

## **Resolution H - Response - Lobby Government (short term support)**

Ontario Pork is asking for interim payments on risk management programs.

The Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC) has been formed to address such issues. The OASC is comprised of The Ontario Federation of Agriculture; Ontario Cattlemen's Association, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, Ontario Pork, Ontario Veal, Ontario Sheep Marketing Association and supported by the Grain Growers of Ontario.

### **Key Messages of the Coalition are:**

- Ontario is losing its farming sector and its ability to produce local food.
- Governments need to take immediate action to preserve local food production.
- Farmers have developed affordable plans that will help them grow the economy.
- Investing in agriculture pays dividends – it will grow our rural and urban economies.
- Canada needs to partner with the provinces for business risk management programming.
- Ad hoc payments come too little too late.
- Agriculture needs the federal government to come to the table with their 60 per cent share.

### **Background:**

Ontario agriculture has a long and proud history. Our province was built on a progressive and productive farming and food processing industry. A strong and diverse agriculture sector can sustain our rural communities, provide healthy locally produced food for Ontarians, contribute to an improved environment, reduce the environmental footprint of the food we eat and accelerate our whole economy to help make Ontario a stronger and more vibrant province.

Without immediate action our respective sectors will face irreparable harm that will snowball to significant and long term impacts on our rural economy and communities. Farm gate prices have not kept pace with cost increases for labour, fertilizer, fuel and other farm inputs. The wild and unpredictable fluctuation in the dollar has stifled export sales. Current government Business Risk Management (BRM) programs like the AgriStability program are not enough to help farmers cope with today's market conditions. We need immediate adjustments to the AgriStability program and to the calculation of reference margins to account for low to negative margins.

We also need the federal government's commitment to provide funding to the provinces to address BRM programming gaps.

We cannot wait three years for the next Growing Forward framework for changes to be made to the current government BRM programs.

**Ontario Agricultural Industry Snapshot:**

- Primary agriculture – 57,000 farms, 43,700 hired full time equivalents,
- \$10 billion in farm cash receipts
- Agri-food industry – 740,000 employed, \$28 billion industry
- Agriculture is second largest economic contributor and the third largest employer in Ontario.