

Farm Animal Care & Farm Environment Advisory Councils Newsletter

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UPCOMING DATES

June 24, 2020
Council Meeting
(COVID-19 Tentative)

COVID-19

In February, the impacts of COVID-19 seemed so far away but in the last month, we have seen it sweep around the globe threatening our families, businesses and social structures. Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) has been in continuous communication with its members including commodity groups, agribusinesses and general farm organizations as everyone wrestles with ways to best help their producers. Collectively, those members are communicating with the government to highlight issues faced by farmers including financial needs, the temporary foreign worker program and the importance of food processors and government inspectors to our food system.

The bright spot to all of this, though, may be the renewed appreciation by consumers for their food systems and an awareness of the work farmers do in support of all Canadians.

Like many of Ontario's agricultural organizations, FFCO is supporting social distancing and slow the spread of COVID-19. Until further notice, FFCO's office has temporarily closed and all employees are working from home offices on projects that will take place later in the year.



Farm & Food Care's 2019
Year In Review is now
available, to read
the full report click [here](#).



Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS Bill - 136)

In January, the councils heard an update on the PAWS Act from Chief Inspector Paula Milne. The PAWS Act has temporary regulations in place and industry consultations on the final regulations were scheduled for late spring, but are now on hold. According to livestock commodity groups and contacts at the Solicitor Generals office, there have been few cases involving farm animals in the first few months. Inspectors are reported to be well-trained and have worked with commodity animal care specialists on each case.



Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act (Bill -156)

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) reports that the Act Now website received over 8,600 letters from farmers in support of the new legislation. The legislation passed on the second reading and was scheduled for review at the committee level on March 27 and 30, but is now on hold. The OFA and livestock commodity groups are prepared to present when the government reopens.

Livestock Emergency Project

This fall, FFCO will be offering full-day, Livestock Truck Emergency training sessions for first responders and interested groups. Additionally, FFCO continues to offer a one hour Farm Fire Awareness presentation for relevant groups including farmers, insurance staff and first responders, by request. For more information, contact bruce@farmfoodcare.org



Soil Health Project

FFCO is working on a yearlong project with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) that is focused on soil health and manure spreading best practices. The project includes the development of twelve soil health videos and 6 videos focused on strip-tillage. Topics including soil testing, crop rotation, cover crops, erosion and remediation will be covered. The videos will be developed throughout the summer and will be available on the FFCO website in early winter.

In addition, the project includes a manure stewardship awareness campaign under the Timing Matters banner. The campaign will promote manure as a valuable nutrient source and encourage year-round manure management planning. Significant effort has been put forth by FFCO's Environmental Assistant, Amy Reymer, into creating unique, timely and informative content for social media. Farmers can find tips for responsible manure management, informative articles and contact information for local Certified Nutrient Management Consultants through Twitter [@TimingMattersON](https://twitter.com/TimingMattersON) or on the [website](https://www.farmfoodcare.org/timing-matters/). A series of complimentary articles were also published in the farm media as part of the overall campaign. The goal is for Timing Matters to be a recognized leader in manure stewardship information in Ontario.

Peer to Peer Network received only 29 reports of manure spreading on frozen or snow-covered fields in 2019. A mild, wet winter meant fewer windows for winter applications, and the Peer to Peer network is optimistic that a better understanding of the risks of winter spreading has discouraged this practice further. Misconceptions around compaction, secondary barns with limited manure storage capacity and difficult fall weather were among the reported rationales for winter manure spreading. The Timing Matters campaign offers key messages, resources and solutions for farmers faced with difficult circumstances around manure storage and application. FFCO appreciates the support of commodity partners in helping share key messages around manure stewardship.



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