

March 20, 2020

Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs  
Ernie Hardeman  
VIA EMAIL

Dear Minister Hardeman,

**Ontario's Food Security challenge during COVID-19 – Protein and grain are Ontario's staples in times of Crisis**

We applaud the work the Ontario government and Canadian government is doing to keep Ontarians safe from COVID-19. Our farmer members want to do their part to support the people of Ontario and Canada through these unprecedented uncertain times. A domestic supply of crops and locally raised livestock is one only way to ensure food security in the world of uncertainty.

Farmers need the governments' help to ensure farmers can do their part to help Ontario mitigate risks of food shortages. The pace and degree of uncertainty is rapidly changing as is the anticipation of supply chain delays or disruptions as the number of individuals impacted by the virus increases and uncertainty reigns on the worldwide movement of commercial goods and volatile markets govern commodity prices. Continuity in food production is essential in Ontario to avoid food shortages and ensure food security as our Country and province faces the impacts of COVID-19. It is impossible to predict the future, but we do know that food production continuity in the face of COVID-19, will face unforeseen challenges and a financial backstop is required for farmers to manage through these uncertainties.

Time is running short. We are asking for the government to immediate engage the sector to address the financial crisis that will impact our ability to maintain a secure food supply.

We want to work with the government on ways to ensure that farmers have programs in place to help them mitigate their risks during this time. One of the solutions we are proposing is to fully fund Ontario's RMP program. RMP is an established mechanism through which farmers can be supported and if fully funded at 100%, with the cap removed, would provide a backstop for farmers to rely on as they make important decisions in the production of livestock and crops in the uncertain business environment created from COVID-19. Additionally, the current structure of RMP ensures that farmers would receive funding according to their need.

/Page 2...

We are asking for the government to fully fund the RMP program at 100% and to remove the cap immediately. Provisions for farmers to re-enter the program need to be made.

Sincerely,



Robert Lipsett  
President  
Beef Farmers of Ontario



Marc Carere  
Chair  
Ontario Sheep Farmers



Markus Haerle  
Chair  
Grain Farmers of Ontario



Pascal Bouilly  
Chair  
Veal Farmers of Ontario



c.c.  
Ontario Premier Doug Ford  
Ontario Minister of Finance, Rod Phillips