

MINISTRY of AGRICULTURE, FOOD and RURAL AFFAIRS

MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)

**March 25, 2021
Via Microsoft TEAMS**

For Management:	For OPSEU/SEFPO:
Alaina Oda (Co-chair) Colleen Fitzgerald-Hubble Brendan McKay	Melanie Begin (Co-chair) Marcus Rangai

Management Resources	OPSEU/SEFPO Resource
Jared Friesen Kristin McCrimmon-Jones	Rodger Noakes, OPSEU/SEFPO

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melanie opened the meeting at 9:33am Brendan McKay new management member 	
Additional Agenda Items / Changes to the Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	
Ad Hoc Meetings	Management distributed a list of ad hoc meetings to OPSEU/SEFPO prior to the meeting.	
Disclosures	Management distributed a list of disclosures/information shares to OPSEU/SEFPO prior to the meeting.	Management to update the disclosures/information

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
		share document and send to OPSEU
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 March 25, 2020.	
Fixed Term Staff Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management provided fixed term staff reports in advance of the meeting - Summer students will start onboarding in April 	
Conversion Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda item renamed from “Conversion Report” to “Conversion Update” - Management reported on two (2) employees 	Management to confirm if/when conversion process is finalized
Diversity and Inclusion	<p>Management reported on:</p> <p>OMAFRA Anti-Racism Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dave Penfold, Manager, Organizational Development, presented on the ministry's draft Anti-Racism Action Plan - OMAFRA hosted 9 ministry-wide consultations with a total of 230 participants - Common themes from the consultations: Leadership, Policies and Programs, Representation, and Training/Education - Discussion about the ministry’s draft Anti-Racism Action Plan <p>Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewing mandate and service offerings - Will continue hosting regular ministry-wide events and will continue to develop/collate a list of resources to support branch D&I discussions 	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are currently 7 OPSEU employees as part of the DIWG <p>Diversity and Inclusion Branch Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy Division hosted a “division day” that focused on D&I and mental health - Various branches hosting regular sessions on D&I topics - Business Development Branch increasing representation and collaboration with Indigenous communities - Economic Development Division D&I speaker series. Last session included topics on racism and colonialism. - Staff led podcast sessions <p>Senior Leadership Diversification Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work underway to develop a 5-year plan due March 31st - Four pathways to leadership: leadership & development programs, coaching & mentoring, recruitment shortlists, and succession planning - 2019/2020 targets posted <p>Indigenous Cultural Competency Training (ICCT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 71% of ministry has completed training - Training will be extended until the end of fiscal year 21/22 - Anticipate registrations will focus on front-line staff and staff new to the ministry <p>Diversity Career Champions Program (DCCP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking event held yesterday March 24th <p>OPS Third-Party Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates are posted 	
<p>Transition Exit Initiative</p>	<p>Active: 8 Approved: 130 (since program began in 2013) Non-Program Exit: 25 Withdrawn: 10</p>	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<p>Winter TEI Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ministry is in the process of finalizing the Winter TEI Review 	
<p>Health and Safety Update</p>	<p>Health & Safety Representatives in Regional Offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three offices currently without a Health & Safety Rep (HSR): Woodstock, London, and Vineland - OPSEU has reached out to staff to volunteer for the HSR role - Discussion on the challenges and different strategies for filling these roles - Management will work with Centre for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness to identify new strategies for filling these roles and will share any additional ideas with OPSEU 	
AGENDA	FOLLOW UP	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>Workplace Reintegration (GROW)/ COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “GROW” initiative has been renamed “Workplace Reintegration” - No major updates to report on the Workplace Reintegration plans <p>In-Office Reporting Tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-Office Reporting Tool launched to the entire ministry March 1, 2021 - The tool will be used when an employee reports to an OMAFRA workplace (e.g. OMAFRA office, third-party workplace), to confirm they have completed a self-assessment prior to entering the workplace, and as part of the ministry’s emergency response - Self-assessment questions will be adjusted based on new Ministry of Health guidelines <p>Ministry Engagement/Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Minister Kelly continues to host monthly ministry check-ins. The most recent took place on March 22nd 	<p>Management to report back on the use of the tool</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parties agree to continue monthly ad-hoc meetings to discuss updates regarding workplace reintegration and COVID-19 <p>In response to questions posed by OPSEU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ministry and staff continue to consistently deliver the regular work of the ministry as well as work related to COVID - Management continues to take an empathetic and flexible approach when supporting staff - Decisions haven't been made on how/when positions/employees will reintegrate to the workplace. Anticipate alternative work arrangements and other flexible arrangements will continue to be options. <p>COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion about positive cases impacting OMAFRA workplaces - Currently no OMAFRA employees are isolating from the workplace as a result of COVID - OMAFRA employees who test positive for COVID-19 will be informed by management that they may be eligible for WSIB benefits if the contraction of the virus occurred in the workplace. WSIB will review the claim and make a determination if WSIB benefits should be paid - MIP has not recently relied on any contingency inspectors 	
OPS Future State Modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OMAFRA has been listed under a "Compliance Harmonization" action item which is being led by Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and being discussed at central tables such as CERC and MBA - OMAFRA does not have any additional information on how this initiative may impact the ministry - Discussion about the listing of the Woodstock Office for sale 	
AGENDA	NEW BUSINESS	ACTION REQUIRED
2021 OPS Employee Experience Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The preliminary response rate for the ministry as of March 24th is 80% - which is higher than the 2019 rate of 71% 	Management to provide an update at next MERC

AGENDA	NEW BUSINESS	ACTION REQUIRED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Themes for this year's survey: in-person and remote work; respect, discrimination, harassment and violence in the workplace; employee accommodations; barriers for persons with disabilities; mental health supports; and leadership - Discussion about response rate within Meat Inspection Program 	
Next Meeting Date	June 17, 2021	

Original signed by:

For the Union

Original signed by:

For Management

March 25, 2021

Date