

Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers

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November 15, 2017

Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor
Minister of Health
Confederation Building 356
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I am writing to you, on behalf of Ontario's more than 400 processing vegetable growers. The Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers (OPVG) is a non-profit farm organization representing the growers of tomatoes, green peas, sweet corn, green and wax beans, cucumbers, beets, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, lima beans, onions, peppers, pumpkins and squash for the canning, freezing and pickling industry. Collectively, this industry generates nearly \$100 million in gross farm receipts annually for Ontario farms.

We are writing to express our serious concerns with respect to the proposed cancellation or restricted use of various crop protection products that are critical to the viability of our industry.

These products include:

Linuron, Mancozeb, Metiram, Carbaryl, Ferbam, Ziram, Thiram, Chlorothalonil, Ipodione, Captan, and Imidacloprid

These crop protection products are vital tools that assist farmers to protect crops from insects, weeds and disease. These products allow Ontario vegetable growers to sustainably and profitably grow a safe, high quality, and quantity of product that our vegetable processors require. These products provide healthy food for Canadians and for other countries around the world, and drive economic growth.

We are committed as an entire industry to the safety of our families, farm workers and industry specialists that support us in the production and processing of these crops. Farm safety protocols and practices with respect to applying and storing chemicals have greatly improved over the past 40 years. In addition, the OPVG has partnered with tomato growers and processors to pilot new worker safety programs, such as Spray Hub that inform farm workers and industry specialists of crop protection application, re-entry and pre-harvest intervals. Opportunity to expand this program to additional crops is currently in discussion.

We would like to express our grave concerns that the implementation of these proposed restrictions or cancellations will put Ontario and Canadian farmers at a significant competitive disadvantage in a global marketplace where we compete. Similar restrictions are not being proposed or considered for the United States or for Europe and putting Ontario farmers at a significant disadvantage if our competitors have access to science and technology not available to our growers. There would be a tremendous negative impact to Ontario farm families if imported vegetable products were not subject to the same production limitations that are being proposed for Canadian horticulture. In addition, jobs and competitiveness within our processing sector are threatened with the potential loss or restriction of these products.

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It is our understanding that PMRA is basing these restricted use, or cancellation recommendations based on significantly outdated product registration data which is not representative of current best management practices, or science of today. We strongly encourage the PMRA to undertake a complete and fullsome review of today's Ontario and Canadian farm practices with respect to crop protection products, best management practices and protocols, prior to taking any further action to limit or eliminate use. These products provide tremendous value to our sector and are safe for consumers, producers and their families, farm workers and industry advisors in the context of current management practises.

Minister, I look forward to your response and would be pleased to meet with you to engage in a more fulsome discussion about the proposed changes under the PMRA and developing an action plan to move forward to address this issue. We are committed to working with you to ensure that any changes will help our industry to become more competitive and prosperous in Ontario and not limit our growth.

Sincerely,



Suzanne M. van Bommel
Chair, Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers
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cc:

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