



NFA
Northumberland
Federation of Agriculture



2026 ISSUE #1

News & Notes

Working for a Vibrant and Innovative Agriculture Industry

Message from the President Allan Carruthers

We made it through the heavy snow and cold temps! Now we are moving into spring any day now. Winter/Spring info meetings have started and farm shows are happening. NFA directors have been attending these events alongside you. We have been planning a few events for our members in the upcoming month. Our annual OFA Connect for Zone 12, will be happening March 26th; details to be found in this is-

sue. The topics to be covered will give our members updated information and a chance to ask questions. The second event is some first aid training on April 1st, that can certify you in CPR. You never know when you may be called to administer CPR and this training session can give you some insight and confidence in case the need occurs. Both of these events

we hope give our members some useful value.

We are working on engaging all levels of our governments to bring your concerns to them. If you have issues that affect your agricultural sector please contact the director listed in this newsletter anytime. Thanks and I hope that 2026 is a great year.

Allan

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Notes from



High Speed Rail



While the Alto High Speed Rail is unlikely to cross any farms in Northumberland, it is a project everyone should be paying attention to. The proposal is to connect Toronto, Peterborough, and further into Quebec with an electric train travelling up to 300 km per hour. The train will have no level crossings and it will be completely fenced along its length. The final route is expected to be announced by the end of this year. It is worth noting that around Hastings the proposed route splits into two possible corridors; southern route, coming south to around Stirling and a more northerly route around Madoc. One can appreciate that to travel 300 km per hour, the rail needs to be very flat and very straight. Zigzagging around farmland and natural features is not possible.

Your Northumberland Federation has met with MP Phillip Lawrence. While at the time of this writing, the Conservative Party has not opposed the train, MP Lawrence is very concerned about the projected 100 billion dollar cost of the project and its effect on existing, subsidized VIA service.....will VIA rail through Cobourg be affected by funding redirected to Alto? I have asked this question twice of the Alto people and received two different answers. In the Senate committee on transportation, MP Lawrence has been trying to get some answers from the Transportation Minister.

MP Shelby Kramp to the east has asked for a complete halt, citing disruption to farmland and local communities.

OFA and our Quebec counterparts, UPA, along with Beef Farmers of Ontario have used language that calls for a complete halt or suspension, at least until the impact on farmers and communities is fully understood. President Drew Spoelstra has testified at the senate committee hearing, voicing OFA's concerns.

The rail issue aside, there are significant concerns with respect to private property rights in the Federal Bill C-15 to make this all happen. With the yet to be passed bill, the government can put restriction on your land with respect to sale and use, while they decide which route will be taken. There is an expedited expropriation process, should you not be willing to give up your land without a fight and these threats to private property rights are concerning. If we look at recent rail plans, rail will never happen. What is certain is we will spend \$4 billion talking about it. It is also not beyond the realm of possibilities that the government will wreak havoc on the countryside by expropriating land and fencing off right of ways, only to decide not to build the railway. Think the Pickering or Mirabel airport or the Frank Meyers farm.

Brian Crews, OFA Provincial Director Zone 12

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Miss any newsletters or want to find an old one? Try out this QR Code to take you right

Resi's Report OFA Member Service Rep

ALTO: proposed high-speed rail

OFA and UPA have released a joint statement, urging provincial and federal governments and Alto to:

- Stay out of prime agricultural areas
- Avoid breaking farms into smaller pieces and keep fields and farm operations whole
- Protect farm drainage systems that are essential for crop production
- Address farmers' concerns about construction impacts and ongoing costs, including fencing, and the building, upgrading and long-term maintenance of safe farm crossings for equipment and livestock
- Ensure agricultural impact assessments are independent, thorough and publicly available

ofa.on.ca/newsroom/farmers-call-for-responsible-agriculture-first-planning-in-alto-high-speed-rail-development/

OFA Connect

This is your official invitation to join us at OFA Connect on Thursday, March 26 at Westminster United Church, just north of the 401, Belleville. This day is for OFA members to come together, connect on current ag issues, and enjoy a hot meal. Please RSVP to resi.walt@ofa.on.ca 613.847.3037

Farmers Mental Health Survey

This survey investigates depression, anxiety, burnout, suicide ideation, resilience, stress, and coping in farmers and ranchers from any commodity across Canada. In addition to providing updated statistics on farmer mental health, we will also compare findings from this study with data previously collected in our 2021 and 2016 mental health surveys.

https://uoquelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_41PZdeZqT9WEcGG

AgScape: Agriculture in the classroom

For 35 years, AgScape has helped Ontario teachers bring agriculture and food education to life in their classrooms. Our impactful, hands-on experiences, including our Teacher Ambassador Program workshops delivered by Ontario Certified Teachers, Virtual Field Trips that take classrooms behind the scenes of farms and food production, and our in-person think AG events, connect students with industry leaders and experiential learning opportunities. To support the continuation of AgScape's work, check out their website, share or donate agscape.ca/donate/

Resi Walt

Member Service Representative
Hastings, Lennox and Addington,
Northumberland, Prince Edward

Agriculture Matters: A Guide for Municipal Councillors and Staff

With municipal elections happening this year and deadlines to submit your name to run (May 1st - Aug.21st), it's time to consider how agriculture can have more representation in local government. Would you consider taking a place at the table? Do you know someone in our industry who would be valuable to represent agriculture? Here is an OFA resource to provide tools for this purpose. Check out the link on their website.

<chrome-extension://efaidhbmnnnhhepcpdcefindnksi/https://ofa.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Agriculture-Matters-A-Guide-for-Municipal-Councillors-and-Staff-11-2025.pdf>

Be Social

Like us on Facebook:
[@OFAzone12](https://www.facebook.com/OFAzone12)



www.FARM911.ca



Our annual forum for members to connect over current topics. Concludes with a complementary hot lunch at noon.
🕒 Doors open at 9:30 AM. Program start at 10 AM.

Joel Wiebe, Community Relations Officer, ALTO
Information session on proposed Alto high-speed rail

Danie Glanc, Policy Analyst, OFA
From Traceability to Treaties:
Emerging Issues in Animal and Food Policy

Jeff Harrison, President, Grain Farmers of Ontario
Challenges and opportunities - leadership in the ag industry

Thursday, March 26

Westminster United Church

📍 1199 Wallbridge Loyalist Rd. Belleville



Lunch catered by



RSVP to Resi Walt, OFA | 613.847.3037 | resi.walt@ofa.on.ca

The United Nations has designated the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026), led by the [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#). This initiative aims to highlight the crucial, often unrecognized, roles women play in global Agri-food systems, address systemic gender inequalities, and improve access to resources, technology, and land for women in agriculture.



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE
WOMAN FARMER
2026



Key Goals and Objectives:

- ◇ **Highlight Contributions:** the essential role of rural women in food security, nutrition, and the economic survival of their families.
- ◇ **Close Gender Gaps:** efforts to bridge inequalities in access to productive resources, training, and financial services
- ◇ **Promote Policy Action:** Foster global commitment to implement gender-responsive policies and investments in agriculture.
- ◇ **Empowerment:** Amplify the voices of women farmers and enhance their leadership in agricultural decision-making


The FAO, in collaboration with other UN agencies like the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), will coordinate activities throughout 2026.

While women make up a massive share of the agricultural workforce—often up to 80% in some regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America—they frequently face significant barriers compared to their male counterparts.

The observance seeks to turn the spotlight on women farmers to build more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems worldwide.

Click on the link below to read OFA Viewpoint article on the topic.

ofa.on.ca/newsroom/a-new-era-on-the-farm-women-lead-mentor-and-shape-the-next-generation/



Health and Safety for Ontario Workplaces

There are 83 agriculture/horticulture specific courses being offered online by WSPS. From **Tractor Safety** to **Managing Multi-Lingual Workplaces**, many of the courses are free and can be a great tool to keep everyone safe on our farms. Check out the list of courses available here: www.wspss.ca/search?results#r=Shop&sort=relevancy&f=@shopifyindustry=IAgriculture%20%26%20Horticulture


The Farm Safety Almanac is a practical guide focused on top farm risks from real WSIB injury data.

Download or read a copy here: <https://www.wspss.ca/resource-hub/home/farm-safety-almanac-2026>



This climate change motivated move is the first capital city to do so. Interesting and alarming to see what other regions in this world do that affect farming.

www.beefcentral.com/news/capital-of-major-eu-beef-exporting-country-bans-meat-advertising/



ALTO

What do you know about ALTO - the proposed high speed train.

Consultation meetings are happening all around us to learn about this proposed project, and share your concerns on how they plan to preserve agriculture.

Come to this year's Connect event on March 26th and bring your questions.

Here is more info from OFA on the subject.

ofa.on.ca/newsroom/farmers-call-for-responsibleagriculture-first-planning-in-alto-high-speed-rail-development/



Northumberland County welcomes Dan Borowec as the new Chief Administrative Officer coming out of his one year retirement from his previous position as director of Economic Development.

northumberland.ca/news/northumberland-county-welcomes-dan-borowec-

5 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT NATIONAL MAPLE SYRUP DAY THIS SCRUMPTIOUS SYRUP!

DECEMBER 17TH

ABOUT 40 GALLONS of sap are required to make just one gallon of maple syrup!

The first written account of maple syrup production dates back to the early 1600s

IT TAKES ROUGHLY 40 YEARS before a tree is big enough to tap.

ANTIOXIDANT LEVELS in a 2-ounce portion of maple syrup are COMPARABLE TO BROCCOLI!

CANADA produces nearly 80% of the entire world's supply of maple syrup.



NFA

NORTHUMBERLAND
FEDERATION OF
AGRICULTURE


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 #northumberlandag

We're on the web
[https://ofa.on.ca/
federations/
northumberland/](https://ofa.on.ca/federations/northumberland/)

Gadgets

Digital resource that you
may find useful.

The First Sixteen

A **podcast**
from Agriculture
and Agri-Food
Canada



Did you know Agri-food Canada
has a podcast?

Check it out!

[agriculture.canada.ca/en/agri-info/firstsixteen-
podcast](http://agriculture.canada.ca/en/agri-info/firstsixteen-podcast)

Or find it on



The sap is starting to run so spring is
around the corner. Equipment will be
rolling on the roads once again for the
2026 crop year so be safe out there.
If it's been awhile since you have taken

CPR training there is a great opportunity
April 1st. Limited space so sign up quickly.

Lisa

CPR Training Offer for Members

Get some training You could save a life!



April 1st, 2026

9:00 am - 1:30 pm

Keeler Centre Colborne

Cost: \$25

Lunch included

NFA is offering this course to members
at this reduced cost

Limited space available

Sign up before March 25.

Email & e-transfer to nfa.lisam@gmail.com to register

CPR Level C Includes:

The Red Cross
Preparing to Respond
Check, Call, Care
Choking - Adult, Child, Infant
Circulation Emergencies
CPR and AED - Adult, Child, Infant

Certificate delivered electronically
upon completion of course

Instructor : Jen Keller-Nelson



OFA Ontario
Federation of
Agriculture

Renew your membership!

The OFA is involved in every aspect of farm business and rural life as the voice of
Ontario's farmers.

- ⇒ Provides 51 localized County Federations of Agriculture for strong leadership and local representation
- ⇒ Includes 31 organizational members and affiliates representing a majority of Ontario's commodities
- ⇒ Is the only accredited farm organization to provide you with 20 trained Member Service Representatives (MSRs) in 15 geographical areas to provide you with front-line service in your area

