



ONTARIO PORK

December 11, 2009

Hon. Dwight Duncan
Minister of Finance
Frost Bldg S
7th Flr, 7 Queen's Park Crescent
Toronto ON M7A1Y7

Re: Pre Budget Consultation

Dear Minister:

First, on behalf of Ontario Pork we would like to thank you for your invitation to attend the December 4, 2009 budget consultation session. Stewart Cressman, an Ontario Pork Director, participated on behalf of the organization.

As you know, Ontario's pork producers have had over three consecutive years of losses. Many have exited the industry and Ontario producers are participating in the federal government's Hog Industry Transition Program to idle their production in a greater proportion than any other province. As the Transition Program unfolds, and as producers continue to exit the industry, there is concern that is shared by both producers and pork processors that production will slip below that needed to support a healthy processing sector. Further consolidation and retrenchment in the processing sector will leave our industry permanently disabled.

Should this occur, Ontario consumers will not at first notice much change. They will be supplied with pork from Quebec, which subsidizes its producers, and from the United States. However, the impact will be felt immediately in rural Ontario, which will lose more jobs and the taxation and economic stimulus that comes with them.

Our industry is not alone in Ontario; cattle, veal, horticulture and grains and oilseed producers are in a similar position. Consequently, we have come together as commodity groups to form the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition to press both the Ontario government and the federal government for a new government and producer funded Business Risk Management Program (BRMP). Current federal-provincial programs do not work in the current protracted economic crisis.

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The coalition is working with the Hon. Leona Dombrowsky and the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs to propose a new BRM approach that will work for Ontario agriculture. For their part, Ontario's pork producers who are searching for a way to remain in business urgently need funding support. Such support would preserve existing jobs in both production and processing and keep alive an important pillar of the Ontario economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wilma Jeffray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'W' and 'J'.

Wilma Jeffray
Chair

c.c. Hon Leona Dombrowsky