



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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October 15, 2015

The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Hoskins,

**RE: Ontario Regulation to be made under the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015:
A Consultation Draft**

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is pleased to submit comments on the Consultation Draft for Regulations proposed under the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015. We commend the Ministry for taking action on this issue and hope that this will contribute to building *a culture of health and community wellness* in Ontario.

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

The OFA has always been strong advocates for farms, farmers, and food. We were instrumental in creating Canada's National Food Strategy that highlights the important link between a healthy Canadian agricultural sector and healthy people. And we continue to advocate for greater education for food literacy, particularly among Ontario's youth, with our '6X16' campaign. This campaign seeks to guide young adults in planning and preparing six nutritious meals by the time they are 16 years old, and help build a foundation for making healthy food choices.

We all know there are well documented links between the food choices one makes and their health. In general, we support the Ministry's initiative to provide greater access to information where there is a clear link between food choices and human health. The caloric content of food and drink items in chain-restaurants is an excellent first step.

This regulation appears well crafted and provides sufficient information to allow consumers to make informed food choices. We appreciate that this regulation targets those food establishments that have sufficient capacity to easily implement the changes, and does not appear to be punitive or burdensome.



However, while we support the intentions of the Healthy Menu Choices Act and this proposed regulation, we do question why food service premises located in schools or private schools have been exempted from compliance. Requiring food calorie information to be posted in school cafeterias where youth are provided with or can purchase food is a valuable opportunity to develop numeracy in youth; that the numbers they see next to food items mean something tangible and are related to healthy food choices.

Unless there are other provisions made to provide this information to youth in our schools, the OFA recommends that schools and private schools as they are defined under the Education Act are made not exempt from compliance to the proposed regulation.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this consultation draft. We look forward to learning more about this new regulation as it develops.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Currie', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Neil Currie
General Manager
Ontario Federation of Agriculture