

June 1, 2015



To: The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier  
Of Ontario  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

To: The Honourable Jeff Leal, Minister of  
Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
1 Stone Road West  
Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2

## **Re: Request for Release of the Northern Consultation Report and Recommendations held on February 10, 2015**

Dear Honourable Wynne:

The Chicken Farmers of Ontario held a number of stakeholder consultations over the last six months to determine appropriate ways to expand chicken production. We were very encouraged that a northern consultation was held on February 10, 2015.

A clear message arose from the northern consultation; participants want locally produced and processed chickens available to consumers who live in Northern Ontario. We are requesting your support to encourage the Chicken Farmers of Ontario to release the consultant's report. We met in good faith that this consultation report would be publicly released.

The current provincial chicken industry's barriers to the growth of the northern development that were identified through this consultation were vast. These included but were not limited to high entry cost to quota purchase and development, limitations to small flock and niche market production, and lack of adequate processing. Addressing these barriers include the following: raise small flock exemption level ie. non-quota producers able to raise more birds/year; establish a smaller minimum northern quota with options for coop ownership of quota; and enhancing processor capacity to meet demands for producers and consumers.

Over the course of the northern consultation, participants were adamant that production and processing in northern Ontario are unlikely to increase until the rules around raising chickens are changed. Moreover, there was expressed concern that solely focusing future growth in the poultry sector in areas of the province with already established producers would be a missed opportunity to encourage economic development and improvements in food security across the province. (see attached chart of key opportunities and challenges identified)

It is through these consultations that a common voice was formed asking for change to the present system which would see:

- To develop a chicken industry in the North which addresses the needs of all communities and provides varied entry points for production and processing.
- To evaluate system models which will provide that all farmers, large and small, can legally produce volumes of chicken that is economically viable for their operation
- To ensure that all communities have access to an adequate supply of locally produced chicken
- To support the development of a robust, diverse and viable agriculture industry in the North

It is through our cooperation between communities and government that we can find solutions to develop the Northern chicken industry over the coming years. This report is but the first stage in this process.

While we understand that decisions such as this will take time, we thank you for your immediate attention to our request for the release of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario consultant's report on the northern stakeholders meeting held February 10, 2015.

Respectfully,

Eat Local Sudbury Co-operative Inc. on behalf of:

#### **Organizations**

##### **Algoma Soil and Crop Improvement Assoc.**

*Secretary– Tim Harris*

##### **Cloverbelt Local Food Co-op**

*President Jen Springett,*

##### **Cloverbelt Farmers Market**

*President -Beth Zurbrigg*

##### **Food Security Research Network**

*Connie Nelson*

##### **Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council**

*Co-Chair – Bridget King*

##### **Kenora District Soil and Crop Assoc.**

*President Martin Sherwood*

##### **Muskoka North Good Food Cooperative**

*Chair, Kelly Picken*

##### **Rural Agri-Innovation Network**

*Coordinator – David Thompson*

##### **Rainy River District Regional Abattoir Inc.**

*Bill Darby*

##### **Sustain Ontario**

*Interim Director – Carolyn Young*

##### **Sudbury Social Planning Council**

*Executive Director – Joseph Leblanc*

#### **Farmers**

##### **Burt Farms**

*Max Burt*

##### **Field Good Farms**

*Ryan Spence and Isabelle Legault*

##### **Mile Hill Farms**

*Renata Weber*

##### **Rowantree Farms**

*Allison Muckle*

##### **Santosha Farm**

*Julia Sutton*

##### **Three Forks Farm**

*Eric Blondin and Peggy Baillie*

## Highlights from the eight Northern Consultations on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### Key opportunities that could be developed

- Northern Economic development through: new businesses, market development, import replacement and job creation
- Development of niche markets
- Industry innovation
- Collaboration amongst producers, communities and processors

### Key Challenges with Present System

- Lack of Northern Chicken Industry
- Low small flock productions volume (not inline with other canadian provinces production regulations)
- Lack of infrastucture to support small to medium scale production and processing
- The system is "southern centric", built for southern ontario farmers without acknowledging the opporunties of the north.
- Limitations to small, niche and alternative forms of production
- Restrictive for entry level farmer