



Overview of Ontario Rabbit Proposal for Marketing Board Status

After evaluation of the various needs of the industry, Ontario Rabbit would like pursue marketing board status under the Farm Products Marketing Act (FPMA). Below is a summary of the key components of the proposal.

Defined Product to be Marketed:

- All commercially produced and sold fryers and adult culled rabbits.
 - Exemptions: Rabbits sold for breeding stock

Definition of a Producer:

- A rabbit producer is actively engaged in the commercial production of rabbits in Ontario
- There will be no exemptions granted

Governance:

- The board shall consist of eight directors, elected on a two year term in alternating groups of four. Initially the board would be elected at large from among all those who attend the Annual General Meeting.

Collection of Check Off fees:

- The proposed Ontario Rabbit marketing board would seek the authority to collect check-off fees on all rabbits sold in Ontario
 - This would include all rabbits sold by Ontario producers even if sent out of province or out of country.
- Producers, depots and processors would be required to become licensed.
 - There would be no fee associated with this license.
- The marketing fee (check-off) would be collected by depots, sales barns and processors and remitted to Ontario Rabbit.
 - A one day depot exemption would be provided in the case of depots buying live rabbits from producers.
 - Depots would be required to remit check-off on rabbits purchased.
 - Depot would also be required to pay check-off on their own rabbits sold to the processor.
 - Depots can be exempted from collecting check-off should the processor remit on their behalf. The depot will still be responsible for submission of data from their clients. The depot will be required to complete the necessary paperwork with OR indicating their intent to follow this process. Otherwise, the depot will still be liable for the check-off remittance.
 - Producers would be responsible to remit the check-off on all rabbits sold out of province or out of country for slaughter purposes.
 - Processors, depots and sales barns would be required to remit list of producer names, addresses and contact information to correspond to the deducted check-off
- Fees would be based on a per head basis and will be based on a three year implementation plan of:
 - Year 1: \$0.15/rabbit, Year 2: \$0.20/rabbit, Year 3: \$0.25/rabbit
 - Approximately 400,000 rabbits slaughter annually x \$0.25/rabbit = \$100,000.00/year
- Enforcement would be achieved through random audits of producers and processors to verify the quantity of rabbits sold and processed. As the number of processors is limited the audit could be done annually, while producers would be randomly chosen from the processor lists.

Ability to adjust Check Off fees:

- This "power" is implicit in having marketing board status, however, the Commission would not expect to see an adjustment in fees for the first three years,



Ontario Rabbit Strategic Plan Overview

Ontario Rabbit's Mission:

Ontario Rabbit, as a representative and responsive organization, is dedicated to developing a progressive, profitable, high quality rabbit industry through promotion, education, advocacy and industry collaboration.

Ontario Rabbit's Vision:

To represent Ontario's rabbit producers with a recognized organization advocating for a stable, profitable and healthy industry through increased communication, consumer awareness and product availability.

Strategic Directions and Goals:

- Consumer Marketing

To increase consumer awareness and knowledge in order to increase the per capita consumption of rabbit meat.

Examples:

- Two new recipes were printed and distributed.
- Increased consumer promotions through rabbit recipes, social media, website, retailers, and processors, etc.
- Developing a rabbit recipes website for consumers.

- Research & Industry Development

To develop and provide education programs, research and industry development initiatives geared at improving the commercial viability of rabbitries, as well as the quality of rabbits produced.

Examples:

- Partnering with beef, veal, sheep and goat producers on a Biosecurity Gap Analysis project.
- Accessed funding under the Agricultural Biosecurity Program to look specifically at the issues impacting rabbit production and mortality, including barn design, ventilation and management issues.
- Accessed funding from the Agricultural Management Institute to develop and implement the successful "Hop to It" Rabbit Management Club program.
- Accessed funding from the Farm Innovation Program to develop an artificial insemination education program for rabbits.
- Working with producers and develop programs to help on feed rations, reducing mortality, and meat yields.
- Hosted several producer workshops and educational opportunities.

- Lobbying & Government Relations

To engage government and industry partners in a productive manner in order to effectively advocate for the commercial rabbit sector.

Examples:

- We are lobbying to include rabbits in the Risk Management Program.
- Working with OMAFRA to develop a rabbit cost of production model and tool.
- Accessed approximately \$1.5 million in leveraged funding for rabbit projects.
- Working with Government, pharmaceutical companies and veterinarians for drug labelling and approvals.

- Communications

To develop internal and external communications tools for rabbit producers, industry partners, consumers and other stakeholders.

Examples:

- Ontario Rabbit is a proud partner of The Alliance quarterly magazine
- Developing resource materials about rabbit production for consumers.
- Organizing Annual General Meeting and other rabbit producer workshops
- Hosted Open House tours and responded to questions from producers about rabbit production challenges.

- Organizational Development

To ensure a strong, responsive and responsible organization through good governance, training, policy development and industry representation.

Examples:

- Ontario Rabbit has been proactively building the organizational infrastructure and capacity as an industry.
- Facilitating information and communication with industry partners for the big picture.
- Partnering with Ontario Veal and Ontario Goat as part of the Ontario Livestock Alliance to share in office, administrative and human resources.