



**Ontario Federation of Agriculture**

**Ontario AgriCentre**

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March 21, 2014

Ministry of the Attorney General  
McMurtry-Scott Building  
720 Bay Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 2S9

Dear Minister Gerretsen,

**RE: Amendments to the Liquor Licence Act Regulation – VQA Wine Sales at Ontario Farmers' Markets**

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is pleased to submit our views to the Ministry of the Attorney General regarding the proposed amendments to the Liquor Licence Act to allow for VQA wine sales at farmers' markets in Ontario.

The OFA is Canada's largest voluntary general farm organization, representing more than 37,000 farm family businesses across Ontario. These farm businesses form the backbone of a robust food system and rural communities with the potential to drive the Ontario economy forward.

The OFA supports this initiative to include VQA wines at farmers' markets. Ontario's wine production has seen impressive growth in the last decade and we are pleased that our members will be able to take advantage of this new market opportunity.

Our long standing position is that the sale of wine at farmers markets is incomplete if it does not include the sale of Ontario fruit wines. To date, we have not received a satisfactory explanation for why fruit wine sales have been prohibited from farmers' markets or why a pilot project similar to this one has not been investigated.

We agree with Premier Wynne that these proposed amendments will help small scale grape growers and wine producers, but broadening the scope to include fruit wine, cider, mead and non-VQA wines could have an even greater impact. We recommend Ontario parallel other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States by allowing the sale of local fruit wines at farmers' markets.

Allowing for fruit wines at farmers' markets will encourage new business opportunities and innovation in the beverage industry and stimulate economic activity upstream by growing the market for Ontario fruit products. Furthermore, opening the amendments to include Ontario's fruit wine producers complements the Ontario Governments commitments to grow the Local Food economy.



Farmers' Markets would also benefit from broadening the scope of these amendments to include fruit wines. The year-round farmers' markets in Ontario would have a greater range of non-seasonal vendors selling local agricultural products to support their operations during the winter months. This can only help to bring greater stability to farmers' markets and maintain growth in Ontario's agri-tourism economy.

We recommend expanding this initiative to allow Ontario fruit wines, Ontario cider, Ontario mead and non-VQA Ontario wines to be sold at farmers' markets along with the VQA wines. Therefore we ask that those Ontario products be included in the proposed amendments to the Liquor Licence Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wales". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Wales  
President

CC: Premier Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Agriculture and Food