



FARM & FOOD
Care ONTARIO

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Celebrate Ontario Agriculture Week October 5 to 11, 2015

Find your story

Ontario is a province overflowing with nutritious and delicious food, and from October 5 to 11, Farm & Food Care Ontario (www.FarmFoodCare.org), Foodland Ontario and agricultural organizations across the province will be celebrating Ontario Agriculture Week along with the province's 37,000 farm families. The week has been celebrated since it was proclaimed by the Ontario government in 1998.

Food and the value of agriculture is a high-trending media subject that continues to grow in popularity, and Ontario's farmers are here to share their stories about how their families produce the meat, eggs, dairy products, grains, fruits and vegetables that feed our families. With such a demand for these stories, Farm & Food Care is here to help connect you with members of Ontario's food and farming sector by providing your news outlet with contacts, story ideas and other regional-specific resources.

As a non-profit coalition, Farm & Food Care Ontario cultivates appreciation for food and farming by connecting farm gates to our dinner plates. We are a coalition of farmers, agricultural professionals and related businesses proactively working together with a commitment to provide credible information and strengthen sustainable food and farming for the future. Farm & Food Care Ontario's role is to be your helpful expert on Ontario's agricultural sector.

#loveONTfood website resources

Both Ontario Agriculture Week in October and Local Food Week in June are great ways to celebrate food and farming in this province. www.loveONTfood.ca is a website full of resources for you to access including:

- An event calendar
- Media Centre
- Graphics library
- Links to food and farming contacts
- And much more

Interested in doing a story on Ontario food and farming, but not sure where to start? Try these story ideas:

Profile a farmer or farm family

To celebrate Ontario Agriculture Week, why not profile a farmer or farm family from your area. We'd be happy to help you find someone in your area to be featured.

Careers in agriculture

You don't have to be a farmer to have a career in agriculture. It's a huge industry with a multitude of sectors and specializations, and one that is constantly evolving. Explore the wide

range of careers available - from plant scientist and communications specialist to veterinarian or drone pilot.

Environmental Innovation

Technology and learning are critical to protecting our environment and providing safe and healthy food. Ontario's farmers use widespread, common-sense approaches and new technologies to produce food while protecting biodiversity, soil health and our waterways.

From farm to fork – what's the safety process?

Find out what makes Ontario products some of the safest in the world. Questions – and misconceptions – abound over how food is prepared for the grocer's shelf. Eggs reach the store from the farm in three to five days, rigorous testing ensures milk is free of antibiotics, and crop protection products are heavily regulated - just to name a few things.

Farm, Food & Beyond: Our Commitment to Sustainability

The Farm, Food & Beyond: Our Commitment to Sustainability initiative, was just launched by farm and food industry leaders in Ontario. This collaborative initiative of Ontario's farmers and food and beverage processors will build upon the success of the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program. By expanding the scope into a whole farm sustainability plan, this project addresses not only environmental practices but also economic and social issues important for sustainability. Together, the farm and food community is taking a supply chain approach to sustainable production and processing. Learn more at www.sustainablefarms.ca.

Support for Ontario's agriculture community

The Ontario government is a strong supporter of the agri-food industry. Through programs and funding such as the [Local Food Fund](#), the [Rural Economic Development](#) program and the [Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence](#), members of the agri-food sector have been able to develop new products, promote new innovations, enter international markets, create jobs and improve their local communities.

About farming in Ontario

Ontario has a large and diverse agricultural sector with more than 125 different types of crops and livestock raised on family farms across the province. Here are some more facts about farming in Ontario.

Who are we and how big are we?

- Number of farm operators: 74,840 (2011)
- Total number of farms: 51, 950 (2011)
- Total cropland in hectares: 3,613,821 (2011)

Sustainability on our farms

- More than 35,000 Ontario farm families have completed Environmental Farm Plans. This represents both commitments by individual farmers and successful farmer-government processes.

- Ontario's farmers have just launched a new *Farm, Food & Beyond: Our Commitment to Sustainability* agenda. Learn more at www.sustainablefarms.ca.
- A significant and growing portion of Ontario farm produce is used to develop bio-based products other than foods. Examples include starch sizing, derived from corn, which is used for paper coatings and adhesives, and oilseed-derived lubricants and paints.
- Ontario-grown wheat straw is providing the fibre portion of polymer-composite materials used to manufacture automobile components and other consumer and industrial products.
- In 1901, three million Canadian farmers produced food for five million Canadians. Canadian statistics show 0.3 million farmers now produce food for over 35 million Canadians.
- For every dollar spent shopping at a farmers' market, another two dollars ripples through the provincial economy. In Ontario alone, sales at farmers' markets totalled almost \$600 million, leading to an economic impact of an astounding \$1.8 billion.

What do we grow and produce?

- Corn is the most common field crop grown in Ontario. It is an ingredient in more than 3,000 grocery products.
- Over 125 different fruit and vegetable crops are grown in Ontario with an estimated annual farm gate value of \$1.2 billion.
- Greenhouse vegetables are the largest sector of the vegetable industry, with an estimated annual farm gate value of \$450 million. Ontario is North America's biggest greenhouse vegetable producer with 1,800 acres under glass.
- Ontario's cattle and beef sector supports more than 11,000 jobs and contribute approximately \$4 billion to the province's economy.
- Dairy is the largest sector of Ontario agriculture. There are 4,000 dairy farmers and 270,000 milking cows producing 2.5 billion litres of milk per year, enough to fill the Rogers Centre twice.
- In terms of major fruit crops, grapes are grown on the largest amount of land at 7,439 hectares.
- For major vegetable crops, potatoes are grown on the largest amount of land at 15,129 hectares.
- Ontario farmers currently supply 65% of the ingredients used by Ontario food processors.
- Egg farming in Ontario provides 6,247 jobs and contributes \$562 million to the GDP.
- There are 176 turkey farmers in the province of Ontario raising about 45% of all the turkeys in Canada.
- Ontario has more than 1,000 farmers raising 200 million chickens grown annually. The industry contributes \$2.72 billion to the Ontario economy and supports 19,183 full-time equivalent jobs.
- There are 28,000 grain farmers in Ontario growing barley, corn, oats, soybeans and wheat, on six million acres of farm land across the province.
- There are approximately 1,524 pork producers in the province of Ontario that marketed 4.97 million hogs in 2014. This contributed \$867 million to the GDP and is responsible for 15,814 full-time jobs.
- More than 70% of Ontario farm products remain within the province.
- Agriculture contributes \$13.7 billion to Ontario's annual GDP.

Other Ontario agriculture facts and statistics:

- Ontario loses an average of 350 acres of farmland every day.
- Rural Ontario is home to 70% of Ontario's farm sector employment.

- In the province of Ontario, there are three agri-food jobs waiting for each graduate with a university degree and two agri-food jobs for every diploma graduate.
- 158,000 jobs are generated by agriculture and agri food sector.
- Food processing directly employs more than 91,000 workers across Ontario.

**Sources include: the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Beef Farmers of Ontario, Farm Markets Ontario, Farm & Food Care Ontario, Egg Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Ontario, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Pork, Economic Contribution of the Ontario Farm Sector – JRG Consulting Group, University of Guelph, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Farmland Trust.

By supporting Ontario’s farm families and the food they produce, we all benefit economically, environmentally and socially.

Want to know more? Connect with Farm & Food Care or any of the groups and organizations participating in Ontario Agriculture Week:

- Ontario Agriculture Week/Local Food Week website: www.loveONTfood.ca
- Farm & Food Care Website: www.FarmFoodCare.org
- Instagram & Twitter: @FarmFoodCareON or @loveONTfood
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FarmFoodCare>
- Media Photo Library: www.FarmPhotos.ca
- Tour 26 Ontario farms virtually with the click of your mouse: www.VirtualFarmTours.ca
- Find Ontario farm families in your area – www.FacesofFarming.ca
- Get *The Real Dirt on Farming* with Farm & Food Care’s award winning publication – www.RealDirtOnFarming.ca or through our blog – www.RealDirtBlog.ca

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