



June 9, 2020

Goldie Ghamari, Chair
Standing Committee on General Government
Government of Ontario
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen's Park
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Dear MPP Ghamari,

Re: Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020

Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on Bill 156, the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*. BFO represents the 19,000 beef farmers of Ontario by advocating in the areas of policy planning, industry development and research, environment, animal health and welfare, and domestic and export market development.

Ontario beef farmers follow high standards of animal care, which include biosecurity, husbandry and animal handling protocols designed to protect animals from disease and maltreatment. Ensuring farm animals are healthy and safe is not only important for farmers and their animals, but also for all Ontarians.

BFO was an active participant in discussions with government over the past several months as this proposed legislation was in development. We believe the proposed legislation, if passed, will better protect farmers, their animals, livestock transporters and the province's food supply.

After reviewing the proposed *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*, BFO would like to submit the following comments:

- Trespass on farms creates biosecurity risks detrimental to the health and welfare of animals, as it provides an opportunity to introduce disease to an operation. It also causes stress to the animals.
- The vast majority of farms in Canada are family-owned and operated, with most families living on the same premises as their facilities and animals.
- Trespassing and even the threat of trespassing on farms is detrimental to the mental health and well-being of our farmers. Everyone has the right to feel safe in their homes and their places of



work. Supporting farmers' mental health and wellness should be a priority within the agricultural sector.

- Animal neglect, abuse and cruelty is never acceptable, and animal welfare is of the utmost importance to BFO and its members. The *Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act* provides the authority to inspect farms and processing facilities in the instance of an animal welfare complaint. Enforcement and prosecution of animal welfare issues is carried out under this Act.
- BFO supports the right of individuals to peacefully protest. Bill 156 does not interfere with the right of people to participate in legal protests on public property – but these individuals do not have the right to trespass on private property or to threaten farmers, their animals, or their livelihood.
- BFO would like to see pasture land explicitly included in the definition of “animal protection zones”, as beef cattle are frequently kept on pasture for several months at a time and, in some areas, year-round.

BFO looks forward to continued work with the Ontario Government and our industry partners on forthcoming regulations related to the Act. We are eager to work together to ensure protection of both animals and farmers across Ontario, and we thank the Standing Committee on General Government for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,



Rob Lipsett, President

cc: BFO Board of Directors
Julia Douglas, Clerk, Standing Committee on General Government

