



December 9, 2025

Nathan Stirk  
President  
Dufferin County Cattleman's Association

Re: Large Animal Veterinary Access 25-02

The following resolution was passed at the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) Annual General Meeting in February and was recently discussed by the BFO Board of Directors:

**WHEREAS**, Access to large animal veterinarians for beef producers is a challenge in many parts of Ontario. This is causing many veterinarians to expand their service area and travel much further distances. This problem leaves many parts of Ontario with minimal to no veterinary care for their cattle.

**THEREFORE, IT BE RESOLVED THAT BFO** focuses on efforts to improve access to veterinarians throughout the whole province and identifies geographic areas of concern including but not limited to Northern Ontario and continue to work with veterinary and government partners to provide solutions.

The BFO Board of Directors would like to thank Dufferin County Cattleman's Association for bringing this resolution forward. Reducing large animal veterinary shortages in the province continues to be a top priority for BFO. At the Queen's Park BBQ and lobby day in May, we asked elected officials to address the large animal veterinary shortage by enhancing incentive programs, increasing investment in the Veterinary Assistance Program (VAP), and ensuring the successful launch of the new collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) Program with Lakehead University and the University of Guelph.

The Veterinary Incentive Program encourages recently graduated veterinarians to practice large animal veterinary medicine and work in underserved areas in the province to address critical skill and labour shortages. Each new veterinarian graduate will be eligible to receive grants of up to \$50,000 over five years for working in rural and northern communities and treating large animals. Since the program launched in October 2023, 15 veterinarians have committed and taken advantage of the program.

In July, I attended Northern Economic Development and Growth Minister George Pirie's roundtable on behalf of BFO to discuss VAP where discussions focused on ways to enhance the program. In August, BFO staff and I met again with Minister Pirie to discuss concerns related to the VAP that were not fully addressed at the roundtable. The minister was receptive to BFO's recommendations.

The Ontario government is investing \$2 million through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to help Lakehead University build a new facility for its Collaborative DVM Program, delivered in partnership with the University of Guelph. In September, the program

welcomed its first Northern Cohort—20 students from Northern Ontario—who are completing the full four-year program at the University of Guelph. Starting in 2027, once Lakehead's new facility is complete, students will begin the program in Thunder Bay before finishing in Guelph.

BFO offers two scholarships to Ontario Veterinary College students pursuing large animal health and welfare. The DVM Entrance Scholarship provides \$4,000 to an incoming DVM student, distributed as \$1,000 annually over four years to a student who has significant beef cattle experience and a demonstrated interest in food animal practice. The DVM Convocation Award provides one award of \$5,000, to a graduating DVM student who has shown strong involvement in beef cattle, completed a beef rotation, and is enrolled in the Food Animal or Rural Community Practice stream. Additionally, the BFO Degree Bursaries offer several awards of varying amounts to students with financial need. Most recently, BFO established a *Beef Farmers of Ontario Veterinary Bursary* in the amount of \$2,000, which was presented at OFA's AGM.

BFO recently sent a letter of support to the Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance (NOFIA) regarding its Vet Capacity Pilot Project proposal. This project looks to support veterinary capacity in northern Ontario, with a targeted focus on the Cochrane district. The project's objectives are to improve access to food animal care in northern Ontario through a shared services model using human resources, equipment, and infrastructure, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of veterinary services for producers.

BFO appreciates this issue being brought forward as we recognize its importance within our sector. We remain committed to advocating for both short-term and long-term solutions to help address and improve access to veterinary services throughout the whole province. We will keep our members apprised of progress made on this issue.

Sincerely,



Craig McLaughlin  
President

cc: Rex Crawford (Mover)  
Mike Swidersky (Seconder)  
Curtis Dullard (Advisory Councillor)  
Kaitlyn McReavy (Secretary)