

MINISTRY of AGRICULTURE, FOOD and RURAL AFFAIRS

MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)

June 25, 2020

Teleconference 1-866-633-1033 / 416-212-8013

For Management:	For OPSEU:
Alaina Oda (Co-chair) Doug Reddick Colleen Fitzgerald-Hubble	Melanie Begin (Co-chair) Heidi Steffen-Petrie Marcus Rangai

Management Resources	OPSEU Resource
Jared Friesen Kristin McCrimmon-Jones	Kathleen Demareski, OPSEU

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
Welcome and Introductions	Alaina Oda opened the meeting at 9:40 am Introductions	
Additional Agenda Items / Changes to the Agenda	N/A	
Ad Hoc Meetings	A list of ad hoc meetings was distributed prior to the meeting.	
Surplus List	Management reported that there are no employees on the surplus list.	
Temp Agency Staff	Management reported that they are not aware of any temp agency staff currently working in the ministry as of June 25, 2020.	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
Fixed Term Staff Reports	Management provided fixed term staff reports in advance of the meeting dated May 29, 2020.	
Conversion Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management reported on two fixed term employees • Discussion about offer letter that was shared with OPSEU 	Management to follow-up on assignment under article 8.6.3
Diversity and Inclusion	<p>Management reported on:</p> <p>OMAFRA Anti-Racism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy memo issued on June 12th which spoke to ministry's commitment to eliminate racism and discrimination • At Deputy employee check-in meetings, confirmed ministry's commitment to create change • Mid-July additional OMAFRA Inclusion resources will be shared • Encouraging branches across the ministry to start conversations with staff utilizing diversity and inclusion toolkit • Report on discussions occurring within Agriculture Development Branch and Business Development Branch <p>Indigenous Cultural Competency Training (ICCT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 500 employees and managers have registered for training. • OMAFRA has maintained high ministry completion/pass rate • Additional training will start between July and September <p>Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIWG Events Calendar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ June 22nd – National Indigenous Persons' Day • D&I Ambassadors Toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Materials posted and available on OMAFRA DIWG intranet page <p>Diversity Career Champions Program (DCCP)</p>	Management to confirm who will be trained and timing

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMAFRA has 30 participants this year • Mentoring relationships were paused due to COVID • Various employment engagement sessions have been scheduled e.g. career development and resume and interview skill sessions <p>OMAFRA Inclusion Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate goal to diversify OPS senior leadership by 2025 • OMAFRA will report on targets in upcoming diversity and inclusion communications 	
Disclosures	Due to the volume of disclosures/information shares since the last MERC meeting, management distributed a list of disclosures/information shares to OPSEU prior to the meeting.	
Health and Safety Update	<p>Health & Safety Representatives in Regional Offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 offices still without a Health & Safety Representative despite multiple asks from OPSEU • Management and OPSEU will continue to reach out to staff to solicit volunteers • Staff are not attending office on a regular basis <p>Joint Health & Safety Committee and Health & Safety Rep Workplace Inspections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Employee Health, Safety & Wellness has advised where there are workers working in the building, they can continue doing monthly workplace inspections. If staff are not working in building, they should not come into the building for the purposes of conducting the inspection. • If staff are attending offices, they need to notify management and sign-in and out. <p>COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources available and promoted through Centre for Employee Health, Safety & Wellness, OMAFRA COVID-19 intranet, resources available for all staff e.g. ergonomics, mental health. • Agriculture Development Branch update on safety guidelines for staff working in the field and for new summer students. Protocols have been 	Identify an existing HSR who can speak to staff at these offices and describe the role

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>shared and implemented with other areas of the ministry e.g. Environmental Management Branch, Business Development Branch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion about health and safety protocols within Meat Inspection Program <p>FSIDB Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPSEU raised concerns and questions about the restructuring of the working group <p>Alternative Emergency Locations – 1 Stone Rd.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPSEU raised concerns about advising employees to use their personal vehicles as a suitable alternative location during inclement weather 	<p>Management can provide an update as decisions are made</p> <p>Management can flag concerns to Business Services Branch</p>
AGENDA	FOLLOW UP	ACTION REQUIRED
MERC Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed changes were provided in advance of the meeting • All parties are satisfied with the changes to proceed with signature 	OPSEU will share signed agreement to management for signature
2019 OPS Employee Experience Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines have been delayed • Anticipate results to be published in mid-July • OPS results will be shared first, followed by ministry level results, followed by branch-level discussions • Results will be communicated by the Deputy and posted on InsideOPS 	
Transition Exit Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPSEU has not received corporate report • Another ministry review date not currently planned. Program is still available for employees to apply. 	Will add TEI to list of standing items for future MERC dates
Agricultural Information Contact Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ministry is not aware of plans to consolidate call centre operations. • Suggest raising through CERC table as initiative would impact multiple ministries 	Remove from agenda
Flexible Work Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy French memo on June 11th that September would be earliest date for staff to return to workplace 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management is considering feedback on how work from home arrangements are working • Flexible work arrangements are a key principle of the return to work plan • OPSEU raised questions and concerns about consistency and how this will affect individual arrangements or employment accommodations 	
COVID-19	<p>Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater access to COVID-19 testing allows for asymptomatic testing and testing for front-line staff in critical positions • If employees need support to go for testing during work hours, they should discuss with management on a case by case basis <p>Doctor Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPSEU asked about options available for staff when medical note is required but doctor may not be available • In the context of the COVID-19 environment, management has minimized where medical notes are requested. If doctor is unavailable, there should likely be a back-up doctor available. • Management will consider other options when a note is required 	
AGENDA	NEW BUSINESS	ACTION REQUIRED
Gradual Re-Opening of OPS Workplaces (GROW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBS will provide corporate guidelines. OMAFRA working group includes Strategic HR Branch, Business Services Branch, Business Development Branch, Communications Branch to determine plans for the return to the workplace • Program areas will consider unique circumstances of their work environment • OPSEU requested to schedule ad hoc meetings for management to provide updates • OMAFRA working group will be sending survey to all staff to gather feedback, ideas and concerns • InsideOPS page will be created to highlight updates on GROW 	Management to schedule regular update meetings with OPSEU
OPS Future State Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deferred to next meeting 	OPSEU will share resources with OMAFRA

AGENDA	NEW BUSINESS	ACTION REQUIRED
		to discuss at future meeting
Next Meeting Date	September 29, 2020	

Melanie Bégin

 For the Union

Alain Ode

 For Management

June 25, 2020

 Date