

Board Highlights: August 12, 2020

Policy Day

The Board of Directors considered options for a continued dialogue with members, keeping in mind the Ontario government guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic limiting the social indoor gathering to a maximum of 50 people. The Board decided to encourage local pork producers' associations to hold information and feedback meetings in lieu of Policy Day in September 2020. The Board of Directors also made a decision to defer the 2020 resolution session to the next annual general meeting to ensure an extensive debate of resolutions. Policy day white papers will be sent out to provide background information and problem statements for the discussion. Board members will attend each of these meetings to ensure a comprehensive discussion with producers in their constituencies. Producers' feedback from these meetings will be compiled, analyzed and submitted for the Board review. Board Chair's address as well as presentations on business risk management programs and pricing will be delivered virtually with an option for producers to submit their feedback, questions and concerns.

COVID-19

The market hog backlog created by processing plants closures has been resolved in Ontario. Some redirecting of market hogs to different processors is expected to continue during the summer months. Ontario Pork continues working with the government on the initiatives to assist producers affected by the closures at processing plants earlier this year as well as to create a framework for handling swine welfare issues in an event of a foreign animal disease.

Price Discovery

Ontario Pork is working to determine what data is most useful to the industry. The Board of Directors reviewed specifics of hog pricing in Ontario and an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of various pricing methods. Producer feedback from the associations' meetings in September as well as the input from the Industry Development Strategy Committee will be used in developing options for pricing pigs in Ontario.

Producer Committee Nominations

Further to a call for committee members that was conducted earlier this year, the Board of Directors appointed members for the Research committee, the Government Relations Group and the Sustainability Advisory Group. Ontario Pork will be finalizing appointments with producers interested in contributing their expertise and time to working on various issues affecting the provincial pork industry. Producers interested in serving on the Resolutions Committee are encouraged to contact Ontario Pork – two members are still required.

Strategic Planning

The Board of Directors and senior managers participated in strategic planning to develop the next strategic plan for Ontario Pork. In-depth information on international pork production trends and pork export markets were presented as part of the education process. Members of the Industry Development Strategy Committee were also invited for the education session.

Response to Animal Rights Extremism

The Board of Directors was briefed on recent escalation in animal rights extremists' activities. Bill 156 passed third reading and received Royal Assent on June 17, but has not yet come into force, as regulations are being developed. Animal rights extremists immediately increased their activities and online rhetoric in response to Bill 156. Ontario Pork's activities to address the situation included support to transporters, government relations and public relations campaigns. Ontario Pork has been working with the transport company involved in the incident at Sofina in June, to reduce the risk of future incidents and provide support to the driver. On August 10, 2020, Ontario Pork invited other interested parties in agriculture to join the industry-wide steering committee to create change, build public trust and safer conditions for workers, animals and for Canada's food supply.