



January 25, 2023

MPP Trevor Jones
Parliamentary Assistant
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Floor, 77 Grenville St.
Toronto, ON M5S 1B3

Dear Mr. Jones,

Re: ARIO Act Consultation

Thank you for inviting the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) to provide comments on the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO) Act. BFO fully supports OMAFRA's pursuit to ensure critical and relevant agri-food research is conducted and disseminated across various disciplines in Ontario. The Ontario agri-food sector is fortunate to have access to world-class agricultural research facilities of which BFO has proudly supported through research and infrastructure investment over many years, in partnership with ARIO, the University of Guelph, OMAFRA, and other partners. BFO views the ARIO Act as an important vehicle to support continued utilization of research facilities, and ongoing investment in their longevity and stability.

If the province proceeds to initiate a full review of the ARIO Act, BFO recommends the following:

1. Maintain the ability for ARIO to hold funds in trust for future priority infrastructure projects, and other research-focused initiatives.
2. Maintain the ability for ARIO to own property to insulate research lands from political interests that may wish to sell or repurpose the use of lands currently under ARIO's purview.
3. Update the wording within the Act to reflect the breadth of colleges and areas of discipline (e.g., engineering) that are now imperative to the success of the sector.
4. Investigate the possibility to expand the ARIO's role as outlined within the Act to include innovation development, getting research into practice (GRIP), knowledge and technology transfer (KTT), and commercialization.
5. Increase the role of ARIO to include facilitation of collaborative research efforts between OMAFRA, AAFC, the University of Guelph and others, as well as industry groups such as BFO, the Livestock Research and Innovation Corporation (LRIC), etc.
6. Assess, with robust stakeholder input, the governance structure of ARIO, including: the role of the board, composition of the board, the Director's role in maintaining a balance of effort across research disciplines and sectors, the Director's role in budgeting re: Sections 9 (2e) "*establish budgets of the Research Institute for programs of research... at OAC, OVC, Macdonald College*" and Section 11, "*prepare and submit to the Minister an estimate of all expenditures required during the ensuing year*", and finally, the role of the board and director in the conservation, protection or preservation of agricultural lands.

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BFO is strongly supportive of recommendations one and two outlined above, and would recommend that the Act not be opened up for a full public review unless the existing authorities outlined in these recommendations will be maintained or not significantly altered.

BFO believes that Ontario's agri-food research capacity is in a very strong position given the recent facility improvements and expansions that have occurred, the strong partnership with the province and sector associations and businesses, and the track record of success in the research and innovation space. However, more work needs to be done to ensure continual investment in facilities and upgrades, training and hiring of HQP, research coordination for the future, and knowledge translation/extension, commercialization, and getting research into practice. To accomplish this, we need a modern act to guide future decision-making and investment, so long as it does not come at the expense of ARIOs core mandate, which we believe continues to be relevant today.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the ARIO Act, and for your due consideration of our recommendations. We would be pleased to discuss our comments in further detail should that be of interest.

Sincerely,



Jack Chaffe
President

cc: Lisa Thompson, Ontario Minister of Agriculture
John Kelly, Ontario Deputy Minister of Agriculture
Lindsay Smith, Office of the Honourable Lisa Thompson
Tanya Marissen, OMAFRA

