Canadian
BEEKEEPERS
Federation

Protecting bees. Supporting beekeepers. Sustaining Canadian food.

Advocating for commercial honey producers and pollinators in Canada

National Food Security Strategy

Opportunities for Commercial Beekeepers and Honey Packers

Canadian Beekeepers Federation

June 2026

Contents

Executive summary

On 11 June 2026 the federal government launched Canada's first National Food Security Strategy, backed by more than $3 billion over ten years, to make food more affordable and the food system more resilient. It is organised around grocery competition, domestic food processing, year-round fruit and vegetable production, and cutting regulatory red tape.

The strategy does not mention bees, honey or pollination anywhere. The opportunity for our sector therefore lies in three places: fitting beekeeping and honey-packing businesses into the generic agri-food programmes; exploiting the one regulatory reform that genuinely targets beekeeping (faster approval of inputs and veterinary biologics); and using the strategy's "more Canada, less import dependence" framing — which the honey-authenticity issue fits unusually well — for advocacy. This briefing sets out, for the beekeeping business, the honey packer and the Federation, where the opportunities are and which entity is eligible for what.

1. The beekeeping business (production side)

This is the side the strategy helps least directly — its money targets processing and controlled-environment agriculture, not primary production.

- **Input / veterinary-biologics approval reform — the single biggest direct win.** $11.3M over four years to clear approval backlogs for seed, feed, fertilizers and veterinary biologics; recognition of approvals from trusted jurisdictions (the Australia agreement is the template); backlog cleared by end-2026 and future approval times cut by a third. This is the mechanism to get Varroa treatments and bee-health products already available in the US/EU/NZ registered in Canada.
- **Productivity Super-Deduction / immediate expensing.** Accelerated write-off on capital spend — extractors, uncapping lines, trucks, indoor-wintering facilities. No application; just capital outlay and your accountant.
- **Farm-succession measures.** Doubled Canadian Agricultural Loans Act guaranteed limit with extended terms, Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption raised to $1.25M and indexed from 2026, and a new task force on intergenerational transfers.
- **Advance Payments Program.** Interest-free advance to $250,000 against honey (an eligible commodity) for seasonal cash flow.
- **Pollination demand (indirect).** The $750M controlled-environment-agriculture pathway and broader fruit/veg push expand acreage over time, lifting pollination-contract demand.

2. The honey packer (value-added side)

The strategy concentrates its money here — processing is framed as the highest-leverage point in the chain (23¢ of every food dollar). Most of the big pots are open to a packing operation:

- **$1B Agri-food Project Finance Fund (Farm Credit Canada).** Catalytic financing for capital-intensive, value-added builds: a packing plant, automated bottling, creamed-honey lines, filtration, warm rooms.
- **REGI – Business Scale-up and Productivity (via PacifiCan).** Interest-free repayable funding, $200k–$5M (agri-food top-up raises the cap toward $10M), up to 50% of costs. See section 4 for the eligibility bar.
- **$150M Food Security Fund (Regional Tariff Response Initiative).** SME equipment upgrades to grow, produce and process more food — with food security named a priority for non-repayable (grant) funding. See section 4.
- **$100M Collaborative Food Innovation Fund (Global Innovation Clusters).** Consortium-model funding for value-added ingredients and IP commercialisation. Best pursued in a group, not solo.
- **Provincial-to-federal licensing support ($12M / 3 yrs).** Hands-on help to bring a provincially-licensed honey house up to federal (SFCR) standard, unlocking interprovincial sale and export.
- **Productivity Super-Deduction / immediate expensing.** Accelerated write-off on bottling, labelling, palletising and warehousing equipment.
- **Food-Link Fund / food hubs ($1B, 20–40 hubs).** Shared cold storage, trucking and co-operative distribution into independent grocers — a packer could supply or anchor one.
- **Import substitution + authenticity.** The headline KPI lifts the domestic share of healthy food from 75% to 85% by 2032. Verified Canadian honey displacing fraudulent imports maps directly onto the strategy's logic — use it in applications and as a market differentiator.
- **Demand channels.** Buy Canadian Policy Framework, the renewed National Food and Beverage Procurement Strategy, and the permanent National School Food Program (400,000 children) are procurement routes for authentic Canadian honey.

3. Canadian Beekeepers Federation — collective opportunities

- **Lead the regulatory file — the highest-value collective play.** Convert the CFIA Act / Pest Control Products Act amendments and the veterinary-biologics funding into registered bee-health products, and ensure the new temporary-pesticide powers carry pollinator safeguards. Every beekeeper benefits.
- **Access the $150M "national innovation ecosystems" SRF stream.** Ecosystem-level rather than firm-level — suited to an association-led initiative such as a national honey authenticity / traceability platform (which also serves the 75%→85% KPI).
- **Convene a consortium for the $100M Collaborative Food Innovation Fund.** Assemble packers, researchers and producers around honey value-added or anti-fraud technology.

- **REGI – Regional Innovation Ecosystems stream.** Not-for-profit only, continuous intake, up to 50%
- **Procurement advocacy.** Push to get authenticity-verified Canadian honey into the National School Food Program and federal procurement, squeezing out fraudulent imports.
- **Shape the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership successor.** The $3.5B cost-shared programme's successor begins April 2028 and is being negotiated now — the vehicle that historically funds bee-health and pollination work.
- **Organise collective distribution and represent the sector** on the intergenerational-transfer task force and in food-hub aggregation models for small beekeepers.

4. The funding routes in detail

Canadian Agricultural Loans Act (CALA)

A federal loan guarantee, not a direct loan: you borrow from a participating bank or credit union and Ottawa guarantees 95% of any net loss, which makes lenders willing to lend on better terms. Current ceiling is $500,000 aggregate per operation — the full $500k for land/buildings, with a $350,000 sub-limit for equipment, breeding stock and refinancing. For an apiary it can fund a honey house, extracting/bottling equipment, trucks, land and colonies (as breeding stock). It does not cover operating costs (that is the Advance Payments Program).

Open to existing, beginning (under 6 years) and start-up farmers, and to those taking over a family farm. Apply through your lender with a business plan and costings. The strategy proposes doubling the limit and extending terms for new entrants and farm transfers — a commitment, not yet enacted.

Using CALA to fund a buy-out: possible only as an asset sale. CALA can finance the tangible assets a buyer acquires (land, buildings, equipment, colonies) but not goodwill, brand value, or a share purchase. If the deal is structured as buying the company's shares, CALA is out entirely. The $350k equipment/stock sub-limit is usually the binding constraint. Sale structure interacts with the seller's capital-gains position — a question for the accountant and the buyer's lender together.

REGI vs the Food Security Fund (the right-sized routes)

Both run through PacifiCan and fund the same kind of capital project (automation, packing capacity, storage), at up to 50% / up to $10M for agri-food. They differ sharply in form and eligibility:

	REGI – Business Scale-up & Productivity	Food Security Fund (RTRI)
Form	Interest-free repayable (a loan)	Grant potential — food security named a priority for non-repayable funding
Amount	$200k–$5M; agri-food top-up toward $10M; up to 50% of costs	Up to $10M (RTRI); SME-scale
Main gate	"High-growth" (~20% YoY), innovative goods/tech, incorporated 2+ yrs, BC facilities	Tariff exposure (e.g. honey exported to the US)
Best for	A packer with a scale-up / automation story	A steady producer-packer that can show tariff impact
Intake	Periodic windows — confirm current window	Call waves: early June 2026, second in fall 2026

Read for a producer-packer: the Food Security Fund is the more promising door (grant-style, eligibility turns on tariff exposure rather than a high-growth test). Business Scale-up is the fallback — interest-free but repayable, and it wants a growth/innovation story. The core Strategic Response Fund itself ($20M+ projects, $10M+ contribution) is out of scale; REGI and the Food Security Fund are the right-sized routes.

5. Programs at a glance: who is eligible and how to use each

Entity key: B = beekeeping business (production) · P = honey packer · F = Canadian Beekeepers Federation (association). Several programs serve more than one.

Program	Who	Specific suggested use
Input & veterinary-biologics approval reform	B, F	F leads: push to register Varroa treatments and bee-health products already cleared in the US/EU/NZ, citing the trusted-jurisdiction recognition. Individual beekeepers benefit from the resulting registrations.
Productivity Super-Deduction / immediate expensing	B, P	Write off new extractors, bottling lines, trucks and storage in the year of purchase. No application — instruct your accountant when you buy.
Advance Payments Program	B	Take the interest-free advance (to $250k) against stored honey to cover spring and summer operating costs.
CALA loan guarantee	B (+ buyer)	Finance a honey house, extracting/bottling kit, land or colonies; or fund an asset-based buy-out of an existing operation. Apply through your bank or credit union.
Farm-succession measures	B	Use the raised CALA limit, the $1.25M capital-gains exemption and transfer rules when planning succession; confirm whether the proposed CALA doubling has been enacted before sizing a loan.

Agri-food Project Finance Fund (FCC)	P	Approach Farm Credit Canada for catalytic financing on a major value-added build — new plant, automated creamed-honey or filtration line.
REGI – Business Scale-up & Productivity (PacifiCan)	P	Apply in an open intake for interest-free repayable funds (up to ~$10M for agri-food) for automation/packing capacity. Frame the project as scale-up plus innovative technology adoption.
REGI – Regional Innovation Ecosystems (PacifiCan)	F	Not-for-profit only, continuous intake. Apply to fund a sector-wide initiative — e.g. bee-health extension or a honey-traceability pilot.
Food Security Fund / RTRI (PacifiCan)	P	Apply in the June/fall 2026 waves for grant-potential equipment funding to process more Canadian honey. Establish tariff exposure (e.g. honey exported to the US) as the eligibility basis.
Collaborative Food Innovation Fund (Global Innovation Clusters)	P, F	Join or convene a consortium to commercialise honey-derived ingredients or anti-fraud / authenticity technology.
Provincial-to-federal licensing support	P	Get hands-on help to bring a provincially-licensed honey house up to federal SFCR standards, unlocking interprovincial sales and export.
Food-Link Fund – terminals & hubs	P, F	P supplies or anchors a regional hub; F can organise a producer co-op sharing cold storage and trucking into independent grocers.
Buy Canadian / national procurement / School Food Program	P, F	P bids to supply authentic Canadian honey; F lobbies for authenticity standards as a procurement criterion.
Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (successor, Apr 2028)	F	F should join the negotiations now to embed bee-health and pollination priorities in the cost-shared programme that reaches producers.
Competition reforms / Grocery Code of Conduct / unit pricing	P	Use fairer-dealing rules and pricing transparency when negotiating listings with chains and independents.
Strategic Response Fund (core)	—	Out of scale for an SME (projects over $20M / $10M+ contributions). Use REGI or the Food Security Fund instead unless contemplating a very large build, possibly in a consortium.
Controlled Environment Agriculture Growth Pathway ($750M)	B (indirect)	Not a direct beekeeping fund; expanding greenhouse and field acreage lifts pollination-contract demand — pursue pollination contracts as acreage grows.

Sources

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