



NORTHUMBERLAND CENTRAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TOWN OF COBOURG · HAMILTON TOWNSHIP · ALNWICK/HALDIMAND TOWNSHIP

For Immediate Release

NCCofC Seeks to put Agribusiness on the Provincial Table

Cobourg – April 14, 2016: The Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce has authored a policy resolution in support of agribusiness that will be presented to the membership of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

The Risk Management Program (RMP) was announced in the 2011 Ontario budget and is among the suite of business risk management (BRM) programs available to farmers in the Province of Ontario. The RMP responds to the well identified need for producers to manage the risks associated with the volatility of market prices for agricultural commodities. In a 2015 report commissioned by the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition, 62% of respondents reported that without RMP they would not be able to maintain current on-farm employment, and 36% of producers said that without RMP they may have downsized their operation or left the industry entirely.

Despite the demonstrated success of the RMP in mitigating the impact of these risks on Ontario farmers, the province capped contributions to the RMP at \$100 million per year in the 2012 Budget. That cap has limited access to the plan, undermined the confidence of producers and is a contributing factor in the ongoing and permanent loss of over 125,000 acres of Ontario farmland annually.

“Southern Ontario boasts well over half of Canada’s Class 1 soils, and a moderate climate that allows greater crop diversity than anywhere else in Canada” explained Rick Riley, Chair of the NCCofC Board of Directors, *“yet we continue to lose upwards of 350 acres of this non-renewable natural resource daily. At this rate, Ontario will lose the ability to be food self-sufficient in the next 20 years, and will become increasingly dependent on food imports, much to the detriment of the economy.”*

The Chamber proposes that raising the Risk Management cap of \$100 million to \$175 million over the next three years (\$25 million per year increase) will support the agricultural community by enabling a more adequate risk management capacity. The position is echoed by several organizations including the Beef Farmers of Ontario, the Grain Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, Ontario Pork, the Veal Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

Chamber President and CEO Kevin Ward will be presenting the proposed policy resolution to the delegates at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce’s Annual General Meeting in Oakville from April 28 through May 1.

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Contact:

Kevin Ward, President & CEO,
Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce
(905) 269-0607, kward@nccofc.ca

