



## News Release

### ***Fruit and vegetable growers welcome additional cost-share funding for farm worker protection***

For immediate release

Guelph ON, October 13, 2020 – Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers are pleased with the joint federal-provincial government funding announcement of an additional \$11.6 million to further support growers in their efforts to protect farm workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding will help offset new costs created by the pandemic and will better prepare farms for similar challenges in 2021.

"The health and safety of farm workers is of the utmost importance to all fruit and vegetable growers and this cost-share funding will help us ensure we can continue to safely provide food for Canadians," says OFVGA Chair Bill George. "Like its impact on many other Canadian businesses, the pandemic has created overwhelming challenges for growers with unexpected additional expenses for everything from helping workers to complete their mandatory quarantine periods, to adapting equipment and modifying workflows."

Today's announcement by Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie-Claude Bibeau and Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Ernie Hardeman also extends government cost-share funding to a category for small capital projects of up to \$100,000 for housing and workplace modifications and equipment to allow greater physical distancing for workers.

The new funds build on the existing \$15 million of government cost-share funding available to Ontario growers announced earlier this year, and will continue to cover projects that prioritize the health and safety of workers, including building physical barriers for more effective separation, upgrading HVAC systems and enhancing hand-washing facilities.

"We appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively with both levels of government to re-assess and re-evaluate ongoing needs for fruit and vegetable growers, as we cooperate to protect the health of farm workers and Canada's domestic food supply," George adds.

In addition to ensuring growers have access to the most current best practices for worker protection, the OFVGA has been working closely with the provincial and federal governments to ensure the sector is prepared for similar challenges in 2021, should the pandemic persist.

The OFVGA is the voice of Ontario's 3,500 fruit and vegetable farmers on issues affecting the horticulture sector. The sector grows produce in fields and greenhouses across the province for fresh and processed consumption. Visit [www.ofvga.org](http://www.ofvga.org) for more information.

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For more information:

Bill George, Chair, 905-984-0994 or [george2vineyards@gmail.com](mailto:george2vineyards@gmail.com)

Alison Robertson, Executive Director, 519-827-5716 or [arobertson@ofvga.org](mailto:arobertson@ofvga.org)