




Township of Southgate
Conference, Workshop/Seminar & Training Policy #2

Council and Staff Education Evaluation Report
Council, Training, Seminars & Professional Development/Self Study

Participant's Name:		Councillor Barbara Dobreen			
Course/Workshop/Conference:		Overall Evaluation:			
(Virtual) Annual Politicians Meeting - 2022		Excellent	Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Average	Poor
Association/Institution Provider:		Name of Instructor:			
Bruce Grey Federations of Agriculture		Hosted by Grey and Bruce OFA Presidents			
Dates Attended: (if online, indicate online)		Thursday March 24th, 2022 - 9 a.m. to Noon			
Purpose of Attending:					
An opportunity to hear directly from the various organizations/AG sectors to better understand the barriers and challenges experienced by farming families across the region. Presentations will be made available for viewing but were not available at this time. The brief provided in advance of the meeting is attached.					
Please summarize the contents and the main points of the course: (Attach additional pages if necessary)					
<p>Home Grown Campaign - Paul Vickers - Zone 2 Director spoke to the Home Grown campaign "This is Agriculture" video and website - to educate the public and gain support for land use planning to ensure future food production. Video can be viewed here https://homegrown.ofa.on.ca/</p> <p>The Drainage Act - The Regulations and recent changes Overview - Links to resources and his contact info is included in his presentation. Extreme events are becoming more frequent - On farm drainage plays a role but isn't necessarily the main contributing factor. Improvements to older drainage systems may need to be improved to address design, climate and on-farm practices. Farmers can tile drain their own farms or use tile drainage contractors who are trained, certified and licensed by the province under the act. Only approvals required would be if they are connecting to a municipal drain or the conservation authority if out-letting to a water course.</p> <p>Presentations from Pork, Dairy, Sheep, Beef, Pine River Watershed, SVCA, OFVG, ALUS Canada, OFA Land Use Planning and Economic Development are included in the attached brief. All AG sectors are experiencing labour shortages and access to local abattoirs and the required skilled trade for them requires meat producers to travel long distances for animal processing. Carbon Tax is greatly affecting inputs across the board.</p> <p>Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers - when considering tree cutting bylaws, please consider the farmer and where possible make them exempt. Apple orchards alone contribute positively to cooling the environment. Rely heavily on Temporary/Seasonal Foreign Workers. Workers need effective protection but when 8 or more audits occur over a 2-year timeframe, it is challenging. Fair treatment of workers needs to be balanced with respect for the grower who has proven to be fair to the worker ... they are workers that return year over year because the grower treats them like family.</p> <p>ALUS Canada - Alternative Land Use Services - A charitable organization. Through ecosystem services, they help farmers do the right thing for the environment and compensate them for it one acre at a time. They work to take marginal, environmentally sensitive land out of production and use it to create windbreaks, cover crops, exclusion fencing, tree plantations and buffer strips, help to produce cleaner air, cleaner water and enhance wildlife and pollinator habitat. 2022 will see 1000 acres and 100,000 feet of fencing in 10 years in operation.</p> <p>Land Use Planning Considerations - Impacts for Agriculture in Grey and Bruce Counties - Land use topics covered were Farmland Preservation, MZOs and Merged Property Titles and impacts they have on agriculture. 175 farmland acres continues to be lost per day. Urban sprawl is a key contributing factor. Urban intensification needs to be considered ... set the boundaries for settlement areas and protect the surrounding farmland. Build up not out.</p> <p>Agricultural Profile for Bruce and Grey Counties - An Economic Powerhouse! - Grey and Bruce represents approximately 9% of Ontario farms with more than 200 commodities from food, fibre, flowers and fuel. \$47 billion in GDP. Covered Agri-Food trends including land prices, number of operators declining but farm size is increasing. More greenhouse and organic acres. More direct farm sales and energy efficiencies.</p>					
Will you use this information in your role? If yes, explain how:					
Yes. Reminds us that the AG sectors are the largest employer and economic driver in our region and how our local and provincial decisions affect them.					
Do you recommend that other Council Members/Staff attend this course? If so, who and why?:					
Yes. This annual workshop/information session is valuable for Provincial and Federal representatives, as well as the local councils and staff.					
Should similar course material be presented in house? If yes, by whom?					
The OFA makes a point to reach out to member municipalities throughout the year. Save the date - 2023 Politicians Meeting - Saturday, March 25, 2023					
Signature:		Date:			
		25-Mar-22			

POLITICIANS' MEETING

March 24, 2022

9:00am – 12:00pm

Organized and Sponsored by:
Bruce County and Grey County
Federations of Agriculture

The Bruce County and Grey County Federations of Agriculture feel it is important to take time to provide our elected Municipal, Provincial and Federal government representatives with constructive input from grassroots organizations. We would like to enhance communication between the agricultural industry and all levels of government so we might create a better understanding of issues creating barriers to successful rural communities and profitable farming families.

- ✓ More than 81,000 Ontarians make their living directly on farms and 718,000 Ontarians work in the agri-food industry
- ✓ Ontario's agri-food industry including agriculture, food processing, wholesale, retail and food services contributes over \$35 billion annually to the provincial GDP which accounts for 5.8 percent of Ontario's GDP
- ✓ Ontario farms generated \$12.7 billion in farm cash receipts (FCR) representing about 22% of Canada's FCR



Meeting Agenda

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speakers</u>
9:00 – 9:20 am	Welcome & Introductions	Chris Cossitt, President BCFA Dianne Booker, President GCFA
9:20 – 9:25	BCFA 2022 Update	Chris Cossitt, President Bruce County Federation of Ag
9:25 – 9:30	GCFA 2022 Update	Dianne Booker, President Grey County Federation of Ag
9:30 – 9:50	Drainage	Tim Brook, OMAFRA
9:50 – 10:00	Grey Bruce Pork Producers	Chris Cossitt
10:00 – 10:10	Pine River Watershed	
10:10 – 10:20	Grey Bruce Dairy Producers	Mark Gamble, DFO
10:20 – 10:35	Zone 2 Sheep Producers	Oliver Garceau
10:35 – 10:50	Bruce Grey Beef Producers	Bill Herron
10:50 – 11:00	Saugeen Valley Conservation	Jennifer Stephens, GM
11:00 – 11:10	Georgian Bay Fruit Growers	Gerbe Botden
11:10 – 11:25	ALUS	Keith Reid
11:25 – 11:45	Land Use	Emily Sousa, OFA Farm Policy Analyst
11:45 – 11:55	Ag Stats	Janice Janiec, OFA Researcher
11:55 – 12:00	Questions/Comments Closing Video	Video Introduction - Paul Vickers OFA Zone 2 Director



Presentation Title: An Overview of the Drainage Act and Municipal Responsibilities

Presentation Overview:

The presentation will provide a brief overview of the function and importance of drainage in Ontario and provide context on the extent of drainage systems in Grey and Bruce Counties.

Municipal council has the principal responsibility for the procedures under the Drainage Act. They appoint drainage engineers for specific projects, appoint a drainage superintendent and assign other municipal staff with various roles for implementation. The presentation will describe these municipal responsibilities and the role that various staff undertake collaboratively to ensure there is ongoing, effective drainage within a municipality.

The key topics that will be discussed include drain maintenance and repair, making improvements to existing drains, updating assessment schedules, managing connections/outlets from private drainage systems and the abandonment of a drain. A brief discussion of the enforcement provisions of the Drainage Act will be provided to assist the municipality in addressing situations where the drain is obstructed or damaged.

On June 30, 2021, changes were proclaimed in the Drainage Act and a new regulation was enacted to enable new processes for making minor improvements to existing drains and amending engineer reports due to unforeseen circumstances during construction. These legislative changes will be presented, as well as various drainage resources to assist the municipality in meeting their obligations under the Drainage Act.

Speaker Biography:

Tim has been working in the water industry for the past 24 years in both the private and public sectors. He is a licenced Professional Engineer and holds both Bachelor and Master degrees in engineering.

In his various roles with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Tim has worked with stakeholders on water management and drainage topics. He is currently OMAFRA's Drainage Program Coordinator, where he provides program leadership, oversight and engineering expertise to administer the delivery of the Drainage Act, Agricultural Drainage Infrastructure Program, Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act and Tile Drainage Act.

Ontario's pork sector: priorities and opportunities

February 2022



ONTARIO PORK

Ontario's pork industry makes a **significant contribution** to Ontario's agriculture and food sector; industry stakeholders are working together to grow our economy and create jobs. Ontario has 1,064 family farms that market 5.9 million hogs yearly. Already delivering 15,843 full-time equivalent jobs and \$2.8 billion in economic activity to **Ontario's economy**, the industry can leverage strong international brand reputation in export markets.

Our industry's ability to access global markets and the prices our producers receive, hinge on many factors outside of their control, notably ongoing trade barriers with China, the looming threat of African swine fever, and currently, the **COVID-19 pandemic**. These risks underscore the importance of farm stabilization programs including the provincial Risk Management Program (RMP), AgriStability and AgriInvest that help Ontario producers weather the volatility and uncertainty of the global commodity markets.

Current policy issues

COVID-19, trade uncertainties, disease threats, animal rights extremism, volatile prices and labour shortages are real and significant challenges to our industry with independent farms been particularly hard hit. Independent farmers live and work in the community and have a positive impact on the social fabric and a greater economic impact by investing locally.

- **Business risk management.** Ontario Pork has asked the province to take immediate action to protect the viability of Ontario pork family farms, so that Ontario's farmers continue to bring high quality pork to consumers.
 - We are grateful for the efforts of the Ontario government to advocate for AgriStability enhancements especially increasing the payment trigger and improving coverage levels.
 - Unfortunately, due to the lack of agreement through the Federal Provincial Territorial process, federal funding to increase the compensation rate remains unavailable.
 - Ontario Pork appreciates the additional \$50 million that the Ontario government made available to the RMP in the 2020 fiscal year.
 - Changes that allow unused funds to stay with each commodity program will also work to provide clarity to the program and make it more sustainable over the long term.
 - Even with all the positive changes to RMP, the program remains underfunded. In 2020, less than 20% of the calculated benefits were paid to producers because of overall funding caps.
 - Increasing the RMP budget by an additional \$100 million annually as recommended by the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition (OASC) would ensure that funds could build in good years and be available to address shortfalls when costs rise and prices fall.
- **Processing capacity**
 - Ontario remains at a severe deficit in processing hogs.
 - This means that Ontario hog producers are forced to ship animals out of province or out of the country so that pigs can be processed.
 - In addition to the increased jobs and economic activity within the province, the pork industry would be more stable and competitive by reducing its reliance on Quebec and US processing plants.
 - COVID-19 has revealed our sector's vulnerability as farmers were immediately impacted by any disruptions in processing capacity. Impacts at the farm level are felt throughout the entire food chain.

- Ontario Pork was encouraged by the announcement of a Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund in the fall 2021 economic statement.
- Ontario Pork requests that funding through the Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund be made available to both provincially and federally inspected hog processing facilities, and that start-up companies be included to ensure as many local options to process hogs as possible.
- **African swine fever (ASF) pandemic prevention plan.** We want to thank the Ontario government for funding to help the industry to prevent and prepare for a potential ASF outbreak by strengthening biosecurity measures and the education and awareness campaign for small producers.
 - To maintain orderly marketing in case of the ASF outbreak, producers will need government support to partially reimburse the value of lost animals.
 - Ontario Pork strongly supports and recommends that government and industry continue to work together to prevent foreign animal diseases from entering Canada.
- **International trade and market access are vital to the continued growth of Ontario's hog industry.**
 - Ontario pork producers operate in the export-dependent sector.
 - Maintaining competitive access to markets and further developing trade with Asian regions will be critical to the growth of the Ontario pork industry.
 - Our industry's ability to access global markets and the prices our producers receive, hinge on many factors outside of their control, notably trade barriers with China, the looming threat of African swine fever, and currently, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pork farmers are proud to be part of Ontario's agriculture; they produce very affordable and versatile meat, contributing over \$1 billion to the Ontario GDP. Even at a time when household budgets might be stretched, Ontario's pork sector offers a wide range of versatile cuts of fresh locally grown pork to create healthy, family-friendly meals. We need government support and leadership to maintain a business environment, so that Ontario's farmers continue to bring high quality pork to domestic and international consumers. We firmly believe that if the current challenges are strategically addressed, pork production will emerge as one of Ontario's key growth sectors.

PINE RIVER WATERSHED INITIATIVE NETWORK

2021 was a challenging year in so many ways.

Now that 2022 is here, we can look back at our accomplishments of 2021:

- Cattle Exclusion Fencing Project completed in Kinloss Township.
- Developed four reforestation sites in Huron & Kinloss Township.
- Planted a Red Maple Reforestation site with a local land owner.
- Planted over 6,000 cedar and spruce seedlings to reforest project sites in Huron Kinloss.
- This fall, PRWIN hosted the Environment Minister's funding announcement at the Point Clark Beach.
- Our 2021 Potted Tree Ash Replacement Program offered shoreline residents over 14 potted trees.
- A partnership with Fanshawe College to create a Mapping Story of all our projects.
- PRWIN's Annual Award of Merit. Award recipients for 2021: Shirley Galloway, Conner Dixon and Brad & Kristie Gilchrist.
- PRWIN took part in the Spruce the Bruce Program – New exterior light and window box for the facade of our office.
- In June, we participated in the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Framework Community mini summit Community Action Initiative: Learning More About Engagement.
- In November, we participated in the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Framework Community Webinar Community Action Initiative: Great Lakes nearshore and threats to ecosystem resilience.
- PRWIN assisted OPG with their Environmental Certificate. OPG has been awarded Gold Certification by the Wildlife Habitat Council.

- In the spring, PRWIN Directors and volunteers offered their time to provide spring maintenance of the rain garden at the Ripley Library.
- PRWIN created a video to exhibit our watershed to help support the Ripley Huron Fall Fair Virtual Events.
- PRWIN hosted a "Sponsorship Day" to recognize our valuable sponsors at our Red Maple Reforestation site.
- PRWIN sponsored local community events: Public skating, Free Tree Contest and participated in the Ripley Fall Fair Parade and contests.
- PRWIN participated in a survey with Bruce Power about Climate Change. It was conducted by the Council of the Great Lakes Region and the Climate Risk Institute who partnered with Bruce Power.
- This fall, PRWIN volunteered their time to assist Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation to plant dune grass and remove invasive plants.
- PRWIN Directors assisted Maitland Valley Conservation Authority by planting 200 white cedar seedlings with a local landowner.
- Memorial trees planted for community members.



The following brief outlines the issues, opportunities and priorities which the Ontario dairy sector is currently facing.

Infrastructure Investment

Dairy processing infrastructure in Ontario is aging and has become an obstacle to economic sustainability and innovation in the sector. Modernization costs are challenging to undertake in this climate, with the loss of market share resulting from international trade agreements negotiated over the last five to seven years. The health of the dairy processing sector is critical to producers in Ontario. DFO supports its industry partners in bringing innovation and modernization to life in dairy processing, with engagement from government.

DFO asks that government works with the dairy industry to incentivize and attract companies to expand dairy processing capacity in Ontario and allocate funding to modernize existing dairy processing infrastructure along with providing support and funding to develop a provincial program to expand beef processing in the province.

Federal Level – Mitigation for Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA)

Dairy farmers thank the government, and all opposition parties for their support on this important issue. However, dairy farmers are still waiting for the government to fulfil its commitments towards mitigation measures for CUSMA. Full and fair mitigation, in the form of direct compensation, is essential to ensuring competitiveness against the influx of dairy products containing milk from foreign producers.

In collaboration with Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), DFO asks that government works with the dairy industry to follow through on the promise to provide full and fair direct compensation for the impacts of CUSMA within the first year of its mandate. The next opportunity for the government to act is in Budget 2022.

Federal Level – Trade Agreements and Protecting Canadian Dairy/No More Market Access Concessions

Due to the combined access granted under CETA, CPTPP, CUSMA and the World Trade Organization, there will be outsourcing of 18 per cent of our domestic dairy products to foreign producers, who will supply milk for imported dairy products that will replace those made with Canadian milk on store shelves, by 2024. All political parties sitting in the House of Commons have committed that no further concessions will be granted to the Canadian domestic dairy market in any new trade agreements; this must be the norm going forward. More market access is a threat to the Canadian dairy sector. The government must not grant the U.K. any additional access and must ensure trading partners are not granted access to our domestic market through multiple trade agreements.

DFO asks that government works with the dairy industry to ensure any additional access to the domestic dairy market is not granted. This would include negotiating a permanent free trade agreement with the U.K. or in any other trade agreement, including the CPTPP.

Federal Level – Border Enforcement

The expected increase in imports entering Canada as a result of recent trade agreements means that it will be more important than ever to ensure that the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have the tools they need to adequately monitor and enforce

Canada's dairy regulations and standards at the border. This means ensuring they have the resources to conduct inspections to validate these products at the border, and audits of foreign farms and processing plants to ensure all imported products are produced according to Canadian production standards.

DFO asks that government works with the dairy industry to support measures to ensure the CFIA and CBSA have the resources and training needed to enforce trade agreements, dairy regulations and production standards at the border.



CONFIDENCE | QUALITY | PURPOSE

Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) is proudly owned and operated by Ontario's dairy farm families. Dairy farming is the largest sector of Ontario agriculture, and DFO is the marketing group that represents them. It's made up of the same farmers who run the farms, and who produce the milk and dairy that you put on your table. It's our mission to provide leadership and excellence in the production and marketing of Canadian milk for a dynamic, profitable growing Canadian dairy industry.



3,343

dairy farms produced milk in Ontario

99% of Ontario producers are registered under proAction, the national quality assurance program



100.1% of quota requirements met by P5 dairy farmers, right-sizing supply with market demand in spite of continued supply chain fluctuations

10,000+

farmers and their families are supported by dairy farming in Ontario



1.4% growth

in Ontario production on a volume basis



16 grants

awarded to Start Up/Scale Up participants



78 plants

received milk from Ontario dairy producers



16.6%

of Ontario producers received gold-level Raw Milk Quality certificates, a YOY increase of 3.2%



3,331

initial Grade A inspections were conducted in 2020-21 – an increase of 18.3%



1,207,392

litres of milk donated by local dairy farmers to Ontario food banks



3,118,147,815

litres of fresh milk shipped in 2020-21

\$2,496,223,698

farmgate value of milk sales

7+ billion

GDP contribution by the Ontario dairy sector

99 producers

entered the industry through NEQAP since 2010



ONTARIO DAIRY:

PARTNERS IN OUR ECONOMY

\$7,027,945,000

CONTRIBUTION TO ONTARIO'S GDP

100,000+

PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY THE ONTARIO DAIRY INDUSTRY

10,000

ONTARIO FARMERS AND FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY THEIR DAIRY FARMS

Data collected as of 2021

Glengarry, Prescott, Russell:

Annual production: 287,124,641 L

GDP contribution: \$647,147,000

Number of Producers: 285

Number of Plants: 4

Carleton, Dundas, Stormont:

Annual production: 212,023,937 L

GDP contribution: \$477,877,000

Number of Producers: 219

Number of Plants: 4

Frontenac, Grenville, Lanark, Leeds, Renfrew:

Annual production: 154,862,982 L

GDP contribution: \$349,043,000

Number of Producers: 215

Number of Plants: 3

Hastings, Lennox & Addington, Northumberland, Prince Edward:

Annual production: 121,455,164 L

GDP contribution: \$273,747,000

Number of Producers: 161

Number of Plants: 6

City of Kawartha Lakes, Durham Region, Peterborough, York:

Annual production: 121,519,524 L

GDP contribution: \$273,892,000

Number of Producers: 182

Number of Plants: 16

Dufferin, Peel, Simcoe, Wellington:

Annual production: 385,899,807 L

GDP contribution: \$869,775,000

Number of Producers: 485

Number of Plants: 14

Brant, Haldimand, Halton, Niagara, Norfolk, Wentworth:

Annual production: 157,414,702 L

GDP contribution: \$354,796,000

Number of Producers: 171

Number of Plants: 9

Oxford, Waterloo:

Annual production: 551,023,626 L

GDP contribution: \$1,241,944,000

Number of Producers: 536

Number of Plants: 6

Elgin, Essex-Kent, Lambton, Middlesex:

Annual production: 288,618,750 L

GDP contribution: \$650,514,000

Number of Producers: 207

Number of Plants: 2

Huron, Perth:

Annual production: 542,270,559 L

GDP contribution: \$1,222,216,000

Number of Producers: 459

Number of Plants: 5

Bruce, Grey:

Annual production: 215,448,526 L

GDP contribution: \$485,596,000

Number of Producers: 287

Number of Plants: 3

Algoma, Cochrane, East Nipissing-Parry Sound, East Sudbury-West Nipissing, Manitoulin-West Sudbury, Rainy River, Temiskaming, Thunder Bay:

Annual production: 80,485,597 L

GDP contribution: \$181,404,000

Number of Producers: 106

Number of Plants: 8



Did you know?

- Ontario's sheep industry contributes over \$510 million to Ontario's economy
- Ontario is the third largest lamb market for lamb processing in North America; behind Colorado and California
- Sheep are environmental powerhouses, improving soil health, and providing wildlife habitat
- Wool is renewable, biodegradable resource.

This past year, the Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) set a new direction for our organization and implemented a new five-year plan, *Building Strength for a Better Future*. There are five key pillars in the plan that will guide our projects and programs, community, prosperity, mastery, invest and operations.

Thank you for your leadership and perseverance through the COVID-19 pandemic. We know this is an extraordinary situation creating business and personal challenges across our province. As the pandemic continues to evolve, there is a need to take bold and decisive measures to ensure the agri-food sector continues to supply safe quality food for provincial, national, and international markets. Over this past year the government has done this, and we thank you for:

- The investment into our processing sector under the Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund
- The investment in new pilot projects to address food processing labour shortages.
- AgriRecovery funding to support farmers facing devastating drought

General Comment

- Agriculture is being implicated in government policy and programs as a potential driver for various public goods and services such as preserving and enhancing biodiversity, conserving, and protecting the environment, providing safe affordable food and being an economic driver. Some of these public goods and services fall outside the normal scope of Agriculture and food, placing added costs and expectations on the shoulders of farmers. For agriculture to reach its potential, there is a need to increase investment commensurate with agriculture's expanded role as a public provider of goods and services.
- The progress made to date in addressing sector challenges have been effective. Ontario will benefit from further investments to assist the agriculture community's commitment to providing high quality food while protecting and enhance our natural heritage.

Risk Management Program

- Join Ontario farmers by increasing the province's investment in the Ontario **Risk Management Program (RMP)** by raising the program cap from \$150 million to **\$250 million annually** to ensure our farmers have the tools to manage today's food production risks.
- Partnering with Ontario farmers means more than just added expense for the province, it represents an investment with a proven return for the Ontario economy.

Environment



OntarioSheep.org

130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, Ontario N1K 1B1 T 519.836.0043 E admin@ontariosheep.org

- Leverage agriculture's environmental contributions by incentivizing the provision of the environmental goods and services and carbon sequestration. Grazing livestock play an integral role mitigating climate change and government support for implementing greenhouse gas reduction activities such as rotational grazing is encouraged.
- Grant all farmers, whether producing food or fibre equitable accessibility to program and policy priorities. This is especially important in the sheep industry in relation to wool production and in terms of environmental programming.



Grey Bruce Politicians Meeting Brief Grey County Beef Farmers Association

In the past two years beef producers have seen increased interest from beef consumers wanting to purchase directly from farmers so they know the source of what they serve. . This will be positive for the local municipalities as the supply industry web will also prosper. The export market has also increased for branded Ontario beef that they recognize as high quality, traceable, and sustainable. The beef processing capacity in Ontario is challenged by skilled labour shortages limiting both farm gate sales growth and the orderly marketing of cattle to federal inspected facilities. Demand for branded product such as Ontario Corn Fed Beef is climbing and more supply is needed to meet retailer's marketing goals. Grey and Bruce are lead counties in the beef cow and beef feeding industry. As new individuals enter the industry and existing beef farmers expand or utilize new sustainable technologies the need for financing will grow as the industry does.

Finance

Significant changes to the Ontario Feeder Finance program are a very positive step to allow young and expanding beef farmers better financing options for their market cattle. BFO has supported the request to the federal government for the Advancement Payment Program (APP) related to cattle be amended to allow for increased maximum limit as input costs are escalating and new and expanding farms will need additional favourable credit particularly as bank rates move up this year.

Risk Management

Grey Beef Farmers were glad that our provincial government increased the Risk Management Program (RMP) given the fiscal challenges of the province. We want you to know the full RMP *would* work for Ontario farmers. The capped program did not adequately cover losses and was not timely as major losses were early in the year but funding releases was portioned by the calendar. We would like federal support for risk management in Ontario but have never reached it unlike that which is provided through crop insurance. The Forage insurance program is still under review with some improvements to the Rainfall based program being offered however it is not the production based insurance available to other crops.

Regulations

Beef farmers continue to request SRM harmonization of grading as cattle deemed as mature in Canada can be shipped to United State processed with less SRM material removed and the meat exported back as graded beef. In United States the SRM material has some regulated but marketable uses as fertilizer were as here it is dumped at a cost. Traceability and food safety are important as Ontario and Canada must maintain the status of producing the best sustainable food for our customers and consumers.

Opportunities exist for our farmers and commodity groups to work together to utilize the resources of the area to produce more quality Ontario grown food.

Bill Herron, President
Grey County Beef Farmers Association

OFVGA QUEEN'S PARK DAY PRIORITIES



ABOUT THE OFVGA

The OFVGA represents more than 3,500 fruit and vegetable farmers in Ontario. The sector:

- Generates more than \$2.7 billion in economic activity
- Employs more than 30,000 people directly on-farm
- Generates an additional 66,000 jobs throughout the value chain.



GROWING ONTARIO'S DOMESTIC FOOD PRODUCTION

Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers compete with international producers like the United States and Mexico with imports into the province totalling more than \$5 billion. This is approximately double the amount Ontario grows locally.

This presents a window of opportunity for Ontario to work with the sector to grow domestic production to strengthen our food security, ensure our province is self-sufficient and our supply chains are resilient.

Ontario's fruit and vegetable sector has **tremendous potential to grow its share of local produce aisles and build on \$1.5 billion in exports.** All that is needed is an environment where local growers can thrive, prosper and remain profitable. The time to invest in local food is now.

ONGOING COSTS TO OUR BUSINESSES IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

With support from provincial and federal governments, Ontario's fruit and vegetable farmers have continued to produce locally grown, safe and nutritious food for all Ontarians. However, the sector continues to face challenges related to labour supply and an unparalleled increase in input costs amidst COVID-19, impacting our ability to remain competitive in a global market.

Supporting Ontario's fruit and vegetable sector to manage through the pandemic is at the core of ensuring food security today and growing domestic food production in the future.

PROTECTING OUR WORKFORCE

Enhanced Agri-Food Workplace Protection Program

- The \$10 million cost-share funding received through OMAFRA's Enhanced Agri-Food Workplace Protection Program in 2021, has enabled the sector to:
 - Ensure the safety and health of temporary foreign workers.
 - Offset additional costs for personal protective equipment and other investments on farms to help prevent virus spread.

- Support farms experiencing an outbreak situation.
- Keep Ontario's food production capacity resilient.

This program expired on February 15, 2022, and we hope to count on your support to ensure the program remains in place and is further extended through 2022 to support farmers in keeping workers safe.

Quarantine Support Program

Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers depend on temporary foreign workers to ensure a strong food supply chain. Ensuring their safety is vital to our province's food security.

- Since the beginning of the pandemic, arriving workers who are not vaccinated have had to quarantine for 14 days at the cost of the employer.



- During spring 2021, the OFVGA calculated the real cost of quarantine to be up to \$1,750 per worker if using existing worker housing, and more than \$3,100 if the worker had to stay in a hotel.
- In August 2021, the federal government ended its quarantine support program to help offset the cost of accommodations and wages. They remain unwavering in its decision to cease funding.

The OFVGA hopes to count on your leadership on this issue.

In absence of action by the federal government, we are calling on the Ontario government to provide funding support to offset the cost of quarantine and the considerable investments employers are required to make for incoming workers.

Without the support of the Quarantine Support Program and Enhanced Agri-Food Workplace Protection Program, we foresee significant challenges for the sector and a potential strain on Ontario's food production and supply.



SAFETY NETS

Increased Investment in Self-Directed Risk Management

The Ontario government showed significant leadership in 2021 through their financial support for farms. This was demonstrated by continuing to extend crop insurance to include labour perils and committing to increase the provincial portion of the AgriStability payment rate to 80%. Despite this support, farmers continue to face challenges due to supply chain disruptions brought on by the pandemic.

- We are currently experiencing major interruptions and cost escalation in the supply chain. We anticipate this will result in continued and permanent cost pressures associated with adequately supporting and protecting the workforce and protecting against extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods.

We hope to count on your support in proactively remedying this by:

- Providing the sector with the tools it needs to be able to adapt by increasing investment in the Risk Management Program, including the Self-Directed Risk Management Program, by \$100M.

We see this as an opportunity to strengthen and grow Ontario's domestic food production, ensuring the supply of sustainable, locally grown food for all Ontarians and to strengthen our ability to meet export opportunities.

LOOKING AHEAD

ACCESS TO LABOUR

Fruit and vegetable farms are more affected by labour shortages than any other farming sector. Labour shortages have existed in the sector even before the pandemic hit, and the pandemic has further exacerbated them. A strong, skilled labour workforce is vital for farms to grow local food production.

Wages are the largest component of production costs, more than twice that of any other production expense.

- Growers depend on programs like the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program to ensure a strong food supply chain.
- During 2021 the OFVGA launched the More than a Migrant Worker campaign to recognize and acknowledge the important role of international guest workers in helping produce our fresh local food in Ontario.

Temporary Help Agencies (THAs) are another resource that the sector depends on to meet the ever-increasing demand for labour. OFVGA has called for and continues to support improved oversight of THAs. However, it must be done right and should not result in the unintended collapse of this critical labour source.

- The workforce available through THAs cannot be replaced through other sources in a practical manner, given the short-term and often short-notice nature of their work and schedule which can be driven by uncontrollable factors like weather.
- If the availability of this labour source was significantly impaired, it could have significant impacts on the ability of farms to grow and harvest local food for Ontarians.
- Due to the sector's significant labour needs, Ontario's health system needs to ensure food production is not limited by public health decisions or a lack of resources.

CROP PROTECTION

Safe and responsible crop protection practices are a vital component of ensuring locally grown, safe and nutritious produce for Ontarians. Availability of crop protection products, including identifying and developing new solutions remains essential, along with ensuring a science-based approach to crop protection regulation.

- Ongoing grower education and safety certification ensures that crop protection products are used responsibly.
- The sector strongly believes that any crop protection products harmful to the environment and to the public at large should not be registered, or be used on products in Canada, or on products imported into Canada.

Although it is a federal responsibility, we hope to count on your support to ensure that growers continue to have access to safe crop protection materials to maintain our domestic food supply.



Fruit and vegetable growers face strong international competition. Regulatory approaches may increase the cost of production, impacting the ability of Ontario's growers to compete with countries that have less stringent environmental standards.

ENVIRONMENT

OFVGA and our members recognize that climate change is real and represents both challenges and potential opportunities to the sector. Our growers understand the risks posed by the changing climate, through extreme weather events, floods and droughts. Protecting the quality of the air, water and soil is paramount to growers, as it impacts their ability to work on farms and produce food for Ontarians.

We hope to count on your support to ensure:

- Targets to reduce emissions and improve environmental performance, account for significant investments already made by individual growers.
- Innovative practices and technologies are deployed to improve production efficiencies and create solutions to reduce emissions without impacting competitiveness.
- The sector is able to inform strategic investments in research and innovation to find efficiencies, reduce emissions and protect the environment.

MARKET FAIRNESS

- Fruit and vegetable growers operate in a competitive market and are subject to contract terms dictated by large grocery retailers, including long payment terms and unilaterally set marketing fees.
- Food price inflation experienced by consumers does not reflect an increase in the price received by growers, who are also experiencing significant increases in input costs.
- The OFVGA is counting on your support to ensure the current Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative to develop a retailer code of conduct comes to fruition. This will help to level the playing field between growers and retailers.
- The code of conduct needs to include features that make it mandatory, enforceable and transparent.



Questions?

Alison Robertson, Executive Director | arobertson@ofvga.org



ALUS

Canada

A Weston Family Initiative

**Sustaining agriculture,
wildlife and natural
spaces for all
Canadians—one acre
at a time.**

ALUS.ca

ALUS in Action

The ALUS program helps farmers and ranchers produce cleaner air, cleaner water, and more habitat for wildlife and pollinators in their communities. Brought to you by ALUS Canada, A Weston Family Initiative—a recognized leader in sustainability that is revolutionizing the way Canadians support the environment—ALUS makes it easy for agriculture to be part of the solution, producing ecosystem services to benefit us all.

Learn more at ALUS.ca.

ALUS Projects

How it Works: ALUS supports tens of thousands of acres of wetland, grassland and woodland projects across Canada. ALUS helps plant windbreaks, improve riparian buffer zones, create wildlife habitat and establish other types of beneficial projects that are suited to local needs and priorities.

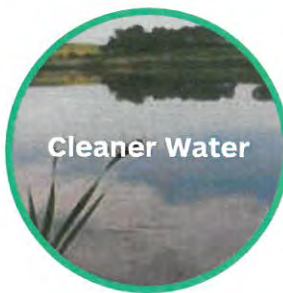


Benefits of ALUS

ALUS projects produce results: Cleaner air, cleaner water, carbon capture, flood mitigation, climate adaptation and biodiversity, including wildlife and pollinator habitat. These are just a few of the valuable ecosystem services produced by ALUS participants on their farms and ranches. Also known as 'nature's benefits,' 'ecological goods and services' and 'natural capital,' ecosystem services are essential for the land, the community, and the planet.



Cleaner Air



Cleaner Water



Pollinators



Wildlife Habitat



Biodiversity



Carbon Capture



Flood Mitigation

Here's what some farmers and ranchers have to say about ALUS:



"I am very proud to be part of ALUS. I like that the program calls on those who know the land better than anyone else to work with nature and produce ecosystem services that truly have an impact."

—Duane Movald (Movald Ranches), ALUS Brazeau, Alberta



"We are agricultural producers. Our main role is to produce food. But we are also stewards of the land. We are continually trying to improve the environmental footprint of our farm, and the ALUS program is a great help with that."

—Johnny Gallant (Ferme Gallant Ltée), ALUS P.E.I., Prince Edward Island



"It's important to take care of the land for future generations. As a farmer, I am happy to give up some profit now if it means the land and the water will remain healthy for my daughters in the future."

—Olivier Martin (Ferme Gestion Petit Manoir), ALUS Montérégie, Quebec

ALUS in your Community

With an ever-expanding number of ALUS communities, ALUS has strong and unique programs in its Western Hub, Prairie Hub, Eastern Hub and Atlantic Hub.

Western Hub—Spotlight on ALUS in Alberta

The ALUS program came to Alberta in 2010. The province's first ALUS program, ALUS Vermilion River, is still going strong. It's joined by a dozen more ALUS communities, each one a unique partnership between ALUS Canada and a strong municipal partner. Hundreds of Alberta farmers and ranchers have chosen to become ALUS participants, with more joining every year. They have already transformed tens of thousands of acres of marginal land into wetlands, grasslands and woodlands through ALUS.



Prairie Hub—Spotlight on ALUS in Manitoba and Saskatchewan

The ALUS concept was created in the Canadian Prairies: ALUS' first-ever pilot project took place in 2006 in Manitoba's former Blanshard Municipality. ALUS has since expanded into such communities as the Assiniboine West and Seine Rat Roseau Watershed Districts in Manitoba, and the SODCAP, Assiniboine (ASAP) and WUQWATR regions of Saskatchewan.

Eastern Hub—Spotlight on ALUS in Ontario and Quebec

The ALUS program came to Ontario in 2007. This first community, ALUS Norfolk, is now the longest continually running ALUS program in Canada, and many more have followed suit. In 2016, ALUS Canada partnered with the Fédération de l'UPA de Montréal to establish the first-ever ALUS program in Québec. Participants have transformed thousands of acres of marginal farmland into wetlands, grasslands and woodlands through ALUS.



Atlantic Hub—Spotlight on ALUS in P.E.I.

Originally implemented by the Province in 2008, the Prince Edward Island ALUS program includes nearly 100% of P.E.I.'s farmers. The P.E.I. ALUS program also benefits from ALUS Canada's support, through a delayed-haying initiative that helps Bobolink and other threatened grassland bird species.



Make A Difference On The Ground

ALUS invests in environmental stewardship on Canadian farms and ranches. Your support enables ALUS to create eco-buffers, wetlands, pollinator hedgerows, wildlife habitat, riparian buffer zones and much more, right across Canada. Every dollar you contribute is multiplied by the investment of farmers, ranchers and communities on the ground.

ALUS Canada is a nationally registered charitable organization that relies on generous funding from public and private sources. You can help ALUS create a healthy landscape that sustains agriculture, wildlife and natural spaces for all Canadians, one acre at a time!

Become an ALUS Supporter! Contact us to discuss your interests. Find us at ALUS.ca.

Corporate Sponsorship Opportunity

Whether your company's core ESG (Environmental Social Governance) interest is water, air, pollinators or wildlife, you can tailor a New Acre™ Project sponsorship package to the environmental issues that matter most to your organization. What's more, your investment will produce lasting benefits for the regions and communities you serve. The New Acre™ Project is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Incorporate the New Acre into your corporate sponsorship portfolio today!

Contact newacreproject@alus.ca

Brought to you by:

New Acre™ Project.

Make a difference.
Make an acre.



A Weston Family Initiative

"TD is proud to be the first sponsor of ALUS Canada's New Acre™ Project, as part of our corporate citizenship platform, The Ready Commitment." –Nicole Vadori, Head of Environment, TD Bank Group

Community Partnerships

ALUS Canada partners with local organizations to deliver the program on the ground, supporting a unique, community-developed, farmer-delivered program on a national scale. ALUS is proud to work with dozens of community partners to have a powerful impact on the environment across Canada. Each ALUS community is strong and unique, determining its own priorities while benefitting from a shared set of ALUS principles and a central support system.

To find out if there is a program in your area, visit the map of ALUS Communities on [ALUS.ca](https://al.us.ca)

Interested in starting up a new ALUS community?

All ALUS communities are partnerships between ALUS Canada and a legal entity, such as a municipality (most common in Alberta), a watershed group, a conservation district, or another type of organization. There is a process in place for establishing a partnership with ALUS Canada and launching a new ALUS program:

1. Contact a regional ALUS Canada Hub Manager to request information.
2. Regional ALUS Canada Hub Manager will present an "ALUS 101" information session in your community.
3. A meeting with all relevant parties to thoroughly discuss entering into a partnership with ALUS Canada.
4. Request an ALUS Canada Expression of Interest (EOI) form and submit it to your regional Hub Manager.
5. There is currently a waiting list in some regions of Canada. Please stay in touch with your regional Hub Manager to indicate your continued interest in ALUS.
6. When the partnership is approved, your Hub Manager will give you the official go-ahead and begin the onboarding process with your organization.



ALUS Red Deer County hosting an ALUS Canada Innovation Awards presentation in Alberta.



Land Use Planning Considerations: Agriculture in Grey and Bruce Counties

Farmland Preservation

The OFA believes the highest and best use of Ontario's arable land is for agriculture. Land capable of supporting agricultural activities is a finite, strategic, non-renewable resource worthy of preserving for its ability to provide safe, affordable and sustainable food, fibre, and fuel for Ontario, Canada, and the world. The world's population is projected to rise to 9.8 billion by 2050, underlining the need to keep Ontario's highly productive agricultural land producing food for sustainable and resilient food systems.

The 2016 Census of Agriculture revealed that Ontario farms encompassed 12.3 million acres or less than 5% of Ontario's land area. Comparing the 2011 and 2016 censuses showed a decline in the area of farms from 12.6 million acres in 2011 to 12.3 million acres in 2016, equal to a loss of 63,940 acres/year or 175 acres/day.

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Between 2000 and 2017, 545 official plan amendments (OPAs) were approved and led to the loss of 72,196 acres of prime farmland in Ontario.¹ In this same period, a total of fifty official plan amendments alone resulted in the loss of 673 acres of prime agricultural land in Grey and Bruce Counties.² While Grey and Bruce do not see the same pressure for development as other counties do, it does illustrate the cumulative impact of seemingly small official plan amendments have on the grand total of farmland loss across the province.

When agricultural land is paved or built over it is lost forever. Every little bit matters.

Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs)

We fully recognize the need for Ministerial authority to issue Municipal Zoning Orders (MZOs) for municipalities without municipal organization and therefore without Official Plans and Zoning Bylaws. For these municipalities, MZOs serve the purpose in facilitating orderly growth and development – a use of Municipal Zoning Orders that OFA supports. However, OFA expresses its deep-seated concerns with the recent proliferation of Municipal Zoning Orders (MZOs) issued for municipalities with robust planning systems, Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. We are seeing MZOs issued for municipalities with robust planning systems at a frequency never-before-seen.

Since 2019, over 2,000 acres of farmland have been lost to MZOs.³

This frequent use undermines Ontario's long-established system of land use planning under the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. Ontario has a well-established system for amending municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to accommodate population and employment growth, including a system for appeals. The recent issuance of multiple MZOs short circuits our long-established planning principles and policies are short-sighted. It deprives citizens impacted by these MZOs of the ability to be consulted on proposed amendments to municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws.

Minister's Zoning Orders, particularly now that they do not have to demonstrate compliance with the PPS, should not be used to develop farmland because their use removes the thoughtful and logical planning process which considers all elements of provincial interest. The argument of economic recovery is not sufficient justification, as we have yet to see evidence that the relatively short-lived boom of economic activity generated by the conversion of farmland into industrial or residential development in any way compares to the 860,000 jobs and nearly 50 billion dollars in GDP that the Agricultural industry is known to contribute to Ontario's economy.

OFA would therefore like to make it clear that we do not support the use of MZOs to develop farmland in Ontario. The only mechanism for developing farmland that we support is through adherence to the PPS via local planning processes, where considerations of Agricultural Systems of provincial interest are included and a level playing field open to the public engagement process is maintained.

Merged Property Titles

Ontario has two property registration systems, Land Titles and Land Registry. Parts of the province, particularly the north, have always been under the Land Titles system, while much of the province was under the older Land Registry system.

An unfortunate feature of lands under the Land Registry system is that the titles of abutting properties held in exactly the same name or names are merged. Despite this merger, the owner continued to receive separate tax notices, under separate roll numbers. Only when it came time to sell one or both parcels would it come to light that the titles were merged. Not every farmer, who bought the farm next door, ended up with the titles merged, competent legal advice would alert the buyer to the means to avoid merged titles.

For farmers with merged titles, the process to "unmerge" them can be time-consuming, and costly. In some instances, their efforts are unsuccessful, particularly if the municipality has established a minimum farm lot size in its Official Plan or Zoning By-laws. OFA has called on the Ontario Government to change the Land Registry System under the *Planning Act* so that the practice of automatic merging is discontinued. We also encourage municipalities to work with farmers to find ways to unmerge property titles in ways that are less time-consuming and cost-prohibitive for farmers.

Conclusion and Further Reading

The OFA supports the efforts of our county federations of agriculture to stem the effects of urban growth on agricultural land in their municipalities. We urge decision-makers at the local and provincial levels to listen to our local federations when they speak on land use and other issues related to Agriculture. They are the leading experts in the agricultural sector in their areas.

Readings and References

[OFA Consolidated Agricultural Land Use Policy](#)

[Farmland Preservation and Urban Expansion: Case Study of Southern Ontario, Canada](#) [1-2]

[32 Years of Lost Farmland: How Urban Development has Really Changed Ontario](#)

[Information on Merged Property Titles](#)

[Value-for-Money Audit: Land-Use Planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) [3]

Economic Contributions of Farming in Grey and Bruce Counties

Profile of Farming in Bruce and Grey Counties (2016 Census data)

Bruce and Grey Counties account for almost 9% of all Ontario farms. Farming in Grey County is on the rise, with a 3% increase in farm number between 2011 and 2016. However, similar to the provincial trend, farm numbers in Bruce County decreased by 4% between the same time period. During this time, Bruce County experienced an overall loss of 24,883 acres used for farming activities, while acres used for farming in Grey County only decreased by 4,776 acres. The largest use of land in Bruce and Grey Counties is for growing crops, with 68% (383,356 acres) and 61% (299,952 acres) of farmland being used for crop production respectively.

Bruce and Grey Counties feature a variety of farm types, including livestock, grain and oilseed, fruit and vegetable, and greenhouse and floriculture. Grain and oilseed production is the primary farming industry in Bruce County (599 farms), while beef cattle farming and ranching is the largest farming industry in Grey County (693 farms).

Soybeans are the major field crop being produced in Bruce County (107,868 acres), while hay is the most predominant field crop in Grey County (120,581 acres). Apples are the largest fruit crop in both Bruce and Grey Counties, at 88 and 3,352 acres being used for apple production respectively. The major vegetable crop in Bruce County is green or wax beans (148 acres), while Grey County's predominant vegetable crop is sweet corn (49 acres).



Total Number of Farms

Bruce: 1,928 farms

Grey: 2,304 farms



Total Farmland Area

Bruce: 558,356 acres

Grey: 495,483 acres



Largest Use of Land

Bruce: Land in Crops

Grey: Land in Crops



Largest Farming Industry

Bruce: Grains and Oilseed

Grey: Beef Cattle



Major Field Crop

Bruce: Soybeans

Grey: Hay



Major Fruit Crop

Bruce: Apples

Grey: Apples



Major Vegetable Crop

Bruce: Green or Wax Beans

Grey: Sweet Corn

Economic Contribution of Farm Production in Bruce and Grey Counties

OMAFRA has calculated the economic contributions of farm production in Bruce and Grey County using their attribution model. The attribution model accounts for the direct **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** and jobs generated by primary agriculture, food processing, and food retail in Ontario. The economic impacts attributed to farms in Bruce and Grey is proportionate to Bruce and Grey Counties relative share of farm production in the province.

Table 1 shows the **cash receipts** for farm production in Bruce and Grey County.

Table 2 shows the **GDP and jobs generated** within the provincial economy as a result of the farm cash receipts in Table 1.

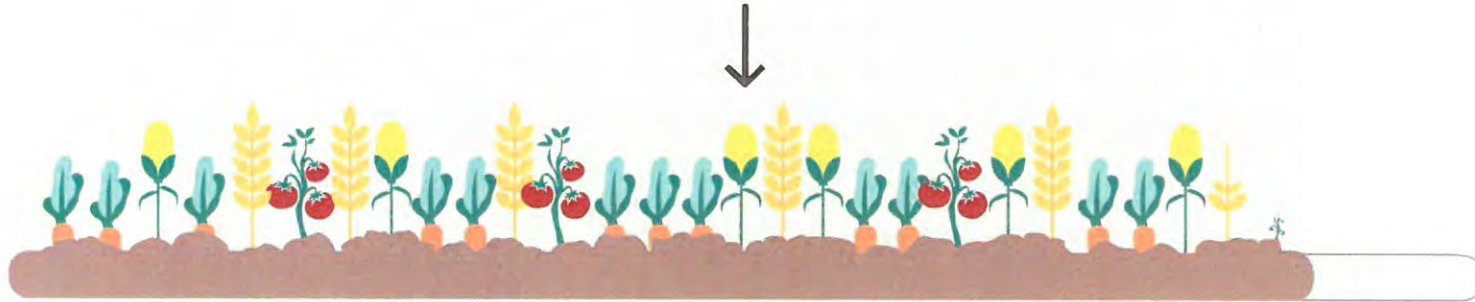
Table 1: Total Farm Cash Receipts in Bruce and Grey County by Commodity, 2020¹		
Commodity	Bruce County Farm Cash Receipts (Millions of Dollars)	Grey County Farm Cash Receipts (Millions of Dollars)
Grains & Oilseeds	\$159.6	\$74.9
Potatoes	\$1.61	\$0.3
Field Vegetables	\$5.6	\$2.3
Fruit	\$1.2	\$20.9
Christmas Trees	\$0.1	\$0.2
Dry Beans	\$5.1	\$2.7
Maple	\$0.9	\$2.0
Forage & Grass Products	\$0.3	\$0.1
Hay & Clover	\$8.4	\$9.9
Forest Products	\$1.1	\$1.7
Cattle	\$189	\$148
Sheep	\$6.0	\$8.7
Dairy	\$90.2	\$66.0
Poultry	\$33.5	\$17.6
Eggs	\$10.7	\$19.1
Hogs	\$41.5	\$13.7
Honey	\$1.3	\$3.2
Other	\$58.2	\$41.1
Total	\$644.9	\$455.4

Table 2: Economic Contributions of Bruce and Grey Farm Production to the Provincial Economy in 2020²		
County	Number of Jobs	GDP (Millions of Dollars)
Bruce	22,621	\$1,477
Grey	16,087	\$1,051

¹Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food & Rural Affairs (2020) Retrieved From <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/county/index.html>

² Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food & Rural Affairs (2020) Retrieved From <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/economy/index.html>

Save Ontario's food and farms from disappearing forever



Home grown, local food matters. **27,098** people across Ontario think it matters too.

Ontario is losing 175 acres of farmland every day to urban development. Once farmland is paved over, it's gone forever. Help protect local, fresh, home grown food made right here in Ontario before it's too late.

The Story



Once **farmland** is paved over, it's **gone forever**.

175 acres of farmland is being lost to urban development every day.

175 acres =

- 32 city blocks
- 437 hockey rinks
- 2,625 tennis courts
- 27,300 cars

How large is 175 acres?

How does it compare to...



1,500,000

Acres of productive farmland lost since 1996.

That's roughly the combined size of Toronto, Peel Region, Halton Region, Waterloo Region, Hamilton and Niagara Region - combined.