



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29th, 2012

The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS) wishes to acknowledge the OMAFRA Panel's report on horse racing. Horse racing is a very important component of many of the agricultural societies across this province and the OAAS is very concerned about the potential economic impact of losing this industry.

While the OAAS does not necessarily agree with all the comments in the report, it is appreciative of the majority of the findings.

The OAAS agrees with the panel that horse racing is a very important sector of the agricultural industry in Ontario and needs to be preserved for future generations. The OAAS also agrees with the panel that the cancellation of the Slots at Racetrack Program (SARP) without replacing it with some other funding option will translate into horse racing ceasing to exist in Ontario. Like the panel, the OAAS is also very concerned about the loss of thousands of jobs and potential loss of life of thousands of racehorses if the provincial government does not replace the SARP with a sustainable funding model. The OAAS also acknowledges and agrees with the panel's recommendation that the replacement program needs to ensure transparency, accountability, performance and benchmarking targets within the industry.

The agricultural societies that currently offer horse racing are committed to ensuring that funding received through the existing SARP or any future replacement funding program is reinvested into the industry and the local communities. The not-for-profit nature of agricultural societies ensures this fact.

The OAAS is committing to working with the provincial government and the horse racing industry to develop a sustainable business model that includes significant public investment that will ensure that horse racing continues to be an important part of the rural way of life for years to come.

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