

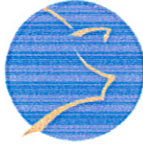
Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC)



Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Long Term Thinking
for Today's Issues



ONTARIO PORK



March 5, 2010

Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier:

We share a common intent to secure a future for Ontario farmers. But we have yet to see a tangible expression of that intent from your government in a time of great distress across rural Ontario.

Farming in Ontario is about food. You understand and appreciate the need for a National Food Strategy to secure healthy and affordable food now and in the future for all Canadians. But to secure a future for our food production system we need to stabilize our farm businesses today.

Farming in Ontario is about jobs. Over 80,000 Ontarians make their living on farms. A total of 718,000 Ontarians work in the agri-food industry. As farms die so will the critical mass needed to sustain our processing industry. Jobs will be lost.

Farming in Ontario is about rural development. Our farm businesses sustain our rural infrastructure across the province. They sustain our communities that contribute so richly to our culture and the fabric of our province.

Farming in Ontario is about ecological stewardship. Our farm families readily adopt beneficial practices that contribute to environmental improvement – leaving the land and water better off.

But farming in Ontario is threatened by factors beyond the control of our farm business managers. The tools that we have worked with to manage risk no longer work favorably for the majority. Our risk management tools need to be repaired to adapt to the current market circumstances to bring stability and sustainability to farming in Ontario.

Premier, we have developed the tools that are needed. We have consulted with Minister Mitchell and agree that our proposed amendments to AgriStability will bring stability to thousands of farms. Our proposed Business Risk Management Program, commencing 2009 will sustain these farms for the future.

Ontario farmers need an immediate commitment from your government to provide the provincial investment needed to stabilize and sustain our businesses. This commitment cannot hinge on federal support being given first.

We understand the necessity of securing a federal commitment, but without a tangible expression from your government over the next few weeks farms will be lost. We continue to be caught between the rhetoric of both levels of government. Ontario farmers deserve and need better than this and are depending on you and your government to stand up for Ontario agriculture at this critical time.

We are prepared to work with you to ensure sustainable farming also becomes a federal priority and to secure the federal government commitment for our farm families.

Premier, our farm businesses await confirmation of your commitment.

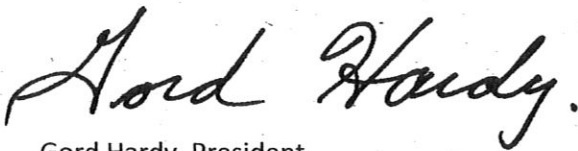
Sincerely,



Bette Jean Crews, President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Henry Stevens, President
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario



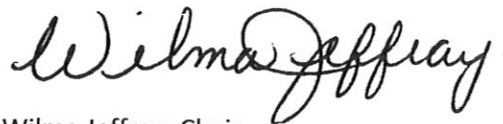
Gord Hardy, President
Ontario Cattlemen's Association



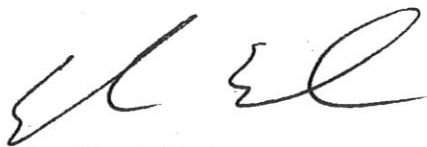
Brian Gilroy, Chair
Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association



Leo Guilbeault, Chair
Ontario Grains & Oilseeds



Wilma Jeffray, Chair
Ontario Pork



Markus Wand, Chair
Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency



Judy Dirksen, President
Ontario Veal

cc: Hon. Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs