



**CHRISTIAN FARMERS
FEDERATION OF ONTARIO**
ACCREDITED FARM ORGANIZATION

PRESS RELEASE – February 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario Submits Comprehensive Recommendations to
Minister of Finance for 2024 Ontario Budget**

CAMBRIDGE, ON, [February 2, 2024] — The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) has taken a proactive stance in shaping the economic, social, and environmental policies that will drive the future of Ontario's agri-food sector. In a letter addressed to The Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance, the CFFO President, Ed Scharringa, laid out a series of key recommendations for consideration in the 2024 Ontario Budget.

The letter, dated, January 24, 2024, highlighted the significance of government fiscal responsibility in fostering a conducive environment for business success. We appreciate the government's ongoing efforts to support agriculture and would like to see the following government initiatives continue:

1. Low provincial taxes on energy
2. Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership funding that supports agricultural and agri-food sector success
3. Efforts to increase Ontario's local processing capacity
4. Farm-sector specific mental health supports
5. Ongoing implementation of Ontario's Soil Health and Conservation Strategy, including support for farmers and researchers to monitor and improve soil health and water quality
6. Efforts to improve access to rural food animal veterinary services. These include increased capacity for Veterinary and Registered Veterinary Technician training, incentives to attract veterinarians to serve in underserved areas, and improved tele-health veterinary services
7. Projects to expand rural internet and rural natural gas access

The key recommendations provided by the CFFO to Minister Bethlenfalvy, are summarized below.

Fiscal Responsibility:

- Reduce provincial deficits and debt for sustainable financial health
- Call on the government to set conditions for long-term prosperity

Housing:

- Encourage careful consideration of where increased housing development occurs
- Advocate for brownfield redevelopment and increased densities within settled areas
- Protect productive farmland for food security and the agri-food sector

Infrastructure and Transportation Improvements:

- Acknowledge ongoing efforts in rural infrastructure projects such as natural gas and internet expansion
- Advocate for continued improvements in rail transit and widened highways, including Highways 11 and 17

Municipalities:

- Address significant costs for municipalities due to provincial regulations
- Reinststate the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) assessment cycle
- Ensure policies consider impacts on municipal finances and fair treatment of Ontarians

Energy Costs and Taxation:

- Emphasize the importance of keeping provincial taxes on energy low.
- Encourage government to voice concerns about the negative impacts of the federal carbon tax, particularly on food production.
- Request exemption of all fuels used for drying grains from federal carbon pricing.

Agri-Food Sector Success:

- Advocate for funding opportunities with reasonable implementation timelines
- Encourage a more efficient inspection system that can keep up with the pace of business.

Farmers' Mental Health:

- Strongly encourage continued efforts to support farmers' mental health.
- Emphasize the need for specific and accessible mental health supports adapted to the realities of farm life.

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Food Animal Veterinary Services:

- Recognize government efforts to improve access to rural food animal veterinary services.
- Highlight the significance of the new program at Lakehead University and incentives to attract veterinarians.
- Call for continued efforts, including a review of the current Veterinary Assistance Program (VAP).

In conclusion, Ed Scharringa, President of CFFO, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the Ontario Budget 2024, stating, "We appreciate this opportunity to provide input on the Ontario Budget 2024 and thank you for your consideration of our concerns and comments."

To read the full letter visit: www.christianfarmers.org/issues/letters-submissions/2024-ontario-budget-consultations

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About the CFFO:

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) is an Accredited Farm Organization representing the interests of over 4,000 farm families in Ontario who are called to the vocation of farming. CFFO policy promotes economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable farming, advocating that farmers receive fair returns for their production and stewardship efforts.

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