

# STATEMENT

## COVID-19 UPDATE



## Meat Processing Essential Workers Eligible to Receive Vaccines as Part of Phase Two of the Ontario COVID-19 Immunization Program

**January 14, 2021 (Guelph, Ont.)** – Announced yesterday by Premier Doug Ford; Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health; Solicitor General Sylvia Jones; and General Rick Hillier, Chair of the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force, frontline essential workers, including food processing, will be eligible to receive vaccines as part of Phase Two of the Ontario immunization program.

In late December, Beef Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association along with the Canadian Meat Council, Meat and Poultry Ontario, Food and Beverage Ontario, Ontario Pork, Ontario Sheep Farmers, Veal Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture called upon government to recognize that meat processing workers and inspectors must continue to be deemed as a critical essential service, in addition to others involved in supporting Ontario's agri-food supply chains. We requested workers in the meat production and processing sectors, including meat and animal inspectors be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

"We are extremely appreciative of the response and actions taken by the Government of Ontario and the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force to prioritize front line essential workers and their access to vaccines in the fight against COVID-19," says Rob Lipsett, BFO President. "We recognize first responders, healthcare workers, and those in long-term care must be prioritized in terms of first access to vaccines. However, we are thankful meat processing essential workers have been identified as a priority for phase two of the vaccination rollout."

The agriculture sector was one of the first sectors to be impacted by the pandemic and has made significant investments to implement mitigation and control measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 throughout the livestock and meat production supply chain.

"Prioritizing workers in meat production and inspection to receive early immunization of the COVID-19 vaccine will help reduce and/or mitigate further disruptions in the meat supply chain, reduce implications for farmers, and protect the welfare of animals and security of our food supply," shares Mike Conlin, President of the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association.

*The Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) represent 19,000 beef producers in Ontario by advocating in the areas of sustainability, animal health and care, environment, food safety, and domestic and export market development.*

*BFO's vision is to help foster a sustainable and profitable beef industry, and have Ontario beef recognized as an outstanding product by our consumers.*

*The Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association (OCFA) is focused on enhancing and maintaining a sustainable beef industry in Ontario. OCFA believes in the future of the family farm and the contribution it can make to rural communities and food production in Ontario. In addition, OCFA established and manages the Ontario Corn Fed Beef*



*program which was launched in 2001. Since then, the program continues to grow in both domestic and international markets.*

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**For more information**

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