

CDC Annual Public Meeting – January 2026

Board Report

Jennifer Hayes – Chair of the Canadian Dairy Commission

Speech – Check against delivery. This speech has been translated in accordance with the Government of Canada's official languages policy and edited for posting and distribution as per its communications policy.

1. WELCOME

Welcome to all invited guests, industry stakeholders and members of the public,

Thank you to all who made the time to attend this afternoon. Your continued engagement supports and encourages our entire team and speaks to the shared commitment which defines the Canadian dairy industry.

Over the past year, we have faced challenges and seized opportunities together. I am proud of the continued resilience and progress we achieved in 2024 and 2025—proof that when we work together, we can adapt, innovate, and thrive.

2. THE CDC MANDATE

Before moving forward, let me briefly remind you of the Canadian Dairy Commission's mandate.

The CDC is mandated to provide efficient producers of milk and cream with the opportunity to obtain a fair return for their labour and investment while ensuring consumers of dairy products are provided with a continuous and adequate supply of dairy products of high quality. Both parts of the mandate are interdependent and inseparable; in other words, neither can be achieved to the exclusion or isolation of the other. This balance is at the heart of everything we do.

3. WORKING TOGETHER TO ADVANCE THE SECTOR

This balance, in turn, depends on unity. Across sectors, regions, and stakeholders, unity is not optional, it is essential. It enables us to respond cohesively to change and to innovate with purpose. When we act together, we amplify our collective strength and help secure the future of our sector.

Through this shared approach, we have been able to implement initiatives such as the Dairy Innovation and Investment Fund, which supports a Canadian dairy sector that is competitive and responsive to evolving consumer needs. The Canadian Dairy Commission also continues to promote industry-wide reflection on the use of all milk components, with a renewed emphasis on innovation and balanced growth.

Through the administration of programs on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and in partnership with industry stakeholders, we have contributed to stimulating investment and advancing market development across the sector.

Unity is built on collaboration. I want to acknowledge the dedication of producers, processors, and partners who consistently find ways to work together across the full scope of all our shared work. Collaboration is the cornerstone of our success. It makes us stronger, more innovative, and more

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resilient in the face of challenges. Every achievement we celebrate today, and every future success, starts with working together.

Unity does not require uniformity. What matters is a shared direction, one that respects and recognizes the diversity of perspectives and realities within a national system, and a genuine commitment to working together toward consensus.

4. DELIVERING PROGRESS

The CDC's commitment is to support industry-led initiatives, engage in dialogue, and contribute the tools, expertise, and evidence that help collective solutions move forward while remaining focused on our mandate.

This same principle shapes our participation in the P10 Pooling Committee's strategic planning process. Our goal is to help foster a fair and prosperous dairy sector, while fully respecting the leadership and direction of our partners.

Our work throughout the year has been guided by a clear strategic focus on collaboration, modernization, and ensuring that the Commission itself remains well equipped to serve the sector effectively.

This progress is underpinned by continued efforts to strengthen governance, enhance planning processes, and build internal capacity ensuring the CDC remains a credible and effective steward of the system.

Maintaining trust in the system depends on decisions that are transparent, rigorous, and grounded in sound evidence, an approach that continues to guide our work.

5. PRIORITIES AND MILESTONES AHEAD

As we look ahead to 2025–2026, our priorities are clear.

We will continue to support the industry in making full use of all milk components through the programs we administer. These efforts reflect a national approach to balanced and sustainable growth, one that supports competitiveness while responding to evolving market realities.

At the same time, we are committed to supporting national conversations on a shared vision for the dairy industry. Working together is about shared direction, not identical positions. This implies respecting the diversity within our national system and committing to collaboration to find common ground. To be clear, the CDC's role is not to define that vision. Rather, our role is to convene, support dialogue, and contribute tools, expertise, and evidence to help industry-led solutions emerge and advance.

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We will also continue to modernize the frameworks that underpin supply management. This includes ensuring that rules, agreements, and tools remain relevant, effective, and responsive. The update of the P10 Agreement, initiated in collaboration with provincial signatories, reflects this commitment and will help ensure that governance structures align with current practice and future needs.

Across all of this work, evidence-based decision-making remains central. Reliable data, sound analysis, and transparency are essential to maintaining trust, supporting balanced growth, and ensuring the long-term credibility of the system.

Delivering on these priorities requires a strong and effective organization. Strengthening governance, modernizing internal systems, and supporting our people are essential to ensuring the CDC can continue to fulfill its mandate with rigour and integrity.

Some of this work will take time. Modernization and collaboration are not one-year exercises. But they are essential—and they are well underway.

These priorities reflect our enduring commitment to partnership and progress. With continued collaboration and a shared sense of purpose, I am confident we will move forward, together stewarding a stable, sustainable, and united Canadian dairy sector. The year ahead will also mark an important milestone for the Canadian Dairy Commission. In October 2026, we will celebrate our 60th anniversary; six decades of service, collaboration, and commitment to our mandate. As we prepare to mark this special occasion, we are considering a number of initiatives to recognize this achievement. Further details will be shared in due course, and we invite you to stay tuned as we look ahead not only to the future, but also to the legacy that has brought us here.

With that I thank you for your attendance and attention, and I adjourn the meeting.