

Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC)



Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Long-Term Thinking
for Today's Issues



ONTARIO PORK



News Release

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Ontario Farmers Need Tangible Results from Ministers

Guelph - The Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition (OASC) and Ontario farmers are reading between the lines and asking Agriculture Ministers when they can expect tangible outcomes from last week's meeting of federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) Agriculture Ministers.

"The Ministers' communiqué on their discussions recognized the current suite of risk management programs are not working," said Bette Jean Crews, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA). "This is a significant change and positive sign, but farmers knew this a long time ago and now need to see real action as a result. Ministers need to act now to preserve our local foods systems."

"In consultation with farmers, our coalition has developed bankable changes to AgriStability and advocated for an AgriFlex program to enable the new Business Risk Management Programs to be implemented now to help our farm businesses," said Wilma Jeffray, Chair of Ontario Pork. "Ministers have once again missed an opportunity to address the current market disasters we are facing in Ontario."

The ministers did announce an immediate and effective AgriRecovery response to the weather disaster faced by prairie farmers. A total of \$450 million was provided in record time to help restore lost acreage.

"The rapid response to the flooding in the prairies through the AgriRecovery program is an excellent example of how well a program can work," says Brian Gilroy, Chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. "Ontario farmers need the same respect of governments in making AgriStability and AgriFlex work for the market disasters we face here."

Until the FPT Ministers decide on adopting predictable and bankable programs nationally the OASC is calling on Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Mitchell to step up and invest in Ontario's farmers by funding the programs developed here in Ontario without waiting for the federal government to act.

"It is imperative that Ontario supports its farm businesses and rural communities through leadership on this risk management file," says Bette Jean Crews. "We will continue to work with Minister Mitchell on a national program but we need stability in our Ontario farming sector now. We are calling on the Minister to do the right thing for Ontario farmers."

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