

November 30, 2021

Prof. Amar K. Mohanty
Professor & OAC Distinguished Research Chair in Sustainable Biomaterials
Department of Plant Agriculture & School of Engineering
University of Guelph
Guelph, Ontario
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Dear Prof. Mohanty,

RE: Letter of support for the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance – Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) Research Program “Plastics in Ontario agriculture and their biodegradable alternatives - misconceptions around biodegradability and composability”

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is the largest voluntary, general farm organization in Canada, representing over 38,000 farm families across Ontario. As a dynamic farmer-led organization, OFA works to represent and champion the interests of Ontario farmers through government relations, farm policy recommendations, lobby efforts, community representation, media relations and more. OFA is the leading advocate and voice for Ontario farmers.

OFA is pleased to provide its support for the “*Plastics in Ontario agriculture and their biodegradable alternatives - misconceptions around biodegradability and composability*” project as submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) Research Program.

Plastic waste on farms is a concern for farmers and OFA members want solutions developed to address this concern. In OFA’s April 19, 2019 submission to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, in response to ERO # 013-4689 (Reducing Litter and Waste in Our Communities Discussion Paper), OFA highlighted the need for research focused on producing compostable baling twine, netting, and films designed to withstand prolonged outside exposure, but able to decompose or be edible when shredded into livestock feed. In Ontario, over 3,500 tonnes of plastic agricultural waste is generated each year including six million pounds coming from plastic bale wraps and silage¹.

Options for farmers to send agricultural plastic wastes for recycling are currently very limited. The cost of disposing of plastic bale wraps and other plastic products has increased causing an additional burden to farmers. There is significant need to develop an inventory of farm plastic waste by region, which would help inform waste management policy.

This project aims to compile the information on plastic waste production and conversion, especially plastic waste from the agri-food sector in Ontario, and provide a report for farmers, plastic waste processors centering on the environmental sustainability of plastic waste conversion technologies (centralized/decentralized conversion), and environmental benefit of alternative (biodegradable and home compostable plastics dedicated to agriculture) to synthetic plastics, thus its future prospects of reducing plastic pollutions in agriculture and the environmental sustainability of rural agriculture.

1. Ontario Agricultural Film Plastic Waste Characterization Study (Blacksheep Strategy).

Upon completion of the project, findings will be disseminated to scientific communities, farmers, plastic waste collector/processor, and policymakers.

OFA would also be pleased to provide support and input into the data collection as well as assistance in developing the Project Findings Report and supporting a communication plan to inform our membership.

Sincerely,



Peggy Brekveld
President

cc: OFA Board of Directors