

December 23, 2019

Mr. Jamie West
MPP, Sudbury
Room 347 Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A8

Dear Mr. West,

On behalf of the OFA, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the time you spent with us last week at Queen's Park and allowing us to share with you the priorities for Ontario's agriculture and food sector. With strong support and investments in our rural communities, we can unlock continued economic growth opportunities and drive a healthy economy that benefits all Ontarians.

Ontario's diverse and innovative agri-food industry feeds our population, fuels our rural communities and drives the provincial economy, generating more than 837,000 jobs and contributing more than \$47 billion to Ontario's annual GDP. From farmers to our diverse food processing industry, our agri-food sector is a powerhouse of possibilities.

OFA is Canada's largest general farm organization, representing more than 38,000 farm family businesses across Ontario. Ontario's agricultural and agri-food sector is among the most diverse agriculture sectors in North America. With over 200 different agricultural commodities grown and raised right here in Ontario, that's more than any other Canadian province and most U.S. states.

As per your request, we are more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit a couple of farming operations, particularly ones where the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program is critical to the success and viability of the operation. Our staff team of Nadine Gill-Aarts and Paul Nairn will be in touch with your office to coordinate a day that fits with your schedule.

We would be very pleased to continue the conversation with you and your office around the labour shortage both at the farm and food processing level in Ontario and how we feel that the Ontario government, OFA and our partners at AgScape can work together to identify and address skills training gaps and promotion of careers in agriculture. We look forward to working together to strengthen Ontario's agri-food sector and rural communities.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie, President