

### Strategic Direction One – Continue Advocacy Efforts in Relation to the Animal Health Act, 2009 and Proposed Regulations

**Issue:**

One of the core activities of the OLPC has been advocating for the creation of provincial legislation to address animal health and disease. The members were very pleased with the creation of the Animal Health Act, 2009 however it is essential that industry continue to be involved in on-going consultations as the Regulations are developed and provide input on specific implementation issues.

It is also important that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the office of the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario, and the Animal Health Laboratory have sufficient resources to be able to implement the Act and Regulations and respond to disease outbreaks. The agricultural associations must ensure that funding limitations are not restricting the content and scope of the Regulations.

**Proposed Activities:**

- Continue advocacy efforts to ensure sufficient financial resources are allocated to OMAFRA, the office of the Chief Veterinarian for Ontario, and the Animal Health Laboratory to be able to implement the Animal Health Act, 2009 and Regulations and respond to disease outbreaks.
- Coordinate a common OLPC member position on the content of the proposed Regulations under the Animal Health Act, 2009 as developed and continue to be involved in on-going consultations.

### Strategic Direction Two – Assist with Coordination of Emergency Preparedness Efforts

**Issue:**

It appears that more disease outbreaks are cross-species so there will have to be a coordinated approach to emergency response. It would be very useful to identify as a group where there are gaps and determine if there is an opportunity to work cooperatively to address some of these gaps. There may also be value in the OLPC working with organizations in bordering provinces to identify what emergency preparedness efforts they have in place. Strategic Direction Five identifies activities for networking opportunities.

**Proposed Activities:**

- Coordinate an annual program of field or table top exercises to improve Ontario's response to an animal disease outbreak.
- Participate in simulations organized by other groups.
- Investigate the possibility of organizing a cross-species simulation.

### Strategic Direction Three – Increase On-Farm Biosecurity Awareness and Encourage Implementation

**Issue:**

The OLPC has maintained that disease prevention is the most cost-effective use of resources and through improved animal health promotion and prevention strategies, the province and the agricultural industry will be able to forestall disease and reduce the overall costs of remediation should an outbreak occur.

Several livestock and poultry commodity and service organizations have already established effective, science-based biosecurity standards for their producers or are currently undergoing gaps analyses. The OLPC also developed a list of low cost biosecurity measures for general livestock and poultry farms which was published in several industry magazines. Although there are some commodity groups and service sectors which do not have prescribed biosecurity protocols in place, there are resources available to their producer members and a communications network through which to provide information.

However, there is a need to engage non-commercial farmers who do not belong to any producer association and who may have a low awareness of the issues and potential risks, e.g. backyard flocks, small scale or hobby livestock producers, etc. A disease outbreak in one of these operations can have a devastating impact on surrounding commercial operations and potentially to human health.

There are also a number of organized livestock and poultry groups that are not yet members of the OLPC.

**Proposed activities:**

- Develop an information network to engage non-commercial or specialty livestock and poultry owners in biosecurity issues.
- Consider adding an OLPC associate non-paying, non-voting membership category for these individuals or groups.
- Contact small livestock and poultry groups to become involved in the OLPC, e.g. pigeon groups, pheasants, ducks, Fancy Feathers, etc.
- Contact other organized livestock and poultry associations to become members of OLPC, e.g. Ontario Elk, Ontario Bison, Fancy Feather, Equine Canada, Ontario Hatcheries Association, etc.
- Develop information pieces to raise awareness of biosecurity issues and encourage implementation on small operations.

### Strategic Direction Four – Consider Methods of Mitigating the Impact of Animal Disease Outbreaks

**Issue:**

Those involved in the agriculture sector have given careful consideration to the impact of animal disease outbreaks and have been working diligently over the past several years to put in place practices which will prevent disease from occurring or reduce its spread if it does arise. Federal and provincial ministries have specific ministries with responsibilities for agriculture and for emergency response.

However, should a transmissible animal disease outbreak occur, and especially one with the potential to infect humans, municipalities and public health officials will also be involved. For this reason, the OLPC wants to encourage municipalities and public health offices to consider how agriculture should be incorporated into their emergency response plans.

**Proposed Activities:**

- Encourage municipalities and public health offices to consider how agriculture should be incorporated into their emergency response plans.
- Raise awareness with municipal and public health leaders of initiatives undertaken by livestock and poultry groups regarding emergency preparedness.
- Provide opportunities for municipal, public health and agricultural representatives to network.

Strategic Direction Five – Pursue Opportunities to Network with Bordering Provinces and National Groups

**Issue:**

As noted under Strategic Direction Two, the OLPC can take a lead role on behalf of the members in pursuing opportunities to work with bordering provinces and other provinces where there is product flow to identify what they have in place regarding biosecurity and emergency response rather than individual commodities working independently. In the event of a disease outbreak, transportation of agricultural services and agri-food products will be impacted, e.g. milk, grains and oilseeds, horticultural products, etc.

**Proposed Activities:**

- Seek opportunities to network and share information with bordering provinces and national animal health and biosecurity groups.
- Maintain a reciprocal membership with the Canadian Animal Health Coalition.
- Explore opportunities to liaise the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council.
- Continue to investigate what role OLPC could play with other agricultural groups and government agencies to assist with the coordination of emergency preparedness efforts in relation to animal disease outbreaks.

Strategic Direction Six – Enhance Communication Efforts within the OLPC

**Issue:**

One of the components of the OLPC's mandate is to provide a venue for information sharing and liaison with government ministries and amongst agricultural groups. A core benefit of the OLPC is that the membership includes all primary production livestock and poultry groups as well as representation from farm service, feed, processing, veterinary associations and government. It is important that effective communications are in place in order to transmit and share the information, ideas, thoughts, opinions and plans between various participants.

**Proposed Activities:**

- Having regular government reports and updates at OLPC meetings is valued by members and is a feature the OLPC should maintain and seek to expand upon. The OLPC Executive will

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work with government representatives to develop a standard reporting template and roster of topics for discussion.

- To ensure more membership input to decision, goals, and objectives of the OLPC, the Executive will solicit input from their constituent member groups (refer to Appendix A) prior to each Executive meeting and on specific action items. Members will be encouraged to provide input and feedback to their Executive representative on action items and issues arising.