

The Honourable Trevor Jones
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
(via email)

September 9, 2026

RE: Aligning the Agri-Food Innovation Alliance with Ontario's Growth and Fiscal Priorities

Dear Minister Jones,

We write to express our collective and unequivocal support for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness–University of Guelph Agri-Food Innovation Alliance (the Alliance Agreement), and to urge that it receive funding commensurate with its strategic value and the growing demands facing Ontario's agri-food sector.

Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sector generates more than \$52 billion annually and employs one in nine Ontarians. It is one of the province's most consequential economic engines and its continued success depends on sustained investment in the research and innovation that drive it. The Alliance Agreement sits at the heart of that system, supporting discovery, field and laboratory capacity, talent development, and knowledge transfer across the entire value chain.

As you have recognized, the University of Guelph is a global leader in agri-food innovation. Through its main campus, Ridgetown Campus, and an extensive network of research centres and laboratories, the University advances Ontario's agriculture, food, and bioproduct sectors in ways that strengthen the province's economy, environmental performance, and long-term food security.

We share your view that sustained investment in innovation is essential, and that the Alliance Agreement remains one of the most effective vehicles for delivering that investment. It is a proven model of government–university collaboration; one that delivers world-class research, infrastructure, and talent development while generating strong economic returns for the province.

Ontario's agri-food sector is well-positioned to meet the challenges ahead, and the Alliance Agreement has reached a critical juncture. As the sector continues to grow, additional investment is vital to sustain momentum and maximize future opportunities. Without additional investment, particularly funding both operational capacity and capital infrastructure, the ability of the Alliance Agreement to deliver programs, support innovation, and respond to emerging industry needs will erode, limiting the sector's ability to realize its full potential.

Strategic government investment in the Alliance Agreement has generated a strong return on investment, and that return extended well beyond the research ecosystem. By combining government funding with university resources, research expertise, and industry co-investment, the Alliance Agreement is a cost-effective model that amplifies the impact of every dollar invested, contributing to job creation, GDP growth, export competitiveness, and innovation across the agri-food value chain. Strengthening the Alliance Agreement directly advances the government's Protect Ontario and Grow Ontario priorities: bolstering local production, food security, domestic

commercialization, environmental outcomes, and economic growth in communities across the province.

We respectfully urge the Government of Ontario to renew the Alliance Agreement with enhanced investment that reflects its strategic importance to Ontario's broader economic agenda. Increased investment would accelerate innovation, supporting industry growth, address larger sector challenges, and strengthen Ontario's economic competitiveness. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and explore how enhanced investment can amplify the Alliance Agreement's impact for Ontario's agri-food sector.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to Ontario's agri-food sector.

Sincerely,



Beef Farmers of Ontario
Chair, Jason Leblond



Grain Farmers of Ontario
Chair, Jeff Harrison



Ontario Aquaculture Association
Chair, Marcia Chiasson



Ontario Bean Growers
Chair, Jamie Payton



Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick
Commission
Chair, William Bearss



Ontario Canola Growers
Chair, Will Runnalls



Ontario Forage Council
Chair, Joe Dickenson



Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers
Chair, Steve Peters



Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers'
Association
Chair, Mike Chromczak



Ontario Sheep Farmers
Chair, Art Alblas



Ontario Pork
Chair, Tara Terpstra



Veal Farmers of Ontario
Chair, Philip Kroesbergen



Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers
Chair, Dave Hope

CC:

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board

Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade

Hon. Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Education

Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs

Hon. Nolan Quinn, Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security

Dr. John Kelly, Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness