



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Provincial Funding is Massive Support for Ontario's Agritourism Sector

Dec. 2, 2024- (Niagara, ON) With the support of the provincial government, Ontario's leading agritourism association is taking giant steps to grow the sector across Ontario.

Agritourism Ontario (formerly Farm Fresh Ontario) is heading into 2025 with a new name and look that is more reflective of what the association does. It is also taking on some big projects thanks to the support of Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.

"Agritourism is such a dynamic and growing part of Ontario's nearly \$51 billion agri-food sector. There are so many engaging, energizing, and fun experiences open to people across our province that reconnects them to their land and soil and inspires them to choose world-class, locally grown food products," said Rob Flack, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. "Thank you, Agritourism Ontario. The work you do plays such a critical role in building up the momentum we're seeing across our province's agritourism sector and communicates Ontario's amazing agri-food story, which employs over 871,000 men and women."

The nearly \$345,000 in funding over three years will help Agritourism Ontario (AO) develop a first-of-its-kind app that will more easily connect families to farms. The funds will also help develop an economic growth study that will for the first time, give a detailed and accurate analysis of where agritourism is and its potential for growth in the province. Funds will also support a marketing strategy and farm visit awareness campaign as well as supporting agritourism operators through professional development workshops, webinars and events for AO members. Agritourism Ontario's board chair Darlene Downey of Downey's Farm in Caledon, said the funding is crucial to help the association grow the sector. "We are very grateful to Minister Flack for his support. There is so much growth potential in our sector and this funding will go a long way in helping us reach that potential."

"We welcome families onto our property and connect them with agriculture," Downey explained. "Children have fun while learning about local food and products. It's a special connection and through this extraordinary support we can continue to grow and showcase Ontario agriculture."

With nearly 300 members plus associate members, Agritourism Ontario is the only association in Ontario solely dedicated to supporting farmers in agritourism and advocating for the sector. Originally founded in 1973 as the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association, AO helps its members improve profitability through a variety of channels including marketing, education, promotion, professional development, and advocacy.

Contact:

Kevin Vallier  
Chief Executive Officer  
Agritourism Ontario  
905-321-8525  
[kevin@agritourismontario.com](mailto:kevin@agritourismontario.com)