

OFA Policy Advisory Council Table discussions

10:30 – 11:10 Table Discussion – Supply Chain/Infrastructure

1. What steps can OFA take to keep our sector resilient?

- Government is aware of what farmers need to be resilient
- Lobby Government
- Be proactive, don't wait for government to come to us
- Continue to talk to politicians – keep the conversation going
- Educate/train more truck drivers
- Help with employment – lots of jobs
- Immigration policies which prefer highly educated immigrants who Preferential to living in urban centres
- We need to empower the types of immigrants who will fill the job ... we currently have, not highly educated specialists
- Proactive with government instead of reactive
- Backroom decisions by staff-build relationships
- Up-take on 4-R only 25 percent, need incentives to get number higher
- Canada should be self reliant on fertilizer
- Be proactive with government instead of reactive (tariffs, emissions)
- Have closer relationships with government staff
- Communication both to government, public and commodities
- Need to have level playing field with USA our major trading partner
- Do own research and investing on carbon issue
- Keeping pressure on government for supply chain connectivity
- Working collaboratively with groups like OABA
- Partnerships with organizations outside our normal – look beyond commodity groups (e.g. economic development)
- Attract people to rural areas but not lose farmland
- Getting things transportation, no longer having shoulders in the roads. Make more environmental (soft curves)
- Rural infrastructure to me more thought out
- Push farmers to run for local counties, local farmers on counties (some in agriculture, some not)
- Offer training for people running for council
- How can OFA get farmers involved in council
- In Peterborough doing farm tours for all who are running
- Need to have members and farmers come to all meetings
- Someone in OFA staff deal with all Agriculture details
- Education our political leaders to keep on it, keeping involved with our leaders
- Get larger farms more engaged, and try to break up their own groups they've made, more diverse problems
- Teach / remind all to use respectful language
- Councillor training and sharing of policies communications and education
- Training and sharing at local level so that there are more champions to share work load
- Be at the table when governments/industry are discussing the issue

- Advocate for less red tape
- Figure out what impacts all farmers without being sector specific
- 'Flush the bureaucracy'
- Should be lobbying bureaucracy vs politicians. Employees do the work and make recommendations to the politicians.
- Put the RA back in OMAFRA
- Better bargaining with government
- More input from farmers and producers- i.e., roundabouts before they are built- federations meeting with transportation department to discuss at annual meeting with the region.
- Ag advisory committees- monthly meetings, encouraging more regular meetings and federation director attendance.
- Road maintenance- lack of labour and resources (money) so losing tar and chipped and paved roads- some counties paving more rapidly to avoid maintenance- depending on region

2. What programs, funding, government departments or new policies can help prevent these situations of infrastructure and supply chain issues?

- Talk to MPP's and make them aware of our needs
- A conversation with Ministry of Municipalities needs to happen to ensure they are getting more control of files
- Flexible rural childcare access (non licenced): need flexibility to meet the needs
- Recognize that ag is larger than the automotive industry-government
- Ag – grants/funding
- No farmer knows what their farms are producing in the way of GHG
- Value added ingenuity
- Incentive or tax back to build on vacant land within urban boundaries
- Increase the definition of high definition i.e., 20 unit/acre minimum is not high density
- How to develop transportation for TFW
- Housing & transportation
- Diesel fuel – often difference from retail pumps – clean fuel – bring in US fuel when cheaper
- More storage for all products, tax credits for businesses to build storage
- Building code – red tape
- Employment – support us in getting labour
- Pandemic interfered with infrastructure
- There must be a better way to deal with half-load season
- Depleting infrastructure (e.g., bridges) need to have better planning/be strategic on what infrastructure needs upgrading
- Broadband internet – goes to major centres/school etc. and bypasses rural residents (designed to high pressure services)
- Matched funding for broadband / fibre
- Research dollars committed to internet that isn't cable or tower based (e.g., satellite)
- Is there more we can do then email Agriculture matters, great information but too much needs to be brought out differently

- Too big of a document, try to do one page, no one is going to read all information-
- Less information more often
- Mobilize it better
- In the newswire have break downs of issues, make aware it must be read
- OFA took away Essex County building
- Strategy to educate local gardening
- Maintain locate information with the government, more guidance on OFA's side
- Communicate with nonmembers, let them know how important Agriculture is, it will help with voting
- OFA provides toolkits so it can be spread locally, reach out to school boards?
- Advertise driving safely with farmer
- Educate kids about the farms, OFA supply grants for insurance (15-17 years old)
- Partnership training for municipal staff the staff may not understand agriculture
- Establish Ag advisory committees
- Information communications for local federations
- Develop domestic sources whenever possible – reduce reliance on foreign supplies
- Gov't needs to support/provide incentives for domestic industries to grow/support Canadian/Ontario companies
- Funding that will provide a level playing field with Toronto regarding communications— both internet and telecommunications.... Not line of sight internet.
- A policy at OFA to lobby to all levels of government and all governments departments at once.
- Piggy-backing all levels of government
- Ask local municipal to speak to Federal governments
- Science projects (experiments) to prove our points. Get the whole picture
- Work to get more funding allocated to rural infrastructure
- Employees within counties and their willingness to work towards ag
- More voices at the planning level – especially during OP discussions.
- Advocating for ag at municipal level- finding a way to be heard when so many obstacles

3. What supply issues are members facing? ex. Construction, key inputs & supplies

- Skills, packaging, transport trucks. Lead time is extended 4-6 months
- Ports very slow, no stock
- Food wastes, make sure it doesn't go to the dumps it can be used as good fertilizer
- Issue of can't get farm buildings built
- Equipment repairs/shortages – need to constantly retain mechanics
- Accountants
- Tracking
- Tires
- Parts
- Packaging and freight
- Labour shortages
- Bin construction
- New equipment delays, missing parts, cement, and limestone shortages

- Cement powder limestone shortages
- TFW requirements
- Lack of housing for workers, makes it harder to attract
- Lack of veterinarians
- Lack of good accountants
- Can't get chemical applicators/custom work
- Loosing custom workers and services ex. Manure apps
- Labour – housing rules in local municipalities for TFW's
- Machinery and parts, long term pricing on fertilizer and inputs
- Transport to move products, elevators full and can't get trucks
- How do we get issues resolved – artificial greed – How do we find out about getting pandemic reductions solved
- Eliminate barriers and help companies/businesses move forward
- Transportation – railroad
- Equipment parts – and the time it takes to get it
- Price of wood/steel etc. – so much volatility – highs and lows
- Still grocery shortages in stores
- Border flow – used to be fluid/easier – now restricted/challenging
- Import reliance – at the mercy of global supply chains
- Anxiety to build a simple driving shed
- Deterrent to grow/expand/renovate for many farmers
- Cement/Concrete
- Powder shortage for concrete
- How is Ukraine involved in the shortage
- Labor shortage
- Network and build trust keep conversation and education going
- Pharmaceuticals – e.g., livestock medicines
- Micro chips – can these not be manufactured here?
- Tires
- Lumber
- Cement
- Computer chips (semi conductors)
- Veterinary
- Seed
- Panic buying
- Wood
- Electrical panels and supplies
- No copper pipes
- Parts and service- auto, farm etc.- no stock available
- Need to have more availability of parts- more locally

4. Examples of problem solving and solutions to work around the issues

- Ex. Bulk fertilizer storage onsite, etc?
- Labour
- SFW – bought hotel
- Rural childcare coops (ex. Durham Jen Christie knows)

- Workplace childcare
- Programs have been put in place to help improve business skills
- More of a diverse group of people in the industry
- Local integration partnership (LIP) – need to push for more rural focused organization
- Digital main street – how to use Canva
- Canada supply domestically with fertilizer difficult for farmers to build and have permission to have on fertilizer storage in large volumes
- Education on thinking outside the box to get parts – look local
- Strategic planning and partnerships
- Working together more ex. Agri's Coop
- What planning is going on, are municipalities working on looking ahead, leading not behind, being proactive, pay someone to watch and connect with municipalities.
- More training centres for ag students in rural base if possible
- Onsite lodging for workers to be easier for farmers – less red tape
- Help/encourage strategies to have immigrants come to rural areas and work in rural Ontario
- What are the barriers to immigrants to locate to rural Ontario and how to get past the barriers
- Are Agriculture educated immigrants allowed to work in their field?
- Plan ahead on building projects – need to prep 2 years in advance in order to get all supplies needed
- Storage (not just fertilizer) – dealers used to store parts, return to that model instead of ordering as needed
- Better roads – improve the roads so half-load season doesn't need to exist
- Work with municipalities to address attainable housing in rural areas – e.g. a working group that looks at repurposing buildings for housing
- Build a fertilizer plant in a place that has natural gas already, instead of needing to build the services out to where the assets are
- Get creative with showcasing agriculture needs e.g., local tours, virtual tours with prospective rural residents
- Educate about the value of local agriculture – food supply taken for granted
- Toolkit came up with some good solutions
- Buy tanks to fill prior
- Stock plying is making shortages
- Host meet and greet gatherings before election to get to know candidates—after to continue the conversations in social setting
- Encourage sharing between farmers, bulk purchase/storage of feed/fertilizer/grains/fuels – with gov't incentives to build storage
- Pivoting ability
- More foresight
- Ensure that a better backbone is in place
- Contingency planning
- Need to have more stock available- shipping fewer amounts in more trucks is not feasible.
- Labour- how to attract more to agriculture- need to get information of ag careers into all levels of education- elementary to high schools and colleges/universities- more focus on the urban centres as the rural schools already have more insight.

5. What are the key issues? – fertilizer storage, construction?

- Labour
- Broadband needs to be reliable
- Construction is two years or more out
- Childcare
- Immigration reform – rural infrastructure to attract & retain immigrants, attracting skilled labourers
- Natural gas
- Truck shortages
- Internet
- Municipal red tape – zoning & construction
- Lack of processing capacity
- Deadstock; lack of availability
- Farmland preservation
- Sprawl
- Development
- Silos – we need to work together
- Government red tape – housing & truck routes
- Labour – foreign certification, recognize standards in education between provinces and countries
- Promote welcoming of immigrants to small communities
- Rural community services, hospitals, education, courts
- Use resources wisely – health care, education etc.
- Implementation of Barton Report – economic driver
- More reliable transport system – rail, road, ocean ports
- Bridges on ½ load that are closed indefinitely, need to rebuild bridge so it's not ½ load year round
- Ended up talking more broadly about our challenges -if we don't have labour, rural services etc. then we won't have viable farms
- Labour
- Education
- Can't find people to work
- Rotating farm management, and development program
- Technology needs to be shown to get people back into Agriculture since they want to work from home
- Roads-bridges-port facilities
- Cell coverage & internet – we need to be able to connect better
- Local manufacturing
- More value-adding necessary in province of Ontario
- Infrastructure needs to be expanded in parallel with expansions (ie, is there enough power—electrical, natural gas etc. or ability to province) to support expanding

2:15-2:50 Table Discussion – Municipal Engagement

1. What tools and additional advocacy can OFA create or share for members & Federations to use in effective Municipal relationships & collaboration?

- Provide a resource for hiring at local level for secretary, HR staff
- Suggested guidelines for policies
- Marcus Ryan's suggestion of working together on lobbying government together 75% tax to municipalities
- Provincial level - collaboration between groups & sending key messages
- Staff time for staff to attend county meetings ex. Ben Lefort Cost of Community Services
- Locally, checking OFA resources online
- Economic import data related to agriculture to present to councils
- County/township profiles OMAFRA already exists - MSR's, Ben/Danielle can assist in distribution of this information
- Consider having development on lower quality lands
- Make agriculture a priority above everything
- Make it relatable
- More examples of lunch & learns
- More breakfast from the farm events
- Effective presentation and letters so council will read them
- Providing exposure to people who have been successful
- One page education
- Visual tools
- Municipal handouts – info sheets and municipal guide
- How to educate urban dwellers – home grown, field to forks
- Publication to go out to people promoting agriculture
- Want email for local federation so local federation can send emails – need to be able – locally to communicate with local federations
- Helping to identify and cultivate some future leaders e.g. grooming for municipal councillors with fresh minds
- Foster younger generation – being on boards, being involved, municipal or federation level – not born wanting to be leaders so we need to foster the concept
- Federation training/info session – learning more about what municipal councillors do and their responsibilities
- Interviews/videos with politicians – the way Mayor Ryan presented his position was very useful to hear
- OFA Guidance documents presented that can be added to by a County Federation to provide County specific information
- The municipal tool kit and ag matters guide are very valuable resources and highly applicable
- Why can't federation educate urban people about ag?
- Field to forks campaign – very strong
- Personalizing, humanizing publications
- A great tool is a successful example of a successful lobby, the steps, and the outcome
- Easy 3-line briefing notes to keep things simple. Elected officials or the public often don't listen long, and have all levels of understanding, backgrounds, and education

- Helping Federations with QR codes linked to one-page documents. So elected officials can easily review things in the downtime—in hotels, cars, lobbies, between meetings
- Some social media examples or guidance
- Show a map on tax- based dollars showing the advantages of rural intensification, more focus on infrastructure to provide the necessary services for development,
- More lobbying efforts focused on the how development is carried out- less power to developers. (Incentives?)

2. What additional partners or government departments can OFA work with?

- Education, Ministry of College & Trades
- Forestry, environment
- Transport
- All commodity groups
- Community and social services, public health
- First responders
- CFA+OFA collaborate more
- MAH
- Integrate into ethnic communities in urban centres to move to rural areas live and work.
- Work with machinery industry, GFO, DFO as partners
- Need to communicate within OFA and local federations to “get our house in order”
- Need to speak with one voice like UPA
- Economic development organizations
- Chamber of commerce
- BIAs
- Ag Advisory Committee
- Municipal Affairs and Housing (beyond just OMAFRA)
- Healthcare
- Education
- Labour
- Government ministries also need to improve connections with each other
- Commodity organizations
- MOE – for proposed environmental regulations
- ROMA – OFA needs to work with this group more on mutual issues (Warden Caucus’s as well)
- Challenge is large “centralized” gov’t vs small/local gov’t
- Especially on labour side, need to make more an effort for workers ethics to establish remote base to increase participation
- Need to attract immigrants to rural Ontario – how to get connected with
- Work with DFO, GFO, or BFO – need to get in harmony with what our statements are – look at Quebec’s model
- Work with them all at once. They all have a direct impact, even ministries that don’t sound like ‘agriculture’ or directly related to the issue
- More work towards working as a unit with multiple partners- i.e., focusing on already established partnerships
- Ag Advisory committees – OFA staff more active roles or involvement or encouraging local federation involvement

3. How can we support our local municipalities to help meet their needs?

- Listen and know their issues and help with our issues to fit in
- Find out their needs (ask friend)
- They have skilled labour shortages
- Helping connect with staff as well as elected officials
- Regional collaboration opportunities
- Communicate- farmers/OFA (county federations – infrastructure needs, municipal drain maintenance is a requirement and needs less interference from CA's and local councils.
- Municipal maintenance is a requirement
- Interference from CA's and municipal council
- Need to make them feel like we are partners
- Show them agriculture can be a trusted resource
- Engage candidates
- Stay focused on services that support farm families
- What priorities for newsletters and seasonal updates?
- Talk about more than ag – learn municipal needs. Work with them not against them
- Help municipalities to fight NIMBY
- Technical advice/support on issues re: drainage
- Stick around after deputations – get to know the councillors better
- Identifying new ways to share our issues/concerns – hard to get to all municipalities' council meetings – nice that there is now an online option often
- Reaching out to councillors – tell them you're on the local board – don't make your first meeting confrontational/asking for things right off the bat
- Building relationships with councillors in the beginning will get your foot in the door
- Common issues – support when you can and be vocal about the issues that you agree on
- Show up to councils when you *don't* have issues
- Talk to them instead of sending emails all the time – it is a more approachable way to build relationships
- Lobby to Provide more power to local municipalities
- Develop Ag Advisory Committees
- County Fed's need to develop a knowledge/relationship with their local Municipalities to lobby together for mutual benefits
- We need to capitalize on the current Ont gov't who has lots of rural seats (i.e., the gov't was formed due to rural/farm support) to bring dollars to rural areas – infrastructure / health / education / investments
- Talk about more than just agriculture – learn their perspective
- More support for people that want to save farmland
- Develop better resources to equip the municipality with more concise, everyday issues
- ALD-Ask, Listen, Do.
- Ask them what their individual needs are. Across the province, there will be some similarities, but most will be different depending on location
- Advocate for better health care, more PSW's.
- More economic driver numbers for specific municipalities
- OMPF dollars. More transfer dollars. Funding for wastewater treatment plants to help promote intensification in urban settings. The answer to saving farmland happens within our cities and towns. Some towns will not intensify as they do not have sewage capacity, or none meaning that they need large lots for septic runs

- Send more literature to councillors from OFA
- Delegations to council
- Sharing the Homegrown campaign
- Is there value in designating a local rep to follow councils in their area
- Be present at meetings, view agendas and minutes.
- Support municipalities through collaboration

4. What are local federations planning for the election campaign?

- o List outreach & activities; if none, why, and what will you try next?

- Debate with questions
- Policy & pie
- Sending a thank you to local councils who intensify within boundaries & protect farmland
- Bus tours after the election with election officials and staff
- No all-candidate meetings but information meetings & invite commodities to set up displays
- Debates-all candidate meetings
- Meeting with candidates returning for school boards
- Letter of introduction from county federations after the election with stats on ag in the municipality
- Provide copies of real dirt
- Invite mayors to county fed event/meetings
- Delegate at council as an introduction to new council members so agriculture has a voice
- Hold meetings with farmer groups to encourage people to run for council
- Municipal councillor training session – with food
- BBQ after election (before swearing in) to eat with them
- Going to work towards being a local lobby
- All Candidates Meetings
- Reaching out
- Sending letters
- It can be challenging sometimes to meet with candidates if they may not get elected, but it can still be important to build those relationships for the future
- Tours in August for municipal councillors – ‘should be elected before they come’ but maybe that needs to change
- Can be easier to get the councillor’s ear before they are elected
- Promoting/encouraging farm/ag knowledgeable people to run for Council
- Meet with Candidates before election – meet with Councils post election
- Host Candidate debates
- After election – Ag Advisory Committee development
- Send letter of congratulations to winners – offer to meet/discuss ag needs
- Also get to know key Municipal Staff
- Holdings meeting encompassing all farm groups in the area to find a candidate that will be able to support and understand agriculture matters
- Training session

- KFA is having all candidates meeting and BBQ Saturday after election with all farm groups
– can have all the councillors because one won't be sworn in for that week after
- Welcome the new councillors in
- One on ones are more helpful for municipal elections than all candidates' meetings, as potentially in one County seven to 9 lower tiers and an upper tier plus candidates is a ton of work for a County Federation that is already struggling with other issues. It's like herding cats.
- Trying to be more strategic and work smarter
- Open discussion with successful candidates
- A 3-minute video sent to candidates could be effective. The struggle is always getting people to listen
- Ag 101 session to successful candidates
- Use of innovative technologies to be more effective with all politicians...we need to appeal to the 99% to get buy in from the public. Possible use of social media influencers (don't need to be farmers) could be effective.
- List outreach & activities; if none, why, and what will you try next?
- Candidate meetings.
- Would do more if they had more involvement from directors
- Large number of municipalities make it difficult to do something for each municipality.