



LONG-TERM THINKING FOR TODAY'S ISSUES

May 7, 2020

Hon. Ernie Hardeman
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
77 Grenville St., 11th Floor
Toronto, ON
M5S 1B3

Re: Farmgate Sales and Farmers' Markets

Dear Minister Hardeman,

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.

We recognize the significant efforts on the part of the Government of Ontario to protect the health of citizens while also supporting essential workplaces and economic activity.

Farms and the broader agri-food system are all essential workplaces, important for our local Ontario food security and for our ongoing economic prosperity, as well. We raise the following with the intention of offering constructive suggestions and raising key concerns.

Supporting Direct-to-Consumer Farmgate Sales

WHEREAS there is increased consumer interest in farmgate sales via online order and pick-up or delivery because of the impact of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS the government has provided cost share support for agribusinesses through the CAP program for creating and increasing online sales; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the CFFO request that government:

- Ensure this cost-share funding is available quickly to agri-businesses which qualify.
- Ensure the greatest number of businesses benefit from this cost-share funding.
- Offer support for online platforms that help consumers locate and connect with local farms for farmgate sales.

Re-opening Farmers' Markets

WHEREAS the province of Ontario has declared that “businesses that produce food and beverages, and agricultural products including plants, including by farming, harvesting, aquaculture, hunting and fishing” and “businesses that process, manufacture or distribute food, beverages, crops, agricultural products, animal products and by-products” as essential workplaces; and


WHEREAS farmers' markets allow essential businesses within these definitions to connect directly with customers; and

WHEREAS more points of sale connecting food producers or processors with consumers will alleviate pressure on already strained supply chains such as grocery stores; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the CFFO request that government permit reopening of farmers' markets according to the same protocols required for other essential businesses.

In this time of crisis, maintaining Ontario's food security is vital. We strongly encourage the government to support more options to allow producers and processors to connect directly with customers via online sales for delivery and pick up and via farmers' markets. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and suggestions.

Sincerely,



Ed Scharringa, President
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario