

For immediate release

New pilot program aims to better connect consumers to Ontario's food value chain

OFA and FFCO partner to launch new "Source Local" initiative

GUELPH, ON [November 22, 2021] – Today, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) launched a new public trust / consumer outreach program, in partnership with Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO). The announcement was made at OFA's 2021 Annual General Meeting, held virtually.

Titled *Source Local*, the year-long pilot project aims to inspire support for food and farming, beginning with local community activations, followed by larger events in urban and suburban centres. The program will also focus on strong communications through both traditional and digital media opportunities. The project's goal is to connect Ontarians to farmers, families and those directly involved in Ontario's food value chain.

Everyone has a reason for the businesses they support, the products they purchase and the food they eat. Ontarians make decisions every day that are based on their own values and principles, and it is our intention to connect with consumers over these shared values. Through connection, we hope to create a better understanding and appreciation for Ontario's farmers and the agri-food value chain. Together, we can connect with Ontarians and showcase the best our industry has to offer.

The partnership between the OFA and FFCO builds on the work that the two organizations have done together for decades. In recent years, partnerships have included shared exhibits at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Speak Up and media training sessions for farmers across the province and collaboration for many initiatives, including Six by Sixteen, Always in Season and local events like Breakfast on the Farm.

The organizations also enjoy strong relationships with others across the entire agri-food sector. Embarking on this public trust work will make great use of these long-established connections and successful track record. Partnering on this campaign will help build authentic, personal and emotional connections between Ontarians and the agri-food sector. It will also leverage the strength of OFA's grassroots membership across Ontario.

"Both organizations are excited for the opportunity to connect our province's farmers and food producers with fellow Ontarians over shared values rooted in tradition and family," stated OFA President Peggy Brekveld. "Farmers are committed to producing fresh, healthy, safe and affordable foods for their own family, friends, community and country. Now is the perfect time to connect over our mutual love of Ontario grown and produced products. We all have an important role to play in the agri-food supply chain. Whether you identify as a consumer or producer – we all have a reason to be #ontagproud."

“This partnership is a great opportunity to build on work that both organizations engage in on behalf of the province’s farmers,” said FFCO Chair Bonnie den Haan. “We know that only two percent of Ontario’s population is involved in food production these days and with so few connected to food production, it’s understandable that consumers want to know more about how their food is grown and produced.”

For more details, visit sourcelocalontario.ca.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, representing 38,000 farm families across the province. As a dynamic farmer-led organization based in Guelph, the OFA works to represent and champion the interests of Ontario farmers through government relations, farm policy recommendations, research, lobby efforts, community representation, media relations and more. OFA is the leading advocate for Ontario’s farmers and is Ontario’s voice of the farmer. For more information, visit ofa.on.ca.

Farm & Food Care Ontario is a coalition of farmers, agriculture and food partners proactively working together to ensure public trust and confidence in food and farming. Farm & Food Care provides a coordinated approach and credible information on food and farming in Ontario. For more information, visit www.FarmFoodCareON.org.

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