



# Agriculture Research Paper

## County of Elgin

June 2011

*Final draft*



# Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1	Purpose, Objectives and Structure of Research Papers .....	2
2.0	LEGISLATION AND POLICIES .....	3
2.1	Planning Act .....	3
2.2	Provincial Policy Statement.....	4
2.2.1	How Local Official Plans Apply Agricultural Policies .....	8
2.2.2	Secondary Uses, Agriculture-related Uses and Consents .....	8
2.3	Nutrient Management Act.....	9
2.4	Minimum Distance Separation Formulae .....	9
2.5	A Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas.....	10
2.5.1	Lot Creation for Agriculture-related Uses .....	10
2.5.2	Lot Creation for Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation.....	11
3.0	BENEFITS OF AGRICULTURE.....	12
3.1	Economic & Employment Benefits .....	12
3.2	Environmental Benefits.....	12
3.3	Social Benefits .....	12
4.0	AGRICULTURAL DATA & SEVERANCE ACTIVITY .....	14
5.0	BACKGROUND STUDIES .....	18
5.1	Elgin County Agricultural Sector Assessment Study .....	18
5.2	County of Elgin Agriculture & Agri-business Sector Profile - Final Report....	19
5.3	Elgin County Local Food Study .....	22
5.4	Niagara Region - Review of Land Use Policy and Related Implementation Measures Regarding Agricultural Value Added Activities - Summary Report & Recommendations.....	24
5.5	Southwold Resources Background Report.....	27
5.6	Broader Public Sector Investment Fund.....	28
6.0	ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD DECISIONS.....	30
6.1	Township of North Stormont - August 2008 .....	30
6.2	Norfolk County and City of Nanticoke- September 2009 .....	30
6.3	County of Prince Edward - January 2010 .....	31
7.0	PUBLIC CONSULTATION.....	34
7.1	County Tour .....	34
7.2	Technical & Steering Committee Meetings.....	34
7.3	Public Focus Group.....	35
8.0	KEY AGRICULTURAL & RURAL PLANNING ISSUES.....	36
8.1	Protection of Prime Agricultural Lands & the Agricultural Sector .....	36
8.2	Lot Creation .....	36

8.3	Economic Development in the Rural Area .....	37
8.4	Green Initiatives in the Rural Area .....	37
8.5	Consideration Of Non-Agricultural Uses In The Rural Area.....	38
8.6	Local Food & The 100-mile Diet.....	40

DRAFT

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

North America was established through agriculture and while there have been significant changes, agriculture still remains important to Ontario's economy and population. Until the 1900's, Canada's population was predominantly farm-based. In the early to mid-1900's, there was a dramatic population shift to urban areas and by the 1980's, the segment of Ontario's farm-based/rural population fell below 20 percent. And in more recent years, the agricultural industry has changed including the use of technological efficiencies, the decreasing need for farm labour, the 'corporatization' of farming, and trends such as the increased consumer demand for organically grown food or opportunities for green-energy industries in rural areas.

Elgin County has embarked on a program to develop the County's first ever Official Plan, a policy document that sets out long-term goals and objectives for how a community wishes to grow and develop. This long-range document will be based on a planning horizon for the next 20 years and address matters of County importance while acknowledging local planning authority and the need to provide a balanced approach to planning in the County. Elgin County consists of seven local municipalities:

- Town of Aylmer
- Municipality of Bayham
- Municipality of Central Elgin
- Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich
- Township of Malahide
- Municipality of Southwold
- Municipality of West Elgin

The City of St. Thomas is geographically located in Elgin County but is a separated City. The County has committed to ongoing discussions and exchange of ideas with the City throughout the Official Plan process.

The main purpose of an Official Plan at the County level is to provide general direction and guidance on a broad basis by establishing an upper tier policy framework that:

- provides guidance to the local municipalities in the preparation of local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws
- facilitates coordination and cooperation amongst the local municipalities and the County on planning and development issues that transcend municipal boundaries

Once the County Official Plan is approved, which is expected in 2012, Elgin County will become the approval authority for local Official Plans, Subdivision and Condominium Plans. This responsibility will be delegated to the County from the Province of Ontario. Having such approval powers at the County level will expedite the approval process and bring decision-making closer to the local municipal partners.

## 1.1 Purpose, Objectives and Structure of Research Papers

Research Papers have been prepared to summarize relevant policy and legislation, background information and findings through consultation to inform the County OP process. The 6 Research Reports are as follows:

1. Population, Employment, Housing & Development Activity
2. Economic Development & Tourism
3. Transportation, Servicing & Waste Management
4. Cultural Heritage and Urban & Rural Design
5. Agriculture
6. Natural & Human Made Hazards  
Source Water Protection & Groundwater  
Natural Heritage  
Mineral Aggregates & Petroleum Resources

The purpose of this Research Paper is to identify and summarize relevant policy and legislation, identify the benefits of agriculture, provide an overview of the state of agriculture in the County, detail relevant background studies and reports, summarize discussions and input from public consultation to date, and identify key agriculture and rural issues.

## 2.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

### 2.1 Planning Act

Section 1.1 of the Planning Act sets out the purposes of the Act as follows:

- a) to promote sustainable economic development in a healthy, natural environment;
- b) to provide for a land use planning system lead by Provincial policy;
- c) to integrate matters of Provincial interest in Provincial and municipal planning decisions;
- d) to provide for planning processes that are fair by making them open, accessible, timely and efficient;
- e) to encourage cooperation and coordination among various interests; and,
- f) to recognize the decision making authority and accountability of municipal Council's in planning.

The Planning Act requires that the Council of a municipality shall have regard to matters of Provincial interest, including the:

- protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions
- protection of the agricultural resources of the Province
- conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base
- conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest
- supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water
- adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems
- minimization of waste
- orderly development of safe and healthy communities
- accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies
- adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities
- adequate provision of a full range of housing
- adequate provision of employment opportunities

- protection of financial and economic well being of the Province and its municipalities
- coordination of planning activities of public bodies
- resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private interests
- protection of public health and safety
- appropriate location of growth and development
- promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians

On October 19, 2006, Bill 51, the Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act received Royal Assent from the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Bill 51 is a continuation of, and complementary to earlier planning framework reforms that include the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), Places to Grow Act and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and Greenbelt Act. Most of the amendments to the Planning Act by Bill 51 came into effect on January 1, 2007 and provide additional implementation tools to municipalities, modify components of the planning process, and provide additional support for sustainable development and brownfield development.

## 2.2 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 (PPS) issued under the authority of Section 3 of the Planning Act, provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS recognizes that the long-term prosperity of the Province depends on the protection of the natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral, cultural and archaeological resources. To further this goal, the PPS sets out policy direction for the protection of:

- Prime agricultural lands, with specialty crop areas given the highest priority for protection;
- Natural heritage features, including significant habitat of endangered and threatened species, significant wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, wildlife habitat and areas of natural and scientific interest;
- Water quality and quantity;
- Mineral aggregate resources; and,
- Significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.

The PPS further encourages municipalities to focus growth in settlement areas away from significant or sensitive resources and areas, which may pose a risk to public health and safety. The PPS requires Official Plans to “be consistent with” the policy statement, a higher order of compliance than the previous PPS language required.

The following chart provides a summary of relevant PPS agriculture and rural policies to be considered in preparing the County Official Plan.

<b>1.1</b>	<b>Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient Development and Land Use Patterns</b>
<b>1.1.1</b>	<p>Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) promoting efficient development and land use patterns which sustain the financial well-being of the Province and municipalities over the long term;</li> <li>b) avoiding development and land use patterns that would prevent the efficient expansion of settlement areas in those areas which are adjacent or close to settlement areas;</li> </ul>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Coordination</b>
<b>1.2.1</b>	<p>A coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach should be used when dealing with planning matters within municipalities, or which cross lower, single and/or upper-tier municipal boundaries, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) managing and/or promoting growth and development;</li> <li>b) managing natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral, and cultural heritage and archaeological resources;</li> </ul>
<b>1.2.2</b>	<p>Where planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality, the upper-tier municipality in consultation with lower-tier municipalities shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) identify, coordinate and allocate population, housing and employment projections for lower-tier municipalities. Allocations and projections by upper-tier municipalities shall be based on and reflect provincial plans where these exist;</li> <li>b) identify areas where growth will be directed, including the identification of nodes and the corridors linking these nodes;</li> <li>c) identify targets for intensification and redevelopment within all or any of the lower-tier municipalities, including minimum targets that should be met before expansion of the boundaries of settlement areas is permitted in accordance with policy 1.1.3.9;</li> <li>d) where transit corridors exist or are to be developed, identify density targets for areas adjacent or in proximity to these corridors, including minimum targets that should be met before expansion of the boundaries of settlement areas is permitted in accordance with policy 1.1.3.9; and</li> <li>e) identify and provide policy direction for the lower-tier municipalities on matters that cross municipal boundaries.</li> </ul>
<b>1.7</b>	<b>Long-Term Economic Prosperity</b>
<b>1.7.1</b>	<p>Long term economic prosperity should be supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) optimizing the long-term availability and use of land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities;</li> <li>b) maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets;</li> <li>c) promoting the redevelopment of brownfield sites;</li> <li>d) providing for an efficient, cost-effective, reliable multi-modal transportation system that is integrated with adjacent systems and those of other jurisdictions, and is appropriate to address projected needs;</li> <li>e) planning so that major facilities (such as airports, transportation/transit/rail infrastructure and corridors, intermodal facilities, sewage treatment facilities, waste management systems, oil and gas pipelines, industries and resource extraction activities) and sensitive land uses are appropriately designed, buffered and/or separated from each other to prevent adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants, and minimize risk to public health and safety;</li> <li>f) providing opportunities for sustainable tourism development;</li> <li>g) promoting the sustainability of the agri-food sector by promoting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts; and</li> <li>h) providing opportunities for increased energy generation, supply and conservation, including alternative energy systems and renewable energy systems.</li> </ul>
<b>1.8</b>	<b>Energy and Air Quality</b>
<b>1.8.3</b>	<p>Alternative energy systems and renewable energy systems shall be permitted in settlement areas, rural areas and prime agricultural areas in accordance with provincial and federal requirements. In rural areas and prime agricultural areas, these systems should be designed and constructed to minimize impacts on agricultural operations.</p>

<b>2.1</b>	<b>Natural Heritage</b>
2.1.7	Nothing in policy 2.1 is intended to limit the ability of existing agricultural uses to continue.
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>
2.3.1	Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture. Prime agricultural areas are areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Specialty crop areas shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Classes 1, 2 and 3 soils, in this order of priority.
2.3.2	Planning authorities shall designate specialty crop areas in accordance with evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time.
<b>2.3.3</b>	<b>Permitted Uses</b>
2.3.3.1	In prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities are: agricultural uses, secondary uses and agriculture-related uses. Proposed new secondary uses and agriculture related uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. These uses shall be limited in scale, and criteria for these uses shall be included in municipal planning documents as recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective.
2.3.3.2	In prime agricultural areas, all types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.
2.3.3.3	New land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae
<b>2.3.4</b>	<b>Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments</b>
2.3.4.1	Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) agricultural uses, provided that the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations;</li> <li>b) agriculture-related uses, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;</li> <li>c) a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, provided that the planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective; and</li> <li>d) infrastructure, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or right-of-ways.</li> </ul>
2.3.4.2	Lot adjustments in prime agricultural areas may be permitted for legal or technical reasons
2.3.4.3	The creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas shall not be permitted, except in accordance with policy 2.3.4.1(c )
<b>2.3.5</b>	<b>Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas</b>
2.3.5.1	Planning authorities may only exclude land from prime agricultural areas for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) expansions of or identification of settlement areas in accordance with policy 1.1.3.9;</li> <li>b) extraction of mineral, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources in accordance with policies 2.4 and 2.5; and</li> <li>c) limited non-residential uses, provided that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the land does not comprise a specialty crop area;</li> <li>2. there is a demonstrated need within the planning horizon provided for in policy 1.1.2 for additional land to be designated to accommodate the proposed use;</li> <li>3. there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas; and</li> <li>4. there are no reasonable alternative locations in prime agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

2.3.5.2	Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on surrounding agricultural operations and lands should be mitigated to the extent feasible.
2.4.4	<b>Extraction in Prime Agricultural Areas</b>
2.4.4.1	Extraction of minerals and petroleum resources is permitted in prime agricultural areas, provided that the site is rehabilitated.
2.5.4	<b>Extraction in Prime Agricultural Areas</b>
2.5.4.1	In prime agricultural areas, on prime agricultural land, extraction of mineral aggregate resources is permitted as an interim use provided that rehabilitation of the site will be carried out so that substantially the same areas and same average soil quality for agriculture are restored.
	On these prime agricultural lands, complete agricultural rehabilitation is not required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) there is a substantial quantity of mineral aggregate resources below the water table warranting extraction, or the depth of planned extraction in a quarry makes restoration of preextraction agricultural capability unfeasible;</li> <li>b) other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unsuitable. The consideration of other alternatives shall include resources in areas of Canada Land Inventory Class 4 to 7 soils, resources on lands identified as designated growth areas, and resources on prime agricultural lands where rehabilitation is feasible. Where no other alternatives are found, prime agricultural lands shall be protected in this order of priority: specialty crop areas, Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2 and 3; and</li> <li>c) agricultural rehabilitation in remaining areas is maximized.</li> </ul>
2.5.5	<b>Wayside Pits and Quarries, Portable Asphalt Plants and Portable Concrete Plants</b>
2.5.5.1	Wayside pits and quarries, portable asphalt plants and portable concrete plants used on public authority contracts shall be permitted, without the need for an official plan amendment, rezoning, or development permit under the Planning Act in all areas, except those areas of existing development or particular environmental sensitivity which have been determined to be incapable with extraction and associated activities.

Section 2.3.1 of the PPS states that “prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture”. The PPS defines “Prime Agricultural Area” as:

“Areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes: areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4-7 soils; and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of on-going agricultural. Prime Agricultural Areas may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using a valuation procedures established by the Province as amended from time to time or may also be identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province”.

The PPS defines “Prime Agricultural Land” as “land that includes specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2 and 3 soils, in this order of priority for protection”. The CLI is the primary system for assessing the quality and capability of agricultural land and consists of 7 classes of agricultural land:

- Classes 1 to 3 are considered prime agricultural land;
- Class 4 land is considered marginal for field crops; and,

- Classes 5 to 7 lands are considered capable for limited uses and production such as pasture and hay production.

**Figure 1** shows the prime agricultural lands in the County based on the CLI data provided by the Province. Approximately 89 percent of the County is considered prime agricultural lands.

It is important to note that the PPS does not simply require the protection of “prime agricultural land”; it requires the protection of “prime agricultural areas”. Therefore, in designating agricultural lands for protection in the Official Plan, the County must consider the definition of “prime agricultural area” which includes prime agricultural lands and associated CLI Class 4 - 7 soils and areas where there are local concentrations of active farms.

The PPS identifies the following uses and activities permitted in prime agricultural areas: agricultural uses, secondary uses and agriculture-related uses. The PPS defines agricultural uses as the growing of crops, including nursery and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment.

### **2.2.1 How Local Official Plans Apply Agricultural Policies**

A review of the proposed Official Plans (OP) in the 6 agricultural municipalities in Elgin County (Town of Aylmer excluded) reveals the following for non-urban uses:

- The proposed new Bayham OP only includes an “Agriculture” designation that applies to prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas. A “Rural” designation is not proposed.
- The proposed new Southwold, West Elgin, Malahide and Dutton-Dunwich OP’s only includes an “Agriculture” designation that applies to prime agricultural areas. Neither a “Special Agriculture” or “Rural” designation is proposed in either Plan.
- The proposed new Central Elgin OP applies an “Agricultural” designation to the vast majority of the municipality, but also applies a “Rural Development” designation to recognize existing small clusters of non-farm residential in the rural area.

### **2.2.2 Secondary Uses, Agriculture-related Uses and Consents**

The PPS does permit secondary uses and agriculture-related uses in prime agricultural areas. Secondary uses are defined in the PPS as “uses secondary to the principal use of the property, including but not limited to, home occupations, home industries, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products from the farm operation on the property”. Agriculture-related uses are defined as “those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are small scale and directly related to the farm operation and are required in close proximity to the farm operation”.

FIGURE 1



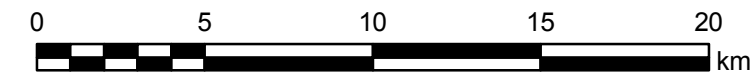
Data Source:  
 Data provided by the Ministry  
 of Natural Resources Land  
 Information Ontario.  
 Copyright Queen's Printer  
 of Ontario, 2010. CLI data  
 from OMAFRA.

**County of Elgin  
 CLI Classification**

**Legend**

**CLI Classification**

 Prime Agricultural Lands



Earlier versions of Provincial land use policies allowed for consents for farm retirement lots, residential infill and residential lots for full-time farm help. However, the PPS now explicitly prohibits the creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas with the exception of creating lots for a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of a farm consolidation. Lot creation and other PPS policies are discussed in more detail in Section 2.5 of this Paper.

### **2.3 Nutrient Management Act**

The purpose of the Nutrient Management Act (NMA), 2002 is to “provide for the management of materials containing nutrients in ways that will enhance protection of the natural environment and provide a sustainable future for agricultural operations and rural development”. A Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) details how nutrients received are managed and applied on land. Details respecting types of nutrients used, application rates and methods, cropping practices, etc. are required as part of a NMP. A Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS), approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, is required in conjunction with building permits for the construction of farm animal buildings or manure storage facilities. A NMS is also required for earthen manure storages not requiring a building permit. The purpose of the NMS is to provide details respecting the generation, storage and discharge relating to manure-related facilities. Official Plan’s, at both the local and County level, typically contain policies requiring compliance with the NMA and applicable regulations.

### **2.4 Minimum Distance Separation Formulae**

As required by the PPS and other upper tier policy documents, new land uses, the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock barn facilities must comply with the Provincial Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formulae. The Province established MDS to protect the ongoing viability of agricultural operations, the ability of these operations to expand and to minimize conflicts with other land uses. Through established formulae, MDS determines appropriate separation distances between agricultural operations, in particular livestock and manure storage facilities, and other land uses. The MDS formulae provides two types of calculations:

- MDS I is a calculated setback that applies to new non-agricultural development, including the creations of new lots.
- MDS II is a calculated setback that applies to new or expanding livestock facilities and manure storages from adjacent approved and existing non-agricultural uses, lot lines and road allowances.

The MDS criteria and formulas were updated in January 2007 to clarify implementation guidelines, ensure livestock uses and non-farm development are treated equally, and require Ministry reviews of MDS every five years. Policies should be included in the Official Plan to ensure adherence with MDS requirements and implementation through local municipal Zoning By-laws, and the review of planning applications and building permits.

## **2.5 A Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas**

The Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas was prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and is intended to summarize “complex matters and reflects legislation, policies and practices that are subject to change”. The Guide notes, however, that reference should be made to applicable legislation and policy documents when making decisions related to land use planning matters.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) allows for lot creation in prime agricultural areas for agricultural uses provided the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural uses common in the area and are sufficiently large enough to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations. Agricultural uses vary across the Province because Ontario has many different landscapes, soils and climates. The Guide notes the importance of creating and maintaining farm parcels that are large enough to provide farmers with the flexibility to expand or change their type of operation as the economy and markets change.

While agricultural uses vary across the Province, farms also come in many sizes and intensities. For example, livestock and row crop production often require larger farm parcels, while tender fruit farms can often be accommodated on smaller farm parcels. The key is that lot sizes must be of a sufficient size to allow the farm to continue to operate, and to expand in the future.

The Guide recommends that planning authorities establish an appropriate minimum farm parcel size in Official Plans to allow planning authorities to evaluate “farm splits” more effectively and consistently and ensures that the PPS policies are applied to both the newly created lot and the retained parcel. For most of Ontario, 40 hectares is the recommended minimum parcel size. The Guide suggests that a smaller minimum lot size may be more appropriate in areas where tender fruits and/or similar specialty crops are grown and are the common agricultural use in the area. For example, a 16 hectare minimum farm parcel size is used for specialty crop areas in the Greenbelt.

### **2.5.1 Lot Creation for Agriculture-related Uses**

The PPS allows planning authorities to permit the creation on new lots for agriculture-related uses provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the uses and appropriate sewage and water services. The agriculture-related uses must also be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. The Guide discusses the 6 items to be addressed, as set out in the PPS, before a planning authority can grant a severance. Agriculture-related uses must:

1. Be small in scale - consider the proposed use, the type and size of agricultural operation it is related to, and relation of the proposed development to the surrounding area.
2. Be directly related to the farm operation - the use is essential to the operation of the farm and its ability to function. Must be associated with the type of farm operation (e.g. a winery is not related to a dairy farm). Uses must be

- related to a single agricultural operation rather than serving the general farming community.
3. Be required in close proximity to the farm operation - a proposed use is considered to be in 'close proximity' if moving the use to a location further away would significantly impair the efficiency or overall productivity of the farm operation.
  4. Be compatible with surrounding agricultural operations and not hinder them - must meet MDS requirements and must not restrict or impact normal farm practices for surrounding farms.
  5. Lots must be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services - planning authority should set minimum lot sizes in local planning documents.
  6. If full municipal services are not provided, confirmation there is sufficient reserve sewage system capacity to treat septage generated from the new lot.

### **2.5.2 Lot Creation for Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation**

The PPS permits lot creation for a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of a farm consolidation provided that the planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel or farm land created by the severances. The Guide highlights four grounds or sets of questions in the PPS that must be addressed before a planning authority can grant a severance for a surplus residents:

1. Is an agricultural operation present?
2. Has there been a farm consolidation? Planning authorities are encouraged to develop more detailed provisions in land use planning documents to clarify and determine when a farm consolidation has occurred. Will the agricultural activities on the acquired land be part of the farmer's broader agricultural operation? Is there a set time limit on applying for a severance after the consolidation? Did the dwelling exist before the new farm parcel was acquired?
3. Is the residence to be severed surplus to the needs of the farm operation as a result of a consolidation? Will the farm operation need the surplus residence in the future? Could it be used for housing for farm help or for a second family involved in the farm operation? Is the farm operation retaining at least one principle farm residence? Is the dwelling inhabitable?
4. How will the planning authority prohibit the construction of a dwelling on the remnant parcel? The Province recommends rezoning the remnant lot for agricultural purposes only as a condition of approval.

The Guide recommend considering two factors in determining the appropriate size of a lot for a surplus dwelling: the location of the existing dwelling on the property and the siting of an appropriate sewage and water system.

Section 2.3.4.1(d) of the PPS also permits lot creation in prime agricultural areas for infrastructure, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or right-of-ways.

### **3.0 BENEFITS OF AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is a key part of Ontario's economy, environment and heritage and as such, provides many direct and indirect benefits to society.

#### **3.1 Economic & Employment Benefits**

The economic benefits of agriculture can be measured in terms of gross farm receipts. According to the Census of Agriculture (2006), Elgin County had gross receipts of \$311,175,680 and land in crops of 130,497 hectares. This equates to \$2385 per hectare in the County.

The agricultural industry provides a considerable number of jobs to the agricultural community as well as urban residents through indirect and induced job creation. The majority of the agricultural community is self-employed, as farmers. However, there are also a large number of operations that require additional labour, either on a full time or seasonal basis. These labourers are a direct economic benefit of the agricultural industry. Indirectly, the agricultural industry supports a number of jobs created by agriculturally related businesses. There are also a number of induced jobs that are supported by the expenditures of those employed in the agricultural or agriculturally related sectors.

#### **3.2 Environmental Benefits**

There are several environmental benefits to preserving agricultural lands. Agricultural lands are extremely important to wildlife, providing large tracts of open space, corridor areas along hedgerows, wind blocks and forested areas, as well as providing a source of food for grazing wildlife and meadow-like habitat.

The agricultural use of lands also has a significant effect on air quality. Crops, like all green plants, convert carbon dioxide to oxygen. There are some concerns with nutrient loading, pesticides, commercial fertilizers, mineral and element deposits, erosion, and surface water and ground water contamination resulting from agriculture use. However, biosolids, which are a source of mineral and organic nitrogens, phosphorus and potassium, micronutrients (zinc, magnesium, copper) and trace amounts of other elements, also contribute organic matter, aid in moisture retention, permeability, structure and add nutrients to the soil. Biosolids can offset the need for commercial fertilizers, thereby providing a cost effective means of fertilizing lands not associated with a livestock operation. In addition, as waste water and sewage sludge can be spread on agricultural lands, the demand for new landfills can be reduced.

#### **3.3 Social Benefits**

The choice to live in or near rural areas stems, in part, from the lifestyle choices and quality of life offered. Agricultural communities are a desirable place to live due to the open space, and the common sense of community. These factors, along with other health benefits, also provide an attractive 'get-a-way' for urban dwellers. Urban residents see agricultural areas as an experience, both entertaining and educational.

Agri-tourism operations such as pick-your-own farms, farm markets and hay rides have become very popular. In addition, the close proximity and relationship between urban and rural areas provides a 'connection' between the important produce farmers provide and what we see on our plate.

DRAFT

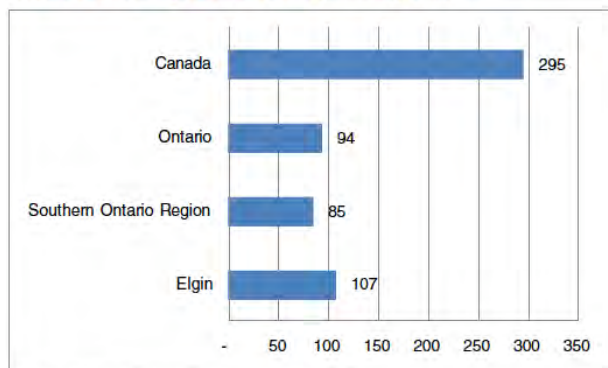
#### 4.0 AGRICULTURAL DATA & SEVERANCE ACTIVITY

The following provides an overview of 2006 Statistics Canada data from OMAFRA and as provided for and summarized in the County's Agriculture & Agri-business Sector Profile, which is also discussed in more detail in Section 5.0 of this Paper.

##### Average Farm Area

The average farm area in Elgin County is 107 hectares which compares to 94 hectares for all of Ontario and 85 hectares in Southern Ontario.

Figure 10 – Average Area of Farms (hectares), 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006

##### Farms Classified by Industry

Figure 11 from the County's Agriculture & Agri-business Sector Profile shows that oilseed and grain farming constitutes the largest portion of farming in the County at 43.7% or 650 of the 1489 farms in Elgin. This does not differ much to the proportion of oilseed and grain farming in Southern Ontario, but clearly demonstrates the strength of this farming sector in Elgin County and Southern Ontario compared to the rest of the Province and Canada. It is also interesting to note the significant percentage of vegetable and melon farming (6.6%) in Elgin relative to other areas.

Figure 11 – Farms classified by Industry (North American Industry Classification System), Census of Agriculture: 2006

	Elgin		Southern Ontario Region		Ontario		Canada	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Total farms</b>	1,489	100	18,665	100	57,211	100	229,373	100
Oilseed and grain farming	650	43.7%	7,691	41.2%	13,056	22.8%	61,667	26.9%
Cattle ranching and farming	197	13.2%	2,270	12.2%	15,989	27.9%	75,598	33.0%
Other animal production	173	11.6%	1,689	9.0%	7,573	13.2%	26,779	11.7%
Other crop farming	158	10.6%	1,854	9.9%	8,823	15.4%	28,574	12.5%
Vegetable and melon farming	99	6.6%	903	4.8%	1,769	3.1%	5,239	2.3%
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture	52	3.5%	1,244	6.7%	2,822	4.9%	8,754	3.8%
Hog and pig farming	49	3.3%	823	4.4%	2,222	3.9%	6,040	2.6%
Fruit and tree-nut farming	47	3.2%	1,225	6.6%	1,892	3.3%	8,329	3.6%
Poultry and egg production	41	2.8%	677	3.6%	1,700	3.0%	4,578	2.0%
Sheep and goat farming	23	1.5%	289	1.5%	1,365	2.4%	3,815	1.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006

## Farm Size

From 1991 to 1996, there was an increase in the number of farms in Elgin. However, between 1996 and 2006, there was a 17.6% decrease in the number of farms in Elgin, which is significant and likely the result of farm consolidations.

Number of Census Farms by County, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006

[| return to index |](#)

Counties & Districts	1991	1996	2001	2006
Brant	1,010	984	817	818
Chatham-Kent	2,822	2,690	2,352	2,196
Elgin	1,764	1,808	1,608	1,489
Essex	2,215	2,109	1,789	1,740
Haldimand-Norfolk	3,066	2,985	2,602	2,415
Hamilton	1,225	1,228	1,026	975
Lambton	2,682	2,622	2,427	2,281
Middlesex	3,162	2,987	2,640	2,525
Niagara	2,706	2,672	2,266	2,236
Oxford	2,382	2,342	2,104	1,990
<b>Southern Ontario</b>	<b>23,034</b>	<b>22,427</b>	<b>19,631</b>	<b>18,665</b>

## Agricultural Profile

Figure 17 provides a summary of the profile of farm operators in Elgin County relative to Southern Ontario, all of Ontario and Canada. Across Canada and in Elgin County, at the time of the Census, the average age of farm operators was in the

Figure 17 – Agricultural Profile, Census of Agriculture: 2006

	Elgin	Southern Ontario Region	Ontario	Canada
<b>Farm and farm operator statistics</b>				
Total population in 2006	49,241	2,405,526	12,160,282	31,511,587
Total number of operators	2,215	26,970	82,410	327,060
<b>Average age of operators</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>53.1</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>52.0</b>
Total male operators	1,580	19,470	58,875	236,220
Total female operators	640	7,490	23,530	90,840
<b>Total number of farms</b>	<b>1,489</b>	<b>18,665</b>	<b>57,211</b>	<b>229,373</b>
Land area (km <sup>2</sup> )	1,881	21,520	907,574	5,469,898
<b>Total area of farms (hectares)</b>	<b>159,282</b>	<b>1,592,343</b>	<b>5,386,453</b>	<b>67,586,739</b>
Average area of farms (hectares)	107	85	94	295

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006

early 50's. Figure 18 reveals that Elgin only had 7.6% of farm operators under 35 years of age. While this is relatively consistent with other parts of the Province and across the country, it does show that there are relatively few young people in agriculture.

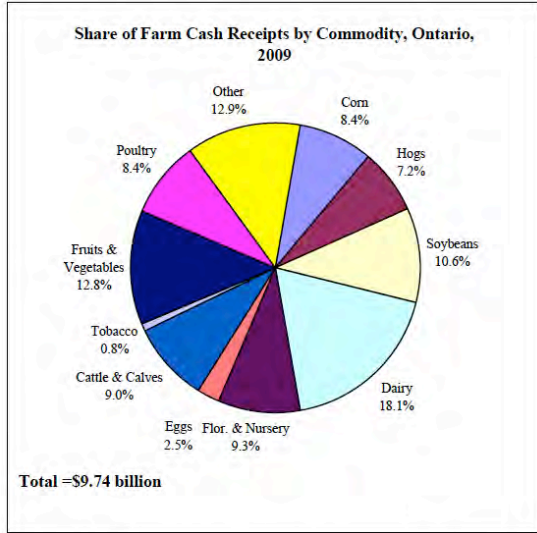
Figure 18 – Characteristics of Farm Operators, Census of Agriculture: 2006

	Elgin		Southern Ontario Region		Ontario		Canada	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,215</b>		<b>26,970</b>		<b>82,410</b>		<b>327,060</b>	
<b>Sex</b>								
Male	1,580	71.3%	19,470	72.2%	58,875	71.4%	236,220	72.2%
Female	640	28.9%	7,490	27.8%	23,530	28.6%	90,840	27.8%
<b>Age</b>								
Under 35 years	170	7.6%	2,075	7.7%	7,070	8.6%	29,920	9.1%
35 to 54 years	1,095	49.1%	13,285	49.2%	40,280	48.9%	164,160	50.2%
55 years and over	965	43.3%	11,615	43.1%	35,065	42.5%	132,975	40.7%
<b>Average age of operators</b>	<b>53.1</b>		<b>53.1</b>		<b>52.6</b>		<b>52.0</b>	

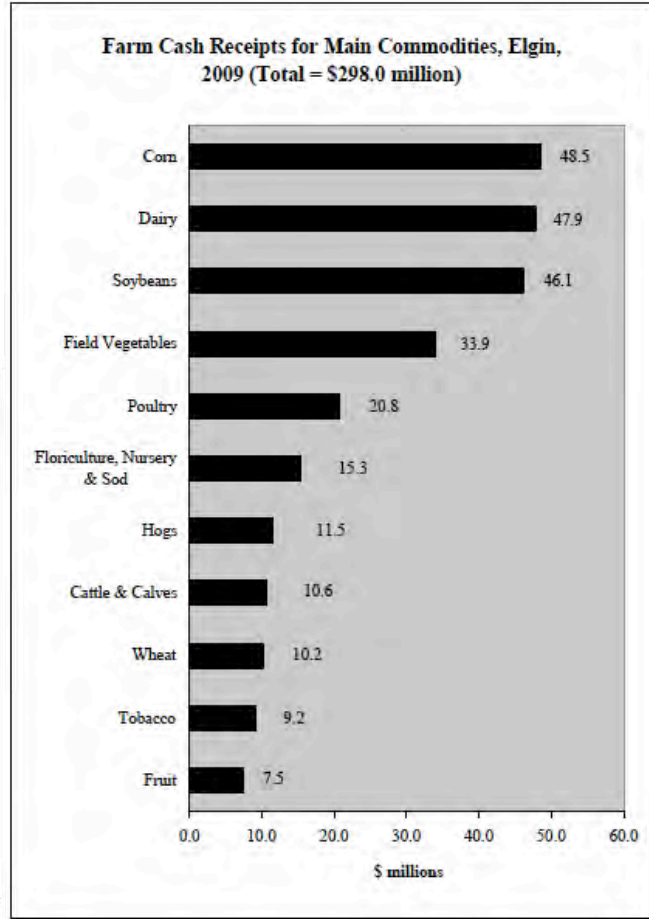
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006

## Farm Cash Receipts

For all of Ontario in 2009, dairy had the largest share of farm cash receipts at 18.1%, while corn was 8.4%. In 2009, the total farm cash receipts for main commodities in Elgin County was \$289 million with corn, dairy and soybeans at the top totaling \$142.5 million or 49% of all cash receipts.



x Suppressed data  
Sources: 2006 Census of Agriculture and Strategic Policy Branch, OMAFRA Dec-10



## Severance Activity - granted conditionally

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Aylmer	6	6	5	4	2
Bayham	35	23	18	16	24
Central Elgin	18	22	17	14	18
Dutton Dunwich	15	8	14	10	11
Malahide	44	23	33	28	15
Southwold	5	11	14	7	8
West Elgin	4	7	6	7	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>89</b>

\*records based on November to October (e.g. 2009 based on Nov/1/08 to Oct/31/09)

The chart above shows that, generally, the number of severances granted has gradually decreased between 2005 and 2009. This trend was evident in Bayham except for a spike in 2009. Severance activity has generally been consistent year to year for Central Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich and Southwold. West Elgin has experienced gradual increases in severance activity over this period. Malahide has seen a significant decrease in severances granted with 44 in 2005 and 15 in 2009 (a 66% decrease).

DRAFT

## **5.0 BACKGROUND STUDIES**

### **5.1 Elgin County Agricultural Sector Assessment Study**

The Elgin County Agricultural Sector Assessment Study was prepared by Harry Cummings and Associates in October 2000 and was intended to assess the role of the agricultural sector in the economy of the County. A total of four reports were completed as part of this Study. Prepared were three individual reports for each of Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford Counties, and a report for the three Counties combined into a single study area. The research in the report relied upon data from population and agricultural census data collected in 1996, and employment and sales data collected in 1999.

At the time of this Study much slower growth and in some cases negative growth were evident in rural settlement areas including Aldborough, South Dorchester and Yarmouth. The Study notes that agriculture remained an important sector for the period of 1991 to 1996 as it was the fourth largest employer in the County, although there was a loss in the agricultural sector of 8.2% (or 375 jobs) for the same period. It is noted in the Study that this decline was “greater than the overall 6.3% decline in agricultural jobs throughout the Province over the same time period.”

The Elgin County Agricultural Sector Assessment Study concluded in 2000 that “almost 84% of the land area in Elgin County that is classified under the CLI is suitable for sustained production of common field crops”. “Crop heat units (CHU) provide an indexing system to assist farmers to select the most suitable hybrids and varieties for their area” and are based on the total accumulated CHUs for the frost-free growing season for areas in the Province. “Daily CHU are calculated from daily minimum and maximum air temperatures drawn from separate calculations taken during the day and night”. The Study indicated that Elgin County’s CHU ranges from approximately 2900-3100 to 3,100 - 3,300 in the south-wet portion of the County.

The Study also examined trends in farm sizes in the Study Area as follows:

#### **a) Defining Farm Size**

Farmers who were consulted as part of the Study indicated that it was difficult or inappropriate to characterize farm sizes using small, medium or large as it is not sufficient to generally define livestock operations and therefore a type of animal unit measurement would be more appropriate. However, the farmers did indicate that acreage is probably an appropriate measure for the size of crop farms.

#### **b) Consolidation into Larger Farms and Corporate Ownership**

Farms in Ontario are becoming fewer and larger, however the surveyed farmers indicated that the change was necessary to remain competitive through economies of scale and new technologies. Farmers in the focus groups also indicated that there has

been an overall impact on the farming industry due to the proliferation of small hobby farms and the amount of severances in the rural areas.

c) Decreasing Public Profile

The farmers in the focus group noted that, in their opinion, society has gradually become less knowledgeable and separated from the farming community. The farmers also indicated that it is becoming more difficult and less attractive for children of farmers to carry-on the farming business.

d) Availability of Qualified Labour

Most farmers in the focus group agreed that, as of 2000, that while there was an adequate supply of labour available, it was difficult to maintain 'quality' labour.

e) Training

Farmers indicated that farm-workers "require a diversity of on-farm skills, and preferred to hire people with previous farming experience". Focus group members indicated that they had concern with the value of certification programs (i.e. narrow in scope and having little practical impact), the lack of rural/agricultural components in school programs.

f) Trends in Agriculture-related Businesses

Farmers in the focus group indicated that agricultural-related business "were increasingly fewer, bigger and located further away". The farmers indicated that "many of the co-operatives and farm equipment dealers have either closed or have been consumed by other companies". The focus group members also indicated that they had seen a number of other businesses and services consolidated or located elsewhere making it more inconvenient for farmers to use their services.

g) Issues with the Farm and Agricultural-related Business Relationship

Farmers indicated that there is less competition amongst agricultural-related businesses as smaller businesses are being "squeezed out", amalgamation of farm equipment dealers, etc.

## 5.2 County of Elgin Agriculture & Agri-business Sector Profile - Final Report

The County of Elgin Agriculture and Agri-Business Sector Profile, Final Report was released in July 2009 and was prepared by Millier Dickinson Blais. The report was prepared to explore new opportunities offered by the agriculture and the agri-business sector. The report was also prepared to gain an understanding of key trends that are transforming these sectors, understand the nature and scope of work conducted on existing farm operations, the County's key sector specific strength in agriculture and agri-business, and the existing infrastructure and assets that support the agriculture and agri-business sector in the County. The report suggests that "agri-business is a generic term that has traditionally referred to the various businesses involved in food

production, including farming and contract farming, seed supply, agri-chemicals, farm machinery, wholesale and distribution, processing, marketing and retail sales”. However, agri-business now refers to a wide range of uses and businesses including agricultural products for non-food uses, small scale production and food processing which serve local and near local markets (e.g. micro-breweries and wineries).

The report indicates that the rationale behind agri-tourism is two-fold. The necessity of farmers to supplement their incomes and increased demand from the general public for specialized vacation experiences. The report defines agri-tourism as “travel, which connects agriculture and rural settings with agricultural operations” and can include (fruit and vegetable stand shopping, winery, orchard, garden and alpaca tours, farm-based bed and breakfast accommodation and participation in harvest festivals, farmers markets and cattle drives).

The report summarizes a local and regional SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) that was conducted to examine Elgin’s ability to support business attraction and investment in the agricultural and agri-business sectors. Discussions were held with representatives of local industry, government ministries and agencies.

#### **Strengths**

- Good transportation connections - good connectivity to other parts of southern Ontario and the GTA via 400 series highways, rail, regional and international airports (London) and the potential for port usage.
- Strong and diverse agricultural community.
- “Eat Fresh, Buy Local Elgin”.
- Integrated grain process cooperative ethanol production facility - Canada’s first farmer and community owned ethanol production facility (Aylmer).
- International Plowing Match.
- Cross over opportunities with energy and environment sector.

#### **Weaknesses**

- One post-secondary institution - Fanshawe College, St. Thomas/Elgin campus established in the community decades ago. However, it does not provide programming specifically tied to the agricultural and agri-business sectors.
- No existing cluster of food processors.
- Lack of interaction between County farmers and consumers.
- Technological servicing constraints - lack of high-speed internet and fibre optic infrastructure.
- Farming community lacks marketing skills.
- Aging farming population - only 7.6% of Elgin’s farm operators are under the age of 35.

## Opportunities

- Build on success of traditional farming base.
- Attract entrepreneurial residents.
- Enhance support of entrepreneurs.
- Strong tourism industry.
- Emergence of agri-tourism.
- Emergence of bio-products industry.
- Organic farming opportunities.

## Threats

- Higher energy and agricultural commodity prices have affected the sector.
- Lack of alternative viable agricultural crops.
- Smaller farms dependent on non-farm income.

The report provided a number of recommendations and key messages including:

- Promote Elgin's proximity to highway infrastructure (other key factors to pursue in attracting new investment include availability and reliability of hard infrastructure such as water, natural gas, and telecommunications).
- Promote the quality and extent of broad band services throughout the County.
- Improve the level of integration between agri-tourism operators and experiences with more traditional forms of tourism (e.g. camping, beaches, festivals, etc.).

The report suggests that despite that significant growth in these sectors, there remains significant challenges including:

- Changing consumer demand both domestically and internationally
- Consumers who are demanding more variety, convenience, healthy food choices, combined with assurance on quality of food and safety.
- Wider societal concerns around the environment and animal welfare which are impacting demand for food.
- Importance of bio-fuels which represents an opportunity and a challenge for the sector (displacement of land used for food production).
- A dramatic increase in the greenhouse industry. Noticeable increase and fruit production (particularly blue berries and grapes - 5 percent between 2001 and 2006). In 2006, Ontario had over 126 million square feet of land covered by greenhouses.

Figure 8 – Area Under Greenhouse, Ontario, 2006

Item	1996	2001	2006	Difference 1996 to 2006	Percentage Change
Greenhouse area (thousand square feet)	63,303	98,374	126,590	63,287	100.0%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006

- Increase popularity of organic products. Ontario experienced a 46% increase in the number of certified organic farms between 2001 and 2006.
- Emergence of a global fast growing bio-economy. There are three specific target industries for bio-products: - chemicals, plastics and forestry. “Currently across the Province there are 10 public and private world-class research institutes working on advanced agri-food technologies”.
- Most widely grown field crops in Ontario are hay, soy beans, grain corn and winter wheat. Ontario produces 57.3% of corn in Canada.

### 5.3 Elgin County Local Food Study

The Elgin County Local Food Study for the Elgin Business Resource Centre by the University of Guelph in May 2010. The purpose of the Study was to explore the current state of the local food network within the Elgin County area by:

- Establishing and providing relevant and current data on local food in the County.
- Provide perceptions of local food.
- Aid in developing an effective local food strategy.

The Study included a literature review, a survey conducted within the County with 64 stakeholders, discussions with seven key informants to supplement survey data and to provide a better understanding of issues, and meetings with a focus group which consisted of 16 local food producers and consumers. The Study indicates there was a general consensus amongst stakeholders that the local food market was emerging and that there was potential for economic development. In addition, the Study showed that there is significant consumer interest in this type of approach as consumers are associating local foods with the environment, health and economic development. However, the two most commonly identified challenges to the development of a local food system were the lack of a supportive policy and the current inconsistency of local products to meet the demands of consumers.

It is noted in the Study that there are various definitions of a “local food system” but the Study references the “100-mile diet” which encourages restaurants and individuals to serve and consume only fresh foods available within a 100-mile radius. The Study engages in a discussion respecting the relationship between local food systems and the concept of sustainability and in particular the benefits of such a system from an economic and environmental perspective. A local food system can translate into benefits for local farmers

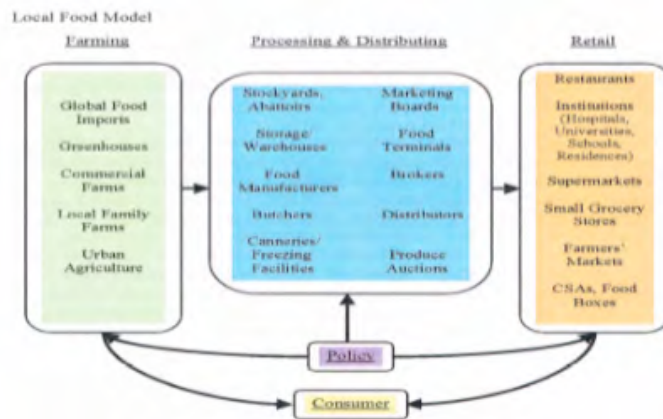


Figure 3. A Local Food Model. Adapted from Xuereb and Desjardins, 2005.

from an economic standpoint and from a broader environmental perspective, benefits include improved climate due to significantly reduce travel times, fossil fuel usage, etc. In addition to the economic and environmental benefits, the Study also cites the benefits of a local food system to communities. The benefit results from knowing where your food originates and creating a sense of community in supporting and working with local farmers. The Local Food Model shown above was adapted from XUEREB and Desjardins (2005) and demonstrates an example of a simple model of the various relationships that can exist in a local food system.

A survey conducted in preparing the Study revealed that:

- Farms are producing large quantities of grain but these products do not factor heavily in the local food network in the County.
- Regulations on meat, dairy and eggs have created barriers in getting small scale meat/dairy products into local markets. Demand for meat by consumers is high and a local market could exist if processing and quality assurance could be localised.
- The most developed local food relationships exist for fruits and vegetables.
- There is demand for many products year round and small local producers, in many cases, are ill-equipped to meet consumer demand. Greenhouses are not available in sufficient numbers to meet the off-season demand.

The Study suggests that to overcome challenges in the long-term, “a cohesive, focused, local food network may be an important starting place”. The Study also concludes that County level support has proven to be a valuable tool in moving local food strategies forward in other Regions. The Study presents six recommendations towards the goal of developing a strong local food system in the County.

1. Networks need to be strengthened to help engage the local community more effectively.
2. Strong, local and coordinated policy is needed to develop local food systems.
3. Further research needed to address the main concern of consumers which is the lack of consistent availability of products.
4. Institutional consumers are an excellent starting place for local food promotion efforts.
5. Household consumers need to be made aware of the wonderful food products local farmers grow each and every year.
6. Intermediaries such as local food terminals and local food markets are essential to bring the field to the fork.

The Study summarizes a number of interviews with key informants and some of the comments and findings from the interviews, relative to the new OP, is summarized below:

- There is significant interest in developing greenhouses for year round production however there is enormous competition from other country’s especially Mexico,

where labour is much cheaper and that consumers need to be educated and informed of the benefits of buying locally.

- From a land-use policy perspective, some municipalities restrict live-stock operations near urban areas. Communal (co-op) processing of products to serve multiple farms is often restricted by planning legislation as they are considered industrial uses.
- The Provincial Policy Statement allows for a wide range of agricultural uses and this should be promoted. Secondary uses include the processing or retail facilities on farm properties so long as they serve the farm on which the product is grown.
- The well developed water and natural gas infrastructure in the County is appropriate for further greenhouse production.
- The ridge running along the lake creates a micro-climate making it a unique growing area, potentially for soft fruits.
- Irrigated former tobacco fields are potential sites for new types of ethnic or specialty crops.
- Seasonality of growing is a particular issue especially when it comes to the needs of restaurants. Restaurants require a consistent and high quality supply of products year round.
- It was suggested that a farmer's market would be part of a larger food system and a future role may be as a whole sale distribution system where producers and institutional consumers meet for exchange and the public market is a secondary function.

From a policy perspective this Study indicates that “Federal and Provincial policies regarding market activity, food safety, land use and taxation all play an integral role in the success or failure of a local food system. Many policies are often sufficiently general that municipal or County policies can play an important role in the promotion of agriculture and short-supply chains at the local level.”

#### **5.4 Niagara Region - Review of Land Use Policy and Related Implementation Measures Regarding Agricultural Value Added Activities - Summary Report & Recommendations**

The Niagara Region Review of Land Use Policy and Related Implementation Measures Regarding Agricultural Value Added Activities Report was prepared by Planscape and dated September 10, 2009. The purpose of the report was to “support the establishment of agricultural value added activities in Niagara by considering how the land use planning process in Niagara can identify and encourage such value added activities”. Niagara Region established an agricultural task force to develop a comprehensive strategy to support agriculture which took the form of the Agricultural Action Plan. The Report states that “In order for agriculture to thrive, there is a need to go beyond just protecting the land base. Farms must be profitable in order for the agricultural industry to be sustainable.” To this end, this Report “explores land use policies that may be appropriate to provide a more flexible approach to what is an appropriate agricultural or agriculturally related activity”. The Report defines agricultural value added activities in general terms as agriculturally related or secondary uses which are complementary and supportive of all of the various sectors of the agricultural economy. The report states that “such activities may be on-farm or off-farm on a separate property. But the critical element in the consideration of off-

farm agricultural value added activities is that they be land uses which service the agricultural economy only and which are not more appropriately directed to settlement areas. In addressing off-farm uses, policies must be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).”

Niagara Region took the approach that it is appropriate to create a policy approach that applied Region-wide but is flexible to account for different municipalities. The Report also notes that “there is also a need to recognize specific policies issues that may arise from particular characteristics of individual sectors within the agricultural economy, such as the tender fruit industry in the north and traditional cash crops in the south.”

The Regions agricultural action plan identified a number of tasks and actions to support agricultural including:

- Implementing a development permitting system for farm-related value added activities based on the Niagara Escarpment Commission approach as a base;
- Evaluate the need for independent inspection services for smaller producers to encourage the development of smaller scale processing activities such as permitting abattoirs in reasonable proximity to agricultural operations;
- Support the implementation of a Culinary Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

There has always been a component of value-added activity on farms such as washing, sorting and packing produce but the extent of permissions for value added activities has been somewhat limited in Ontario. Value added can mean enhancing or improving and existing product or introducing new product or product uses. Adding value does not necessarily mean altering a product; it can involve the introduction of “new production or handling methods that increase a farmers capacity and reliability in meeting market demand. Value added can be almost anything that enhances the dimensions of a business.”

The Report states that “value added agriculture is seen as a way to:

- Increase employment and revitalize rural communities;
- Reduce the economic risk associated with trade activities;
- Diversify the economic base of rural communities;
- Increase farmers financial stability;
- Provide an opportunity for farmers to sell directly into the retail market;
- Promote a culture of research and innovation; reduce dependency on the world price of commodities;
- Increase opportunities for smaller farms and companies through the development of niche markets;
- Increase quality and brand recognition of regional and Canadian products;
- Promote collective solutions and partnerships along the food value chain;

- Help retain young farmers;
- Educate the non-farm population about farming.

“Cooperative allow for centralized, shared facilities and shared risks, and may also occur off-farm”. In addition the size of these cooperative facilities may necessitate the need for off-site land to be used by a number of users and due to financing constraints of individual farms, the need for off-farm facilities shared by a number of farms in close proximity, becomes a real necessity.

In the Report, farmers also pointed out that there are two “sides” to the value-added activities available. On the “production side”, value added activities can include “washing, sorting and packaging product, processing activities (wineries, canning, abattoirs); and distribution activities (storage, warehousing and shipping).” On the marketing side, value added activities may include “roadside produce stands, pick-your own facilities, retail facilities for the sale of products, outlets that feature local products, cafes, tasting facilities, tourist accommodations (bed and breakfast, inns, spas), that focus on the agricultural and rural experience and experiential activities, which can include working vacations on farms, cooking schools”. The Report also states that there are other activities that could be considered as value-added including fair grounds, educational facilities, research facilities and local food initiatives.

“In amending policies to allow these types of activities, the issues of scale and servicing must be considered. If the purpose of the activities is to enhance and support agriculture, then larger scale commercial or industrial uses or uses that generate a demand for additional service would not be appropriate. The underlying agricultural use must remain dominant.” In considering these uses, there must also be a determination as to whether or not the use should be located in a settlement area due to scale, intensity or other factors.

The Report provides a long list summarizing the issues to be considered including:

- A distinction should be made between value-retention and value-added activities.
- Compatibility between agricultural uses (both on-site and neighbouring uses) and value added uses must be maintained.
- Agri-tourism activities should include farm holiday opportunities, various accommodation opportunities, and educational and recreational activities.
- Not all agriculturally related or secondary uses need to be on farm properties. They may occupy separate lots and appropriate circumstances.
- Lot creation for non-agricultural uses should be prohibited but existing lots could be used for processing or marketing uses subject to specific tests.
- Uses that create a demand for urban services should not be permitted.
- Policies should be flexible, with limited prescriptive standards in the Official Plans - detailed standards should be in the zoning by-laws, unless required to establish or define an appropriate scale of activity.

- Policies need to recognize opportunities for cooperative ventures rather than several small processing activities occurring on individual farms.
- Locational criteria should be developed for specific types of activities, particularly where they occur off-farm.
- Requirements for local products only or on-farm produce only related to such items as retail sales and farmers markets should be relaxed. While it is appropriate to require the majority of product be from the farm, to allow on-going operation, some off-farm product may be required.

## **5.5 Southwold Resources Background Report**

In support of its new Official Plan, the Township of Southwold produced a number of background reports including a Resources Background Report. The report was prepared by Zelinka Priamo Ltd. for the Township in January 2009 and addressed a number of resources including agricultural, mineral resources, natural heritage, cultural heritage and archaeological resources, infrastructure and protecting public health and safety. The purpose of Southwold's agriculture component of the background report was to review current trends and issues in the industry, and recommend a policy direction for the new Official Plan. The report notes that, from an agricultural perspective, in the Township of Southwold:

- Agricultural production is predominantly corn, soy beans and wheat crops and beef, swine, dairy and poultry livestock operations.
- Corn and soy bean production account for the largest portion of land production in the Township.
- There is a trend for the total number of livestock farms to be reduced with the total number of animals holding steady or rising.
- Farm size for Southwold beef, horse and sheep farms have similar numbers of livestock on average as do the County and the Region, however swine production in the Township is more intense on average than that of the broader region.
- Gross farm revenue in Southwold exceeds 55 million dollars annually (second highest in Elgin county).

Through Southwold's public consultation process, a number of issues were identified including:

- Concern that farmers should have additional flexibility to sell farm land while keeping their existing homes.
- There should be policies permitting the severance of dwellings surplus to farm needs.
- Temporary dwellings (granny flats) should be permitted in the rural area.

- Some members of the public indicated their preference that residential growth be limited to the identified settlement areas and restricted from agricultural areas.
- Concern that abandoned rail corridors are being used as trails for All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV).
- Lot creation policies should take into account public health concerns.
- Limited livestock (horses) a combination should be permitted on small rural lots (one acre).
- The report indicates that agricultural policies should provide a framework for the protection of agricultural land primarily for farming including:
  - Identifying and protecting prime agricultural areas;
  - Support on-farm business activity and farm-related commercial and industrial operations;
  - Minimize conflict with farm operations;
  - Protect the environment;
  - Growth, development and servicing;
  - Direct non-farm development to settlement areas where services are available;
  - Minimize land use conflict through compliance with MDS;
  - Establish farm sizes which can be justified based on compatibility, suitability, flexibility and viability criteria.

## 5.6 Broader Public Sector Investment Fund

The Broader Public Sector Investment Fund helps to connect farmers, food processors and distributors with schools, hospitals and municipalities to increase the amount of food purchased by the public sector. This fund and program is intended to assist Ontario farmers and the agri-food industry. The initiative includes:

- Funds for local projects that encourage business between institutions and farmers.
- The development of an electronic market place that links buyers with sellers across Ontario.
- A Province-wide report to attract positive support of local foods in the public sector.
- The Broader Public Sector Investment Fund is a partnership between the Greenbelt Fund and the Ontario Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Rural Affairs. The broader public sector institutions and contract caterers generate 1.8 billion dollars in food and beverage sales on an annual basis and because of this major investment it can help to sustain the agricultural industry in Ontario. The Broader Public Sector Investment Fund is a 4 million dollar grant-making program. In order to apply for the program, an application form must be submitted along with information respecting the proposed project and a budget. Projects are cost-shared with the fund program contributing up to 75% of the projects total budget. Round 1 for

applications submission expired November 1, 2010 however the deadlines for Rounds 2 and 3 are April 1, 2011 and August 1, 2011 respectively.

DRAFT

## **6.0 ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD DECISIONS**

The purpose of this section is summarize 3 Ontario Municipal Board decisions that potentially have significance to some of the agriculture issues and policies to be considered in Elgin County.

### **6.1 Township of North Stormont - August 2008**

A By-law passed by the Township of North Stormont to permit an existing 2,000 square foot garage to be used for the repair of farm-related equipment and vehicles and prohibiting any new commercial structures to be built. The property is 0.55 acres in size and there is an existing residence and an additional garage on the property. The owner of the property conducts a farm equipment and vehicle repair business, and these repairs are conducted on the farms where the equipment/vehicles are located. The proposed zoning by-law would allow the owner to use the existing garage for the repair of farm equipment and vehicles. The zoning by-law was appealed by the owner of a residential property located in close proximity to the subject property, and the basis of the appeal was the incompatibility of uses.

The subject property is designated as “Agricultural Resource Lands” in the Official Plan and agricultural-related uses are permitted and encouraged “as a means to strengthen and diversity in the agricultural industry” on prime agricultural lands. To encourage compatibility, the Official Plan stipulates that the use should be small and large-scale uses should be directed to lands designated “Employment District”. The proponents position was that the subject property is located on prime agricultural lands, is zoned for agricultural uses and the proposed use is a small-scale agricultural-related use in conformity with the Official Plan. The proponent also referenced the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) definition of “agricultural-related uses” which includes farm-related and commercial and farm-related industrial uses in close proximity to farm operations. The proponent indicated that the surrounding area consists of existing farms and the proposed use is in conformity the PPS.

The Board accepted the evidence and opinion of the proponent finding that the proposed use is a small-scale agricultural-related use within an area of agricultural operations. The Board also found that the proposed use is supportive of farming operations and is compatible with the surrounding farm and residential uses.

It is important to note that the Board determined that, in this instance, the agriculture-related use is directly related to and in close proximity to the farm operation as per the PPS.

### **6.2 Norfolk County and City of Nanticoke- September 2009**

A total of 3 appeals were lodged with the OMB with respect to Official Plan Amendment #25 to the Norfolk County Official Plan, Amendment #29 to the former City of Nanticoke Official Plan and the former City of Nanticoke Zoning By-law.

The subject property is designated and zoned “Agricultural” in the County and City Official Plans and the City Zoning By-law. The owner of the subject property resides in an existing house and also operates a contracting and excavating business from the property. The business was commenced without first determining whether the land uses were permitted in the Official Plan and Zoning By-law. It was determined that the proposed use was not in conformity with the Official Plans and Zoning By-law. The Amendments to the 3 documents approved and subsequently appealed by an abutting neighbour.

The business involves a number of activities including the carrying out of a variety of jobs for local farmers including the installation of drive-ways, digging post-holes, removing concrete, culvert work, debris removal and snow-plowing and removal. To support his business, the owner has a 5-ton dump truck, mini-excavator, 3 Bob-cats and a trailer for transporting this equipment. The owner also maintains 2 fuel tanks on the property. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing confirmed that the subject property falls within a prime agricultural area and therefore should be protected for long-term agricultural use.

In support of the land use, evidence was provided that the adopted planning instruments are consistent with the PPS given that secondary uses need not be agriculturally related. It was also suggested that the existing use may be considered a home industry.

The Board found that the PPS allows for secondary uses provided they are compatible with and do not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. The Board found that there is nothing about excavating contractors yard that would interfere with surrounding agricultural uses and may be considered a benign land use. The Board also found that there is nothing in the PPS explicitly stipulating that a secondary use must be directly related to agriculture. However, the Board found that there were remaining issues to be considered prior to the Board making a final decision including potential noise impacts. Therefore the Board that the final decision and order be deferred to allow for the review of appropriate noise impact and attenuation information.

### **6.3 County of Prince Edward - January 2010**

County of Prince Edward Official Plan Amendment #45 (OPA 45) was appealed to the Board and the appeal was allowed in part in December of 2009 with the final order being withheld pending receipt of an amended OPA from the County. The modified OPA 45 was approved by the Board in January 2010.

OPA 45 introduced general policies for wineries and to provide specific definitions and land use policies for “farm wineries” and “estate wineries”.

OPA 45 applies to all lands designated “Prime Agricultural” and Rural in the Official Plan. The Amendment was prepared because there was no municipal policy regarding wineries and municipal requirements for new/expanding wineries were not clear. The identification of two classes of wineries (Farm Winery and Estate Winery) was designed to support a wide variety of wine operations in the County. The effect of OPA 45 was

to permit farm wineries as part of the farm operation and to permit estate wineries subject to a site specific zoning by-law amendment. The two classifications provide for the identification of winery operations that are considered agriculture nature and those that are considered commercial.

The following is a summary of some of the policies contained in OPA 45:

- Farm Wineries are permitted in areas designated Rural and Prime Agricultural.
- Estate Wineries are permitted in areas designated Rural and Prime Agricultural
- “Farm Winery (agricultural use)” includes buildings and structures associated with agricultural uses on the same farm lot, where wines are produce and may include storage, display, processing, wine tasting, a licensed tied-house and retail administrative facilities and outdoor patio area. The use shall not include a restaurant, banquet facility or on-site commercial kitchen. Wine tasting and the offering of locally-grown product samples is considered part of the farm winery activity.
- “Estate Winery (agricultural-related use)” means a building or structure where wines are produced and may include storage, display, processing, wine tasting, storage, hospitality room, administrative facilities, outdoor patio area and on-site restaurant, dining facility, commercial kitchen, banquet hall, retail facility or other commonly commercially-zoned amenity.
- Farm Wineries must be located on properties with a minimum lot size of two-hectares and must be planted with a minimum of 4,000 vines on-site.
- The fruit used in the annual production of wine at a Farm Winery shall consist predominantly of fruit grown in the County of Prince Edward by that Farm Winter Operation.
- On-site tasting room and retail floor space shall not exceed the lesser of 75 square metres or 25 of the total winery floor area (excluding any below ground floor area).
- On-site retail floor space for non-agricultural and/or non-Prince Edward County agricultural products shall not exceed 5% of the total retail floor space.
- Estate Wineries are only permitted on lots with a minimum size of 8 hectares and must be planted with a minimum of 16,000 vines on-site.
- The maximum floor area for retail and hospitality uses shall be 400 square metres so as not to detract from the main use of the land and not adversely effect other uses permitted in the area.
- Estate Wineries shall be subject to site plan approval.

Of particular note, the Board found that:

- Farm wineries and estate wineries should be permitted in both the “Prime Agricultural” and “Rural” designations in the Official Plan
- Facilities normally associated with estate wineries are a secondary use directly related to the agricultural activity of viticulture and wine making as contemplated in Section 2.3.3.1 of the PPS
- It is within the jurisdiction of the municipality to provide greater clarity on the list of secondary uses it wishes to permit within estate wineries, and to regulate size and location through the Zoning By-law and site plan approval process
- The replacement of “51%” with “predominantly” in the policy intended to ensure fruit used in the annual production of wine at a farm winery consists predominantly of fruit grown in the County by that farm winter operation. The “51%” provision was intended to ensure that processing or bottling operations were not established under the guise of a farm winery on prime agricultural land.
- A tied-house licensed by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario is a common and recognized use to be associated with a farm winery and was added to the definition of farm winery in Official Plan.

## **7.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The preparation of an Official Plan is a significant undertaking that provides a number of opportunities for shaping the County's future, including protecting and supporting agricultural communities in a changing economy, and enhancing natural and cultural heritage resources. A significant part of this review involves identifying a vision, establishing goals and objectives and considering growth and policy options with the help of the public and agencies through an extensive consultation process. The consultation program features a variety of communication methods and activities to ensure that the public, stakeholders, local municipalities and the County as a whole have the opportunity to take an active part in shaping the direction and content of the Official Plan, and by extension, the future of the County.

### **7.1 County Tour**

In September 2010, County Staff and the consultant team toured the County and met with representatives from various local municipalities. With respect to agriculture the following comments and issues were received/identified:

- Concern that the Provincial Policy Statement is not being applied consistently across the County with respect to rural severances
- Need for flexibility to consider development on lands that are not conducive to agriculture (e.g. topography)
- Need to consider flexibility and appropriate policies for home occupations/industries and secondary uses generally, and in the Amish and Mennonite communities

### **7.2 Technical & Steering Committee Meetings**

The Technical Committee is comprised of representatives from the County, Provincial Ministries (Municipal Affairs & Housing; Environment; Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs; Natural Resources), Kettle Creek Conservation Authority, Catfish Creek Conservation Authority, Municipality of Bayham, Town of Aylmer, Municipality of Southwold, and Municipality of Dutton-Dunwich.

As a result of the October 25, 2010 municipal elections, the Steering Committee is now comprised of Mayor Bernie Wiehle (West Elgin), Mayor David Mennill (Malahide) and Deputy Mayor David Marr (Central Elgin).

The following is a summary of some of the issues and discussion points, with respect to agriculture raised at meetings with these Committees:

- Need for more direction to the County Land Division Committee with respect to severance applications (e.g. when supporting studies should be submitted, determination of consent vs. plan of subdivision requirement)
- There is a demand for 'rural living' and therefore, rural development on a limited basis

- The Province considers the entire rural area in Elgin County as prime agricultural areas as defined under the Provincial Policy Statement. County Official Plan should incorporate criteria for local municipalities when considering the removal of prime agricultural areas.
- Recognition that there is the need to conform with the Provincial Policy Statement however, there is also the need to allow for some flexibility for certain, unique needs and circumstances at the local level.

### **7.3 Public Focus Group**

The Focus Group consists of members of the general public and stakeholder representatives from each of the local municipalities, but is not a decision-making body. The main purpose and role of the Focus Group is to provide input to the County and consulting team and to act as a ‘sounding board’ throughout the process. Comments and issues identified by the Focus Group include the following:

- Need to maintain smaller farms to allow young people to stay in the community and prosper
- Difficulty securing approvals for garden suites in the rural area
- Need youth apprentice training programs locally
- Agriculture, tourism and residential should live in harmony
- New rural lots in rural area can create constraints for farmers who want to conduct and expand their operations (e.g. impacts of Province’s Minimum Distance Separation requirements)
- Need to address urban / rural conflicts

## **8.0 KEY AGRICULTURAL & RURAL PLANNING ISSUES**

The following initial list of key issues have been identified as requiring further policy analysis and direction in the Official Plan:

### **8.1 Protection of Prime Agricultural Lands & the Agricultural Sector**

As noted earlier in this Report, the vast majority of land in the County is considered prime agricultural land according to mapping provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The County's Official Plan should protect high capability agricultural lands through appropriate Official Plan policies and mapping, including prohibiting scattered, incompatible development/uses in the rural area. The Official Plan should also prevent land use conflicts between agricultural and other uses through the use of Minimum Distance Formulae, and policies requiring appropriate buffering, reduction of traffic impacts, etc.

### **8.2 Lot Creation**

The creation of lots in prime agricultural areas fragments the agricultural land base. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas ("Guide"), over 15,500 new lots were created on Ontario's agricultural lands between 1990 and 2000 and 80% of these lots were created for residential uses. As a consequence and through the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the Province discourages lot creation in prime agricultural areas, only permitting lot creation to be considered for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, surplus farm residences and infrastructure.

The PPS directs municipalities to allow for lot sizes for agricultural use that are large enough to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations as the economy and markets change. For example, the "Guide" recommends that, for most municipalities in Ontario, 40 hectares is an appropriate minimum parcel size.

The Official Plan should protect agricultural lands through appropriate policies limiting severances in the rural area and ensuring that the sizes of new and remnant parcels are appropriate to permit current and future use of land for agricultural purposes.

With respect to lots created for agriculture-related uses, there are 6 factors to consider when developing policy and assessing the appropriateness of a severance. The agriculture-related use must be small-scale, directly related to the farm operation, required in close proximity to the farm operation, compatible with and not hinder surrounding agricultural operations, lot sizes limited to a minimum required to accommodate the use, and there must be confirmation there is sufficient reserve sewage system capacity to treat septage generated if on private services.

For lots created for a surplus residence, there are 4 grounds or sets of questions in the that must be addressed before a planning authority can grant a severance for a surplus residents:

- Is an agricultural operation present?
- Has there been a farm consolidation? Is there a set time limit on applying for a severance after the consolidation? Did the dwelling exist before the new farm parcel was acquired?
- Is the residence to be severed surplus to the needs of the farm operation as a result of a consolidation? Will the farm operation need the surplus residence in the future? Could it be used for housing for farm help or for a second family involved in the farm operation? Is the farm operation retaining at least one principle farm residence? Is the dwelling inhabitable?
- How will the planning authority prohibit the construction of a dwelling on the remnant parcel?

### **8.3 Economic Development in the Rural Area**

To ensure the continued financial viability of individual farms, farmers are creating other sources of income to supplement the primary farm income. As noted in the 2009 Elgin Agriculture & Agri-business Sector Profile Report, there are many potential opportunities to support individual farms and the County economy as a whole including good transportation connections and connectivity to other parts of southern Ontario, and good examples and opportunities to build on such as the ethanol production facility in Aylmer.

Upper tier policies can encourage and support local municipalities to consider appropriate land use policies and regulations to assist farmers. The Official Plan can be key to identifying and offering opportunities, and providing guidance to farmers to assist in responding to changing market conditions. A county Official Plan can also include policies to recognize the importance of agriculture in the economy and provide guidance and support for entrepreneurs and new businesses in the community, agri-tourism, etc.

### **8.4 Green Initiatives in the Rural Area**

Section 1.8.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) permits alternative and renewable energy systems in settlement areas, rural areas and prime agricultural areas subject to compliance with provincial and federal requirements. However, the PPS also requires these systems to be designed in such a way that impacts on agricultural operations are minimized.

There are many ways the farming industry can implement 'green' practices into operations to improve and protect air, water and land, but also to realize significant financial savings. Today, and historically, farmers have been leaders in the areas of sustainability. Some of the energy efficient and sustainable farm practices used and worthy of promotion include:

- a) Switching from incandescent to fluorescent lighting

- b) Assessing and implementing measures to protect groundwater from pesticides, manure leachate, etc.
- c) Improving insulation in farm buildings and water lines
- d) Irrigation - use reductions and avoiding on hot days
- e) Implementing modern forms of composting
- f) Use of solar energy and wind turbines to generate electricity
- g) Using dimmers and motion sensors
- h) Installing energy-efficient ventilation systems
- i) Using water recycling systems
- j) Implementing anaerobic digestion systems to create energy from manure

The County should consider the inclusion of policies in the Official Plan to educate and promote sustainable and energy efficient farm practices.

### **8.5 Consideration Of Non-Agricultural Uses In The Rural Area**

Recent initiatives to augment farmer income include: on-farm businesses, home industries, home occupations, home professions, the production of value-added agricultural products and niche market specialty products and agri-tourism. There are many reasons to support non-agricultural and value added activities/uses in the agricultural area, including increased employment, revitalization of rural communities, economic diversification, and retention of young farmers in the community.

Home based business include home/cottage industries, home occupations and home/cottage professions. Home industries are typically conducted entirely within a dwelling unit or accessory structure, as a secondary use, and are limited in terms of floor area, signage, outdoor storage and number of staff. As a less intensive use, home occupations are conducted within the dwelling unit, as a secondary uses, by the residents only.

Home professions are a type of home occupation. They permit the use of part of a dwelling unit as a professional office but as a secondary use. Home professions typically include: legal, medical, surveyors, engineering, architectural, planning, accounting, dental, optometry, chiropractor, real estate, book keeping, photography and computer support, among others.

There is a large range of home based businesses that produce value-added agricultural products, from selling fresh pies from a roadside stand, to large food manufacturing plants. It is here that we encounter a gray area, from what is a value-added agricultural product, and what is an on-farm business that has no relationship to agriculture. As noted in the 2009 County Agriculture & Agri-business Sector Profile Report, there are 2 main reasons to encourage and support agri-tourism. Many farmers see the need to supplement their incomes. And there has been significant increased public demand for specialized vacation experiences.

Policies respecting home occupations, home industries and farm-related commercial and industrial uses, and the criteria to promote and regulate these uses, will be considered as part of the Official Plan project. In doing so, the County can consider a number of factors and issues including compatibility with agricultural uses, the appropriate types of agri-tourism for the County, and appropriate location criteria should be developed for specific types of activities. It is important to note the wording in the PPS that permits municipalities to consider criteria for these uses as recommended by the Province or based on local approaches that achieve the same objective. The County will consult with the Province, local municipalities and the community on the best approach to deal with these uses in the future.

Lastly, there is the need to consider flexibility and appropriate policies for non-agricultural uses for the Amish and Mennonite communities. The Perth County Official Plan prohibits the establishment of new institutional and public uses, with the exception of landfill sites and sewage treatment facilities, on lands designated "Agriculture". However, the Perth County Official Plan does permit new schools, churches, and cemeteries within the "Agriculture" designation where such uses "service the immediate rural community which relies on horse drawn vehicles as their primary means of transportation subject to the following criteria:

- (i) Reasonable justification in support of the selected site must be provided. Such justification must give consideration to alternative sites on non-prime farmland areas and hamlet areas in the vicinity;
- (ii) Permitted land areas for these uses shall be as follows:
  - (a) not more than 1 1/2 acres for a freestanding school;
  - (b) not more than 2 1/2 acres for a church cemetery; and
  - (c) not more than 3 1/2 acres for a combined school, church and cemetery;
- (iii) The schools, churches, and cemeteries are required to satisfy the minimum distance separation provisions of MDS I. To assist in meeting the provisions of MDS I, a school and/or church may be located on a farm property as a part of a farm building cluster and served by the principal farm access driveway. Where a church is to be located on a farm property and adjacent to a cemetery on a separate lot, the access to the church may be by the access driveway serving the cemetery use. Due to the passive nature of the use, a freestanding cemetery on a separate lot shall be interpreted as similar to a passive recreational use and will be a "Type "A" Land Use" for the purpose of MDS I;
- (iv) In the case of schools, the use of long term leases as opposed to land severances, shall be encouraged;
- (v) In respect to cemeteries, acceptable arrangements must be made for the perpetual care of the cemetery; and
- (vi) An amendment to the local municipality's implementing zoning by-law and a site plan agreement shall be required for such schools, churches and cemeteries".

## **8.6 Local Food & The 100-mile Diet**

The 2010 Elgin County Local Food Study indicated that a local food market was emerging and that there is the potential for associated economic development. There are various definitions of a local food system but the 2010 Study references the “100-mile diet” which encourages restaurants and individuals to serve and consume only fresh foods available within a 100-mile radius.

A local food system can benefit the economic well-being of farmers, but also can provide a broader benefit through improved climate as a result of significantly reduced travel times, fossil fuel usage, etc. The Study also noted that one of the challenges to the development of a local food system is the lack of supportive policy. Other recommended initiatives and approaches include taking advantage of the well developed water and natural gas infrastructure in the County for further greenhouse production, and irrigated former tobacco fields as potential sites for new types of ethnic or specialty crops.

Through the Official Plan project, the County can consider options for policy to develop and support local food systems.