



October 15, 2024

Jasper Munro  
President, Bruce County Beef Farmers

Dear Jasper,

Re: *Securing Conservation Land for Rental to Beef Farmers 24-13*

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The following resolution was passed at the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) annual general meeting in February and was recently discussed by the BFO Board of Directors:

**WHEREAS**, Ontario beef farmers continue to lose available grazing land to other farming practises and urban development; and

**WHEREAS**, conservation land can be used for grazing while still supporting and promoting other conservation efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, much of Ontario's excess conservation land was previously used as productive pastureland; and

**WHEREAS**, the rental income received from beef farmers can be used by Ontario Conservation Authorities to support ongoing conservation efforts; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT BFO** work with the appropriate conservation authorities to evaluate the potential to establish a process/application for beef farmers to rent Ontario Conservation Land for grazing purposes.

BFO thanks Bruce County Beef Farmers for bringing this resolution forward. A pillar of BFO's strategic plan focuses on growing Ontario's beef sector by promoting pasture development through the expansion and improvement of existing community pastures, the creation of new community pastures and by working with conservation authorities and different non-governmental organizations like land trusts and other organizations.

In 2022, BFO worked with Conservation Ontario, which represents all of Ontario's conservation authorities, to distribute a survey to each conservation authority to understand their process for leasing land for agriculture. Of the 20 responses we received from the 36 conservation authorities, three indicated they do not lease land for agriculture purposes and the process for how the remaining conservation authorities lease land to farmers and the size and number of land parcels available varied greatly.

We recently met with Conservation Ontario to talk about this resolution. Following our discussion, BFO was asked to prepare a letter that could be distributed to each conservation authority regarding opportunities to rent land to beef farmers for grazing purposes. The letter shared with Conservation Ontario has been appended to this response for your awareness. In the

letter, we ask interested conservation authorities to contact BFO regarding land that can be rented to beef farmers for pasture use or land that could be developed into pasture. For the conservation authorities who contact BFO about such opportunities, BFO will contact the respective local association regarding next steps.

In addition to conservation authorities, BFO will continue to engage other conservation focused organizations, such as land trusts and other non-profit organizations like Ducks Unlimited to explore other opportunities to promote pasture development and partnerships with beef farmers.

We encourage producers to also engage and build relationships with their local conservation authorities, land trusts or other organizations that may own land for conservation purposes and discuss opportunities to access agriculture land or improve underutilized land for pasture use.

Thank you, again, to Bruce County Beef Farmers for bringing this resolution forward.

Sincerely,



Craig McLaughlin  
President

cc: Ken Schaus (Mover)  
Don Grant (Seconder)  
Jarrett Johnson (Advisory Councillor)  
Jennifer Legge (Secretary)



September 12, 2024

Jo-Anne Rzadki  
Manager, Business Development and Partnerships  
[jrzadki@conservationontario.ca](mailto:jrzadki@conservationontario.ca)

Dear Jo-Anne,

Thank you for the recent opportunity to discuss a resolution passed by Beef Farmers of Ontario's (BFO) membership at our 2024 Annual General Meeting earlier this year, which focused on fostering relationships between Ontario beef farmers and conservation authorities.

The resolution speaks to the continued loss of grasslands and available grazing land in Ontario. It asked for BFO to engage with Ontario's conservation authorities to share our members' interests in partnering with them and to explore the potential for beef farmers to rent conservation authority owned land for cattle grazing.

We certainly see this as an opportunity to promote communication between conservation authorities and local beef farmers seeking additional pastureland to graze their cattle while supporting the management of grasslands. We also see this as an opportunity to provide additional benefits to the land itself, thereby helping conservation authorities achieve their mandate. We know that managed grazing practices can have a number of environmental benefits, including improved soil health, carbon sequestration, biodiversity and supporting species at risk.

We would be happy to have further conversations or answer any questions with interested conservation authorities who may have land available for grazing purposes or in working with beef farmers to support the restoration of suitable areas for grasslands.

For more information or questions, please email [darby@ontariobeef.com](mailto:darby@ontariobeef.com) or call 613-360-4020.

Sincerely,

Darby Wheeler  
BFO Policy Advisor

*BFO represents the 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.*