

# Home Grown Campaign Farmland Preservation

MZOs and Land Use Planning in 2021

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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](http://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](http://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**





A person wearing jeans and rubber boots is walking through a field of young green plants. The scene is backlit by a bright sun, creating a warm, golden glow and long shadows. In the background, there are trees and a small building.

# Agriculture in 2021

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- Produce more than 200 commodities
- The agri-food sector (field-to-fork) employs more than 860,400 Ontarians and grosses 47.3 billion in GDP
- 1 in 8 people are employed in agriculture and agri-food



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 development
- 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





**Last year, the OFA Engaged the Minister on this topic.**



- OFA expressed 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 commented that we are seeing MZOs issued for municipalities with robust planning systems at a frequency never-before seen, and that this undermines Ontario's long-established system of land use planning
- We asked Minister Clark for support in deterring the use of Ministerial Zoning Orders for municipalities with well-developed, Ministry-approved Official Plans and Zoning By-laws

# Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs)

- Referenced in: “A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe”
- Greenbelt Plan
- Provincial Policy Statement
- AIAs recommend ways to “avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects” on agriculture





# 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.



**The most recent MZOs that OFA is aware of that have been used to develop farmland were posted to the registry in April 2021.**

- Despite OFA's comments, MZOs are still being used to develop farmland.
- This is occurring alongside multiple recent Planning Act changes that have enhanced the Minister's powers in regards to MZOs
- OFA is concerned that this could result in more of our diminishing supply of farmland being lost to development without a thoughtful and well-balanced approach







# 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





# Benefits of Agricultural Lands

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- OFA understands the importance of urban growth and development – 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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