

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Office of the Minister

77 Grenville Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1B3
Tel: 416-326-3074
www.ontario.ca/OMAFRA

Ministère de l'Agriculture, de
l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Bureau du ministre

77, rue Grenville, 11^e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1B3
Tél. : 416 326-3074
www.ontario.ca/MAAARO



October 20, 2022

Jeff Hansen
Chair and President
Ontario Hop Growers' Association
jeff.hansen@happyhourhopyard.com

Dear Jeff Hansen:

I want to thank everyone for continuing to make health and safety a priority during this pandemic. Ontario's progress against the COVID-19 pandemic has been hard-fought, and we have a plan to ensure our economy stays open. To help farmers and other agri-food businesses guard against the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and protect employee health and safety, Ontario is continuing to provide financial assistance through the Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program.

To help you in your efforts to protect our workers and maintain our food supply through this difficult time, I am pleased to announce that on November 10, 2022, the Ontario government will be launching a new intake under the Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program to support workers' health and safety and ensure the continued supply of locally grown food all year round.

Ontario is providing \$10 million in 2022–23 for ongoing support and expansion of the Enhanced Agri-Food Workplace Protection Program. The program is a cost-sharing initiative that provides financial assistance to eligible agri-food businesses that continue to face extraordinary costs related to wage support, isolation and quarantine measures, and infection prevention and control measures. The \$10 million in provincial funding will be available through three program streams:

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- Stream I: Agri-Food Workplace COVID-19 Prevention and Protection
- Stream II: Wage, Isolation and Quarantine Support for Employers of International Agri-food Workers and Domestic Workers in Ontario
- Stream III: Congregate Housing Infection Prevention and Control Measures (Congregate housing defined as employers who provide housing to International Agricultural Workers (IAWs) partaking in the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and / or Workers living in employer provided accommodation)

One of our government's top priorities is to guard against the spread of COVID-19 in agri-food workplaces so that worker health and safety is protected, and Ontario's food supply chain remains strong. Additionally, I encourage you to visit www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-resources-agri-food-industry to find additional resources that may be useful as you implement these measures.

I encourage you to share this information as widely as appropriate. If you have any questions, please contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre (AICC) by email at ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca or by phone at 1-877-424-1300.

Again, thank you for all you have done. I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa M. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Lisa M. Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

- Your mental health is important! If you're a farmer or a member of a farm family and in need of mental health support, please call 1-866-267-6255 and arrange to speak with a professional today.
- For additional resources visit: <https://farmerwellnessinitiative.ca/>.