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Chair: Michael Coteau



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• (1635)

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Wassim Bouanani): Honourable members of the committee, I see a quorum.

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(3)a), as the clerk of the committee, I will preside over the election of the chair and the vice-chair.

[English]

I must inform members that the clerk of the committee can only receive motions for the election of the chair. The clerk cannot receive other types of motions, cannot entertain points of order and cannot participate in debate.

We can now proceed to the election of the chair. Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the chair must be a member of the government party.

I am ready to receive motions for the chair.

Mr. Barlow, go ahead.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Clerk, I nominate Michael Coteau as chair of the committee.

[Translation]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Mr. Barlow that Mr. Coteau be elected as chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Coteau duly elected chair of the committee.

I invite Mr. Coteau to take the chair.

[English]

The Chair (Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.)): Thank you very much. I really appreciate this opportunity to chair this very important committee.

I want to speak for a couple of minutes to people from all different walks of life who are specifically somehow connected to agriculture. I want to say thank you for your commitment to this important sector. I'll work as hard as I can to ensure that we can move along to do what we can do to advance the interests of agriculture in this country.

Before we continue, I'd like to ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the cards on the table. These mea-

sures are in place to help prevent audio and feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters. You will also notice a QR code on the cards, which links to a short awareness video.

If the committee is in agreement, I will now invite the clerk to proceed with the election of the vice-chairs.

The Clerk: Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the first vice-chair must be a member of the official opposition. I am now prepared to receive motions for the first vice-chair.

[Translation]

Go ahead, Mrs. Chatel.

Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I nominate John Barlow as first vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

The Clerk: It has been moved by Madame Chatel that Mr. Barlow be elected as first vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

Seeing none, I will now put the motion to the committee. It has been moved by Madame Chatel that Mr. Barlow be elected as first vice-chair of the committee. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Barlow duly elected first vice-chair of the committee.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 106(2), the second vice-chair must be a member of an opposition party other than the official opposition.

I am now prepared to receive motions for the second vice-chair.

Go ahead, Ms. Dandurand.

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): I nominate Yves Perron as second vice-chair of the committee.

The Clerk: It has been moved by Ms. Dandurand that Mr. Perron be elected as second vice-chair of the committee.

Are there any further motions?

(Motion agreed to)

The Clerk: I declare the motion carried and Mr. Perron duly elected second vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

The Chair: If the committee is in agreement, I will now invite members to present the routine motions. A draft version of these motions has been distributed by the clerk to all members in both official languages.

If it's preferable that each motion be presented individually and adopted separately, does any member wish to present them?

Go ahead, Mr. Connors.

Paul Connors (Avalon, Lib.): I'm going to suggest that we move these motions as a block and approve them all at one time.

The Chair: Is there an agreement that we can move everything all at once?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motions agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings])

The Chair: Considering that we have passed the routine motions, I guess we can invite the analysts here to join us now. Please join us.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: Welcome. Thank you.

Are there any additional issues to be brought forward for discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Perron.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, everyone.

First, I have to say that I think we have a great team.

Second, I've talked to each of the members briefly, and I get the sense that we will be guided in our work by the tradition of the common good and the best interests of people in the agriculture and agri-food sector, as we've been doing for years now. I'm very happy about that.

Last, I thank the members for placing their trust in me as second vice-chair, even though there wasn't really any other choice based on the criteria.

I would like to give notice of two motions. I don't want to discuss them today, but I want the members to have the text of these motions, which are about specific studies.

I'll read them, if I may, Mr. Chair.

• (1640)

[English]

The Chair: If you just wait one minute, we'll distribute them.

We'll take a minute or 30 seconds.

Sir, go ahead.

[Translation]

Yves Perron: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The first notice of motion is about the pork industry.

Whereas:

1. The reference price used in the pork sector in Quebec and Canada is currently that of the U.S. market, which can lead to distortions throughout the supply chain;

2. There is no similar transparency mechanism in Quebec or Canada; and

3. Producers, processors, and retailers all deserve a fair share of the revenue;

It is agreed that the members of the Committee will convene stakeholders in the pork supply chain for 3 meetings to discuss how prices are set in the industry and to bring about greater transparency.

The problem is the lack of transparency in the market. We don't know where in the supply chain the money is going. In Quebec in particular, the number of independent producers is declining steadily. We therefore think it would be worthwhile for the committee to study this matter.

The second notice of motion is about the investment deficit in the agri-food sector.

Whereas:

1. The agri-food sector is experiencing an investment deficit that is hindering its growth and our food resilience;

2. According to the OECD, between 2011 and 2023, Canada fell from 37th to 44th place out of 47 countries in terms of capital investment in the agri-food sector;

3. According to a report by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, automation and digitization in the industry must be encouraged by the government in order for it to achieve its growth objectives; and

4. To reduce our environmental footprint and food cost inflation, regional food processing with a focus on short supply chains should be considered;

It is agreed that the committee members will convene stakeholders from the agri-food sector for three meetings to study the issue and propose solutions to this situation.

The motion is clear enough, and I don't think I need to explain it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Let's get some good work done, everyone.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

It's my understanding that this is just a notice of motion and that we'll deal with it in the fall.

Go ahead, Mr. Barlow.

John Barlow: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks, Mr. Perron, for these motions. I think both would be worthwhile, but I would just suggest two things, Mr. Chair, if I may.

Previously, each party would bring some suggestions to a subcommittee where we would, together, decide on our calendar for a certain number of weeks. That seemed to work well, so I would suggest that if Ms. Chatel is still open to doing that, we would get together in the early fall as soon as we resume and have that subcommittee meeting—or maybe during the summer, if we really want to get things going quickly in the fall. If all of us would have some time as parties and members of Parliament to come up with a couple of ideas and present a couple of ideas from all of us that would be discussed at the subcommittee, we could prioritize those and see which ones we want to do first.

With regard to the ones that Mr. Perron.... For example, with regard to the motion on pork, the same thing could easily be said about beef, so I don't know why we would just be specific on pork. If we want to discuss that, I think we would have to broaden it. Mr. Bonk knows that file extremely well; he would have some good suggestions on that.

Also, on your other one with the OECD numbers, net revenue for farming and agriculture was down 25% last year. That's the worst drop since 1988, so there's more to this issue than just innovation and technology and lack of investment. I would like to maybe take a look at that and broaden that or find some language not just on the productivity side and the investment side but also on the revenue side. Why is revenue dropping at catastrophic rates, and what are some of the reasons that we can maybe address?

I think this is a good start, but again, Mr. Chair, I would suggest that, as parties, we come forward with a few suggestions each and have a subcommittee meeting. We can maybe try to organize a

Zoom meeting in early September and then be able to hit the ground running in late September. That would be my suggestion, Mr. Chair.

• (1645)

The Chair: It sounds like both are compatible, so we'll move this until the fall, and then we'll do exactly what you suggested. I think that's something we normally do.

Go ahead, Sophie.

Sophie Chatel: I absolutely second the suggestion of meeting at the subcommittee to decide on the priority. There's a lot we could achieve, and I think this committee has a lot to offer. I think now is the time, as things are moving quite quickly, for us to have a strong voice for our farmers and producers.

On those two motions, I think that there's a lot that I like in them, and I, myself, would also like to make recommendations. I think that eventually in that subcommittee we could sort these out, but it's a very good basis. There are things I would like to even go further on in some of the proposals, but I want to thank the member for the suggestion.

The Chair: Well, it sounds like we're all on the same page. Is there anything else that anyone has to bring up for discussion?

Okay. Is there a motion to adjourn? Yes.

Does everyone agree?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Have a great summer. The meeting is adjourned.

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