



April 22, 2015

Hon. Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Dr. Hoskins,

Re: Provincial strategy for Lyme disease

Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) is writing to join the Ontario Lyme Alliance in support of MPP Michael Mantha's November 2014 motion in the Legislative Assembly calling for the development of a provincial strategy for Lyme disease by November 27, 2015. The all-party support of Mr. Mantha's motion underlines the resolve that the Ontario government and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care must show in prioritizing and developing a Lyme disease strategy.

BFO represents the 19,000 beef producers in Ontario by advocating in the areas of policy planning, industry development and research, and domestic and export market development. A provincial strategy for Lyme disease is of particular importance to Ontario's beef farmers because of their increased risk of exposure to ticks in long grasses and forested areas, where farmers regularly work. As ticks can be transferred from animals to people, and as Lyme disease is a zoonotic disease that can be transmitted between animals and people, farmers must be particularly vigilant in checking themselves, as well as livestock and outdoor pets, for ticks and evidence of tick bites. As a disease that can have debilitating health effects for both humans and animals, Lyme disease is a serious concern for Ontario beef farmers.

Lyme disease is a potentially devastating illness and the number of infected ticks is rapidly increasing in Ontario. Along with a growing number of Ontarians being exposed to the risk of Lyme disease, there is a lack of public and physician awareness and cases are frequently misdiagnosed or undetected. Individuals who are eventually diagnosed with Lyme disease are often unable to receive treatment in Ontario because of outdated and restrictive treatment guidelines. It is essential that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care develop and implement a provincial strategy that addresses the method in which Ontario's healthcare system deals with Lyme disease, to ensure that more accurate diagnostic methods are pursued, appropriate and sufficient treatment is available within Ontario, and awareness and education are increased amongst physicians and with the general public.

Beef Farmers of Ontario strongly supports the call for the development of a provincial strategy for Lyme disease.

.../2



We would welcome any opportunity to discuss the contents of this letter or to be engaged in the development of a much-needed provincial strategy for Lyme disease in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Gordanier". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Bob Gordanier
President

cc: BFO Board of Directors
Ontario Lyme Alliance

