

**Ministry of Agriculture,  
Food and Rural Affairs**

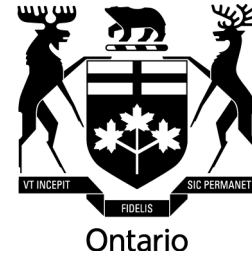
Office of the Minister

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**Ministère de l'Agriculture, de  
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Jason Verkaik  
Chair, AgriCorp  
1 Stone Rd W  
Guelph, ON  
N1G 4Y2

Dear Mr. Verkaik;

As you begin planning for 2021-22, I am pleased to write to you in your capacity as Chair of the AgriCorp Board of Directors to provide you with a letter setting out expectations and direction for AgriCorp in the year ahead. Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for AgriCorp for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Ontario's board-governed agencies are vital partners in ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to Ontarians. The work that you and your fellow board members undertake to establish the goals, objectives, and strategic direction for AgriCorp ensures that the agency successfully delivers agricultural programs. It is important that this direction is consistent with government priorities, the agency's mandate, key policies and directives and my directions, where appropriate. I thank you for your willingness to serve.

The COVID-19 outbreak brought challenges that were out of the ordinary for all of us to deal with. AgriCorp demonstrated responsiveness and flexibility in recognizing stakeholder challenges and working with the ministry to develop and implement solutions. Our collective experiences during the pandemic to date have reinforced our need to continually re-examine how both the ministry structures and how AgriCorp delivers our programs. Through these challenges we need to continue to find opportunities for improvement.

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As an Operational Enterprise agency of government, I expect that AgriCorp functions in a way that brings private sector efficiencies to the work of government. This view translates in to every aspect of your agency's processes, from empowering employees to resolve issues as they arise, through to streamlining internal approvals and reducing internal and external red-tape.

As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers. This includes:

**1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management**

- operating within your agency's allocations
- identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation as directed, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability
- identifying and pursuing efficiencies and savings
- complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, Realty Interim Measures and Agency Office Location Criteria
- continuing to address the recommendations of the Agency Review Task Force

**2. Transparency and Accountability**

- abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting
- adhering to requirements of the Agencies and Appointment Directive, and responding to audit findings, where applicable
- identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability
- setting out performance measurement expectations publicly and clearly and subsequently reporting back on them
- incorporating in the Board's review of senior management's performance the achievement of the agency's performance measures

**3. Risk Management**

- developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks, including planning for and responding to emergency situations such as COVID-19

**4. Workforce Management**

- optimizing your agency's workforce to enable efficient and effective fulfilment of government priorities, while enhancing customer service standards
- streamlining back office functions to ensure that all available resources are redirected towards the critical front-line services that Ontarians depend upon

## 5. **Data Collection**

- improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting, including by leveraging available or new data solutions to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery.
- supporting transparency and data sharing with the ministry, as appropriate.

## 6. **Digital Delivery and Customer Service**

- exploring and implementing digitization or digital modernization strategies for the provision of services online and continuing to meet and exceed customer service standards through transition
- using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including COVID-19

In addition to these government-wide priorities, I expect AgriCorp to focus on:

- Continue to prioritize providing a high-level of front-line services, in-line with national comparators as applicable in the programs the agency delivers;
- Continue to look for ways to reduce burden on the agriculture sector by streamlining application processes and tightening delivery timelines;
- Support the Ministry's efforts as requested in program policy and design, including any changes resulting from Federal-Provincial-Territorial decisions affecting Business Risk Management programs;
- Work closely with industry to ensure that Production Insurance (PI) plans continue to meet their needs, and with the ministry to ensure any PI plan enhancements are properly prioritized and aligned with government objectives;
- Complete the implementation of both the Production Insurance IT system (AIM) and the Farm Business Registration program IT system;
- In concert with the ministry, work to ensure that changes to the 2021 Risk Management Program are implemented and delivered to producers effectively;
- Update Business Continuity Plans each year and submit to the ministry in Q1.

I look forward to the continued partnership between AgriCorp and the ministry and seeing your delivery and financial targets and results on the above items set out in your Business Plan and reported through your Annual Report.

Through these measures, we can continue to ensure that AgriCorp is continuing to fulfill the agency's legislated mandate.

I thank you and your fellow board members for your continued support, and for your valuable contributions. Should you have any questions/concerns, please feel free to contact David Hagarty, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Division.

Sincerely,

Ernie Hardeman  
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs