



Farm Animal Care & Farm Environment Advisory Councils Newsletter

SUMMER 2018 ISSUE

Fire Awareness

Barn fires are an important animal welfare issue impacting farmers and the public perception of farming in Ontario. Financial losses from barn fires in Ontario have exceeded \$100 million over the last four years in structures alone, not including animal and production losses. This is a significant loss to the productive capacity of the industry, and an animal welfare issue that erodes public trust in Ontario agriculture. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) estimates that 40% of barn fires are the result of faulty electrical systems, for example, corroded electrical connectors. The risk of electrical fires can be reduced by replacing worn and weathered connectors with the new standard NEMA 4 water-proof connectors on fixtures like fans and heaters. Farm & Food Care Ontario along with commodity organizations, fire departments and insurance companies have been working to help address this problem. A new resource has been developed that highlights [ten ways to reduce the risk of barn fire](#).

CAP funding application: Livestock emergency preparedness

Farm fires and livestock transportation accidents are two of the most important animal welfare issues impacting farmers and public perception of farming in Ontario. With the support of several members, Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) has submitted an application for CAP funding for a project addressing gaps in these areas. The proposed project has two parts; training sessions for first responders and truck drivers in responding to accidents involving livestock trailers; and an awareness and education campaign directed at farmers on strategies that reduce the risks of farm fires. FFCO is continuing to look for project partners and steering committee members with experience in fire prevention or livestock transport. For more information, contact Program Manager [Bruce Kelly](#).

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UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Joint Council Meeting
September 19, 2018
Victoria East Golf Club, Guelph, ON

Farm & Food Care Annual Gala
Nov 1, 2018
Delta Hotel, Guelph, ON

Farm & Food Care Annual Meeting
April 10, 2019
Country Heritage Park, Milton, ON





PMRA pesticide re-evaluation

Caleigh Irwin, Manager of Crop Protection with the Canadian Horticulture Council (CHC), gave a presentation to the Farm Environment Advisory Council at its latest meeting on June 12. Irwin provided a summary of the presentation below:

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) regulates all crop protection products in Canada. This includes the registration of new products as well as the re-evaluation of all current active ingredients, leading to an ever-increasing workload.

Based on these re-evaluations, the PMRA has been deregistering pesticides largely due to perceived risks to the environment (e.g. pollinators), or human health (e.g. post-application worker exposure). Post-application worker exposure is an area that the CHC is especially focused on, as eight essential Group M fungicides are currently under (or concluding) re-evaluation. CHC is working with the PMRA and other critical stakeholders to find, submit, or generate data that would both support the safety of workers and permit continued use of essential crop protection products.

Final decisions have been published for captan, chlorothalonil, metiram, and mancozeb. Many uses have been restricted or cancelled, but CHC is hard at work to ensure that the PMRA is making science-based decisions that enable growers to continue to provide fresh, healthy, locally-produced fruits and vegetables for Canadian consumers. For more information contact the [CHC](#), [Flowers Canada \(Ontario\) Inc.](#), the [Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association](#) or [Farm & Food Care Ontario](#).



Resources for dry or extreme weather

It's proving to be a hot dry summer and considerations should be made regarding water, shade and ventilation. FFCO has received calls about how to best manage livestock during extended periods of hot and dry weather. Water and regular observation of animal activity is key to good management for all livestock but particularly cattle, sheep, dairy and goats. Poultry and swine housed inside barns depend on mechanical ventilation systems which should be inspected to ensure output is at full capacity. Daily routines can be adjusted to include early morning feedings and avoiding any unnecessary movement during warmest parts of the day. Like ventilation, water supply equipment is critical during this time of year and producers must monitor fans, air inlets and drinkers to ensure proper functioning. Repairs should be made immediately. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture has collaborated with commodity groups and Farm & Food Care Ontario on [resources](#) that cover management under periods of extreme weather including access to alternative feed for livestock.

Updated land lease agreement brochure now available

The Farmland Agreements brochure and website have been updated and re-designed to help landowners and farmers have constructive conversations about the relationship between land rental and long term soil health. Updated resources at the site include more information on how to establish pricing formulas and how to make accommodations for planting pasture, installing fencing or other capital investments. By increasing the length and viability of farmland rental agreements, we can improve the long term economic returns for both the farmer and the landowner, while building healthier soils that can be better farmed into the future. You can find the new brochure [here](#).

Discovery Farms®

Discovery Farms® Wisconsin gave a presentation to the joint councils at the latest meeting on June 12th. Discovery Farms® is a research farm co-operative that develops on-farm, systems-oriented research that examines the economic and environmental effects of agricultural practices based on a diverse group of farming operations. The goal is to educate and improve communications among the agricultural community, consumers, researchers and policymakers to better identify and implement effective environmental management practices that are compatible with profitable agriculture. Discovery Farms® includes farmers throughout the leadership structure, to help identify program priorities and select research locations. Discovery Farms® has cooperatives in three American states and there is considerable interest in Ontario, where there is growing pressure to recognize and manage water quality impacts resulting from agricultural activities. This research focuses on farm and field scale water quality information under real world conditions – examining the impacts of different cropping, tillage and nutrient application practices to provide practical, credible, site-specific information to enable better farm management. The joint councils decided that Farm & Food Care Ontario would continue to meet with commodity groups and OMAFRA to determine whether there is interest in establishing a similar program in Ontario.

[Learn more about Discovery Farms®](#)

Peer to Peer Nutrient Response

Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) was a member of the Peer-to-Peer nutrient response pilot in 2018, a commodity-based program designed to raise awareness about the risks associated with applying nutrients to frozen or snow-covered ground and following up on reported incidences in the Lake Erie watershed. Additionally, Farm & Food Care provides administrative support to the Peer to Peer group, manages funding and produces year-end reports.

In 2018, the team followed up with farmers on 18 reported incidences and found that the most common explanations for spreading during the winter period were that:

- It is convenient to spread during winter period (work load management);
- The farm lacks sufficient manure storage capacity; or
- A general belief amongst some farmers that winter spreading reduces soil compaction

FFCO has successfully secured \$72,000 from Environment Canada over the next two years for this program to continue. In 2019, the program will include more comprehensive incident reports, targeted communications addressing the misconceptions above, and increased efforts to reiterate that the risk of runoff is extremely high – especially towards the latter half of winter.

For more information on program findings or for presentation materials, please contact [Bruce Kelly](#).

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