

**OAAS Spring Board Meeting 2021
take back notes**



1) Highlights from our April Board Meeting –

- **Convention 2022 Hotel room reservations** will be available starting May 3, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

IMPORTANT – NOTE the time frame - due to the current staffing levels at the hotel, booking does NOT open after midnight as it did in the past.

Watch the OAAS Website and FB page for more information.

- **Thank you letters for MPPs, Minister Hardeman & OMAFRA** - We are encouraging our Agricultural Societies to send thank you letters or emails to your MPP, Minister Hardeman and OMAFRA for the financial support provided by the Government. Let them know your Agricultural Society has benefitted from receiving this funding and support.

- **Spring OAAS webinars starting in May**

The OAAS is planning on holding a series of webinars similar to what we held last spring. We are looking at offering similar webinars to a couple of the most popular Convention webinars around “COVID-19 Risk Management,”; Re-Opening Plan for Fairs and Events and “Safe processes and procedures to hold your fair competitions!”

Watch for emails and check the OAAS website and FB page for details on dates and topics.

If you have any other ideas for topics, please email them to the OAAS Manager.

- **We are looking for your good news stories** for our email blast/mailings/newsletters etc. Please send your writeups/reports/photos to the OAAS Manager. Share your ideas on what activities you have held and are planning – i.e. what worked well and what you would change, etc.

- **Speakers/Sessions Committee** - Is looking for topics and ideas for 2022 Convention – please send them to the Convention Administrator.

- **OAAS Program Committee**

- **Strategic Planning** - 3 Agricultural Societies are currently taking part in this program and will be meeting for session # 4.

Leonard Riopel, Committee Chair has put together an excellent slide presentation on the processes and benefits of creating and/or updating a Strategic Plan for your Agricultural Society. Please contact your Provincial Director to view this presentation or to learn more about Strategic Planning program.

- **First Impressions** – the in-person program has been put on hold for 2021 due to the pandemic. We are planning a webinar for Agricultural Societies on the importance of, and tips on keeping your Websites/Facebook/Instagram, or other social media platforms current. It is important as we move away from COVID to keep your website and social media platforms current to ensure that the public and your sponsors know you are still here and working on your fair and/or events.

- **Ambassador Committee** – is looking at a number of new ideas for Convention - stay tuned for more information.

- **Youth Committee** – is working on creating a template for engaging youth in our Agricultural Societies, more information and details later this year.

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The Designated Harassment Officers are Brian Slaughter and Andrew Icceton .”*

- **New Strategic Plan** – OAAS is starting to work towards a new strategic for the next 3 years.

Notes from March Meeting

2) Convention Review

- **639 registered – 700 to 800 participants** with multiple participants in households
 - **Delegates have attended over 5,100 live and recorded seminars** since February 15; over 1200 Quick Talk & Tips; viewed over 3600 Entertainment showcase videos.
 - The OAAS has 1,300 followers on FB; 464 followers on Instagram.
 - Social Media Stats for the week of Convention
 - Over 9,900 visits, 1,300 likes for FB
 - Top 2 FB pages – Red Ribbon Celebration 3.6k views; Cookbook recipes 2.9k views
 - 215 Instagram visits
- Online Auction – 65 items with total sales of \$7,600
- 55 Tradeshow booths – Egg Farmers of Ontario - 399 visitors
- **Survey** – number of responses was up considerably over 2020; about the same as 2019 convention.
 - **Comments were very positive; generally, more positive than previous surveys**
 - **Many people commented on how much they liked the option to go back and see the recorded versions later.**

3) Renewing District Zoom accounts – OAAS will pay 50% again this year

The OAAS will pay 50% of a District Zoom account for 2021 – the same as 2020. The District needs to renew/purchase their account and send a copy of the receipt to OAAS Manager to be reimbursed.

4) Provincial Competitions – cancelled for 2022 Convention

Since not all fairs will be able to compete in the District and Provincial Competitions again this year, the Board made the decision to cancel the OAAS Competitions at the 2022 Convention

5) Judges' Requirements deadline extended until January 1, 2023

With the continued public health stipulations due to the pandemic, we don't expect that any judging schools will be held before the fall. Because of this, the OAAS will again modify the "Requirements for OAAS Certified & Apprentice Judges Policy" and update the December 31, 2021 deadline to January 1, 2023, so Judges do not need to worry about recertifying during the pandemic.

6) New Ag & Hort Judging handbook

We are hoping to move forward with updating the Agriculture & Horticulture Judging Standards Handbook in 2021.

7) Judges and Judging schools

The OAAS will look at providing virtual webinars or meetings on various topics over the next few months to re-engage current and potential Judges, i.e., Judge's Toolkit, Best Practices, Etiquette, recruitment of Judges, etc.

We have posted the '*Homecraft Judging Standards Handbook*' on the www.ontarioagsocieties.com website for a limited time to help keep Judges engaged.

As well, a complimentary updated '*Homecraft Judging Standards Handbook*' will still be provided at Judging School as per the previous OAAS policy.

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The OAAS has received a couple of enquiries regarding holding virtual Judging Schools. After much discussion, the OAAS feels that the hands-on component in an in-person Judging School is critical to properly train and assess our Judges and that virtual Judging Schools would not be viable for the majority of the categories that are taught. For those few categories that could possibly be taught virtually, it was felt that a significant amount of technical expertise and equipment and the accompanying expense required to host a virtual Judging school would also be prohibitive. The OAAS does not have the staff or budget at this time to investigate or create virtual training. From our experience hosting various webinars and our recent Convention, there is more work and expense (and stress) to organizing virtual events than there is with organizing in-person events. Our expectation is that organizing and hosting a virtual Judging School would be much more involved than hosting a Zoom meeting.

The OAAS, in consultation with the Judging Panel, will create a framework and criteria that a virtual Judging School proposal must meet for the Board and Judging Panel to consider their proposal for approval.

Any District, Agricultural Society, group or person interested in hosting a virtual Judging School must submit a detailed plan and outline within the Virtual Judging School framework and criteria that was created by the OAAS how the District/society/group would plan and carry out the Judging School prior to it being considered for approval.

8) Fair Passports

The Board decided at the recent Board meeting to defer the printing of the Fair Passports. It was felt that Agricultural Societies holding fairs in 2021 required all potential income, so they did not need to lose revenue due to the use of passports.

9) Ontario Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions Directory

We will post a digital version of the '*Ontario Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions Directory*' on our www.ontarioagsocieties.com website but do not plan on distributing a printed version of it this year.

10) Fair date brochures

We will post a digital version on the www.ontariofairs.com website, but we are deferring the decision on whether or not to print the '*Ontario Agricultural Fairs & Exhibitions Fair Dates Brochures*' until our May meeting. We print over 20,000 copies annually, and they are distributed to Agricultural Societies and Ontario Tourism Centres to promote our annual fairs and exhibitions.

11) District Director Zoom meeting

Question - is there any interest in holding a District Directors Zoom meeting for information sharing etc.

12) Printing a small number of Annual Reports – Contact the OAAS Manager, by April 30th, if interested There is a digital version of the 2020 Annual Report on our www.ontarioagsocieties.com website. If you are interested in a printed copy of the '2021 Annual Report', we will look at printing enough to cover the demand. There will be a charge to cover the cost of mailing – information on how to order a printed Annual Report will be on the website.