



## Ontario Agri Business Association

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April 12, 2012

Honourable Dwight Duncan  
Minister of Finance  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Frost Building South  
7 Queen's Park Crescent  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1Y7  
[dduncan.mpp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dduncan.mpp@liberal.ola.org)

Dear Minister Duncan,

The Ontario Agri Business Association (OABA) is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization that serves to represent the interests of crop input retailers, country grain elevator operators and feed manufacturer members working out of 331 locations and employing over 8,000 people in rural communities across Ontario.

OABA members are very concerned about recent announcements regarding the future of the slots-at-racetracks partnership. OABA's members benefit from a dynamic equine sector in the province and a decision to eliminate the slots-at-racetracks program would have a significant, negative impact on many of our member businesses.

A number of our member firms depend on the equine sector and the horse racing industry in particular for their success. The growth of the racing industry has been very beneficial at a time when feed production targeting traditional livestock and poultry sectors is in decline. The harness racing industry alone is worth over \$30 million to Ontario's feed manufacturers, distributors and retailers. Equine feed tonnage lost due to this government decision will not be replaced and will potentially result in the loss of jobs at our member facilities.

The slots-at-racetracks program has been a successful government/industry partnership that has helped create a vital and sustainable horse racing industry in Ontario. This has resulted in positive economic spinoffs for a number of stakeholders throughout rural economies. OABA strongly encourages the government to reconsider changes to the slots-at-racetracks program. Rural Ontario cannot afford to lose an important economic driver like the horse racing industry.

Respectfully submitted,

ONTARIO AGRI BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Dave Battenham".

David Battenham  
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario  
Brian Tropea, General Manager, Ontario Harness Horse Association

*"Representing the Crop Input, Grain and Feed Industry"*  
[www.oaba.on.ca](http://www.oaba.on.ca)