

# ONTARIO'S 2025 PROVINCIAL ELECTION

## ELECTION TOOLKIT FOR BEEF FARMERS



# PRODUCER CALL TO ACTION

**W**ith the 2025 Ontario provincial election date of February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 quickly approaching, we need to build awareness of the current challenges and opportunities facing the Ontario beef sector.

This toolkit has been put together to assist Ontario farmers and industry representatives during engagements with provincial candidates on sector priorities, prior to the election.

Every conversation between farmers and local candidates increases the awareness of the beef and broader agri-food sector and our associated opportunities and challenges.

Producers are encouraged to take the time to reach out to local candidates of all stripes through attendance at all-candidate meetings and/or one-on-one meetings and other riding and community events. Additionally, producers can engage candidates through social media, email, written letters or phone calls. Reaching out and building a connection with local candidates will provide us a better understanding of each political party's plans and commitments for agriculture in the future.

A contact list of known candidates in Ontario's rural ridings is available through the BFO website and office. To assist in sparking discussion with local MPP candidates, a list of questions and conversation-starters have been included in this package. There is also a list of tips for communicating and meeting with candidates.

If you speak with a candidate, please contact the BFO office and let us know how it went. We are keenly interested in the outcomes of your conversations during the 2025 provincial election campaign.

## FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION & SUPPORT



### BFO POLICY & ISSUES LEAD

Thomas Brandstetter

Manager of Policy and Issues

thomas@ontariobeef.com

C: 705.257.9490

P: 519.824.0334 ext. 236



# ONTARIO BEEF SECTOR OVERVIEW

Agriculture is the backbone of our rural communities and is important to the quality of life of all Canadians and Ontarians. There are approximately 19,000 beef farmers in Ontario, representing 13.7 per cent of all farms in the province, most of which are multi-generational family-run operations. Beef farms and the broader beef cattle sector have a presence and economic impact in every county and district in Ontario.

## ECONOMY

The beef sector is an important economic driver of Ontario's agri-food sector. Combining the revenue from primary production, processing and retail, the beef sector contributes \$2.69 billion to Ontario's GDP on an annual basis. Gross sales from Ontario beef production, processing and retail exceed \$13 billion, with revenue from farm gate sales reaching \$1.4 billion, processing at \$3.5 billion and retail surpassing \$9 billion. The income derived from the beef sector helps support a broad range of rural infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and community centres.

## EMPLOYMENT

Ontario's beef sector is vitally important to the well-being and growth of families, businesses and communities, both rural and urban. As a significant job creator, Ontario's beef industry is responsible for 9,500 jobs in primary production, 9,000 jobs in processing and 43,900 jobs in retail. In total, Ontario's beef sector sustains more than 61,000 jobs. Beef farms provide a wide variety of jobs between on-farm (equipment operation, breeding and feeding) and off-farm (farm machinery sales, grocer sales, meat packaging and processing, and transportation).

## ENVIRONMENT

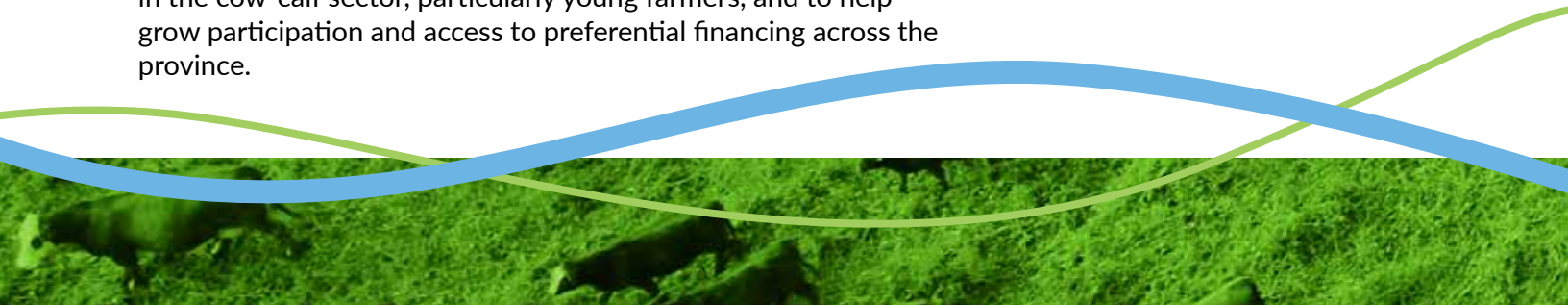
As long-term partners with the environment, more than 70 per cent of Ontario farmers have taken an environmental course, evaluated their farm's environmental footprint, and made improvements to protect soil, water and ecosystems. In addition, grasslands used in beef production help store approximately 1.9 billion tonnes of carbon in Canada. We're proud to say that due to improved production practices, producing 1 kilogram of beef in Canada today emits 15 per cent fewer greenhouse gases than it did in 2014. The Ontario beef sector maintains one of the lowest GHG footprints of all beef production systems in the world – less than half of the global average.



# PRIORITY ISSUES FOR THE ONTARIO BEEF SECTOR

## TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE ONTARIO BEEF SECTOR

1. Ensure farmers have robust risk protection to mitigate volatility in the marketplace, specifically in response to U.S. tariffs and related impacts on input costs, market prices, and other potential supply chain disruptions.
2. Defend Ontario's trading relationship with the U.S. and vigorously oppose and respond to any U.S. tariffs on Ontario agri-food products, specifically cattle, beef and beef products.
3. Conduct a formal review of the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act and its underlying regulations and operational processes. Seek to create distinct and tailored systems of enforcement and regulatory frameworks for livestock, companion animals, and zoos and aquariums, similar to what is done in other jurisdictions.
4. Create more robust incentive structures to increase food animal veterinary capacity across Ontario, including modernization and increased funding support for the Veterinary Assistance Program (VAP).
5. Provide funding to support an expansion of community pasture cooperatives in Ontario through infrastructure assistance, improvement grants, and preferential financing and/or direct funding to support land acquisition.
6. Introduce property tax relief measures through the development of a new property tax assessment class for food processors, particularly abattoirs, or through other targeted measures that will help reduce the tax burden on processors of food.
7. Provide a government-backed guarantee under the Ontario Breeder Loan Program to improve competitive financing options for farmers in the cow-calf sector, particularly young farmers, and to help grow participation and access to preferential financing across the province.



# QUESTIONS FOR MPP CANDIDATES

## TRADE

How will you and your party defend and support Ontario farmers impacted by U.S. tariffs on agri-food products, including Canadian counter-tariffs, specifically cattle and beef and beef products?

How does your party aim to ensure that retaliatory action does not raise the cost of production for Ontario farmers?

## LABOUR

What is your party's plan to address worker shortages in key industries such as the agri-food sector, and in particular the food processing sector?

## LAND USE

If elected, what will your party do to preserve agricultural land and protect marginal agriculture land to prevent further loss of farmland and pastureland?

Would your party consider establishing community pastures on conservation lands that are currently in agricultural production?

## YOUNG FARMERS

How does your party intend to support young farmers and new entrants?

## RESEARCH

How does your party plan to support beef and more broadly, agri-food research, innovation and access to new technology?

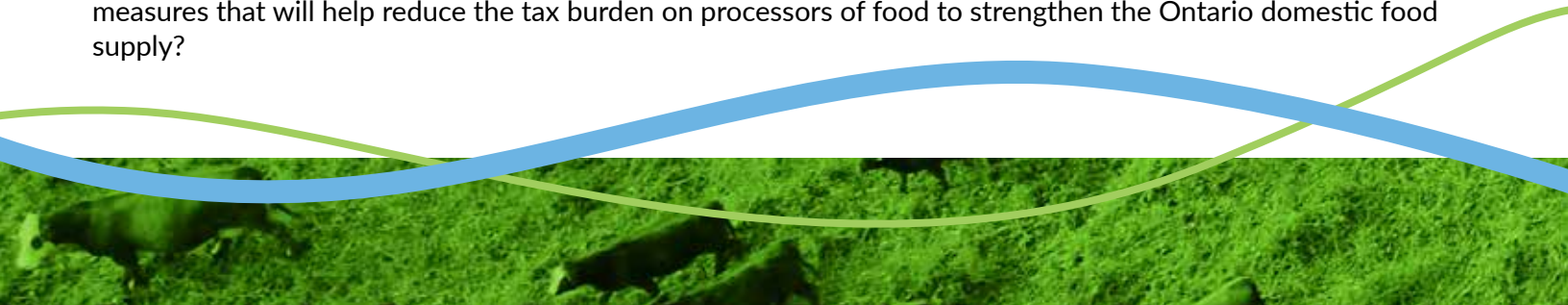
## ANIMAL WELFARE ENFORCEMENT

Will your party conduct a review of the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act to ensure it is appropriately aligned with livestock animal care practices?

## TAXATION

Will you and your party update and resume property assessments, and if so, when?

Would you and your party support the introduction of property tax relief measures through the development of a new property tax assessment class for food processors, particularly abattoirs, or through other targeted measures that will help reduce the tax burden on processors of food to strengthen the Ontario domestic food supply?



# TIPS ON COMMUNICATING WITH MPP CANDIDATES

**BE AWARE OF TIME.** You may only have a few minutes to get your point across.

**BE ASSERTIVE.** Know what you want in advance and ask for it.

**BE DIRECT.** State the purpose of your meeting clearly and highlight our sector's key issues.

**BE INFORMATIVE.** Refer to information in this toolkit and stick to the facts.

**BE POLITICAL.** Explain your hometown's relevance to the beef sector i.e. how Ontario's beef industry contributes to the local economy.

**PERSONALIZE YOUR MESSAGE.** Relate our sector priorities to your own story as a beef farmer and support it with BFO's speaking points. Your personal story and how the challenges facing the beef industry affects your operation will be more highly regarded than speaking points alone.

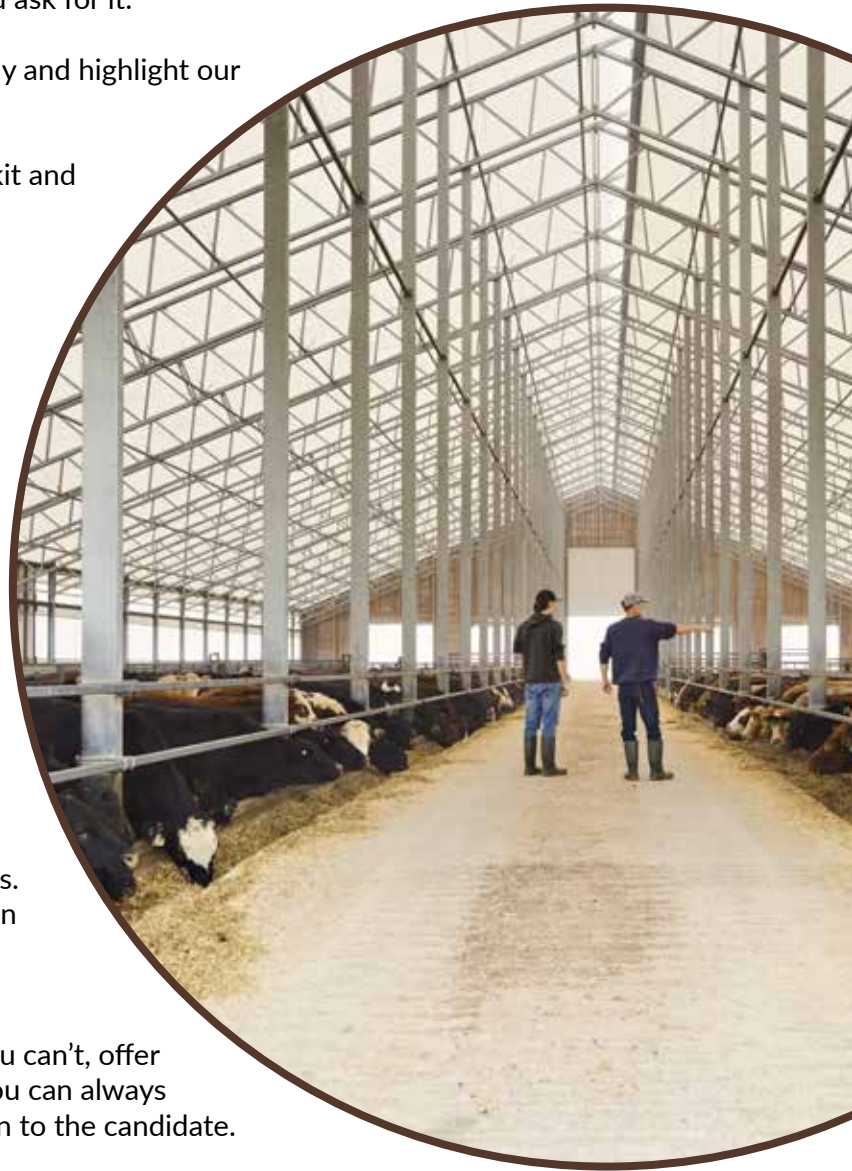
**BE INQUIRING.** Ask your candidate if they are familiar with your issues. Ask for the candidate's view on the subject and how they will act to address these issues, if elected.

**BE COURTEOUS.** Be tolerant of differing views and don't speak badly of other politicians or organizations. Keep in mind that there may be other occasions when BFO will lobby this candidate or MPP, and a cordial relationship keeps the door open.

**BE RESPONSIVE.** Try to answer questions. When you can't, offer to get back to the candidate with the information. You can always ask BFO for help in getting the necessary information to the candidate.

**BE AVAILABLE.** Make sure your candidate knows how to reach you. Feel free to offer to have the BFO office follow up with additional information.

**BE AWARE.** Local farm organizations often host candidate meetings or debates, which is a good time to get out to see your local candidates and ask them questions all at the same time.



# MESSAGES TO RELAY BY PARTY AFFILIATION

## PC CANDIDATES (RETURNING)

- Thank them for their support during the last legislative session.
- In particular, thank them for the funding announced for the Ontario Risk Management Program, the Ontario Feeder Loan Guarantee Program, and the Ontario Beef Market Development Program, which were very appreciated and helpful.
- Note that the Ontario beef sector looks forward to continuing the positive working relationship that was fostered with the previous government with the new government that will be formed.

## PC CANDIDATES (NEW)

- Thank them for their party's support during the last legislative session.
- In particular, mention the previous government's funding support for the Ontario Risk Management Program, the Ontario Feeder Loan Guarantee Program, and the Ontario Beef Market Development Program were very appreciated and helpful.
- Note that the Ontario beef sector looks forward to continuing the positive working relationship that was fostered with the previous government with the new government that will be formed.

## OPPOSITION CANDIDATES (RETURNING)

- Thank them for their support during the last legislative session.
- Thank them for working with the sector on key issues of importance, particularly the Ontario Risk Management Program.
- Note that the Ontario beef sector looks forward to establishing a positive partnership with the next government.

## NEW CANDIDATES (OTHER PARTIES)

- Note that the Ontario beef sector looks forward to establishing a positive partnership with the next government.

