

Terms of Reference

GTA Agricultural Action Committee

1. Vision

- 1.1 The GTA agricultural industry is highly dynamic, driven by the need to adapt to opportunities to remain viable. Committed stakeholders need to work together with agricultural industry leaders to address challenges and lead change.

2. Preamble

- 2.1 In 2001, the GTA Federations of Agriculture approached the GTA Regional Chairs seeking to work together to address the long-term sustainability of agriculture in the GTA. The Regions agreed to assist the Federations, and a key outcome was the production of a GTA Agricultural Action Plan (Action Plan).
- 2.2 The Action Plan provides guiding principles and practical directions to be advanced and implemented by key agricultural interests.
- 2.3 The partners (GTA Regional Councils, GTA Federations of Agriculture, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and Agri-Food Canada) all support and commit to the implementation of the Action Plan.
- 2.4 A GTA Agricultural Action Committee (herein referred to as the “Action Committee” or “GTA-AAC”) is necessary and called for in the Action Plan to provide leadership and represent the agricultural industry sector in the GTA.

3. Goal

- 3.1 The goal of the Action Committee is to ensure the implementation of the actions identified in the Action Plan and provide advice to the GTA Regional Municipalities, the Federations of Agriculture and the Agricultural Industry on GTA agricultural and rural matters.
- 3.2 The GTA-AAC will build a broad partnership with all stakeholders.
- 3.3 The GTA-AAC will build the support of the other Provincial Ministries identified in the Action Plan (see attached Responsibility Matrix) to ensure Actions are implemented.

4. Purpose and Role

4.1 The GTA-AAC exists to implement Action No. 7 identified in the Action Plan to:

- provide a coordinating function for agriculture issues in the GTA;
- share information and resources to raise awareness of issues;
- act as liaison with all levels of government;
- encourage innovation and diversification within the industry; and
- combine resources and efforts to achieve a sustainable, long-term agricultural industry within the GTA.

The purpose of the GTA-AAC is to:

- establish the timetable for priority items in the Action Plan;
- develop a workplan to implement the actions outlined in the Action Plan, and to address firstly the nine priority items identified in the responsibility and priority matrix in the Plan;
- coordinate with other participating organizations and coordinate for funding options.

5. Mandate

5.1 The GTA-AAC is a non-partisan Steering Committee. The Committee is to be established in accordance with these Terms of Reference. Committee members are guided by these Terms of Reference. Roles and responsibilities of the Committee are to be reviewed every three years.

5.2 The Terms of Reference provide for a balance between activities in the GTA Agricultural Action Plan, with an allowance for the GTA-AAC to be proactive and advise on matters identified on its own initiative.

5.3 Develop a budget, designate funds, and provide advice and guidance as to the content and extent of the programs and recommendations for implementation of Actions in the GTA Agricultural Action Plan to the Regional Planning Commissioner's of Ontario (RPCO), the Federations of Agriculture, and Provincial/Federal Ministries.

5.4 The GTA-AAC may report directly to GTA Regions and other partners on substantive matters. Otherwise, the GTA-AAC shall report through the RPCO–GTA Caucus and representatives of the Federations of Agriculture, to the GTA Regions (Chairs), the Federations of Agriculture (Presidents), and Provincial/Federal Ministries.

6. Scope of Activities

6.1 The scope of the GTA-AAC may include activities such as providing leadership and advice on such matters involving:

- a) Influencing, shaping and helping to implement Federal, Provincial and Regional policy programs, guidelines and initiatives that support the agricultural industry in the GTA;
- b) Issues and concerns of the agricultural community;
- c) Agricultural and rural policy directions pursued by the Partners. This may include providing advice on policy related to agricultural matters;
- d) Identification and implementation of programs which encourage public awareness and education of agricultural and related rural issues; and
- e) Matters as they arise, at the request of the Partners.

7. Composition

- 7.1 The GTA-AAC will be comprised of (14) members in total. Four members will be individuals representing the four respective Regional Federations of Agriculture; four members representing the Regional Municipalities (Regional Chairs or delegates), one City of Toronto (e.g. Toronto Food Policy Council) representative; two Provincial government representatives, one Federal government representative and two representatives of the agricultural industry (e.g. producers, processors etc.).
- 7.2 Membership shall be a 3-year term corresponding with the term of Regional Council; however, members shall continue to serve until their replacements are appointed. At the discretion of the GTA-AAC, non-attendance of three consecutive meetings will be sufficient grounds for replacement. Committee members length of term may be staggered to ensure continuity.

8. Membership Selection

- 8.1 The Regions will formally request each of the four GTA Regional Federations of Agriculture to nominate one person to represent their Federation. Regional Councils (or Regional Chairs) will recommend individuals for appointment to the GTA-AAC.
- 8.2 Each of the four Regional Councils shall appoint one representative and an alternate to the GTA-AAC.
- 8.3 In nominating members to the GTA-AAC, excluding the representative of the Regions, regard shall be given to achieving a diversity of members engaged in varied disciplines of the agricultural industry and members living in the rural community with knowledge of agricultural and related rural issues. Availability to attend meetings is also essential.

- 8.4 In the case of a vacancy, the approach described in Sections 7.1 and 7.2 will generally be followed.
9. Support Services and Funding
- 9.1 A technical Working Group will be appointed consisting of staff from the four GTA Regions, Federations of Agriculture representatives and staff from the Provincial and Federal Ministries identified as responsible for implementing actions within the Action Plan.
- 9.2 The Working Group shall serve as staff liaison to the GTA-AAC. The liaison will provide administrative, procedural and technical support to the GTA-AAC, as well, link to the Regional Agricultural Advisory Committees.
- 9.3 The GTA-AAC will need to establish an appropriate budget, and timeframe for the implementation of action items. It will, investigate potential Federal, Provincial and Regional funding programs, as well as private funding programs available to assist with implementation of directions and actions.

Committee Procedures

10. Officers
- 10.1 A Chair and two Vice-Chairs (first and second) will be elected annually by the membership of the GTA-AAC. An RPCO-GTA Caucus representative will chair the inaugural GTA-AAC meeting.
11. Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair
- 11.1 The Chair shall preside over the meetings of the Committee and assist the Committee in reaching consensus on fundamental issues of concern to the Committee.
- 11.2 The Chair shall act as spokesperson, and co-ordinate the presentation of the Committee's position to RPCO-GTA Caucus and other stakeholders as required.
- 11.3 It shall be the duty of the Chair, with respect to any meetings over which he/she presides, to:
- a) preserve order and decide on all questions of order;
 - b) receive and submit to a vote, all motions presented by the members of the Committee where consensus cannot otherwise be achieved;
 - c) announce the results of the vote on any motions so presented;
 - d) decline to put to a vote motions which infringe upon the rules of procedure, or which are beyond the jurisdiction of the Committee;
 - e) enforce on all occasions the observance of order and decorum among the members;

- f) adjourn the meeting when business is concluded;
 - g) represent and support the Committee, declaring its will and implicitly obeying its decisions in all things; and
 - h) perform other duties when directed to do so by resolution of the Committee or Regional Councils.
- 11.4 The Vice-Chair shall assume the authority and perform all the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.
- 12. Roles and Responsibilities of Members
- 12.1 Committee Members shall:
 - a) attend and actively participate at all meetings;
 - b) work with other members to attempt to reach consensus on decisions before the Committee;
 - c) coordinate agricultural groups to implement actions; and
 - d) adhere to these terms of reference.
- 13. Voting
- 13.1 When an issue arises, the Committee will attempt to reach a consensus on how the Committee should resolve the issue.
- 13.2 If a consensus cannot be attained, a question before the Committee will be put to a vote and each Committee Member will be entitled to one vote.
- 13.3 A motion shall be deemed to be carried when a majority of the members present and voting have expressed agreement with the question. Consequently, on a tie vote, the motion is lost.
- 14. Public Access and Delegations
- 14.1 Any delegation wishing to address the Committee:
 - (a) regarding matters on the agenda, may be heard by leave of the Committee, upon request to the Chair setting out the issue to be presented to the Committee, before the close of business the day prior to the meeting; and
 - (b) regarding matters not on the agenda, may be heard by leave of the Committee, upon request in writing, setting out the issue to be presented to the Committee, at least five (5) days before the date and time of the meeting of the Committee.
- 14.2 Every such delegation shall be limited to ten (10) minutes for speaking to the Committee unless approval of the Committee is obtained by the Chair to extend or limit the speaking time for the delegation concerned.

- 14.3 Upon the completion of a presentation to the Committee by a delegation, any discourse between Committee Members and the delegation shall be limited to members asking questions for clarification and obtaining additional, relevant information only. Committee Members shall not enter into debate with the delegation respecting the presentation.
- 14.4 No delegation shall:
- m) speak disrespectfully of any person;
 - n) use offensive words or unparliamentarily language;
 - o) speak on any subject other than the subject for which they have received approval to address the Committee; or
 - p) disobey the rules of procedure or a decision of the Chair or Committee.

15. Meetings

- 15.1 The GTA-AAC will hold approximately eight meetings per year, and establish a meeting schedule at its inaugural meeting. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair. RPCO-GTA Caucus is to be kept informed of such meetings.
- 15.2 Unless otherwise determined, all meetings will be open to the public.

16. Minutes and Agenda

- 16.1 The minutes of each GTA-AAC meeting will be amended as necessary and approved at the following meeting. The unapproved minutes will be forwarded to all the partners for information. When approved, any amendments will be forwarded to same. The GTA-AAC agendas will be prepared by the GTA-AAC Chair or Vice-Chair with input from other GTA-AAC members.

17. Committee Resolutions

- 17.1 The GTA-AAC will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are “carried” if supported by a majority. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes may be considered as officially representing the position of the GTA-AAC.

18. Annual Reports and Workplan

- 18.1 An annual report summarizing the activities completed in the previous year shall be prepared by the GTA-AAC. The annual report shall be forwarded to the RPCO-GTA Caucus, each GTA Regional Council, Federation of Agriculture, Provincial and Federal government.
- 18.2 An annual workplan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be

prepared by the GTA-AAC for consideration and approval by RPCO-GTA Caucus.

- 18.3 An annual review of the GTA-AAC by Regional Councils, Federations of Agriculture, and Provincial and Federal governments will be completed to examine the effectiveness of the Committee and to ensure continued improvements.