



2017 Farmland Forum



The Future of Farming & Farmland Protection in Ontario

Thursday, March 30, 2017

Mariposa Inn & Conference Centre/Best Western, Orillia

Co-host: Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition



Program

8:00 Registration (refreshments and light breakfast provided)

9:00 Welcome, Opening Remarks

Kathryn Enders, Ontario Farmland Trust

Margaret Prophet, Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition

Steve Clark, Mayor of Orillia

Jeff Leal, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs

9:30 KEYNOTE: An Indigenous Perspective on Farming and Farmland Preservation

Dan Longboat, Director of the Indigenous Environmental Studies and Science Program, Trent University

Farmland preservation has deep roots from protecting and honouring the land that nourishes our communities to supporting the biodiversity that all life depends upon, and ensuring future generations can continue with a livelihood in caring and tending to the land. Dan will set the tone for the day by providing his perspective on the importance of farmland preservation in Ontario.

10:15 PANEL // Shifting Farmland Ownership & What it Means for the Future of Farming in Ontario & Canada

Regulation of Farmland Markets: Reflections on Policies Across Canada and How Ontario Compares

Brady Deaton, Food, Agricultural & Resource Economics, University of Guelph

Farmland Lease Financing: Helping Farmers Meet Their Goals
Jeff McAllister, Associate, Bonnefield

Concerns from the Field: The Impact of Land Ownership Leaving the Hands of Farmers
Emery Huszka, National Farmers Union

Facilitator: Norm Ragetlie, Chair, Ontario Farmland Trust

11:30 Lunch

12:30 PLENARY: Measuring Farmland Conversion in Ontario: Quantifying Farmland Loss through Official Plan Amendments

Wayne Caldwell & Sara Epp, University of Guelph

Farmland in Ontario is under immense pressure from development associated with population growth and urbanization. In many communities, farmland is sacrificed for residential subdivisions, commercial developments and aggregate operations, among others. Currently, no accurate data regarding the amount of farmland lost to other land uses exists. This presentation will explore a new methodology for measuring the loss of farmland through official plan amendments from 2000-2014 in southern Ontario. Seven case studies will be presented, highlighting the amount of farmland converted to other land uses both before and after the Greenbelt Act (2005) came into force. Trends regarding the loss of farmland and future development pressures will also be explored.

1:30 CONCURRENT SESSION//The Impact of Farmland Preservation Policy in Ontario & Across Canada

A Look at Protecting Farmland in Ontario from a National Perspective

David Connell, University of Northern British Columbia

Drawing from the results of a national research project on agricultural land use planning, this presentation will discuss the strength of Ontario's legislative framework (laws, regulations, policies) for protecting farmland vis-à-vis other provinces. The discussion will reveal the diversity of legislative frameworks for agricultural land use planning between provinces and among jurisdictions within provinces.

1:30 CONCURRENT SESSION//The Significance of Soil Classification for Farmland Protection

OMAFRA's Soil Classification Project and What it Means for Ontario Agriculture

Daniel Saurette, Land Resource Specialist, OMAFRA

Arthur Churchyard, Policy Advisor, OMAFRA

OMAFRA is currently engaged in a soil classification project and Daniel will share details about what this project involves and the intended results. Arthur will then expand on this research and highlight what this new soil classification could mean for Ontario agriculture, and more importantly the protection of agricultural land for farming in Ontario.

The Expansion of Farming in the North and the Need for Updated Soil Classification Maps

Peggy Brekveld, Vice President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

As more farmers re-locate to northern Ontario, the need for soil classification maps for all communities in Ontario is becoming increasingly apparent to ensure protection of the top soil classes for agricultural purposes.

2:15 Coffee/Tea Break

2:30 PLENARY: Holding the Line & Preserving Farmland: Oregon's Experience with Firm Urban Growth Boundaries & Long-term Viability Analysis for Agriculture

Jim Johnson, Oregon Department of Agriculture

The Identification and Assessment of the Long-Term Commercial Viability of Metro Region Agricultural Lands research study for the greater Portland area shows how Oregon's land use policies can allow for 'rolling urban growth boundaries' instead of identifying firm urban growth boundaries that are based on long-term viability of agricultural lands. In his presentation, Jim will discuss the current use of urban growth boundaries in Oregon, key questions and findings in the report relating to urban growth boundaries and identifying the most viable lands for protection as farmland and finally a discussion of some of the continuing questions and issues Oregon must address in its search for the "perfect" rural/urban edge.

3:30 Wrap up & Concluding Remarks

Kathryn Enders, Executive Director, Ontario Farmland Trust

Norm Ragetlie, Chair, Ontario Farmland Trust