

2021 OSCIA *Resolution Package*



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Resolution #3 – Prescott SCIA – Producer Crisis support program

Background:

To present to the Provincial government to initiate and fund a program to help and support FARMERS IN CRISIS. A system exists in many regions of Quebec bordering the Eastern Ontario region and is showing extraordinary results to help battle MENTAL HEALTH issues, accident issues, employee issues, psychological support, and suicidal issues on the farm. The program hires Agricultural social workers by region to go up and down Concession roads to speak with farmers and get them to talk about their day-to-day challenges.

WHEREAS Mental Health issues are present everywhere in Agriculture in Ontario, and;

WHEREAS producers are somewhat isolated on their respective farms, and;

WHEREAS it may help producers to express their challenges by hiring social workers with an agricultural background to visit growers on their farms to bring a true discussion on Mental Health issues, and;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the OSCIA bring the Provincial government's attention to the program in Quebec where agricultural social workers are hired to help support producers locally.

MOVED BY: Warren Schneckenburger

SECONDED BY: Marc Saumure (Prescott SCIA)

CARRIED

SEND TO: Honorable Lisa Thompson, Minister, OMAFRA

COPY TO: CAMH, Works Stress & Health Program

Mary Mannella, Director (Acting) Mental Health and Addiction programs, OMAFRA.

Micaela Braaten, Do More Ag

Dr. Andria Jones-Bitton, Associate Professor, Department of Population Medicine,
Director of Well-Being Programming, OVC, UofG

RESPONSE FROM: HONORABLE LISA THOMPSON, MINISTER, OMAFRA

Thank you for your kind words as I begin my new role as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and for sharing the resolution from your annual meeting about the importance of mental health in agriculture in Ontario.

Your dedication to farmers and their families, especially during these difficult times, is not going unnoticed. I very much appreciate hearing from OMAFRA stakeholders and I appreciate you and your organization for being a strong advocate for the sector.

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This matter is very important to me personally and as Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Bringing mental health issues forward for open discussion is so important to help remove the stigma that exists and to let our farmers know we are here to help when times are tough.

You may already know that, during 2020, my ministry developed a toolkit of [resources for the agriculture sector](#) that was shared widely. Included in this toolkit are a number of mental health resources including the [Mental Health for Farmers – First Aid Kit](#) and [AbilitiCBT](#), a government-sponsored mental health program. I encourage you to share these widely.

The governments of Canada and Ontario recently announced that they are investing in new initiatives to support and promote mental health in Ontario's farming and rural communities. Three initiatives will receive over \$430,000 in funding as the governments continue to focus on ensuring farmers, agri-food workers, and rural communities have access to the mental health support they need. These projects will provide more data on farmer and rural mental health in Ontario to ensure available supports meet unique community needs.

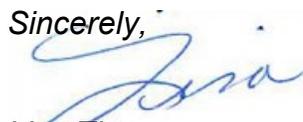
Ontario is also helping the sector through farm financial assessments, enhanced risk management programs, and the Ontario, [Agricultural Information Contact Centre \(OMAFRA\)](#) where comprehensive support information is available.

I have shared your letter with staff in my ministry and asked them to gather more information about the program in Quebec. I look forward to learning more about the results you've mentioned and if a similar program can be implemented in Ontario.

I have also shared your resolution regarding crop damage due to trespassing with my ministry staff as well as the Solicitor General of Ontario, the Honourable Sylvia Jones. As the Ministry of the Solicitor General is responsible for the Trespass to Property Act as well as enforcement, they may be able to provide more information.

Again, thank you for sharing the resolutions from your annual meeting and thank you for your kind welcome.

Sincerely,



*Lisa Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs*

*Look forward
to working with
you!*

COVID-19 Reminders

- For vaccination booking details visit: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>
- Follow your local public health/safety measures: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/zones-and-restrictions>
- Practice physical distancing – stay 2 metres away from others in public
- Get the facts - www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread

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