

## The ABCs of Farming

Once upon a time a young man bought a farm property and wanted to start farming. He didn't know quite where to start, so he called his friend who owns a farm and asked for advice.

"It's really quite easy," said the friend, "just call the MSR Member Service Representative at OFA Ontario Federation of Agriculture and they'll help get you on the right track." He gave him the phone number he needed, and was satisfied that he had done the right thing.

The MSR Member Service Representative at OFA Ontario Federation of Agriculture was very helpful. "First of all you will need an FBR Farm Business Registration number so you can qualify for FPTP Farmland Property Tax Program. And if you haven't reported your land purchase to the FPTP Farmland Property Tax Program at OMAFRA Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, you should do so or MPAC Municipal Property Assessment Corporation will put you in the wrong assessment. When you pay your fee, you will become an OFA Ontario Federation of Agriculture member of the CFA County Federation of Agriculture, unless you choose to join one of the other GFOs General Farm Organizations – CFFO Christian Farmers' Federation of Ontario or NFU National Farmers' Union. If you do not qualify for FBR Farm Business Registration you can become an IFM Individual Farm Member. You can use your FBR Farm Business Registration number for RST Retail Sales Tax exemptions, but not GST Goods and Services Tax."

Now that I have bought the property, I need some money to set up the operation. "Well, you might contact FCC Farm Credit Canada or BMO Bank of Montreal, RBC Royal Bank, CIBC Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, TD Toronto Dominion Canada Trust, or YNCU Your Neighbourhood Credit Union. CAFA Canadian Association of Farm Advisors has many professional contacts for advice. If you're being innovative, you can apply for grants to AAC Agricultural Adaption Council, FIMCLA Farm Improvement and Marketing Co-operatives Loans Act, CFDC Community Futures Development Corporation, or sign an MOU Memorandum of Understanding with a partner."

The young farmer was also interested in learning more about crops and livestock. "No problem. Just contact one of the commodity groups, like OCA Ontario Cattlemen's Association, DFO Dairy Farmers of Ontario, OP Ontario Pork, GFO Grain Farmers of Ontario (not to be confused with the above named GFOs General Farm Organizations), OF&VGA Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, OSMA Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, COG Canadian Organic Growers, CFO Chicken Farmers of Ontario, ODEFA Ontario Deer and Elk Farmers' Association, TFO Turkey Farmers of Ontario, EFO Egg Farmers of Ontario, OEF Ontario Equestrian Federation and OHRIA Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association. Be sure to follow the guidelines of OFAC Ontario Farm Animal Council and OSPCA Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or you'll get into trouble. Courses are also available at UofG University of Guelph, RCAT Ridgetown College of Agricultural Technology, KCAT Kemptville College of Agricultural Technology, HRIO Horticultural Research Institute of Ontario and online. And always work safely, obeying the OHSA Ontario Health and Safety Act, and the WSIB Worker Safety and Insurance Board and OFSA Ontario Farm Safety Association guidelines."

What if I need production advice? "There are several possibilities: you can contact your RIC Rural Information Co-ordinator at OMAFRA Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who will refer you to the GIC Government Information Centre and from there you will be connected to an advisor. You may wish to contact OIA Ontario Institute of Agrologists for a list of qualified CCAs Certified Crop Advisors. There are a number of commodity improvement groups, such as BIO Beef Improvement Ontario, ODHIC Ontario Dairy Herd Improvement Corporation, and OSII Ontario Swine Improvement Incorporated."

I am also concerned that I want to do what's right environmentally. "There are a number of guidelines you will need to be aware of, and these are governed by MOE Ministry of Environment, MNR Ministry of Natural Resources, EPA Environmental Protection Act, and OMAFRA Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. You could contact the OSCIA Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association to get more information on EFP Environmental Farm Plan. Other sources are EFAO Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, GPSC Grower Pesticide Safety Course and AGCare Agricultural Groups Concerned About Research and the Environment who can inform you about IPM Integrated Pest Management, PA Pesticide Act and PMRA Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency. And for food safety, you'll want to meet HACCP Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points standards."

"If you decide to put up a new building, you will need to be aware of MDS Minimum Distance Separation, NMP Nutrient Management Plans or NMS Nutrient Management Strategy, and OMB Ontario Municipal Board."

I've thought of using the farm to generate energy. "OK, you will need to know more about the GEGEA Green Energy and Green Economy Act and FIT Feed-in Tariff through OPA Ontario Power Authority, or if you're logging the bush, contact OFA (the other one) Ontario Forestry Association, OWA Ontario Woodlot Association, or your OSN Ontario Stewardship Network."

What if I have problems? "Call QBRM Queen's Bush Rural Ministry, DART Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation and Treatment, AA Alcoholics Anonymous, CIC Crisis Intervention Centre, FCS Family and Children's Services, CMHA Canadian Mental Health Association. The FDMA Farm Debt Mediation Act will allow you to access CASS Canadian Agricultural Skills Service and CFBAS Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services to access FBA Farm Business Assessment, SBPS Specialized Business Planning Service and PAVE Planning and Assessment for Value-Added Enterprises. Sometimes, your MP Member of Parliament and MPP Member of Provincial Parliament can be of help."

All these acronyms are giving me a major headache. What do you recommend? "Take an ASA Acetyl-salicylic Acid (Aspirin) and call me in the AM ante meridiem (morning)."

- Gertie Blake