

Ontario Supporting Agricultural and Rural Fall Fairs and Exhibitions

Funding committed to offset lost income from the cancellation of fall activities and events

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LINDSAY — The Ontario government is expanding eligibility for agriculture societies to apply for funding to help offset the financial losses due to the cancellation of fall fairs, exhibitions and activities during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. For this year only, nearly \$1 million will be made available to all qualifying agricultural and horticultural societies to help ensure operations. In previous years, organizations could only qualify for provincial funding if they operated fall fairs.

The announcement was made today by Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

"Our agricultural and horticultural organizations are part of the backbone of rural Ontario. We know that the decision to cancel their fairs and events was a difficult but important one in order to do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19," said Minister Hardeman. "We are providing this funding to help continue operations and relieve some of the burden they are experiencing during this difficult time."

"Our horticultural and agricultural societies have educated and entertained us on the importance of agriculture for more than a century," said Laurie Scott, MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. "This funding will help support this important sector of Ontario's economy as the province recovers from the impacts of COVID-19."

The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS) has reported that over 175 fall fairs and events have been cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19.

"The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS) is grateful for the Ontario government's support," said Vince Brennan, OAAS Manager. "This investment shows the confidence and appreciation that the Ontario government has for our over 200 Ontario Agricultural Societies, their members and volunteers and the significant contribution they make to their communities and rural life in Ontario."

"Thanks to the Ontario government for all of the support and assistance they have shown to all of the Societies/Clubs affiliated with the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA)," said Charles Freeman, Vice President of the Ontario Horticultural Association. "Ontario's continuing support

of the 27,000 plus membership across the province is appreciated by everyone involved with the OHA."

The province provides some funding to individual agricultural societies through grant payments enabled through the Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act. Under the Act, Regulation 16 sets out that in the year an agricultural society is paid a grant they must hold an agricultural exhibition, such as a fall fair. The COVID-19 restrictions have prevented the events that would help to meet this criteria in 2020, with some societies at risk of closing their organizations without this support.

QUICK FACTS

- The OAAS is a provincial association representing over 200 agricultural societies from across the province.
- The OHA is a volunteer charitable organization that encourages interest in gardening and related environmental issues representing over 280 horticultural societies from across the province.

LEARN MORE

- [Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs](#)
- [Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies](#)
- [Ontario Horticultural Association](#)

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