessarily due to lack of initiative on the part of the government, rather, it alludes to how the system has been designed to have numerous safeguards against policy change.

This attempted change is further complexified by the duality in Canadian foreign policy which attempts to protect specific goods (such as dairy) within the industry while also seeking to improve the foreign market standing of the majority of agricultural products.


According to Murray Fulton (2015), it is unlikely that future agricultural policy in Canada will focus on alternative food systems or agroecological production.

That withstanding, he acknowledges how discussion surrounding these subjects has changed and the success of increased support of their importance in agricultural policy. The rhetoric that has been used juxtaposes agroecology and small-scale production with big industry, relying heavily on this strong narrative as a persuasive device.

Regardless of this popular success, Fulton's analysis argues that it has not translated to the level at which policy makers operate.




This is not to say that policy makers are ignorant of organic agriculture, in fact they were instrumental in establishing a strict regulatory certification system, though this is the only instance of their interference in the organic market during this decade.



The organic case is an example of the government's reluctance to intervene in new areas of agriculture where it is not deemed economically necessary for the greater public good.

This is not the same approach that continues to be adopted toward staple crops in Canada's agricultural industry wherein security (through state assistance) is prioritised.

It is due to its peripheral status, both in terms of economic and political significance, that organic agriculture and alternative food systems are unlikely to be featured heavily in public policy.

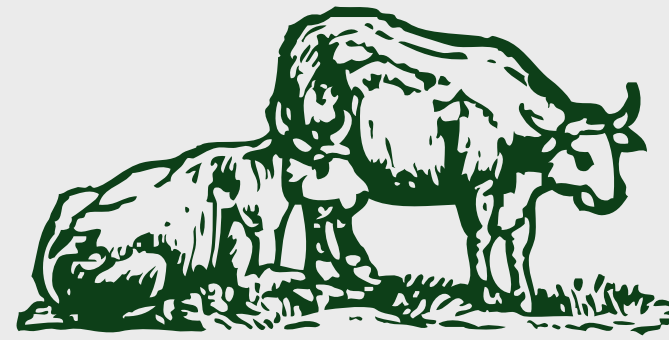


The final pre-pandemic era (2015-2019) showed that lobbying and compromise-seeking continued to dominate over economic efficiency in policy development.

Policy is shaped by politics: the ability of groups and individuals to change discourse in an impactful manner.

As such, areas existing on the periphery of agricultural discourse still have a chance of breaking onto the agenda of decision-makers and emerging into policy.





You've reached the end of Module 3!

We will be discussing the politics of sustainability
in Module 4.

Please make sure to complete the Module 3 Quiz before
moving forward in your learning.

Thank you!



1

HEDLEY, D. (2017). GOVERNANCE IN CANADIAN AGRICULTURE. *CANADIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS* 65, 523-541. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1111/CJAG.12141](https://doi.org/10.1111/CJAG.12141)

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FULTON, M. (2015). AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: ECONOMICS AND POLITICS. *CANADIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS* 63, 7-18. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1111/CJAG.12065](https://doi.org/10.1111/CJAG.12065)

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