

From: Michelle Spoelstra
To: [Kolar, Loren](#)
Cc: [Mel Switzer](#); [Drew Spoelstra](#)
Subject: Hamilton-Wentworth Federation of Agriculture -Vaccine support
Date: May 13, 2021 10:19:09 AM
Attachments: [HWFA-Vaccine support.pdf](#)

Good morning,

On behalf of HWFA President, Mel Switzer and OFA Vice-President, Drew Spoelstra, I have attached a letter encouraging HPHS to follow the leadership of neighbouring health units that recognize the importance of our agricultural workers and food processors by prioritizing, communicating and offering vaccinations for this priority group.

Thank you for this consideration.

Regards,

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Michelle Spoelstra

Secretary/Treasurer
Hamilton-Wentworth Federation of Agriculture
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Hamilton-Wentworth Federation of Agriculture

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May 13, 2021

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
Chair of the Board of Health

Dr. Elizabeth Richardson
Medical Officer of Health

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Dr. Richardson,

The Hamilton-Wentworth Federation of Agriculture (HWFA) is a local voice for more than 545 farm families – a significant source of food, fiber and fuel, as well as employment, in the City of Hamilton. Agriculture has met the challenge of providing a safe, stable, and strong food supply in the City of Hamilton, and across the province, throughout the pandemic. Farmers, farm workers and food processing workers are essential as they collectively support the entire food system, but this can only be maintained if these workers remain on the job and in good health.

HWFA strongly encourages Hamilton Public Health Services (HPS) to invest in the food security that is vital to the well-being of Hamilton residents by prioritizing farmers, farm workers and food processing workers in the local vaccine roll out. These workers, including those who live and work in congregate settings and seasonal agricultural workers, are clearly identified as Group 1 of the Province's Phase 2 Vaccination Plan.

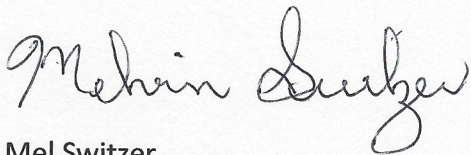
We are encouraged to learn that some Hamilton farmers are now able to book vaccines through the opening of the provincial booking system, but there does not seem to be any prioritization of these essential workers. To date, there has been no communication from HPS to the agriculture community, leaving farmers and agri-food employers wondering what they can do to protect workers while they continue to provide food for our tables. HWFA encourages HPS to follow the leadership of neighbouring health units that recognize the importance of our agricultural workers and food processors by prioritizing, communicating and offering vaccinations for this priority group. Implementing a plan, such as dedicated vaccination clinics

for farmers and farm workers can help this prioritization, recognizing the importance of keeping our food supply chain strong.

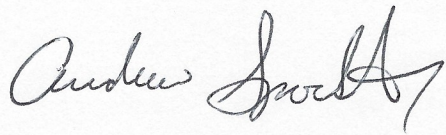
HWFA is also concerned about the impact of potential Section 22 workplace closures on our food system. Just one closed workplace in the agri-food system has a vast impact on the overall system beyond Hamilton borders. Taking vaccine clinics to the food processing sector in Hamilton would help secure our local food system.

We ask you to consider these points and elevate the priority of these essential workers in local vaccine appointments. HWFA is here to help, and we would be happy to meet with you to discuss the role we can play in prioritizing vaccines for farm and food workers, ensuring a secure local food system for Hamilton.

Yours truly,



Mel Switzer,
Hamilton-Wentworth Federation of Agriculture,
President



Drew Spoelstra,
Ontario Federation of Agriculture,
Vice President

Cc:

Donna Skelly, MPP Flamborough-Glanbrook
Members of the Board of Health
Hamilton City Councillors