

2025 OAAS Board of Directors and Staff

Below is a list of the 2025 Board of Directors and a very brief introduction to each one of them. It is meant to give insight into the skills and talents around the Board table aside from those gained as members of an Agricultural Society.

Heather Owens, President

Heather will be serving the term of 1st Vice President this year as well as Provincial Director for District Three. She has been involved with the Campbellford-Seymour Agricultural Society for over 40 years. She is a long-standing Director of her Agricultural Society and is currently the Past President. Having been an exhibitor at her home fair and several surrounding fairs for years, she started attending judging schools and plans to become an OAAS-certified judge in future. The past year Heather was actively involved with the creation and hiring of the new position of an executive assistant and on the selection committee for the OAAS Scholarships. Heather has been employed with the Highland Shores Children's Aid Society for the past 30 years, supervising a Permanency team for Foster Care and Adoption. Heather was raised on a dairy farm and participated in 4-H, Junior Farmers and the Northumberland Holstein Club.

Jessica Cook, 1st Vice-President & District 10

Jess Cook has been heavily involved with her local agricultural society in Dundalk for the past 15 years but her love for the fair began as a small child through calf club and 4H. Jess currently lives outside of Dundalk with her husband, Jordan and two girls Audrey & Mackenzie. The fair is a family affair and they all participate in volunteering at events. Jess is the practice manager at a rural veterinary clinic in Markdale which keeps her tied to both small and large animal medicine. Jess was honoured to be the recipients of the 2023 Tommy Cooper award. Jess is passionate about her leadership role and mentoring of youth.

Lorna Wilson, 2nd Vice-President & District 5

Lorna brings a wealth of ag awareness, volunteer and fair knowledge to the board table. In her current role as Volunteer Coordinator for Country Heritage Park, she has built up a 500-strong list of student volunteers. Lorna sat on the OAAS board previously as Speakers and Seminars Chair and has delivered many workshops and seminars – most recently at the IAFE AGM in Indianapolis, Indiana. Lorna resides on retirement acreage with her husband, Lorne and currently serves as her church's treasurer.

Glen Syme, Past-President

Lives besides the village of Appleton in Eastern Ontario, which is part of District 2. He has been a dairy farmer all his life, Bred and milking purebred Holsteins in a tie-stall barn. Their herd has achieved the prestigious master breeder Shield and shows Holsteins at local fairs.

In Glen's pass time, he is an old-time square dance caller and has taught 4-H ers square dancing for several years. Glen is also a director of the North Lanark Ag Society in Almonte and has a passion for Agricultural and Ag Societies.

Amy LeRoy, District 1

Amy is proud to be part of the District 1 family and her home fair is the Vankleek Hill Fair. She has been on that board for many years and especially loves co-chairing the heavy horse committee with her dad and working with the sound and lighting crew. Growing up, Amy spent most fair seasons showing her family's Percheron horses all across Eastern Ontario and now she enjoys judging produce and supporting local fairs. She has also been a volunteer at the OAAS convention for many years and enjoys meeting fair friends from all across the province. Amy always knew she wanted a job where she could help people and now works with youth as a Recreation Therapist at The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre.

Angie Robinson, District 2

Angie was born and raised in the small rural community of Beachburg, near the Ottawa River, where her family owned a small dairy farm and then a beef farm. She grew up raising purebred Hereford cattle, competing in 4h shows and open shows in eastern Ontario and several times at the junior show at the Royal. She has been a long-time volunteer and supporter of the Beachburg Agricultural Society, carrying on a family tradition of several generations, and is currently a director on the board. She also enjoys volunteering with other organizations, such as the Canadian Cancer Society and other fundraising and non-profit initiatives in her community. She is entering her 3rd year as District 2 Provincial Director.

Jodi Ferguson, District 3

Growing up, the Fall Fair was a magical experience, filled with homecraft exhibits, dog shows, and horse shows that sparked Jodi's lifelong love for community and agriculture. Her passion for engaging youth stems from memories of entering homecraft projects at school, inspiring her to create opportunities for the next generation. Living on her spouse's century-old dairy farm, she strives to involve her children in farming and fair activities, hoping to inspire more youth to participate, whether by volunteering or entering competitions.

A member of the Lennox Agricultural Society/Napanee Fair since 2022, in 2023 becoming a Convening Director, overseeing the Derby, the Children's Homecraft division, and the revival of the Ambassador program.

Michelle Molloy, District 4

Being raised on a farm in Orono, Ontario, agriculture has always been a part of Michelle's life. Her introduction to the fair world began at a young age when her mother began volunteering with the Orono Agricultural Society. Through this influence, Michelle also started volunteering and eventually also became the Secretary of the Orono Agricultural Society. Now living in the Kawartha Lakes, she enjoys fishing, boating, geocaching, and spending time with her two sons. Michelle is passionate about promoting volunteerism to youth and proudly sits on the Provincial Youth Committee.

Michael Philpott, District 6

Michael is a District Director from District 6 and lives in the fruit and wine region of Ontario. His home is in the Town of Lincoln, and his home Fair is the West Niagara Agricultural Society. They are recognized as the youngest fair in Ontario.

Michael was instrumental in having Lincoln A. S. and Smithville A.S. Amalgamate in 2012. He worked closely with OMAFRA as this was the first time they experience this. Over the years with the OAAS, I was part of the right sizing of the board. Worked with Societies having MPAC issues. Michael has also been a part of helping Societies with their Strategic planning. In addition, he also worked with Societies to understand the act. Building a strong relationship with fairs and OAAS in my District. In 2019 The OAAS awarded Michael with the Meritorious Award for Service.

At his home fair, Michael has been instrumental in Ag education, ag commodities and the interaction of all ages touching and holding farm animals.

Michael believes his biggest contribution was (Teamwork Makes A Society Strong) now it is Teamwork makes our Ag Societies Strong.

Mona Eichmann, District 7

Mona was first introduced to the Tavistock Agricultural Society as an exhibitor in the Homecraft Division. Shortly thereafter, Mona joined as an Associate Director, and in 2001-2002 served as the Homecraft President. Over the years, Mona has been a Convenor for the Display Competition, Pet Show, Fine Arts, Plants and Flowers, and also convened the Amateur Photography class along with her mother Gertrud. Mona served as President of the Tavistock Agricultural Society in 2017-2018, and currently convenes the Display Competition, Amateur Photography and Pet Show classes together with her daughter Heidi. Mona has been a member of the District 7 Executive for several years and is honoured to represent the District as their Provincial Director.

Mona is a Regular Member with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Over the past 37 years, Mona served several communities including Portage la Prairie, Toronto, Ottawa, London, Milton and Kitchener. Mona's career with the RCMP focuses on General Duty or Federal Policing duties, as well as providing peer support for RCMP employees and their families. Mona volunteers as the Treasurer for the RCMP London Veterans Association, and is a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Anna P. Lewis Women's Institute and the Concordia Club.

Jentje Steenbeek, District 8

Jentje brings a keen focus on the agricultural sector, having spent the majority of his life on dairy farms both in Huron County and originally back in the Netherlands. Upon graduation from the University of Toronto, Jentje returned to his Bayfield roots as owner/operator of Stonefield Garden Centre on Orchard Line. Today he uses his experiences on sales in surveillance and video systems marketed to the commercial and agricultural sectors as well as guiding buyers and sellers in the real estate market in Huron and Perth counties.

Cory Gosnell, District 9

Cory grew up on his family farm in Muirkirk, Ontario, just outside Chatham in southwestern Ontario. As a child, he spent his free time working on the family's cash crop farm and participating as an active member of various local 4-H clubs before leaving for post secondary school where he obtained a degree in political science and economics. Cory has spent the last 25 years working in the public sector with a focus on healthcare operations, holding various leadership roles including managing two of Ontario's oncology clinical programs, and most recently as the Chief Operating Officer of Lawson Health Research Institute, one of Canada's top 10 research institutes. After returning to his roots in Muirkirk, Cory joined his local agricultural society taking on the role of secretary / treasurer, where he has a passion to ensure its sustainability for future generations. Cory took on the role of District 9 director in 2025 and is pleased to participate as a member of the provincial OAAS Board of Directors representing his district's societies. In his free time, Cory enjoys spending time helping on his family farm and spending time with friends and family.

Terry Whitmell, District 11

Carol received her Bachelor of Math from the University of Waterloo. She worked in the software industry and travelled for work extensively throughout North America. Nearing retirement age, Carol and her husband moved to Northern Ontario, where they became active in the local community through involvement in the agricultural society. Carol is an avid quilter and enjoys spending time with her two horses.

Keith Emiry, District 12

Keith is a partner in his family farm, Borealis Dairy Farm near Massey, in the beautiful LaCloche Foothills west of Sudbury. Keith brings a wealth of experience from many farm organizations, his United Church and as a father to three adult boys and many foster children. Keith is a long-time 4-H Leader, an avid fan of sports and loves playing soccer, coaching and square dancing.

Lauren Armstrong, District 13

Lauren Armstrong has always had a passion and encourages today's youth to strive in this world. She encourages them to take every opportunity that comes their way because you never know what experiences will come out of it. Plympton Wyoming Agricultural Society is where it all started for Lauren in 2012 when she became Ambassador and director. Through the years, Lauren's accomplishments included being Chair of the Ambassador Program, Executive member and now President. In addition, Lauren has experienced 6 years at the district level following 3 years on the OAAS Provincial Board. In her spare time, Lauren enjoys long runs, baseball, curling and spending time with her family and friends.

Sylvie Rioux, District 14

Sylvie Rioux lives in New Liskeard with her family and is a dedicated community volunteer and active contributor to local life. With over 20 years of volunteer experience with the New Liskeard Agricultural Society and other organizations, Sylvie is passionate about building strong connections, making a positive difference, and supporting community growth. She is committed to lifelong learning and approaches every opportunity with a focus on collaboration, growth, and meaningful results.

Emily Watson, District 15

Emily was born and raised on a small mixed farm in the Rainy River District. A tradition that continued as she and her husband raised 3 children, where 4H was an important part of their lives. Emily has been a lifelong volunteer and spent 8 years as the President of the Rainy River Valley Agricultural Society. During this time she also served on the District 15 Executive. She continues to volunteer her time at the RRVAS' Emo Fair each August. She also spends time organizing and attending Judging Schools in District 15. She acts as a Judge at the various Fairs in her district when requested. She also enjoys volunteering her time with other organizations and is serving her third term as President of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 29 Ladies' Auxiliary and is the Legion District Commander for District 7, which starts west of Thunder Bay and continues to the Manitoba border and north to Sioux Lookout and includes six Auxiliaries.

Vince Brennan – Executive Director

As a former dairy farmer, Vince brings over 50 years of involvement with his local agricultural society as an exhibitor, director, and committee member. Strong organizational and governance skills have been gained from working with the Hastings Federation of Agriculture as a 4-H volunteer and serving as President of the Ontario 4-H Council during a time of significant change. Vince has been an official dairy livestock judge for most of his life and has had the opportunity to judge livestock shows in many countries around the world. He is also an avid curler who actively supports several local clubs in the area. Vince has been with the OAAS since the spring of 2016.

Kathryn Lambert – Convention Manager

Over a decade and a half of working with the OAAS, first as the Board Secretary and Convention Coordinator, has provided Kathryn with a wealth of knowledge about this association. She also works with 4-H Ontario for over nine years in various positions, including Event Coordinator; she is involved with her local agricultural society in Glencoe and the local minor soccer association and Holstein Club. Her current role as Convention Administrator is a perfect fit as she literally knows someone in every agricultural society in Ontario!

Brenda Tipping – Administrative Assistant

Brenda Tipping, based in Thorndale, Ontario, brings with her over 25 years of providing senior administrative support to executives and the Board of Directors in public, not-for-profit, and private sectors. Having served the Thorndale Agricultural Society for the past 11 years as Treasurer, a past District Director, and a past Provincial Director of District 13, she brings her administrative skills to the OAAS and a strong knowledge of the workings of our Agricultural Societies and the OAAS.