



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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Ministry Overview

Mandate

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) strives to be a global leader, unleashing the potential of Ontario's rural, agriculture and food systems. This is done by ensuring protection and assurance in the agri-food system, providing stewardship of Ontario's capacity to produce food and fostering economic development of the sector and rural Ontario.

Key ministry priorities include supporting the growth of the agri-food sector, ensuring the sustainability of agriculture, providing business support to producers, exploring opportunities to expand agriculture in the North, and helping to foster vibrant rural economies.

Through its actions, the ministry supports rural and urban communities alike, and builds a high quality of life for all Ontario residents.

Ministry Contribution to Priorities and Results

OMAFRA's programs principally support the government's priority outcome of a **Supportive & Dynamic Business Environment** through its efforts to accelerate growth in the agri-food sector by attracting investment, increasing our domestic and international market share, and helping the sector meet the Premier's Agri-Food Growth Challenge to double its growth rate and create 120,000 jobs by 2020.

To achieve this, the ministry not only provides programs to deliver funding, but also provides tools and advisory services that support economic development in rural economies. It does this by facilitating, coordinating and delivering appropriate resources, tools and information to rural municipalities, organizations, businesses and entrepreneurs. The ministry also provides knowledge, resources and connections to allow Ontario's agriculture and food businesses to reap the benefits of cutting edge information, technology, research and marketing opportunities, and position them for sustainable growth.

The ministry also contributes to the government's priority outcome as a **Leader on Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Mitigation**. It is committed to enhancing environmental protection efforts through technical education and outreach and advisory services that will assist Ontario's producers and manage our soil and water resources effectively.

In addition to its own programming, OMAFRA also supports MEDEI by delivering infrastructure programming on their behalf, which supports the government priority outcome of **Modernized Infrastructure & Transportation Networks**.

Through its support of these three priority outcomes, OMAFRA contributes to the government's efforts to create new opportunities and build a promising future for all the residents of Ontario.

Ministry Programs

Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-Product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities

Rural Ontario is home to about 2.6 million people, approximately 20 per cent of Ontario's population. In addition

to agricultural businesses, rural Ontario is home to diverse industries, with the top three being trade (wholesale & retail), health care and social assistance, and manufacturing. The ministry offers resources under the headings of Economic Development, Research, Business Risk Management Transfers and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Capital. Together, these resources support the government's priority outcome of a Supportive & Dynamic Business Environment.

Economic Development:

To strengthen this important community, the ministry provides a broad range of strategic agri-food business development programs and funding that support good jobs and attract investment. OMAFRA also provides a range of community economic development tools and resources, including Business Retention and Expansion toolkits, First Impressions Community Exchange, community economic analysis tools, downtown revitalization and regional advisory services.

The programs offered by the ministry include the Rural Economic Development (RED) program, the Rural Summer Jobs Services, the Horse Racing Partnership Funding Program, the Wine and Grape Strategy, Foodland Ontario and the Local Food Fund, and the Food and Beverage Growth Fund. These programs assist the industry in working towards meeting the Premier's Agri-Food Growth Challenge to double the sector's growth rate and create 120,000 jobs by 2020.

Through the RED program, the ministry provides funding to help rural communities remove barriers to community development and promote economic growth to support sustainable rural economies and regions, while developing the capacity, tools and flexibility they need to become stronger, more prosperous communities. Priorities for the RED program include boosting job creation, strengthening rural communities, community revitalization, and skills training and development. Since 2003, more than \$187 million has been invested in 601 RED projects, generating over \$1.2 billion in new economic activity and creating and supporting more than 37,000 jobs.

The goal of the Rural Summer Jobs Service (RSJS) is to encourage rural employers to create summer jobs that enhance the life skills and work experience of students in Ontario. Under the RSJS, OMAFRA has provided over \$22 million in funding to rural employers since 2007.

The Horse Racing Partnership Funding Program provides public support to provide the industry with opportunities for growth and support a sustainable horse racing industry in Ontario.

The Wine and Grape Strategy helps to support local wineries, increase the competitiveness of the industry, thereby creating jobs and economic growth across the province.

Programs such as Foodland Ontario and the Local Food Fund help to increase awareness of and celebration of local food, and develop consumer propensity to buy Ontario food first. The ministry supports the use of the Foodland Ontario logo on Ontario fresh and processed food products. It communicates the benefits of Ontario food, encourages the purchase of Ontario food, co-ordinates promotion and research activities with producer organizations and industry stakeholders, and promotes the Ontario brand. The Local Food Fund supports projects in four key areas: regional and local food networks; enhanced technologies, capacity and/or minor capital; research and best practices; and education, marketing and outreach.

The Food and Beverage Growth Fund, as one stream under the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, supports food and beverage processing and bio-product manufacturing projects that will help create and retain jobs, strengthen supply chains, increase market access, and enhance innovation and productivity.

Research:

The ministry works in partnership with industry, academia and federal and provincial governments and agencies to advance and deliver research and innovation as a critical element in promoting growth of the agriculture and food sectors. Each year, OMAFRA invests over \$75 million in research to support growth in the agricultural sector.

The ministry's Partnership Agreement with the University of Guelph is an essential component of research in Ontario's agri-food and bio-products sector. Through the Partnership Agreement, the ministry supports research, veterinary clinical education, laboratory services in animal health and agriculture and food, Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) and knowledge translation and transfer (KTT). This long-term investment provides access to specialized expertise and facilities to address government, ministry and industry priorities.

The ministry also invests in open research programs. These programs are competitive programs, open to public and private research organizations, drawing from a wide-range of institutions through annual calls for proposals and address current gaps, priorities and emerging issues not covered in the University of Guelph Partnership.

The ministry works with industry and other partners to focus research priorities, co-invest in research projects

and infrastructure, and to encourage uptake through technology transfer activities.

OMAFRA is moving forward on implementing a strategy that will modernize its research and innovation programs, services and infrastructure, to intensify focus on consumer, market and economic outcomes in partnership with governments, industry and academia. Through these partnerships, collaborations and strategically targeted investments the government is able to leverage knowledge, technology and intellectual capacity, to extend its reach and build a sector that is aligned with government and industry priorities.

Business Risk Management Transfers:

Through its Business Risk Management (BRM) strategy, the ministry helps Ontario's agricultural producers manage risks beyond their control, including weather and market volatility. It also includes other assistance to support endeavours to improve sector profitability. OMAFRA offers a variety of programs, primarily delivered through its crown agency, AgriCorp.

Programs include federal/provincial programs under the Growing Forward 2 agreement (AgriInvest, AgriStability, AgriInsurance (Production Insurance), AgriRisk and AgriRecovery), and the provincial-only Risk Management Program (RMP) which includes the Self-Directed Risk Management Program (SDRM) for edible horticulture.

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Capital:

Working with federal, provincial and municipal governments, OMAFRA administers several municipal capital programs on behalf of MEDEI, with a particular emphasis on communities with populations of less than 100,000. These programs allow communities to build on projects that deliver on local needs, support revitalization and repair of critical infrastructure and help to create jobs in construction and related industries. These investments support the government priority outcome of Modernized Infrastructure & Transportation Networks.

The ministry's research is supported by the infrastructure platforms of its agency, the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO), and includes research stations, labs and related agricultural infrastructure. These facilities provide the capacity for research on a wide variety of agri-food issues and support industry-driven research while leveraging third party investments.

Better Public Health and Environment

OMAFRA provides oversight of the agri-food system in Ontario and has responsibility for emergencies related to farm animal disease, food contamination, and agricultural plant disease and pest infestation. The ministry is working with MOECC to develop a comprehensive Pollinator Health Strategy for Ontario, which builds on work already taken to improve pollinator health and sets aspirational targets:

- an 80 per cent reduction in the number of acres planted with neonicotinoid treated corn and soybean seed by 2017; and
- an over-winter honeybee mortality rate of 15 per cent by 2020.

As part of the Strategy, the ministry is working on a Pollinator Health Action Plan. The plan will take into consideration the needs of farmers, beekeepers and all Ontarians.

In support of the government's priority outcome as a Leader on Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Mitigation, the ministry is working with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to enhance environmental protection efforts through technical education and outreach and advisory services to assist Ontario's producers address climate change issues and manage our soil and water resources effectively.

Ministry Administration and Policy

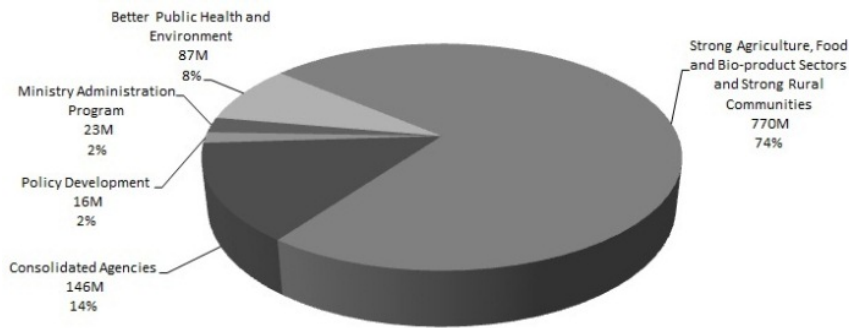
OMAFRA continues to provide high quality customer services and deliver programs efficiently. In order to drive the success for rural Ontario, the ministry will ensure rural consideration is given in policy and programs across government and will develop key performance measures and metrics for rural Ontario to promote economic growth and opportunities to support a high quality of life for its residents.

The ministry also provides strategic leadership, advice and facilitation to industry producers, processors and other value chain participants and works with the industry on regulatory changes to advance the sector.

Ministry Planned Expenditures 2015-16 (\$M)

Operating	893
Capital	148
Total	1,041

Ministry Allocation of 2015-16 Base Spending



[Text equivalent to graphic](#)

Highlights of 2014-15 Achievements

In 2014-15, OMAFRA was successful in achieving many positive outcomes for the priorities that were set at the establishment of its new mandate.

Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-Product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities

- The ministry focused on fostering vibrant rural communities and supporting the growth of the agri-food sector in 2014-15. The new permanent infrastructure program, the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) was launched, the Rural Economic Development (RED) program was fully subscribed, the Local Food Fund continued to support sector-led projects that increase awareness and celebration of local food, the Wine and Grape Strategy renewal was launched, and the ministry was involved in leading an industry-government Growth Steering Committee at the Premier's Summit in support of the Agri-Food Growth Challenge.
- In January, 2015, Ontario launched the Food and Beverage Growth Fund in support of food, beverage and bio-product processing projects in the province.
- In addition to this programming, in October 2014, the ministry held an Open for Business Stakeholder Consultation Forum with stakeholders across the value chain to review current regulatory issues in OMAFRA and across government.

Better Public Health and Environment

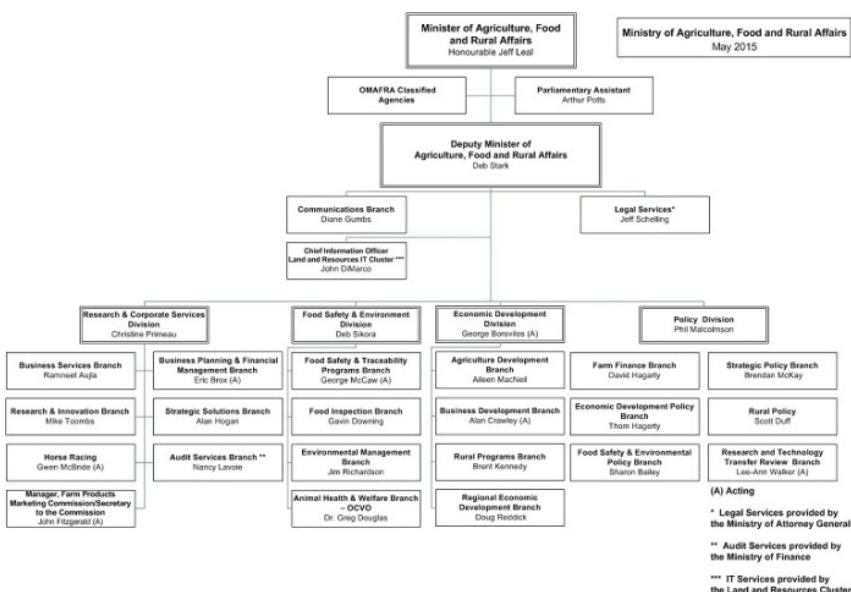
- To find a balanced approach to pollinator health challenges, OMAFRA partnered with the stakeholders and other ministries to develop a Pollinator Health Action Plan and develop a draft regulation under the *Pesticides Act* that would reduce the use of neonicotinoid-treated soybean and corn seed. The Ministry also began the development of a comprehensive Pollinator Health Action Plan, in conjunction with ministry partners, that will address the broad range of stressors on pollinators.
- OMAFRA continued to demonstrate its leadership role in animal health and food assurance systems by implementing amendments to *Food Safety and Quality Act* that create a more flexible and outcome-based approach to compliance and developing reforms under *Nutrient Management Act* to streamline environmental compliance for greenhouse growers and enhance protection of the environment.

Ministry Administration and Policy

- OMAFRA continued to deliver its programs efficiently, and to provide the quality customer service that its clients and stakeholders have come to expect.
- In order to foster the success of rural Ontario, the ministry has engaged rural stakeholders on their unique needs, insights and experiences, in order to bring a rural voice to government decision-making. In April 2014, the Ontario government released its Rural Roadmap: The Path Forward for Ontario. The Rural Roadmap is a summary of the conversations conducted with a broad cross-section of rural Ontarians.

For more successes and details, please see the annual report appended to this document.

Ministry Organization Chart



[Text equivalent to graphic](#)

Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs)

OMAFRA's agencies perform a range of functions, from delivering Business Risk Management Programs, to supervising the province's 20 marketing boards and three representative commodity associations, to fulfilling other regulatory, operational, trust and advisory functions.

The ministry is responsible for the governance and oversight of 13 provincial agencies in accordance with the Agencies & Appointments Directive, 2015. The following is a list of the ministry's agencies, boards and commissions who are accountable to the Minister.

Consolidated Agencies

Agencies with assets, liabilities, revenues or expenses greater than \$50M, or an annual surplus or deficit or outside revenue source of greater than \$10M, are consolidated in OMAFRA's budget.

Agricorp

Type of agency: Board-governed/Operational Enterprise

Constituting instrument: *AgriCorp Act*

Function: Agricorp was created in 1997 with a mandate to deliver crop insurance and other agricultural business risk management programs. Agricorp currently delivers three core programs, AgriStability, Production Insurance and the suite of Risk Management Programs, as well as several smaller programs, such as Farm Business Registration.

Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO)

Type of agency: Board-governed/Operational Service

Constituting instrument: *Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario Act*

Function: ARIO provides strategic advice to the ministry regarding the direction of ministry funded research programs in the areas of agriculture, food, veterinary medicine and household science. In addition, ARIO owns and manages the province's agri-food research infrastructure, which is critical to the future success of Ontario's agri-food and rural sectors and a key component of overall provincial economic growth.

Ontario Racing Commission (ORC)

Type of agency: Board-governed/Regulatory

Constituting instrument: *Racing Commission Act*

Function: ORC is responsible for providing regulatory and economic oversight for the horse racing industry in Ontario, as well as providing industry development programs. The ORC governs and regulates thoroughbred,

quarterhorse and standardbred racing and licenses all racetrack operators and industry participants. Under the *Racing Commission Act*, the ORC has the power to suspend violators, or to impose and collect fines, should participants breach the rules of racing established in Ontario.

Financial Information for Consolidated Agencies (\$M)

	2015-16 Expenditure Estimates	2015-16 Revenue Estimates	2014-15 Expenditure Interim Actuals	2014-15 Revenue Interim Actuals	2013-14 Expenditure Actuals	2013-14 Revenue Actuals
Agricorp	144.30	168.01	115.76	161.24	148.68	199.51
ARIO	(4.79)	2.97	(5.05)	3.34	(9.64)	(0.35)
ORC	6.00	8.49	6.02	8.32	7.78	8.89

Non-Consolidated Agencies

Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal (AFRAAT)/Board of Negotiation (BON)

Type of agency: Non Board-governed/Adjudicative

Constituting instrument: *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act* and *Environmental Protection Act*

Function: AFRAAT hears and makes decisions on agriculture, food and rural affairs issues.

AFRAAT makes decisions related to the accreditation of farm organizations, exemptions for religious reasons from registration and/or paying the fee associated with joining an accredited farm organization; farmland classification for municipal taxation purposes; the technical and cost apportionment of projects under the *Drainage Act*; as well as disputes under the *Crop Insurance Act*, the *Farm Products Marketing Act*; the *Farm Implements Act*; the *Agricultural Employees Protection Act*; and various other statutes.

BON negotiates settlement in cases where contaminants cause damage to livestock, crops, trees or other vegetation. While the jurisdiction for requesting assistance from the BON falls with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in legislation, the operation of the BON has been transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Normal Farm Practices Protection Board (NFPPB)

Type of agency: Non Board-governed/Adjudicative

Constituting instrument: *Farming and Food Production Protection Act*

Function: NFPPB reviews and resolves disputes respecting an agricultural operation, including the determination of what constitutes a normal farm practice, and makes the necessary inquiries and orders to ensure compliance with its decisions.

Grain Financial Protection Board (GFPB)/Livestock Financial Protection Board (LFPB)

Type of agency: Board-governed/Trust

Constituting instrument: *Farm Products Payments Act*

Function: Under the *Farm Products Payments Act*, funds and boards are established to protect producers from non-payment by licensed buyers.

GFPB collects fees, administers a compensation fund and approves claims made against the fund. The fund was set up under the Grain Financial Protection Program to protect producers of grain corn, soybeans, wheat and canola in the event of defaults on payment by licensed buyers as well as to protect owners of grain who store their grain in licensed grain elevators.

LFPB collects fees, administers a compensation fund and approves claims made against the fund. The fund was set up under the Ontario Beef Cattle Financial Protection Program to protect producers and other sellers of beef cattle in the event of defaults on payment by licensed buyers.

Business Risk Management Review Committee (BRMRC)

Type of agency: Advisory

Constituting instrument: *Order in Council*

Function: BRMRC has the authority to consider requests for reviews and make non-binding recommendations to the program administration for the following programs: AgriStability; Ontario's Risk Management Program; Ontario's Self-Directed Risk Management Program; and, any other program to which the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the Minister assigns responsibility.

Livestock Medicines Advisory Committee (LMAC)

Type of agency: Advisory

Constituting instrument: *Livestock Medicines Act*

Function: LMAC has a duty to review all legislation and regulations related to livestock medicines and their use, and advise the Minister on matters relating to their control and regulation. It evaluates and recommends procedures relating to their sale and the proper standards for livestock medicine maintenance, handling and storage. LMAC also makes recommendations respecting the description of drugs or classes of drugs for sale under a licence or any class of licence and make inquiries and report back to the Minister on any matter as referred.

Rural Economic Development Advisory Panel (REDAP)

Type of agency: Advisory

Constituting instrument: *Order in Council*

Function: REDAP is responsible for providing recommendations to the Minister on applications for funding under the Rural Economic Development program (REDP), the Local Food Fund and any other program that the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the Minister may assign.

Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission (OFPMC)

Type of agency: Non Board-governed/Regulatory

Constituting instrument: *Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act*

Function: OFPMC develops and implements regulated marketing policy. It administers the *Farm Products Marketing Act* and the *Milk Act* along with supervising Ontario's 20 marketing boards and three designated associations. The OFPMC provides leadership in the form of advice, facilitation and direction, as well as educational programs to these boards and associations to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the regulated marketing system.

Ontario Food Terminal Board (OFTB)

Type of agency: Board-governed/Operational Enterprise

Constituting instrument: *Ontario Food Terminal Act*

Function: OFTB has a mandate to acquire, construct, equip and operate a wholesale fruit and produce market, and operate such facility for the distribution and handling of fruit and produce.

Detailed Financial Information

Operating and Capital Summary by Vote

Votes/ Programs	Estimates 2015-16 \$	Change from Estimates 2014-15 \$	%	Estimates 2014- 15* \$	Interim Actuals 2014- 15* \$	Actuals 2013- 14* \$
Operating Expense						
Ministry Administration Program	22,902,300	(1,000,000)	(4.2)	23,902,300	24,278,100	25,288,827
Better Public Health and Environment	87,070,000	(6,730,000)	(7.2)	93,800,000	83,609,500	76,619,692
Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities	608,993,800	(13,709,700)	(2.2)	622,703,500	527,451,400	527,948,816
Policy Development	15,944,200	(700,000)	(4.2)	16,644,200	15,626,600	14,453,990
Less: Special Warrants	-	(167,175,000)	(100.0)	167,175,000	138,384,200	-
Total Operating Expense to be Voted	734,910,300	145,035,300	24.6	589,875,000	512,581,400	644,311,325
Special Warrants	-	(167,175,000)	(100.0)	167,175,000	138,384,200	-
Statutory Appropriations	2,096,014	-	-	2,096,014	264,800	324,492
Ministry Total Operating Expense	737,006,314	(22,139,700)	(2.9)	759,146,014	651,230,400	644,635,817

Consolidation Adjustment - Agricorp	143,546,500	(59,918,000)	(29.4)	203,464,500	114,237,500	146,189,896
Consolidation Adjustment - Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO)	6,418,000	793,000	14.1	5,625,000	7,557,900	3,946,036
Consolidation Adjustment - Ontario Racing Commission	5,927,500	(2,130,500)	(26.4)	8,058,000	5,944,500	7,723,976
Total Including Consolidation & Other Adjustments	892,898,314	(83,395,200)	(8.5)	976,293,514	778,970,300	802,495,725
Operating Assets						
Ministry Administration Program	300,000	-	-	300,000	N/A	-
Better Public Health and Environment	12,300,000	11,800,000	2,360.0	500,000	N/A	-
Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities	305,000	-	-	305,000	N/A	-
Total Operating Assets to be Voted	12,905,000	11,800,000	1,067.9	1,105,000	-	-
Statutory Appropriations	-	(11,800,000)	(100.0)	11,800,000	N/A	3,608,600
Ministry Total Operating Assets	12,905,000	-	-	12,905,000	-	3,608,600
Capital Expense						
Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities	158,799,600	(81,828,000)	(34.0)	240,627,600	203,958,000	221,649,276
Less: Special Warrants	-	(40,068,300)	(100.0)	40,068,300	22,352,800	-
Total Capital Expense to be Voted	158,799,600	(41,759,700)	(20.8)	200,559,300	181,605,200	221,649,276
Special Warrants	-	(40,068,300)	(100.0)	40,068,300	22,352,800	-
Ministry Total Capital Expense	158,799,600	(81,828,000)	(34.0)	240,627,600	203,958,000	221,649,276
Consolidation Adjustment - Agricorp	753,800	(951,200)	(55.8)	1,705,000	1,518,300	2,487,000
Consolidation Adjustment - Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO)	(11,212,000)	16,394,400	59.4	(27,606,400)	(12,605,800)	(13,587,242)
Consolidation Adjustment - Ontario Racing Commission	70,000	20,000	40.0	50,000	76,000	55,000
Total Including Consolidation & Other Adjustments	148,411,400	(66,364,800)	(30.9)	214,776,200	192,946,500	210,604,034
Ministry Total Operating and Capital Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including Assets)	1,041,309,714	(149,760,000)	(12.6)	1,191,069,714	971,916,800	1,013,099,759

* Estimates, Interim Actuals and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure. Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the 2015 Ontario Budget.

For additional financial information, see:

- [Expenditure Estimates](#)
- [Public Accounts of Ontario 2013-2014](#)
- [2015 Ontario Budget](#)
- [OMAFRA](#)

Appendix: 2014-15 Annual Report

2014-15 Achievements

With the swearing in of a new Cabinet in 2014-15 OMAFRA received five mandate priorities: Supporting the Growth of the Agri-Food Sector; Ensuring Sustainability of Agriculture; Providing Business Supports to Farmers; Expanding Agriculture in the North; and Fostering Vibrant Rural Economies, OMAFRA delivered many positive outcomes in 2014-15. In 2014-15, the ministry continued to support the growth of the agri-food sector, ensure the sustainability of agriculture and help develop rural economies.

Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-Product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities

- The new permanent infrastructure program, the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) was launched in August 2014.
Under the funding formula component, 425 communities across the province will receive annual funding to support improvements and repairs to road, bridge, water and wastewater projects and/or the development and implementation of asset management plans for the same assets.
In February, 2015, the province approved 78 projects through the OCIF application-based component that will help communities maintain and repair vital infrastructure such as bridges and roadways as well as water and wastewater systems.
- The ministry had a focus on fostering vibrant rural communities and supporting the growth of the agri-food sector in 2014-15. It offered a comprehensive set of programs to support good jobs, attract investment, and help the agri-food industry make an even greater contribution to Ontario's economic success. OMAFRA's programs and services led to \$328 million invested in the food processing sector, creating or retaining over 2,200 jobs.
- In 2014-15, under the RED program, the ministry approved 96 projects across the province and provided \$13.9 million in funding support to RED and RED-related projects such as:
 - A pilot for an innovative prototype fueling hub to allow selected blends of farm-sourced bio-methane to be combined with pipeline natural gas and delivered as blended fuels for vehicles. This made-in-Ontario fueling hub aims to be a long-term sustainable business providing cost-effective, low carbon fuels to rural Ontario businesses with a slate of new jobs including skilled engineers, vehicle service technicians and new follow-on rural industry support positions.
 - The updating of business and strategic plans for the re-creation of a Francophone heritage village from the period 1850 to 1915. The mission is to preserve, promote, celebrate, and disseminate Franco-Ontarian culture and heritage that will also act as a tool to support economic development, tourism, and community-building in eastern Ontario.
- OMAFRA approved 79 projects under the Local Food Fund (LFF) in 2014-15. The Fund is a key component of the government's Local Food strategy and is designed to support innovative projects that celebrate local food and economic growth in Ontario. The program supported the industry with \$9.7 million in funding to projects like:
 - A comprehensive, multi-media marketing campaign for a family-owned business manufacturing ready-to-use Indian cooking sauces made from local Ontario ingredients that resulted in expanded markets as well as the creation/retention of six jobs.
 - The expansion of automated baking equipment and enhanced cold storage capacity and distribution for a bakery specializing in European pastries made with local dairy and fruit products. The project was very successful resulting in five new products lines, new and expanded markets beyond Ontario's borders and the creation of seven full time jobs.
- Ontario's \$75 million Wine and Grape Strategy was renewed in March 2015 as part of the government's

economic plan for Ontario. The government launched two programs at this time:

- The new Marketing and Vineyard Improvement Program will help to increase the sale of Ontario wines in and out-of-province and enhance the marketing of Ontario's wine regions as tourist destinations. The program will also support vineyard production improvements.
 - The renewed VQA Wine Support Program will help increase LCBO sales of Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) wines, encourage innovation and improve exports and tourism.
- To help the sector rise to the Premier's Challenge, the Minister announced the Growth Steering Committee at the 2014 Premier's Summit. The Committee will work with the ministry to provide advice to the Minister that is relevant to industry, government and partners aimed at helping drive agri-food industry growth and create jobs across the province.
To assist the sector in meeting the goals the Premier has set – to double the sector's growth rate and create 120,000 jobs by 2020 - OMAFRA launched the Food and Beverage Growth Fund on January 7, 2015.
- OMAFRA focused on developing a strategy for the northern Agriculture, Aquaculture and Food Processing sector under the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines' Northern Growth Plan.
- In 2014-15 the Beekeepers Financial Assistance Program (BFAP) was extended to cover bee mortalities in 2015 as part of a combined effort to build up healthy bee colonies in the province. BFAP is part of Ontario's Pollinator Health Strategy and a multi-pronged approach to strengthen pollinator health, agriculture, and the economy. BFAP was designed in 2014 as an ad hoc response to address acute bee hive mortalities.
- After several months of working with the Beef Farmers of Ontario and central government agencies, OMAFRA introduced changes to the Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program which will effectively double individual loan limits. These changes will particularly benefit young or beginning beef producers by giving them access to larger loans which allow scales of economy supportive of a full-time beef producer at more favourable repayment terms. The program changes came into effective April 1, 2015.
- In 2014 the Ministry collaborated with industry to review the Risk Management Program (RMP) for cattle, hogs, sheep, veal, grain/oilseeds and the Self-Directed Risk Management (SDRM) program for edible horticulture. The existing program design was retained and the annual program expenditures of \$100 million continues to maintain the government's substantial commitment to the province's agriculture sector.
- The Horse Racing Partnership Plan (HRPP) came into effect April 1, 2014. The HRPP is the government's five-year plan for a sustainable horse racing industry and includes public investments of up to \$500 million. The plan reflects the hard work and genuine willingness of many in the horse racing industry to work together and build a new partnership with government.

The plan provides the appropriate public support to maintain a foundation for racing, but, more importantly, it provides the industry with opportunities for growth. By increasing funding for purses and operational support for regional tracks, the government is giving racetrack operators the tools to develop new sources of revenue and build business relationships that will support a sustainable horse racing industry in Ontario. In 2014-15, government funding preserved 950 race days at 15 licensed tracks and enhanced horse improvement programs for each racing breed.

- The ministry held an Open for Business Stakeholder Consultation Forum with stakeholders across the value chain to review current regulatory issues in OMAFRA and across government. The Open for Business strategy encourages government and the agri-food sector to work together to clear the path for business success. Open for Business Forum is all about constructive conversation and working together on issues for a positive outcome. The forum does not replace the consultation work that is done throughout the year.

Other examples of red tape reduction include:

- Providing producers, processors and agri-food businesses with easier access to needed information through a single phone number, as part of our One Window initiative.
- Co-ordinating assistance to investors so that they can establish and expand operations faster. Ministry staff are reviewing the current approach to supporting investments in innovation and developing options and recommendations.

Better Public Health and Environment

- Ontario is facing a difficult situation with respect to the health of our pollinators. In order to find a balanced approach to pollinator health challenges, OMAFRA has partnered with the Ministries of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) to develop a cross-ministry Pollinator Health Action Plan aimed towards reducing the over-winter honeybee mortality rate to a maximum of 15 per cent by 2020.

The government also consulted on the proposal to reduce the use of neonicotinoid treated corn and soybean seed through a new regulatory system under the *Pesticides Act*. During the consultation period, almost 52,000 written submissions were received and over 400 people participated in consultation sessions. If approved, this regulation will be in place by July 1, 2015, in time for the 2016 agricultural planting season. As a result of this regulation, Ontario hopes to see an 80 per cent reduction in the number of acres planted with neonicotinoid treated corn and soybean seed by 2017.

- The ministry demonstrated its leadership role in animal health and food assurance systems by implementing the following:
 - Greenhouse Nutrient Feedwater Regulation: This new regulation is making it easier for greenhouse growers to comply with environmental standards regarding the disposal of greenhouse nutrient feedwater by streamlining environmental compliance and reducing the costs and uncertainty of approvals. It promotes the reuse, and facilitates the recycling of, greenhouse nutrient feedwater while providing farmers with a new source of nutrients to fertilize their crops and protecting the environment.
 - Memorandum of Understanding with MOHLTC for the Inspection of Meat Plants: This MOU was created in 2014 to address an overlap in inspection authority in licensed meat plants, particularly those meat plants with retail or food service areas.
 - Fish Inspection Act: Responsibility for this Act was transferred from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to OMAFRA in 2014 to support the growth and development of a strong fish processing industry in Ontario. The ministry now administers the Fish Interim Audit Program which provides food safety audits of about 100 non-federally registered fish processors in Ontario.
 - Anaerobic Digester regulation changes: Amendments to the Nutrient Management Regulation will allow farm-based digesters to treat more off-farm materials. This fulfills a commitment to increase renewable energy generation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and foster innovation and economic opportunities in rural Ontario.
 - Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDv) mitigation: Provided veterinary guidance for PED surveillance, diagnosis and monitoring. Participated in industry communication and continuing education events including seminars, town hall meetings and advisory committees. Communication and cooperation with inter-provincial stakeholders regarding Ontario's efforts to reduce the impact of PED in the Ontario swine herd and mitigate the risk to neighbouring provinces.

Ministry Administration and Policy

- In an effort to provide high quality customer services and deliver programs efficiently, the ministry completed program reviews for Growing Forward 2 and the Local Food Fund to ensure more tangible outcomes including better client experiences and improved use of government funding.
- In April 2014, the Ontario government released its Rural Roadmap: The Path Forward for Ontario. The Rural Roadmap is a summary of the conversations conducted with a broad cross-section of rural Ontarians.

Ministry Interim Actual Expenditures 2014-15

	Ministry Interim Actual Expenditures (\$M) 2014-15*
Operating	779

Capital	193
Staff Strength**(as of March 31, 2015)	874.15

* Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the *2015 Ontario Budget*.

** Ontario Public Service Full-Time Equivalent positions.

For more information:

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