



Strategic Plan

Grain Farmers of Ontario





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2016 - LOOKING FORWARD

Introduction



GRAIN FARMERS OF ONTARIO is the province's largest commodity organization representing Ontario's 28,000 barley, corn, oat, soybean, and wheat farmers. The organization brings value to its farmer-members through research, innovation, market development, advocacy, and public outreach.

Our ability to bring value to our farmer-members requires us to have a strategic plan which sets out where we are going and how we will achieve success in a time of rapid, unpredictable change and with the rise of public opinion and pressure surrounding modern agricultural practices.

In 2010, the Board of Directors introduced our first strategic plan; in late 2013, we updated this plan. After extensive review and discussion by the Board and management,

a new plan is being introduced in 2016. It represents important changes and additions to our goals and our strategies.

Our strategic plan has six elements.

Our Mission sets out our purpose as an organization.

Our Vision defines our ultimate goal.

Our Core Values describe the organization we strive to be.

Our Strategic Goals set out the specific targets we have established.

Our Situation Analysis identifies the current threats and opportunities we face.

Our Strategies spell out how our goals will be achieved.

The Board of Directors and management are committed to the successful implementation of this plan.

Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals



MISSION

Our mission is to develop, defend, and promote an innovative and sustainable business environment which will allow our farmer-members the opportunity for profitable growth.

VISION

Our vision is to drive the Ontario grain industry to become a global leader.

CORE VALUES

We are committed to:

- **our farmer-members**
We believe in working together to deliver excellent services that create real value for our farmer-members
- **our people**
We believe in providing an environment where people are respected and passionate about their work and are able to reach their full potential
- **our results**
We believe in having a winning attitude that drives the achievement of our goals efficiently and effectively
- **our innovation**
We believe in innovation and having a collaborative, flexible, and adaptive approach
- **our honesty and integrity**
We believe in leading by example, demonstrating ethics, trust, transparency, and teamwork in all we do

STRATEGIC GOALS

We are committed to accomplishing the following goals:

- protect and grow markets by encouraging new uses for Ontario grains while ensuring a strong focus on mitigating potential risks to our domestic and export markets by partnering with stakeholders
- target our research, innovation, and knowledge transfer initiatives to enhance our farmer-members' profitability
- provide the means for our farmer-members to be economically sustainable while meeting their commitment to the environment and society
- represent our farmer-member interests in a committed, efficient, and cost-effective manner and be a trusted point of contact
- influence provincial and federal governments to ensure a regulatory system that fosters a positive business environment for our farmer-members
- shape and maintain a social license for our farmer-members

Situation Analysis

THREATS, OPPORTUNITIES, STRENGTHS,
VULNERABILITIES

“You think you understand the situation, but what you don’t understand is that situation has just changed.”

- Putman Investments

There is no doubt that we are living in a time of rapid, and often unpredictable, change. It was just three years ago that Grain Farmers of Ontario issued a Strategic Plan, and revisions are already required. Over the past three years, the world we do business in, and that our farmer-members compete in, has changed.

Consider:

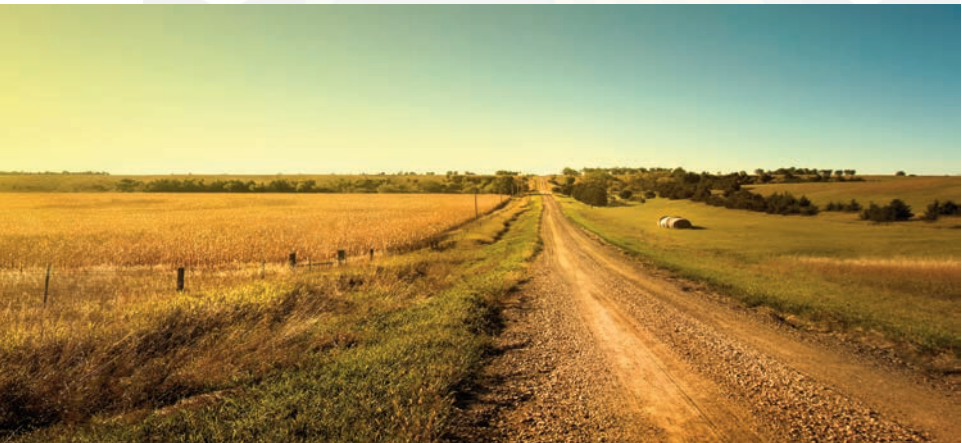
- the rapid growth of social license driven by well organized groups who are successfully challenging the agriculture industry in the absence of a strong unified voice for agriculture and exacerbated by the decline in agricultural knowledge and experience within our legislative assemblies
- the significant increase in the use of social media, which has resulted in the ability for anyone to instantaneously impact any contestable matter
- world upheavals (such as terrorism, Brexit, refugee crisis, government changes, cybercrime) bringing uncertainty and volatility to our markets and a period of low financial returns
- the rapid rise in the prosperity of 1% of the North American population and the stagnation in earnings of the rest





- exponential increases in innovation and technology both to communications and to the agriculture industry such as genome editing, farm management software sensors, satellites, and robotics
- increasing financial insecurity driven by higher costs of land, production, energy, transportation, and new technology
- the reality of increasing immigration into Canada and, with it, a change in diets and fewer ties to Canadian agriculture;
- more regulation, often driven by activists' agendas, which can impact trade, limit farmers' decision-making options, and affect land owner rights
- growth in agriculture industry consolidation – fewer farms, larger farms, and multi-national consolidation of farm outputs

These realities reinforce the importance of Grain Farmers of Ontario being the voice of, and support to, our farmer-members. The threat of lower cost international competition from emerging markets and the expansion of domestic production can be met by supporting existing markets, seizing opportunities for niche markets, increasing sales to local trade, and leveraging the advantages of our wheat pool program for returns and our equity position.



Strategies

HOW OUR GOALS WILL BE ACHIEVED

Goal 1

Protect and grow markets by encouraging new uses for Ontario grains while ensuring a strong focus on mitigating potential risks to our domestic and export markets by partnering with stakeholders

Strategies

- Stimulate economic opportunity by building awareness of the health and versatility of Ontario grains and encourage the development of new processing initiatives and end uses
- Maximize wheat marketing programs and returns for Ontario grain farmers
- Increase the use of Ontario grains for domestic and export markets
- Ensure the viability of the bio-fuels and bio-products industry as a market for our grains
- Assist in the creation of new market development opportunities and the effective continuation of current markets, and inform our farmer-members of those opportunities
- Ensure a strong focus on potential risks and possible crises in domestic and export markets, including trade barriers
- Be receptive to opportunities for collaboration with stakeholders, to increase benefits to our farmer-members



Goal 2

Target our research, innovation, and knowledge transfer initiatives to enhance our farmer-members' profitability

Strategies

- Influence research priority setting in the grain sector
- Invest Grain Farmers of Ontario's funds in research areas or projects of high priority or significant impact to farmer-members
- Encourage private sector investment in research that provides benefits to farmer-members
- Maximize the public sector research investment in the grain sector
- Develop the most effective data management approaches
- Ensure that Grain Farmers of Ontario plays an active role in supporting the commercialization of relevant research results
- Drive knowledge transfer of the latest advancements to our farmer-members

Strategies

HOW OUR GOALS WILL BE ACHIEVED

Goal 3

Provide the means for our farmer-members to be economically sustainable while meeting their commitment to the environment and society

Strategies

- Ensure that our farmer-members have the tools to be sustainable
- Ensure our farmer-members are prepared for the evolving government and regulatory environment
- Assist our farmer-members in preparing for growing volatility whether in markets, regulations, climate, or other
- Understand and monitor farmer-member demographics and farm ownership
- Influence potential sustainability programs to establish a focus on delivering value for the marketplace, while minimizing the administrative burden on our farmer-members
- Meet our commitment to the environment and society in a scientifically sound manner
- Create and improve farm programs that stabilize the business environment



Goal 4

Represent our farmer-member interests in a committed, efficient, and cost-effective manner and be a trusted point of contact

Strategies

- Create an environment of shared commitment among farmer-members, delegates, directors, management, and staff
- Encourage youth to take a more active role in the Ontario grain industry
- Continuously improve governance, infrastructure, internal systems, procedures, technology, and staff development to meet the expectations of the organization and its farmer-members
- Proactively build and improve relationships with stakeholders to manage issues that will affect our farmer-members
- Reflect the diversity of our farmer-membership in our delegates and on our Board of Directors
- Anticipate emerging issues, formalize early warning and detection systems, and develop formal mechanisms to address issues
- Continuously improve internal communications resources required to raise the level of awareness on key issues

Strategies

HOW OUR GOALS WILL BE ACHIEVED

Goal 5

Influence provincial and federal governments to create a regulatory system that fosters a positive business environment for our farmer-members

Strategies

- Be the unified voice of our farmer-members on issues
- Aggressively impact all levels of government, including both elected officials and government staff
- Establish and encourage Grain Farmers of Ontario representation within organizations that have an influence on government
- Inform farmer-members of regulatory system challenges
- Foster a culture of active engagement for crisis management
- Cultivate political influence



Goal 6

Shape and maintain a social license for our farmer-members

Strategies

- Be the voice of our farmer-members to society at large
- Deepen internal conduits of information and policies governing the sharing of information to equip farmer-members
- Nurture long-term relationships with traditional media and be their preferred point of contact
- Build on the foundation and reputation of value and strength delivered by Grain Farmers of Ontario
- Build and execute an aggressive social media plan
- Determine new means and approaches to defend our farmer-members' right to farm, including unifying the voice of agriculture in Canada
- Instill trust with consumers by providing credible information about end uses of Ontario grains.

Conclusion



Today, Grain Farmers of Ontario is a united voice for the province's barley, corn, oat, soybean, and wheat farmers and an organization that adds real value to its farmer-members.

As we move forward in a time of unprecedented change and innovation, and with the growing debate over social license, Grain Farmers of Ontario must have a clear direction in order to overcome new threats and take advantage of new opportunities.

A great team working in an innovative culture, delivering robust programs to engage our stakeholders, and being well prepared to manage through unpredictable times will ensure the sustainability of our organization and our industry.

Your Board is committed to this new three-year strategic plan. It will be carried out and the goals will be met by working together while reflecting our Core Values which create an atmosphere of respect, honesty, partnership, and a drive for excellence.



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