



OFA 2019 Federal Election Campaign BACKGROUND

To operate sustainable farms in Ontario and Canada, farmers rely on services and support from government just like any other business and industry sector. But there are also unique needs for agricultural businesses and our rural communities that require all levels of government to step up with greater investments. Supporting our sector delivers very clear benefits of greater economic growth, a more competitive market and prosperity for all Ontarians. We need a coordinated commitment from all levels of government – including federal.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) believes growth and prosperity can be achieved by simply distributing economic development opportunities across the province and our country. It's how we can move towards Producing Prosperity with our agri-food sector.

From farmers to our diverse food processing industry, the agri-food sector is the leading economic engine for the Ontario and Canadian economy – a powerhouse of possibilities. To keep this sector profitable and productive, we need strong and vibrant communities with the infrastructure to support growth.

Here's what the agri-food sector and rural communities need from our next federal government.

1. Rural Ontario needs affordable energy.
2. We need well maintained roads, bridges and drainage systems to keep our industry moving.
3. Access to reliable high-speed internet will support farms and rural communities.
4. Tapping into markets for our agri-food products depend on smart regulations, fair access to global markets and a skilled, local workforce.

Investments add up

Investing in agriculture and rural communities is an investment in future economic growth – with a guaranteed pay off. New investments in Ontario and Canadian rural communities will grow existing businesses, attract new companies and boost opportunities for regional economic development.

- Ontario farms grow and produce the most variety of agricultural goods in Canada, with more than 200 farm and food products
- Canada's agri-food industry is the second largest employer in the country, employing 2.3 million Canadians
- More than 837,064 jobs are generated by Ontario's agri-food sector
- Ontario's agri-food sector contributes more than \$47 billion to Ontario's annual GDP and \$112 billion to Canada's annual GDP
- Ontario farms support \$8.1 billion in annual wages and salaries
- Canada ranks as one of the top five global exporting countries with significant growth predicted to drive our production and economic contributions

Benefits for everyone

Agriculture and our rural communities rarely make it to the top of the public agenda, although the agri-food sector is one of the key drivers of our provincial and federal economies.

Investing in rural communities strengthens our agri-food sector here in Ontario and across the country. By supporting a strong domestic agri-food industry – and investing in infrastructure that promotes activity across the province – all Ontarians and Canadians will have access to safe, high-quality local food.

OFA strongly recommends the federal government adopt a new approach – a concerted effort to boost our agri-food sector and rural economy through a planned program of distributed economic development and investments. Economic growth throughout our country, including small towns and rural areas, will increase government tax revenue, reduce government dependency and benefit *all* Canadians.

We're ready to work together with government to deliver the investments and programs. The agri-food sector needs that will in turn benefit our economy and all Canadians.

For more information visit [**producingprosperity.ca**](http://producingprosperity.ca) and [**producingprosperitycanada.ca**](http://producingprosperitycanada.ca).