

Board Highlights: June 23, 2026

Ontario Pork's Advocacy Activities

The Board received an update on Ontario Pork's recent advocacy activities with provincial and federal policymakers. Discussions focused on key issues affecting pork producers, including processing capacity, foreign animal disease preparedness, labour availability, and the need for government programs that reflect the scale and complexity of modern pork operations.

At the provincial level, Ontario Pork representatives met with government officials and MPPs at Queen's Park to discuss sector priorities, including processing capacity and preparedness for a potential foreign animal disease event. At the federal level, Ontario Pork met with MP Arpan Khanna to discuss disease preparedness, labour challenges, and the importance of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to pork operations. Ontario Pork will continue to engage with policymakers on these priorities and advocate for practical solutions that support producers and strengthen the sector.

New Faculty Member Presentation

The Board met with Dr. Con-Ning Yen, Assistant Professor of Muscle Biology and Meat Science in the Department of Animal Biosciences at the University of Guelph. Dr. Yen provided an overview of her research interests in meat science, including factors that influence meat quality and growth efficiency in livestock. Since joining the University of Guelph in 2026, she has been working to develop a research program focused on current meat science issues in Canada.

The discussion provided an opportunity for the Board to learn more about emerging research capacity at the University of Guelph and areas of potential interest to the pork sector.

Increasing Producer Participation at the Ontario Swine Conference

The Board reviewed options to support increased producer attendance at the 2027 Ontario Swine Conference, including potential cost coverage for delegates and producers at-large. The discussion reflected the Board's interest in making the conference more accessible to producers and encouraging stronger participation in an event that brings together industry updates, research, trade and economics discussions, and networking opportunities. After considering cost estimates, eligibility criteria, registration, and capacity limits, the Board agreed to cover registration costs for Ontario pork producers attending the 2027 Ontario Swine Conference.

Policy and Risk Oversight: Trade and CUSMA Process

The Board discussed the upcoming CUSMA joint review as well as the completed study, *A Review of Live Swine and Pork Trade Between Canada, United States and Mexico*, commissioned by Ontario Pork earlier this year. The study supports Ontario Pork's position that the North American pork sector operates as an integrated market, with significant cross-border movement of pork products and live animals. The Board also discussed recent advocacy by agricultural organizations across Canada, the United States, and Mexico calling for renewal and strengthening of CUSMA/USMCA/T-MEC. This advocacy reinforces the importance of maintaining the full trilateral framework and avoiding uncertainty or disruption that would be harmful to agriculture in all three countries. Agricultural organizations across North America have emphasized the importance of long-term stability and are urging officials to extend the agreement for another 16 years rather than allow it to move into uncertain annual reviews.