

OCA Welcomes Minister McMeekin as New Ontario Agriculture Minister

For Immediate Release

October 21, 2011 (Guelph, ON) – On behalf of Ontario's beef producers, the Board of Directors of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA) would like to extend a warm welcome to The Honourable Ted McMeekin, as he returns to Cabinet as Ontario's new Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The announcement was made yesterday at the Ontario Legislature, by Premier McGuinty.

Minister McMeekin was elected to the Ontario Legislature in 2000 and has served previously as the Minister of Consumer Services and most recently, as the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Training Colleges and Universities. His home riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale makes him a natural fit for the agricultural portfolio as he is well versed in issues facing rural Ontario.

"We look forward to fostering a great relationship with Minister McMeekin in the months to come. Ontario's agri-food sector is vital to this province and we look forward to open-dialogue discussions on the issues and challenges facing Ontario's beef producers," said Curtis Royal, OCA President. "There is a tremendous opportunity to expand the agri-food sector in this province, and with that expansion create significant employment opportunities for our fellow Ontarians."

2011 has been a positive year for the Ontario beef sector. In March of this year the McGuinty Government announced a new Risk Management Insurance Program for all non-supply managed commodities in Ontario. The implementation of this program was a top priority for Ontario beef farmers and will provide them with the tools they need to sustain their operations for years to come. The Ontario government also announced an increase to the Feeder Finance Co-operative Program this past summer. This much needed increase of funding to the program will ensure continued support for the cattle feeder sector in Ontario and will provide the resources to help young farmers establish themselves in the cattle industry.

"We are very pleased with the relationship we built with former Agricultural Minister, Carol Mitchell, and would like to thank her for her hard work and dedication in responding to our industry's needs. We wish her the best in her future endeavors and we look forward to building on our accomplishments with Minister McMeekin," added Royal.

OCA intends to meet with the new Minister and his staff as soon as possible to discuss plans for agriculture and the beef sector moving forward. OCA would also like to extend warm congratulations to all returning and newly elected Members of this 40th Ontario Parliament.

The Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA) is a grassroots organization representing 19,000 beef producers in the province and provides leadership to cattlemen from all sectors of the industry. OCA is involved in a wide range of issues that are of concern to Ontario's beef producers. These include industry sustainability, trade, animal health, environment and animal care. In addition, OCA works closely with other sectors of the agriculture and food industries on matters of mutual concern.

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