

### OLPC Board Elections

OLPC held its annual meeting on June 16, 2023. Gord Coukell was acclaimed as Chair. The Vice-Chair will be elected by the Board at their July meeting.

#### Term Expires 2024

Minor Livestock – Kendra Keels,  
Veal Farmers of Ontario  
Individual Agri-Business – Julie  
Harlow, Angus GeoSolutions Inc.  
Agriculture and Food Associations  
and Coalitions – Jean Howden,  
LRIC

#### Terms Expires 2025

Major Livestock – Alex Hamilton,  
Dairy Farmers of Ontario  
Poultry – Klaus Schneeberger,  
OBHECC  
Veterinarian Associations – Steve  
Roche, Acer Consulting

### New Member

Christian Farmers Federation of  
Ontario was accepted as a new  
OLPC member.

### OLPC 2023 Membership Meetings

- August 18, 2023 – virtual,  
shortened agenda
- October 13, 2023 – in-person  
at Beef Farmers of Ontario in  
Guelph
- December 15, 2023, virtual

### Toronto Public Health Unit Reports 117% Increase in Raccoon Bites

As of May 31, the Toronto Public  
Health Unit has received 88 reports  
of people being bitten and/or  
scratched by raccoons. This is a  
117% increase in reports for 2023  
compared to the previous five-year  
average between 2018 to 2022.

In 2023, more than 80% of the  
individuals bitten and/or scratched  
by raccoons received rabies post-  
exposure prophylaxis treatment, a

### Livestock Disasters and Animal Rescue Response

Dr. Chris Riley, Department of Clinical Studies, Ontario Veterinary College gave a presentation to OLPC members at the June meeting regarding his work in New Zealand with the Massey University Veterinary Emergency Response Team (VERT). VERT is a voluntary specialist team, able to conduct technical animal rescues and perform in-field veterinary treatment and disaster assessment. The team provides technical rescue and/or emergency treatment of single animals or mass causality events such as flood and wildfire rescue.

Team members are small and large animal veterinarians, veterinary technologists, experienced animal handlers, and others passionate about animal welfare and technical animal rescue. Recognizing the gap in infrastructure for the care and welfare of animals in disasters and rescues in New Zealand, VERT was formed in 2010 and was the first veterinary emergency response team in Australasia.

### Canadian Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine Bank

The March 2023 federal budget included CFIA receiving \$57.5 million over five years to set up a FMD vaccine bank with another \$5.6 million for annual operating funds. If vaccination was to be used during a FMD outbreak, it is estimated that Canada would require 2.5 million doses of vaccine. However, we currently only have access to 300,000 doses from the North America FMD vaccine bank, a joint initiative of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. CFIA will maintain 12 antigens at potentially two sites, Merial at Lyons and at a lab in South America. A vaccine distribution and response strategy will also be prepared.

### Equine Influenza at Six Quebec Facilities

Horses in six regions in Quebec have been confirmed positive for equine influenza. All six affected stables are epidemiologically linked to two Standardbred racing events. The horses are located in MRC Pierre-de-Saurel, MRC Bécancour, MRC Joliette, MRC Les Maskoutains, and Trois-Rivières.

Equine influenza is a highly contagious respiratory disease. Clinical signs can include a high fever (up to 106°F); a dry, hacking cough; depression; weakness; anorexia; serous (watery) nasal discharge; and slightly enlarged lymph nodes. Vaccination is an important and inexpensive protection against the disease.

### Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED) in Ontario

Ontario has reported eight outbreaks of PED from May 29 to June 9, 2023, in various farm types, from nurseries, to farrow-to-wean, and finisher operations.

### African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Caribbean

The USDA has pulled back ASF eradication funding from the island of Hispaniola (encompassing the Dominican Republic and Haiti). They are shifting their focus from an eradication strategy to more of a chronic management strategy as the disease is now viewed as endemic on the island. The USDA will use the remaining funds to protect U.S. borders from ASF.

The Dominican Republic will be starting to apply the NAVET-ASFVAC vaccine, developed by Vietnamese and US scientists. Efforts will focus initially on market pigs eight to 10 weeks of age before scaling up to cover 100% of the country's pigs.

series of multiple vaccine doses as raccoons are a high-risk vector for rabies transmission.

### Rabies Numbers in Canada for 2023

During the first five months of 2023, there have been 744 samples submitted for rabies testing from across Canada. Nationally, 35 samples tested positive. Ontario accounted for 457 samples of which 11 tested positive. The breakdown from which species the positive samples were taken are as follows:

	Can.	Ont.
Arctic fox	7	
Bat	10	5
Bovine	1	
Dog	3	
Raccoon	2	
Red fox	3	
Skunk	9	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>11</b>

### Repository of Agriculture Scholarships and Bursaries

Many organizations and businesses have established scholarships and bursaries to support youth with an interest or passion in following a career in agriculture. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has tried to make it a little easier for folks to find these opportunities by creating a central location to file them <https://ofa.on.ca/resources/agricultural-scholarships/>

### Gene Editing Technology Produces First BVDV-Resistant Calf

A recently published study in *PNAS Nexus* reported that U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists, utilizing CRISPR, a gene-editing tool, have created the first gene-edited calf with resistance to BVDV. Scientists modified the gene cell (CD46), which binds the virus to that receptor and causes infection in cattle. The first CD46 gene-edited calf was born in July 2022 and has shown reduced susceptibility to BVDV. The scientists will continue to closely observe the calf's health and ability to produce and raise her own calves.

The signs of Bovine viral diarrhoea virus (BVDV) vary, depending on the immune status of the exposed animals, and the strain of the infecting virus. If non-vaccinated animals are infected with a virulent strain of the virus, the disease will likely appear as an acute, severe sickness, with bloody diarrhoea, high fever (105–107 °F), off-feed, mouth ulcers, and often pneumonia. Some infected animals may die, while others will recover, usually within one or two weeks. Occasionally an animal will die very quickly before other signs are apparent. Since BVDV is a viral disease, antibiotics are ineffective.

BVDV can be disastrous to pregnant cows because it can infect developing calves, causing spontaneous abortions and low birth rates. Some infected calves survive to birth and remain infected for life, shedding massive amounts of virus to other cattle. Despite more than 50 years of vaccine availability, controlling BVDV disease remains a problem since vaccines are not always effective in stopping transmission.

### Updated Canadian Livestock Transport Training Program

Animal Health Canada has significantly updated the Canadian Livestock Transport (CLT) certification program, a comprehensive training course for livestock and poultry transporters, shippers and receivers. Enrolment is now open on its newly launched e-learning platform at <https://campus.animalhealthcanada.ca/>.

Recognized across Canada and the United States, CLT is an easily accessible, standardized online program offering humane animal transportation certification. The update, based on the most recent regulations, revamped the core training materials to make the training program more engaging and user-friendly.

### National Transport Code of Practice

The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) launched a revision of the 2001 Transport Code in 2018 but the process stalled in 2021/2022 and was formally paused in March 2023 when the government funding expired.

There were many reasons for the permanent pause of the revision process; the two most significant were the new transport regulations and no national champion. After the revision project was announced, the Health of Animals Act transportation regulations were revised. That content essentially covered everything that would be in the Code. It then became difficult to envision the role or purpose of an updated Code. There are also pre-transportation sections in all 11 of the other on-farm animal production Codes.

In addition, national Codes supported by NFACC typically have a national association to champion it. There is no national animal transport association so no entity to “sign off” on the content and encourage adoption.

### Our Mission

Provide a forum to facilitate the development and coordination of an Ontario strategy to deal with foreign animal disease and other transmissible livestock and poultry diseases.