



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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August 20, 2018

Hon. Ernie Hardeman
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
77 Grenville Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1B3

Dear Minister Hardeman:

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) once again congratulates you on your appointment as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. We believe that together we can accomplish much to make our farming and food sector even stronger.

We were pleased to hear your comments expressing a real interest in easing the regulatory burden across the agri-food sector. While we have priority interests in large scale investment across rural Ontario to drive the agri-food sector and our economy, much gain can be made by taking care of the day-to-day issues that stifle productivity and investment. We are very interested in working with you to resolve regulatory impediments to a stronger agri-food sector.

In this regard, we have identified several issues with the program guidelines for The Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program that have led to an unjustifiable increase in the number of denied claims. We are committed to ensuring that the program is effective and responsive so producers who experience loss to predators can depend on the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program.

Specifically, we recommend a number of changes related to standards of evidence, the appeals process, incentivising investigators to get to the farm sooner, the application form, reviewing the reasonable care measures and exploring the option of a companion program that would help producers with the cost of preventive measures (through CAP).

In addition, the program guidelines deny applications from farmers who have not filed a Farm Business Registration by March 1. This is in stark contrast to the Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program, where producers remain eligible for the program if they pay their FBR invoice before September 1 and reflects a regulatory “glitch” that is very difficult for farmers to accept. The effect is only to limit program payables, with no other justifiable reason.

Minister, we would be pleased to outline our recommended changes in greater detail. They are not onerous but will certainly make the program fair and more acceptable to our farm members who suffer livestock losses.



We look forward to working with you to make these simple but important changes to the program guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Currie', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Keith Currie
President