

Ontario Farmer

Open market advocates withdraw from hearing

Tue Dec 8 2009

Page: B12

Section: News

Byline: BY JIM ROMAHN ONTARIO FARMER

Column: News in brief

Guelph -The Open Marketing Group has withdrawn from the OMAFRA Appeals Tribunal hearing into pork marketing.

Brian Simpson, spokesman for the group, was not able to attend the first two days of hearings at the end of November because of a family death and funeral.

And when he attended Dec. 2, he downgraded the group's status from full participant, with the right to cross-examine witnesses, but the obligation to present its own case and be subjected to cross-examination.

He opted for status as an intervenor, which is a status shared with Maple Leaf Pork Inc. and Teresa De Wetering.

And then Dec. 3, he sent a message that the group is withdrawing entirely.

Paula Lombardi is another one who has withdrawn.

She was the third tribunal panel member, but decided to withdraw on the basis that her law practice involves a case before the Ontario Municipal Board in which Sean Foran, lawyer for the Ontario Pork Producers Marketing Board is also involved.

That left lawyer Kirk Wahlstedt, and panel chairman Frank Handy to handle the hearings and decision.