



ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

May 7, 2022

RE: Senate Study on Examining and Reporting on the Status of Soil Health in Canada

Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

The Senate of Canada

Ottawa, ON

Canada, K1A 0A4

Dear Members of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry,

The University of Guelph (U of G) is very pleased to offer our expertise to support your upcoming soil health study that will be focused on enabling sustainability and improving economic prosperity in Canada. Soil health is the foundation of Canadian agricultural production and is what our food security, water quality and ecosystems are based on. This study comes at a critical time as soil health and sustainable soil management are increasingly important in countering the risk of climate change while continuing to sustainably grow food for the planet. For context, an estimated 68 percent of Ontario farmland is in an unsustainable erosion risk category and 82 percent is emitting carbon to the atmosphere.

U of G is home to leading experts related to soil health, who would be willing to provide testimony to support your committee's study. As Canada's Food University, U of G is a global leader in pioneering agriculture and food innovations directly with industry partners, ranking 1st in Canada and 12th worldwide in agricultural science. Specifically, U of G's Soils at Guelph is a leading research cluster that is advancing sustainable soil management by making research accessible and facilitating knowledge exchange between researchers, farmers, industry, and government. Led by Dr. Kari Dunfield, Dr. Laura Van Eerd, and Dr. Claudia Wagner-Riddle from the School of Environment Science, a major focus of Soils at Guelph's research is around sustainability and the role of soil health in reducing agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions. Upon request, the U of G would be pleased to provide a comprehensive list for your consideration of faculty and researchers to appear before committee.

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As part of the committee's study, U of G would also like to formally invite all committee members to tour the Ontario Crops Research Centre – Elora in Wellington County to experience in-person our research. Elora is one of the largest agricultural research farms in Canada, covering 2,310 acres and home to the Soils at Guelph program. The site features 18 soil weighing lysimeters that are currently examining how the diversification of annual crop rotations impacts soil health, and how agri-ecosystems may be affected by global warming.

If you have any questions or would like to follow up on this tour invite, I encourage you to reach out to Mellissa McDonald, Director, Government Relations and Community Engagement, at mellissa.mcdonald@uoguelph.ca or (226) 220-0565.

Thank you for your consideration.



Dr. Rene Van Acker, Dean, Ontario Agricultural College

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