



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Eleven leaders to be inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame

**Guelph, February 1, 2023** - In 2023, the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame (OAHF) will induct 11 individuals who have made significant impacts on Ontario agriculture and beyond.

Their influences range from agronomy and crop consulting, soil health and water quality advancements, pesticide and crop research, the development of farm shows and farm co-operatives and leadership in the sectors of horticulture, dairy, forages, eggs and pullets.

The successful nominees for induction include:

- David Biesenthal
- Dale Cowan
- Mack Emiry
- Richard Frank
- Brian Gilroy
- Peter Gould
- Carolynne Griffith
- Ray Robertson
- Robert James Scott
- Tarlok Singh Sahota
- Doug Wagner

All have been selected by the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association as worthy candidates based on their life-long commitments to Ontario agriculture.

The inductees will be recognized in a ceremony on June 11, bringing the total number of inductees recognized since 1980 to 256. To qualify for this prestigious recognition, inductees must have shown visionary leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

“Our Board of Directors was overwhelmed by the number of nomination packages received for consideration last year,” said Nick Whyte, president of the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association. “This level of interest really shows the importance that the agricultural industry places on recognizing its leaders – both past and present.”

#### Inductees for 2023 and their nominators include:

**David Biesenthal** (1943 - ) is a graduate of the Ontario Veterinary College. He is a veterinarian and progressive beef and crop farmer. During the 2001 Walkerton water crisis, David’s family was the focus of much unwanted media attention and intense scrutiny due to accusations against him and his cattle. His record keeping and early adoption of the Environmental Farm Plan and the Nutrient Management Plan programs eventually exonerated him. This resulted in him being recognized as a leader and often-

requested public speaker, committed to advocating and doing what is right. He has had a profound impact on the future of agriculture due to his work in advocating agriculture's role in water quality.

David Biesenthal was nominated by Inductee Stan Eby, Colin Reesor, Joe Dietrich, Trillium Mutual Insurance Company, and Bruce County Beef Farmers

**Dale Cowan** (1953 - ) is a widely respected leader in Ontario agriculture with a career of over 40 years. A Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) since 1997, he has advised growers of numerous crops, has mentored many new CCAs and has reviewed crop recommendations spanning 275,000 acres. Through his extensive volunteer activities, Dale has become the "go to" person when it comes to associations and government looking for an agronomist to provide balanced, science-based and practical input. He is known for his exploration of the newest technology and has also been instrumental in the development and promotion of sustainable agronomy and precision farming practices through Ontario.

Dale Cowan was nominated by the Ontario Certified Crop Advisor Association

**Carleton Mackinnon (Mack) Emiry** (1940 - ) is a dairy farmer who has dedicated his life to the advancement of agriculture in Ontario and his contributions are far reaching. His greatest passion in agriculture is soil health and his objective has always been to leave the soil in an improved condition for following generations. His work as chair of the Land Stewardship Committee evolved into work that led to the development of the Environmental Farm Plan. He has also provided a much-needed voice, to many agricultural discussions on behalf of Northern Ontario. Organizations benefiting from his commitment include the Manitoulin West Sudbury Milk Producers' Association, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the provincial Nutrient Management Advisory Committee.

Mack Emiry was nominated by the Manitoulin North Shore Federation of Agriculture

**Dr. Richard Frank** (1928 – 2021) will be forever associated with sound pesticide use. He co-created and was director of the first pesticide testing lab in Ontario. Beginning in the mid-1960s and until his retirement from government, Dr. Frank authored more than 100 scientific papers, providing valuable scientific data and understanding on the occurrence, fate and risks of pesticide residues in Ontario agriculture. He worked to both study and improve access to pesticides while ensuring that his priorities related to protecting the environment as well as producer and crop safety were considered before any recommendations were made. In the 1970s, when Ontario's horticultural producers were faced with pest control problems, Dr. Frank's lab provided critical pesticide residue data that allowed federal authorities to grant uses. The Minor Use Program later grew into the world-recognized entity that it is today.

Dr. Frank was nominated by the Frank family.

**Brian Gilroy** (1956 – ) Brian Gilroy, an apple grower near Georgian Bay, has a career marked by a lifelong passion for the apple sector and a love of agriculture, people and learning. Brian's years of determined consensus building are a fundamental cornerstone of today's Ontario and Canadian apple industries. His work has left long-lasting impacts on the edible horticulture sector nationwide, as well as public trust and outreach efforts in Ontario that benefit not just fruit and vegetable growers but farmers from all sectors. He has been an active and involved member and leader of many organizations including the Georgian Bay Fruit Growers' Association, Ontario Apple Growers, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, Farm & Food Care Ontario, the Fruit & Vegetable Growers of Canada and the Royal Agriculture Winter Fair, among others.

Brian Gilroy was nominated by the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association

**Peter Gould** (1951 –) had a 36-year career with the Ontario Milk Marketing Board (now Dairy Farmers of Ontario). Peter's name was synonymous with ensuring high standards for milk quality and food safety. Known as a visionary, Peter always recognized the milk industry's need to continue to evolve to remain relevant. He was instrumental in the establishment of a single quota system, implementing a raw milk quality program and taking responsibility for the administration and enforcement of Ontario raw milk quality regulations. A strong supporter of supply management, Peter played an active role in numerous international trade negotiations and was also a leader in raising funds to build the world-class dairy research barn at the University of Guelph.

Peter Gould was nominated by Murray Sherk and Albert Fledderus, Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO)

**Carolynne Griffith** (1942 –) has a long history of making significant contributions to improve Ontario's egg and pullet farming sectors. She has dedicated years to advancing the interest of Ontario's egg and pullet farmers locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally. As chair of Egg Farmers of Ontario, Carolynne was an effective advocate in defending the interest of Canadian egg farmers, the broader industry, and supply management during historic trade negotiations. In this capacity, Carolynne ensured the perspective of Canadian egg farmers was heard by international trade negotiators, government representatives, and other stakeholders. These efforts will have an impact for generations. A strong supporter for building meaningful connections with consumers, she has answered thousands of questions about eggs and egg farming at the Canadian National Exhibition, Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Western Fair, local events and schools.

Carolynne Griffith was nominated by Egg Farmers of Ontario (EFO)

**Ray Robertson** (1943 – ) has demonstrated great leadership within the agricultural community to help it adapt to changing economic, environmental, and political realities and needs. He has helped to grow an appreciation for the role of forage crops on farms to promote soil health and conservation, was instrumental in forming the Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association and served with the Ontario Forage Council and the Ontario Hay and Forage Cooperative. His contributions have left a permanent impression on the industry. He is committed to working on behalf of farmers and the industry, to maintain and build upon programs that are essential for their adoption and continuing success. He has served in leadership roles in programs such as Land Stewardship and the Environmental Farm Plan and even developed and sourced funding for programs in Grey County to help farmers adopt conservation methods.

Ray Robertson was nominated by the Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA)

**Robert James Scott** (1900 – 1946) was one of Ontario's greatest and most influential farm activists and was one of the most prominent men in Canadian agriculture during the 1930s and 1940s. He passionately worked to organize farmers into cooperatives where farmers would pool their resources. By organizing farmers, they were then able to be more competitive, were no longer taken advantage of and had a strong, united voice to influence change. He led the United Farmers' Co-operative of Ontario, advocated for many farm-related matters such as for fixed prices of commodities during the Second World War to guarantee an adequate food supply. He spoke up for fair railway freight rates for crops and was called upon for advice by Ontario Premiers and Prime Minister MacKenzie King. At the time of his premature death, he was a director for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Ontario Stockyards Board and the Ontario Beef Cattle Producers' Association.

Robert James Scott was nominated by the Huron County Federation of Agriculture

**Tarlok Singh Sahota** (1953 –) has made great contributions in his work managing and sustaining a privately-run Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Station and its successful transition to Lakehead University Agricultural Research Station. The research station, under the leadership of Dr. Sahota, has always focussed on development-oriented agricultural research which found an easy application on farms, due to vigorous extension efforts of Dr. Sahota and receptive farmers. Until 2004, Thunder Bay producers grew only a few crops that were needed for cattle. Dr. Sahota's research and extension helped area growers to diversify their cropping systems by adding numerous crops to their mix. He has authored hundreds of publications, extension articles and participated in media reports. Thunder Bay farmers rely on research conducted by Dr. Sahota to make their businesses more profitable and environmentally sustainable.

Tarlok Singh Sahota was nominated by the Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture

**Doug Wagner** (1953 –) has contributed to Ontario's agriculture and food industry through his work with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ontario Seed Growers' Association, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and Canada's Outdoor Farm Show. These organizations have endured for many years and continue to grow in strength. Through a number of organizations, he has developed numerous young agricultural leaders, established new programs for educational and networking venues for farmers, and advanced opportunities to showcase innovative technologies to producers, businesspeople and government decision makers. Described as an "effective people person", his successful leadership is grounded in his ability to work with staff, volunteers, government bureaucrats, politicians, and clients.

Doug Wagner was nominated by Inductee Kenneth Knox

The 2023 induction ceremony will take place on Sunday, June 11, 2023, at the Grand Way Event Centre, Elora. Tickets are available at a cost of \$40 (for in person attendance) or \$20 (virtual attendance) on the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame's website at [www.oahf.on.ca](http://www.oahf.on.ca).

*It is the mission of the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association to acknowledge, record, and preserve the contributions made by leaders to the growth and development of Ontario's agriculture and agri-food industry. To date, 245 worthy candidates have been inducted into the Hall of Fame gallery.*  
[www.oahf.on.ca](http://www.oahf.on.ca)

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