



# **Agriculture: An Economic Powerhouse**

**Supporting Agriculture in  
Middlesex County**

# Agriculture at a Glance

AS OF 2021



**2,518**  
farms



**628,592**  
acres of farmland



**250 acres**  
is the average sized farm

## Local Snapshot

Middlesex County  
CENSUS DIVISION



## Local Farm Sales



**5**  
farms operate a CSA  
(Community Supported Agriculture)



**19** farms sell  
at farmers' markets



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

## Economic Contributions in 2021

### Local Impact



The local agri-food sector  
employed **28,715** people  
through **4,645** local agri-food  
business establishments

### Farm Cash Receipts



**\$1.3 billion**  
in Farm Cash  
Receipts



- Grains & Oilseeds
- Poultry & Eggs
- Hogs

### Across the Province

Farm cash receipts  
generated by local farms  
supported **\$2.9 billion**  
in GDP and **43,412**  
employees in the agri-food  
sector from farm to fork  
across Ontario

# Agriculture: An Economic Powerhouse

- Middlesex County and the City of London have complementary strengths
- Middlesex County has a growing number of innovative farm businesses and input supply companies stimulating the economy
- The City of London has a thriving agri-food processing sector



# Less Farmers to Produce More Food

- Almost 50,000 farms in Ontario (Census of Agriculture, 2021)
- Farms are much larger – average size is 243 acres. (Census of Agriculture, 2021)
- Price of farm land has dramatically increased in last 10 years
- How do we feed our country with only 2% of the population are farming?
- Farmers are doing a really good job of meeting increase demand for food but need the land to do this



# Why we need to Protect Farmland

- Over half (52%) of prime soils in Canada are in Ontario (OMAFRA, 2016)
- In Ontario farmland makes up less than 5% of land base (OMAFRA, 2016)
- Agricultural land is: productive, valuable, essential, finite and non-renewable
- Between 2016 and 2021, Ontario lost **319 acres** of farmland per day (Census of Agriculture, 2021)



# 319 Acres of Farmland =



58 City Blocks



797 Hockey Rinks



1,207,096 Bottles of Wine



23,500,000 Apples

## 5 Areas to Work Together:

- Supply chain challenges and affordability
- Building infrastructure
- Energy transition and supply
- Strengthening Ontario's labour force
- Rural health care



## Rural infrastructure



Reliable broadband internet for business development and utilizing precision agriculture technology



Roads, bridges and culverts to transport farm equipment and distribute agri-food products



Access to natural gas to attract and retain businesses in rural communities





“Key economic sectors include agriculture and agribusiness, manufacturing, small business, and tourism.”

Middlesex 2046, Official Plan Update

## Hands to Table



- Explore local restaurants and producers
- Know where your local food comes from
- Pairs local producers with local restaurants

<https://handstotable.ca/>



**What OFA tools and resources are available to you?**

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

- Highlights key agricultural issues taking place at the municipal/local level.
- The latest iteration (August 2022) includes revisions and some new topics:
  - On-farm diversified uses
  - Cost of Community Services studies
  - Farm worker housing
  - Natural Heritage System
  - Tree by-laws
- Outlines the issues for farmers, how you can help, and resources to learn more.
- It can be downloaded at [ofa.on.ca/GrowAg](https://ofa.on.ca/GrowAg)

## GrowAg Page on OFA's Website

- For municipal staff and councils and local organizations.
- Has the ability to initiate dialogue and inform policy development by providing clear, concise solutions instead of focusing on the barriers.
- It can be downloaded at [ofa.on.ca/GrowAg](https://ofa.on.ca/GrowAg)
- Examples

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.

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.

**The agriculture sector – from our farmers to our diverse food processing industry – is an economic powerhouse for the Ontario economy.**

**To keep this sector profitable and productive, we need strong, vibrant rural communities, with the infrastructure to support them.**