

National Farmers Union Ontario
5420 Hwy 6 N.,
R.R. 5, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2
coordinator@nfuontario.ca



Hon. Dwight Duncan
Minister of Finance,
7 Queen's Park Crescent, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M74 1Y7
dduncan.mpp@liberal.ola.org

March 20, 2012

Dear Minister Duncan:

The National Farmers Union (NFU) is an accredited general farm organization in Ontario. Our members are family farms from across Ontario, who grow and raise a variety of crops and livestock, including hay and horses.

The National Farmers Union is asking your ministry to continue to support the horse racing industry in Ontario through the revenue sharing agreement. The present revenue sharing agreement provides economic benefits to farmers directly involved in the horse racing industry, to farmers and rural communities through spin-offs, to municipalities (mostly rural) who host race tracks, and to the Province of Ontario.

The decision to move slots out of racetracks and into other privately owned facilities will have a significant economic impact across rural Ontario. Without support, it is likely racetracks will close, leading to a loss of income to those directly involved in horse racing, including registered farms. However, as a farm organization, the NFU is also concerned about the economic ripple effects the loss of horse racing will have:

- on the farmers who supply hay, grain and straw to the 65,000 horses involved in the horse racing industry. These are crops that are particularly suitable, due to their growth habits, for protecting our soil and contributing to biodiversity;
- on rural tradesmen, like farriers, many of whom are farmers earning extra income to support their farm;
- on rural infrastructure which is also used by a variety of other farmers, like feed mills;
- on farmers who either use horses for transportation or board pleasure horses, which have retired from or did not make the grade as race horses;
- on municipalities which host race tracks and use their portion of the revenue sharing agreement to the benefit of their communities;
- on rural businesses, like restaurants, who benefit from the the tourism and entertainment dollars associated with the racetracks in their communities.

Horse racing in Ontario has a long history and makes a significant contribution to the fabric of rural Ontario. The National Farmers Union urges the Ministry of Finance to continue a revenue sharing agreement with the horse racing industry, to protect jobs, economic opportunities and infrastructure in rural Ontario.

Your sincerely,

Ann Slater, Coordinator, National Farmers Union in Ontario

c.c. Premier Dalton McGuinty, Honourable Ted McMeekin
c.ci. Mr. Tim Hudak, Ms. Andrea Horwath
c.cii. OHHA