

Farm & Food Care Ontario marks end of transition year

A break-even budget is anticipated for the coming year



BY LILIAN SCHAER
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Milton – Both chair Brian Gilroy and treasurer Jim Gowland referred to the past year as one of transition for Farm & Food Care Ontario as they addressed attendees at the organization’s annual meeting on April 11.

A new executive director, Kelly Daynard, was hired last year, the organization became independent of Farm & Food Care Canada (now Canadian Centre for Food Integrity), and several high profile initiatives were launched.

One of those was the latest issue of Real Dirt on Farming that was unveiled last fall. The digest-sized version of the popular booklet that answers Canadians’ questions about farming will be inserted

into the Globe and Mail on May 12, directly reaching 200,000 Canadian households.

The long-time virtual farm tour website was overhauled in 2017 and relaunched as Farm Food 360. The new site features virtual reality technology and eight new farm tours for mink, sheep, eggs and egg processing, cheese and milk processing, grain and dairy cows.

About 4,000 people attended two Breakfast on the Farm events, and five farm tours took 100 food writers and influencers, 65 registered dietitians and 30 culinary students to farms and farm businesses across Ontario.

According to Gowland, revenues increased by almost \$125,000 to \$1.526 million mostly due to more sponsorship, and although there was \$62,000 deficit, most of that was attributed to costs resulting from the transition with CCFI and changes in staffing. A break-even budget is anticipated for the coming year.

“We thank all of our sponsors and supporters; it went a long way to help out this organization to reach some viability for the

future,” he said. “We worked hard to control the expense side of this organization; it has been a good year for rationalizing expenses.”

Twenty-six new members joined Farm & Food Care Ontario last year, and a new \$60 Individual Annual Membership category was announced at the meeting. Most of the organization’s budget comes from memberships and sponsorship and while a small amount comes from special projects, there is no direct government funding for Farm & Food Care Ontario.

Members approved several by-law changes, including an introduction of term limits for board directors at five consecutive two-year terms, re-naming the secretary position to Second vice-chair, and reducing quorum requirements. The governance committee will review current board size and composition, and voting structure this year.

DAVE MCEACHREN from Grain Farmers of Ontario and Joe Hickson representing the Ontario Seed Growers Association were acclaimed to their director posi-



Retiring director and past chair John Maaskant addresses the audience after receiving an award in recognition of almost two decades of service to Farm & Food Care and its predecessor, Ontario Farm Animal Council.



Farm & Food Care executive director Kelly Daynard.

Christian Farmers’ Federation of Ontario board member Ed Scharinga were elected in the at-large category.

Long-time directors and past chairs Bruce Christie and John Maaskant, who both also served on the board of FFCO predecessor organization Ontario Farm Animal Council, stepped down from the board, as did Heather Copland of Grober Nutrition and Sandi Brock of Ontario Sheep Farmers.

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