

MPP Sylvia Jones 'encouraged' by recent beef-sector investment

Written By MIKE BAKER

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones has welcomed two recent announcements that she says display the provincial government's support for Ontario's cattle farmers and abattoirs.

In a joint endeavour supported by the federal government, up to \$2 million is being invested to support numerous projects and initiatives that will help bolster Ontario's beef sector.

One of those programs, Ms. Jones says, will provide an opportunity for cost-share funding for provincially licensed abattoirs to take on a variety of projects to improve food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity measures at their operations. In another venture, the Province is investing up to \$292,600 to help Ontario's beef farmers with marketing efforts to access emerging markets in Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and Europe.

The cost-shared project, the Province believes, will encourage export-market diversification and supports efforts to increase volume and sales through trade missions, promotional events and the development of new brands.

'The news for beef farmers and local abattoirs in Dufferin-Caledon is encouraging,' Ms. Jones said. 'These initiatives will help secure economic growth in our local beef industry, and support provincially licensed abattoirs by improving food safety.'

The initiatives are funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). The application intake for abattoirs opened on Feb. 19, with applications accepted until April 30. Eligible projects must be completed on or before Dec. 31 of this year.

Some examples of projects eligible for support under the abattoirs initiative include capital upgrades for enhanced food safety, improvements in the safe handling and housing of animals and the purchase of new equipment for safe and efficient animal-hides disposal.

Since June 2018, both the federal and provincial government have committed cost-share support to approximately 2,500 projects through the CAP to help Ontario farmers, processors, businesses and sector organizations innovate and grow.

Ernie Hardeman, Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, lauded the investment in a release to media this week.

'By making these investments, our government will strengthen and grow provincially licensed abattoirs, while further improving our already high food safety standards,' he said. 'We're also working with the province's beef industry in seeking out new markets for Ontario's beef farmers. Looking to diversify and build new markets is an important step to ensure the success of the industry.'