

Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC)



News Release

For Immediate Release

March 29, 2011

Ontario Budget Delivers New Risk Management Program for Ontario Farmers

(Guelph ON, March 29, 2011) – The establishment of a risk management program (RMP) was the single most important action the provincial government could have taken in today's budget, say farmers representing the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition (OASC). The new program will help ensure the economic success of Ontario's non-supply managed commodities, which include beef, pork, veal, lamb, fruits, vegetables and grains and oilseeds.

OASC leaders praised the provincial government for delivering this much-needed tool to Ontario farmers, but also renewed their call for the federal government to join in the program.

"The Premier, Minister of Agriculture, and Finance Minister have earned our thanks as the establishment of RMP will be a critical tool to give our farmers the predictability, stability and bankability they need to move their businesses forward," says Bette Jean Crews, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

"Today, the provincial government demonstrated its commitment to Ontario's farmers," adds Henry Stevens, President of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. "RMP was by far the best solution that offered farmers the support they have been requesting and the most hope for their future."

OASC members will press all federal candidates to follow the province's lead and provide their share of financial support for the RMP so that farmers would receive the benefits of a fully funded program. A pilot risk management program has been funded for the last four years by the provincial government for Ontario's grains and oilseeds sector.

“Our farmers have benefited greatly from the original provincial pilot program, but it’s now also time for the federal government to step up and support this initiative,” says Leo Guilbeault, Chair of Ontario Grains and Oilseeds. “The establishment of a permanent program will give our farmers the confidence they need to make long-term investments necessary to succeed.”

“The fact that the provincial government decided to move forward on RMP during these tough fiscal times, and without the participation of the federal government, makes this announcement that much more significant to Ontario farmers; we look forward to working with the minister over the coming months to finalize program design,” adds Wilma Jeffray, Chair of Ontario Pork.

Ontario Pork and Ontario Cattlemen’s Association united in a professional public affairs campaign to fully communicate to all elected members of government the importance of this program and what it means to hog and beef farmers.

“This announcement is a game-changer for Ontario farmers who today have good reason to be optimistic about their future,” says Mark Wales, Chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association Safety Nets Committee.

The Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition was formed to help secure sustainable, bankable and predictable risk management programming for non-supply managed farmers in Ontario. Coalition members include the Ontario Cattlemen’s Association, the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association, Ontario Veal, Ontario Grains & Oilseeds, Ontario Pork and Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, together with the Christian Farmers’ Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

-30-

For more information:

OFA:	Bette Jean Crews	613-921-0597
CFFO:	Henry Stevens	519-837-1620
Grains and Oilseeds:	Leo Guilbeault	519-796-2289
Veal:	Judy Dirksen	519-338-3083
Cattle:	LeaAnne Hodgins	519-824-0334; cell: 519-767-8634
Pork:	Mary Jane Quinn	519-767-4600 x 1303
Fruit and Vegetable:	Art Smith	519-763-6160 ext 115; cell: 519-831-8770
Sheep:	Murray Hunt	519-836-0043 ext. 23; cell: 519-766-2589