

FROM THE FIELD

From our field office to yours – timely information for MPPs about Ontario's agri-food sector, from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Don McCabe
President
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of Agriculture

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring signals renewal in agriculture, and one of the busiest seasons for our 36,000 farm members. Farmers across the province are setting their sights and plans on the opportunities that lay ahead for this new growing season.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is supporting our members on the issues that are important to their businesses and their families. In this issue of *From the Field* you can read about our work on the opportunities for agriculture in the Cap and Trade System, our position on Bill 100 and an update on addressing phosphorus issues in Lake Erie.

There is no better way to experience our sector – with all its opportunities and innovation – than to see it firsthand. We hope you have an opportunity this summer to visit rural Ontario and a farm market or two. We also hope you can join our annual OFA Field Day on August 9 to learn about North America's only vertically-integrated duck farm.

Thank you for your continued interest and support in Ontario's agri-food sector. During this spring season, we encourage you to take a drive and enjoy a local farm market in your area.

2016 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE: DATA DRIVES DECISIONS



Five-year check-in uncovers industry trends and insights that help guide agriculture policy.

Just as governments depend on census data to track trends and shape policies, the agricultural community depends on the Census of Agriculture results to guide policy recommendations for our sector. This five-year check-in uncovers industry trends and insights, and demonstrates the contributions that agriculture makes to the Canadian economy.

This year's Census of Agriculture will be completed by anyone responsible for, or knowledgeable about, the day-to-day decisions on a farm operation. Questions cover a range of topics including land use, crops, livestock, agricultural labour, machinery and farm finances.

New for the 2016 census, farmers will also be asked about adoption of new technology, direct marketing, succession planning and renewable energy production.

OFA encourages all politicians to work with farm organizations in using the results of the 2016 Census of Agriculture. We all depend on food grown in Canada, and the policy decisions made need to be informed. Stay in touch with census data.

Inside...

**Bill 100 | Cap and Trade
Phosphorus | Six by Sixteen**

ADVOCATING FOR AGRICULTURE IN A CAP AND TRADE SYSTEM

With a Cap and Trade System coming to the province, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture is hard at work advocating for the important role our agricultural sector can play to address climate change mitigation.

OFA has been working with the government since the new system was announced, and we're pleased with the potential of Cap and Trade and the carbon offset contributions agriculture can make. Carbon offsets are generated by the

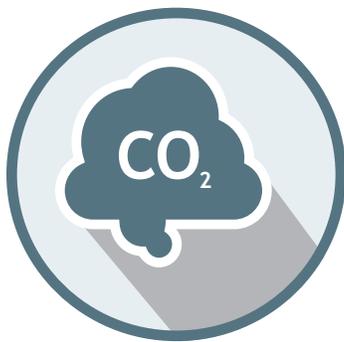
actions of an unregulated sector, like agriculture, that reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions, going beyond what would have happened in the absence of those actions.

OFA is committed to working with government and industry to ensure the new system recognizes agriculture's role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and includes a flexible, realistic and simple path to agricultural offset credits from farmers.

OFA hosted a workshop this spring entitled "*Setting off on offsets – Farming's contribution to greenhouse gas reduction and how to capitalize on it*" that brought together Canadian and international experts, and included topics on offset policy, emerging technology, and experiences from other jurisdictions operating a Cap and Trade System.

You can view workshop presentations at ofa.on.ca

- ✓ We support a system that acknowledges the carbon offsets that Ontario's agricultural industry offers
- ✓ We are encouraged by the government's commitment to support on-farm emissions reductions
- ✓ We want a system that recognizes the efforts Ontario farmers are already making to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- ✓ We are looking for policy decisions that limit undue burdens and regulations for Ontario farmers



Working together to reduce phosphorus levels in Lake Erie

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, along with regional Lake Erie and water Working Groups, is looking at solutions to reduce overall phosphorus levels in the lake and minimize phosphorus loss from farmland into the watershed.

Ontario farmers have already made many changes to farming practices to reduce phosphorus levels using Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Many factors contribute to phosphorus levels in Lake Erie and surrounding waterways including farm and municipal sources. OFA supports the goal of reducing phosphorus load, and has partnered with Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI). Together, we're developing a pilot project in the Thames River Basin to encourage farmers and non-farm landowners to adopt water

management and drainage improvements to reduce phosphorus loss.

We're also working as part of a bi-national agreement between Canada and the United States under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to meet the phosphorus reductions targets. A joint project under this agreement is developing a phosphorus reduction strategy and domestic action plan by 2018. OFA and GLSLCI will be providing input and influence on Canada's domestic action plan and phosphorus reduction strategies.



Easing into the proposed *Supporting Ontario's Trails Act*

Many Ontarians love to explore the unique and diverse landscapes throughout the province, including thousands of kilometres of recreational trails. Many of those trails intersect privately owned land including farm operations. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is on record supporting the voluntary nature of any trail-related easement – addressing the areas where public trails pass over private land. But we must ensure the rights of private landowners are not overlooked.

OFA supports Bill 100 and the proposed *Supporting Ontario's Trails Act* in principal, but continues to recommend more clarity on the issue of easements, trespassing and best practices. We have outlined all of our concerns and suggestions in a formal submission on Bill 100 *Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2016* – a bill that also includes amendments to other statutes including *Occupier's Liability Act* and *Trespass to Property Act*.

Here are some highlights from OFA's submission.

- OFA disagrees that Bill 100 will impose any trail-related easements on unsuspecting and unwilling private property owners
- Bill 100 needs clarification on easements – that they are voluntary, solely at the discretion of the property owner, and will never be unilaterally imposed on a property owner
- Adherence to trail-related best practices must be a condition of any trail organization receiving government funding
- Enable a property owner to specify the terms for easements on their property
- Bill 100 fails to address liability protection for farmers and rural property owners as part of the amendments to the *Occupiers' Liability Act*
- Bill 100 falls short on OFA's longstanding requests to adjust and enforce fines in the proposed amendments to the *Trespass to Property Act*

Fueling growth

Agriculture runs on energy, driving economic growth in the province with jobs, food, processing and spin-off benefits to rural and local communities. But we need ways to stay competitive, especially when it comes to energy costs.

- We need investments in rural infrastructure that include natural gas infrastructure to lower business costs on farms, in the agri-food sector and throughout rural Ontario
- We need a farm/industrial electricity rate to remain competitive and grow our farm businesses



LET'S GET YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE KITCHEN



Every \$1 spent promoting healthy eating saves up to \$6 in chronic disease health care costs.

February 2008 Presentation for a Healthier America report.

We are helping young people make healthy food choices. OFA is serving up food literacy at SixbySixteen.me, a new website that draws on the resources of more than 20 commodity partners to help young people learn to plan and prepare six nutritious, locally sourced meals by the time they are 16.

OFA created this new hub of information for parents, young teens, teachers and health professionals to promote local, healthy food choices. There are resources to learn how to make meals, find local food and make healthy food choices.

We're holding a special launch event on May 25 – follow us along on Twitter (@SixbySixteen), Facebook (/SixbySixteen) and Instagram (SixbySixteen). And watch for an exciting cooking contest coming up.

If you have ideas or questions about SixbySixteen, contact us at sixbysixteen@ofa.on.ca



Celebrating 80 years of advocacy for Ontario agriculture

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is celebrating an impressive milestone throughout 2016. It's the 80th anniversary of Canada's largest general farm organization. To mark the occasion, OFA has created a special 80th anniversary logo, and we've established four exciting events to celebrate – new bursaries, a trivia contest, a farm gate challenge and an agricultural trip.

- OFA has established three new **80th anniversary bursaries** for students of OFA families who are continuing their education in the agriculture and agri-food sector.
- You can test your knowledge of OFA trivia in the **80 for 80 Trivia Contest** – follow along on OFA's weekly e-newsletter, Twitter (@OntarioFarms) and Facebook (/OntarioFarms).
- Beautifying OFA's iconic farm gates could win cash for farm members who dress up their farm signs in the **OFA Farm Gate Challenge**.
- OFA is sponsoring a special group trip to the **2017 World Agriculture Expo** in California.

For more information on any of these activities, visit ofa.on.ca and click on the OFA 80th logo.

Springtime and the eating is easy

Ontario agriculture comes alive in the spring, and so do the food options. Farmers' markets are opening up, the first local foods of the season are arriving in stores. If you're wondering what's in season and where you can find it, check out some of these great resources.

Farmersmarketsontario.ca – listing of local farmers' markets across the province

Ontariofarmfresh.com – find a farm to visit in your area, and a listing of what fruits and vegetables are in season

Coming events

OFA FIELD DAY

— 2016 —

Mark August 9 in your calendar to join OFA to learn about and experience Ontario agriculture. We're hosting another exciting on-farm event to give you a firsthand look at some of the food grown, processed and enjoyed right here at home.

Tuesday, August 9, 2016
10 am - 2 pm
King Cole Ducks
Newmarket, ON

You're invited to this exclusive event for Ontario MPPs, staff and guests at North America's only vertically-integrated duck farm.

Watch your inbox for more information. Or contact us at fieldday@ofa.on.ca if you have questions.

Do you have questions about Ontario's agri-food sector or want to learn more about issues impacting our industry? Contact OFA for insight and information.

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