



THE AGRICULTURE UNION: AN OVERVIEW

Agriculture Union members are front-line defenders of public health, supporters of sustainable agriculture and guardians of a secure food chain. Others carry out key roles in upholding integrity in the federal public service and ensuring the public is able to receive services in both official languages.

Our more than 8,000 members work for such important federal government departments and agencies as the:

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA);
- Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)
 - Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
 - Canada Agricultural Review Tribunal (CART)
 - Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency (CPMA);
- Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC);
- Canadian Grain Commission (CGC);
- Canada School of Public Service (CSPS);
- Public Service Commission (PSC); and the
- Department of National Defence (DND) (language training).

Just as Agriculture Union members work diligently to protect the public, their union works to protect their rights in the workplace. An involved membership ensures our Union's continued strength and inclusiveness. Each member is strongly urged to participate. Membership control is enshrined in Agriculture Union by-laws and regulations. Regular meetings, conferences and conventions ensure the Union's leadership – at every level – is always accountable to the membership.

The workplace-centered Local is the heart of our union. Locally-elected executive members and activists work with members to protect and enforce their rights. They assist and represent co-workers on workplace problems or incidents of management abuse in such areas as discipline, harassment, discrimination, health and safety and technological change.

Our national officers are Agriculture Union members, elected by delegates to our union's National Triennial Convention. The National Executive and the National Council together run the business of our union between conventions.

The National Executive is comprised of a National President and four National Executive Vice-Presidents. The National Council is made up:

- National Executive
- Regional Vice-Presidents, who represent defined geographical regions of the country; and
- National Directors elected to represent our members at the Psc, CSPS, DND (Language training) , CGC and such common interests as Human Rights.

Union officers are backed by a strong team of Service Officers and administrative staff located at our National Office in Ottawa. This experienced staff provides guidance and support to the membership.

The Agriculture Union is a Component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), one of the country's largest and most progressive unions. While our Union provides the specific knowledge and familiarity needed to deal with the particular government Departments and Agencies that employ our members, the PSAC has the resources and expertise to take on the larger federal public service issues that impact all Agriculture Union members, regardless of their specific job or workplace.

Membership in the PSAC allows Agriculture Union members to enjoy the best of both worlds – the autonomy we want combined with 'strength in numbers' and access to such specialized services as education, adjudication and negotiations.

The labour movement in Canada has always had a strong social conscience. While wages and working conditions will always remain our key concerns, many of the universal social programs that Canadians now enjoy were first fought for and won by organized labour. A partial list of labour's victories would have to include: medicare; workers' compensation; old age pensions; employment insurance; human rights legislation; and pay equity. Major gains won by unions like the Agriculture Union and the PSAC are shared today by all Canadians.

(January 2012)