



Welcome back!

Grievance settlement returns contract meat inspectors to the OPS – and OPSEU

Seven years after being privatized by the Mike Harris Tories, Ontario's contract meat inspectors are coming back into the Ontario Public Service.

In a grievance settlement ratified Thursday, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food agreed to post public service jobs for 118 meat inspectors. The new public employees will join the 10 Agricultural Specialists already working for OMAF in over 200 provincially-inspected abattoirs.

"We applaud the new Liberal government for fulfilling this campaign promise," said OPSEU president Leah Casselman. "This settlement recognizes the work of the people who do one of the toughest, bloodiest, and most important jobs in Ontario. It's a crucial first step in stabilizing and revitalizing our meat safety system to protect the health of all Ontarians."

After the Alberta "mad cow" scare in May and the Aylmer Meat Packers scandal in August, meat safety became a burning issue during the recent provincial election campaign. Both the Liberals and the New Democrats promised to bring meat inspectors back into the public service.

The contract inspectors' wages have been frozen at 1993 levels. Reimbursement for expenses, such as use of their own vehicle for work purposes, has been sporadic at best. But as Agricultural Specialists, the successful applicants will now have collective agreement rights, in

some cases for the first time in their lives.

To view the settlement, visit <http://www.opseu.org/ops/meat/scan.pdf>.

Grievance process rolls on

The meat inspectors' settlement is just the latest in a series of victories that have brought a total of 273 positions back into the OPSEU bargaining unit this year. OPSEU's "bargaining unit integrity" grievance is at mediation/arbitration five days a month.

OPSEU president Leah Casselman wrote to Premier Dalton McGuinty today to urge the government to take immediate steps to speed up the settling of the grievances.

"This process has worked well, but slowly," she wrote. "It needs to be streamlined. Your leadership now could make things move a lot more quickly. By instructing [Management Board Secretariat] and your line Ministries to co-operate fully with each other and the union, you really can strengthen the public service and save money at the same time."

OPSEU members have identified over 2,000 fee-for-service consultants and temp agency workers whose work belongs in the OPSEU bargaining unit. The positions are many and varied, from Systems Officer to Nurse, and in every Ministry.

Casselman said there are more positions in

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OPSEU workplaces that have not yet been identified. She urged OPSEU members to help the Grievance Department with the work.

“If you are working beside someone who is not a public service employee, but should be, let us know,” she said. “A strong public service depends on committed public service employees. The OPS can never provide the service Ontarians expect if it is staffed by people who have no long term commitment to the work we do.”

For more information on the bargaining unit integrity grievance, check the web at

www.opseu.org/ops/frontlines2apr0303.htm and at www.opseu.org/ops/frontlines2apr0303.htm.

To provide new information about temp agency or fee-for-service consultants in your workplace, fill out the stewards’ survey at <http://www.opseu.org/ops/BUIstewardssurveyformApr0303.PDF> and fax it in to the number on the form.

To talk to someone in person about it, contact OPSEU Grievance Officer Laurie Chapman at 1-800-268-7376 ext. 704 or (in the Toronto area) (416) 443-8888 ext. 704.

Get on the list!

You too can receive *FRONTlines*, delivered directly to your very own computer or secure fax machine. Send your request to Jackie Evans at (416) 443-1762, by e-mail to jevans@opseu.org, or by phone at 1-800-268-7376 ext. 675. Please let us know your OPSEU Local number.