

Home Grown Campaign Farmland Preservation

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Our Mission: Farms and Food Forever

- Over 38,000 farm business members
- 51 local federations for strong, grassroots leadership
- 45 knowledgeable and experienced staff strategically located across Ontario
- 31 commodity and industry organizational members
- 18 member-elected Board of Directors



Home Grown Campaign



Campaign – homegrown.ofa.on.ca
– an advocacy campaign focused on protection and preserving Ontario’s farmland and domestic food production.



Purpose – increase awareness, educate the public, and enhance consumer knowledge on the threat and negative impacts urban development poses to Ontario’s agri-food system.



Call-to-Action – engage in the campaign on social media, sign the online petition and share our message in support of the protection and preservation of Ontario’s farmland.



Online Petition – Change.org – has received signatures from more than 5,900 supporters.

Based on data from the Census of Agriculture, Ontario is losing 175 acres of farmland every day to urban development.

It's a concerning number. Roughly the size of 135 football fields. Every day.

Whether you are talking about your morning toast, an apple in your lunch or grilled chicken for dinner, it all comes from Ontario farmland.

We get it – urban development matters. But where our food comes from matters too.

175 acres

=

5 family farms every week



Agriculture in 2021

- Produce more than 200 commodities
- The agri-food sector (field-to-fork) employs more than 860,494 Ontarians and grosses 47.3 billion in GDP
- 1 in 8 people are employed in agriculture and agri-food

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



What kind of food and farms are we talking about?

Although Ontario farmers do a lot with a little, only about 5% of land in the province can actually produce food.

More than 200 different fruits, vegetables, grains and livestock are grown or raised right here at home.

The land that supports this food production is a finite resource¹. It needs to be protected now.



VIEWPOINT



Long-term land use planning needs to focus on protecting agricultural land to ensure we have the resources available to continue producing food for the future

Peggy Brekveld,
President

Local Planning Process

Land Use Planning

- Protecting farmland because of urban pressures for growth
- Approach agriculture as a system, including the need for infrastructure and economic viability of farming



Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs)

- Frequent use undermines the local planning process
- Bypasses long-standing processes intended to protect farmland
- Eliminates local input or any type of appeal mechanism
- OFA recognizes need for MZOs to be executed in certain circumstances – but not when they impact productive farmland



Recent Planning Act Amendments

- Ontario cannot sustain continuing losses of agricultural land – it is a limited and declining land base.
- OFA recommends higher density development should be mandated province-wide to take advantage of existing infrastructure and reduce demand on agricultural land for future development.





Local Input

- Imperative for MZOs and amendments to them to solicit local input
- Advanced public notice should be provided before MZOs are issued
- MZOs need to be posted on the environmental registry for consultation, not just as decisions

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A winding river flows through the center, bordered by lush green fields and dense trees. A dirt road runs along the right side of the river. In the background, more fields and small farm buildings are visible under a cloudy sky.

Benefits of Agricultural Lands

- OFA understands the importance of urban growth and expansion – but where our food comes from matters too.
- Focus needs to be on protecting agricultural land to ensure we have the resources available to continue producing food for future generations.



Environmental Benefits

- Carbon sequestration, reduced soil erosion and watershed and wildlife habitat protection
- Aesthetic and recreational space, air quality & climate change mitigation
- Nutrient cycling, pollination services, soil erosion control
- Water cycling, groundwater recharge



Access to Local Food

- Food security
- Food access
- Enhancing agricultural productivity
- Urban-rural connections

Economic Opportunity in Agriculture

- **Attract & Retain Youth** to grow a skilled future workforce and fill current critical job vacancies
- **Enable Diversification** through value-added, direct farm marketing and agri-tourism





Thank You

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