

Timeline of OFA activities throughout FOI request

Upon learning of the freedom-of-information (FOI) request made to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), OFA took immediate action on behalf of our 38,000 farm family members in an effort to maintain the privacy and security of those with a Farm Business Registration. OFA communicated our awareness of the situation to members and immediately consulted legal counsel and sought advice on how our members could best respond to the FOI request through OMAFRA. From the outset, OFA urged OMAFRA to deny the release of this information. The detailed timeline includes communication with members, correspondence with OMAFRA, submitting our own freedom-of-information request, publication of a joint news release etc.

June 11 – OFA advised verbally by OMAFRA that an FOI request for membership information has been received.

June 26 – Approximately 490 Ontario farmers received letter from OMAFRA informing them of FOI request ([click here to view a copy of the letter](#) sent to Ontario farmers).

July 1 – OFA releases public statement to members on freedom-of-information request (link to email message to members – <https://mailchi.mp/ofa/ofas-message-to-members-on-freedom-of-information-request>).

July 2 – OFA submits FOI request to learn the name and address of the requestor.

July 3 – OFA follows up on initial statement to members. New email message distributed re: OFA addresses member concerns (link to follow up statement – <https://mailchi.mp/ofa/ofa-addresses-members-regarding-freedom-of-information-request>).

July 8 – OFA requests an extension to the consultation period asking for more time for members to respond to FOI (link to letter – <https://ofa.on.ca/resources/ofa-letter-to-omafra-regarding-extension-request-for-foi>).

July 15 – OFA received notice – request for extension denied.

July 15 – OFA received notice – FOI request for requestor's name denied.

July 16 – OFA sends message to members via email encouraging them to share their concerns to OMAFRA ahead of the July 17 deadline to submit input and feedback (link to message – <https://mailchi.mp/ofa/ofa-addresses-members-regarding-freedom-of-information-request-1499012>)

July 17 – OFA delivers a revised FOI request to OMAFRA asking for requestor's name only.

July 17 – OFA provides submission to OMAFRA strongly opposing the potential release of farm business information (link to submission – <https://ofa.on.ca/resources/ofa-submission-to-omafra-regarding-freedom-of-information-request/>).

July 17 – OFA includes message to members and reference to our submission in the weekly newsletter urging members to submit their concerns to OMAFRA (link to newsletter – <https://mailchi.mp/ofa/this-week-at-ofa-news-to-note-tkzxxw0iqc>).

July 23 – OFA publishes commentary on FOI request, urging members to continue submitting comments and concerns to OMAFRA (link to commentary – <https://ofa.on.ca/newsroom/ontario-farmers-urge-protection-of-private-and-secure-information/>).

August 10 – Followed up with OMAFRA regarding the results of FOI dated July 17 – OFA was advised that it was never received.

August 10 – OMAFRA releases FOI notice of decision (link to letter – <https://ofa.on.ca/resources/omafra-notice-of-decision-regarding-foi-request/>).

August 10 – FOI request to learn the identity of the requestor re-submitted by OFA.

August 11 – OFA, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario and the National Farmers Union – Ontario releases joint statement on FOI decision (link to news release – <https://ofa.on.ca/newsroom/general-farm-organizations-receive-notice-of-decision-regarding-freedom-of-information-request/>).

August 12 – On behalf of our members, OFA submits intention to appeal the FOI decision made by OMAFRA (link to appeal intention – <https://ofa.on.ca/resources/ofa-submits-intention-to-appeal-foi-decision>).

August 12 – OFA President Keith Currie pens an open letter to members regarding FOI decision (link to open letter – <https://ofa.on.ca/an-open-letter-to-ofa-members-regarding-the-freedom-of-information-decision>).

August 28 - OFA provides members with an update on FOI request. OFA confirmed with the Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) that our Third Party standing in terms of the FOI appeal process has been confirmed. Meaning that OFA is permitted to represent our members at their request in the appeal process.

September 4 - OFA encourages members to file an appeal before the September 9 deadline. Once the noted decision has been made, and the filing period for appeals comes to a close, OFA will know more about next steps in this process and keep our membership apprised.

September 9 – OFA receives notice of decision for the freedom-of-information(FOI) request regarding the last name and first name of the requester for FOI request #20-05 (link to formal notice of decision from OMAFRA – <https://ofa.on.ca/resources/ofa-receives-notice-of-decision-from-omafra-regarding-foi-request>)

November 12 - Settlement reached in freedom-of-information request. Led by OFA and supported by our legal counsel, the FOI request has been withdrawn. OFA, Christian Farmers



Federation of Ontario and the National Farmers Union – Ontario release joint statement on settlement.