



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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September 4, 2018

The Honourable John Yakabuski
Minister of Transportation
77 Wellesley Street West
3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1Z8

VIA email

Dear Minister Yakabuski;

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) congratulates you on your appointment as Minister of Transportation. We believe that together we can accomplish much to make our farming and food sector a driving force in a vibrant Ontario economy.

While we continue to support investment in economic development across rural Ontario the day-to-day issues that affect our farm businesses' sustainability also require attention.

On behalf of our farm family businesses and Ontarians in general, I wish to raise several interconnected issues with respect to the safe and efficient movement of farm vehicles on Ontario's roads.

Farm equipment has grown significantly in size. While farmers recognize their responsibility to share the road with every other road user, farmers are also faced with roads, bridges and traffic circles that simply cannot accommodate today's farm equipment. Bridges are rebuilt wide enough to accommodate two lanes, but without shoulders. The travelled portions of roads are raised, which often either reduces the width or shoulders, or renders them steeply sloped away from the travelled portion, or both. And traffic circles or roundabouts on roads frequented by farm vehicles are too narrow to enable them to pass through.

I have attached some length and width data provided to OFA by John Deere for your reference.

Secondly, farmers from across Ontario are concerned about the lack of awareness and/or respect of the Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) sign by the motoring public. They do not appreciate that farm vehicles travelling on Ontario's roads are required to display the sign, or that farm equipment is limited to a maximum speed of 40 kmph. They also seem unaware or do not respect that farm equipment has the right to be on most Ontario roads. Many unfortunate accidents attest to these facts.

To improve overall road safety, the OFA proposes that your Ministry implement a SMV sign awareness campaign targeted towards the general motoring public. This could include Public Service Announcements and additions to driver education courses.

Lastly, we understand that Ministry staff have been working to revise and update the Farm Guide. The Guide was first published in 2000 and updated in 2008. It provides farmers and enforcement personnel with information on the rules and regulations that govern farm equipment and farm trucks. It has been a valuable resource for our members, MTO personnel and OPP officers.

We request that Ministry staff collaborate with farm organizations on the Guide's content. New forms of machinery are developed and marketed from time to time, such as bale stackers and telehandlers. The Guide has not kept up so enforcement personnel exercise judgement and do not accept these new and innovative farm machines as bona fide self-propelled implements of husbandry.

In working with Ministry staff on a revised Farm Guide we can acknowledge such new equipment and refresh other areas as required.

Minister, OFA very much looks forward to working with you and your Ministry to ensure our farm families and Ontarians are safe on our rural roadways.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President

Encl.

c: Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
OFA Board of Directors