

Message from PCFA President Joanne Foster



A quick introduction...my name is Joanne Foster. I'm married to Dave, we have 3 children, one of whom still helps out when needed at home. We live and farm on the home farm, just north of Kirkton in the municipality of West Perth. We have cash crop, contract feeder pigs and do some market gardening.

As I sit and write this it appears that winter has come again. The weather this winter has been challenging, spring had tried to make an early presence but the snow has come back. I suppose, after all, we do need to remind ourselves that we do live in Ontario....winter happens. Just like the weather, farming has many issues. Here in Perth County as farmers, we are not immune to that be it animal rights, Municipal, provincial or federal issues, animal health issues, stray voltage. neonic issues, weather related issues and so on. Perth County Federation of Agriculture has worked on many

issues in the past and is continuing to do so. We have various working committees and have input into various issues be it the G2G Guelph to Goodrich Trail or the County Official Plan. On our local PCFA board we have board members who are familiar with many of these issues and can help point you in the right direction with whatever information you are needing help with. There is no lack of issues to deal with.

In the past Perth County Federation of Agriculture has supported The Perth County Junior Farmers, 4-H, Farm Safety and the Huron Perth Ag & Water festival (for grade school children) to name a few. Most recently PCFA hosted a successful Perth County Harvest Gala where PCFA awarded an Agricultural Recognition Award. In the past this award was given out at our annual meeting. We felt this award was worthy of an evening all of its own. The Perth Harvest Gala focused not only on celebration but also supporting local food and business. The services and food for the Gala were all either Perth County sourced, or product of Ontario. I hope to see you all at our Harvest Gala this fall.

Did you know that PCFA is now also on the social media band wagon? Check out our facebook page. Look up Perth County Federation of Agriculture, and while you are checking out the page, remember to give it a like! Feel free to post/share any ag related news/information on our page.

Would you be willing to help PCFA go green? If so, could you please provide our Secretary, Agnes Denham with your email address in order to receive an electronic version of this mail out.

Again, I would like to invite any of you to attend any of our local board meetings. They are usually held on the third Wednesday of every month. Information can be found on the website www.perthcountyfarmers.ca, the Rural Voice or you can call the office at 519-229-8866 for current dates and times.

One more thing, if you feel there are issues that we at PCFA should be working on, or want us to take the message forward to OFA, I encourage you to contact our office, any board member in your area, myself or the OFA member service rep, Margaret Vincent. All contact information can be found in the brochure included with this mailing.



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 notices of member meetings and notices of PCFA events.

You can unsubscribe at anytime.

PCFA Position on Goderich to Guelph Rail Trail

Over the past couple of years, the Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) has been following the Goderich to Guelph Rail Trail Inc. (G2G), in connection with their plans to open the former rail line as a recreational trail. OFA members who have property neighbouring the proposed trail have raised concerns to PCFA about the potential for trespassing, biosecurity concerns, fencing and the ability to cross the trail to access lands. In an attempt to address these issues with G2G, PCFA along with adjacent farmland property owners agreed to have representation on a joint Perth and Huron Counties Working Committee.

The Working Committee met several times to discuss many issues. PCFA brought our members concerns forward to the Committee. A final document was developed outlining possible solutions to the challenges the trail proposal presents. The document was presented at Public Open Houses in Milverton and Blyth in November 2015. Questions, concerns and comments were to be addressed by appropriate members of G2G Inc. and where necessary the County of Perth. A number of the questions have yet to be answered.

PCFA will not be able to consider a position on the G2G trail proposal until the questions raised by our membership and neighbouring landowners are answered. It concerns PCFA that our participation in the Working Committee has been characterized as support for the proposed G2G trail, without our position being developed.

Impediments to the Growth of Agriculture

The topic of municipal impediments was recently identified as an issue by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) members that approached the Perth County Federation of Agriculture. In response, the delegates representing Perth County to the OFA Convention presented the topic as a resolution, asking for OFA to collect examples of municipal level impediments to growth, from its membership. This resolution was supported by the Convention delegates.

OFA held their first 2016 Policy Advisory Council (PAC) meeting on February 4. One of the main topics of discussed was identifying municipal level impediments to the growth of the Ontario Agri-food sector. Several barriers were identified by the 104-member PAC, that impede agricultural growth in Ontario's municipalities. Three of these areas identified were planning, economic development and community engagement. The number one challenge identified by OFA members is the lack of understanding of farm practices and the realities of living near farming neighbours. There is a role for farmers and municipalities to make a difference on this issue. Farmers have an opportunity to advocate and share the good news story of what modern farming is today. Municipal leaders have a responsibility to learn and understand what the agricultural industry is all about – an industry that drives our rural economy and feeds our province. OFA will be developing a recommended "best practices" checklist for municipalities to encourage local agricultural support.

Many policies impacting the agri-food sector are established by provincial and federal governments. But there are still plenty of decisions being made at municipal levels that can support agriculture. Land use policies, taxation and development charges, financial support and community engagement are all opportunities

What does your Farm Business

Registration fee to OFA do?



- **Lobbying.** The board and staff of OFA continue to work for farm members on numerous issues faced today
- **Member Assistance.** Staff from both head office and in the field work to assist members on a variety of topics.
- **Farm Property Tax Rate.** By having a FBR number tied to your farm properties, you keep a "farm tax rate" on your farmland. This rate is 25% of a residential rate.
- **Local Level Federation Support.** A portion of your membership is shared at the local level for projects. Your local federation also works on your behalf for area specific issues
- **Benefit partner opportunities.** Not only do these partnerships help save you money, they earn money to further support the activities of OFA

These features among others cost you 53.5¢/day in 2015, per membership.

For more information please contact your local Member Service Representative Margaret Vincent at 1-800-511-1135



OFA 5 Current Issues

Climate Change

Cap and Trade with offsets. Focus on offsets because of agriculture ability to sequester carbon.

Great Lakes Act

Focus on phosphorus load of Lake Erie with method for proper methods of meeting target

Infrastructure

Natural Gas, high speed internet.

Ontario Trails Strategy

Making sure farmers and property are protected.

Waste-free Act

This new act is meant to replace the waste reduction act