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21. Issue – Safety-Net Payments and Beginning/Expanding Farmers

Whereas the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Hon. Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she “absolutely” wants to help the beginning and new-entrants to agriculture; and

Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

Whereas the Safety-Net payments (i.e. Ontario Cattle, Hog and Horticulture Payment (OCHHP)) are based on historical averages and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic Allowable Net Sales (ANS); and

Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and are being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory Safety-Net program or payment that meets their needs;

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to immediately adjust the Safety-Net payments made via OCHHP, to include beginning and expanding farmers and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers that have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments; thereby, preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector.

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