



AIC2018

Education in Agricultural Sciences and
Technology - Ready for the Future?

Envisaging Future Graduates Forum Presentation

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From Education to Practice in the Public Interest

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Basis of Agricultural Science as a Regulated Profession

- Qualified, educated and accountable people were seen as a means of protecting farmers from misinformation
- First Agrology Act in any Canadian province; legislation forming the l'Ordre des agronomes du Québec, in 1937
- 1946 the Government of Saskatchewan passed legislation for the creation of Canada's second Institute to regulate practitioners
- Qualification assurance legislation based on a public interest model
- Most other provinces followed suit
- Scopes of practice grew to meet society's needs



Not in Ontario

- ❑ Neither the Ontario government nor the agricultural/environmental sector have recognized the capacity of any current association or body to ensure agriculture and environmental practitioners had the necessary education, ethics, commitment to ongoing learning and public accountability
- ❑ Other sector associations with industry and employer support have come forward that have provided credibility for practitioners through certifications
- ❑ Statutory ability to remove from practice anyone proven not suitable to practice in the public interest in agriculture or environmental practice does not occur in Ontario
- ❑ Credibility and trust are undeniably major issues in our sector today

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- “It has been a long time since either government or corporate society could use trust me as a working promotional campaign. It is no longer enough for corporate society or government to trot out their ‘experts’ and use the word science as if they were referring to a passage from the bible.”



Who Do You Choose?

- You are told you need a root canal. Do you choose a dental equipment salesperson or a regulated and licensed dentist?

Professional Standards & Regulation in the Public Interest

- ❑ Sector practice, across Canada, goes beyond agriculture, environmental stewardship and food production
- ❑ Ontario's government realized the dangers to public safety that voluntary accreditation poses outside of agriculture – actioned the formation of The Ontario College of Trades
- ❑ Regulation in the public interest: an obligation to protect the most important public values held by society
- ❑ A clear and consistent education entrance requirement for agricultural and environmental practice in Canada
- ❑ Licensed professional = commitment to act in society's well being

Professional Standards & Regulation in the Public Interest

- ❑ 10,000 across Canada licensed to practice agriculture and environmental science in the public interest – only about 300 in Ontario
- ❑ Ontario lacks a regulatory body within agriculture and environmental science practice capable of operating with a mission to protect the public by licensing/accreditation and safe guarding competence of designated/accredited practitioners through adherence to a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, as well as through the provision of quality advice/work and public accountability
- ❑ A regulatory body that is capable of holding its practitioners to a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice is clear
- ❑ There is no association in Ontario capable of ensuring agriculture and environmental science practitioners advocate and practice good stewardship based on sound principles and practices within a values-based publicly accountability framework



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