



LONG-TERM THINKING FOR TODAY'S ISSUES

October 21, 2021

The Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
11th Floor, 77 Grenville Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1B3
Delivered via email: lisa.thompson@pc.ola.org; minister.omafra@ontario.ca;

Dear Minister,

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.

The CFFO supports *Bill 54, The Organic Products Act*, which proposes to harmonize Ontario's rules regarding organic claims with current national standards. The CFFO recognizes the value of legislation that regulates use of the term "organic" when labelling products that are produced and sold within Ontario. We support an inclusive and fair system for all organic producers.

Ontario is the largest market for organic products in Canada. Fair regulation of the term "organic" will support a strong provincial organic sector and ensure a fair playing field for all producers. Ontario farmers and consumers both benefit when local farmers and processors meet this market opportunity for organic products.

Regulation around the use of the term "organic" will ensure trust and consumer confidence within the marketplace. Currently, the Canadian Organic Standards only apply to products that bear the Canada Organic Logo. While fraudulent labels are currently prohibited under the *Food and Drugs Act*, this does not adequately protect the organic claim. Specific provincial legislation is needed, similar to legislation established in British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Quebec. This legislation should reference the strong and globally recognized federal organic certification system.

Ontario has a strong and diverse food system, and organic farming is an important part of that overall diversity. Market demand demonstrates that Ontario consumers support this system of production. Government legislation to regulate "organic" will benefit both consumers and producers, and it will strengthen the Ontario agri-food sector as a whole.

We appreciate your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

Ed Scharringa, President
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario