

# OFA Director-at-Large Candidate Profiles

## Erica (Renaud) Miles

Hello, delegates!

Agriculture is my passion. I was raised on a six-generation family farm on land my ancestors cleared and settled in Leeds County. I love my family, my heritage, my farm, and my rural community. I've always been very active in the community, and jump at any opportunity to help where I can.

Currently, I'm splitting my time between working alongside my mother on the family farm and working as a freelance artist. I am slowly growing my herd of Herefords and looking optimistically to a bright future in the beef industry.



For some time I struggled with finding my place as a professional artist, and as a farmer. I wanted a career in agriculture, I wanted a career in the arts, and I wanted to raise Herefords... I wasn't sure how to marry those careers into something that worked. Eventually, the lightbulb came on, and I began a series of online comic strips called Farm Girl Strips. My mission now is to highlight the time-honored practice of farming and celebrate the people who have dedicated their lives to it through illustrations and storytelling. A media that connects both farmers and non-farmers alike.

I want to join the board because I want to make a difference. I want to work on behalf of OFA members in every county and make farming easier and safer for them. It hurts to see our community, and our members, struggling. I want to fight for our members and their needs. I want to encourage governments to only provide regulations that we need, and support us when times are bad. I want agriculture to still be a career option for future generations, and my generation.

I've had experience lobbying my local MP and MPP, as part of the Leeds Federation board. I recognize that there are some issues that are key for OFA to work on for our members such as, unwanted trespassers, specifically by animal activists. Farm support programs and the need to fix them. Rural infrastructure, such as natural gas, broadband, roads, etc. Trade, and supporting both supply and non-supply managed commodities when they are hit by trade disruptions.

# Erica (Renaud) Miles

What I bring to the table is a fresh outlook, and an eagerness to learn. I want to learn all about the different crops and commodities that our members are involved in. I also want to reach out to the non-farming community and let them see us for who we really are: the ones who grow and raise the food they eat, and as stewards of the land, air, and water that we all need to survive. It's something I've been trying to accomplish through my work as an artist and author. I think that I could bring that to Queen's Park, or Parliament Hill, and make every one of them just as passionate about agriculture as I am.

## Relevant Experience

- Life-long farmer in Leeds County
- On the planning committee for the 'AgriCULTURE' summit in Mallorytown 2019
- Comic artist and published author specializing in agriculture **awareness and outreach** since 2018
- Volunteered for Farmers on the Hill, and the Ottawa Valley Farm Show Lobby Day since 2017
- Took the **BUILD Leadership** program hosted by Beef Farmers of Ontario in 2017
- On the **Board of Directors for the Leeds County Federation of Agriculture** since 2015
- Worked as an Officer for the Royal Canadian Air Cadets in Burlington from 2014 - 2018
- Worked the very first Breakfast on the farm in 2013
- Worked as an intern for **Farm & Food Care** in 2013
- Worked for **Farmers Feed Cities** at a booth at the CNE in 2013
- Studied Graphic Design at St. Lawrence College from 2010 - 2013
- Spent a summer in CFB Cold Lake, Alberta in the **Senior Leadership Course** training to become an officer for the Royal Canadian Air Cadets in 2009

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# Richard Pringle

## **Owner of Pringle Ridge Farms**

- Cash cropping 500 acres, 25 beef cattle, small flock of sheep
- Own and operate a small business in vegetation management

I grew up on my family's dairy farm in Selby. We are proud to be a century farm and I, along with my sister Carolyn, am the 4th generation. I left the farm at a young age to pursue a career in construction. After my brother passed away, I came home to continue our family's farming legacy. You know the saying, "You can take the boy off the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the boy." We no longer milk cows, but Carolyn and I are partners in a diverse operation. The farm set up and partnership with my sister enables me to dedicate the time needed to be a strong OFA Director.



## **Lennox & Addington Federation of Agriculture**

*Vice President*

I enjoy being a part of a small but passionate group of farmers who work well together. We represent over 300 OFA members in our county. Last year, we launched the L&A Farmer Wellness Program, a first of its kind program in Ontario, providing mental health services to OFA members at no charge. For more info visit [farmerwellnessprogram.ca](http://farmerwellnessprogram.ca)

## **Over 25 years experience in the construction industry**

*Heavy equipment operator & licensed mechanic*

I was fortunate to have a long career in the construction industry. Working in a sector outside of agriculture means that I have a broad perspective of two different industries. I'm grateful for the experience gained working with all types of people, from upper management to the people on the machines. I'm also proud of my ingenuity – I learned how to diagnose a problem, and using limited resources, find a solution. I often felt like I was "pulling a bunny out of a hat" some days.

# Richard Pringle

## **Community Development Awareness Committee**

*For the Town of Greater Napanee*

I'm the agricultural representative for this committee. Currently, our group is focusing on re-developing the town's Market Square into a community hub. Primarily, it will serve as a market for vendors, but we're also developing it to be a venue for events and festivities. One of my passions is local history, and this project is particularly valuable to me because I believe it will restore the heritage of what the Market Square once was. I remember my dad describing the way the Market Square used to be a place for all the local farmers to come sell their product, and how it was such a thriving centre with people going to the theatre and other local stores to buy their goods.

## **Ran for Municipal Council in 2018**

This was the first time I threw my name into the hat and I enjoyed the process and all the experience I gained from it. I knew that in order to instigate change in my community, I had to step up to the plate. I wanted agriculture to have more influence on our council, so I put myself out there and I'm happy I did.

## **My passion is bridging urban and rural**

After living in Durham Region for decades, I saw first-hand the impact of urban sprawl. I witnessed farmers selling their land off for big money, and the next generation not willing to take over the family farm. I returned home to my family farm to be a part of the effort to preserve this industry. I believe my unique perspective would be an asset in OFA's efforts to advocate for a sustainable farming and food sector. We need to continue to work with our urban counterparts to invest in agriculture and the rural landscape.

**I kindly ask for your vote for the position of Director at Large, for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. It would be an honour and a privilege to be a part of this organization.**

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# David Ritchie

Good morning, Honoured Guests, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Dave Ritchie. My wife, Karen, and I run a cash crop farm in Simcoe County. I have been a life long OFA member and a Director and PAC member for the last two years for Simcoe County.

I am putting my name forward for Director at Large, because I believe, OFA has a crucial role in representing and championing Agriculture in Ontario.

Ontario's Agri Food sector generates 13.7 billion in provincial G.D.P every year.

We create 158,000 jobs and I believe we are not only the best at what we do, but world leaders and #1 opportunity economic growth.

I have over the last 12 years, as an Ag Rep. on the Source Water Committee, have had the opportunity to work with the OFA staff and valued their help and knowledge in forming policy to protect farmers right to farm. It was their presence that made Ag. Rep. across the province, leaders at the 19-committee table.

I have over 25 yrs. of Agriculture Committee work and I have organized many round table meetings with M.P.'s and M.P.P.'s.

Currently I chair the Ag Liaison Committee for Doug Downey, M.P.P. and Attorney General for Ontario.

I would like to be your Director at Large and with your support we can move agriculture in Ontario forward.

## **Farmers working with Farmers for Farmers**

Thank you for your support.

Due to a prior commitment forgive me for my absence.



# David Ritchie

**Dave Ritchie, retired dairy farmer,**

1. Life long OFA member
2. OFA Director for the last 6 years
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President for Simcoe County Federation
4. Member of PAC for the last 2 years
5. Past Municipal Councillor and Deputy Mayor
6. Past Simcoe County Councillor
7. Member of Severn Sound Environmental Assoc.
8. Member of the Lake Simcoe South Georgian Bay Source Water Committee for 12 years
9. Chair of the Ag. Liaison committee for out local M.P.P. Doug Downey
10. Past Chair of the Simcoe County Milk Committee



# Teresa Van Raay

Hi. I'm Teresa Van Raay and I am a candidate for the Director at Large for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, 2019

My husband Martin & I have been farming for 37.5 years in the Dashwood area, in South Western Ontario. Three of our children have joined the farm over the past 6 years. We have a wean to finish pig operation, grow soys, corn & wheat. In 2011 we started a company called The Whole Pig where we sell our pork at the farm gate...and deliver to customer's homes. In 2014 we started growing garlic. 2019 we had 37 acres and hoping by the OFA annual we will have the same acreage planted. We built a packaging plant for the garlic and now bag and box garlic for the Ontario Market.



I have always been active in our community, with farming and the non-farming aspects of living in rural Ontario. With the birth of The Whole Pig I joined local Chamber of Commerce's and community groups. With the London Chamber of Commerce I was on the first ever Agriculture Committee and there is now an Ag Award at their awards banquet where over 2000 people attend. The experience of directly marketing to consumers opened my eyes to the huge disconnect between producers & our consumers. For the past 14 years I have been a Director on Ontario Pork (retiring in March 2020) For my entire farming life I have been a member of the Huron County Federation and had the opportunity to represent Ontario Pork as the PAC rep and this past year on the steering team.

I believe in the mandate of our Federation that we need a strong, collaborative voice for agriculture. That voice needs to speak up to Government and to fellow Ontarians who benefits daily from all we produce on our farms. That voice also needs to be quiet and listen to our members and their concerns.

It is an honor to grow food and it would be an honor to represent you as a Director on Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I welcome any questions. Don't hesitate to call or e-mail me with any questions or comments.

Thank you, Teresa Van Raay

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## Sara Wood

Hello everyone! My name is Sara Woods.

I grew up on a family farm in West Perth, Perth County, Ontario. My husband, Chris and I live on my husband's family farm which we now farm on our own. Since 2015 we have been on a path forward to secure the land from our respective families, to ensure we had a viable cash crop operation for the future.



We currently farm 2000 acres, 1300 acres owned; the remainder is secured with sharecrop agreements, rent or custom work. We use a soybean, wheat, corn, cover crop rotation. I am the principal farm operator.

I was involved in 4-H dairy from the age of 12 to 21 and somewhere along the line I knew I always wanted to farm. It was also where I first learned about leadership and that I wanted to be a part of that.

I spent 3 years at the University of Guelph. While there I swam competitively on the varsity team. Learning to juggle full time school while maintaining my commitments to swimming, I learned how to prioritize and work hard for the things you want.

I was honoured to be crowned Ontario Queen of the Furrow 2012 and represented the Ontario Plowmen's Association across the province. This experience has inspired my interest in soils, the land and our local organizations. It amplified my desire to give back to our community by being an active member and I have since served as president of our local plowmen's association.

I was a member of the first Soil & Crop Network, which is a group of innovative farmers, working together on promoting alternatives to conventional farming and working towards healthy soils. Our last meeting was with OMAFRA and industry leaders, to discuss the challenges of being innovative.

As an Advanced Agriculture Leadership Program (AALP) participant, I was part of an 18 month educational journey, not only through self-development but also professional development. While touring as part of AALP I found as farmers, we share similar struggles. This program helped to strengthen my communication skills and relationship building.

# **Sara Wood**

I am an elected Director on the Perth County Federation of Agriculture and as a member of the Constitution Committee; we undertook a total rewrite of our constitution and changed our election process. I have also been a member of our Federations' Executive Committee for 4 years.

I believe I have the skills and energy to work hard for you and as a young farmer can provide a perspective important to the board of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I ask for your support

# Adrian Wynands

I have always been a team player. If elected, will work in whatever capacity the Board decides.

I am always willing to learn and have always been a strong advocate for agriculture and the environment, but where farmers are asked to sacrifice for the greater good, compensation should be in order.

## **My Experience and Know-How**

Married to Carol for 47 years. 2 children & 4 grandchildren.

Operates a family cash crop farm.

Partnership Dairy Farm in Roebuck.

Director on the OFA Board representing Grenville County before the restructuring.

Policy Advisory Councillor for Grenville since restructuring

President of Grenville Federation of Agriculture since 1989.

Co-ordinator & fundraiser for 4H Grenville County.

Organizer & co-ordinator for Grenville County Food Banks Project.

Member of South Nation Clean Water Committee.

Member of South Nation Source Water Protection Committee.

Former Augusta Township Councillor.

I appreciate your support for Director at Large.

Thank You

