



For immediate release

Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020: Protecting Ontario Farms and the Food System

GUELPH, ON [December 4, 2020] — More than ever, we understand the critical importance of maintaining a steady and reliable food supply and protecting the safety of those who feed us. Today, the Ontario government announced the proclamation of the *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020*. Beginning December 5, 2020, the *Act* will protect Ontario's food supply chain, from farm to table, without infringing on the right to peacefully protest and, in conjunction with the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act (PAWS), 2019*, ensure animals are protected and cared for properly.

Ontario's farm and commodity groups applaud the efforts of the Hon. Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ontario government in working diligently to support the needs of Ontario's food producers. The *Act* demonstrates to trespassers, activists, law enforcement and the Ontario justice system that the protection of farms, families, agri-food employees, animals and the food system is of the highest priority. The *Act* strikes a balance in enhancing the safety and protection of the farming and food industry while recognizing and respecting a citizen's rights to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

To be perfectly clear, Ontario's farm and commodity organizations are aligned in having zero tolerance for animal abuse. Concerns around animal abuse, and the ability and obligation to report such actions are entrenched within the *PAWS Act*. Farmers are highly regulated, following strict codes of conduct to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all farm animals. Animal welfare is integral to the care they provide for their animals. The *Security from Trespass*

and Protecting Food Safety Act complements the *PAWS Act*, ensuring the highest standards of animal care, protecting people, animals and the province's food supply while respecting lawful and peaceful protest.

The agri-food industry in Ontario contributes more than \$47 billion to the province's annual GDP and employs more than 860,000 Ontarians. Workers across agriculture and the food sector — including farmers and farm workers, transporters, abattoirs, processing plant employees, food service and retail outlets — have experienced threats and harassment from activists seeking to end their industry. These events pose severe risks to human and animal health and welfare and threaten the integrity of the food system by breaching biosecurity protocols. Unwanted visitors and trespassers can have devastating impacts on the health and safety of farms, families, businesses and livestock. In Canada, 97 per cent of farms are family farms — not only a place of business, but also homes where children are raised, and family and friends are welcomed.

Ontario farm families depend on the safety and security of their farms to raise livestock, and grow and produce food to maintain a strong, reliable food supply. On behalf of all Ontario farmers, processing facilities and agri-food businesses, we'd like to express our sincere appreciation to the provincial government for protecting farms and food safety. The *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* ensures Ontario's food value chain system is safeguarded, by strengthening protections for farm families, agri-food employees, and animals while maintaining the right to lawful protest.

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