**Breakout Session Summary**

Attendees were divided into breakout tables and asked to consider the following questions:

1. **What interprovincial trade barriers currently affect farmers in your county/region?**
* **TRUCKING**
* Trucking is a massive issue – due to Ontario / Quebec bridge rules
* Ontario has – 2 tonnes more than Quebec allows on their roads – you can weigh your trucks – but it’s very difficult for Ontario truck drivers to move product into Quebec
* There’s 10 miles in NB where you cannot drive double trailers – have to have a truck down there and drive it for 10 miles, then re-hook when you drive into Nova Scotia
* different axles, ways of chaining things, etc.
* Transporting product into Quebec – had to get a proper sticker for the gas tax in case he got caught – even though he didn’t buy gas in Quebec – 2 or 3 years ago – now it’s even worse apparently
* **HOGS**
* Hog farmers – two places to have your hogs processed – Manitoba or Pennsylvania – Manitoba 1500 km – Manitoba 450 km Pennsylvania from eastern On
* Pennsylvania is cheaper that driving all the way to Manitoba
* Processing facility in Gatineau – they actually have capacity and want Ontario’s business but can’t get it
* 30 years ago, a lot of our hogs did go to Quebec-it has been done – but we don’t know what or who changed the regulations
* Quebec has always been difficult to deal with
* **VEAL**
* a lot of Ontario processors want to buy cattle from Quebec but need to be on the electronic auction – we don’t restrict Quebec from buying Ontario cattle, but they restrict ours -Ontario buyers are penalized in Quebec
* Local abattoir in Durham region -beef had the same issues – provincial condemnation rates are much higher than federal condemnation rates
* If everybody goes to a federal system and the rules are all the same, you could transfer back and forth
* **GREENHOUSE**
* not necessarily tariff related but a pressure on their business
* 10 ac bell peppers greenhouse (80% export oriented) - site could do 80 ac
* When they brought in natural gas – they put it in for 80 ac – the thing that Union Gas/Enbridge does – they will put capacity in there, but they’re planning that they’re going to phase in your business
* added pressure of energy costs – if this could be reduced - it’s not going to solve the problem, but it could ease the stress – external utilities
* If they give up that capacity they can’t get it back
* **HALDIMAND**
* beef/pork/fresh fruits/veggies/flowers
* farm equipment/agribusinesses
* Commodities/businesses most impacted by interprovincial trade barriers
* **HAMILTON/WENTWORTH**
* greenhouses (cucumbers, stone fruit, berries, green peppers) – their market is US
* Beef/pork producers too
* Businesses that sell direct to the public – pick-your-own apples etc. have been largely spared
* **CHATHAM-KENT**
* OPVG – some of the contracts were not renewed and will not be renewed for tomatoes and cucumbers – in the Chatham Kent community – wait and see
* The uncertainty - what has happened vs. what has been said
* Holland Marsh- produce 2/3 of the number of onions in Canada- haven’t heard of any barriers
* Meat processing- Number of Provincial plants is diminishing; interprovincial barriers is not the challenge- the number of processing plants is the issue
* Quebec is aggressively pursuing seed treatment regulations – get insecticide added to seed- challenge to produce the proper number of seed-
* Meat cannot be processed in another province for sale unless it is Federally inspected
* No time or space for interprovincial trade – 82% of beef goes to US for slaughtering
* Dairy- large amounts of cheese being brought in
* Forced to bring in 21% of chicken from the states but no penalty for not filling it
* Costly transportation for moving products
* Bees from Ontario going to Atlantic Canada for use in pollinator service for Atlantic fruit production - Atlantic bee owners want to restrict number of bees from outside their provinces, so their bee populations keep "employed" in this service.
* meat inspection - provincial vs federal inspection - also question if the CFIA-BSE regulations are still needed/relative given the fact US meat products inti our markets do not have the same BSE regulations applied
* PMRA - Pesticide Registration differences between provinces
* Transportation - provincial differences on weight restrictions/limits
* Transportation - fuel taxation differences between provinces
* Alcohol - e.g. wine % of grape sources
* Labour/Construction Workers - e.g. Farm building construction workers - Quebec Farm Builders/Construction workers can come into Ontario, whereas Ontario Farm Builders/Construction workers cannot go into Quebec
* Niagara Region Alcohol, wineries, ciders
* Perth specifically - Pork concerns slaughter/shipping. Dairy – challenging to get unified regulations. Quebec, hard to agree and come to an agreement.
* Transporters/drivers, too many differences, licensing, certifications etc from one province to another
* Apple Growers & Veg growers are concerned with the difference of the exemptions, exceptions, ministerial exemptions.
* It’s affecting the people we are selling to.
* Meat plant certification - interprovincial, federal.
* Standards, abundance of processing in Quebec, but lack in Ontario yet cannot process in Quebec and sell in Ontario.
* Standardized rules across the province for meat processing, but good standards. i.e. CFIA standards
* Professional licensing-one reg across the province-standardized testing
* Honey-regulations locally, provincially and federally all disagree i.e., a local area says recycled plastic containers, Canada says all glass jars. Etc.
* Even maple syrup has different standards—i.e. Quebec syrup is not boiled down as long as Ontario. And there is a quota system in Quebec and not Ontario.
1. **Are local members recognizing any strategies that could potentially ease these barriers to make farm their operations more productive and profitable?**
* Every industry that has more direct control of their final market are doing better than strictly commodity market
* Hog farmer vs. hog farmer has a strategy with Conestoga
* Supply managed industries can say – we don’t care about exports – we will just produce for our own country – other commodities don’t have that luxury
* Those with direct markets are going to fare better
* **BUY CANADIAN/LOCAL**
* Movement to buy Canadian - provincial interests can supersede national interests
* If we jump on promoting Canadian product, some of the other provinces are not on board to look outside their borders
* Some provinces have a different outlook .e.g. people in Montreal recognize Quebec as a province of Canada -most of the rest of Quebec seems themselves as their own country – Canada is Canada and Quebec is Quebec
* VFO members are saying why would we put $$ in Buy Canadian if Quebec is only going to protect and promote their own
* Quebec is a unique situation that Canada has always had – how do we work with them if they don’t want to?
* Local used to mean Ontario or your local communities, but now it’s shifted to Canadian - to the maple leaf instead of Foodland Ontario
* While some provinces might have a different mentality and perception (e.g. Quebec), we could try to work with Manitoba, NS, etc. – who want to work together
* It is also difficult because some commodities are more interconnected with certain provinces than others (e.g. veal cattle is very integrated with cattle industry – so it’s very much interconnected with Quebec)
* **COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING**
* Stronger country of origin labelling -veal is being imported from NZ – then blended – then labelled as Canadian
* In some cases, this is by necessity (e.g. sheep – Ontario still can’t fulfill the market)
* We need to improve transparency for consumers looking to buy local/Ontario/Canadian products - improve understanding of where it is processed/packaged/graded in Canada
* OFA should work with Foodland Ontario at the provincial level and CFA at the national level
* Insuring, licensing trucks and drivers is still a challenge
* Promoting and supporting local abattoirs
* Difficult to meet environmental standards
* Utilize kill plants and move meat to be processed
* Eliminate Provincial pesticide regulations for all Provinces- (i.e. the approval process on top of PMRA)
* Hog farms in Eastern Ontario have no options since there is no end user
* Subsidize transportation costs, prioritize rail time
* Increase the capacity for ports to unload example on the East coast.
* “we” regulatory authorities need to RECOGNISE the differences between provinces and allow the cross-border trading – e.g. in meat processing regs.
* set one Federal level of Reg’s – e.g. In meat processing
* build consumer awareness of regulations – e.g. difference between “Made in Canada” vs “Product of Canada” – or the difference in how a product produced in Ontario vs BC (e.g., source of grapes in wine between Ont. and BC)
* single desk/single portal for paperwork needing to be submitted
* processing – need to increase local processing capacity for many commodities
* caveat – need to be cautious that if interprovincial barriers are reduced/eased, it doesn’t inadvertently trigger a loophole for international access
* Farmers need to find & recognize the issues before the planning can happen.  What is the biggest and most important barrier.
* CFIA seems to be the limiting factor. IE: Pork
* Look into what other countries have done and how they were able to figure it out. Mutual recognition.
* Grants
* Subsidization or lack thereof in different provinces is in effect a trade barrier
* Quebec is recognizing that this in an issue.
* To make individual businesses more competitive regulations and licensing need to be standardized to encourage growth.
* Centralized location to navigate system, regs
* Education
* Seasonal worker standards are different across municipal lines
* Different rules in municipalities, i.e. ZBLs, can be red tape across lower tiers and upper tiers.
* CROW rates
* Standardized conservation authority approvals
* Regulations that drive people away from meeting the standards
1. **What interprovincial trade barriers should OFA focus on promoting removal of and why?**
* Should focus on what is important to keep rather than what to get rid of. Take six months to determine what is important to keep, then remove remaining barriers. Faster process. Could have unintended consequences. Commodities to provide input on which of their regulations are critical to their industry.
* Federal (CFIA) vs provincially (OMAFA) inspected slaughter plants. Could affect exports. Find common ground between two sets of regulations.
* SRM – specific risk materials
* Need a long-range plan (20-30 years) not 3 years
* Some of the provincial regs now are benefiting certain corporations and a mechanism to limit competition
* If it’s inspected federally the product can cross borders, why can’t we align the products from each province
* We are seeing inconsistencies between provinces for inspections; seeking uniformity (ex would be trucking and professionals keeping their licencing between provinces)
* What kind of tool (like AI) could review the 200,000 regs, to set up a diverse task force?
* Why do we have them in the first place? Seems restrictive and our farm products should be federal
* Is it a ‘simple’ solution to dop provincial guidelines and move to Federal-only? With meat as an example
* We have 10 provinces and an extraordinary amount of bureaucracy (regulations, rules, inspections) which have made for a lot of restrictions, and limits to small business (red tape) and ultimately closure of 100s of abattoirs
* Can we move to ‘small plant, federal rules?’
* Common sense is no longer ‘common’
* Can the provinces cede their own restrictions? But where do we start
* US trade can be more important in some cases so international rules can be more important depending on the product (i.e. boats destined for Europe are only 2 hours from some counties, and US borders are more convenient than moving some products across our province and beyond
* Can we investigate more port options, move to a shipping model and investigate the framework
* Even trucking and licencing (for professions including trucking) are not consistent
* Thunder Bay example – dairy farmers 15-page doc; preparing to ship milk to MB just before COVID. That deal didn’t proceed. But 2 trucks travel 13-14 hours 1 way to bring Thunder Bay Milk from there to Parmalat on the QC side. Dairy farmers do pay for their own trucking in this scenario, but the inefficiency is concerning. No processing plant in Thunder Bay due to regs (or if there was one, it has not kept up w the regulations and is closing)
* All regulations were all put in for some reason. There should be something removed. When we don’t know why its hard to understand
* Provincial borders - Meat processing
* duplication
* Pork processing issue – shut down interprovincial border forced to go to the states.
* Pork industry at risk and the green house sector.
* Anything to US
* Pest Management Regulatory Agency: Ontario still needs to put a stamp on it, Quebec growers won’t take
* Drones to do spraying
* Massive issue
* No regulations on this yet
* Turbulence coming out of a drone is a lot
* Application patterns are dramatically different
* Trucking must have different regulations – Vehicle requirements - Common standard across Canada
* Driver’s licencing – licencing going into Quebec is different. Trucks can’t cross over
* Insurance
* Safety requirements
* Weight restrictions
* Fuel taxes
* Half loads – talking about Class A roads are different in every part of the province
* Animal laws and regulations with animals in vehicles – different rules – stopped at different points because of restrictions and regulations
* Driver Training
* Local trucking (100 km versus someone in Temiskaming their local haul could be 4 hours) versus long haul
* Inspection requirements – Transportation is a big issue for fruit and veg farmers – requirements for vehicles safety. They operate for 6 weeks. Need to do annual inspection - one grower have 25 trailers and takes up to a month to get them safetied. How do we get the inspections to be scaled back and still be safe?
* Explore within their commodity groups – make sure commodity involved is included at beginning of discussions.
* Another level of inspection has been changed – mechanics need a 50,000 iPad to do these.
* Use a tractor with a trailer – hauled by tractor and their rules. – tomato growers could not do this along the busy route
* Labeling in Canada – Canada choice with a maple leaf. No Canadian product. Bottled in Canada.
* Beef Farmer in area – no where to ship to, needing more processing plants. Need to have places to send beef and pork.
* Reduce Liability
* Melding and adding things instead of removing. Regulations are good, but we need to streamline things.
* Needs to come from the consumer – always serving the consumer. What is it that they want? More Canadian goods?
* Addressing the barrier between the processors and retailers.
* You can pack pork but is someone going to buy it. Producers, grocery and processors need to work together.
* Supply chain problem.
* Competitive market for growers.
* You can’t as a flower farmer, take it to the local store to sell. Need to go to terminal to be distributed form there.
* Don’t change regulation for the sake of change, but streamline. What do we want as an industry, as producers? Stability\*
* Many commodities are against opening interprovincial trade. If something goes wrong in another province, how will that affect us? Traceability\*
* We don’t have any barriers – perhaps designate different areas to specialize in specific agricultural goods. Example: seafood out east and west, and so on.
* Issue seen with this is how weather or other issues could affect these products. Diversify and not put all eggs in one basket.
* If all our plants are CFIA inspected, then products can be exported internationally.
* If federally approved, provincially should be a given. We can drive with an Ontario licence in other countries, why doesn’t the same apply here?
1. **What interprovincial trade barriers should be maintained and why?**
* Ontario has high meat inspections standards. Other provinces need to meet those standards/regulations.
* Pesticides – if it’s OK by federal govt, should be ok for provinces. Technology ensures that pesticides are applied accurately. Municipalities shouldn’t be involved in regulations.
* Alcohol – let the free market decide.
* Focus on labelling – made in Canada vs product of Canada
* Western Canada meat inspectors have stated it would not be overly complex to harmonize provincial rules without worrying about meeting the federal rules.
* Don’t want undue cost to producers
* How can we analyse which regs affect more than 1 commodity?
* A consistent barrier to remove is issues around trucking – this impacts all products!
* Seeing issues of movement of workers between provinces – training, wsib, paying into programs if staff is required to work in a different province
* Daylight savings time – should that be on the table? (it does impact on the US side for trade as well)
* BIG ONE TO KEEP – safety/disease prevention
* Need to be aware of safety and cautious that we don’t harm any sector in the process
* Timelines are crucial – some products need a short time to move to market so changing to shipping is only viable for some situations
* Christmas tree farms deal with federal guidelines. Minor use symposium for pesticides; have found inconsistencies between
* BC can’t allow seedlings in from certain areas (disease-related reasons). Requires making a different logistical decision about shipping and planning
* In Christmas trees, we wait for inspections. Most Ontario are u-cut. Inspections are frustrating, pinch point, timelines unclear, last minute changes impact their certification, and the season is so tight for time. Most others don’t notice or see the seedling business. Ontario working well between NS and QC, currently.
* International trade and regulatory climate is very difficult with Christmas trees
* Trees – federally inspected so wouldn’t likely be as concerned or impacted by other commodity changes with regards to inter-provincial trade barriers
* Package size, package quantity – those items that aren’t specific to food safety could be easy targets at this time.
* Inspections and postmortems can vary. Ex of New Zealand was not inspecting heads of butchered sheep so could not export from that plant to Canadian market
* Issue of being opened to trade challenges if we reduce certain inspection standards
* Want to prevent these tasks from creating more regulation-based jobs! (inspectors etc)
* If the industry is paying for inspection and switched to taxpayer; would that change the climate and get support without it being trade-actionable
* Daunting to pick through the list of regulations
* Could reducing inspection fees help new/small processors to become established?
* Maintain barriers associated with bulk produce
* Maintain Ministerial exemptions
* Apples and potatoes to move in bulk. Small amounts can move freely but in bulk you need a ministerial exemption.
* Carrots, beets, onions and corn are in a grey zone.
* Fear that CFA could lose all exemptions
* Supply management should be maintained – most are keeping heads down
* Not shipping eggs as much so shipping interprovincially
* Beer and Wine – two issues – one about production; two is about business protection. VQA for example – grapes are grown in Ontario and produced in Ontario. Will allow some imported
* Maintain relationships with commodities across Canada
* Dairy sector provincial level quota fill credit. Quota issuance, caution to tear them apart because it will open the milk act.
* Important to have regional milk supplier, to regional milk processing and retail
* Stay away from anything protected under supply management
* Take it off the table completely
* Transportation could be harmonized
* Crop spraying and pesticides
* Supply management if it isn’t broke don’t fix it
* Provincial and federal protections to be standardised
* Apples should remain on the no list as influx from other provinces would kill the market right now
* Supply management concerns about only protecting the one faction of agriculture leaves the beef farmers aloof
* 60 percent of beef gets shipped to the U.S BSE damaged the beef market
* Supply management protection could make a hostage situation with other markets
* New Zealand and U.S huge threats. Meat processing needs to be harmonized to help interprovincial trade movement
* OFA take a leadership role by reaching out to individual’s commodities to consult on which changes to make to streamline and strengthen the Canadian Ag system. OFA needs to bring leadership of each commodity to streamline approach and identify what isn’t going to work
* We can talk about supporting supply management. Support risk management and insurance programs on the same level as supply management
* Cut down on the trucking, focus on regional processing
* Blow the whole system up and start over!
* Break it down and figure out what should be kept versus not.
* LCBO all Ontario products and little companies can’t compete with the big ones.
* Rural versus urban power – different perspectives. Has to be something to protect the small industries. Business have been built on the systems we have in place.
* This could be a short-term issue, so how much should we really change.
* A pros and cons list
* How can we make our business sustainable?
* Ontario is known for high food standards and influences many
* There are reasons for the regulations and barriers
* Must sell certain percentage of Canadian goods?
* Labeling – packaged, made, product of Canada should remain as consumers like this
* Is there a place to incentivise buying Canadian to maintain the local market
* How to market buying Canadian?
* How much does marketing help the smaller producers? Marketing can be targeted to age range, demographic, etc. Not seeing affects of the current marketing campaigns
* Agriculture has always been supporting local, so now we can push that more
* Who are those companies who can support us?
* Sobeys and Farm Boy will actively meet with clients, why can’t other grocers follow suit
* Cultivating relationships and maintaining
* Code of Conduct: Certain percentage of store needs to be Canadian and local content
* Provincial is local
* Regulations to protect those investing heavily in producing a product for retailers.