



**Ontario
Federation of
Agriculture**

President & Vice-President Candidate Profiles

Annual General Meeting 2014

Note: All Candidate Profiles have been listed in alphabetical order.

Keith Currie

Once again it is time for the Annual General meeting of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and I would like to welcome all delegates and visitors to Niagara Falls for the 2014 event.

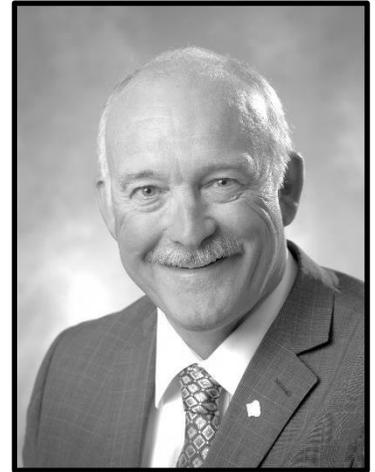
The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has a long proud history of acting and advocating on behalf of it's members and the farm community in Ontario. We have, we are and we always will have a defined path that we follow to meet those goals. But like our operations at home, we can ill afford to stay on the straight and narrow and expect our great industry to grow and prosper.

The Premier's challenge of a year ago, of 120,000 jobs by 2020 is one that the agri-food industry has embraced. General Farm Organizations and commodities all agree that working through OMAFRA and the Premier's office on a focussed direction will no doubt lead us to achieving that goal. And it is that goal that will allow the entire agri-food chain to continue to prosper and grow. While our relationship with our fellow partners are strong, this challenge serves the potential to unite agriculture in a way we have not seen for a long time. It is crucial that we seize this opportunity to gain and keep momentum that will put the agriculture voice ahead of all others for many years to come.

But we still have work to do. Just like our businesses at home, we need to have our long term focus, but take care of the short term day to day work. We need to look "outside the box" for solutions and for partnerships/alliances that will help us meet our goals. Our messages repeated by others can only strengthen our cause.

But we cannot forget those on the inside either. We need to continue to work with PAC to further develop policies that will drive our positions forward. We need to use the messages they bring from the grassroots to strengthen our efforts. A strong united board of directors will only serve to reinforce to government and decision makers that agriculture must be considered in all aspects of governing to make proper decisions for the future of this great industry.

Leadership goes beyond being the spokesperson for our organization. Much like your operations at home, you need your workforce and your equipment "ready to go" when the time comes to deliver optimum performance and efficiency. Bringing everyone together to work at full capacity is a strength I have and will use to help this organization move forward to help the agri-food industry as a whole achieve the challenges before us.



Keith Currie

My wife Janice and I own and operate our family farm just south of Collingwood Ontario. We have been married for 27 years, have raised 4 children and recently have become proud grand parents. I am very honoured and proud of being the 8th generation to operate our family farm.

We are in exciting times for agriculture. The full potential of our industry is yet untapped. But working together and collaboratively we can begin to uncover some of the great potential that lies ahead in this province's great agriculture industry. I ask for your support to allow me to serve as your president of OFA.

Keith Currie

keith.currie@ofa.on.ca

705-441-3362

Don McCabe

Don's Biography

Don McCabe has served as Vice President of the OFA since 2008. A no-till corn, soybean and wheat farmer from Inwood, Ontario. Don represents farmers in the Lambton and Middlesex counties to the OFA Board.

Having studied at a doctorate-level education in soil genesis and classification from the University of Guelph, and a chemistry degree from the University of Western Ontario, Don has become a leading advocate for environmental farm stewardship in the areas of air, water, biodiversity and climate change.

The opportunity to have presented at meetings locally to globally on environmental goods and services from agriculture, renewable energy, and feedstock supply from the farm gate to the bioproduct's industry gate, Don is known to always present the farmers' needs and abilities to meet these new emerging markets while ensuring proper soil management and sustainability.

McCabe sits on the Thames Sydenham and Area Source Water Protection Committee. Elected to the Agriculture Adaptation Council, Don is the current Secretary to the Board. He is serving in his fifth year as President of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada, Vice Chair of the Bio-Industrial Innovation Centre and is proud to serve as Fire Chief to the Inwood Fire Department.

Research, Advocacy and Results

Ontario agri-food is the NUMBER 1 industry in Ontario today. The emerging BIOECONOMY in this province is a GLOBAL phenomena choosing to "kick the tires" in Ontario. Primary agriculture is the ENGINE to this current and future prosperity of this province, and this country. The feedstock (fuel) provider to this ENGINE is your farm business. The Premier's challenge for agriculture job creation will have bioeconmy input due to OFA past and current activities.

As an OFA member, you expect your organization to be advocating for your future needs and opportunities. Communication of Ontario farmer's needs and capabilities is a constant need in today's fast changing environment. The audience's that need to hear our message are not only the local municipal, provincial or federal governments. Current and possible future partners from industry need to know Ontario farmers are in this for the long haul. Having a sustainable business environment that works for all is the GOAL. I have been part of numerous activities in the past years to help reach these common goals, and spread your message. I am PROUD to be your ADVOCATE locally to globally with Ontario results. Putting TOOLS in your TOOLBOX for your FUTURE is my job description.

I ask for your support to continue working on your behalf.



Don McCabe

My areas of advocacy currently revolve around the environment and new market opportunities. It allows me to harness my education in chemistry and soil science with agriculture. Today's issues of energy, water, soil quality, biodiversity bioproducts are all areas where I have Represented OFA member needs to governments, environmental organizations, and others from the global stage to local events.

As I see agriculture as a solution provider to society, the time is now to prepare for the future. An example is the OFA Biomass Project on biomass energy. This project has evolved into a much larger opportunity to establish farmer profitability from current land assets with residue management, or new crops to produce biochemicals, composites and related products. I am honoured to be a part in bringing people and resources together under this project to maximize a profitable, sustainable opportunity for Ontario farmers. The 2014 Outdoor Farm show and Cornstalk Harvesting Days have brought international attention and prospects forward for Ontario farmers.

I have chosen some of the highlights I have experienced since the start of 2014 to list below. I want to illustrate my passion and drive to represent OFA members for their future prosperity.

Jan 2014

- Ontario Budget consultation in Sarnia
- Meetings with various MP's and MPP's at their constituency offices

Feb 2014

- Biodiversity Offsets Conference in Ottawa
- BioAmber funding announcement

Mar 2014

- Development of HOLOS GHG calculator as member of AAFC expert committee
- Canadian Food Summit conference Toronto
- Invited panel moderator for feedstock logistics at International Biomass Conference in Orlando

Apr 2014

- OFA Queen's Park lobby
- All Energy 2014 conference speaker
- Phosphorous Workshop to introduce possible project funding from U.S. sources

May 2014

- Attended the BIO World Congress on Industrial Biotechnology in Philadelphia (bioeconomy and bioproducts networking)
- Meeting with biomass sugar technology provider Renmatix

June 2014

- Speaker at Binational conference by Southwest Economic Alliance on cornstalk bioprocessing opportunity feedstock

- 6th World Congress on Conservation Agriculture in Winnipeg. With our U.S. partner Conservation Information Technology Center, Soil Conservation Council of Canada hosted over 50 countries to discuss soil management

July 2014

- CFA Summer meeting
- FPT Meeting Winnipeg with Ag Ministers

Aug 2014

- Project presentation on Corn Stalk Bioprocessing Business Case
- OFA Board meeting host in Lambton County Great opportunity to share my home area with fellow directors and show our future opportunities in bioeconomy

Sept 2014

- Outdoor Farm Show cornstalk demo was a GREAT success
- Invited participant to UN Climate Summit
- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry reception
- Canada/EU trade agreement reception with PM Harper

Oct 2014

- Participant at Ontario Economic Summit
- Excellent networking with Ontario business leaders and Cabinet

Nov 2014

- Cornstalk harvesting days event

Debra Pretty-Straathof

Greetings to our 2014 OFA Delegates
From: Debra Pretty-Straathof

I am asking for your vote to elect me to serve as your next OFA President. Our members are my priority.

Farm/family background:

The Pretty family started farming in Lanark County in 1814. Soon after the Royce and Thompson branches of my farming ancestors arrived; followed about 100 years later by a Home Child, Reg Bowden, my maternal grandfather, who went from being farmed out for child labour, to owning his own farm. I now own part of that farm property which is where I conduct my small garlic experiment; trying to find a sustainable way to combat root and stem nematodes.

Straathof Farms is a 600 acre, 120 cow Holstein herd, located near Arnprior, in Renfrew County and is operated by my husband, his brother and father. They are presently moving from the double eight, parallel parlour to a robotic milking system. I've milked the cows, cultivated fields, chopped corn silage, baled hay, fixed broken shear bolts, helped cows calve...but now my key role is the one I have provided to the OFA members for the past 15 years.

We've raised three children who we are very proud of, and they have all studied in the agriculture and food field. Angela is finishing her PhD in Soil Science at Wageningen University in the Netherlands after completing her Environmental Studies degree at Waterloo, and her Masters at Guelph. Katrina is putting her UoGuelph degree in Food Science to work at Gay Lea, and Martin is working at the UoGuelph after earning his degree in International Development with an emphasis in Ag&Rural issues. Perhaps, some day, one or more of them will come home to farm.

Service to the farm community:

I started serving the Renfrew County farm community in 1991 starting with Agri-Food Education. We created our Farm Comes to Town project for students and the public, and The Original Rural Ramble. I also enjoyed several years as the county Dairy Educator. The Soil and Crop Association of Eastern Ontario presented me with an Award of Merit for "outstanding contribution to the local agriculture community." I decided I needed more education in communications so I attended Algonquin College and earned an honours diploma in Public Relations. I learned how to effectively communicate with "publics" which are any group or individuals that may have an effect on an organization or business; including the media, government, members, opinion leaders, etc. The program helped me develop practical communication skills which serve me to this day in my duties within OFA.

After graduation in 1999, I was asked to represent the Arnprior Region Federation of Agriculture as their Director on the OFA board. After restructuring, Zone 8 includes Renfrew, Ottawa, Lanark and the Arnprior Region.



Debra Pretty-Straathof

It has been an education, an honour and a privilege to serve the farm communities, not only at home, but across Ontario and Canada; working to enable prosperous and sustainable farms.

I also represent farm women on behalf of the CFA on the World Farmers Organization (WFO) Standing Committee for Women in Agriculture. I am ready to serve as your OFA President.

Experience:

I firmly believe in learning as much as I can at each level before moving on to the next. I have held many positions in the OFA, and OFA related boards, including:

OFA Vice President (two terms)

OFA Executive Committee (five terms)

Chair: OFA Finance Committee and Chair: OFA Governance task team

Chair: CFA Taxation Committee and Vice-Chair: Ontario Agri-Food Technologies

OFA rep. to the Ontario Commodity Council and Open For Business process

Farmers on the Hill Lobby Team and Hay East Team member

President: Farm Line Support Service

Young and Beginning Farmers Task Team and Communications Task Team

Farm Finance, Trade and Taxation Committee and Chair: Science and Tech Standing Committee

CFA biotechnology working group and Ontario Ruminant Industry Development Fund

Canadian General Standards Board Committee for the Voluntary Labeling of Foods that Are, and Are Not, Products of Genetic Engineering (Earned an Award of Merit for this work from CGSB)

The OFA President serves the members through the direction of Board policy and by exemplifying our strong commitment to OFA members by delivering your message to the people who need to hear it. It takes tenacity and perseverance to engage again and again: to be heard and understood; to have elected officials (and their key staff) realize that what is good for us is good for Ontario.

Our provincial challenges:

* preserve our farm land, energy costs - get natural gas into rural areas, as well as high speed internet, and ensure that the Trespass Act is strengthened. We also need effective tools to address climate challenges and invasive species.

*Growing Forward III must ensure that the needs of Ontario farmers are addressed in both the BRM and non-BRM sections.

*continue to improve communications with the county federations and membership, recognizing they are the foundation of OFA.

* Continue our outreach to young and beginning farmers.

* Participate in regulation improvements through the Open for Business process

* finish the OSPCA improvements – Progress has been made through the commodity MOUs with the OSPCA.

I build relationships with a win/win philosophy. My fellow board members have described me as passionate, knowledgeable, driven, honest, compassionate, and aggressive, but to be honest...I've also been known to be a touch talkative; however, my listening skills have improved! I look forward to seeing you at Convention, and I would very much appreciate your vote for President.

You may contact me at debra.pretty-straathof@ofa.on.ca or at (613) 371-8840.

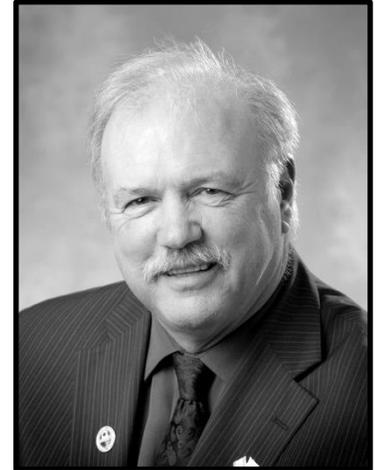
Best regards,
Debra

Mark Wales

A Message to Delegates

I will be letting my name stand to be your President for 2015. It has been an honour to represent you, and be the spokesperson for our organization for the past 3 years.

2014 will go down as a challenging year to farm. After a longer than normal winter we had to deal with a late spring, and then a cooler and wetter than normal summer. Early damaging frosts in many areas will have a dramatic effect on Corn and Soybean yields and a late wet fall is adding to the challenges. Price drops in grain markets are creating challenges for some and opportunities for others, while improving livestock prices have certainly been welcome by many. This year has highlighted the need to maintain and improve our suite of safety net programs in the face of events we cannot always control.



We saw some important progress on a number of the issues that we have been lobbying government on. The commitment of \$230 million dollars loan and grant over 2 years to get new Natural gas lines in Rural Ontario is a great start. We would have preferred all grants. Starting in January 2015 people seeking Farm Plates for their vehicles will require an FBR number. This has long been an irritant that people with no connection to the farm could access this benefit. Government passed regulations to the FBR process so that we will not have to go thru the 2 step process every year. Changes to the assessment for Commercial Grain Dryers will take effect on January 1, 2015 and be retroactive to 2014 which will reduce the tax burden on them. This is fairness that we have all been seeking for a long time. In addition OFA is working with MPAC to look at new ways to fairly assess the value of farmland, and how to assist people wanting to do on-farm value added. The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change is working much more proactively with sectors such as the Greenhouse industry to deal with nutrients without heavy handed regulation. Our lobbying is working on many fronts.

Our industry and our organization have never had better profile with the press, the public, the industry, and all parties in government. Individual board members are becoming much more involved in day to day lobbying. Events like our Queen's Park Lobby days, hosting each of the political party caucuses for breakfast, and working with lobby partners like Union Gas and Enbridge continually remind everyone that OFA is the organization that truly represents the interests of all Ontario farmers. All of this is about Growing Ontario on behalf of our members.

The year ahead will be very important to begin getting gas lines in the ground, working to ensure government continues to reduce nuisance regulation, continues support for safety net programs and build on partnerships that we have developed to ensure that we bring the greatest possible lobby voice to the table.

As we go forward into 2015 I would be proud to continue being your President, to lead our organization, to be your spokesperson, to ensure that governments at all levels are accountable for their actions. I believe in OFA and what we can achieve together.

Mark Wales
President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
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C. 519-773-6706

Mark Wales

A brief account of a committed agricultural representative

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

- 2012 – 2013 - 2014 President
- 2009 - 2011: Vice President; Executive member since 2008
- 2008 – present: Regional Director Zone 4 Elgin Oxford
- 2008 - present: Lake Simcoe Protection Plan Committee agriculture representative
- 2008 – present: Lake Erie Source Water Committee agriculture representative
- 2005 – 2007: Chair, Farm Finance Trade and Taxation Committee; Member 2002 - 2007
- 2000 – 2002: Member, Rural Affairs Committee
- 1996 – present: Director

Elgin Federation of Agriculture

- 1990 – 2012: Director and President for three years

Elgin Stewardship Council (oversees management of the Aylmer, Fingal and Calton wildlife areas balancing the interests of agriculture, hunting and the public)

- 1990 – 2010: Inaugural Director and Past Chair

Environmental Farm Plan

- 1996 – 2012: Chair, Elgin County Peer Review Committee

Labour Issues Co-ordinating Committee

- 1998 – present: OFA representative and Vice Chair

Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Sector Council

- 2013 – Present: Chair, 2010 – 2013: Vice Chair; Founding Director since 2003

Garlic Growers Association

- 2001 – present: Director; President since 2004

OACC -Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council

- 2011-2012: Chair

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association and Canadian Horticultural Council

- 2006: Property Section Chair
- 2008 – present: Safety Net Section Chair; Since 2009: Chair, Canadian Horticultural Council Safety Nets Committee

East Elgin Agricultural Society

- 1988 – 2005: Director; Chair, Tobacco Committee

FARMING HISTORY

- 1986 – present: A variety of vegetables, both fresh market and processing; corn, soybeans, white beans
- 1976 – 2005: Flue-cured, burley and black tobacco

EDUCATION

- 2004: Nuffield Canada scholar
- 1997: Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program Class 6
- 1976: University of Guelph, Bachelor of Science (Agriculture)