



President

Chris Hamilton

Hello, my name is Chris Hamilton and I am President of the Niagara Federation of Agriculture. I hope this message finds you well during these challenging times. I am a beekeeper in Niagara, working with several thousand bee hives to provide pollination to fruit growers. Advocating for natural and commercial pollinators is why I got involved with the NFA. My involvement has since grown to advocate for all sectors of Niagara agriculture with its many variations of which I am privileged to continuously learn more about.

The mandate of the Niagara Federation of Agriculture (NFA) is to advocate for the agriculture community, to strengthen long-term viability by connecting farms, family and food, within the Niagara Region. The NFA has over 1400 farm family members represented by 12 board members and 3 Ontario Federation of Agriculture Policy Advisory Councillors. One of the goals of the federation is to promote and inform the public on the value of the agriculture industry in Niagara. We had several events planned this year but unfortunately they have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These events included the Niagara Agriculture Lifetime Achievement Award presentation, Niagara Farm Day and, the farm tour we organize for the Region of Niagara staff and councillors. We are disappointed, but look forward to having these events next year. Although many events have been cancelled, the NFA board members are still working on behalf of the farmers in Niagara.

The last few years have been challenging for most agriculture producers due to the uncertainty of the weather and commodity markets. It has been stressful for farm producers and their families. This year we will be adding the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. With our children home from school, it is even more important that we continue safe farming practices on our farms. Take the time to review your farm safety plan and talk to your children about the importance of being safe on the farm. We are all facing many uncertainties and challenges which could result in increased levels of anxiety and depression. This is normal and nothing to be ashamed of.

For more information about COVID 19, farm safety and mental wellbeing please visit our website www.myniagarafarmer.ca



Member Service Rep

Nadine Gill

Nadine Gill-Aarts is the OFA Member Service Rep (MSR) for Halton, Hamilton, & Niagara. She can be reached at 289-687-7477 or nadine.gill@ofa.on.ca

In agri-food we are used to rolling with the punches. We're often subject to things out of our control, like market swings and the whims of Mother Nature. The current pandemic is seemingly no different; with the exception being it is felt throughout our communities, regardless of the sectors we work in. As always, agri-food will be here, providing Canadians with safe and fresh food made with the highest standards, adapting as we always have during periods of unease.

As the pandemic continues to impact our lives, many of us are feeling overwhelmed with the abundance of non-stop information made available to us. To help, OFA has created an ag-focused COVID-19 resource hub, found here: <https://ofa.on.ca/information-and-resources-covid-19/>. Details include financial and HR management, government regulations, provincial and federal updates, funding opportunities for your business, and mental health resources. OFA and the Niagara Federation of Agriculture send updated information to members by email. If you are not on the OFA email list please contact me and I will have you added.

OFA continues to lobby on your behalf amidst this pandemic. Supporting the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's (CFA) call on the federal government to secure Canada's food supply chain by prioritizing the agri-food system, we are asking the federal and provincial government to keep our sector viable. It is clear that farm businesses and food processors need immediate assistance to offset the various impacts of COVID-19 across the sector.

During these difficult times I want to remind OFA Members that your MSR and the Niagara Federation of Agriculture are here for you. Please contact me if you are experiencing any issues related to your farm business as a result of COVID-19, want to share a new business model you've developed, or just need to chat!

Open in Niagara for Businesses and Consumers

www.openinniagara.ca

The Region of Niagara has launched the "Open in Niagara" mapping tool highlighting all businesses still open for business. This website is a free tool designed to crowdsource information and to let consumers know which essential businesses are open including those selling agri-food products. (***Note: The tool is not compatible with Internet Explorer unfortunately.**)

The Niagara Federation of Agriculture (NFA) would like to thank all consumers that source out Niagara grown produce and Niagara services. It is because of your loyalty that agriculture producers in Niagara are surviving during this difficult time of uncertainty. Please remember that Niagara farmers will continue to produce safe, fresh food for you and your families.

Anyone can add their Niagara business to the site by going to www.openinniagara.ca and clicking on the "Add a Business" button in the upper right hand corner. If you have any questions, please email info@niagaracanada.com

The Niagara Federation of Agriculture (NFA) would like to thank the Region of Niagara for supplying this venue for advertising our Niagara businesses during this time.



Andy Veenstra Named 2020 Niagara Agriculture Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

The Niagara Federation of Agriculture is proud to announce Andy Veenstra as the 2020 Niagara Agriculture Lifetime Achievement Recipient. Andy and his wife Dorothy have 9 children and manage a 2000 acre cash cropping operation. Since 1968, Andy has grown his operation to now include a commercial grain elevator, a corn/soybean roaster plant, a straw pelleting operation, and the production of bio-diesel. Andy now farms with his three sons working and

managing the operation. The award was to be presented in April but because of COVID-19, the award will be presented to Andy in the spring of 2021

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PRESIDENT

Chris Hamilton

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