

# Ontario Federation of Agriculture

## *STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2010*



Ontario  
Federation of  
Agriculture

***The OFA is a farmer-led, dynamic, provincial advocate, working to represent the interests of its farm members to government.***



# THE WAY FORWARD

## *2007-2010 STRATEGIC PLAN*

This document represents the newest vision and direction of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture for the period 2007 to 2010.

The Strategic Plan renews our commitment to provide an excellent standard of service and programs designed to continuously meet the needs of our members.

We look forward to the continued implementation of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture's Strategic Plan. We will need your help and support to ensure that it succeeds.

*Neil Currie,  
General Manager*

*Bette Jean Crews  
President*

*Geri Kamenz,  
Past President*



# INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAN

The Strategic Plan for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture represents the Strategic Goals for change and the Action Plans for bringing about that change. This is an adaptive, non-static document subject to change with new and or additional input.

The plan is not a stand-alone document. It is designed to work in conjunction with each year's Operational and Marketing plans.

We will continue to reach out to our members in order to learn more about how our programs and services are being received and, how we can maximize our efforts to their full benefit.



STAYING FOCUSED

# *Mission Statement*

*The Ontario Federation of Agriculture  
will work collaboratively towards a  
profitable, sustainable future for  
Ontario farmers.*

*Note: The above noted Draft Mission Statement awaits the approval of the membership at the 2007 AGM.*



## PRINCIPLES, VALUES & BEHAVIOURS

### **PRINCIPLES and VALUES**

Professionalism and integrity united in the delivery of high value services and programs. Promoting common interests through collective action.

### **BEHAVIOURS**

The OFA continues to work effectively to ensure that its various publics and all levels of government address the concerns of Ontario farmers – our members.



# A LOOK INSIDE THE ASSOCIATION STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

## Strengths

1. A dedicated, hard working, professional and committed staff
2. A strong, recognized, credible, and respected brand image
3. A grass roots organization well supported by its 38,000 members
4. Well connected politically through its network
5. Trusted and respected through its long history in Ontario
6. Demonstrated leadership through its advocacy efforts



# A LOOK INSIDE THE ASSOCIATION STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

## **Weaknesses**

1. Advocacy tends to be more reactive than proactive
2. Messaging suffers from lack of clear planning
3. Too many issues to manage - clouds the focus
4. Pressures on financial stability compromise effectiveness
5. Communications (tools & delivery) inconsistent & unclear
6. All of the above contribute to membership disengagement

# A LOOK OUTSIDE THE ASSOCIATION OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

## Opportunities

1. Increase outreach to consumers, new urbanites/rural landowners
2. Improve relationships with current or new government
3. Improve media credibility with strategic marketing plan
4. Develop new strategic relationships with governments, commodities, corporations and bureaucrats
5. Increase revenue potential through new services & external fee for services to other organizations
6. Consolidate message and efforts with other similar organizations



# A LOOK OUTSIDE THE ASSOCIATION OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

## Threats

1. Changing farmer conditions, i.e. age, bigger farms, no time, high stress
2. Revenues threatened (OFA fees fixed) while costs rise
3. Consumer apathy to farm issues – farmer apathy to political process and advocacy organizations
4. Consumers uniformed/uneducated on farm/food issues
5. Farmers face globalization, high domestic standards, imports to Canada, international trade deals, etc.
6. Increased competition from new start-up organizations



## WHAT'S WORKING?

1. **Grass roots input = strong, trusted OFA image**
2. **OFA voice strengthened by comprehensive provincial policies and issue specific coalitions**
3. **Effective/efficient issue management and prompt responses to emerging issues**
4. **Excellent support services through access to staff and programs**
5. **Great reputation for quality trade/farm shows and programs**
6. **OFA strength is the network outreach**



## WHAT'S NOT WORKING?

1. **Resolution process** handicapped by weak data base (archives) & lack of reporting on progress, i.e. where are they now and what's in it for me.
2. **Inadequate communications** due to lack of planning, electronic connectivity to membership, inconsistent surveys
3. **Weakness in funding mechanism** stalls growth and value proposition
4. **Recruitment of directors** by sector, age, gender, skill sets etc. requires governance plan review
5. **Co-operation** between commodities needs work as does recognition of smaller commodity groups



## WHAT'S MISSING?

1. **Stronger HR function including annual staff performance evaluations, peer reviews, performance increases etc.**
2. **Pride in sense of accomplishment – celebrations of successes, credit for work well done – tooting our own horn**
3. **Training plan for directors and staff - data bank of director skills, abilities, knowledge areas**
4. **Internal communications tools, i.e. internal newsletter**
5. **A clear well articulated vision/definition of OFA's role**
6. **Funding for value added services to members, i.e. legal, accounting, hydro-geologist, political coordinator**



## WHAT'S WORKING BUT ADDING NO VALUE?

1. **Board of Directors too large** - some directors not contributing
2. **The AGM/** two days of annual convention
3. **Membership benefits** are comparatively unattractive – have little uptake and offer disproportionate value
4. The **committee process** generally, including some standing committees
5. Little assistance to or mining of **non-members**
6. Necessary **liaison with some commodity groups**



# TAKING ACTION

## ACTION PLANS

- **Turning objectives into reality will be achieved by implementing the Action Plans listed on the following pages.**
- **Implementation will in turn, be accomplished predominantly through OFA's staff with help, where appropriate, from the Board, committees, and task forces.**
- **These goals and action plans represent only another step in the continuous improvement process of the OFA.**
- **Strategic planning is not a one-time effort. Once goals are set, commitment must be maintained, progress monitored, and adjustments made until these objectives are reached.**



# AGRICULTURE'S BEST POLICY CHAMPIONS



# 1 ***OFA will be Ontario's leader in results-based advocacy, bringing high-value benefits and services to its members.***

<h2><b>The Actions:</b></h2> <p>Members' interests will be advanced through an effective policy committee structure enhanced by developing and attracting high quality volunteers to the Board.</p>	<h2><b>Who's Accountable?</b></h2> <p>The Structure Review process may provide a reform plan for committee operations. Regardless, the committee process will be addressed directly by the Board, which remains accountable as committees serve the Board.</p>
<p>Policy/advocacy work can only flourish in a "value-to-members" environment. New systems will be designed to ensure that advocacy takes this philosophy into account before during and after the work is undertaken.</p>	<h2><b>How do we Measure?</b></h2> <p>Regular reviews of policy status with reports of success or closure carried in regular member communications. All policy work summarized in annual report at the AGM.</p>
<p>The status of all policy work will be tracked to be clear on where it is in the loop and what remains to be done to ensure success or closure. Regular reports to the membership on that status will elevate credibility and help members to better understand the 'value proposition'.</p>	<h2><b>When will it be done?</b></h2> <p>New systems for policy work adopted by end of 2007. Reporting mechanisms to commence 2008 fiscal year.</p>



# OFA – ONTARIO'S VOICE OF AGRICULTURE



## # 2 *The membership, governments, media and the general public expect a singular voice to speak on behalf of agriculture – the OFA is that voice.*

<h3><b>The Actions:</b></h3> <p>The OFA will increase its profile and strengthen its voice by implementing a strategic marketing and communications plan geared to turning up the volume on critical farm issues.</p>	<h3><b>Who's Accountable?</b></h3> <p>Senior administration working through/with the Marketing and Communications Task Force. By connecting this plan to the Strategic Plan overall accountability rests with the Board of Directors.</p>
<p>OFA media will be improved by establishing relationships with key medias in the province; by making OFA spokespersons available to that media on a 24/7 basis and by enhancing the media skills of OFA spokespersons through professional development and advanced media training.</p>	<h3><b>How do we Measure?</b></h3> <p>Documented evidence of established media relations in combination with regular reporting devices on media hits, stories, op/ed pieces, government reports referencing OFA's efforts.</p>
<p>Communications to members will be made better through, surveys, farm shows, member benefit promotion and the advancement of electronic media with improved website linkages.</p>	<h3><b>When will it be done?</b></h3> <p>Marketing and Communications Plan to be implemented no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> 2008. Media relations and electronic communication's strategy can be implemented immediately.</p>



# TODAY'S LEADERS FOCUSED ON TOMORROW



**# 3 *OFA will provide services and programs specifically designed for young farmers and new entrants to the industry.***

## **The Actions:**

The OFA will design specific programs targeted to young farmers and new entrants to farming in support of their ambitions.

A survey of the new demographics of farming in Ontario to be undertaken or secured in order to determine where best to apply resources.

The organization's governance structures, committee makeup, advocacy efforts and communications must all reflect this demographic reality.

## **Who's Accountable?**

Senior administration with help from a Board of Directors' appointed Task Force that includes representation from junior farmers.

## **How do we Measure?**

By establishing today's numbers against the results of the demographic survey targets, growth can be monitored and adjusted year over year.

## **When will it be done?**

The survey can be conducted prior to year end 2007. Structural changes that reflect the new demographic can be staged in starting in the new year 2008.



# VOLUNTEER DRIVEN BY PEOPLE WHO CARE



**# 4 *By focusing on its human resources and operational excellence, the OFA will be the best employer in Ontario agriculture!***

## **The Actions:**

We will undertake a systems review of our HR policies and procedures to ensure a respectful workplace, clear job objectives for employees, identify training needs and establish regular performance feedback.

An internal review of services such as the budgeting process, the committee structure and tech. support will enable us to achieve our people objectives.

An industry-wide comparative analysis of best practices in the people management area will help to sharpen our focus.

## **Who's Accountable?**

Senior management with input and oversight from the Executive officers.

## **How do we Measure?**

Through the development of internal staff surveys and benchmarking. Peer to peer reviews of personal performance and/or 360 degree reviews will help to achieve better operational efficiencies.

## **When will it be done?**

HR Review guidelines as well as internal operations review to be in place by the end of 2007. Industry comparisons and best practices review by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2008.



# OFA GROWS STRONGER AS RELATIONSHIPS EXPAND



**# 5 *OFA will build effective relationships with local federations governments, commodity groups and associations to improve our ability to advocate and affect legislative and regulatory change for agriculture in Ontario.***

## **The Actions:**

The OFA will undertake a review of which key partners it needs to formalize strategic alliances with. These alliances can take the shape of Collaborative Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding etc.

Our best partners can also be our best sponsors. Efforts will be taken to maximize OFA's sponsorship opportunities with an eye towards strengthening its relationships and its bottom line.

Working collaboratively with other organizations can raise the profile on issues and/or increase the uptake of offered programs and services. The OFA will seek out opportunities for joint ventures.

## **Who's Accountable?**

The Board of directors with input from senior administration.

## **How do we Measure?**

By cataloguing our current list of key alliances and stakeholders, we can begin to build a data base of critical relationships on which to grow. Establish targets & monitor for progress.

## **When will it be done?**

Partner analysis can commence immediately with sponsorships and joint ventures to be completed by June 2008.



# ACHIEVING FISCAL FITNESS



## # 6 *The OFA will achieve financial stability through self-managed fees & the effective management of other revenue generators.*

### **The Actions:**

We will undertake a review of OFA's legislative obligations and the regulations that follow in an effort to disentangle revenue restrictions to our fee base. Any fee increases must be accompanied by an effective communications strategy.

In concert with the new strategic plan, the OFA will implement a Five Year Financial Plan in order to better guide the organizations future. Cost mitigation can only be achieved in relationship to how they (costs) impact services to the member.

Current and future decisions on programs and services will be based on a "value-to-member" principle always with an eye on the bottom line. Programs and services currently offered will be analyzed against these principles.

### **Who's Accountable?**

Senior administration in conjunction with a Board appointed delegation. Input from the Chair of Finance will provide clarity and professional oversight to negotiations and planning.

### **How do we Measure?**

By designing and implementing a cost benefit analysis formula against all programs and services. Annual net financial results will be reflected through changes to the funding formula and membership uptake.

### **When will it be done?**

Implementation to begin immediately following the conclusion of fiscal year end 2007.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The foregoing action plans indicate what must be done if we are to take steps toward improving the OFA. They do not indicate in all cases how each of the elements of the plan are to be carried out. This will be determined by the appropriate groups, committees, boards and task forces along with the administrative staff of the OFA.

Each objective contains actions that define the next steps in the revitalization of OFA. Only total involvement by all stakeholders will ensure that these steps and the ones that follow are successful.

The Board of Directors and staff have accepted the challenge of leading efforts to implement this strategic action plan. Their commitment is shown in their declaration of support on the next page.

*“Many hands make light work”*



# THE BOARD'S COMMITTMENT



**As the elected leaders of the OFA Board, we agree to the following principles and actions in order to accomplish the objective of revitalizing the organization. We accept the responsibilities and roles of proactive leaders with a common goal and vision to secure the future of the OFA.**

**We, the Board of Directors, are committed in whole to the principles, actions and ideas outlined in this Strategic Plan.**

**We therefore will be:**

- **Active supporters of approved changes within the organization**
  - **Committed to prudent economic improvements for OFA**
  - **Ambassadors for OFA & active participants in its programs/activities**
  - **Open to all viewpoints and responsive to new, creative ideas**
  - **Encouraging customer and stakeholder input to guide our success**
- 