

Jamie Reaume

- CEO of Country Heritage Agricultural Society (known as Country Heritage Park) – a small, diverse, eclectic food and farm operation that has linkages to the past, the present, and the future of agriculture – while providing a vital consumer-driven link to education with the vision of becoming a broader sector think tank for real-time solutions
- Halton Federation of Agriculture Board Member; PAC member for 2021 onward



My past has shaped my perspective on farming and food, bringing into focus the idea that we simply cannot

continue to be reactive to every situation and scenario but rather, we need to be forward-thinking, progressive and fearless in what we endeavor to accomplish. I have dedicated nearly a quarter of a century to advocacy in defense of farmers, who they really are and the food system as a whole.

- Former Executive Director, Holland Marsh Growers' Association (which I helped develop)
- Former Chair (and present Board member), The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance
- Former Chair, The Ontario Food Terminal

In short, a whole ton of former stuff, whether it is the former Editor of The Grower publication, communications officer with the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, member of several boards of trade/commerce, municipal economic advisory committees, and several other agricultural organizations.

Why I am running?

First off, we should challenge every position through an election – particularly when we are facing extreme challenges to our livelihoods. It provides options and choices in place of complacency and status quo. Second, as someone who has always been a strong voice for farmers – regardless of location within the province – I have spent the better part of my career engaged in all activities that OFA lends its weight towards, from government relations and farm policy development to community and media relations. Finally, I am a forward-thinking individual. Most of the concerns of farm organizations tend to be of the short-term nature, and usually require focusing on our past to attain a present that may not work for all others. If we expect the political process to provide long-term planning and solutions, we are all very sadly mistaken. It is time to add my voice for active change, and with OFA going through its own updating into the 21st century, the time is right for a voice that understands the farm, rural, and urban issues as I do.

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After all, if we continually leave it to others to plan for our farm and food systems, we will inevitably fail – simply due to the nature of the following statement: if you are not at the table, you are on it. Our numbers are dwindling, which means a more unified approach is required to prepare for our future.

What I bring to that table, board or otherwise, is an experienced communicator with a public and government relations skill set that is second to none; one who bridges urban-rural divides and issues while providing sound fiscal planning and budget oversight. In a simple sentence, I am a fixer, it is what I do best.

And fix things we must. There is no longer a United Farmers of Ontario political party; our future lies in conversations with those making decisions, the consumers. They no longer care where or how they get their food as long as it is firm, fresh and cheap. Consumers have no interest in preventing the urbanization of their farmland so long as they have access to parks, Little League ball and soccer fields, and an occasional bike lane is left amid the concrete, stucco and asphalt. Experience has taught me that consumers have no need of “the farmer” which they are not, or of an individual who reminds them of their past and not their future. Their romanticism for the farmer is just that, an artificial and quite transient appreciation of his rough- cut visage against the horizon, the stuff of a wine commercial, cigarette ad or impromptu rock concert. In short, think of the image American Gothic. In the past six decades, only one politician has really understood the farmer, former U.S. President John F. Kennedy, who once said, “the farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything at retail, sells everything at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways.”

Six decades. Nothing has changed. The time for change is now.