



Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group
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October 27, 2003

The Honorable Steve Peters
Ministry of Agriculture and Food
77 Grenville St., 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M5S 1B3

Sent via Ministry fax: 416-326-3083 and Guelph: 519-826-4335

Dear Mr. Minister;

Please accept our heartiest congratulations on your recent election as MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London and your appointment as our new Minister of Agriculture and Food.

We greatly appreciate all your hard work on food safety issues in recent months and years. We especially appreciate and support your public comments to date on the need to improve Ontario's food safety system.

We are writing to request a meeting with you as soon as possible. We believe our perspective, as contract meat inspectors, is a unique one. We have witnessed first hand the destruction of the food safety system over the past six years. We believe, however, that solutions are available that will vastly improve meat inspection in the province.

We would like an opportunity to discuss with you the need to return meat inspectors to permanent and Crown employee status and the need for new training opportunities for front-line workers. Action now will help resolve the high turnover rate among meat inspectors and immediately strengthen public confidence in food safety, thereby strengthening the farm economy across Ontario as well.

We would also like to discuss your plan to hold a public inquiry into the meat inspection system. We believe the results of our September 2003 phone survey (attached) highlight some of the critical issues that the public inquiry would need to address.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Brian Burdick
(705)741-1703

Earl Yantzi
(519)392-6743

Robert Lowry
(905)357-7881

c.c. Carol Mitchell, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Agriculture and Food