

March 31, 2020

Steven Del Duca
Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party

Dear Mr. Del Duca,

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), I would like to congratulate you on being elected as the Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party. We know your extensive knowledge and experience as an Ontario MPP and former Cabinet Minister will serve well as you lead the Ontario Liberals. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure issues and priorities for growing and sustaining Ontario's farming and agri-food sector and our rural communities are front and centre for the Province.

We're all living in a new reality as the changes and challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic play out each day. Farmers are known for their resilience and perseverance. But even before COVID-19 hit, farmers were coping with a tough year, with multiple rail disruptions, a shortage of meat processing capacity and uncertain global trade and market access. Business interruptions are already being felt on Ontario farms, including lost, limited or delayed access to labour, interrupted on-farm services, like feed and agronomy consultations. Farmers are experiencing problems getting their products to market, or experiencing the loss of markets altogether.

Ontario's diverse and innovative agri-food industry feeds our population, continues to provide positive environmental and climate change benefits, 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. We encourage you and all party members to ensure that both health care and food security is top of mind for our government. Ensuring a viable, agri-food sector is critical throughout this crisis, but to the long-term success and recovery of the province.

Again, OFA looks forward to continuing the conversation with you and working together to strengthen Ontario's agri-food sector and rural communities. Please feel free to reach out anytime for additional information on issues, priorities or opportunities in the Ontario agri-food sector.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President