

To Whom It May Concern:

Please consider the following for publication as a letter to the editor:

Rather than eliminate prison farms, Correctional Service should be moving in the other direction – increasing the availability of such programs and widening their scope. Expanding the farm program would, in one fell swoop, increase successful rehabilitation *and* generate even greater financial returns for CSC, the government and taxpayers.

From the farm gate to the processing plant, agriculture today is a business. While there will always be a need for some low-skilled labour, managing Canada's food chain requires ever-greater knowledge and skill.

CSC Institutions should accordingly expand and extend existing farming programs. Greater use of greenhouses could extend growing seasons, allowing the growing of higher-value produce and growing flowers and plants to stock local nurseries. There should be an upward move into value-added products. A dairy farm could also produce cheese or other milk by-products. Where grain is grown, create a specialty bakery.

CSC's farm programs could be restructured as self-funding profit centres that provide inmates with both the knowledge and the skills they need to secure *real realistic employment* upon their release.

If managed and run with energy and vision, our prison farm programs could evolve into world-class models of rehabilitation.

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