

Board Highlights: May 30-31, 2023

Ontario Pork's Committees

The Board of Directors selected candidates to serve on the Resolutions, Research Priority Setting, Research Proposal Review as well as Production Insurance and Risk Management committees. 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.

Policy Day

The Board of Directors decided to hold Ontario Pork's Policy Day on September 19, 2023 in Guelph. The Board will be confirming policy topics requiring delegates' feedback at the June meeting.

Emerging Swine Disease: Streptococcus Zooepidemicus

Dr. Ryan Tenbergen, Demeter Veterinary Services spoke with the Board about an emerging disease, Streptococcus Zooepidemicus, which can have a devastating impact on hog farming operations. The disease is a threat to the swine sector and has been present on a few farms in Canada since 2019. The route of introduction to Canadian herds remains unknown. Dr. Tenbergen informed the Board that the live attenuated vaccine has been 100% successful in challenge studies. He indicated that currently, the only tool to control the disease is depopulation.

Farmland Severances and Other Land Use

Ontario Pork, along with general farm organizations and other livestock commodity groups, met with Premier Ford, Minister Thompson, as well as staff from the Premier's office, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to voice strong concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and potential impact on available farmland in Ontario. Ontario Pork highlighted issues with the three-lot severance government proposal, the importance of Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) in regulating development in rural areas, and a need to extend the consultation period so that producers and farm organizations can further discuss the impacts of the proposed PPS on farmland. The provincial government listened to farmers' concerns and announced an extension to the consultation period until August 4, and that the three-lot severance proposal will be removed from the PPS.

Ontario Pork's Labour Committee Report

The ad-hoc Labour Committee has now completed its work; the committee role was to assist the Board of Directors in developing a strategy for the pork industry to address farm labour and industry workforce challenges. The Board of Directors accepted a final report from the committee and reviewed strategies recommended by the committee in five focus areas: perception and industry awareness, people and workplace culture, skill development and education, immigration and foreign workers, automation and technology. The Board tasked three Board members and staff with refining the recommendations and developing an action plan.

Resolutions Response Document

Board members approved responses to resolutions that were brought forth by delegates at Ontario Pork's Annual General Meeting on March 22, 2023. The Resolutions Response document will be finalized and mailed to delegates by June 30, 2023.