

Board Highlights: September 20-21, 2023

2023 Policy Day

The Board of Directors discussed delegate feedback from the Ontario Pork Policy Day held on September 19, 2023, at the Cutten Fields Club for delegates, presidents and secretaries from local pork producers' associations. This year's event, attended by over 60 participants, focused on opportunities for producers to participate in the Ontario Pork initiatives aimed at maximizing and enhancing value for members. Tara Terpstra, Board Vice-Chair, provided a comprehensive overview of the Ontario Pork governance structure, the Board of Directors, advisory groups and committees. Multiple opportunities exist for pork producers to get involved and actively contribute to strengthening the provincial pork industry. These opportunities can be tailored to each producer's schedule and level of time commitment, from participating in focus groups and advocacy efforts to serving on committees and the Board of Directors. During a roundtable discussion, delegates discussed Ontario Pork's key initiatives in various areas including emergency preparedness, animal care and health, practical research, risk management, labour and many others and prioritized those most important for producers' input. As Ontario Pork looks for new and innovative ways to increase member engagement, the Board of Directors suggested holding a combined industry event in collaboration with industry stakeholders. Participants supported holding such an event in March 2025 but encouraged the Board to preserve the Ontario Pork identity.

Ontario Pork also received delegates' feedback to the proposed changes to the statistics reporting. The Policy Day included a market update and a presentation about on-farm cybersecurity, its possible vulnerabilities, and tools to proactively identify and mitigate potential risks.

The Board of Directors will be working on identifying next steps based the feedback from delegates.

Labour Working Group Report

The Board of Directors received the final report of the Labour Working Group, which was tasked with developing a plan to support strategic recommendations for the pork industry to address farm labour and industry workforce challenges. The recommendations included enhancing employer knowledge of human resource requirements, increasing public understanding of the pork sector, promoting the benefits of working on farms and in processing plants, and advocating for improvements to the temporary worker program. The Board directed the staff to elaborate on the actions outlined in the plan and to also compile the associated costs necessary for its implementation.

Wild Boar Proposal

The Board of Directors decided to provide funding support towards a research project titled "Using Gene Editing to Control of Wild Boar Populations" provided that the project gathers support from other national stakeholders. The project would explore the use of gene editing to control invasive wild boar. Wild pigs pose a significant risk to the pork industry and have contributed to the spread of African swine fever in many countries. A detection in Canada, either in domesticated or wild pigs, could be catastrophic to Canada's pork industry.