



**March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Hello Everyone,

I am sending you this note and update in an effort to keep you informed as to what the CFA is doing to help minimize the impact on farmers of this quickly evolving COVID-19 pandemic.



First off, the CFA created a Coronavirus resource webpage for all members and farmers on March 6. This page includes the latest general information on the coronavirus pandemic, guidance to employers and employees and more specific information for animal producers. You can access the information [here](#).

On March 11 CFA executives met by teleconference and made the decision to modify our April board meeting and hold it electronically, as well as to reschedule our April Lobby Day and Reception to October 2020.

Currently, I can tell you, we are part of an ESDC Emergency Preparedness Committee that will have its first call Monday, March 16 focusing on what needs to be done to ensure farmers have access to predictable and timely farm labour for the upcoming planting season.

As well, the Minister of Agriculture has created a Roundtable of industry leaders, including the CFA, to discuss the impacts this situation is having on the sector in terms of the food supply chain. For the first 2 weeks starting March 16, calls will take place every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12:00-12:45 EST. They may change in length and frequency depending upon the circumstances.

Given the importance of a stable food production and distribution system throughout the pandemic, CFA will ask the Minister\government to make food production and distribution the highest priority next to controlling and treating COVID-19. We will ask government to ensure farmers have access to temporary foreign workers, while developing a viable contingency plan that would provide for this year's upcoming labour needs. We will also request that the government apply an agri-food lens to all future measures it may consider taking to control the pandemic, to ensure they account for any potential negative impacts these measures may have on food production and distribution. Finally the CFA will be circulating a survey later today to identify any potential issues farmers may face in regards to the pandemic and convey these issues to the Minister.

Rest assured that the overall objective and focus of the CFA for the time required is to ensure that all Canadian farmers get through this pandemic with as little negative impact as possible. I will be providing an update on the pandemic and what CFA is doing on a regular basis moving forward.

Mary Robinson, CFA President