

Federation of Agriculture is ready to get to work with new government

By Mark Wales

President

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

In a surprising turn, Ontarians voted in a majority Liberal government, returning Kathleen Wynne as Premier.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) extends our congratulations to Wynne and her party, and were particularly encouraged to hear her declare 'the government has work to do' after her win election night.

OFA will continue building relationships and working with all three legislative parties. And we're looking forward to four years of stability. A majority government provides OFA with the opportunity to make headway with issues and concerns affecting our farm business members. We're ready to work with the new cabinet. And will be watching the budget closely to be sure the investments committed to rural infrastructure are spent appropriately.

While provincial candidates were campaigning for their seats, OFA was building support for agriculture and rural Ontario on all party platforms. We introduced our Growing Ontario campaign, successfully engaging with 167 candidates to acknowledge the significant economic impact the agri-food sector provides to our province. And we're happy to report, 44 Growing Ontario campaign supporters were successfully elected, and that means more than one third of Ontario's MPPs already support Ontario's agri-food sector.

Our campaign focused on four key issues that need support in order for agriculture to continue growing and providing economic strength in Ontario. Election candidates were educated on the importance of competitively priced energy, fair farm property taxation, increased food literacy and the need to support agri-skills training. In the true spirit of Growing Ontario, OFA will continue to push these issues with the new government, working for our 37,000 members to deliver the legislative tools our industry needs for growth and sustainability.

This new government brings some changes, and we thank former PC leader Tim Hudak for his attention and understanding of agriculture and rural concerns.

OFA is ready to get back to work to keep the spotlight on the agri-food sector at Queen's Park. We can't wait to get started, working with the new majority government and both opposition parties, to build even bigger and better growth opportunities for Ontario's agri-food sector.