

THINKGREEN 2025

OFC ANNUAL REPORT



OPENING REMARKS

As we celebrate another year of Ontario Forage Council (OFC) achievements and successes, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the people who helped us develop and deliver the activities covered in the pages of this report.

To the OFC Directors, thank you for your dedication to attending Board meetings to provide direction and leadership to the organization. The input, ideas, and producer voice that you bring to each meeting are invaluable in ensuring OFC is servicing the industry in a meaningful way.

To the ON Grazing Mentors, thank you for sharing your knowledge, time, and farms with us and so many producers! Your contributions to the Grazing Mentorship Program, and the Community Pastures Initiative are helping many producers achieve their grazing goals!

To our many friends at OMAFA, your support and resources are truly appreciated! A special thank you to Christine O'Reilly who is not only an ex-officio member of OFC but is often a hands-on participant in many of OFC's webinars and tours! We appreciate you!

To the OFC Members, without your support, none of this is possible. It is through industry collaboration, and stakeholder contribution that the staff at OFC can deliver the myriad of activities year after year. Thank you!

And to Rebecca Vito, OFC Communications Manager, thank you for not realizing we can't afford you!

Patricia Ellingwood

OFC General Manager



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The OFC Board of Directors consists of up to a maximum of 12 Directors, with representation from Beef Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Sheep Farmers, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, and Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. There are 6 additional seats from members in good standing, and two ex-officio seats for the University of Guelph and OMAFA.

Thank you to this year's Board!

Joe Dickenson

President
Individual Member

Travis Grubb

1st Vice-president
Kubota Canada

Michael Richards

2nd Vice-president
Ontario Sheep Farmers

Birgit Martin

Past President
Individual Member

Kerrie Jenken

Ontario Soil & Crop
Improvement Association

Scott Fisher

DLF Canada

Jake Gregory

CanGrow Crop Solutions

Lawrence Levesque

Speare Seeds

Brian Burnett

Dairy Farmers of Ontario

Denise Byers

Beef Farmers of Ontario

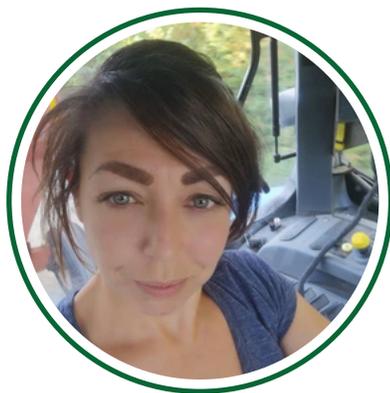
Donna Hancock

Ex-Officio
University of Guelph

Christine O'Reilly

Ex-Officio
OMAF

OFC STAFF



Patricia Ellingwood

General Manager



Rebecca Vito

Communications Manager

MEMBERSHIP

OFC would not exist without the support of its members. Thank you for continued efforts to help the Ontario forage industry year after year!

GOLD MEMBERS



SILVER MEMBERS



Membership Levels

- Gold Members
 - Silver Members
 - Ontario Hay Marketing Forum
 - Individual Members
- Learn more at ONForageNetwork.ca

OFC brings together organizations and individuals passionate about the future of forages in Ontario. In 2025 we hosted events that reached across the forage industry. **Learn more about becoming a member at onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/ontario-forage-council-members/.**



At Canada's Outdoors Farm Show in September, we ran Forage Quest, a scavenger hunt to find OFC members. Participants picked up a game card and went around to each member's booth to collect a sticker. Bringing a full card back to the OFC booth earned them an It Depends t-shirt. It took participants about three hours to visit each booth, with 50 people completing the challenge!



COMMUNICATIONS

In 2025 OFC saw continued growth with our communications strategy. Online event listings, social media, and The Forage Update were the top ways people found out about OFC events.

The Forage Update

OFC's monthly email newsletter shares information about OFC's events and other happenings, forage industry news, and other upcoming events. *Subscribe at onforagenetwork.ca/subscribe and check Ontario Forage Council.*

Social Media

Follow OFC on social media to get all the latest updates, especially for upcoming events.

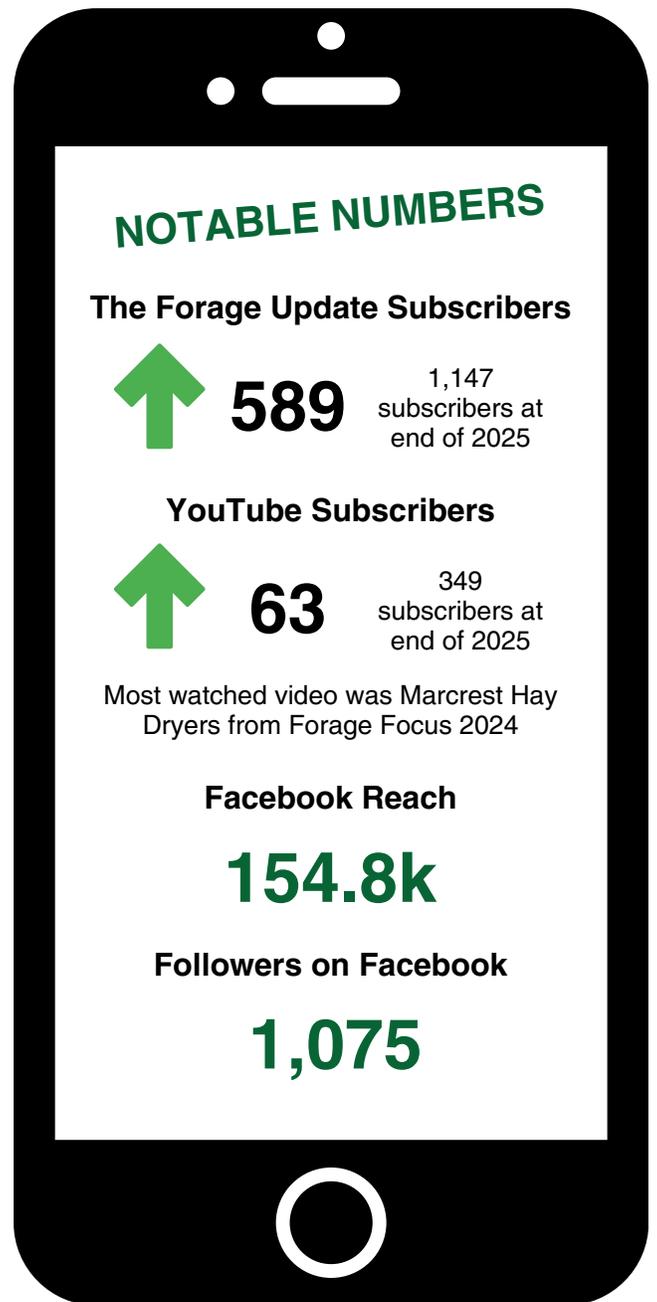


YouTube

Most OFC webinars are recorded and shared on our YouTube channel. *Visit the channel at www.youtube.com/@ontarioforagecouncil.*

Website

The place to find all information about OFC, its members, programs, and OFC events. Also the home of Ontario Hay Listings, the hay version of Kijiji. *Visit ONForageNetwork.ca.*



In 2024 a fun little graphic started showing up in OFC social media posts to promote The Forage Update. Eventually, he started making his presence known elsewhere and hit the big time in 2025 as the star of OFC's It Depends t-shirts. OFC had a mascot. The only problem was, he didn't have a name. In December 2025 we asked our followers to give us suggestions and we'd pick our favourite.

Twenty-two suggestions later, our mascot was dubbed Sprout. With 5 entries for the name a draw was held and the winner was Jake Ringelberg. Thanks for naming the OFC mascot!

OFC CORE PROGRAMS

OFC's events kick off each year with the **Profitable Pastures Webinar Series**, held from March 4th to March 6th in 2025. Topics included the Grazing Network Group with Jim Whitley, What Grass Wants with Dr. Eric Lyons and Dr. Marcus V. Talamini Jr., and Special Considerations for Grazing Sheep and Dairy Cows with Christine O'Reilly.



Forage Expo took center-stage in Bruce County on June 26th at Trelford Farms outside of Paisley. Although Forage Expo doesn't usually return to the same area in quick succession, the 2023 event received such a deluge that all involved felt it was time for redemption in 2025. Unfortunately, rain once again showed up and prevented in-field demonstrations. Farmers are an adaptable bunch, though, and the event pivoted to longer discussions with sales reps at static machinery.

A busy day of forage equipment demonstrations was paired with OFC's Annual General Meeting and a visit from Parliamentary Assistant Paul Vickers to announce the Community Pasture Initiative. Forage Expo was a full day in 2025 and OFC could have done it without the help of our partners, Bruce County Soil & Crop and OMAFA.

The **Forage Focus Webinar Series** closed out the core OFC programs for 2025, happening December 2nd to 4th. Topics included Triticale: The Comeback Kid with Joanna Follings, Drones in Forages: A Digested Breakdown of Their Advantages with Adrian Rivard & Mike Verhoog, and From Dry to Thrive: Forage Fixes for Future Fortitude with Christine O'Reilly.

BY THE NUMBERS

Profitable Pastures nightly registrations:

Night 1 - 168, Night 2 - 152, Night 3 - 148

Forage Focus nightly registrations:

Night 1 - 154, Night 2 - 135, Night 3 - 143

Forage Expo Numbers

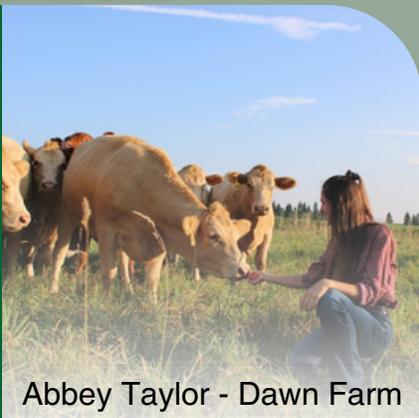
Number of people: Roughly 300

Pieces of equipment: 37

Trade show exhibitors: 13

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 DLF PASTURE AWARD WINNERS!

BEEF



Abbey Taylor - Dawn Farm

Learn more about the winners and the award on our website.



SHEEP



Gayla Bonham Carter & Scott Bade - Footflats Farm

ADDITIONAL 2025 PROGRAMMING



OFC is pleased to be delivering the **Community Pastures Initiative** as part of the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP) under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

Through this \$5 million investment from the governments of Canada and Ontario, this initiative will help to rejuvenate the community pastures, making them more productive and resilient.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering more carbon, and increasing other ecological goods and services through enhanced pasture management practices and the creation or enhancement of natural features are the focus of this initiative.

Learn more at onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/community-pastures-initiative/

Partnering with Canadian Forage & Grasslands Association (CFGA) and Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS), OFC was able to offer Grazing Plan Workshops through the Advanced Grazing Mentorship Program. Ontario Grazing Mentors took participants through topics including herd plan, carrying capacity, using a grazing plan template, paddock design, planning for contingency, and mapping.



This workshop was also offered to support producers with OFCAF applications. A total of 174 people webt through all the workshops. **At the end of 2025 plans were being developed to turn this workshop into an online course.**

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FOR SPONSORING OFC PROGRAMS IN 2025!

- Trillium Mutual Insurance
- Ontario Sheep Farmers
- Beef Farmers of Ontario
- Porteous Russell Real Estate
- Range Ward
- CanGrow Crop Solutions
- Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association
- DLF Canada
- Good To Go Shade Shelters
- Kubota Canada
- Quality Seeds
- International Stock Food
- FCC
- Nuhn Forage Inc
- Maple Lane Farm Service
- Marcrest Manufacturing
- Vermeer
- Silo-King

FORAGE RESEARCH PRIORITY SETTING

In November of 2025 OFC brought together forage industry stakeholders, from producers, to researchers, and other industry partners, to update Ontario's forage and grazing research priorities.



The session was facilitated by the Livestock Research Innovation Corporation (LRIC) and explored different priorities that were aligned under three categories:

- 1 – Breeding research
- 2 – Management research
- 3 – Research demonstrating the economic and societal value of expanding forage acres

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of all involved, a road map was developed to help guide future research, collaboration, and KTT initiatives.

Some highlights from the Road Map include:

Research That Should Be Done Nationally

- Forage breeding (national breeding and testing programs)
- Determine how much carbon is sequestered when converting cropland to perennial forage

Research That Should Be Done Provincially

- Test varieties for Ontario, tracking traits such as drought tolerance, climate resilience, digestibility, disease resistance, and winterkill resilience
- Determine the economic impact a perennial forage crop provides on the yield of other crops, soil health, and the societal benefits associated with increased hay acres
- Compile data package on crop fertility to support updated forage crop nutrient
- Evaluate alternative methods for making or storing forages, including options that reduce or eliminate single use plastic

Where To Focus KTT Efforts

- Provide evidence showing that cash crop producers benefit economically from grazing cover crops and/or crop residue
- Share best management practices for forage crops as they become available to encourage forage production
- Evaluate and communicate best practices for drone seeding to extend the grazing period, including species selection and management recommendations



Find the full report and Road Map at onforagenetwork.ca/2026/02/18/ontario-forage-research-priorities-report-2025/



OFC was on the go in 2025 and got to see a lot of our beautiful province.



We went to Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in Woodstock, Ontario Sheep Farmers Field Day in Orono, the Tours & Tailgate Supper hosted by the Temiskaming Community Pasture and the Ontario Crops and Beef Research Stations, tours at the Grey Dufferin Community Pasture, a Field Day at the Thunder Bay Community Pasture, and Forage and Pasture Night at the Ontario Crop Research Centre in Elora.



OFC Staff and Grazing Mentors visited 10 of the Community Pastures for the Community Pastures Initiative.

We were invited to several ag industry events, with staff and Board members attending all they could.

The Community Pastures Initiative was nearing the start of project implementation on several pastures as the year drew to a close.



At the end of 2025, several new exciting opportunities presented themselves. Look out for more webinars, in field events, and the introduction of online courses in 2026.





ONForageNetwork.ca



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Providing leadership, education, collaboration, and advocacy for the Ontario forage industry