



September 22, 2025

Jim King
President
Victoria Beef Farmers

Dear Jim,

Re: *The Protection of Livestock from Dogs Act 25-01 & Wildlife Damage Compensation Program 25-05*

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

THE PROTECTION OF LIVESTOCK FROM DOGS ACT

WHEREAS, domestic dogs kills in the province fall under the scope of Protection of livestock and Poultry from Dogs Act Ontario Regulation 329/11,

WHEREAS, in 2019, OMAFRA changed the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program (OWDCP) program (for payments due to predation losses from Wild Animals) to no longer have maximum payment amounts, and only using market rates,

WHEREAS, beef prices have risen exponentially in recent years, and the current regulation imposes a \$2,500 non-registered cattle maximum rate,

WHEREAS, municipalities are required to adhere to the above regulation when determining maximum compensation values,

WHEREAS, municipalities should have the ability to use fair market rates in assessing domestic dog predation kills in the same manner that wild animal predation kills are valued,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT BFO submit a request to the Minister responsible for Regulation 329/11 to remove the maximums altogether from the legislation and to explicitly permit fair market rates to be used in cases of Domestic Dog kills.

WILDLIFE DAMAGE COMPENSATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation program relies on municipal clerk offices to administer this program with farm experienced investigators conducting investigative work in the field,

WHEREAS, these investigators are being asked to sign a waiver exempting them from compensation should an accident or event occur while an investigation is taking place,

WHEREAS, if individual investigators are required to purchase insurance for themselves at great cost, the industry potentially may lose most or all the investigators if it is no longer a profitable arrangement,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT BFO work with the other General Farm Organizations on this file to make a request to the appropriate body (Province or Municipality) that investigators be covered under their insurance.

The BFO Board of Directors would like to thank you for bringing these two resolutions forward at our AGM in February. Ensuring our producers have a viable, well-run program is critical to help mitigate the risk our producers face from wildlife predation alongside domestic dog predation. In 2024, the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation program (OWDCP) paid out a total of \$1,101,040.75 over 579 incidents involving beef cattle within the province. In the Kawartha Lakes region, the program paid out a total of \$114,249.68 over 61 incidents.

The *Protection of Livestock and Poultry from Dogs Act* has maximum values associated with each species of livestock and has further sub-categories within it for both registered and non-registered cattle. Currently, the compensation maximums established within the Act's regulations are \$2,500 for non-registered cattle and \$8,000 for registered cattle. These maximum values differ from those established in the OWDCP, which are \$4,000 for non-registered cattle and \$8,000 for registered cattle. The value of the animal is determined by using the indicated weight and a standardized fair market value formula. With the current market prices of beef cattle, these maximum compensation limits are going to become very restrictive on the compensation producers receive. BFO would like to see the maximum compensation values align with the CFIA destruction rate values. As of the June 2025 update, they are \$16,500 (from \$10,000, set in 2015) for registered cattle and \$10,000 (from \$4,500, set in 2015) for non-registered cattle.

To address the maximum compensation value limits for both the *Protection of Livestock and Poultry from Dogs Act* and the OWDCP, BFO alongside Ontario Sheep and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture sent the attached letter to Minister Jones of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) regarding the need to increase the maximum compensation as the current market prices have surpassed the current maximum prices set by the ministry.

In the letter, we also recommended streamlining the process of wildlife predation claims. Over the past number of years, BFO has received complaints from our members that the turnaround times for their predation claims were falling outside of the service standards put forward by OMAFA. In some cases, we heard of wait times up to six months after the claim was submitted before payment was received. We recommended the ministry look into the model they use in unorganized townships, where producers submit their own claims directly to OMAFA and receive their payment directly from the ministry. If this process was used province-wide, it would allow the program to eliminate the intermediary and create a more efficient process. This would also enable counties and townships to offload the program from their duties, as many municipalities struggle to find investigators or at times are even unaware that they are responsible for administering the program.

BFO participated in a roundtable for red tape reduction at the beginning of September, and one of the recommendations we brought forward was to replace the current predation compensation program with a self-reporting and central verification system. This would result in a program that is timely for our producers, will allow claims to be processed faster by the ministry and save time and money for the ministry and municipalities as there will no need for the municipality to have to investigate.

BFO is a member of OMAFA's Ontario Wildlife Conflict Working Group, which meets quarterly and is responsible for reviewing program stats and discuss potential improvements to the program. Be assured that BFO will bring your concerns forward to that group and push for change within the program so it can be timelier and more predictable for producers. If you have any further comments or concerns about the program, please contact the office to ensure they are addressed.

BFO would like to thank Victoria County for bringing these issues forward and we will update you on any further progress on this file.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig McLaughlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Craig" and last name "McLaughlin" clearly distinguishable.

Craig McLaughlin
President

cc: Adam Shea (Advisory Councillor, Mover)
Lois Batty (Seconder)
Glenna Stephenson (Secretary)



July 15, 2025

The Honourable Trevor Jones
Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Agribusiness
77 Grenville Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 1B3

Sent via email: minister.omafa@ontario.ca

Dear Minister,

Re: Issues Regarding the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program

The Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program (OWDCP) is a valuable resource to livestock producers in Ontario. We have appreciated the responsiveness of your ministry in the past when issues have been identified and addressed.

Our organizations recently participated in a meeting of the provincial Agriculture Wildlife Conflict working group. At that meeting, we suggested improvements to the program we feel will reduce program costs, address producer concerns and improve the responsiveness of the program to our farmers. It was suggested at that meeting that we bring our concerns and solutions to your attention.

This year, our organizations received feedback from our producers that the amount of time between reporting livestock damage and a producer receiving compensation was over six months and, in some cases, almost a year. Additionally, inspectors in some municipalities are not responding in a reasonable time to producer reports of damage and livestock kills are having to be documented by producers rather than inspectors to capture the required proof of wildlife damage.

There is broad inconsistency in program delivery through municipalities that leads to inequity between farmers across the province. Some municipalities send inspectors right away and pay claims immediately. While others rarely send inspectors and hold money even when it is transferred by the province until council approves the transfer, which causes significant delay.

Our boards recommend the province administer the program equitably to all producers by introducing an online wildlife damage reporting form. We understand a form may already exist and be in use for farmers

in unorganized townships. Producers can submit their own photos and investigators can be engaged only when the province requires additional information.

This reduction of red tape will save the province and municipalities thousands of dollars in administration time and the cost of investigators for every claim.

The OWDCP does not accurately reflect the true valuation of commercial breeding sheep stock lost to predation. Presently, commercial breeding sheep stock is only compensated at the cull animal meat price. The cull animal value does not truly reflect any breeding stock value. There is no compensation value given for the many years and thousands of dollars of investment in a commercial breeding program and the future flock genetic improvement these animals represent. Commercial or non-purebred genetics does not mean they are of lower quality than purebred genetics. In many purchases, the commercial ewe genetics have a value premium due to hybrid vigor resulting from the genetic selection for specific traits inherent in other breeds.

To further improve the program, an annual survey of sheep breeders reporting actual values of commercial and purebred breeding stock sold should be conducted. The survey can also help identify the added value for specific breeds utilized for their quality wool or their dairy milk production. Similar to breeding stock, the actual value of these animals is significantly more than the cull meat price. The survey could also determine a value for livestock guardian dogs when they are also lost to predation.

In addition to concerns regarding wildlife predation, Ontario farmers also face losses from domestic dog attacks, yet the compensation framework for these incidents remains outdated and inconsistent with the support provided under the OWDCP. While the OWDCP provides compensation to poultry and livestock producers at market value based on industry-recognized pricing, losses caused by domestic dogs fall under the *Protection of Livestock and Poultry from Dogs Act*, which does not follow the same valuation approach. This discrepancy results in significantly lower compensation rates for producers who experience losses due to domestic dog attacks.

For example, under the OWDCP, non-registered cattle are compensated up to \$4,000, while the *Protection of Livestock and Poultry from Dogs Act* only provides up to \$2,500 for the same loss. The lack of regular updates to compensation rates under this separate legislative framework creates an unjust financial burden for affected producers. This disparity does not reflect the true economic loss suffered by farmers and fails to provide adequate support for their livestock protection efforts.

We recommend harmonizing the compensation structure for livestock losses caused by domestic dogs with the OWDCP model, ensuring that all producers receive fair and up-to-date compensation based on industry standards. Aligning these programs would create a more equitable system, recognizing that the source of predation—whether wildlife or domestic dogs—should not determine the financial viability of a farm business recovering from a loss.

We thank you for the opportunity to bring forward these recommendations that can strengthen the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program and we look forward to working with you to ensure the program is able to compensate producers in a fair and timely manner for predation losses.

Sincerely,

Craig McLaughlin Drew Spoelstra

Art Alblas

Craig McLaughlin
Chair
Beef Farmers of Ontario

Drew Spoelstra
President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Art Alblas
Chair
Ontario Sheep Farmers