

YOUR
INDUSTRY
YOUR
FUTURE
YOUR
VOICE



For 60 years, the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) has been a tough and credible advocate and unified voice for the province's 19,000 beef farmers, representing all sectors of the industry.

As an organization, BFO utilizes valuable check-off dollars, provided by its membership, to advocate in the areas of sustainability, animal health and care, environment, food safety, and domestic and export market development to help beef farmers and provide solutions to issues facing the beef industry in Ontario.

Take a look through our third edition of BFO's Report Card to read about how BFO has used your check-off dollars over the last four years, and how we will continue to use these valuable check-off dollars to move our industry forward.

While we have done our best to provide a high-level overview of activities, this summary is not exhaustive.



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Report Card
Four Years in Review - 2018-2021
BEEF FARMERS OF ONTARIO



POLICY

- Responded to 84 resolutions that were brought forward by beef farmers from across the province.
- Prepared over 45 consultation submissions for government on issues and proposed regulations affecting beef farmers and the Ontario beef industry.
- Secured increased compensation values under the Wildlife Damage Compensation program to better manage and compensate farmers for livestock losses due to predation.
- Ongoing lobby for a science-based approach to proposed and now enacted humane livestock transportation regulations, including securing a two-year delay in enforcement of the regulations.
- Actively engaged in the cap and trade and carbon credit consultations while advocating that any costs to beef farmers should be offset by environmental rewards and benefits for our sector.
- Helped repeal the planned elimination of the *Line Fences Act*.
- Provided comments on labelling guidelines for simulated meat and the front-of-package labelling requirements which could impact ground beef.
- Provided comments on the reduction in use of antimicrobials in animals and enhanced veterinary oversight, in order to control antimicrobial resistance.
- Formed an emergency response working group, held training sessions and seminars for producers and emergency personnel on how to respond effectively to livestock truck rollovers.
- In response to a number of resolutions, requested changes to the *Beef Cattle Marketing Act* through OMAFRA to trigger check-off on cattle owned from birth-to-finish, and packer-owned cattle.
- Provided comments during the consultation process and worked closely with all other livestock and general farm organizations on the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*.
- Provided comments during the establishment of the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019*, and continuing to work with PAWs inspectors on animal care concerns on beef farms through the use of our trained animal care advisors.
- Eliminated the five-year renewal requirement for Nutrient Management Strategies under the *Nutrient Management Act*.
- Representation on an SRM Task Force with industry and government representatives to look at revisions to our SRM removal requirements given Canada's change in BSE risk status to negligible in 2021.
- Conducted a governance review with the help of Canlead Solutions to assess the effectiveness of our association and our current structure.
- Actively engaged in addressing processing backlogs, labour shortages, lost market opportunities, and depressed returns to producers resulting largely from the current lack of processing availability.
- Working to address the longstanding issue of veterinary access in underserved areas of the province.
- Working with government and industry to address the loss of deadstock collection services in some regions of the province.
- Prepared a submission on the Next Policy Framework, which highlights our industry's needs for funding for manure storage, on-farm expansion, labour incentives for agri-food workers and employers, perimeter fencing and herd growth incentives to name a few.



INDUSTRY SUPPORT

- Delivered over \$540,000 to our local associations in support of producer and consumer education and initiatives through the Sharecost Program, and County and District Grant Program.
- Delivered over \$1.7 million to the Ontario Corn Fed Beef program to support marketing efforts.
- Delivered \$117,650 to Farm & Food Care in support of agriculture advocacy.
- Provided \$80,000 in support to 4-H Ontario for their Discovery Days program.
- Provided \$40,000 to AgScape to support beef, agriculture and food production education in classrooms across Ontario.
- Worked with OFA to support their *Feeding Your Future* initiative, a program focused on agri-food jobs and training opportunities in Ontario.
- Committed \$45,000 toward the creation of DVM scholarships in support of future beef veterinarians at the Ontario Veterinary College.
- Committed member of the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef; Meat & Poultry Ontario; Ontario Livestock and Poultry Council; Ontario Forage Council; Ontario Federation of Agriculture; and Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



- Lobbied the provincial government to increase the Risk Management Program (RMP) by an additional \$50 million, which was announced in 2020. Continuing to advocate for this program as a valuable business tool for beef farming families.
- Continuing to be the point of contact with key government officials on new regulations and legislation that may affect beef farmers.
- Facilitated over 100 meetings with elected MPs and MPPs to build support for beef industry issues and priorities.
- Ongoing lobby for enhancements to the AgriStability program and business risk management programs to ensure financial stability for our members.
- Helped deliver improvements to the AgriStability program, including the removal of the RML, increased compensation levels from 70-80 per cent on the provincial portion.
- Ongoing lobby for the federal government to increase the interest-free portion of the Advance Payments Program from \$100,000 to \$500,000.
- Ongoing support of national lobby and market access efforts (CETA, CUSMA, CPTPP, Canada-U.K. etc.) through funding to the Canadian Cattlemen's Association.
- Delivered enhancements to the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program, a program largely subscribed to by beef farmers under the age of 40.
- Advocated for drought support for beef farmers in 2018 and in 2021. Further to this, delivered 5.8 million pounds of hay to 129 livestock producers in Rainy River and Kenora through the Northwestern Livestock Emergency Assistance Initiative announced by the provincial government in 2021.
- Secured \$15 million in government funding across three programs (feed, water/fencing, per/hd payments) in drought relief for livestock producers across northwestern Ontario.
- Lobbied for and played an active role in establishing the Canada-Ontario COVID-19 Beef Emergency Feed Maintenance Initiative, also referred to as the "set-aside" program. Secured \$5 million in government funding to deliver this initiative to help our sector mitigate processing plant disruptions due to COVID-19.
- Helped to deliver over \$32 million in government funding across two programs to help increase meat processing capacity in Ontario.
- Sustained active consultation with government in the development and implementation of *PAWS and Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*.
- Secured \$700 thousand in government funding to increase deadstock management capacity.
- Maintained partnerships with fellow industry commodity groups to enhance our lobby as an agricultural community.

PRODUCER ENGAGEMENT



- Designed a cost of production calculator for cow-calf producers.
- Launched an article series in *Ontario Beef* magazine, and an accompanying webpage called Wellness on the Farm, which focuses on the overall wellbeing of farmers.
- Developed and distributed an Animal Transport Record form to help members comply with new humane transport regulations.
- Provided financial support to develop a cattle transport training webinar for eastern Canada.
- Administered the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee and the Beef Breeder programs, which support expanding farmers plus young and beginning farmers.
- Development of young producer initiatives, and the establishment of the Ontario Beef Youth Alliance and the BFO youth committee positions
- Launched the Rural Ramble on the Road video series in 2021, along with filming a calf club video series in 2020.
- Conducted over 50 visits to Ontario beef farms in response to animal care calls received through the Farm & Food Care Helpline service, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA), and the new Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS).
- Hosted a cow-calf management school and numerous virtual workshops and webinars to provide information and practical on-farm learning opportunities for our members.
- Co-hosted virtual cover-crop grazing sessions, Carcass 101, Beef at Guelph Research Day and Beef Symposium webinars in conjunction with OMAFRA, University of Guelph and Ontario Sheep Farmers as both educational and networking tools for beef farmers.
- Hosted numerous Verified Beef Production Plus (VBP+) training sessions for beef farmers.
- Established the Ontario Beef Quality Assurance Rebate Incentive Program to provide BFO check-off paying members with a 75 per cent rebate on VBP+ audit fees to encourage more producers to become VBP+ certified.



CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Undertook a comprehensive consumer research project to determine Ontarians' knowledge about, perception of, and feelings toward beef, specifically Ontario beef.
- Created the new Ontario Beef brand identity and developed a brand-new public-facing website, which includes a product locator feature, to replace the former Make It Ontario Beef initiative.
- Hired a marketing agency to help develop and execute an Ontario Beef marketing strategy, which focuses predominantly on digital and social media to make the investment go as far as possible.
- Launched several large-scale and micro promotional campaigns to date, one of which, *The Ontario Beef Burger Battle*, also won a gold medal at the 2021 Influencer Marketing Awards. Most of these campaigns included either an influencer or partnership component, or both.
- Developed a number of print/digital resources and promotional items all geared toward the promotion of Ontario beef.
- Partnered with AgScape to create *An Exploration of Beef Farming in Ontario*, which includes three Ontario curriculum-linked resources for use by educators teaching grades 7-12. The lesson plans cover the topics of nutrition, animal care, the environment and careers as they relate to beef farming in the province.
- Continued to have a presence at events like the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and CNE prior to COVID-19, and participated virtually where possible throughout the ongoing pandemic. A new consumer event booth has been created for when in-person events take place again.
- Partnered with a public relations agency to launch a traditional PR campaign focused on the environmental benefits of beef farming.



MARKET DEVELOPMENT

- Initiated a Regional Marketing Initiative and strategy, and funded 11 *Collaborative Partnership Program* projects to enhance the competitiveness of Ontario beef.
- Conducted a food origin research project with Oritain, an analytical company and global leader in scientific traceability based in New Zealand.
- Formed a joint marketing committee with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association and created a robust four-year marketing strategy (2020-2024) to support four objectives: growth in the domestic market for Ontario branded beef; growth in export markets for Ontario branded beef; maximize value of Ontario beef products; and develop a mandatory on-farm quality assurance program for Ontario beef.
- Efforts continue to focus on export markets for Ontario beef. Currently in Japan, there are 21 retail partners promoting Ontario beef in 567 outlets across the country, representing the highest Canadian beef brand presence in the market.
- Ongoing collaboration on Ontario beef brand development, market expansion of existing Ontario beef brands, and expansion of certified sustainable Ontario beef products at the retail level.
- Currently, 43 projects are underway in various stages of implementation with retail, foodservice, processing, packers, producers, industry associations and academic institutions. 30 of these are domestic projects with 13 projects in 10 export markets.



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Made a strong commitment to advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion within the beef industry and the broader agri-food sector, and fight racism and discrimination in all of its forms.
- Hosted intensive training for the BFO Board of Directors, staff and interested members on the fundamentals of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Supported Feed Ontario in the amount of \$70,000 to support local food banks and families and children in need.

MARKET INFORMATION



- Issued over 1,000 daily reports and 200 weekly reports by tapeline recording, mail, fax, email and through the BFO website.
- Tracked statistical data to support Canfax in its analysis of national markets and trends.
- Provided daily voice-recorded market commentary and pricing on CKNX Radio.
- Provided weekly market commentary and pricing to the Ontario Farmer and on CFCO Radio.
- Provided industry and media with an accessible resource for market commentary and statistical data.
- Continued information resource for auction markets.
- Established a fed cattle price reporting system in partnership with Canfax.
- Working to address the loss of boxed beef price reporting in Canada with CCA, Canfax, and our counterparts across the country.

COMMUNICATIONS



- Published 20 editions of the *Ontario Beef* magazine that were each mailed to over 16,000 homes providing industry information for beef farmers.
- Issued 200 weekly e-newsletters to members and industry stakeholders covering current news headlines and upcoming events.
- Shared important BFO news releases, and routine industry updates, resources and opportunities through BFO's digital membership database.
- Launched a bi-weekly industry-wide COVID-19 response communications forum. More than 35 industry calls have been held since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Organized annual summer and fall meetings for the BFO Advisory Council and local presidents to provide a platform for discussion on industry issues and county and district concerns.
- Coordinated BFO's annual general meetings, which provide a forum for beef farmers for learning, discussion and contribution to the activities and strategic direction of the Ontario beef industry.
- Attended various farm shows and producer events, both in-person and virtually, to support farmers.
- Created online pop-up merchandise shops to promote the BFO and Ontario Beef brands.
- Launched a thank you campaign for auction markets and processing plant employees in the winter of 2020 to show our appreciation of their diligent efforts to support our industry through the pandemic.
- Continued to be a resource for industry and media who were looking for commentary on issues facing the Ontario beef industry.
- Engaged with farmers and the general public through a variety of social media platforms.

RESEARCH



- Secured over \$20 million in federal and provincial funding to modernize the Ontario Beef Research Centre in Elora, Ontario. In addition, BFO contributed \$1.5 million towards the new build.
- Secured \$1.3 million in government funding for feed intake equipment at the Ontario Beef Research Centre in Elora, Ontario.
- Committed \$200,000 per year for three years (2020-2022) to the BFO research strategy, and supported beef research projects in the areas of animal health and welfare, environmental sustainability, food safety, antimicrobial use, resistance and alternatives, forages, and others.
- Funded a multi-year on-farm field trial to assess satellite-based forage insurance.
- Through national check-off, BFO distributed producer funds to the Beef Cattle Research Council to support national beef, cattle and forage research and extension.
- Committed \$150,000 toward the National Beef Science Cluster.
- Delivered \$160,000 to the Livestock Research Innovation Corporation in support of livestock research in Ontario.
- Hosted a number of research-focused events together with the Livestock Research Innovation Corporation and the University of Guelph.
- BFO's producer relations team continues to work closely with the Beef Cattle Research Council on extension of research with producers in eastern Canada.



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