



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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January 22, 2016

The Honourable Jeff Leal
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
77 Grenville Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON
M7A 1B3

Dear Minister Leal,

RE: Standardizing Biosecurity Training and Practices across Ministries and Agencies

As you are aware, many of our farmers rely on strict biosecurity protocols on their farms to maintain the health of their animals. We have witnessed the terrible results that can occur in Ontario and across Canada when these protocols fail, or have not been properly followed. Not following these protocols even once can have serious repercussions for the farm operation and for the whole sector. Given this it is incumbent on all farm inspectors to respect biosecurity protocols.

Farmers understand that they will be subject to compliance inspections on occasion by regulatory agencies, and that some have legislated powers of entry to enter farm properties. However, there is growing concern among farmers that some ministry and agency personnel are neither familiar with nor following acceptable biosecurity protocols.

Therefore, OFA requests that OMAFRA conduct a comprehensive review of biosecurity protocols across all pertinent ministries and agencies with legislated *powers of entry* and who may enter onto farm properties. We recommend this review should investigate:

- Alignment and adherence to a standardized set of protocols to ensure that all regulatory enforcement personnel are receiving the same information,
- The frequency of training of enforcement personnel in farm Biosecurity,
- A complaint process in the event a farmer witnesses enforcement personnel not following the standard practices.

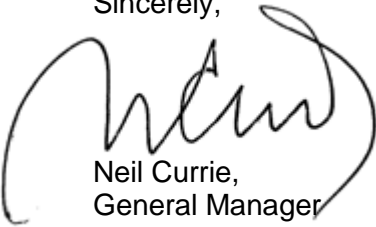
Should this review uncover an inconsistency in the protocols and training across regulatory agencies, OFA requests that OMAFRA provide a standardized set of acceptable biosecurity protocols and a recommended training schedule to agencies and other ministries. Furthermore, the biosecurity training status of all regulatory agencies should be posted on the OMAFRA biosecurity webpage and made available in an OMAFRA factsheet or printed format.



OFA has played a key role in providing biosecurity information and coordinating expertise. We are interested in continuing this role and providing assistance to complete this review. Now, more than ever, the strength of our value chains relies on the steadfast implementation of biosecurity on our farms.

Minister, we look forward to working with OMAFRA to spread this message to other relevant government ministries and ensure that a standard set of acceptable biosecurity protocols are in place and followed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Currie', is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Neil Currie,
General Manager