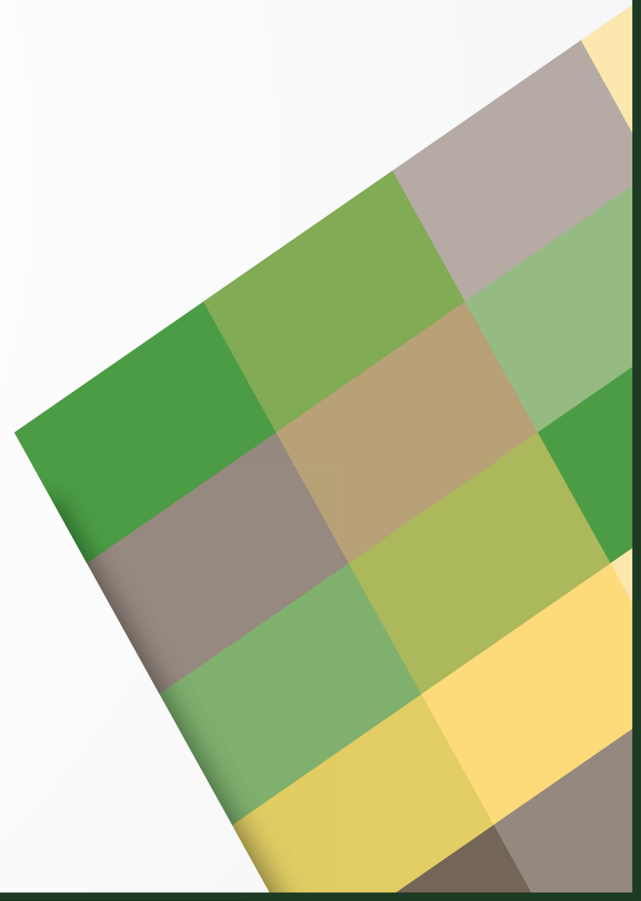


RURAL ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

# Agricultural Economic Development



# Agricultural Economic Development

January 19, 2025





CHERRYLANE

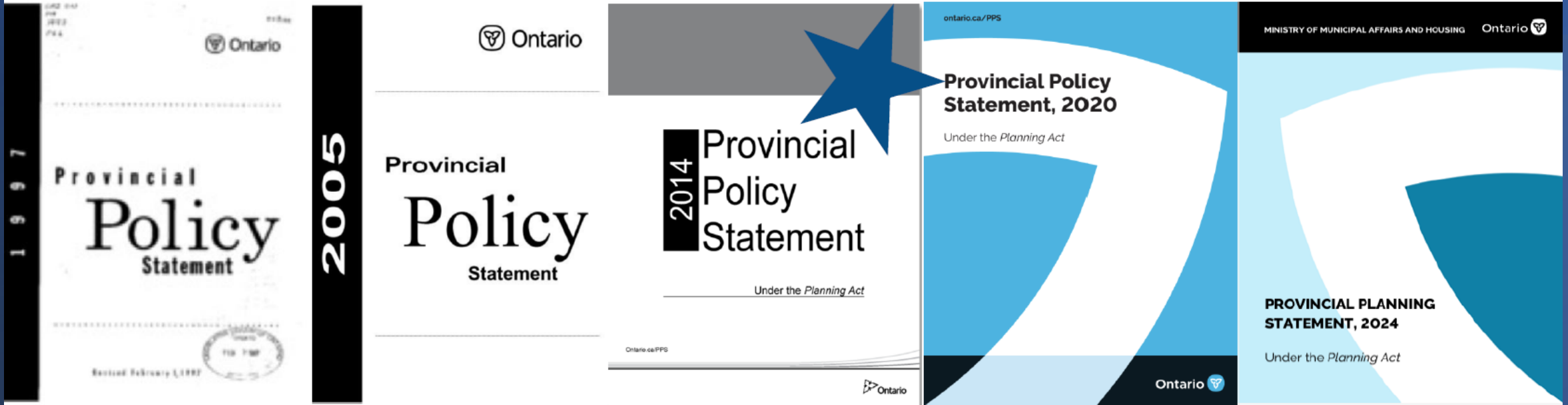




[www.vanderviewfarms.ca](http://www.vanderviewfarms.ca)



# The Evolution of the PPS

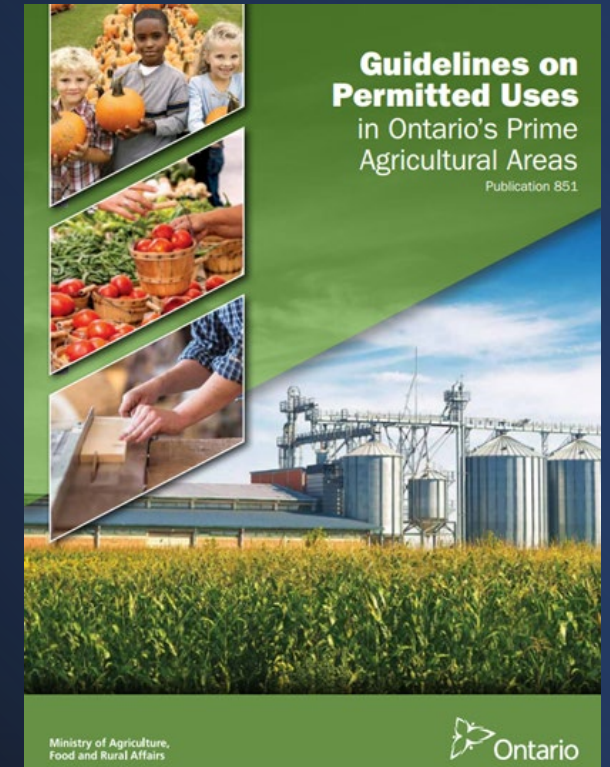


Introduction of On-Farm Diversified Uses

# Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas

In 2016, OMAFRA introduced Publication 185: Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas

- Agricultural Uses
- Agriculture-Related Uses
- **On-Farm Diversified Uses (OFDUs)**





# On-Farm Diversified Uses



Value-Add (Cheese Factory)



Value-Add (Winery)



Veterinary Clinic



Café/Small Restaurant



Home (Professional Services)



Home Occupation (Studio)



Agritourism (B&B)



Agritourism (Petting Zoo)



Winery/Tasting Room



Retail (Antiques, Tack Shop)



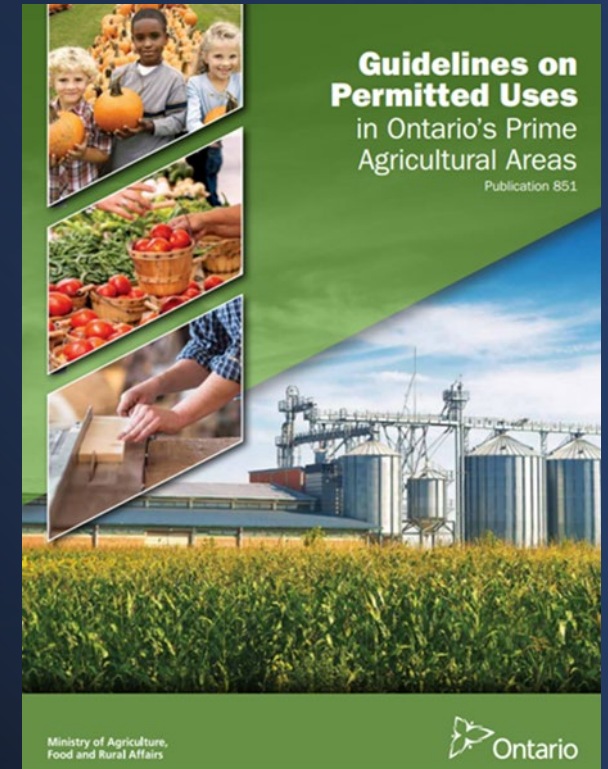
Seasonal Storage



Home Industry (Carpentry)

# Criteria for On-Farm Diversified Uses

- 1) Located on a farm
- 2) Secondary to the main agricultural use of the property
- 3) Limited in area  
(2% of property to maximum of 1 ha)
- 4) Home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism, value-added uses + more
- 5) Compatible with surrounding agricultural operations



# ON-FARM DIVERSIFIED USES



**WALTERS DINNER THEATRE**  
Oxford County



**CIRCUS IN THE TREES**  
Norfolk County



**WINDMILL LAKE WAKE & ECO-PARK**  
Huron County

# On-Farm Diversified Uses Research

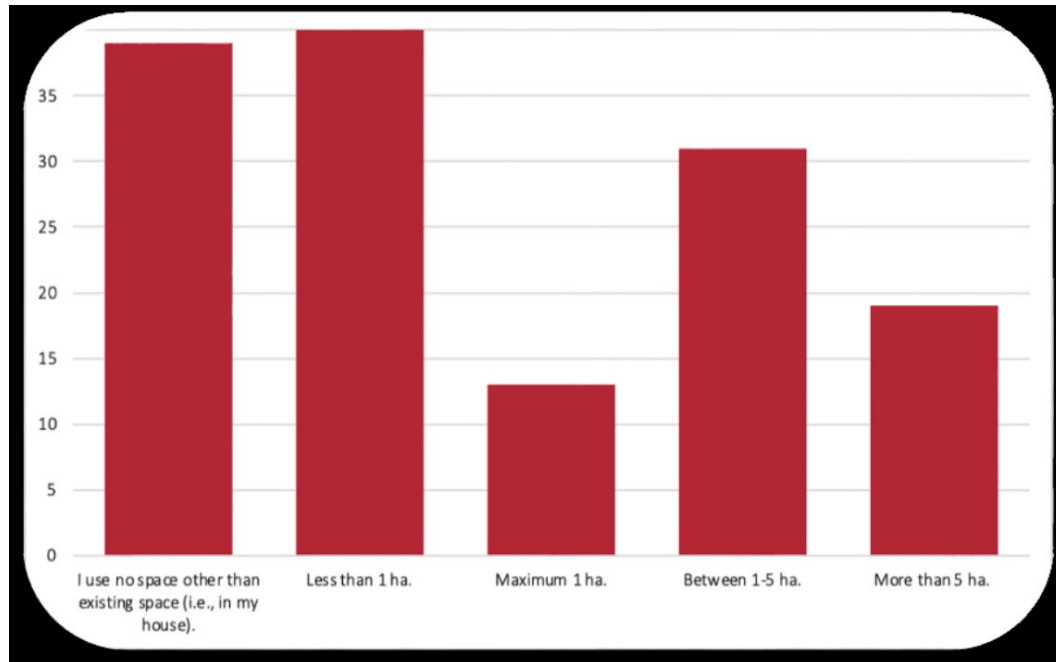
## Objectives

- Evaluate the effectiveness of policy that allows for OFDUs (at individual farm, municipal, and provincial levels)
- Identify existing policies and strategies used to encourage OFDUs (at a municipal level)
- Evaluate the specific policy effects on farmers
- Identify best practices for policy and strategies for OFDUs based on evidence.



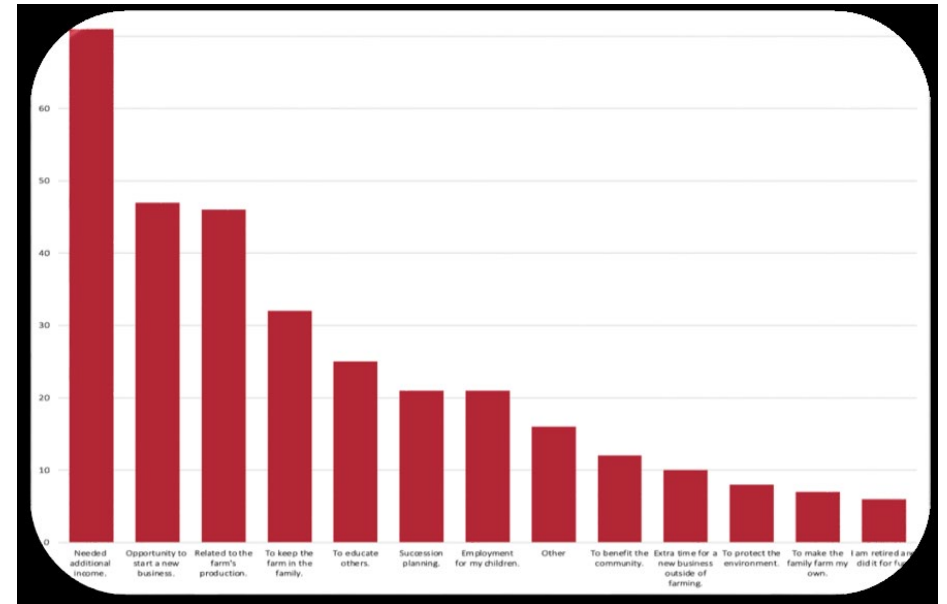
# Research Results

How much land do you use for your OFDU?

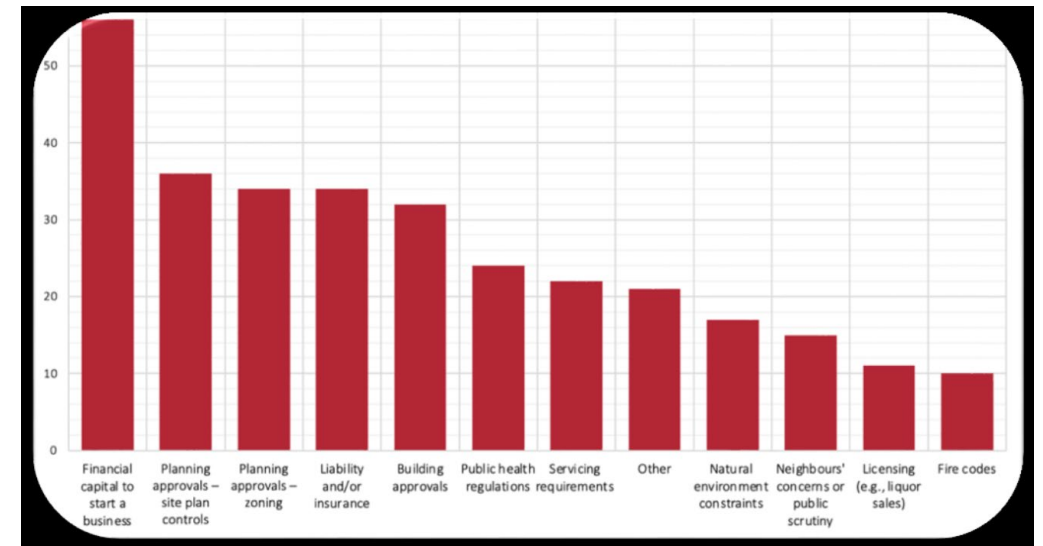


- An average 3 jobs created within the family unit
- An average 9 jobs created outside the family unit
- In total, 1,551 jobs were created as a result of OFDUs

Why did you establish an OFDU?



What challenges did you experience when establishing or expanding the OFDU?



# Research Best Practices

Implementing Land  
Use Policy &  
Provisions

Pre-Consultation

Economic  
Development  
Resources & Support

Minor Site Plan  
Process

Special Events By-law



# Research Municipal Recommendations

1. Municipal and private planners would benefit from training on the Guidelines to encourage consistent interpretation of OFDUs.
2. Municipalities should clearly define 'farm' and consider size and scale criteria in policy development.
3. Municipalities should establish as-of-right policies and provisions for OFDUs.
4. Municipalities (all departments) and farmers are encouraged to have pre-consultation meetings with all fees, timelines, and requirements laid out.
5. Fees and requirements could be scaled back for farmers (i.e. development charges, engineered drawings, studies, application fees, etc.).

# Resources & Readings

- Final Research Report available at Dr. Wayne Caldwell's Resource Website at <https://www.waynecaldwell.ca/projects/>
- OPPI Y Magazine Article - Balancing Farmland Protection with On-Farm Diversification for Agricultural Viability (Issue 12, Fall 2022)
- Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance White Paper on Event Barns at <https://foodandfarming.ca/research/>
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture Community of Practice at <https://ofa.on.ca/CommunityofPractice/>
- Municipal World Achieving Farmland Protection and Agricultural Viability - 3 parts (Issues – Jan/Feb/March 2023)
- Plan Canada Article – Reinventing the Family Farm (Issue October 2021)
- The Globe and Mail – Why Fluxing is a good thing for family farms (June 21, 2021)
- OPPI Workshops & Events – On-Farm Diversification at <https://ontarioplanners.ca/inspiring-knowledge/cpl/workshops-events>



# Agricultural Economic Development

Dr. Pam Duesling PhD, MCIP, RPP, Ec.D.,  
CMMIII

Town of Pelham

Director of Community Planning &  
Development

[pduesling@pelham.ca](mailto:pduesling@pelham.ca)





# Promoting Economic Development: Growing Agriculture in your Community

Danielle Sharman, Policy Analyst  
Ontario Federation of Agriculture  
ROMA Annual Conference  
Toronto, ON  
January 19, 2025



**\$50.7 BILLION**  
agri-food contribution to GDP

**871,000 EMPLOYED**  
in the agri-food sector

**200+ PRODUCTS**  
grown or harvested in Ontario

**1 in 9 ONTARIANS**  
employed in agri-food

Source: 2021 Census of Agriculture and OMAFA calculations.

# OFA represents farmers

- 38,000+ farm families are members
- 51 local federations
- 20 member service representatives
- 10 policy research staff
- Established in 1936



Our mission: Farms and Food Forever



# Rural issues are Ag issues, too

- ✓ **Natural Gas Access**  
to attract and retain businesses
- ✓ **Reliable Broadband Internet**  
for business connectivity
- ✓ **Transportation Infrastructure**  
e.g. roads, bridges, and culverts
- ✓ **Social Infrastructure**  
e.g. rural schools and health care



# Ontario Agriculture

as of 2021

- 48,346 farms
- 16% sell farm products directly to the consumer
- Over 5,200 farms sell directly from their farm, at stands, or pick-your-owns
- Over 1,100 sell at farmers' markets
- 17.5% generate renewable energy, incl. solar, bioenergy, wind power
- Nearly 60% of Ontario farms are small (< \$100,000 in revenue)



# OFA Tools and Resources



**OFA**

Ontario  
Federation of  
Agriculture

## Local and Regional Statistical Snapshots

### Agriculture at a Glance

AS OF 2024

**148**  
farms

**44,908**  
acres of farmland

**303 acres**  
is the average sized farm

### Local Snapshot

Sudbury  
CENSUS DIVISION

---

### Local Farm Sales

**35%** sell farm products directly to the consumer.

**1** farms operate a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)

**4** farms sell at farmers' markets

**38** farms sell directly from their farm, at stands, or pick-your-own

---

### Economic Contributions in 2023

**Local Impact**

The local agri-food sector employed **930** people through **205** local agri-food business establishments

**Farm Cash Receipts**

**\$16 million** in Farm Cash Receipts

**TOP 3**

- Dairy
- Grains & Oilseeds
- Cattle

**Across the Province**

Farm cash receipts generated by local farms supported **\$31 million** in GDP and **507** employees in the agri-food sector from farm to fork across Ontario

---

### Farm Facts

**19.6%** generate renewable energy, including solar, bioenergy and wind power

**35.7%** of farm operators are female

**87.8%** are small farms (less than \$100,000 in revenue)

---

Source: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (2024) County Profiles.

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OntarioFarms
OntarioFarms
ontariofarms

### Agriculture at a Glance

AS OF 2024

**6,720**  
farms

**1,997,046**  
acres of farmland

**297 acres**  
is the average sized farm

### Regional Snapshot

Eastern Ontario  
CENSUS AGRICULTURAL REGION

---

### Local Farm Sales

**18%** sell farm products directly to the consumer.

**69** farms operate a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)

**203** farms sell at farmers' markets

**836** farms sell directly from their farm, at stands, or pick-your-own

---

### Economic Contributions in 2023

**Local Impact**

The local agri-food sector employed **70,415** people through **13,861** local agri-food business establishments

**Farm Cash Receipts**

**\$2.1 billion** in Farm Cash Receipts

**TOP 3**

- Grains & Oilseeds
- Dairy
- Poultry & Eggs

**Across the Province**

Farm cash receipts generated by local farms supported **\$4 billion** in GDP and **65,545** employees in the agri-food sector from farm to fork across Ontario

---

### Farm Facts

**16.3%** generate renewable energy, including solar, bioenergy and wind power

**30.9%** of farm operators are female

**67.2%** are small farms (less than \$100,000 in revenue)

---

The Eastern Ontario Region includes the following census divisions: Frontenac, Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, Lennox and Addington, Ottawa, Prescott and Russell, Renfrew, and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (2024) County Profiles.

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### Ontario Agriculture at a Glance

Nearly **50,000** farms across the province

**11.7 million** acres of farmland

**243 acres** is the average sized farm

---

### Local Farm Sales

**16%** sell farm products directly to the consumer.

**322** farms operate a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)

Over **1,100** farms sell at farmers' markets

Over **5,200** farms sell directly from their farm, at stands, or pick-your-own

### Economic Contributions

Ontario's agri-food sector grosses

**\$50 billion** in GDP annually

Ontario exports nearly

**\$26 billion** in agri-food products annually

Ontario's agri-food sector employs

over **871,000** people

**11%** of the Ontario labour force

---

### Farm Facts

**17.5%** of Ontario farms generate renewable energy, including solar, bioenergy and wind power

**31%** of farm operators are female

Nearly **60%** of Ontario farms are small farms (less than \$100,000 in revenue)

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Source: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness economic indicators.

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ontariofarms



## Agriculture Matters: A Guide for Municipal Councillors and Staff



RESOURCE

### Agriculture Matters: A Guide for Municipal Councillors and Staff

The purpose of this Guide is to provide an overview of issues affecting farm businesses today, as well as identifying opportunities for local communities to support this untapped, and sometimes undervalued, economic sector. It is available electronically at [ofa.on.ca/GrowAg](https://ofa.on.ca/GrowAg).

Farming is a unique sector which aims to grow plants and animals under environmental conditions that are rarely under a farmer's control. The variable timing of planting season, the length and intensity of the growing season, as well as economic and political factors can intensify the challenges associated with operating a farm business. Farmers are willing to engage with municipalities on topics affecting the sector, however, any outreach should consider the time of year and should engage farmers early and often throughout the process.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA)'s 51 County and Regional Federations offer strong, grassroots leadership, and should be your first point of contact when addressing municipal issues affecting agricultural businesses in your community.

#### Agri-Food: Driving Ontario's Economy Forward

Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sectors are leading economic drivers for the province, contributing over \$50 billion in GDP and employing over 870,000 Ontarians. OFA calls for greater investment in Ontario's agri-food sector and rural communities as an effective strategy to deliver economic growth and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Distributing economic development will create new jobs, enable new affordable housing options, improve food security, and contribute to environmental stewardship. When we invest in our small communities, we improve the physical and social infrastructure in rural Ontario; generating new opportunities to work and live in communities across the province. This is beneficial for rural Ontario and alleviates the growth pressure in our urban communities.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) proudly represents more than 38,000 farm family members across Ontario, supporting our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations governed by all levels of government. OFA works to ensure the agri-food sector and our rural communities are included, consulted, and considered in any new and changing legislation that impacts the sustainability of our farm businesses. We are the leading agricultural advocate for Ontario farmers, businesses, and communities.

- OFA updates the Agriculture Matters Guide to highlight key agricultural issues taking place at the municipal/local level.
- The latest iteration (January 2025) includes revisions and some new topics.
- This resource outlines the issue for farmers and resources to learn more.

<https://ofa.on.ca/GrowAg>

## GrowAg Page on OFA's Website

RESOURCE

### Guide to Support Agricultural Growth in Your Municipality

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) has identified municipal impediments and opportunities to support growth in Ontario's agriculture and agri-food businesses.

While many policies are established at the provincial and federal level, there are many best practices that municipalities can implement to support their agri-food sector.

Municipalities can support agricultural economic development through:

RESOURCE

### Checklist to Support Agricultural Growth in Your Municipality

This checklist is accompanied by a Guide to Support Agricultural Growth in Your Municipality. Please consult the Guide for further information on how to implement the actions in the Checklist, and why they are important for supporting the agricultural sector in your municipality.

Land Use Planning

- Outlined a clear definition and policy for on-farm diversification, value-added agriculture, and agri-tourism in municipal policies

- For municipal staff and councils to engage in dialogue with OFA to implement policy and programs that support agriculture and agri-food businesses in their community.

### AGRI-FOOD INITIATIVES ONTARIO DIRECTORY

An online collection of projects, programs and policies to help you support agriculture and food. To view, click the topic button. A Google Drive folder will open in your web browser.

<b>STUDIES</b>	AGRICULTURAL SECTOR	FOOD LITERACY
	BROADBAND + INFRASTRUCTURE	FOOD SYSTEM
	BUSINESS RETENTION + EXPANSION	LABOUR + WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
	ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE	LAND USE PLANNING STUDIES
	FEASIBILITY STUDIES	LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT
	FOOD DISTRIBUTION HUBS + INCUBATORS	OTHER STUDIES
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	AGRICULTURAL SECTOR	FOOD
	AGRICULTURE + CULINARY TOURISM	FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	OTHER STRATEGIES
<b>PROJECT/PROGRAM</b>	AGRICULTURAL SECTOR INFOGRAPHICS	STEWARDSHIP / ECO G+S PROGRAMS
	AGRICULTURAL SECTOR PROFILES	FOOD HUB SERVICES
	ASSET MAPPING PROJECTS	LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION
	COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS	OTHER PROJECTS/PROGRAMS
<b>GUIDANCE</b>	AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES	MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL PLANS
	FOOD CHARTERS	ZONING BY-LAWS
	FOOD POLICY COUNCILS	OTHER GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS
<b>OTHER</b>	FUNDING PROGRAMS	ONLINE TOOLS
	HOW-TO GUIDES AND TOOLKITS	OTHER RESOURCES

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## On-Farm Diversified Uses (OFDUs) – OFA Best Practices to Enable Agriculture

### Examples of OFDUs

- winery, cidery, distillery
- bakery, abattoir
- agritourism / recreation
- retail services (e.g. farm market, small café or restaurant)
- home occupations (e.g. bookkeeper or vet clinic)
- home industries (e.g. equipment repair)

- Consistent with the PPS, recognize OFDUs as a **permitted use** in prime agricultural areas *and* on rural lands to support long-term agricultural viability.
- Adopt OFDUs '**as-of-right**' within your municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws
- Scale back application fees, **simplify requirements, and streamline the process** for farmers
- Ensure a timely and affordable planning approval process to **enable farmers to enhance their agricultural viability** by diversifying their operations.

## Taxes for Value-Added Activities

- OFA's standing position has been that if at least 51% of the product is **grown and value-added to by the same farmer or farmers** and at least 90% of the product is **grown in Ontario**, then that should be considered an **extension of the farm business** and taxed at no more than 25% of the residential property tax rate.
- Municipalities can also support value-added agriculture by creating a new property tax class for small-scale on-farm businesses.

In municipalities that choose to enact the optional property tax sub-classes, eligible on-farm buildings, where value added activities are taking place, will have the first \$50,000 of assessed value taxed at 25% of the local commercial or industrial tax rate. Buildings with assessed values of greater than \$1 million are not eligible.

## Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Community of Practice



Membership

[Home](#) > Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Community of Practice

### Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Community of Practice

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs (MRA) has coordinated a free, online network to bring together economic development and planning professionals across Ontario interested in agricultural issues. The quarterly meeting topics will be based on relevant municipal policies, procedures and programming impacting the agricultural sector.

- Voice your challenges and receive feedback from fellow practitioners
- Speak with experts in the field and have your questions answered
- Network with other municipal staff that work on similar issues
- Learn best practices and strategies that you can implement in your community

**Join the Email List:** We will notify you about upcoming webinars

#### Next Webinar

Agricultural Updates to the Provincial Planning Statement, January 28, 2025 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. [Register Now!](#)

<https://ofa.on.ca/communityofpractice/>

## Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Community of Practice

### Next Webinar:

Agricultural Updates to the Provincial Planning Statement

January 28, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

OMAFRA Land Use Policy staff will talk about key changes to agricultural related policies in the updated PPS, including highlighting the province-wide Agricultural Systems approach.

<https://ofa.on.ca/communityofpractice/>



# Cultivating Local

Seizing Opportunities to Grow Ontario's Local Agri-Products Sector

In response to growing interest in buying and selling local, OFA's Cultivating Local project will host nine online workshops with key resources for farmers and future farmers exploring opportunities to sell direct to consumer in Ontario.

<https://ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local>

# Selling directly to consumers

## Benefits

- Connecting with consumers and educating about agriculture
- Increased income potential
- Lifestyle considerations (e.g., room for creativity, work with family)
- Opportunity to develop a brand for the farm





# Selling directly to consumers

## Challenges

- Advertising and marketing
- Labour availability and time constraints
- Regulatory hurdles (e.g., understanding permitting and health inspection requirements)
- Managing costs, setting prices, and forecasting profitability



# Selling directly to consumers

## Challenges

### Value-Added Agriculture

- Upfront costs a hurdle to getting started
- Difficulty scaling-up
- Access to processing space and infrastructure (e.g., commercial kitchens, abattoirs, packaging, etc.)
- Lack of funding opportunities
  - Finding grants for small-scale farmers can be difficult

### Agritourism

- Insurance and liability
  - Cost of insurance
  - Risk of theft or damage to property
- Biosecurity concerns
- Building facilities/infrastructure on-site to support agritourism (e.g., parking, washrooms, etc.)
- Dependence on weather



## Cultivating Local – Completed Workshops 2024

- Market Trends and In-Demand Local Products in Ontario
- Getting Started in Value-Added Agriculture, Food and Beverage
- Selling at Farmers' Markets
- Selling to Restaurants and Institutions
- Selling Online and Leveraging Social Media Platforms
- Labelling and Attributes: Organic, Free Range, Gluten-Free and more

View recordings online at <https://ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local>



## Upcoming Workshops (2025)

- Exploring Agritourism Opportunities: January 30
- Selling Local in Rural and Remote Ontario: February 13
- Beyond Food: Textiles, Ornamental Horticulture & More: February 27

Thursdays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

To register for free, visit <https://ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local>

A person wearing jeans and rubber boots is walking through a field of young green plants. The scene is set at sunset, with a warm, golden light illuminating the background. In the distance, a barn and trees are visible. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

# Thank You

---

Danielle Sharman  
[danielle.sharman@ofa.on.ca](mailto:danielle.sharman@ofa.on.ca)

[ofa.on.ca/GrowAg](https://ofa.on.ca/GrowAg)

# What's new in land use planning and economic development at OMAFA?

ROMA Conference  
January 19, 2025

Nancy Rutherford – Rural Planner

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and  
Agribusiness

Policy Division

Food Safety and Environmental Policy Branch

Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit



# Purpose

- What's new at OMAFA?
  - OMAFA's Land Use Planning Context
  - Updated Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) (2024) policies to support agricultural land use and economic development
  - Development of OMAFA PPS Guidance Material
- Resources to support agriculture in your community.

# OMAFRA's Land Use Planning Context

- The Province's agricultural resources provide environmental, economic and social benefits.
- The wise use and management of these resources over the long term is a provincial interest.
- OMAFRA works with MMAH and other partner ministries on implementation of government direction, legislation and policies to consider agri-food sector needs.
- Land use policies aim to support the long-term protection of Ontario's farmland and sector viability.
  - Policies do not prevent farmland loss but ensure agricultural considerations are part of planning decisions.
- Provincial land use policies speak to the identification and protection of agricultural resources, growth management, land use compatibility, permitted uses and lot creation.
- Underlying approach behind the policies – avoid, minimize and mitigate.





# Provincial Planning Statement (2024) - Key Agricultural Policies



# Provincial Planning Statement 2024 – Key Agricultural Policies

- New Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024) came into effect on October 20, 2024.
- New PPS includes 4 key changes to agricultural policies intended to support the long-term protection of Ontario's farmland and to support the success and resiliency of the agri-food sector.
- These 4 key changes are summarized here, but more details on PPS policy changes can be found in Appendix A.

Topic	Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<b>Agricultural Systems / Designation of Prime Agricultural Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All municipalities <u>required</u> to map, designate, and protect <i>prime agricultural areas</i> and <i>specialty crop areas</i> <u>using an <i>agricultural systems approach</i></u>, supporting <i>agricultural uses</i>, <i>agriculture related-uses</i> and <i>on-farm diversified uses</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement to designate prime agricultural areas is not new but now encouraged to consider if rural lands are part of a contiguous system.</li> <li>• Requirement to support and foster the agri-food network is new.</li> <li>• No requirement to use provincial mapping, a key implementation consideration is ensuring consistent, accurate mapping of prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas..</li> </ul>

# Provincial Planning Statement 2024 – Key Agricultural Policies

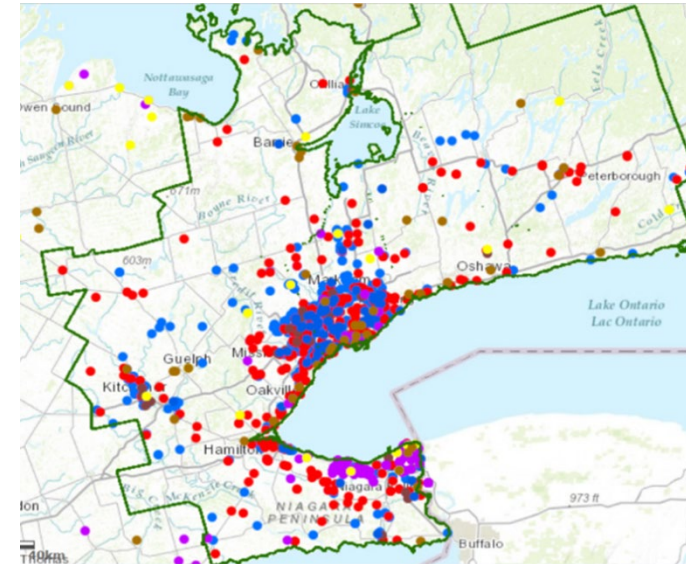
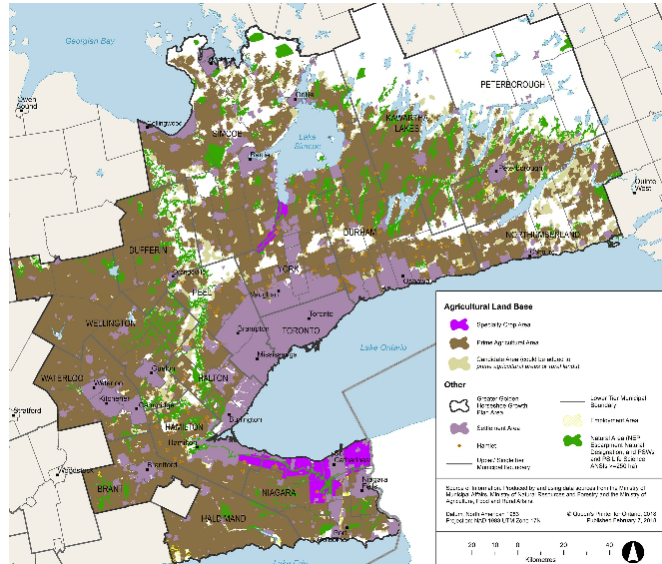
Topic	Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<b>Supporting Local Food and the Agri-Food Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New policy introduced <u>encouraging</u> planning authorities to support local food, facilitate near urban and urban agriculture, and foster a robust agri-food network.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize and promote local food production which can contribute to the development of complete communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Agricultural Impact Assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs) are required for <u>aggregate operations</u> and <u>non-agricultural uses</u> (e.g., golf courses), in prime agricultural areas.</li> <li>Municipalities shall consider AIA when considering Settlement Area Expansion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AIA applies to the agricultural system, which following the definitions of AIA, agricultural system, and agri-food network includes both adjacent agricultural operations and lands, and the broader agri-food network.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Residential Units (ARUs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>New</u> policy; municipalities must permit up to two additional residential units in prime agricultural areas, subject to several criteria.</li> <li>ARUs cannot be severed and must remain with the principal dwelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This strategy seeks to address the housing needs of the agricultural community while preserving the viability of agricultural land.</li> </ul>

# OMAFA PPS (2024) Guidance Material



# Agricultural System Approach

- An **Agricultural System** is a group of inter-connected elements that together create a viable, thriving agricultural sector.



## 1. Agricultural Land Base

Continuous, productive land base composed of prime agricultural areas (including Specialty Crop Areas) and **may** include other lower capability lands supporting agricultural production



## 2. Agri-Food Network

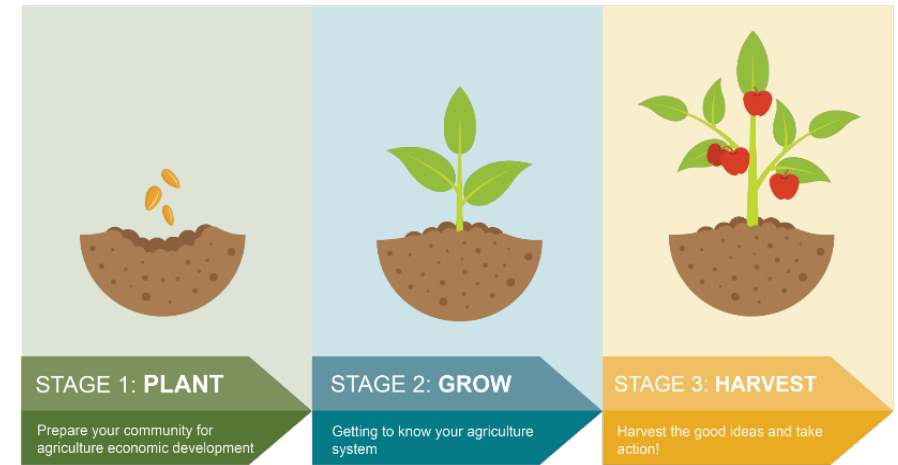
Infrastructure, services, and agri-food assets (processors, feed mills, etc.) important to the viability of the agri-food sector

[Agricultural Systems Portal \(arcgis.com\)](http://arcgis.com)



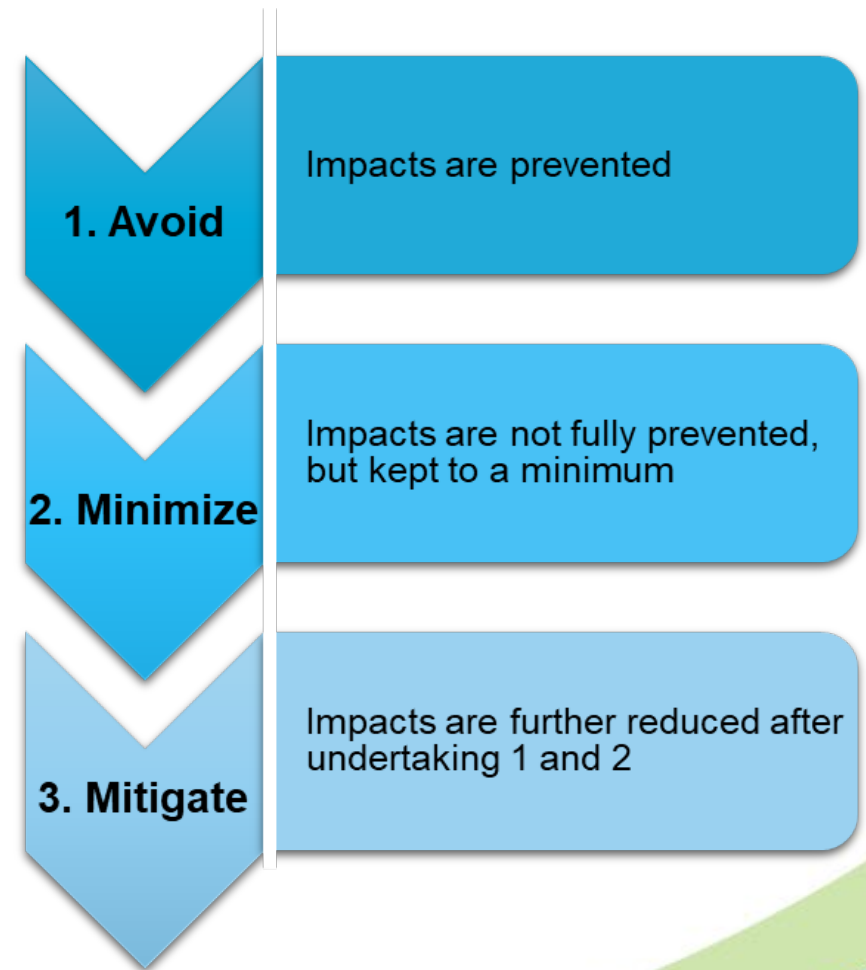
# Agricultural Systems Approach - Creating Conditions for a Thriving Agri-Food Sector

- OMAFA has several existing tools to support municipalities to implementation of an agricultural system. See Slide 12 for additional information and guidance material.
- Municipalities can support a thriving agri-food sector by:
  - Considering impacts on the Agricultural System when decisions are made on investments, growth, programs, policies, and services.
  - Engaging in agriculture economic development to strengthen the sector.
- OMAFA land use and economic development staff work together to provide training for both municipal land use planning staff and economic development staff to support implementation.
- While municipal capacity varies, OMAFA anticipates that for many municipalities the amount of new additional work resulting from the new PPS will be limited.



# Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs)

- A study that evaluates the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on the Agricultural System (farmland, farm operations and the agri-food network)
- AIAs help determine how:
  - To avoid adverse impacts (e.g., through site selection)
  - To minimize and mitigate adverse impacts (e.g., through site design, use of buffers, etc.)
- Overall goal of an AIA: to improve compatibility between agricultural and non-agricultural uses
- Our team is working on updates to AIA guidance to align references with the new PPS.
- Draft AIA guidance is available [online](#) and can be used in the interim.



# How does OMAFA help with PPS implementation?

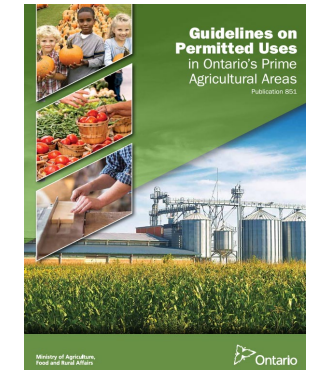
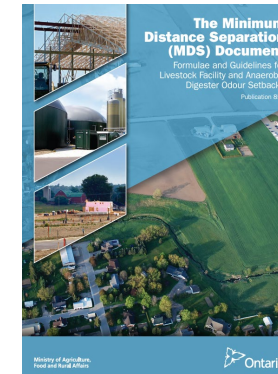
- OMAFA plans to update / develop 3 key guidance documents to support implementation of the PPS, 2024.
  - Agricultural Impact Assessments
  - Agricultural Systems
  - Additional Residential Units (ARU) in Prime Agricultural Areas
- Existing guidance material (e.g., MDS, permitted uses) remains available for use.
- OMAFA Rural Planners are available to provide technical advice and support to municipalities and stakeholders.



# Existing OMAFA Resources & Guidance Material

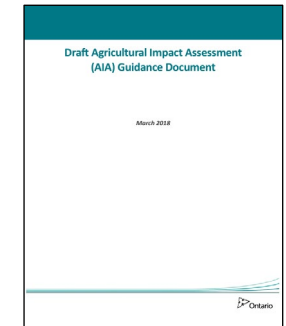
- Existing Guidance Material and OMAFA Resources remain available to support existing PPS policies. For example:

- [The Minimum Distance Separation Formulae](#)
- [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas](#)
- [GIS Storyboard on evaluating alternative locations for non-agricultural uses](#)



- While the Guidance Material on Agricultural Systems and Agricultural Impact Assessments is being updated, existing Guidance Materials and OMAFA Resources remain available on our website. For example:

- [Prime Agricultural Areas](#)
- [The Agricultural System](#)
- [Agricultural Systems Portal](#)
- [Draft Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidance](#)



- In addition to updating guidance on AIA and Agricultural Systems, OMAFA staff will also be prioritizing guidance on Additional Residential Units (ARUs).

# Other Resources to Support Agriculture in your Community

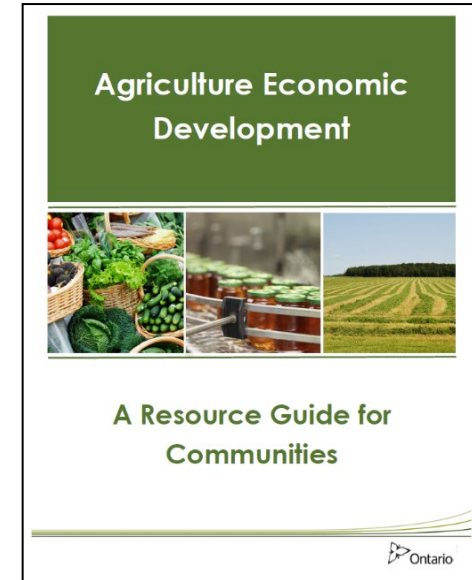


# Resources to Support Agriculture in Your Community

A wide range of tools and resources can help you navigate agriculture economic development.

## Agriculture Economic Development – A Resource Guide for Communities

- Preparing your Community for Agriculture Economic Development
- Understanding the shifting role of municipal staff and leaders in Agriculture Economic Development
  - Promoter, Connector, Educator, Enabler, Organizer
- Getting to know your Agriculture System
- Harvest Good Ideas and Take Action (practical activities and tools to support agriculture in your community)
- Municipal Agriculture Economic and Planning Forum
  - Annual event for those who work at a local level with agriculture within their portfolio
  - To be hosted in Simcoe County in October 2025
- Agriculture Economic Development & Land Use Planning Community of Practice
  - Webinar that is held at least 4 times per year and co-hosted by OFA, OMAFA/Ministry of Rural Affairs
  - Opportunity for Ontario practitioners to promote best practices, share success stories, and build capacity
  - For more information: [www.ofa.on.ca/communityofpractice](http://www.ofa.on.ca/communityofpractice)
- Data Sources that can support Understanding Your Agricultural System
  - [County profiles: agriculture, food and business | ontario.ca](http://County%20profiles%3A%20agriculture%2C%20food%20and%20business%20|%20ontario.ca)





# Summary

- There have been recent changes to the Provincial Planning Statement that impact the agri-food sector and rural municipalities.
- OMAFA has existing guidance documents and materials to support implementation.
- OMAFA will be updating key documents, as needed.
- OMAFA staff are here to help.
- We want to hear from you...
  - What tools has your municipality found to be most helpful?
  - Are there other specific supports that would be helpful for your municipality?

An aerial photograph showing a landscape of agricultural fields. A two-lane road with yellow center lines runs diagonally across the upper right portion of the image. To the left of the road, there are large, vibrant green fields, likely corn or soybeans, with distinct rows. To the right of the road, there are brown, tilled fields. The overall scene is a typical rural agricultural setting.

# **Appendix A: Key PPS (2024) Changes – Agricultural Policies**

# Agricultural System Approach / Designation of Prime Agricultural Areas – Policy 4.3.1 and Definitions

Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy revised. All municipalities <u>required</u> to map, designate, and protect <i>prime agricultural areas</i> and <i>specialty crop areas</i> <u>using an agricultural systems approach</u>, supporting <i>agricultural uses, agriculture related-uses</i> and <i>on-farm diversified uses</i>.</li> <li>• Even municipalities without “prime agricultural areas”, such as Toronto, Guelph, and some northern municipalities, may still have significant “agri-food network” components like food processing or distribution infrastructure.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Municipalities are <u>encouraged</u> to identify these elements as part of the agricultural system, (see Slide 11).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement to designate prime agricultural areas is not new but now encouraged to consider if rural lands are part of a contiguous system.</li> <li>• Requirement to support and foster the agri-food network is new.</li> <li>• While no requirement to use provincial mapping, a key implementation consideration is ensuring consistent, accurate mapping of prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas.</li> <li>• OMAFA will continue to provide staff support, provincial land base mapping (upon request) and updated guidelines for agricultural systems to support municipalities.</li> <li>• See Appendix A for more information.</li> </ul>

# Agricultural Impact Assessment – Policy 4.3.5 and Definitions

Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs) are required for <u>aggregate operations</u> and <u>non-agricultural uses</u> (e.g., golf courses, energy projects, institutional uses, etc.), in prime agricultural areas.</li><li>• Municipalities shall consider AIA when considering Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (see Slide 19)</li><li>• Except for infrastructure, the policies regarding agricultural impact assessments from APTG 2019 now apply province-wide.</li><li>• Effectively, this is a substantive revision to previous PPS policies that required mitigation of impacts to agricultural operations and lands.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AIA applies to the agricultural system, which following the definitions of AIA, agricultural system, and agri-food network includes both adjacent agricultural operations and lands, and the broader agri-food network.</li><li>• OMAFA staff will be working towards updating existing draft guidance material.</li><li>• See Appendix A for more information.</li></ul>

# Additional Residential Units (ARUs) – Policy 4.3.2.5 and Definitions

Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>New</u> policy; municipalities must permit up to two additional residential units in prime agricultural areas, subject to criteria:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) setbacks from livestock operations;</li><li>○ compatibility with surrounding agricultural operations;</li><li>○ servicing;</li><li>○ public health and safety;</li><li>○ limited scale;</li><li>○ proximity to the principal farm dwelling or farm building cluster; and</li><li>○ minimize loss of farmland.</li></ul></li><li>• Policy states where two ARUs are located on the property, at least one must be within or attached to the principal dwelling.</li><li>• Policy states ARUs cannot be severed and must remain with the principal dwelling.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This strategy seeks to address the housing needs of the agricultural community while preserving the viability of agricultural land.</li><li>• ARUs may include a variety of options, such as a basement apartment in an existing dwelling; a residential unit within or attached to an existing dwelling, garage or out-building; or a separate detached dwelling, etc..</li><li>• OMAFA staff will be working towards developing new guidance material. See Appendix A for more detail.</li></ul>



# Farm Worker Housing – Policy 4.3.2.6 and Definitions

Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing policy permitting farm worker housing as part of the definition of agricultural uses retained.</li><li>• New PPS policy clarifies that the two additional residential units (ARUs) that are permitted on a lot in a <i>prime agricultural area</i> in accordance with policy 4.3.2.5 are <u>in addition</u> to farm worker housing permitted as an <i>agricultural use</i>.</li><li>• Definition of an agricultural use modified to reflect current language used in sector for farm worker housing, and to recognize that international farm workers are not located on the farm property for the entire year (e.g., delete reference to 'full-time').</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintains existing policy provisions for farm worker housing, and clarifies concerns raised about the term 'full-time'.</li></ul>

# Supporting Local Food and the Agri-Food Network

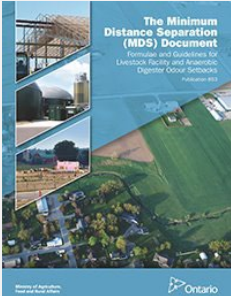

## Policy 4.3.6

Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New policy introduced encouraging planning authorities to support local food, facilitate near urban and urban agriculture, and foster a robust agri-food network.</li><li>• New definition of urban agriculture introduced.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize and promote local food production which can contribute to the development of complete communities.</li><li>• This is a policy of encouragement, and not a requirement.</li><li>• Builds off policy that was in APTG, 2020</li></ul>

# Permitted Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas – Policy 4.3.2 and Definitions

Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing policies retained for Agricultural Uses, Agriculture-Related Uses, and On-Farm Diversified Uses</li> <li>• Minor technical amendments to policy and definitions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reference added to provincial guidance material.</li> <li>○ Minor updates to definition of Agriculture Use, with respect to farm worker housing, see Slide 15</li> <li>○ Definition of On-Farm Diversified Uses updated to include electricity generation facilities and transmission systems, and <i>energy storage systems</i> as other possible examples of <i>on-farm diversified uses</i>, which may be permitted subject to meeting <u>all</u> criteria for an <i>on-farm diversified use</i>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing guidance material for municipalities remains in place – See Appendix D.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="1753 601 2084 1015" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates to “on-farm diversified uses” definition support provincial priorities related to energy supply and support a diversified income stream for farmers</li> </ul>

# Other Agricultural Policies

Policy Direction	Outcomes and Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For other agricultural topics, existing policy direction is retained, with minor changes to address technical edits, or revise definitions.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lot creation and lot adjustments</li> <li>○ Identification of specialty crop areas</li> <li>○ Land use compatibility for livestock operations, i.e., Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formulae</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor edits intended to align with other policy changes, e.g., lot creation revisions to address ARUs; MDS setbacks apply to ARUs in detached dwellings, etc.</li> <li>• OMAFA staff will continue to work with municipalities on identifying additional specialty crop areas, outside of the Greenbelt Plan.</li> <li>• Existing guidance material for MDS remains in place, see Appendix D.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;">   </div>

# Building Community **LEADERS**

Developing leadership and  
governance excellence

A series of workshops for Agricultural Societies.

**Why Municipalities should  
care**



Building  
Community  
**LEADERS**

# Who we are

- The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS) is an association representing 212 agricultural societies from across the province with approximately 30,000 members.
- Ag societies are governed by a volunteer board of directors who are responsible for their local activities, events, and meetings.
- Volunteers are the strength of our organization.





## Our Mission

The OAAS provides leadership, guidance, education, and resources for its member Agricultural Societies.



## Our Vision

Inspiring and Supporting Ontario Agricultural Societies.

# Benefits of Ag Societies



## Change Agents

A bridge between  
community history and  
newcomer interests



## Volunteers & Infrastructure

Great return on investment  
people, land & buildings are a  
resource to leverage



## Economic Development

Visitor attraction  
Community revitalization,  
sustainability



# Agricultural Societies mobilize Agritourism

**Bridgers:**  
Community  
Connection &  
Rural Culture



**Economic  
Development:**  
Education &  
Awareness



**Infrastructure  
and Investment**



**Welcomers:**  
Visitor &  
Newcomer  
Welcome



# What works

- Volunteers are the strength of our organization
- Good communication
- A shared vision

*The upside of investing in our volunteers  
is too great to ignore*



## About the Program

The Building Community Leaders program has been developed to enhance leadership and governance skills and risk management practices in Ontario's agricultural societies and, by extension, the agri-food sector.

- Ag societies are the front line leading vibrant rural community activities.
- Build upon the good work ag society volunteers are doing by strengthening capacity.



## OAAS & ROI

This project is coordinated in partnership with the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) and funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Ontario**



# About the Program



## Workshops

Each 2-day workshop will deliver leadership, governance, risk management practices and community engagement skills to participants using an experiential approach.



## Networking

A post workshop community of practice will be offered to participants to continue to share and collaborate. Webinars and an online forum will be used to accelerate best practices and leverage resources.



## Engagement & Sharing

Program participants are invited to take part in a culminating event where they will be inspired to mobilize action and celebrate successes.

# Sessions include



## Governance Excellence

Duties of a board  
Board structure  
Effective meetings  
Risk Management  
Being a welcoming board  
And more...



## Leadership Training

Understanding your leadership  
style and those of others  
Dealing with conflict  
Creating a strong working  
relationship



## Engagement & Sharing

Being a leader people  
will follow  
Hear from AG Society peers  
on best practices

Plus...great networking, great food,  
great company!

# Upcoming Workshops



- Richmond Hill, Feb 19-20, 2025
- Caledonia, April 12-13, 2025
- Barrie, May 24-25, 2025
- Kingston, June 21-22, 2025
- Guelph, October 24-25, 2025
- **Richmond Hill**, February 2026

# Want to get involved?

Workshops will be delivered across the Province of Ontario. For a session nearest you, visit <https://www.ontarioagsocieties.com/agricultural-society-info/building-community-leaders>.

Price \$125 includes accommodation and meals.

## Contact Us



613-395-2465



<https://ontarioagsocieties.com>



[info@oaasfairs.com](mailto:info@oaasfairs.com)

Follow OAAS on Facebook





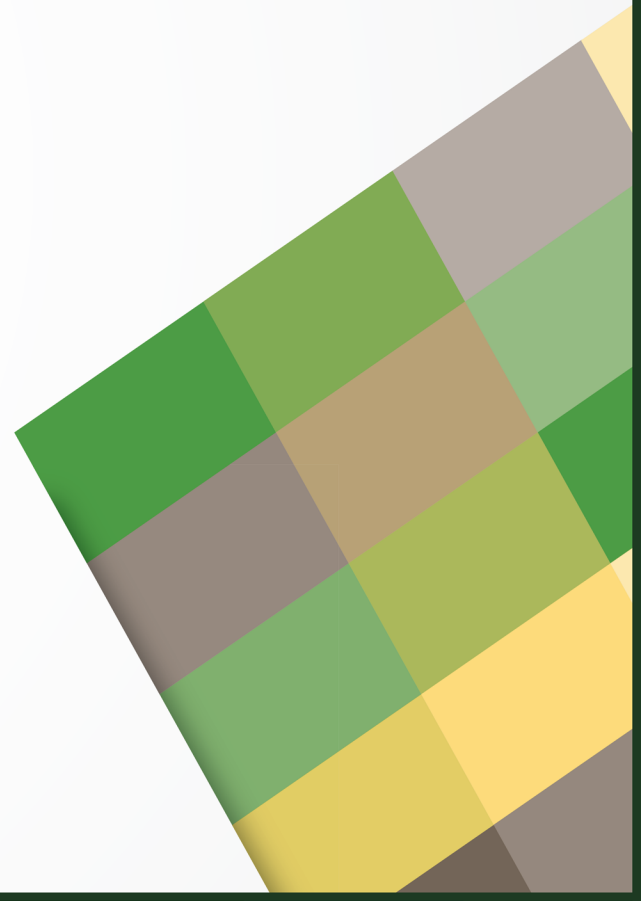
# Proactive Ideas

- Ask how you can work together better - a report on successes and needs
- Encourage and support volunteers to attend a BCL workshop



# Questions and Answers





155 University Avenue Suite 800, Toronto, ON M5H 3B7  
416.971.9856 | roma@roma.on.ca | www.roma.on.ca

