

**Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**EFAO Requests Quota Exemption for Small-Scale, Direct Marketed Chicken**

At its annual meeting on November 6 in Listowel, the members of the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) agreed to encourage the Chicken Farmers of Ontario (CFO), and the government, to find a way to create a quota exemption to allow farmers to raise up to 2000 chickens per year, as long as the chickens are sold direct to consumers from the farm or at a farmers<sup>1</sup> market stall.

In the resolution, the association noted its support for the original intent of supply management to meet the local demand for chicken at a price fair to family farms. EFAO President Ann Slater, a St. Marys area farmer, said, "We have many members of our organization who would like raise a small, seasonal flock of chickens, but the present price of chicken quota and the minimum quota requirements are out of reach of young farmers and small, diversified ecological farms."

Most members of EFAO market a portion of their farm produce direct to consumers. Slater added, "Customers come to our members wanting to buy chicken raised in a time-honoured way on a small-scale farm. When our customers cannot purchase chicken direct from farmers they know and trust many simply decide not to eat chicken. Our members do not want to take business away from the chicken board."

A number of EFAO members in the western part of the province have recently been visited by CFO inspectors and told to quit raising small chicken flocks without quota or face legal action. "Many small farmers feel they have fewer and fewer options on what livestock and crops they can raise and market and at the same time they feel their customers are losing the right to make their own choices about who produces their food and how it is grown", said Huron county farmer, Nancy Hislop.

The EFAO board has sent a letter to the CFO and the Minister of Agriculture outlining their request and has put a committee in place to continue work on this issue.

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