

September 8, 2020

Ms. Karen Vecchio
Deputy House Leader of the Official Opposition
Member of Parliament, Elgin-Middlesex-London

Dear Deputy House Leader,

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), we would like to congratulate you on being appointed the Deputy House Leader of the Official Opposition. We know your knowledge and experience within the House of Commons will serve you well in your new role. We look forward to working together with you and your colleagues to unlock continued economic growth opportunities for Ontario's agri-food sector and drive a healthy economy that benefits all Ontarians and contributes to all Canadians.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new reality for all Ontarians and Canadians as the changes and challenges to our environment continue to mount each day. Ontarians rely on the agri-food system to ensure they have steady and reliable access to safe, healthy and affordable food products. Farmers are well-known for their resilience and perseverance. But, even before the COVID-19 crisis, farmers were coping with a difficult year that included multiple rail disruptions, a shortage of meat processing capacity and volatile global trade and market access.

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 serves as an economic engine for the provincial economy, generating more than 860,000 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 strategic infrastructure investments and food security is prioritized at the federal level. Ensuring a viable agri-food sector is critical, not only throughout this crisis, but to the long-term success and recovery of the province and our country.

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

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President



Crispin Colvin
Zone 6 Director
Lambton-Middlesex



Tracey Arts
Zone 4 Director
Elgin-Oxford