

Board Highlights: June 23-24, 2020

Board Election Process

To ensure leadership continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Directors extended terms of service for current Board Chair, Eric Schwindt and Vice Chair, John de Bruyn until the next year's annual general meeting. Expression of interest forms to serve on Board advisory groups and committees will be circulated to producers. All producers interested to contribute to a committee or an advisory group are encouraged to apply.

Policy Day

The Board of Directors decided to hold a face-to-face Policy Day in mid-September 2020. Once the date is determined, it will be circulated to all Ontario Pork delegates as well as presidents and secretaries of local pork producers' associations. Discussion topics will include pricing and business risk management programs. The resolution session, which was postponed due to COVID, may be incorporated in the agenda. If government restrictions on meetings are not lifted by September 2020, Ontario Pork will hold a virtual meeting to discuss most urgent topics with its delegates.

Political Structure Review

The Board of Directors deliberated options for further consultations and vote on the new political structure proposed by the Political Structure Review Committee. As the COVID-19 made it impossible to conduct comprehensive discussions and consultations with Ontario Pork's members on the proposed political structure, the Board decided to postpone the membership consultations and vote until next year.

COVID-19

Staff briefed the Board of Directors that the backlog created by processing plants closures was eliminated in Ontario. Ontario Pork worked with the provincial government, processors and other supply chain partners to address the backlog. Currently, plants in Ontario and Quebec are processing at or near capacity, with the addition of overtime hours and shifts when possible. Along with other agricultural organizations, Ontario Pork continues its advocacy efforts to address losses that producers have suffered related to COVID-19, as well as due to ongoing market volatility.

Canadian Pork Council Update

Rick Bergmann, Chair and John Ross, Executive Director, Canadian Pork Council (CPC), joined the Board discussion via a videoconference to provide an update on the CPC efforts in speaking with the federal government to inform on the state of the industry and to stress the urgent need for a meaningful financial assistance. Most recently, Rick Bergmann and Doug Ahrens appeared in front of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food about the Business Risk Management Study. Rick and Doug explained why existing BRM programs do not work for pork producers and suggested ways to improve the programming.

Prairie Swine Centre Update

James Reesor spoke with the Board about his experience serving as Ontario's representative on the Prairie Swine Centre (PSC) Board of Directors and provide his last report. Prairie Swine Centre is a non-profit research corporation and is recognized for its contributions to practical, applied science, training and knowledge transfer in pork production with emphasis in the disciplines of nutrition, engineering, and applied animal behavior. James is completing his term on the PSC Board in June 2020. The Board of Directors thanked James for his commitment, outstanding expertise and leadership while representing Ontario pork producers on the PSC Board of Directors. James also served as the PSC Board Chair from October 2015 to June 2019 and was instrumental in leading the PSC through its transition in leadership.