



SPARK questions about **sustainable** PRACTICES

project

AGRICULTURE

What can **sustainable agriculture** look like?

Sustainable agriculture influences, and is influenced by, the way food is produced.

Canadians have ideas about sustainability

Did you know that there are more than 100 definitions of sustainability? The most commonly used definition of sustainability comes from the United Nations. It defines **sustainability** as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. There are three pillars of sustainability – the environment, the economy and society.

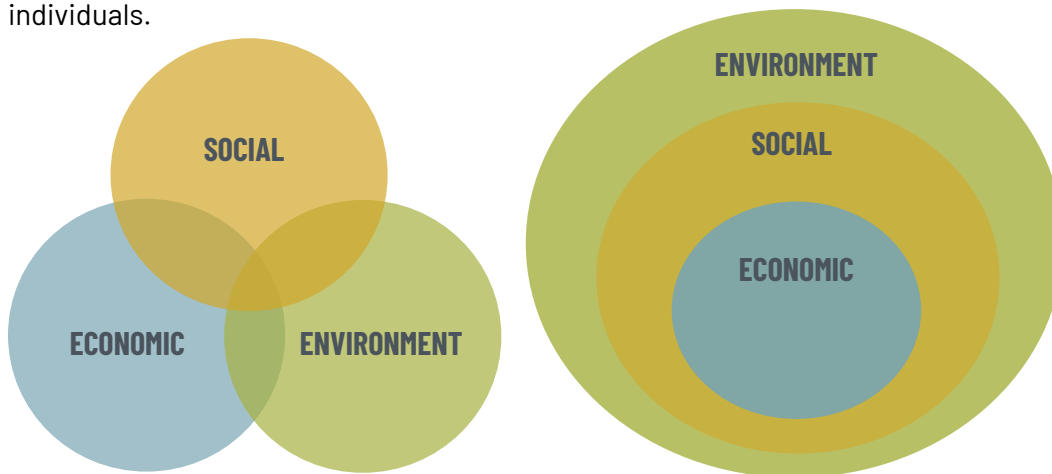
This definition of sustainability is often shown with three connected circles. It can also be shown as three circles nested in each other. This image is used to show that the environment affects all decisions related to sustainability.

Sustainability can apply to many different activities and decisions. Sustainable practices can apply to groups, organizations and individuals.



I will use information and **INVESTIGATE FURTHER** questions to help me identify a project question I want to investigate for an **sustainable PRACTICES** project.

I will identify what I need to know more about.



the concept of sustainability applies to our food

Sustainability can also be used to describe food. Some organizations and individuals describe **sustainable food** as food that:

- Protects the diversity of plants and animals
- Does not damage or waste natural resources and ecosystems
- Provides benefits for society, such as safe and healthy food products
- Contributes to sustainable ways of life and communities

The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) is a non-profit organization made up of farmers, ranchers, people interested in food and food companies as well as universities, non-governmental organizations, restaurants, retailers and food processors.

The CCFI conducts research surveys every year. According to their 2020 survey, sustainable food means different things to different people. However, there **are** some areas of agreement.

- Almost half of the Canadians who participated in the study believe sustainable food has a positive impact on the environment.
- Three in ten say that sustainable food means that it is grown/raised locally.
- About one in four to one in five Canadians say that sustainable food means that food:
 - Is safe for themselves and their family
 - Provides a healthy standard of living for farmers
 - Is nutritious for themselves and their family



INVESTIGATE FURTHER

The way food is produced, distributed and eaten forms an important link between natural and agricultural environments and a healthy society. What practices are involved in producing sustainable food?

SUSTAINABLE FOOD...



Infographic from the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (2020).

the food system is influenced by public interest in sustainability

The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity also found that many Canadians associate sustainable food with a positive impact on climate change and the environment. For example, they look for grocery store items that use less packaging.

Younger Canadians, aged 18 to 23, have the most influence on the demand for environmentally sustainable food.

- These younger Canadians define sustainable food as food that is provided in sustainable packaging.
- They also look for food items with less packaging that have a minimum impact on the environment.
- These younger Canadians are also more likely to look for grocery stores, restaurants and recipes that offer plant-based or meat alternative options.

These concerns are connected to what makes up our food system and the entire process involved in making food accessible to all people.

A **food system** includes how and where food is grown, the materials needed to grow the food, how it is processed and distributed and how it is consumed. It also includes the waste that is created by all these activities.



INVESTIGATE FURTHER

In what ways can a demand for sustainable food influence sustainable farming practices?



INVESTIGATE FURTHER

To what extent and why can definitions and understandings of sustainability change over time?



public interest in sustainability is also connected to an interest in farming

Canadians are not only interested in the “big idea” of sustainability, but they are also interested in farming. This includes an interest in the ways that farming is connected with natural environments. What other food system interests and concerns are identified in the infographic below?

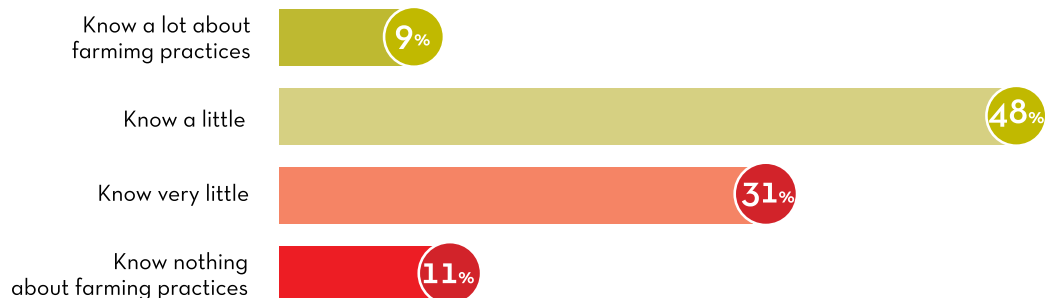


INVESTIGATE FURTHER

How is sustainable food production connected to natural environments and interactions in those environments?

The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Public Trust Research indicates that consumers are interested in the topic of sustainability. Check out the results!

91% of Canadians claim they know ‘little or nothing’ about modern farming practices, and 60% indicate they are interested in learning more.



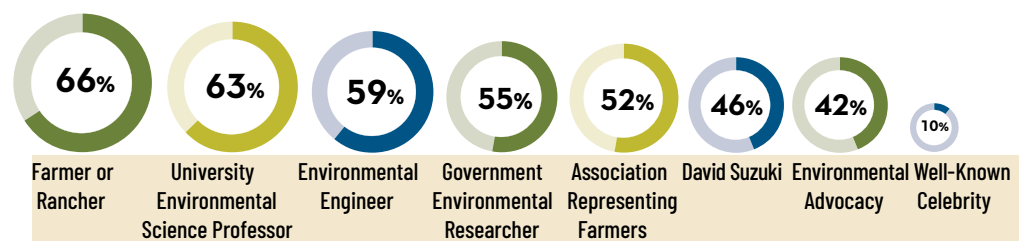
40% of Canadians agreed that Canadian farmers are good stewards of the environment.

When asked if consumers are interested in knowing more about agriculture, 60% of respondents indicated ‘Yes’ and 40% indicated ‘No’.

60% of Canadians are interested in knowing more!

41% indicated they were concerned with the topic of environmental sustainability in farming.

When consumers were asked who they trust to provide credible information about farming and environmental issues, Canadians indicate farmers and researchers as their top sources, respectively.



Infographic from the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Insight Report: Sustainability (2020).