



NEWS RELEASE

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GOAT SECTOR JOINS FORCES WITH VEAL AND RABBIT

The Ontario Veal Association (OVA), together with Ontario Rabbit (OR), is pleased to announce that the Ontario Goat Breeder's Association (OGBA) has joined forces to create a new and revolutionary partnership for Ontario's livestock producers.

The OVA, OR and OGBA have come together to share organizational and staff resources in order to bring a greater level of efficiency and value to their respective members. Last year, the OVA and OR were successful applicants as part of the CanAdvance Growing Capacity Initiative (GCI) funding program administered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council. Recently, this veal and rabbit GCI partnership was successful in obtaining an additional GCI funding investment to the project that would provide resources to bring the OGBA into the partnership.

With an additional \$522,000.00 in funding for the remaining three years of the project, the three partners will now be able to access additional staff resources, develop joint organizational infrastructure, and address important industry development initiatives in their respective sectors. Most importantly, the funding provides the organizations the opportunity to develop and implement a plan for self sustainability once the funding program is completed in 2012.

"After consultation with the industry, the GCI program was created to provide resources for the industry to grow their capacity for the long-term growth and sustainability of the industry as a whole," states Kim Turnbull, Agricultural Adaptation Council Chair. "The collaborative advantage, created through this partnership, provides great benefit to the three organizations involved, but also serves as a great example to the agriculture and agri-food industry of how strategic alliances can be formed," adds Turnbull.

"The Ontario Goat Breeder's Association is very excited about this opportunity and what it will mean for not only the organization but all involved in the goat industry," said Tobin Schlegel, OGBA President. The Ontario goat industry has so much potential "and we want to be able to build an infrastructure for the organization that will help facilitate not only the opportunities that are here today waiting for us but also those that come our way down the road," added Schlegel.

The original partnership of the OVA and OR has been a resounding success so far. "This past year has been a whirlwind of activity, projects and initiatives that have surpassed our wildest expectations in terms of what could have been possible for Ontario's rabbit growers," explained Dave Kabbes, OR President. "This collaboration has made a real difference in the rabbit industry and this will help us with our mandate of becoming self sufficient when this project ends,".

"The OVA is looking forward to sharing our experiences with both the rabbit and goat sectors and at the same time being able to build an infrastructure that will ultimately provide a greater voice

for Ontario's veal producers through our ability to engage in more projects, issues and communications within the larger agri-food sector," stated OVA President Judy Dirksen.

"There is no doubt that our plate is full with the coordination of three separate organization's needs, but there is a lot of common ground in the livestock sector that we can identify and bring the three groups together on in order to be more efficient," explained Executive Director Jennifer Haley.

Haley becomes the Executive Director of OVA, OR and OGBA in this new partnership. The three organizations will share a head office located in Guelph. There is no sense reinventing the wheel explains Haley. "The OVA was once in a very similar position as OR and the OGBA in terms of transitioning from a volunteer board to governing board. Now we have the chance to share our lessons learned," she added.

Each of the project partners agree, that this project will ultimately save veal, rabbit and goat producers money by avoiding duplication, reducing overhead costs and expanding the various organization's reach in the agri-food industry. At the same time, it is hoped that together the three groups will have a stronger representative voice with industry partners, including government.

"The OGBA has a very clear mandate for the Ontario goat industry. We all need to work together to realize our industry's potential and this project provides the perfect rallying point to do so," stated Schlegel. Dirksen added that "this project is a perfect example of what organizations can do and what is possible when we think outside the box. Everyone is really excited by the possibilities,".

The OVA represents Ontario's grain fed and milk fed veal farmers. The OVA is responsible for marketing and promotions, producer education, communication, government and industry relations, as well as research and development.

OR represents Ontario's rabbit growers and strives to enhance the profitability of meat rabbit production through education, advocacy, research and market development.

The OGBA represents Ontario's goat producers and promotes the advancement of the goat industry by providing promotion and education opportunities for goat producers and others in industry related sectors.

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