

For over 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 the fourth edition of our Report Card to read about how BFO has used your check-off dollars over the last three years, and how we 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.



#### **POLICY & ISSUES**

- Responded to 57 resolutions brought forward by beef farmers from across the province.
- Prepared over 35 consultation submissions for government on issues and proposed regulations affecting beef farmers and the Ontario beef sector.
- Worked with the Arrell Food Institute to conduct a study on the use of community pastures to encourage cow herd expansion.
- Participated in the Veterinary Medicine and Beef Farming Sector Working Group to address the lack of access to large animal veterinary care in underserved areas of the province. A strategy document was formalized to guide our collective actions in response to this issue.
- Provided recommendations in response to the *Veterinarians Act* public consultation and supported the formal review of the Veterinary Assistance Program.
- Supported the proposal by the University of Guelph and Lakehead University to train 20 per cent more veterinarians annually with targeted recruitment from northern and rural areas through a collaborative DVM in Rural and Northern Community Practice Program.
- In collaboration with other livestock groups, investigated policy and program options that would help address deadstock pickup and disposal gaps in the province.
- Secured an increase to the claim threshold for reasonable care plans from five claims to 10 under the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program.
- Led consultations with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association, the Ontario Livestock Markets Association, and the Ontario Livestock Dealers' Association to develop a unified position on future amendments to the Ontario Beef Cattle Financial Protection Program.
- Co-authored a report outlining the rising rate of cattle condemnations in the province, specifically at provincially inspected abattoirs. In collaboration with Meat and Poultry Ontario, Veal Farmers of Ontario, and the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association, struck a working group with OMAFRA's meat inspection branch to find solutions.

- Signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Solicitor General to formalize the working relationship between BFO Animal Care Advisors and Animal Welfare Services (AWS) investigators on animal welfare cases involving beef cattle.
- With our partners in the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition, commissioned a study on the economic value and impact of the Risk Management Program (RMP) in Ontario.
- Ongoing comment submissions on CFIA's proposed traceability amendments to Part XV of the Health of Animals Regulations.
- Conducted a review of internal policies, as well as a review of our by-laws to assess compliance with *Ontario's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* (ONCA). Subsequently, our by-laws were revised in early 2024.
- Submitted comments to Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) to support the development of the renewed Beef Code of Practice of the Care and Handling of Beef Cattle.
- During the Cargill labour negotiations, submitted a formal proposal to government aimed to help producers cashflow their operations. Subsequently, an accelerated reporting and payment timeline under RMP, temporary acceptance of OTM cattle under RMP, and increased AgriStability interim payments from 50 per cent to 75 per cent were announced.
- Worked with OMAFA and Agricorp to address producer concerns on RMP file reviews most specifically related to Agricorp's request for railgrade information on cattle sold on a live basis a practice no longer being employed.
- Completed a strategic plan review process and launched our BFO Strategic Plan (2023-27).
- Committed member of the Agriculture Adaptation Council, Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef; Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario; Farm and Food Care Ontario, Livestock Research Innovation Corporation; Meat & Poultry Ontario; National Cattle Feeders' Association, Ontario Agriculture Commodity Council, Ontario Livestock and Poultry Council; Ontario Forage Council; Ontario Federation of Agriculture; and Presidents' Council.



## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & ADVOCACY

- Point of contact with key government officials on new regulations and legislation that may affect beef farmers.
- Hosted over 500 MPPs, legislative and bureaucratic staff at each of our Queen's Park beef barbecues in 2022 and 2023.
- Facilitated over 150 meetings with MPs, MPPs and Senators to build support for beef sector issues and priorities.
- Participated in over 50 government roundtables, standing committee appearances, pre-budget consultations and committee receptions.

- Helped to secure over \$300 million in federal and provincial funding commitments that support Ontario's beef farmers and beef sector. Some of the funding was directed to building veterinary, processing and deadstock capacity in the province, as well as market development and trade opportunities for Ontario beef.
- Ongoing advocacy for increased investment in RMP the single most valuable business tool for beef farmers and rural communities.
- Participated in pre-budget consultations, meetings with staff and members from Treasury Board, Finance, OMAFRA, the finance committee and the Premier's Office on multiple occasions to advocate for increased investment in RMP.
- Secured a provincial investment of \$2 million over four years to help augment our market development efforts to develop new brands and markets for Ontario beef both domestically and around the world.
- Along with CCA, advocated for harmonization with U.S. practices on SRM removal requirements.
- Attended the anti-carbon tax rally, the Parkhill Meats expansion announcement and the FTP rural economic development reception.
- Attended the Ontario Food Summit hosted by Ontario's Minister of Agriculture to discuss food security and strategies to strengthen our food system.
- Attended the State Agriculture and Rural Leaders Ag Chairs Summit to meet with Minister Thompson and other influential agriculture leaders from across Canada and the U.S.
- Joined Minister Thompson and OMAFRA on their trade mission trip to Japan and Vietnam to build our relations in Asia and bolster the value these markets hold for Ontario beef farmers.
- In 2022, secured an increase in the loan limits under the Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program from \$500,000 to \$1 million for individual members and \$1.5 million for corporations.
- In 2024, secured an increase to the provincial government guarantee under the Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program from \$65 million to \$125 million. In addition, Ioan limits for individuals and corporations were doubled.
- In collaboration with other livestock groups, secured OMAFRA funding (led by LRIC) to investigate policy and program options that would help address deadstock pickup and disposal gaps in the province.
- Ongoing advocate for the protection of grazing and pasture lands, including our active lobby against the proposal to allow up to three severances on agriculturally zoned lands under the Provincial Planning Statement, which was later repealed.
- Appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food regarding electronic logging devices (ELDs) and our call for clearer language in the guidelines for livestock transporters and request for harmonization with the U.S.

- Along with our allies across the livestock sector, advocated and received increased flexibility with respect to ELDs and hours of service under the humane transport regulations to ensure animals are delivered safely to their destinations.
- Requested amendments under the Beef Cattle Marketing Act to modernize the check-off collection process and eliminate the current exemption on custom processing.
- Attended several meetings with MPPs and the Solicitor General's office, as well as appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy outlining our concerns with the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act* and improvements to better align with beef production practices.
- In partnership with CCA, executed a successful lobby and *Don't Label My Beef* campaign that generated attention from policymakers, the media, and the general public. The Government of Canada listened to our sector's concerns and reversed the policy proposal on ground beef, a nutrient-dense protein.
- Along with CCA, advocated for and secured a federal commitment of \$57.5 million over five years to fund a Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine bank, and support for the development of emergency response plans related to foreign animal disease outbreaks.
- Worked with Senator Rob Black and MP Gerretsen's office to develop a parliamentary petition to help expedite the RFP process to help re-open the Joyceville abattoir in Kingston.
- Ongoing advocacy and letter-writing efforts to defeat Bill C-282 (the Supply Management bill).
- Appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade to talk about the Canadian beef sector's concerns with Bill C-282.
- Lobbied to obtain a more reflective grain corn to silage conversion formula under production insurance in response to a 2021 resolution, which was successful.
- Advocated for an increase in the interest-free portion of the Advance Payments Program (APP), which was increased from \$100,000 to \$350,000, and now at its current level of \$250,000.
- Obtained an amendment to the *Ministry of Agriculture* and Rural Affairs Act to exempt feeder cattle under the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program from the *Innkeepers Act* to allow co-ops the ability to offer custom feeding agreements.
- Collaborated with other farm organizations to help modernize, in partnership with the government, the *Agriculture Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO) Act.*
- Joined the National Cattle Feeders' Association (NCFA) to augment our advocacy work in Ottawa, along with our national efforts with CCA.
- Sponsored the Ontario Legislative Internship Programme and hosted interns on two farm tours to provide them with the opportunity to learn about beef farming.

## PRODUCER EDUCATION & SUPPORT

- Delivered \$575,000\* to our local associations in support of producer and consumer education and initiatives through the Sharecost Program, and County and District Grant Program. \* *Includes estimates for 2024 due to time of publishing*.
- Administered the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program, the Ontario Beef Breeder Co-operative Program and the Advance Payments Program, which support both expanding and young farmers.
- Attended various farm shows, producer events, and local meetings, both in-person and virtually, to support farmers.
- Helped address individual producer concerns on a variety of topics, like expropriation challenges, line fences act, municipal issues, land use challenges, implementation of regulations, age verification, funding applications to name a few.
- Hosted regional meetings to discuss looming issues in our sector including what BFO can do to help address them, and how we can best position the Ontario beef sector for growth and sustainability.
- Hosted three Cow-Calf Management Tours with a combined attendance of 175 individuals. The events focused on herd health protocols, best management practices, and grazing management.
- Hosted two Feedlot Management Schools together with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association (OCFA) with a combined attendance of 200 individuals. The events focused on receiving cattle protocols, bunk management, and managing risk.
- Hosted an Ontario Beef Feedlot Market Security Forum together with the OCFA for 75 individuals to help stimulate discussion on strategies and market options the Ontario feedlot sector can use to improve market and price security, and to mitigate against escalating risks.
- Hosted a virtual meeting as a follow-up to the Ontario Beef Feedlot Market Security Forum called *Hedging Strategies in Today's Market*, which had close to 40 participants.
- Ongoing support of youth development, including the administration of the Ontario Beef Youth Alliance (OBYA), now with over 250 members.
- Hosted three OBYA tours, with a combined attendance of 85 individuals. The 2024 tour included a partnership with the Canadian Cattle Young Leaders annual Spring Forum, which provided an opportunity for the provincial and national groups to network.
- Hosted the BUILD Leadership Program with the Rural Ontario Institute to provide beef industry leaders with practical governance, communications and advocacy training. 14 graduates successfully completed the program, and joined the previous 96 graduates of the program since it was first launched in 2012.

- Co-hosted three annual virtual Beef Symposium events together with the University of Guelph, and OMAFRA. These events had a combined registration of close to 400 people.
- Together with OMAFRA and the University of Guelph, hosted over 150 registrants for the Beef Day@Guelph and Calving School events to showcase current research, carcass evaluation in the University of Guelph meat lab, calving techniques and resources, as well as a tour of the Ontario Beef Research Centre.
- Along with OMAFRA and Ontario Sheep Farmers, hosted Grazing Cover Crops webinars and supported the Advance Grazing Sessions with the Ontario Forage Council.
- Offered the Ontario Beef Quality Assurance Rebate Incentive Program to provide BFO check-off paying members with a rebate on VBP+ audit fees. In Ontario, there are 482 VBP+ trained producers and 63 audited (active) VBP+ farms.
- Completed numerous VBP+ training workshops online and in-person, along with many speaking engagements at producer events like the Grey-Bruce Farmers' Week, breed association meetings and post-secondary agricultural programs.
- Hosted a webinar with the bovine veterinarian community to increase the awareness of the VBP+ program.
- Conducted two presentations to Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) students in the Food Animal Club regarding Ontario's beef sector, vet access, beef quality assurance, and the relationship between beef producers and veterinarians.
- Hosted a webinar to highlight RMP using producer examples on how the program works for cow-calf, backgrounder, and feedlot operations.
- Hosted a webinar with CFIA on the federal transportation regulations.
- Responded to 92 animal care complaints received through Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS).
- Provided *Basics of Beef Production* training to over 100 Animal Welfare Services inspectors.
- With Dairy Farmers of Ontario and Veal Farmers of Ontario, secured funding from OMAFRA to train staff in Incident Management Systems (IMS) and host a foreign animal disease table-top simulation workshop.
- Participation in the Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Systems (CAHSS) Beef Network with academics, veterinarians and industry professionals from across Canada.
- Hosted a briefing meeting regarding the Cargill labour negotiations for 20 industry representatives (i.e. nutritionists, vets, salespeople).

- Issued over 750 daily reports and 156 weekly reports by recording, mail, fax, email and through the BFO website.
- Delivery of the Ontario Fed Cattle Price Reporting Program in partnership with Canfax, and distributed 156 weekly reports to program participants.
- Tracked statistical data to support Canfax in its analysis of national markets and trends.
- Provided daily voice-recorded market commentary and pricing on a number or radio stations.

 Provided weekly market commentary and pricing to the Ontario Farmer publication and on radio stations.

MARKET INFORMATION

- Provided industry and media with an accessible resource for market commentary and statistical data.
- Ongoing information resource for auction markets.
- Provided auction market spring and fall stocker sale listing information and holiday hours to members through the BFO website and Ontario Beef magazine.

#### RESEARCH & INNOVATION

- Through national check-off, BFO distributed producer funds to the Beef Cattle Research Council to support national beef, cattle and forage research and extension.
- Delivered \$120,000 to the Livestock Research Innovation Corporation (LRIC) in support of livestock research in Ontario.
- Funded seven new BFO research projects through the BFO Research Program all based out of the Ontario Beef Research Centre. Projects focus on forages, dairy crossbred calves, GHG and efficiency through genomic and practical innovations, and antimicrobial use and resistance.
- BFO committed to an investment of \$645,000 over three years (2023-26) in beef research here within the province.
- Provided \$25,000 in financial support for a beefspecific research kickstart fund with the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) and the Beef Cattle Research Council (BCRC) to assist with ruminant health researcher recruitment efforts.
- Supported LRIC in speaking at their Farm Innovation Tour hosted at Gilbrea Farms for 25 academics and industry professionals.

- In collaboration with LRIC, hosted Dr. Charlotte Yates, President of University of Guelph, and Rene Van Acker, Dean of the Ontario Agriculture College at Schaus Land & Cattle Co. in Walkerton.
- Invested \$15,000 per year for five years in the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) Living Labs project to advance the greenhouse gas and carbon sequestration goals outlined in the Canadian Beef Industry 2030 Goals, as well as supported additional projects that align with the environmental sustainability priorities of BFO's Research Committee. We have three beef sites involved in the project with a focus on fall grazing cover crops and its impact on the following year's corn crop yields.

## **CONSUMER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

- Executed six major social media campaigns (2 BBQ Battles, 3 Local Flavour and 1 Ask Your Butcher Anything) that have collectively garnered 83,686,226 impressions and 3,734,728 engagements at the time of publishing.
- Garnered 226,848 visits to the Ontario Beef website (ontbeef.ca), and now have over 215 businesses listed on the site's product locator.
- Executed a traditional PR campaign in 2021/2022 that garnered 152 pieces of media coverage and over 45,000,000 impressions (for context, our target was 15,000,000!).
- Ran six waves of podcast ads, which featured environmental, nutrition and social messaging. Ads were read by hosts including Conan O'Brien, Alan Cross and Kathy Kenzora and gleaned 5,843,000 impressions.
- Completed two editions of a high-profile influencer campaign that garnered 8,400,000 impressions, 4,500,000 video views and over 12,000 link clicks.

- Ran two video advertising campaigns on streaming services that garnered 14,300,000 impressions.
- Participated in eight Breakfast on the Farm events and a Source Local event, had a presence at the Canadian National Exhibition and Royal Agricultural Winter Fair each year, partnered with Samurai Media on a presence at Toronto Food & Drink Festival in 2023 and 2024 and a Chef Collective Chef Battle in 2022.
- Completed videos of each of the three annual Ontario TESA award winners and photo shoots at nine different farms in addition to a retail photo shoot.
- Created and published three new fact sheets geared towards consumers, as well as partnering with Canada Beef on a "Make the Most of Your Beef" guide. These pieces complement our other resources and recipe cards that we continue to have incredible and increasing demand for.
- Partnered with AgScape to create a curriculum-linked resource called *An Exploration of Beef Farming in Ontario*.

## 🐑 ONTARIO BEEF MARKET DEVELOPMENT - IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OCFA

- Commissioned a third-party evaluation on the impact and success of the Ontario Beef Market Development Program. It was deemed to be having a positive impact on the growth in domestic and export markets for Ontario branded beef.
- Signed a long-term agreement with the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association to make the Ontario Beef Market Development (OBMD) Program permanent.
- Ontario Beef was represented in major markets through trade events in Tokyo, Osaka, Okinawa, Vietnam, Riyadh and Jeddah.
- Participated in major food events in Ontario including the Restaurants Canada Show, Grocery Innovations Canada, SIAL Canada and the Meat & Poultry Ontario Meating Place Conference.
- Hosted a number of incoming trade missions with existing and new customers from Japan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
- Hosted Kinsho Stores and Prima Meat Packers from Japan who are long-standing supporters of Ontario beef.
- Secured a restaurant chain partnership with Lone Star Texas Grill in Ontario and hosted a farm-to-fork tour for their staff.
- Participated in the Ontario Agri-Food Trade Mission to Japan and Vietnam with OMAFRA.
- Secured a new distributor partner in Vietnam (Qualifoods), Saudi Arabia (Tamimi Markets) and Ontario (Rowe Farms).

- In the foodservice sector, continued commitment to long-term partnerships with Flanagan's Foodservice and Morton's Foodservice.
- In the retail sector, continued commitment to Loblaw and their loyalty to the Ontario Corn Fed Beef brand.
- Developed a new Ontario beef brand with Bielak Farms Ontario Heritage Beef.
- Maintained active engagement with Ontario packers to provide market insights and technical assistance to enhance their operations.
- Developed Enjoy Some Local Flavour point of sale materials for retail stores and butcher shops and distributed over 150 kits.
- Primary sponsor of Ontario's Finest Butcher Competition.
- Distributed the Ontario Beef Culinary Resource guide to students enrolled in the Fanshawe College Professional Butchery Techniques program.
- Provided culinary education and the donation of a meat case to the Chef's Table Market located at Fanshawe College in London.
- The Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance (OCFBQA) program was certified as a Halal Compliant Cattle Feed Program. This certification provides market access for Ontario beef in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. OCFBQA is the only certified Halal cattle feed program in Canada.

- Published 15 editions of the Ontario Beef magazine that were each mailed to over 16,000 homes providing industry-relevant information for beef farmers.
- Issued 150 weekly e-newsletters to members and industry stakeholders covering current news headlines and upcoming events.
- Issued over 50 important industry updates to BFO members on current issues, programs and deadlines.
- Shared important BFO news releases, resources and opportunities through BFO's communications channels.
- Completed a brand refresh, which included the launch of an updated website, digital assets, tradeshow materials and internal/external communication documents.
- 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 three BFO annual general meetings, which provide a forum for learning, discussion and setting the strategic direction for the Ontario beef sector.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Updated our resource guide to support event attendance by BFO and our local associations, and community and fall fair resource requests.
- Offered five online pop-up merchandise shops to promote the BFO and Ontario Beef brands.
- Continued to be a resource for industry and media who were looking for commentary on issues facing the Ontario beef sector.
- Engaged with farmers and the general public through a variety of social media platforms and have achieved a combined total of 27,000 followers on X, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.
- Achieved 940,000 visits to the BFO website (www.ontariobeef.com).
- Ongoing support for BFO county and district associations.

#### SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & PUBLIC TRUST

- Supported Feed Ontario in the amount of \$140,000 to provide local food banks, families and children in need with a nutrient-dense source of protein (Ontario ground beef).
- Received the Paul Mistele Award, in 2022, in recognition of our Feed Ontario beef program.
- Supported Canada Beef's *Burger it Forward* initiative by directing funding to our Ontario beef program with Feed Ontario.
- Delivered \$120,000 to Farm & Food Care Ontario in support of building trust in food and farming, and agriculture advocacy.
- Provided \$40,000 in support to 4-H Ontario for their Discovery Days and Career Impact programs, as well as cross bred awards provided to 4-H members.
- Provided \$85,000 to AgScape in support of agriculture in the classroom efforts, and the expansion of beef education materials for teachers and schools. Funding also contributed to the translation of resources and programming in French language and French Immersion schools.
- Created a permanent DEI Committee of the Board that meets quarterly and helps maintain accountability.
- Participated in several industry-led working groups on DEI-related initiatives.
- Accepted over 10 speaking engagements and panelist requests about our DEI initiatives for a variety of groups, conferences and events.

- Completed an Indigenous Awareness course which provided valuable insights into how we might better establish and strengthen our relationships with Indigenous and First Nations communities.
- Board and staff participated in a virtual tour and debrief of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School located in Brantford.
- Made a \$2,500 donation to the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund, who work to improve the lives of Indigenous people by building awareness, education and connections between all peoples in Canada.
- Coordinated an Orange Shirt Day fundraiser where proceeds from every shirt sold were donated to Water First Education & Training Inc. We are pleased to have sent donations of over \$1,000 so far.
- Secured \$11,000 in funding through the Sowing the Seeds of Wellness Initiative for mental health tools, resources and speakers for producer events.
- Ongoing promotion of the Farmer Wellness information and upcoming In the Know and Guardian Network training dates in the weekly *Bull-etin* e-newsletter and *Ontario Beef* magazine.
- Provided funding to support the production and film festival release of the *Deeply Rooted* documentary film that focuses on highlighting the mental health crisis in the agriculture sector.

# **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**





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