

NEWS RELEASE

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Beef Cattle Check-off Increase Approved with Strong Support from Delegates *Election Results from BFO's 63rd Annual General Meeting*

February 21, 2025 (Guelph, Ont.) – This week, delegates attending the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) 63rd Annual General Meeting in Toronto approved an increase of \$1.50 to the national portion of the beef cattle check-off with strong support and a vote of 92 per cent in favour of the increase. BFO will begin the formal process of requesting that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness amend Regulation 54 of the Beef Cattle Marketing Act, which will likely take several months to complete. Upon approval, the existing mandatory \$1.00 per head federal agency levy will be increased to \$2.50, and total Ontario check-off per head will be increased from \$5.50 to \$7.00 per head.

The approved increase will provide several important benefits. Firstly, it will help to address financial constraints faced by BFO in light of inflationary pressures and flat marketings. Additional dollars will also be used to increase support for the Ontario Cattle Feeders' Association for their operations and management of the Ontario Corn Fed Beef program, as well as increased investment in the Ontario Beef Market Development Program which is jointly managed with BFO. From a national perspective, the increase to the national portion of the Ontario check-off will align Ontario's rate with the rest of the country, and will allow BFO to increase investment in national research and consumer and public engagement efforts to better align Ontario with the National Beef Strategy.

"We truly appreciate the support of our members and the trust they have put into the leadership of BFO to invest their dollars to make improvements in our sector," shares Craig McLaughlin, BFO President. "We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are committed to demonstrating the value we provide to our members through our government relations and advocacy work, our focus on policy and issues, our consumer and market development efforts, and the educational opportunities and support we provide to beef farmers."

At the meeting this week, the Board of Directors of BFO elected their 2025 president and vice president. Craig McLaughlin will continue to lead the association in the year ahead as president with Jason Leblond continuing his role as vice president.

Joining the BFO Board of Directors in 2025 are Nicholas Martin and Denise Byers for respective three-year terms. Martin, who will represent the feedlot sector on the board and replace Joe Dickenson who completed two terms, resides on Manitoulin Island where he operates a cow-calf-to-finish operation with his family. Byers will serve as southern director, and will replace Ron Stevenson who also completed two terms. Byers and her family operate a cow-calf-to-finish operation in the Durham Region.

Returning to the BFO Board of Directors are cow-calf director Don Badour and at-large director Kim Jo Bliss.

The BFO Board of Directors and staff welcomed close to 400 attendees during this year's two-day annual general meeting. Delegates and guests heard from a number of speakers, including keynote speakers Tim Hudak who shared his five commandments of high impact advocacy and Dr. Jody Carrington who spoke about the importance of fostering connection and battling burnout. Attendees also heard from a panel, which focused on the topic of traceability and how beef farmers and industry can be prepared for the new *Livestock Identification and Traceability Amendments to the Health of Animal Regulations (Part XV)* once implemented. BFO was also pleased to welcome Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Francis Drouin, who brought greetings during the annual banquet where guests enjoyed an Ontario Corn Fed Beef dinner provided by St. Helen's Meat Packers.

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BACKGROUND

Under Regulation 54 of the Beef Cattle Marketing Act, a compulsory check-off on per head sold by cattle farmers is payable to the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) to fund the Association. Packing plant operators, auction market operators and livestock dealers are required to deduct the check-off from the proceeds payable to the seller and remit check-off fees to BFO. Breeding stock, cull dairy cows and beef calves are included. Exemptions only exist for cattle sold for the production of milk and veal.

The BFO Board of Directors consists of 12 elected officials: three from the cow-calf sector, three from the feedlot sector, one from the background sector, one each representing the southern, northern and eastern regions of Ontario, and two at-large. Directors are elected for three-year terms on a rotating basis. In addition to the 12 elected officials, one youth representative is appointed by the BFO Board of Directors through an application process to fill a non-voting position.

The Beef Farmers of Ontario represents 19,000 beef farmers in Ontario by advocating in the areas of sustainability, animal health and care, environment, food safety, and domestic and export market development. BFO's vision is help foster a sustainable and profitable beef industry, and have Ontario beef recognized as an outstanding product by our consumers.

For more information and Photos:

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