



July 8, 2019

The Honourable Ernie Hardeman
Minister, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Floor, 77 Grenville Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1B3

Dear Minister,

Re: Beef Farmers of Ontario FPT Priorities

The Ontario beef industry is an important economic driver of Ontario's agri-food sector, contributing \$2.69 billion to Ontario's GDP on an annual basis. Gross sales from the sector exceed \$13 billion annually and sustain more than 61,000 jobs, and there is significant opportunity to build on these contributions.

A recent report from the OECD estimates that global beef trade will increase by 25% by 2023. Ontario's abundance of clean water, and productive land resources, as well as a strong demand for our products puts us in an excellent position to take advantage of these new growth opportunities and expand our province's economy.

As you meet with your Federal, Provincial, and Territorial counterparts, we would ask that you promote Ontario's interests on the following issues:

Business Risk Management Programs

Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) would appreciate FPT Ministers moving toward their 2017 commitment to better balance the BRM support among the production categories. The climate of imbalance has become so apparent in Ontario where we have established supply managed operations, and thriving crop farmers rotating corn, wheat, soybeans. Ontario's beef cow herd has dropped by 32.5% over the last decade. At the same time, corn and soybean production has increased more than 30% while pasture and hay production has decreased by more than 30%.

We believe there is a dire need to improve the fairness and effectiveness of BRM programs to ensure all sectors have access to similar levels of support. The current federal/provincial support structure strongly favours grains, oilseeds, horticulture, and supply managed sectors at the expense of beef farmers. This needs to change. We do need action on the commitment by our government to correct the current imbalance, something we believe has gone ignored for far too long, and is manifested in our current climate of uncertainty, risk, and continued marginalization.

As well, we would ask you to be mindful in this portion of the meeting to leave Ontario's options open. As you are well aware, you have mandated another review of the RMP program, which is currently underway. BFO would appreciate leaving the federal door open, in terms of program redesign options, in case that we could settle on a design which will relieve some of Ontario's fiscal pressure on the RMP. And, in any event, BFO could not support the imposition of a new federally designed program without broad producer consultation.



Health of Animals Regulations – Humane Transport

The impending changes to the humane transport regulations announced February 22nd are both concerning and disappointing and will, if enacted, create impractical or unworkable requirements for the Ontario livestock sectors, and more importantly, will serve to undermine rather than enhance the welfare of animals transported in Canada.

Of most concern, the decrease in maximum allowable time in transit may actually degrade animal welfare outcomes rather than improve them. The level of stress and the risk of injury and sickness are highest during loading, unloading and stops at livestock rest stations where animals are co-mingled with animals from different origins. The government's approach will cause more livestock to be exposed to these risks by requiring more frequent stops, unloading and reloading.

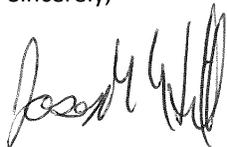
Furthermore, no analysis of current livestock rest station infrastructure was completed to support the regulatory amendments scheduled for implementation. We have grave concerns regarding the capacity for existing livestock rest stations to handle even moderate increases in the volume of trucks and animals. In addition, the location of the existing sites are not compatible with the requirements for off-loading if the proposed reductions to time in transit are enacted. As a result, industry is extremely concerned about its ability to comply with the impending regulations without an immediate plan to address rest station infrastructure.

AAFC research confirms that more than 99.9% of cattle transported in Canada arrive at their destination without incident, under existing regulations. Additional AAFC research is presently underway to better understand the relationship between loading, unloading and reloading animals and the associated animal welfare outcomes among different classes of animals and time in transit. This is a noted gap in current research. It is unfortunate that the government chose to proceed with new rules that will require more frequent stops, loading and unloading before the efficacy of these practices, from an animal welfare perspective, could be evaluated using science-based research tested under commercial conditions in Canada.

We have urged the The Honourable Minister Bibeau to take pause and work with our sector on a feasible and practical path forward that better balances the welfare needs of the animals entrusted to our care and aligns with the realities of our existing transportation and commerce systems. We ask that you call on Minister Bibeau to pause the implementation of these regulations, and consider more fully the input from those who will have to work under the conditions prescribed. Specifically, we have asked for a two-year delay in the come into force date to allow these conversations to occur. BFO would appreciate it if this message could be carried at the FPT table. A joint-letter was recently sent to Minister Bibeau outlining this request, with support from Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Veal Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association, Ontario Livestock Transporters' Alliance, Ontario Livestock Dealers Association, and the Ontario Livestock Auction Markets Association.

On behalf of the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO), we thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in advance of the upcoming FPT Ministers of Agriculture meetings in Quebec City.

Sincerely,



Joe Hill
President

cc: Tara Barry, Chief of Staff
Amanda Brodhagen, Senior Policy Advisor
Janette Leask, Policy Advisor

