

May 22, 2026

To: Arran McPherson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Technology Branch,
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Re: Urgent Request to Pause Closure of the Organic and Regenerative Research Program at Swift Current Research and Development Centre

Dear Assistant Deputy Minister McPherson,

We are writing to express our urgent concern regarding the planned closure of the Organic and Regenerative Research Program at the Swift Current Research and Development Centre and the immediate risk of irreversible loss of nationally significant research assets and datasets.

Given the timing of spring field operations and the lack of clarity regarding next steps for the program – including whether it can proceed with planned research activities this spring – irreversible damage to long-term organically managed trial land, datasets, and active research projects could occur imminently if operational changes occur before this decision is reconsidered. Once the integrity of organically managed trial land is compromised, these research assets cannot easily be recreated.

This situation is particularly urgent given that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has formally recommended in its report, [*Science in Canadian Agriculture and the Closure of Research Centres*](#), that the Government of Canada “reconsider its decision to cancel the organic and regenerative program at the Swift Current Research and Development Centre.” Proceeding with actions that compromise the program before the government has responded to Parliament’s recommendations risks pre-empting the parliamentary process and permanently eliminating research assets that cannot later be restored.

We therefore respectfully request that **AAFC immediately pause any actions that would compromise the integrity of the program’s long-term field trials and allow planned 2026 field operations and research activities to proceed** while discussions continue and options for preserving research assets, datasets, and continuity are considered.

There also remains uncertainty regarding whether the program will be permitted to operate through the previously discussed 12-month transition period necessary to complete ongoing projects, fulfill external commitments, and responsibly preserve scientific data and capacity. The Committee further emphasized the importance of preserving unique research programs and ensuring continuity for long-term research assets.

Given the program’s alignment with AAFC priorities, externally supported research activity, and limited apparent operational savings, it is difficult to understand the rationale for closing this program.

The Swift Current RDC itself remains operational, meaning this decision does not appear to achieve meaningful facility consolidation or “bricks and mortar” savings. At the same time,

the closure risks the loss of industry-funded projects, collaborative partnerships, scientific expertise, and long-term research infrastructure that cannot readily be rebuilt.

The Organic and Regenerative Research Program is the most active dedicated organic systems research program within AAFC and has operated for nearly two decades.

The program's work is directly aligned with AAFC's stated science and research priorities. Its research addresses agronomic resilience, crop diversification, soil health, weed and pest management, disease suppression, greenhouse gas mitigation, cover cropping, and climate adaptation. These are core agricultural priorities that benefit producers across production systems — not only organic producers.

Research conducted through the program has provided practical insights into diversified rotations, soil health, integrated pest management, disease suppression, and low-input production systems that are increasingly relevant as producers face climate variability, input cost pressures, and evolving market demands.

While we remain concerned about the broader impacts of recent AAFC research cuts across the research ecosystem, the Swift Current program has a distinct context and presents a uniquely urgent situation because irreversible losses could occur if field operations proceed before reconsideration of the decision is undertaken.

At minimum, we urge AAFC to:

- immediately pause any destruction or alteration of the long-term organic trial land under the program;
- authorize planned field operations for the 2026 season;
- maintain the scientific and technical capacity necessary to preserve research continuity and orderly completion of ongoing research activities; and
- engage urgently with affected stakeholders and partners to discuss options for continuity.

We request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this matter and potential pathways forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan
Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network
Canadian Federation of Agriculture
Canada Organic Trade Association
Canadian Organic Growers
Common Frontiers
Coop Agrobio du Québec
Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario
Équiterre
Farmers for Climate Solutions

Food Secure Canada
Friends of the Earth Canada
Growers of Organic Food Yukon
Manitoba Organics
National Farmers Union
Ontario Organic
Organic BC
Prairie Food System Vision Network
Prairie Oat Growers Association
Regeneration Canada
Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission
Saskatchewan Seed Growers' Association
SaskOrganics
SaskWheat
SeedChange
Young Agrarians