

## Clarification on the August OMAFRA grant and the Budget News Release: Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover

Good Morning All, email sent to all Ag Societies on Nov 8th

I would like to thank everyone that took the time to take part in our earlier letter campaign regarding COVID relief funding for our Agricultural Societies. I am convinced that your letters to your MPP's and other elected officials were significant in the success of our funding request.

Since the Budget announcement on Thursday, I have had a flood of emails and phone calls with questions about the Budget announcement and the August announcement about the OMAFRA grant funding.

### August grant announcement:

- Below is a copy of the letter that I understand was sent to all Ag Societies in September - the information highlighted in blue should answer most of your questions.
- Your Agricultural Society should have received/will be receiving this payment rather than waiting until the expected payment date of March 2021.

*To: xxxxxxxxxx Agricultural Society*

*Following up on the recent Minister's announcement on funding to help offset the financial losses due to the cancellation of fall fairs, exhibitions and activities during the COVID-19 pandemic the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is providing a one-time payment in 2020 to every eligible agricultural and horticultural society.*

*The payment amount is based on your society's 2019 grant eligibility under the Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act, RSO 1990, c. A.9 (Act). If your society received a grant in 2019, it will receive a similar grant this year, and **no application is required.** This payment will be automatically issued to all eligible societies and will replace the 2020 grant. Funding is expected to be provided in September 2020.*

*Although no application is required, in order to receive the payment, your society must be registered in Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) and the society's information must be up-to-date including the society's legal name and contact information.*

*For additional information please review the [Agricultural and Horticultural Initiative Guidelines](#).*

*If you have any questions or concerns please contact:*

*Agricultural Information Contact Centre (AICC)*

*Toll Free: 1-877-424-1300*

*TTY: 1-855-696-2811*

*Email: [aq.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:aq.info.omafra@ontario.ca)*

- OMAFRA shared with me on Friday that many of the cheques or deposits are complete.
- The last batch should be completed this coming week, which is excellent news for everyone.

This announcement only removed the requirements for the OMAFRA grant – it did not change the requirements to remain 'in good standing' with OMAFRA. Each Agricultural Society will still be required to complete the requirements, i.e. have their financial statements reviewed/audited, hold an annual meeting and complete the OMAFRA form by February 1<sup>st</sup>. I am waiting for more information from

OMAFRA as to whether annual meetings can be delayed beyond the 15 months after last year's meeting – I will send out further details once I receive them.

**COVID Budget announcement:**

This is **new** funding for Ontario Agricultural and Horticultural Societies – it is not related to the previous funding announced in August. It is not part of the Trillium grant.

Please be patient! We do not have any details at this time on when or how the funding will be distributed. When I met with Minister Hardeman last week, he indicated their goal was to make this happen smoothly and as quickly as possible in an efficient way. Details have not been worked out at this time, but when I met with OMAFRA on Friday, they indicated that I would be involved with OMAFRA in the decision process.

We will be sending out details as soon as they become available, so please ensure that someone is monitoring your email on a regular basis. If your contact email has changed recently, please ensure that I have the updated information.

Below is the information from the Budget – page 72.

**Supporting Agricultural and Horticultural Societies**

The government recognizes the unique characteristics and challenges of rural areas and is taking steps to support rural Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Province has enabled a one-time change in eligibility requirements to allow agricultural and horticultural societies to receive their annual grants.

The Province is now **providing an additional \$5 million in new funding to supplement their annual grants this fiscal year**, helping to offset revenue losses and the impacts from having to cancel agricultural exhibitions and annual fall fairs due to COVID-19. The government recognizes the importance of these communities and is taking steps to help them address the challenges they are facing.

I hope this clarifies some of the confusion about the funding announcement. Please watch for upcoming emails about the funding.

Please be patient!

Thanks,



Vince Brennan, Manager (OAAS)

613-395-2465

'Celebrating 175 years in 2021,'

**OAAS Convention 2021 GONE VIRTUAL: February 15-20,**

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*"Teamwork makes our Ag Societies Strong."*

