



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: Provincially Inspected Abattoirs

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.

The COVID-19 crisis has spotlighted a concern held by the CFFO and others for many years—the decreasing number of small processing plants and abattoirs across the province. We recognize the many efforts taken at both the provincial and federal level to resolve pressures on the processing industry created by the pandemic. However, our already strained processing sector is now buckling and livestock farmers are primarily paying the price.

Burdensome regulations in the past have resulted in many small processing plants closing down or new businesses unable to get going. Now, with large plant closures in both Canada and the US, the significant risks of closure, especially of larger federally inspected plants, even for a few days, are evident. This causes huge problems for livestock producers and can also cause problems for meat supply to consumers as well.

Recommendations:

WHEREAS independent meat processors are experiencing an increase in demand due to changing supply chains and consumer purchasing habits; and

WHEREAS the impact of large processing plant closures on the overall food system, and to farmers in particular, can be devastating where no alternatives exist; and

WHEREAS the current COVID-19 crisis has clearly illustrated the benefits of a strong local food system including many smaller meat processors; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the CFFO request that government support provincially inspected abattoirs and local market-focused meat processors to protect our provincial meat processing capacity and overall provincial food security.

This support could include:

- Financial support for businesses in creating and improving online marketing platforms.
- Support to help businesses maintain and protect their workforce (e.g. help connect processors with potential new employees, cover extra costs for personal protective equipment, fund training costs for new or backup employees, etc.).
- Remove red tape to allow businesses to flourish and reduce start up and maintenance costs.

In this time of crisis, maintaining Ontario's food security is vital. This means creating an environment where small and large processors can operate, which will protect the local processing capacity in the province. We need small and large abattoirs and processors to serve the needs of producers and customers, to quickly adjust to changes in the market place, and to have the ability to take advantage of new opportunities.

Sincerely,



Ed Scharringa, President
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario