ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN: HOW FOOD GOES FROM A SEED TO THE CONSUMER IN SIX STEPS

1. SEED
Many crops, like corn, canola and soy, start the same as a seed. In cases of GM seeds, they can be developed to resist pest pressure or to help reduce food waste.

2. PLANTED
The seeds, whether they have been genetically modified or not, are then planted and grown by a farmer, often with the help of crop protection products and other tools.

3. HARVEST
When farmers harvest their crops at the end of the growing season, they are packaged up and sent off the farm and along the supply chain.

4. DISTRIBUTION
The commodity now goes out into trade routes, is sent to processing facilities or is kept in storage.

5. PROCESSING
Cotton gets woven into shirts; corn and soy feed livestock; canola gets pressed into oil; and wheat is milled into flour for bread. Here is where products are sent to markets, restaurants, and clothing stores to then finish the journey with the consumer.

6. CONSUMER
Products are sent to markets, restaurants, and clothing stores to then finish the journey with the consumer.

WHAT IS A FUNCTIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

When the chain is broken, farmers, producers and everyone else involved are impacted. If food doesn’t reach the consumer, the environment suffers, the farmer’s inputs are wasted, and economic repercussions often ensue.

RESTAURANTS
Goods for restaurants are prepared in different quantities and packaging than those for sale at the grocery store. When restaurants no longer need those products, the intricate chain that packages canola oil for fryers, or potatoes into 50 lb crates can’t adapt to such an abrupt change to repackage and redirect the product elsewhere.

SCHOOLS
When schools close and the children are no longer drinking milk, farmers suffer from loss of that specific demand. But while there may be empty shelves in the dairy aisle, there is no way for farmers to get that milk to a completely different supply chain while it is still fresh.

FARMERS
If farmers and ranchers can’t get seeds, pesticides, or animal feed, their entire operations have to be put on hold as there is no way for them to plant, protect or raise their commodities. Functional supply chains are needed for food security all the way from the farmer to the consumer.