

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Office of the Minister

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Ministère de l'Agriculture, de
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May 15, 2023

Cathy Lennon
General Manager
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
cathy.lennon@ofa.on.ca

Dear Ms. Lennon:

I am pleased to share some additional information about the latest steps my ministry is taking to support soil health and conservation in Ontario.

As was announced in the 2023 Budget, the government has committed \$9.5 million over the next three years to improve soil data mapping and soil evaluation and monitoring, and to support key actions under the [Grow Ontario: a provincial agri-food strategy](#).

This \$9.5 million investment over 3 years will fund 2 programs:

- i. The creation of an innovative Ontario Agriculture Soil Information System (OASIS) to house, manage and analyze soil and agronomic data critical to supporting producers, agricultural production and land management needs and decision making.
- ii. The use of innovative technologies to renew Ontario's Soil Resource Inventory (SRI) to update the province's outdated soils information and maps to support the use of cutting-edge technology to inform land management practices. Furthermore, this data will support provincial land use planning and the Housing Supply Action Plan 3.0 as it will help direct development and reduce adverse impacts to Ontario's prime agricultural areas.

Healthy soil is essential for life and is the heart of Ontario farms and our food system. Supporting Ontario's agricultural soils is critical to long-term sustainability of food production, sector growth and economic resiliency for Ontario's food supply chain.

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The economic and environmental benefits of keeping Ontario's agricultural soil healthy includes improved growth, yield and quality of crops, increased water and nutrient retention, as well as resiliency, biodiversity and climate change adaption and mitigation.

As more information about these programs becomes available it will be posted to the websites linked above.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa M. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" and last name "Thompson" clearly legible.

Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Did you know about the Farmers' Wellness Initiative?

- Your mental health is important! If you're a farmer or a member of a farm family and in need of mental health support, please call 1-866-267-6255 and arrange to speak with a professional today.
- For additional resources visit: <https://farmerwellnessinitiative.ca/>.