



FARM PRODUCTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Farm Products?

Farm Products is the general term that Ontario Rabbit uses regarding its proposal to the Ontario Farm Products Commission. This proposal is to become an officially recognized commodity board that is legislated under the *Farm Products Marketing Act*.

What is the Ontario Farm Products Commission (OFPMC)?

OFPMC is an agency of OMAFRA that is accountable for the conduct and impact of Ontario's regulated marketing system. It has the authority to use itself, or delegate/authorize the marketing boards to use the powers available under the *Farm Products Marketing Act*.

Does this mean that I will be under a quota system similar to what Dairy Farmers of Ontario or Chicken Farmers of Ontario has?

No, not all marketing boards in Ontario have a quota system. The proposed Ontario Rabbit marketing board would seek the authority to collect check-off fees on all rabbits sold for slaughter in Ontario. This would include all rabbits sold by producers even if sent out of province. There is no intention to collect a check-off on breeding stock at this time.

How much will this check-off fee be?

Fees would be collected on a per head basis, and will be based on a 3 year implementation plan of: Year 1: \$0.15/ rabbit; Year 2: \$0.20/ rabbit; and Year 3 & up: \$0.25/ rabbit. This phased in approach needs to be approved by the Commission prior to a producer vote.

Who is responsible for collecting the check-off fee?

The check-off (marketing fee) would be collected by sales barns, depots and processors and remitted to Ontario Rabbit. Ontario Rabbit will have the responsibility of collection.

When would the check-off fee be collected?

The check-off would be collected at the end point of sale. Processors, depots and sales barns would be required to remit lists of producer names, addresses, and contact information to correspond with the deducted check-off to Ontario Rabbit on a monthly basis.

Do I still have to pay my \$35 membership fee?

No, the check-off fee is now considered your membership fee. There will be no additional fee required.

What will Ontario Rabbit use this check-off fee for?

Ontario Rabbit will develop an annual budget based on the needs of the organization as a whole, reflecting the needs of the entire rabbit industry. The main areas where check-off dollars will be allocated are to consumer marketing, producer education programs, government relations and advocacy, communications, and overall organizational development. It will be Ontario Rabbit's responsibility to report back to producers at the Annual General Meeting held every year.

Is there HST on check-off?

Yes, there will be HST on check-off as this is a service that is being provided. Any producers that currently have an HST number will be able to apply for it back, similar to what you would do for other farm bills that have HST on them.

Why does Ontario Rabbit need to know who is producing rabbits in Ontario?

Because membership to Ontario Rabbit is currently voluntary, the organization has no strong verified data on the production of rabbit meat in the province. By knowing exactly who is producing the commodity, it will help the organization build better traceability programs, and gather cost of production data reflective to your farming operation. Ontario Rabbit can then advocate for more programs that will assist producers. An example of this would be the Ontario Risk Management Program.

What is the process for applying to the OFPMC?

Ontario Rabbit has been meeting with producers across the province to finalize the proposal and collect signatures on Petitions of Support. The entire package will then be submitted to the OFPMC in the Fall of 2011. If the Commission feels that there is enough support, then they will recommend to the Ontario Minister of Agriculture that there be a vote by producers on the proposal.

How will producers be notified of the vote?

You will receive a package in the mail from OFPMC/OMAFRA outlining the proposal along with a voting card. Information will also be posted on Ontario Rabbit's website. The mailing list is compiled by the Commission with input from Ontario Rabbit.

When will the vote happen?

It is anticipated that the vote will occur Spring/Summer of 2012, pending approval of the initial proposal by OFPMC and the Minister.

If you have any other questions, comments or concerns please contact us at Ontario Rabbit info@livestockalliance.ca or 1-866-311-6422.