

January 4, 2021

Dr. Michael Drescher
Associate Professor | School of Planning
Director | Heritage Resources Centre
Faculty of Environment
University of Waterloo

Dear Dr. Drescher,

RE: Project Proposal – Ontario Farmers’ Adoption of Best Management Practices

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, proudly representing more than 38,000 farm family members across the province. OFA has a strong voice for our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations governed by all levels of government. We are passionate and dedicated to ensuring the agri-food sector and our rural communities are included, consulted, and considered in any new and changing legislation that impacts the sustainability and growth of our farm businesses.

Ontario’s diverse and innovative agri-food sector is a powerhouse for the province – growing and producing more than 200 farm and food products, fuelling our rural communities and driving the provincial economy by generating more than 860,000 jobs and contributing over \$47 billion to Ontario’s annual GDP. We are the leading agricultural advocate for Ontario farmers, their businesses, and their communities.

Farmers are integral partners in managing the natural environment. They rely on the air, soil, and water to conduct their business, and have a vested interest in the sustainability of these resources. Farmers interact intimately with the natural environment every day, and an agricultural perspective to resource management is critical.

OFA championed the development the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program and Best Management Practices (BMPs) workbooks. OFA encourages all Ontario farmers to adopt BMPs and complete an EFP for their farming operation. Farmers are also encouraged to investigate workshops, webinars and programming to support EFP implementation available through the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) and programs or grants to assist with beneficial farm management practices. OFA is also committed to the development of farm practices that ensure rural water quality is maintained or enhanced.

OFA believes the widespread adoption of BMPs is key to transitioning to more sustainable production systems. Therefore, OFA is pleased to provide this letter of support for your proposed research project: Ontario Farmers’ Adoption of Best Management Practices.

OFA fully supports the stated objectives of the proposed project:

- Investigate the patterns of farmer's adoption of specific BMPs across southern Ontario.
- Analyze factors that drive the patterns of adoption of specific BMPs.
- Explore casual mechanisms that give rise to the factors driving adoption of specific BMPs.
- Produce recommendations for increasing adoptions rates of specific BMPs across southern Ontario.

This project will provide important insights into the adoption of BMPs. Increasing our understanding of key patterns and factors in the adoption of BMPs will inform policy development and program design aimed at increasing BMP adoption rates.

OFA is prepared to commit \$2,000 worth of in-kind support to this project. Our in-kind support will consist of promoting the survey to OFA members, providing feedback on research materials, adding to the interpretation of data analysis results, and reviewing draft reports.

We look forward to collaborating on this important research project.

Sincerely,



Peggy Brekveld
President

cc: OFA Board of Directors