

ONTARIO FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING INDUSTRY ELECTION ISSUES ALLIANCE OF ONTARIO FOOD PROCESSORS | MAY 2014

The Ontario food and beverage processing industry is a key contributor to the provincial economy. In 2011, the industry generated \$39.4 billion in annual revenues and contributed over \$11 billion to the provincial GDP. Over 125,000 jobs are directly provided by Ontario's 3,000 plus processors with thousands more generated indirectly in supporting infrastructure. This sector is Ontario's number one employer.

In October 2013, the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors released the report, [Ontario's Food and Beverage Processing Industry Strategy – The New Engine of Ontario's Economy](#). This report speaks to the opportunities and the challenges in growing a successful industry. The report also identifies four recommendations for action if the sector is to meet growth targets by 2020 of 185,000 jobs and \$70 billion in revenue.

1. **Establish a Food and Beverage Innovation Centre** that is dedicated to processing innovation, cutting edge technology, business development and incubation to drive a new level of competitiveness in the Ontario sector.
2. **Raise the Profile of Ontario Food & Drink** to build on Ontario's strong brand – a place for healthy, high quality safe food and drink - in local and export markets.
3. **Develop Talent & A Future in Food** so that the next generation workforce is engaged and informed on the suite of employment opportunities in food and beverage processing.
4. **Simplify & Modernize Regulations** to facilitate access and navigation and to ensure that regulations are supporting not encumbering commerce.

PARTY LEADER QUESTIONS

1. How will your party provide support and facilitation to the four recommendations identified by industry above?
2. Access to capital for business development is a critical issue for Ontario's processors. How will your party provide capital support for domestic development of Ontario businesses and incent new investment to the province?
3. Ontario has some of the highest energy rates in North America. As a supporter of the Coalition of Ontario Manufacturers for Competitive Industrial Power Rates, AOFI is calling for the establishment of a fair industrial power rate. How does your party respond to this?
4. Trade agreements with global partners are essential to providing the right environment for export development. How will your party facilitate robust trade partnerships that support commerce for Ontario businesses?
5. Are there any other comments you would like to provide on how your party will support food and beverage processor business competitiveness in Ontario?