



LONG-TERM THINKING FOR TODAY'S ISSUES

The Honorable Ernie Hardeman
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
1 Stone Road West, Guelph, ON N1G 4Y2
Delivered via email to minister.omafra@ontario.ca

June 26, 2019

Dear Minister Hardeman,

I am contacting you to express the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario's (CFFO's) support for the detailed June 3, 2019, submission to you by the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers (OPVG). As you know, CFFO is an Accredited Farm Organization representing the interests of over 4,000 farm families in Ontario who are called to the vocation of farming. CFFO policy promotes economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable farming.

As such, we are approaching you on this matter because we believe that the proposal to move towards a direct contracting model for processing tomatoes, and considerations for using this model for other processing vegetable crops, will not support sustainable farming. **Given the market structure, direct contracting will undoubtedly damage the ability of OPVG farmers, including many CFFO farmers, in achieving sustainable business goals.**

Fundamental to an efficiently operating market is equal bargaining power when it comes to negotiating contracts. Given the reality that there are very few processors and many growers, there is unequal bargaining power at the outset. Hence, OPVG can level out the playing ground by acting for growers in negotiating for them collectively. Furthermore, in order to achieve the best deal for all concerned in the short and long runs, every single buyer and seller must be bound by the rules.

We encourage a process whereby OPVG can genuinely and effectively enter into consultations with government if there are issues that require solutions. What we are hearing from OPVG is that their growers support their efforts and request an open and productive dialogue with government. In the interests of the growers, we encourage you to support their efforts to market their produce in an orderly and fair manner that supports their long-run sustainability.

We have recently requested a meeting with you to discuss the matter further, and as always, we look forward to an opportunity to respectfully offer our insight into this matter.

Sincerely,

Clarence Nywening, President
Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
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cc: Dave Hope, Chair OPVG & CFFO Executive Board