

Ontario Protecting Agri-Food Workers during COVID-19*Government investing \$15 million into health and safety measures for farm operations*

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WOODSTOCK — The Government of Ontario is taking additional steps to better protect workers in the agri-food sector during the COVID-19 outbreak. The province is significantly expanding the Agri-food Workplace Protection Program and committing up to \$15 million to enhance health and safety measures on farms and in food processing facilities.

"Agri-food businesses and their hardworking employees play a critical role in keeping our food supply chain strong, providing us with fresh, high-quality and nutritious food all year round," said Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "Today's investment will allow farmers to adapt to this new environment and implement additional health and safety measures during the COVID-19 outbreak."

The Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program provides cost-share funding for farmers to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and implement workplace modifications and other measures. By significantly expanding the program, farmers can take additional steps to improve health and safety for their workers and ensure the continued supply of locally grown food during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Today's announcement more than triples the [previous investment through this program](#) by the governments of Canada and Ontario. Both levels of government had committed a total of up to \$4.5 million for farmers and provincially licensed meat processors to enhance worker safety under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program.

Some of the measures already approved through this program include purchases of PPE, temporary housing for ill workers, building physical barriers for worker separation, enhanced hand washing facilities and a tent rental to expand lunch room space.

The Ontario government is also supporting producers and other operations that experience unexpected costs for short-term accommodation and transportation as a result of the impacts of COVID-19.

QUICK FACTS

- The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) will deliver cost-share funding for the [Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program](#).
- OMAFRA has also partnered with the Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS) to provide agri-food businesses, organizations and associations with educational resources, tools and consulting services to help them implement COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Additional details about businesses that may qualify can be found on the [WSPS website](#).
- The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development recently released [safety guidelines for employers](#) to help protect workers, customers, and the general public from COVID-19.
- Health and safety inspectors are now working with employers in the agri-food sector to help ensure the safety of employees, including temporary foreign workers.
- The [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#) provides information on COVID-19 for industry.
- Today's announcement is part of [Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19](#). This \$17 billion immediate response to the global pandemic provides urgent and direct support to help businesses, workers, seniors, families, students, Indigenous peoples and communities, and vulnerable populations during COVID-19.
- The action plan includes \$3.3 billion of additional resources for health care, \$3.7 billion to support people and jobs, and it makes available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flow, protecting jobs and household budgets.

LEARN MORE

- [Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs](#)
- [COVID-19 in Ontario](#)

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