



LONG-TERM THINKING FOR TODAY'S ISSUES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CFFO Releases Report on Strengthening Communities in a Crisis

Guelph, ON (August 3, 2021) – The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario has released a new report, “Strengthening Community: Addressing the Human Side in a Crisis,” which explores major issues affecting Ontario farmers in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report is based on a series of discussions with CFFO members across the province, examining the ways that the pandemic has affected them and their communities in four major areas:

- rural internet,
- farm labour issues,
- local food systems, and
- mental health.

Discussions were held as part of CFFO’s 2021 Policy Tour. Held annually, the CFFO Policy Tour is an opportunity for members to offer on-the-ground feedback on agricultural issues in order to inform CFFO’s policy and program direction. This year’s tour was hosted online over ten sessions in February and March.

“One thing is clear from the discussions held this winter,” says CFFO President Ed Scharringa, who participated in every discussion. “The issues that existed before the pandemic have been heightened for many farmers, both as business owners and as community members. We heard stories about the difficulties many of our members faced, but we also heard about new opportunities and a strong hope for the future.”

The report offers a snapshot of the varied experiences and perspectives of members. Participants discussed the problem of unreliable internet access, the struggle to find skilled labour, the place of local food systems within an integrated global system and the many challenges affecting the health and wellbeing of farmers and their loved ones.

Based on member input, the report offers fourteen policy recommendations on a range of issues, such as improving national food security through inter-provincial trade, investing in automation while protecting the right to repair, and reducing barriers to mental health treatment in rural communities.

“The core concern we see from our members is a deep sense of community care,” says Suzanne Armstrong, CFFO Director of Policy and Research. “It will take determination and investment to support local food, farmers, farm workers, and rural communities. But ultimately,

if we support farmers and their communities, everyone who relies on them for safe, healthy food will benefit."

For the full report, click [here](#).

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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 return for their production and stewardship efforts.

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For more information about the work of the CFFO, please visit www.christianfarmers.org.