



**THE VOICE OF ANIMAL AGRICULTURE**  
**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REPORT**  
**2008**





## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REPORT 2008

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

My name is John Maaskant. I've been proud to be the chair of the Ontario Farm Animal Council for the last five years and am a chicken farmer from Clinton.



It has been a year of both milestones and achievements as OFAC celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2008 and this report gives you a summary of many of them.



Late in 2008, OFAC was honoured for its many accomplishments when it received the prestigious 2008 Canadian Agri-Food Award of Excellence in the category of Agricultural Awareness and Education. The awards are co-sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

The award's citation read, "For the past 20 years OFAC has helped dispel inaccurate notions of farming and food production. It is often called upon by organizations to help deal with concerns related to animal care, food safety and the environment. The continued popularity and growing demand for their outreach efforts are proof of their success in bridging the gap between farmers and the public. OFAC

has become recognized as a credible and knowledgeable voice for the livestock and poultry farmers and agribusinesses in Canada."

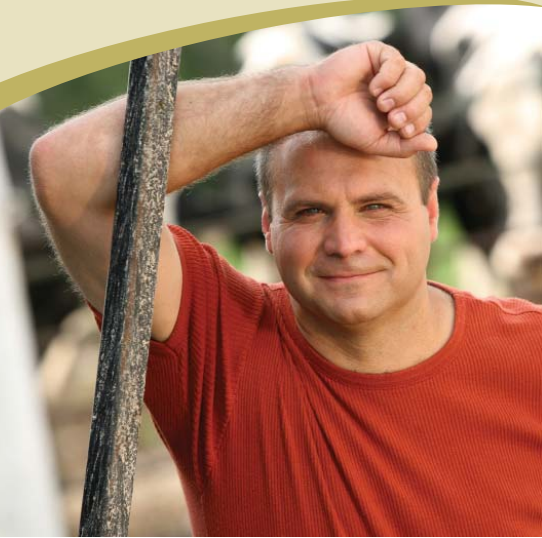
We were delighted with this recognition but realize that our work is far from over. There are still many myths to be shattered and consumers to be reached as we continue to fulfill our mandate of:

**"Animal agriculture proactively working together - Addressing questions to ensure consumer confidence."**

As chair of OFAC, I'm proud of the work our organization has done - and continues to do. And I hope we do our members - both current and those with that early vision of two decades ago - proud.







## OVERVIEW

In 1987, an alliance of Ontario's major farm animal commodity groups came together to take a collective approach to raising awareness about responsible farm animal use to the public. That initiative was formalized in the summer of 1988 with the creation of OFAC. OFAC was the first organization of its kind in North America and there are now similar organizations across Canada and the U.S.A. OFAC's award-winning programs and materials have also been used or adapted for use by others across North America.

OFAC is committed to being a leader within the livestock farming community and in the communities that we live, work and provide agricultural services. It is OFAC's responsibility to promote farming practices that sustain animal agriculture's long term viability while caring for our most important members - farm animals - in the best possible manner.



*OFAC's tenth anniversary celebration in 1988.*

## OFAC's four key areas of Corporate Social Responsibility

OFAC's 2008 Corporate Social Responsibility document is based on four key areas of service to our members, industry and our farm animals through various **Animal Care, Community Leadership, Livestock and the Environment and Consumer Outreach** projects and initiatives.

These four areas ensure that our contributions meet specific criteria that promote and protect our industry, members and farm animals.

*"I think what people have to consider is that the livelihood for farmers is their livestock. By tender care, by having them comfortable and clean, it's a well proven fact that - in the dairy industry - cow comfort is one of the most important considerations. Animals treated with TLC don't mind giving back to you, and that's what it is all about."*

**Ralph Dietrich, Dairy Farmer,  
Bruce County**





## FARM ANIMAL CARE

Any responsible farmer will tell you that his or her livelihood depends on healthy, contented animals or birds. Farm organizations and others working in agriculture have spent millions of dollars researching all aspects of animal welfare, health and comfort. They have implemented many programs both to improve animal care and to show the public how they care for their animals. Here are a few highlights of some of OFAC's animal welfare initiatives in 2008.

### Enhancing farm animal care - in transit



Late in 2008, OFAC received project funding to hire a newly created position - that of a Livestock Transportation Specialist.

Over the next three years, OFAC will be offering specialized training to livestock transporters in Ontario through both the Truckers' Quality Assurance (TQA) training program for hogs and the Certified Livestock Transportation (CLT) program for those who haul any species of livestock. OFAC will also take a lead role in creating and offering other learning opportunities for improving livestock handling related to transportation with farmers, processing plant and sales barn staff, and emergency personnel.

*"It doesn't matter how late a night it is or how cold it is, I always go out and check my chickens," says Weber. "When you're going to be out of your barn for several hours while you're sleeping, you want to be sure the birds are resting comfortably; that nothing has gone wrong."*

Bruce Weber, Egg Farmer,  
Waterloo Region

Funding for this three-year project has been provided, in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Adaptation Council. Financial support has also been contributed by the Ontario pork industry's In Transit Loss Account (ITLA) committee and by the Ontario Cattlemen's Association.

Last year, OFAC also organized and coordinated two **Livestock Transportation emergency courses** in Kemptville and London for police, firefighters and OSPCA officials and will continue to coordinate these courses for first responders for livestock transportation emergencies and barn fires.

**OFAC Objective:** To advance responsible farm animal care.

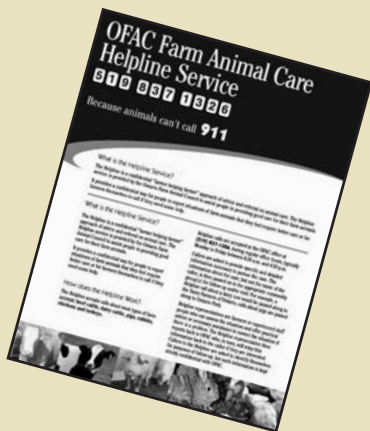






## Farm Animal Care Helpline Service - 519-837-1326

OFAC continues to operate its animal care **Helpline service** which had 12 calls in 2008. The Helpline is a confidential “farmer helping farmer” approach to advice and referral on animal care. It provides a confidential way for people to report situations of farm animals that they feel require better care or for the farmers themselves to call if they need help. Many more calls are fielded throughout the year to answer questions and provide advice and referrals over the phones which are not recorded as Helpline visits. In 2008, OFAC's Farm Animal Needs Advisor made over **100 visits** to farms, sales barns and producer meetings to examine site specific situations and talk about animal care issues.



## Pigeon Welfare

In the months following the collapse of Pigeon King International, OFAC and others partnered together in an unprecedented effort to successfully address potential animal welfare and or health concerns related to thousands of pigeons on Ontario farms. Other partners included OMAFRA, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA), and Egg Farmers of Ontario.

Overall, there was excellent collaboration between the partners, especially considering that the groups had never faced this type of scenario before. The experience and knowledge gained from it will certainly be useful and could be applied to more severe emergencies on a larger scale.

**OFAC Objective:** To provide leadership and expertise on the issues in animal agriculture.





## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

OFAC works to show leadership at all levels of farm life - from assisting in writing updated protocols related to animal welfare to promoting the hard work, commitment and values of Ontario farmers.

### 2009 Faces of Farming Calendar

6,000 copies of OFAC's fourth annual Faces of Farming calendar were sold out in two short months after its launch in late October. The calendar features the faces and stories of 19 Ontario farmers and celebrates the hard work, dedication and values of this province's farming community.

This year's project participants represent all sectors of agriculture - from beef to bees, and from kidney beans to soybeans. Most of them come from many generations of proud, hardworking Ontario farmers. Participants also come from all corners of Ontario.

The calendar was mailed as an early Christmas present to 1,200 Ontario politicians, 800 media outlets and more than 1,000 grocery stores and butcher shops. Stories about the project and its participants were featured in more than 40 media outlets including television, radio and newspapers.

### Young Ambassador Training Program

Throughout 2008 and continuing into 2009, OFAC hosted training sessions for **young ambassadors** in Guelph, Kemptville and Ridgetown as well as for fair ambassadors and fair board volunteers. The workshops cover items to remember when talking to a consumer at an event or when making a presentation. The seminars are based on OFAC's new *Proudly Presenting... Agriculture* booklet which is a brochure designed to help those in the agriculture industry positively present agriculture, and is a part of the OFAC Young Ambassador program. In 2009, OFAC will be facilitating sessions for students at all the University of Guelph campuses across Ontario.

The OFAC Young Ambassador program is being funded by proceeds from the inaugural 2008 Jim Johnstone Memorial Golf tournament, hosted by Egg Farmers of Ontario. Johnstone served as EFO chair from 1972 to 1987 and was also instrumental in the establishment of OFAC, serving as the Council's first Chair from 1988 to 1992. Funding has also been secured from the Ontario Pork Industry Council (OPIC) for the next three years.







### Supporting Ontario's Food Banks

Even in uncertain economic times, Ontario's farmers seem to find a way to help out those in need. In October of 2008, over 250 Ontario farmers and industry supporters came together at the inaugural Harvest Gala in Guelph and further committed to assisting Ontario's 120 food banks that feed 320,000 people each month for the remainder of this year and beyond.

Six agriculture-driven programs, Gobble Away Hunger, The Milk Program, Donate-A-Hog, Drive Away Hunger, Harvest of Hope, and Buy Local, Share Local will work directly with the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB) to distribute food to as many communities as possible in the coming year.

The Gala was organized by OFAC staff and numerous other industry partners. The OAFB also received \$5,000 from the proceeds of ticket sales to the Harvest Gala.



### Speak Up for Agriculture program for Farmers

Between October and January, OFAC and AGCare's Urban Media Specialist, Wallace Pidgeon, ran 13 Speak Up training sessions across the province. In total, more than 100 primary producers took part in the courses which taught them skills they could use when giving media interviews, speaking to school groups, presenting on agricultural topics at municipal council meetings and more. Funding for this program runs from 2007 to 2010 and comes from the groups' Proactive Media Relations project, funded in part by the Agricultural Adaptation Council.



## LIVESTOCK AND THE ENVIRONMENT

As farmers with families whose livelihood and way of life are very close to the land, we understand more than most the importance of healthy soil, water and air. Farmers live on farms with their families and depend on the environment to create a healthy place to live as well.



### Agriculture Hits the Trails

**“Agriculture Hits the Trails” is an innovative communications project of AGCare and OFAC that is targeted to families and outdoor enthusiasts who use Ontario's walking and cycling trails.**

The billboards will be placed on the trails in the spring of 2009. Key messages on the signs and billboards will include information about the farms those trail users are passing by - including environmental farm plans, nutrient management, crop rotation, conservation tillage and other stewardship projects.

### Clean Sweep

A first-of-its-kind collection program for sharps and unused livestock pharmaceutical products took place in the fall of 2008 as part of an Ontario government-funded initiative to protect water quality in the Great Lakes Basin.

Farmers were able to bring their sharps and unused livestock medicines to a series of collection sites in Eastern and South Western Ontario free of charge for safe and environmentally friendly disposal during a pilot project week in November.

The project was co-ordinated by AGCare and the Ontario Farm Animal Council together with their partners, the Canadian Animal Health Institute, the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, the Ontario Agri Business Association and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The clean sweep pilot program was part of a larger Ontario government initiative under the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem designed to protect water quality in the Great Lakes that will culminate in a province-wide sweep of pesticides, sharps and unused livestock pharmaceuticals in the fall of 2009. The project report will include recommendations for continuing this type of program in the future.







## CONSUMER OUTREACH

Consumer Education programs continue to be one of OFAC's core services as staff and members work to show the public where their food comes from. In 2008, OFAC displays were at 20 different public education events over 96 days reaching 2.2 million Ontarians including 38,500 students. Other agricultural education initiatives included the following:

### Culinary Student Tours

How do dairy goats and cows differ from each other? Where are turkeys raised? How big is a day-old chick? How are mushrooms, greenhouse tomatoes and apples grown? These are all questions that were answered for culinary students from five Ontario colleges in 2008 - Fanshawe in London, Sir Sandford Fleming in Peterborough, Algonquin in Ottawa, St. Clair in Windsor and Niagara colleges.

Since 2005, more than 300 students from a number of Ontario culinary institutes have visited a variety of Ontario farms on the invitation of OFAC and AGCare including dairy goat, sheep, dairy cow, chicken, egg, turkey, tomato, mushroom, greenhouse vegetable, apricot, apple and more. Without exception, each student has come away from the experience with a much stronger appreciation of the work that goes into raising food - whether it is meat, milk, eggs, fruits or vegetables.

Past experience has shown that while these students receive a solid education on how to prepare and serve food, they generally have little or no idea about how these products were raised or grown. OFAC and AGCare plan to offer four additional tours in 2009.

This program was generously supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Adaptation Council's CanAdvance Program.

### Media Tours

Two tours for about 60 food editors, writers, cookbook authors and Professional Home Economists were conducted out of Toronto and Ottawa in 2008 by OFAC and AGCare to sheep, egg, rhubarb and mushroom farms. Since 2003, these tours have helped to forge some strong relationships between Ontario's "foodies", reporters and farmers and have resulted in some great articles in the province's press.

**OFAC Objective: To provide reliable information on animal agriculture to the media, educators and the public.**

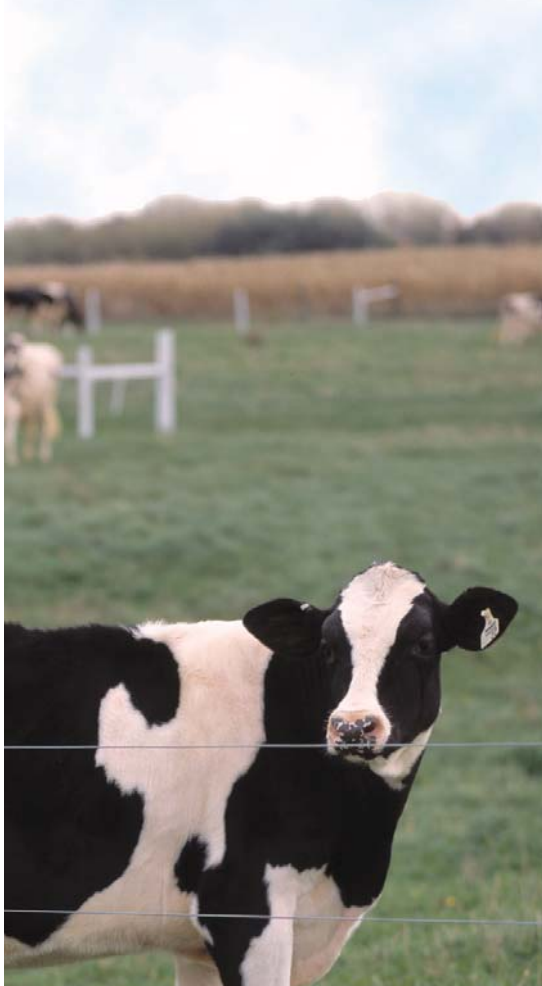




### Media Outreach Program

Throughout 2008, OFAC and AGCare staff met with reporters and editors at television, radio and newspaper outlets across Ontario offering expertise and contact assistance with agricultural stories. These meetings have resulted in a number of news stories already being generated and many opportunities for future positive coverage.

The team also created [www.farmingsources.com](http://www.farmingsources.com) - a new website designed to help media write about food and agriculture in Ontario. Farmingsources.com provides contact information for agricultural spokespeople and is searchable by issue or by organization.



### Real Farmers with Real Heart Radio Campaign

During the winter of 2008, OFAC's new radio campaign reached into the households of radio listeners across the province, introducing them to some Ontario farmers who told stories about how they care for their animals and poultry.

The "*Real Farmers with Real Heart*" campaign, which aired on targeted country music radio stations, featured a series of minute-long radio clips. Each clip told a different story about raising livestock or poultry. Robin Brown, a beef farmer from Victoria County, explained how their cattle always come first - even on Christmas morning when her children must wait to open their presents until the cattle are fed and all of the chores are done. In his clip, David Murray, a Perth County dairy farmer talked about why he chose to buy comfortable rubber mattresses for the cows in his barn to lie down on. Other clips focus on farmers' initiatives in the areas of research, education and agricultural innovation. All of the clips can be found on OFAC's website at [www.ofac.org](http://www.ofac.org)

Funding for this project was provided, in part, through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program. This was a collective outcome partnership with OFAC's sister groups and the Agricultural Adaptation Council in Ontario, the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development and the Alberta Agriculture and Food Council.







Evaline, grade five, Toronto -  
"Everyone had a job on the farm.  
Even the animals have jobs."



Bernice, grade eight, Toronto - "Farmers feed us. They help by planting hundreds of foods for us to eat. Without them we can not survive. Thank you farmers for all your hard work."



Aynsley, grade one, Stratton - "Farmers need to feed their animals because if you don't feed them, they'll die and you won't have meat or milk."

## FarmzOnWheelz

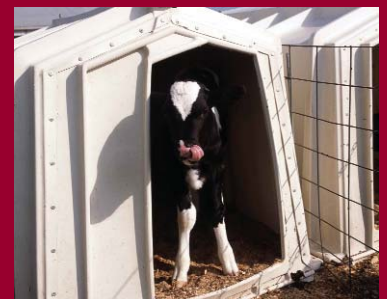
2009 will feature even more groundbreaking work with the exciting development of **FarmzOnWheelz**, a new, professional traveling exhibit that will feature a powerful video about farming to be shown both online and at events across Canada! This interactive, "cool" exhibit about agriculture will fulfill our need for a visual and fast-paced outreach to teens, an audience that is currently not being reached by anything positive about farming or farmers.



Work on this project has been underway for more than a year with focus groups being held late in 2008. The exhibit, which will feature OFAC's Virtual Farm Tour project and many other components is being designed by the Ontario Science Centre with the help of an enthusiastic working group and will be on the road in the summer of 2009.

Funding for this project was provided, in part, through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program which is administered in Ontario by the Agricultural Adaptation Council, and an extensive list of industry supporters. Add your organization's name to the list at [www.ofac.org](http://www.ofac.org) **Thank you!**

OFAC's true strength is in our coordinated approach to public education and industry issues on behalf of all of animal agriculture. OFAC operates with a core budget of \$400,000 per year and a full time staff of three. Our results on our proactive projects are only achieved by leveraging our funds with project funding and partnering with government, commodity groups, agribusinesses and farmers. Thank you to everyone who helps contribute to OFAC's successes.



*OFAC's Founding Members Organizations:*

Chicken Farmers of Ontario

Dairy Farmers of Ontario

Egg Farmers of Ontario

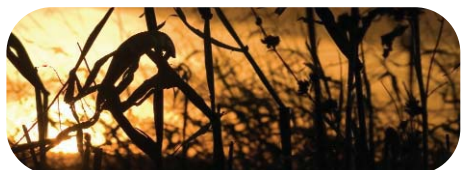
Ontario Cattlemen's Association

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario Pork

Turkey Farmers of Ontario

Ontario Institute of Agrologists



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