



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

# Creative concepts in support of the AgriCommunication Campaign

Qualitative research

## Executive Summary

Prepared for:  
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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Canada 

# **Creative Concepts in Support of the AgriCommunication Campaign**

## **Qualitative Research**

### Executive Summary

#### **Prepared for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**

Supplier Name: Narrative Research

March 10, 2022

This public opinion research report presents the results of online focus groups conducted by Narrative Research on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The research included a total of 16 online focus groups, with young adults 18 to 34 years old, adults aged 35 and older, and females, located in each of five regions: British Columbia, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic. Twelve groups were conducted in English and four in French, from February 14 to 16, 2022.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre :

#### **Concepts créatifs à l'appui de la campagne AgriCommunication Recherche qualitative**

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## Executive summary

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### Background and research methodology

The purpose of the research is to inform Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC's) development and promotion of a toolkit highlighting how farmers play a leadership role in the adoption of more sustainable and climate-resilient practices, and clean technologies, with the support of the Government of Canada. The focus testing was designed to examine three concepts being considered in support of the AgriCommunication initiative, seeking to understand if they resonate with the target audiences and are clearly communicating the message and the intended call-to-action.

To reach this goal, a total of 16 online focus groups were conducted on February 14 to 16, 2022 in large urban centers across five regions. Regions included: British Columbia, (Greater Vancouver/Victoria), Prairies (Winnipeg/Saskatoon/Regina/Edmonton/Calgary), Ontario (Greater Toronto Area (GTA)/Ottawa), Quebec (Montreal/Quebec City), and Atlantic Canada (Halifax/Moncton/Saint John/Fredericton/Charlottetown/St. John's). Across regions, the distribution of focus groups included five sessions with young adults 18 to 34 years old, five sessions with adults 35 years or older, as well as four mixed age sessions with females only and two sessions with minority language groups. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes and 12 sessions were held in English, while four were conducted in French. Participants were provided an incentive of \$100. Across all groups, a total of 144 individuals were recruited and 125 participated.

All participants were recruited per the recruitment specifications for the Government of Canada. Recruitment was conducted through qualitative panels stored on Canadian servers, with follow-up calls to confirm the details provided and to ensure quotas were met. This report presents the findings from the study. Caution must be exercised when interpreting the results from this study, as qualitative research is intended to be directional only. Results cannot be attributed to the overall population under study, with any degree of confidence.

### **Political neutrality certificate**

I hereby certify as a representative of Narrative Research that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Directive on the Management of Communications. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed



Margaret Brigley, CEO and Partner | Narrative Research

Date: March 11, 2022

### **Key findings and conclusions**

The following summarizes the key findings and conclusions from the Qualitative Research on Creative Concepts in Support of the AgriCommunication initiative. Three concepts were examined, each included three web banners and either three or four social media ads.

#### **“Our Food. Our Planet.” Concept**

Overall reactions to the concept “Our Food. Our Planet.” were positive, prompting participants to feel a personal connection to the issue at hand. This concept elicited a feeling of community and togetherness, and communicated aspects related to sustainability and the future of the planet. In general, this concept was felt to inform the public that farmers are engaged in sustainable actions, with an invitation to find out more about what farmers are doing. That said, the focus was felt to be more about the farmer and education, rather than on the consumer and an individual’s actions, leading some to feel more like a spectator than a participant. While the topic of sustainable agricultural practices was felt to be targeted to everyone, participants were unsure of their role and how they could get engaged in the process. As such, this concept lacked personal relevance to some.

Further, the global nature of the tagline (Our Food. Our Planet) meant it was not always clear that the concept was referring to Canadian farmers or farmers in general, as this information was only clarified in one call-to-action statement, and not throughout the concept visuals/messaging. There is a risk associated with this approach in its current form as it could be interpreted as a global campaign rather than a Canadian initiative. The statement “Learn how farmers are growing a better future/Découvrez comment les agriculteurs cultivent un avenir meilleur” was felt to be an invitation to find out what sustainable practices are implemented by

farmers, though it was not felt to be compelling even among those who found it intriguing. Of the three English action statements reviewed, the preferred version was, “Canadian farmers are leading the way in feeding a growing population. Find out how you can play your part.”, however, there was confusion as to the context of what would be communicated and why consumers should care. French-speaking participants identified two statements as most compelling : “Les agriculteurs canadiens sont en première ligne pour nourrir une population croissante. Découvrez comment faire votre part” and “Apprenez-en davantage sur la façon dont (insérer le nom de l'agriculteur) contribue à assurer un avenir meilleur”.

Visually, this concept received mixed reviews, with some finding it bland conservative, and lacking visual appeal, while others appreciated the design’s simplicity and use of photography. Many found the darker green colour choice unappealing despite its association with nature.

### **“Feel Good About Your Food” Concept**

Overall reactions to the concept “Feel Good About Your Food” were more polarizing than the other two concepts, with a wider mix of opinions, and fewer considering this a strong concept. It was felt that the focus is almost exclusively on the importance of eating healthy foods and buying local in support of the agriculture sector, and to a lesser extent, an invitation to become more informed about food and agriculture. For many, the buy local reference was felt to be too familiar and overused to have a lasting impact, despite the concept being eye-catching and visually colourful. The concept did not effectively convey the importance of sustainable agricultural practices, nor did it strongly evoke any connection to farmers’ actions in addressing climate change, or the sector’s contribution to the Canadian economy.

The tagline was considered vague and resulted in varying interpretations, although the overall message was deemed to be supporting local agriculture through consumer purchases. In addition, the statement “Support our farmers and food producers/Appuyez nos agriculteurs et nos producteurs agroalimentaires” lacked direction on its own, and elicited a specific call-to-action only when paired with the tagline “Feel good about your food”. Of the three action statements reviewed, “#FeelGoodFood is just around the corner. Find out how you can support sustainable agriculture by visiting [Landing Page].” was preferred across English audiences. The hashtag was highly appealing and considered memorable, along with the clear call-to-action about what could be learned by visiting the website. French-speaking participants’ preference was equally divided between the three statements examined. Of note, the French hashtag was considered too long to be memorable. A suggestion was made to shorten the hashtag to “#AlimentsRéconfort”.

The overall look and design for this concept were well received as being bright and eye-catching, and the use of photography was more appealing than drawn images. That said, some

felt that it aligned too closely with various designs associated with Canada's Food Guide, or that it looked dated.

### **“Our Future to Grow” Concept**

Overall Reactions to the concept “Our Future to Grow” were mixed. This concept had memorable/unique elements that elicited interest for some but that confused others and raised questions as to the intention. Some felt that the concept was encouraging citizens to grow their own food, or support their local farmers, while others felt that it was communicating that we all have a part to play in sustainability, and that individual actions can contribute to it. Confusion resulted in part from the tagline being vague, and the visuals that could lead to various interpretations. The confusion was most evident for those who looked at the imagery too literally, seeing a giant woman who was watering mountains, in reference to growing our future. That said, for others the unique nature of the images (large woman watering, vine moving throughout the images) was memorable, and sparked an interest in learning more. The vine helped contribute to a feeling of connectedness and a sense that we are all in this together, which aligned with the use of the word “our” in the tagline.

As a result, interpretations of the intent varied, with some feeling they were being asked to grow their own food, to support local agriculture, or to focus on sustainable farming. This concept was more likely to raise discussion around economic and environmental concerns, including drought, flooding, fires affecting farmers, the price of food, inflation, and supply chain issues.

Though considered vague, the tagline “Our Future to Grow” was seen as optimistic and the use of the word “our” created a sense of community and togetherness. Of the three action statements reviewed, the preferred version across audiences and languages was “There are many challenges that affect farmers and the food we eat. Learn more about what farmers are doing to protect Canadians and what you can do to amplify their action/La production d'aliments comporte de nombreux défis. Découvrez ce que font les agriculteurs pour protéger la population canadienne et comment vous pouvez contribuer à leur action”. This statement does not place the onus on the individual to identify areas, but rather it creates an opportunity to learn more about the challenges and what could be done.

From a graphics standpoint, this concept was felt to be unique and original by some, but confusing and lacking clarity to others. Some of the visuals were also considered too busy or too small to be fully understood.

## Conclusion and direction

Research findings reveal that receptivity to the three concepts were mixed, each eliciting different interpretations of the intent and overall messaging. This results in some confusion as to the objective of the campaign, limited personal relevance, and a weak call-to-action. Nonetheless, speaking of sustainable agricultural practices and the government's involvement in this area was considered important, particularly in light of economic challenges and the impact of climate change on agriculture.

With this in mind, the **ultimate concept selection should be based on the desired message** that AAFC wishes to communicate. Both the "Our Food. Our Planet." and "Our Future to Grow" concepts communicated a broader scope of messaging that included, to varying degrees, references to sustainability, the importance of the agriculture sector to our economy, and the need for consumer to play a role in supporting farming, while the "Feel Good About Your Food" concept was seen as primarily a buy local campaign.

Mixed opinions were also expressed in terms of which concept **makes people think about their own actions**. "Our Food. Our Planet." and "Our Future to Grow" concepts were both felt to engage participants to think about their choices to preserve what is "theirs", while the "Feel Good About Your Food" concept was most strongly conveying the need to buy locally produced foods, or Canadian products, something that is easily actionable.

In terms of the concept that **elicited pride in agriculture and the farm sector, and the effort being made to fight climate change**, in many cases, the identified concept was different from the individual's preferred concept. Often, the "Our Food. Our Planet." concept was selected because of the feeling of connectedness from using the word "Our". In some cases, there was surprise with the topic of climate change being raised in the context of the campaign when this was introduced at the end of the focus group. While sustainability and climate change were considered related, there had often not been specific mentions of climate change throughout sessions in relation to each of the three concepts examined.

Findings suggest that other aspects need to be considered in the final development of the campaign concept. Across all three concepts, each component on their own lacked clarity and comprehensiveness of messaging. Only when considering all aspects together was there greater clarity in the intent, particularly in terms of identifying sustainability or support for farmers. Most importantly, components of the concepts that only included an image and tagline were not well understood and did not display a strong call-to-action, resulting in confusion and wide ranging interpretations as to the overall intent. To fully understand the intent of the campaign, a higher level of detail is needed, such as the use of a tagline, a follow-up statement, and a call-

to-action statement on all components. In general, the action statements provided clarity in messaging and intent, and thus should be incorporated into the final creative components. Statements that indicate how to play a part were by far preferred.

Despite the perceived limited personal relevance of the concepts, the use of the word “our” consistently elicited a personal connection and aided in increasing the perceived importance of the message. It also identified the general public as being the campaign’s target audience. Establishing personal relevance is key to capture interest and engage the public to reflect on their own role and contribution.

From a design standpoint, the use of real images/photography and real farmers/situations was appealing across the three concepts. Diversity in the types of people (gender, race and age), and in the types of farming (dairy, wheat, eggs, vegetables, etc.) are considered important.

Finally, the best ways to communicate the message to the target audiences include social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter were commonly mentioned), at the source such as in grocery stores, or general channels such as the subway or billboards.