Food sector strategy for the north

The province is looking to expand the food sector in northern Ontario and asked the public to weigh in on a draft framework. The OFAH is generally supportive of this plan and sustainable economic development in northern Ontario, but not at the expense of our natural resources, public access to Crown lands, and northern identity.

Who is leading the strategy?
• The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

What is the strategy about?
• The Agriculture, Aquaculture and Food Processing Sector strategy proposes to strengthen food-producing industries (i.e. field crops, aquaculture, livestock, maple syrup) and identify additional opportunities for growth in the north.

Where exactly would this apply?
• Northern Ontario districts: Rainy River, Kenora, Thunder Bay, Greater Sudbury, Timiskaming, Cochrane, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Algoma

Why is the OFAH involved?
The OFAH commented on the draft strategy because of the potential impact to anglers, hunters and the management of Crown land. Some of our questions, and concerns include the potential for:
• Wildlife habitat destruction and population decline resulting from unfettered clearing, draining and cultivating of land
• Species introductions resulting from pond and cage aquaculture escapes
• Crown land being converted for agricultural use without fully evaluating environmental, social, cultural and economic trade-offs

The OFAH also recommends:
• A coordinated effort among government agencies and conservation authorities
• Government agencies consider partnering with ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) to balance agriculture with ecology
• An investment in laboratory resources to afford best farming practices (i.e: soil testing/precision fertilizer application)
• Access to provincial government agricultural expertise
• Full regulation of all cage aquaculture in Ontario

Latest RCMP Prohibition -- 10/22 magazine

The RCMP is at it again, and legal firearms owners are the target. This time they’ve taken aim at the Ruger high capacity 10/22 magazine which holds 25 cartridges. Despite the fact that these magazines have been legal in Canada for decades, the RCMP firearms lab has suddenly concluded that because they will fit Ruger Charger pistols or clones, and since pistols are limited to magazines of ten rounds, the magazine should now be classified as prohibited. This was confirmed in a memo dated July 21, 2016 from the RCMP Criminal Division Branch. The Ruger 10/22 is one of the most common rifles in existence, owned by tens of thousands of Canadians, and generally used for controlling nuisance animals, target shooting and plinking. Ammunition magazines designed for rimfire rifles like the 10/22 are unregulated in Canada and the pistol in question didn’t even exist for decades after the 10/22 high capacity magazine was created, which was clearly meant to be used in the Ruger 10/22 rifles.

“Once again, with little or no justification, the RCMP has demonized legal, law-abiding firearms owners and criminalized tens of thousands of firearms owners across the country who have these magazines in their possession. As usual, they offer no facts to justify the decision, no statistics, no examples of these magazines being used in a crime. Instead, they based the decision on the possibility that someone, somewhere, after decades of lawful use, might choose to use one in a manner for which it was not intended,” said Greg Farrant, manager of Government Affairs and Policy for the OFAH.

What can you do? Write, call or e-mail your Member of Parliament, the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister. Tell them, politely, that as a legal, law-abiding firearms owner you are appalled that the RCMP seems intent on finding ways to harass the firearms community and that you want the decision overturned. A list of MPs and their contact information can be found at www.parl.gc.ca/parliamentarians.