

**MINISTRY of AGRICULTURE, FOOD and AGRIBUSINESS
MINISTRY EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE (MERC)**

October 1, 2026
Via Microsoft TEAMS

For Management:	For OPSEU/SEFPO:
Heather Cassidy (Co-chair) Colleen Fitzgerald-Hubble Basia Florio	Marcus Rangai (Co-chair) (regrets) Fadi Al-Daoud Pervin Pereira

Management Resources	OPSEU/SEFPO Resource
Jared Friesen Elif Erboke	Adam Cygler

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
Welcome and Introductions	- Heather Cassidy opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. - The OPSEU Co-Chair was unable to attend. The meeting proceeded with the agreement of the parties and participating representatives. - Adam Cygler was introduced as the OPSEU Corporate Resource and Negotiator, replacing Brenton Beeston. Participants introduced themselves.	
Additional Agenda Items / Changes to the Agenda	Additional new agenda items presented: n/a	
Ad Hoc Meetings	Management distributed a list of ad hoc meetings to OPSEU/SEFPO prior to the meeting. OPSEU/SEFPO did not have any questions.	
Disclosures	Management distributed a list of disclosures/information shares prior to the meeting. OPSEU/SEFPO did not have any questions.	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
Surplus List	Management reported that there are no employees on the surplus list.	
Temp Agency Staff	Management reported that they are not aware of any temp agency staff currently working in the ministry as of October 1, 2026	
Fixed Term Staff Reports	Management provided fixed-term staff reports in advance of the meeting.	
Conversion Update	Management reported on: No conversions since last MERC meeting.	
Transition Exit Initiative	One (1) approved application and one (1) non-program exit since last MERC meeting. Active: 2 Approved: 142 Non-Program Exit: 42 Withdrawn: 11	
Health and Safety Update	Health & Safety (H&S) reps in regional offices: Management advised on two vacant H&S representative positions.	
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	Management provided the following updates on EDI topics. Accessibility - Management provided accessibility updates, including the 2026 AODA compliance attestation cycle and the 2026-29 OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. - Management highlighted the new accessibility learning available through LearnON, including required modules for employees and two management-focused modules for managers and directors. All staff and leaders must complete the training by the end of 2027.	

AGENDA	STANDING ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
	Diversity and Inclusion: Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG): Rainbow Training Session – Allyship and Inclusion – June 11 - Attendees – 148 participants - This session focused on building awareness and practical skills to become effective allies for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in the workplace. Participants explored what meaningful allyship looks like in action, including recognizing privilege, challenging bias, and fostering inclusive behaviors at both individual and organizational levels The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group continued programming, including: - Grandfather Teachings series for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. (Links will be made available on the OMAFA Indigenous Relations Page to ensure those that can't attend drop-in sessions are able to access videos/ at a time that works for their schedule.) - Planning for a panel discussion related to the UN designation of 2026 for the International Year of the Woman Farmer. New Training Modules Launched: - Two new training modules addressing antisemitism and Islamophobia in the workplace have been launched, with mandatory completion for people leaders by March 31, 2027. This will be available to staff on November 16, 2026 (optional for staff to complete). - The e-learning modules will be available in three phases via LearnON. - Three multi-ministry sessions are planned to take place on topics of Peri Menopause in the Fall. - Sessions are also planned to focus on men's health and wellness, and workplace wellness. Diversity Career Champions Program (DCCP) - The Diversity Career Champions Program continued with 19 mentoring relationships and multi-ministry programming.	

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	• OMAFA is working with 21 ministries to deliver events. • 9 events have been held to-date, with another 6 planned between now and the end of the program in the Fall. Onboarding Sessions • OMAFA is planning a Fall 2026 onboarding session for new employees. Divisional Updates: ADB branch is prioritizing and working on updating the communication pathways, focusing on blogs and websites, to make them accessible.	
AGENDA	FOLLOW UP	ACTION REQUIRED
Staying Well in the Workplace	Management provided the following updates: • Effective August 1, 2026, the OPS EFAP transitioned to an umbrella model, offering two complementary services: Core services provided by TELUS Health, and inclusive and specialized counselling services provided by Homewood Health. • Instructions on how to access each service can be found on the OMAFA Cares - InsideOPS, under Support Tools and Resources or directly on Inside OPS.	
Employee Experience Survey	• The 2026 Employee Experience Survey was fielded from February 18 - March 13, 2026. Results were made available to staff in June 2026. • Branch level meetings are underway to discuss the results and plan actions.	Management will provide a copy of the survey results and a high level organization chart to OPSEU Corporate Resource.
BRAVO Stars Program	• The 2026 BRAVO formal awards season launched on September 1, 2026. • The nomination period runs September 8 to October 16, followed by judging and Lightbulb award voting.	

AGENDA	FOLLOW UP	ACTION REQUIRED
	Award ceremony will be held on December 1, 2026.	
ADB-JEIB Job Validation Review Project Update	- OPSEU/SEFPO inquired about updates to the ADB's IDO3 Job Validation Project. - Management advised that ADB management is actively working with JEIB and other HR partners such as the Talent Acquisition Branch to consult on changes to the job descriptions and they will provide updates to the employees as the process evolves.	
AGENDA	NEW ITEMS	ACTION REQUIRED
DOWNSVIEW BUILDING ELEVATOR OUTAGE	- OPSEU/SEFPO raised concerns about the prolonged passenger-elevator outage and the related safety, accessibility and operational impacts on staff. - Management advised that they checked with their facilities lead who followed up on the issue with Infrastructure Ontario. Management advised that the passenger elevator passed the inspection on September 30, and is now back in service as of October 1, and that the out of order signs will be removed.	
Next MERC Date	The meeting date has been changed to December 16, 2026, 10:00 a.m.	Members will confirm if an in-person/hybrid meeting will be held.

Approved by:

Fadi Al-Daoud OPSEU-SEFPO Vice-Chair (for Marcus Rangai, OPSEU/SEFPO Co-Chair)

Heather Cassidy, Employer Co-Chair

October 1, 2026