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## NEWS RELEASE

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### ONTARIO GOAT DEPARTS FROM LIVESTOCK ALLIANCE

*VFO and OG partnership wraps up by year end*

GUELPH, ON– Veal Farmers of Ontario (VFO) and Ontario Goat (OG) jointly announced the departure of OG from the Livestock Alliance partnership, and as a result, the dissolution of the Livestock Alliance, by the end of 2018.

“OG as an organization will still exist but our capacity to function as a member of the Livestock Alliance will wind up and be completed by the end of 2018,” stated Dirk Boogerd, OG President. “It is important to OG that we are able to meet our responsibilities as part of the partnership that has shown us so much support and value over the years, and at this time, we are unable to do that.”

Despite the best efforts of OG to try and bring the Ontario goat industry together with a united voice, the sector remains divided. With two failed attempts to become a recognized commodity organization that would see the implementation of stable funding, the volunteer board of OG is left with no other choice but to wind up its partnership with VFO.

“While we still firmly believe in the concept of the Livestock Alliance and what it can do for our members, the reality is that in order for it to work effectively, all partners must have stable funding so that costs are shared equitably on a consistent and ongoing basis,” stated Tom Kroesbergen, VFO Chair.

OG entered into the Livestock Alliance partnership in July 2009 with the goal of building organizational capacity so that Ontario’s goat farmers had a representative voice within the industry and with government. Through the sharing of office space and staff resources, OG was able to leverage funding for a number of important projects, fund new research and facilitate industry development over the past nine years. “The impact that OG has had on our industry over the past several years is significant. The lack of producer representation at all levels and work on behalf of all meat, dairy and fibre producers in Ontario will be felt,” stated Boogerd.

Boogerd explains that after the second failed attempt to become organized, OG went out to its members with a flat rate annual membership fee as a result of member feedback. However, support for this initiative has been underwhelming and has left OG without the financial resources necessary to continue its partnership with VFO.

“There is no question that Ontario’s goat producers recognize the need for investment in our industry so we can continue to grow, develop, and take advantage of new opportunities, but there is an incompatibility with what we need and how much producers are willing or able to invest to make sure our voice is heard,” explained Boogerd. “Over the past nine years, OG has become a resource for producers, industry partners, and government. We have built lasting relationships, but OG does not have the financial resources required to continue responding to their requests for producer input, assistance and support,” he added.

“We have appreciated all of the efforts of the OG Board members and while we are disappointed with the outcome, we respect their decision to depart the partnership on good terms as they assess their current needs and resources. Moving forward, our dedicated staff will focus solely on a number of key VFO priorities and issues that will benefit the veal industry” added Kroesbergen.

“The transition will take place over the coming months as we work to resolve some of the joint initiatives and projects between the two organizations,” explained Jennifer Haley, Executive Director. Haley also explained that some of the Livestock Alliance initiatives will remain as status quo until the end of the year, while other OG specific initiatives have been suspended. Effective immediately, there are no staff resources being allocated to goat projects or issues.

OG remains a non-profit agricultural organization in good standing recognized under the Agricultural & Horticultural Organizations Act with voluntary membership and a voluntary board comprised of producers elected by their peers. “As we work through this transition, we will have a better idea of what the role of OG will be in the future,” stated Boogerd.

The Veal Farmers of Ontario is a producer-run organization that represents the interests of Ontario’s veal producers. VFO is committed to promoting industry growth and viability through collaboration, innovation, marketing and education. To learn more, visit [ontarioveal.on.ca](http://ontarioveal.on.ca).

Ontario Goat represents Ontario's milk, meat and fibre goat farmers with a united voice and is dedicated to enhancing the goat industry through education, collaboration, innovation and strategic alliances. To learn more, visit [ontariogoat.ca](http://ontariogoat.ca).

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