

Thursday, February 20th, 2020

RE: Bill 156
Security from Trespass and
Protecting Food Safety Act



Dear Mayor and Council,

The Middlesex Federation of Agriculture (MFA) represents the voice of agriculture in the local community, and advocates on behalf of our farm family members. Along with our Commodity partners in Middlesex County and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the MFA is committed to a sustainable and profitable future for farm families.

Ontario farms have increasingly come under threat of unwanted trespassers and activists who are illegally entering property, barns and buildings, seizing private property and threatening the health and safety of the farm, employees, livestock and crops.

On December 2nd, 2019, the provincial government introduced Bill 156, *Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2019*. The bill is intended to protect Ontario farm animals, farms, farmers and their families, and the safety of the entire food supply by addressing the ongoing threat of unwanted trespassing and from unauthorized interactions with farm animals. The risks of these actions include exposing farm animals to stress and potential diseases, as well as the introducing contaminants into the food supply.

The Middlesex Federation of Agriculture (MFA) appreciates the support from the provincial government for taking a strong stance to protect our farms and food safety, and introducing more significant consequences for illegal trespassing activities.

The Middlesex Federation of Agriculture (MFA) is calling on all municipal councils in the province to reassure their citizens that the safety of Ontario farm animals, farmers and farm families, and the safety of the entire food system matters. We respectfully ask that your council show your support for Bill 156 by sending the following letter (see below) to Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Ernie Hardeman. If you have already indicated to Minister Hardeman your support for Bill 156, we thank you for your initiative!

Thank you for showing your support for stronger legislation to protect Ontario farms, animals, and food from intruders.

Sincerely;

David Bolton, Board President

Middlesex Federation of Agriculture

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(519) 264-9812 mfa4h@bellnet.ca

If you ate today, thank a farmer. If you are a farmer, thank you!

Sample letter to Minister Hardeman:

Hon. Ernie Hardeman
Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
77 Grenville Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1B3

Email: minister.omafra@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Hardeman,

Ontario farms have come under increasing threat from trespassers and activists who illegally enter property, barns and buildings, causing significant disruptions to the entire agri-food sector. These activists are trespassing under false pretenses to gain entry on to farm properties. They have seized private property and threatened the health and safety of Ontario farms, employees, livestock and crops. These individuals and organizations are causing health and safety concerns and undue stress to Ontario farmers, their families, and their businesses. Once peaceful protests have escalated to trespassing, invading, barn break-ins and harassment. These incidents distress farmers, their families and employees, and threaten the health of livestock and crops when activists breach biosecurity protocols, ultimately putting the entire food system at risk.

We strongly support the new proposed legislation, *Bill 156: Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act*. This new legislation is an important way to keep our farm and food supply safe for all Ontarians. Bill 156 provides a balanced approach to protecting farms while recognizing a citizen's right to protest. This new legislation will ensure farm businesses have a legal standing to protect their farm, family and employees, livestock, crops and ultimately the entire food system. *Bill 156: Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act* is good news for Ontario's agri-food industry.

Thank you for this important new legislation. Protection of our Ontario should be the highest priority.

Sincerely,

Please copy: mfa4h@bellnet.ca