



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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March 7, 2012

Elk Management Program
Ministry of Natural Resources
Wildlife Policy Section
300 Water Street
P.O. Box 7000
Peterborough, Ontario
K9J 8M5

Attn: Elk Program Coordinator

RE: EBR Registry Number 011-5624, Amendment to Regulation under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to extend the open season for hunting elk

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) has a long-standing interest in issues pertaining to elk, particularly the relationship between elk and agricultural operations. In that context, OFA welcomes the opportunity to provide its comments on the proposal to extend the Fall 2012 elk hunt in the Bancroft-North Hastings area from 1 week to 2 weeks.

The OFA welcomes the proposal to extend the open season for hunting elk in Ontario from 1 week to 2 weeks. We view it as a positive step. We support the extended season. We anticipate an extended season will reduce elk predation on standing crops and stored feed in the Bancroft-North Hastings area, by maximizing hunter success.

A key objective of the Bancroft-North Hastings area hunt is to reduce the population of elk preying on area farms. A longer hunt, with more hunter days in the field, should serve to restore the elk's natural fear of mankind to animals that have faced no hunting or harassment for many years as well as to reduce elk numbers in the Bancroft-North Hastings area.

Farmers some distance from the Bancroft-North Hastings area now routinely see elk, and notice elk damage to standing crops and stored feed.

At OFA's Annual Meeting last November, delegates adopted a resolution calling for an expansion of the area beyond portions of WMUs 57, 58, 60, 61, 62 and 63A. We believe that the elk are expanding their range well beyond the Bancroft-North Hastings area. The OFA strongly recommends that the Ministry of Natural Resources immediately develop the requisite regulatory tools to implement an immediate response, once there are sufficient numbers of elk outside the Bancroft-North Hastings core area to be causing damage to standing crops and stored feed.

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Concurrent with an extended annual hunt, the OFA recommends that the province immediately act on its regulation-making authority and ban the supplemental feeding of elk.

The OFA appreciates the opportunity to provide its comments on the proposal to extend the Fall 2012 elk hunt in the Bancroft-North Hastings area from 1 week to 2 weeks. Furthermore, we encourage the Ministry of Natural Resources to implement our additional recommendations.

Yours truly,



Mark Wales
President

MW/pj

cc: OFA Board of Directors