

OFA Board of Directors Policy: Members' Forum

As required in OFA's by-laws, OFA's Board outlines the purposes, procedures and frequency of Members' Forum meetings in this policy.

1. Purpose of the Members' Forum

The Members' Forum is established to provide a platform for open dialogue and engagement between the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) Board of Directors, county/regional federations, and OFA members. The forum will:

- Serve as a consultative body where current members can share feedback and concerns related to agricultural policy, practices, and OFA initiatives.
- Foster communication between county/regional federations and OFA's Board of Directors on strategic matters affecting the agricultural community.
- Promote collaborative discussion on issues of regional and provincial importance within the agricultural sector.
- Provide training and leadership development opportunities.
- Provide an opportunity for OFA's leadership to share advocacy updates, gather input, and explain Board decisions.

2. Procedures for Members' Forum Meetings

- **Invitation to Attend:** Each county/regional federation of agriculture, designated by OFA as a local branch for accreditation purposes under the *Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act, 1993*, shall be invited to send their president (or their designate) and one additional current Member as its representatives to one yearly hybrid (in-person and virtual attendees) meeting of the Members' Forum. Only the county/regional federation of agriculture president (or their designate) shall be invited to attend virtual meetings of the Members' Forum that are held entirely by telephone and/or electronic means.
- **Designation of Meeting Participants:** Each county/regional federation of agriculture's president or their designate shall be designated by the county/regional federation to attend one or more meetings. Each county/regional federation may designate one additional current Member to attend the yearly hybrid meeting as their representative. Contact information for those designated shall be sent to OFA in writing prior to the next Members' Forum meeting. The county/regional federation may change their designate(s) to attend future meetings at any time as long as the new designates' contact information is provided to OFA in writing.

- **Agenda Development:** The agenda for each meeting will be developed by OFA's Board in consultation with county/regional federations. Suggestions for agenda items can be submitted by county/regional federations in advance of the meeting.
- **Submission of Proposals and Feedback:** Members wishing to present specific proposals, resolutions, or topics for discussion at the Members' Forum must submit them to OFA's Board at least 14 days prior to the meeting. OFA's Board may waive the minimum 14-day requirement if the matter is deemed time sensitive. Submissions will be reviewed and may be included in the agenda at the discretion of OFA's Board.
- **Chairs and Facilitators:** Meetings of the Members' Forum shall be chaired by OFA's President. In the event OFA's President is unavailable, the President shall designate a chair of the meeting.

3. Frequency of Members' Forum Meetings

- **Regular Meetings:** The Members' Forum shall meet a minimum of twice annually. Generally, one hybrid meeting, with the county/regional federation president (or their designate) plus one additional representative attending per county/regional federation, will be held in the spring of each year, and one or two virtual meetings, attended by the county/regional federation president (or their designate), will be held throughout the year.
- **Special Meetings:** Additional meetings of the Members' Forum may be called by OFA's Board as necessary, or upon written request by at least:
 - a. Thirteen county/regional federations, or
 - b. A number of county/federations representing 25% or more OFA Members.
- **Notice of Meetings:** Notice of meetings, including the agenda and relevant materials, shall be sent to the current Member designated to attend if known to OFA and the president and administrator of each county/regional federation in advance of the meeting. Special meetings may be called by OFA's Board with a shorter notice period if deemed necessary.
- **Location of Meetings:** OFA's Board shall determine the location and venue for meetings. The yearly hybrid meeting will generally be held at a central location. In cases where the meeting is in person, a hybrid virtual option will be offered whenever possible.

4. Reporting and Follow-Up

- **Meeting Notes:** Meeting summary notes shall be taken and distributed to all county/regional federations within 30 days following the meeting.
- **Recommendations:** Recommendations arising from the Members' Forum will be reviewed and considered by OFA's Board. Updates, follow up and any business arising from the summary notes of previous meetings will be discussed at the next meeting.

5. Expense Reimbursement

- **Per Diem:** OFA will compensate each meeting attendee who has been designated in writing to represent a county/regional federation, a per diem amount of \$200 (for a full day meeting) or \$100 (for a meeting lasting a part of a day) for each meeting attended.
- **Meeting Travel Expenses:** Legitimate and reasonable expenses of a meeting attendee, who has been designated in writing to represent a county/regional federation, will be reimbursed by OFA as per OFA's expense policy.
- **Meeting Costs:** OFA will cover the costs associated with hosting the meeting, including any meeting room rental and food provided during the meeting.