



News Release

Fruit and vegetable growers welcome funding to protect farm workers

For immediate release

Guelph ON, May 14, 2020 – Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers are pleased with the announcement of financial supports from the federal and provincial governments to protect agricultural workers on Ontario farms during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The funding can be used for things like buying personal protective equipment, enhanced cleaning and disinfection, and adapting work areas and living spaces to ensure physical distancing as part of efforts to keep essential frontline workers in the agri-food sector safe.

"The health and safety of farm workers is of utmost importance to all fruit and vegetable growers and this funding will help us ensure we can continue to safely provide food for Canadians," says OFVGA Chair Bill George. "Like many other Canadian businesses, the pandemic has burdened growers with unexpected additional expenses for everything from quarantining and housing workers to adapting equipment and modifying workflows, and this support is a really great start by the federal and provincial governments to help us cover some of those costs."

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is now accepting applications through its Agri-food Workplace Protection Program, which is part of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

"We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with both levels of government to re-assess and re-evaluate ongoing needs for fruit and vegetable growers and the sector's value chain as the pandemic continues to unfold," he adds.

The OFVGA continues to closely monitor the impacts of COVID-19 on fruit and vegetable growers and the edible horticulture value chain, and has provided both an assessment and detailed recommendations to the federal and provincial governments.

The organization has been asking for two measures in particular that would provide effective support to fruit and vegetable growers: a COVID-19 rider on top of current AgriStability programming to provide supplemental coverage to the base program, and a highly targeted, standalone quarantine support program modeled after the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Animal Health Compensation program. [More details are available here.](#)

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association is the voice of Ontario's 3,500 fruit and vegetable producers on issues affecting the horticulture sector. Visit www.ofvga.org.

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