

September 28, 2023

Hon. Lisa Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Floor, 77 Grenville Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1B3

Mr. Doug LaRose
Chief Executive Officer
Agricorp
1 Stone Road West
Guelph, ON N1H 8M4

Dear Minister Thompson and Mr. LaRose,

Re: PI coverage of crop damage caused by Ontario wildlife

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA)'s more than 38,000 farm family members, I am writing to you regarding our outstanding request for Production Insurance changes to assist PI participants who suffer wildlife damage to their crops.

As you know the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program (OWDCP) provides compensation to poultry and livestock producers for losses caused by Ontario wildlife. We thank you for listening to OFA and our livestock partners and for having made the necessary changes to that program. Our work continues with your Ministry to ensure the OWDCP meets the needs of poultry and livestock producers.

However, livestock producers are not the only farmers in Ontario experiencing production losses caused by Ontario wildlife. Crop producers also incur consistent losses each year caused by a variety of wildlife ranging from migratory birds to deer. Unfortunately, Ontario crop producers are not effectively compensated for losses caused by Ontario wildlife.

As currently designed, available Production Insurance plans do not adequately address crop losses caused by wildlife. Claims under Production Insurance are triggered when a producer's yield falls below their Average Farm Yield (AFY), which is calculated using up to 10 years of actual reported yields. Year after year crop damage caused by wildlife lowers a crop producer's AFY and so repetitive damage will not trigger a crop insurance claim in any given year.

We would also like to note that OFA member delegates attending the OFA's Annual General Meeting held on November 21, 2022, passed the following resolution (# 22-11-05):

"THAT the Ontario Federation of Agriculture work with the Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association and other stakeholders to fully quantify crop losses and investigate the viability and potential for a spot loss compensation program for wildlife damage to crops, and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OFA strongly advocate and pressure the provincial government for a spot loss compensation program for wildlife damage to crops.”

Given, Ontario crop producers are not effectively compensated for losses caused by Ontario wildlife, OFA is asking that the Ontario government create a wildlife damage compensation program to compensate crop producers for the losses they experience due to Ontario wildlife.

OFA would be happy to work with you and partners such as Grain Farmers of Ontario and Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association on ideas of how to make this happen. Feel free to reach out to us if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Peggy Brekveld
President

cc: Steve Sickle, President, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Brendan Byrne, Chair, Grain Farmers of Ontario
Madeleine Beaudry, President, West Nipissing Sudbury East Federation of Agriculture
Norman Koch, President, Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture
Frank Haasen, President, Cochrane Federation of Agriculture
Jason Koivisto, President, Algoma Federation of Agriculture
Mike Johnston, President, Manitoulin/North Shore Federation of Agriculture
OFA Board of Directors
Stephanie Vanthof, OFA Member Service Representative, Zone 15-Northern Ontario
Janine Lunn, Manager, OFA Member Service Manager, Eastern & Northern Regions