

OPSEU



SEFPO

Syndicat des Employé-e-s
de la Fonction Publique
de l'Ontario

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Presidents and Stewards with members in the Ministry of
Agriculture and Food

FROM: Terry Baxter, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

DATE: April 11, 2005

SUBJECT: **Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Divisional Minutes – January 23, 2005**

Attached, for your information, please find the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

Your making these available to your delegates and members would be appreciated.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:

IN SOLIDARITY,

Leah Casselman
President

Terry Baxter
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

/jm

cc: Executive Board Members
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**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FOOD
DIVISIONAL MEETING**

**2005 DIVISIONAL MEETING
JANUARY 23, 2005
SHERATON CENTRE, TORONTO**

CALL TO ORDER

Sister Diana Liu, Staff Representative, called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

Emily Hitchcock, Vice-Chair, L.232
Phyllis MacMaster, 1st Alternate, L.434
Carolyn Adams-Vining, 3rd Alternate, L.232
Brian Burdick, L.308
Robert Lowry, L.211
Earl Yantzi, L.225
Diana Liu, Staff Representative, Toronto Regional Office

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOTION

Moved: E. Yantzi (L.225) Seconded: C. Adams-Vining (L.232)

That the Agenda be amended to add “election of the Meat Inspectors sub-ERC” before the elections of the MERC.

CARRIED

MOTION

Moved: E. Hitchcock (L.232) Seconded: P. MacMaster (L.434)

To adopt the Agenda as amended.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

MOTION

Moved: R. Lowry (L.211) Seconded: E. Hitchcock (L.232)

To adopt the minutes of the previous Divisional Meeting.

CARRIED

ERC TEAM REPORTS

MERC Vice-Chair Emily Hitchcock distributed the MERC Report (attached).

Brother Burdick requested that a correction be made to page 2 of the MERC Team Report to read "...return of the Meat Inspector to OPSEU in **2004**." – change bolded and underlined.

MOTION

Moved: B. Burdick (L.308) Seconded: R. Lowry (L.211)

To adopt the MERC Team Report as amended.

CARRIED

ELECTIONS

Diana Liu reviewed the election procedures.

MEAT INSPECTORS SUB-COMMITTEE

MOTION

Moved: E. Hitchcock (L.232)

Seconded: B. Burdick (L.308)

WHEREAS the Meat Inspectors rejoined the Ontario Public Service in March 2004 and, prior to being laid off in 1996, the Meat Inspectors had a province-wide ERC with elections being held at the OMAF Divisional Meeting;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Executive Board establishes a Meat Inspector ERC to deal with Meat Inspection operational issues as a sub-committee of the OMAF MERC.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the costs associated with the four ERC meetings to be held in 2005 and beyond, estimated to be \$3,300 annually, be budgeted for as an OPS committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Executive Board accepts the election results from the OMAF Divisional for the Meat Inspectors Sub-ERC Committee.

CARRIED

MOTION

Moved: B. Burdick (L.308)

Seconded: R. Lowry (L.211)

That the Meat Inspectors Sub-ERC be comprised of three Meat Inspectors (also known as Meat Hygiene Officers) elected today from the OMAF Divisional Meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT a Chair and Vice-Chair be elected from the Meat Inspectors declared elected to the Meat Inspectors Sub-ERC.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT an additional three Meat Inspectors be elected as Alternates and ranked accordingly.

CARRIED

The Meat Inspectors Sub-Committee elections were held subject to the approval of the OPSEU Executive Board.

MEAT INSPECTORS SUB-ERC CHAIR

<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Stand/Decline</u>	<u>Results</u>
E. Yantzi (L.225)	R. Lowry (L.211)	Stand	Acclaimed

MEAT INSPECTORS SUB-ERC VICE-CHAIR

<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Stand/Decline</u>	<u>Results</u>
E. Yantzi (L.225)	B. Burdick (L.308)	Stand	Acclaimed

MEAT INSPECTORS SUB-ERC MEMBER

<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Stand/Decline</u>	<u>Results</u>
B. Burdick (L.308)	E. Yantzi (L.225)	Stand	Acclaimed

MERC CHAIR

<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Stand/Decline</u>	<u>Results</u>
E. Hitchcock (L.232)	D. Peebles (L.232)	Stand	Acclaimed

MERC VICE-CHAIR

<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Stand/Decline</u>	<u>Results</u>
E. Yantzi (L.225)	E. Hitchcock (L.232)	Stand	Acclaimed

MERC MEMBER

<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Stand/Decline</u>	<u>Results</u>
E. Yantzi (L.225)	B. Lowry (L.211)	Stand	Acclaimed

MERC ALTERNATES

<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Stand/Decline</u>	<u>Results</u>
E. Hitchcock (L.232)	P. MacMaster (L.434)	Stand	1st Alt.
E. Hitchcock (L.232)	C.Adams-Vining (L.232)	Stand	2nd Alt.
E. Hitchcock (L.232)	E. Yantzi (L.225)	Stand	3rd Alt.

MOTION

Moved: E. Yantzi (L.225) Seconded: E. Hitchcock (L.232)

That all ballots be destroyed.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

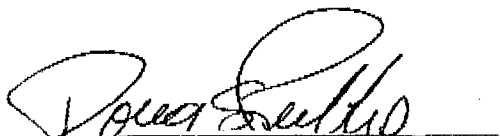
Moved: C. Adams-Vining (L.232) Seconded: P. MacMaster (L.434)

To adjourn.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

AUTHORIZED FOR DISTRIBUTION:



Doug Peebles
Chair
Ministry of Agriculture and Food



Leah Casselman
President
OPSEU

jm

Attach. (1)

MERC Team Report - Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Divisional Meeting January 22/23, 2005

At the divisional meeting of November 3, 2002, elections were held for the MERC Team. As a result Doug Peebles, Mitch Nagel, Emily Hitchcock were elected to the team. Doug was elected as Chair and Mitch as the Vice-Chair. Phyllis MacMaster, Kathleen Salazar and Carolyn Vining were elected as the alternates.

In December 2004, Mitch Nagel accepted a position with Land and Resources Cluster, reporting to the Ministry of Natural Resources. As a result, Emily became the Vice Chair and Phyllis moved up on to the team. On behalf of Emily and Phyllis, I respectfully submit this report.

We would like to thank Mitch for all his work he has done on behalf of the members and wish him well in his future endeavours. Mitch has been acting Co-Chair due to my Membership Development Training assignment with OPSEU and election to the Bargaining Team. Emily has assumed the acting Co-Chair role since Mitch's departure.

In addition, we would like to thank Stephen George our Job Security Officer from OPSEU for all his support to the team. He has gone out of his way to be available for meetings, phone calls and whatever else we could possibly throw his way.

We are scheduled to meet with management four times a year. As well, a number of Ad Hoc meetings are usually held in between to follow up on action items. Some of the issues we have dealt with since the last divisional meeting are as follows:

Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization (CAIS)- the program evolved out of the Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program (OFIDIP) a short-term federal/provincial income relief program for farmers. The CAIS program was officially announced in December 2003.

In 2002, all of unclassified contracts for OFIDIP were extended to January 2003. During the summer of 2003 there were a number of short term unclassified positions filled for the purpose of processing BSE claims.

In February 2004, we were successful in having a number of the full time unclassified positions rolled over to the classified service. Also a large number of short term unclassified positions were filled to process all the CAIS applications.

During July 2004, the Ministry disclosed that Cabinet had given approval for discussions to take place with Agri-Corp (a Scheduled Agency of former ministry Crop Insurance staff), regarding transfer of the program from the Ministry to Agri-Corp. The CAIS program was transferred as of December 1, 2004, affecting 16 classified members, all who accepted a position with Agri-Corp. All of the unclassified contracts ended on November 30, 2004. Though Agri-Corp offered most of the unclassified members a contract.

Land and Resource Cluster (LRC) – The LRC is made up I & IT branches in the ministries of Natural Resources, Environment, Northern Development and Mines, and Agriculture and Food. In August 2004, the LRC announced the reorganization of its

MERC Team Report - Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Client Services units across the Cluster – and the introduction of “Horizontality” (staffing across the Cluster ministries).

A number of new senior Systems Officers 3, 4 and 5 positions were created, which were posted out of Natural Resources; the host ministry for all new Cluster positions. All of the Help Desk positions were considered as new - though they are located at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Headquarters in Guelph.

The Systems Officer 5 positions are analyst positions associated with the Help Desk. The Systems Officer 4 positions are senior Group Leader positions in the field and at the Help Desk.

A number of existing Systems Officer 3s in Environment and Agriculture and Food were direct matched (red circled) to System Officer 2 positions in their ministries. This issue is still under review by OPSEU and the Cluster MERC Teams.

In November 2004, the first “Horizontal MERC meeting” with the Chairs of the Natural Resources, Environment, Northern Development and Mines, and Agriculture and Food MERCs took place with the Employer. The purpose of the meeting was to address concerns of how the Employer was proceeding with the “Horizontal” changes. At the time of this report, only one surplus notice has been given, and the individual was direct assigned to another similar Systems Officer position in their home ministry.

WDHP – We have continued to challenge the ministry to provide training for all staff in this area. In the past year staff have received information on WDHP I&IT. Though we raised concerns about the inadequateness of the training materials provided by MBS as well as the need for further training on WDHP in general across the ministry. We were able to negotiate a more suitable training package with the ministry, which is currently being delivered to staff.

Meat Inspection – OPSEU promised to make this an election issue – and we lived up to our promise, a factor in the defeat of the Tories and the Minister at the time (prior to Oct 2003).

We are please to welcome the return of the Meat Inspectors to OPSEU in 2003. This was due primarily to the leadership of those who stepped forward to take up the challenge of instituting change - the long and hard work of many - efforts that has been put in by OPSEU to ensure that consumer confidence is restored to the Meat Industry in Ontario.

Though it is our position that after 8 years of cuts backs by the previous government that lead to the systemic break down of Ontario Meat Inspection Program. Rather than holding a Public Inquiry, the Liberal Government asked the Honourable Roland Haines to review the meat regulatory and inspection regimes in Ontario.

OPSEU submitted a number of written recommendations as well as participated at the public meetings held in Peterborough and London during March 2004. Justice Haines, in all he made 113 recommendations in his report to the government, adopting a number of OPSEU's recommendations. The report was made public in July 2004.

MERC Team Report - Ministry of Agriculture and Food

In September 2004 the inaugural Meat Inspector ERC meeting was held. The Meat Inspector ERC is made up of Meat Hygiene Officers (also referred to as "Meat Inspectors") appointed by the MERC Chair, until elections can be held at the Omaf Divisional meeting.

The Meat Inspector ERC has provincial implication; therefore the proposal is to consider the committee as a subcommittee of the Omaf Merc. The subcommittee will focus on Meat Inspection operational issues in a similar context as a LERC.

Rural Affairs – has been transferred from Agriculture and Food to Municipal Affairs (MMAH) effective April 1, 2003. Approximately 50 OPSEU positions were affected, through a direct transfer, as well about six positions were seconded over to MMAH.

Nutrient Management – The ministry established a new branch and filled a number of new OPSEU positions. In April 2004 The compliance unit was transferred to the Ministry of Environment; all members affected by the transfer were accommodated in their requested work locations.

Unclassified Conversion – prior to each MERC meeting, the ministry provided us with an updated listing of full-time unclassified members that included the number of continuous months in the position. The quarterly unclassified listing has ensured that the ministry is compliant with Article 31A.

Terms of Reference – over the past term, the team has taken on the task of updating the Terms of Reference with Management for our MERC.

Meet with the Minister – Steve Peters, Minister of Agriculture and Food as well as Frank Ingratta met with the Team at the September 2004 meeting. This is the first time that a Minister has met with a MERC Team across the OPS. The Minister acknowledged the importance of the committee as well as all the good work that's done on behalf of OPSEU members in our bargaining unit.

Earlier in the year, Leah Casselman, OPSEU President and Michael Grimaldi, Executive Assistant met with the Minister Peters in what was described as a very positive meeting.

Minutes - The MERC minutes are posted on the ministry's Intranet at <http://intra.omafra.gov.on.ca> - look under committees.

Respectfully submitted
OMAF MERC Team

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