

Board Highlights: December 13, 2019

Research Committee Update

Arno Schober, Chair of the Research Committee provided a report on the committee meeting held on December 3, 2019. At that meeting, the Research committee had reviewed 22 letters of intent from researchers and decided to invite eight researchers to submit a full proposal. The researchers will present their proposals at the committee meeting on February 4, 2020. A call for proposals is sent out to Canadian agricultural researchers annually by Ontario Pork.

Presidents' and Secretaries' Meeting

Ontario Pork held a meeting for presidents and secretaries of local pork producers' associations on December 11, 2019 in Guelph. Discussion focused on the preparation for upcoming pork producers' associations' annual meeting in January and early February of 2020 and assistance that Ontario Pork can provide. The annual meetings' schedule will be published in Ontario Farmer on January 4, 2020. In 2020, elections will be held in zone 1 for the purpose of voting in delegates and substitutes for three-year terms. Only elected delegates can be nominated to run for a Board position.

Ontario Pork's Reception at Queen's Park

On November 19, 2019, Ontario Pork hosted its MPP Reception at Queens Park in Toronto. This year's reception was attended by approximately 130 guests, including eight ministers, 41 MPPs, their staff, representatives from Conestoga Meat and Sofina Foods, Ontario Pork Board members, and pork producers, Jolanda Vandenbroek from Oxford and Jackie and Gary Smith from Golden Horseshoe. Eric Schwindt, Chair of Ontario Pork presented the 2019 Ontario Pork's social responsibility report that outlined goals for measurable improvements in farm operations, animal care and food safety, environmental sustainability, and in supporting strong communities and people. Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and John Vanthof, MPP for Timiskaming-Cochrane and ag critic for the NDP party, also delivered remarks. Ontario Pork's representatives held meetings with government officials and MPPs. The dialogue included key topics that currently impact the pork sector.

Update on the New Research Facility Project

The Board of Directors was briefed on the progress of the new research facility project. The external design committee, consisting of representatives from Ontario Pork, University of Guelph and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, has been meeting to discuss design ideas to optimize the herd size to research requirements and financial parameters. In early December 2019, Ontario Pork hosted meetings with equipment manufacturers and dealers to assist the external design committee in the development of equipment a request for proposals for the new facility. The Ontario Pork internal design committee also met to provide input into the design process on December 12, 2019.

Producer Information Meetings

The Board of Directors discussed the outcomes of producer information meetings held in late November – early December in five location throughout Ontario. At the meetings, members of the Political Structure Review Committee presented their findings to date and received producers' feedback. The committee will now meet to review the feedback and refine the proposed model.

Producer information meetings also included a presentation and demo of the AgManifest software, developed by Ontario Pork to replace physical paperwork of the industry hog movement, feeding into the PigTrace database via electronic means to assist producers and processors in being compliant with the federal regulations related to the traceability of swine in Canada. Ontario Pork's staff encouraged producers interested in trying the software to contact the Ontario Pork office for assistance.