

How can you HELP the FARM ECONOMY?

Most city people don't know much about farming, or the food industry. They do understand food, however.

If consumers feel that the meat for sale in their local stores is not safe, they won't buy it. And when they don't buy it, the farm economy suffers.

A Cabinet document obtained by the Toronto Star estimates that Ontario meat products cause 58,000 illnesses a year and cost our health care system \$200 million a year.

Our provincial meat inspection system is part of the problem. It's underfunded. It's poorly managed. It's a hazard to human health.

It's no surprise that consumers are worried. Retailers are worried, too. More and more of them simply refuse to buy - or sell - provincially inspected meat.

A weak provincial meat inspection system is putting the farm economy at risk.

We all want farm products to meet the highest standards of quality and safety. That's why Ontario's contract meat inspectors are calling for a modernized meat inspection system.

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A better system starts with more stability for inspectors. Because of low wages and poor working conditions, up to 30 per cent of contract inspectors quit every year. Large numbers of inexperienced inspectors are on the job. Some are being rushed onto killing floors before they've even completed basic training.

In these circumstances, errors can happen. These errors can be costly - to consumers and producers alike.

The Cabinet document calls for more

permanent professional inspectors. It calls for mandatory training for meat industry workers. It calls on the province to start inspecting processing plants that are now under municipal jurisdiction.

Big improvements are possible - and they're not that difficult.

Ontario food producers need a modern, fully funded meat safety system. It's the best way to protect consumers. It's the best way to protect our farm economy.

Think about FOOD SAFETY when you vote.

