



For Immediate Release

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Dairy Farmers of Ontario plans to make good governance better

MISSISSAUGA, October 17, 2008 –Dairy Farmers of Ontario’s long record of good governance will be even stronger in the future as the organization follows up on the results of an independent governance review conducted by Deloitte, one of the world’s largest consulting firms.

The DFO Board supported conducting the review one year ago after a resolution from delegates to the organization’s annual Fall Policy Conference and results of the independent review were presented by a Deloitte representative at the 2008 Fall Policy Conference in Alliston on October 14 to 16, 2008.

“This was a serious and comprehensive review and DFO is committed to following up on all of the report’s recommendations,” said DFO Chair Bruce Saunders following his presentation of the Board’s response to the report.

The Board will be meeting with the Governance Review committee, comprised of three dairy farmers representing Dairy Producer Committees, to make decisions about specific plans to follow up on the recommendations of the committee. Progress will be reported back to delegates at the 2009 Spring Regional meetings and Fall Policy Conference.

The review had three primary objectives. These were: an assessment of DFO’s governance structures, practices and procedures; an evaluation of stakeholder management practices, and a strategic planning process review.

The comprehensive process included focus groups with dairy farmers from across the province, interviews with DFO Board Members and senior staff, an online survey and interviews with 36 external stakeholders.

The report noted DFO receives strong credit for solid improvements made across key governance elements in recent years. The report also noted respect for DFO and credit for its national efforts from industry peers.

Despite this progress, the report noted there is still room for DFO to improve as an organization and made seven recommendations.

1. Clarify, refine, and communicate the Board’s mandate to focus the organization on a common vision.
2. Delineate, in writing, the roles and responsibilities of the Board, staff, and committees to enable DFO to work toward its mandate more effectively and efficiently.
3. When appropriate, ensure the Board is given additional information and analysis, and has access to relevant expertise, to improve decision-making impact and speed.
4. Communicate in a more relevant, timely, consistent, and easily accessible way to improve DFO’s stakeholder relationships.
5. Institute periodic board evaluations to assess the Board’s performance and proactively manage Board accountability.
6. Strengthen strategic planning capabilities and formalize the process to prioritize objectives, set policy, and manage operations.
7. Formalize stakeholder engagement plans to better understand and manage stakeholder needs, improving DFO’s prospects for success.

DFO General Manager Peter Gould said he was pleased with the positive results and confident that the organization will benefit from the process. “We will be stronger as a result of this effort.”