

Huron County

Total Land Area (Census 2016)¹: 339,927 ha
Area of Census Farms (2016)²: 297,726 ha
Area of Huron County in the Greenbelt³: 0 ha
Percent of Huron County in the Greenbelt: 0%
Gross Farm Receipts (2016)⁴: \$1.234 billion
Gross Farm Receipts per Hectare of Census Farm: \$4,145
Population (2016)¹: 59,297



Growth Rate 2006-2011: -0.4%
Growth Rate 2001-2016: 0.3%

Prime agricultural area redesignated to a development designation (including urban, residential, and employment)	25 ha
Prime agricultural area redesignated to a rural designation	0 ha
Land designated as a prime agricultural area with a site-specific amendment to allow additional uses	0 ha

Purpose of the Summary

This county summary is part of a wider study on farmland availability in Ontario. The study quantifies the conversion of prime agricultural areas based on Official Plan Amendments in upper and single-tier municipalities across the Province over a 14-year study period from 2000-2014. This summary is meant to provide detail of the findings in Huron County. In conjunction with similar case studies from other counties/regions in Ontario, these findings will form the basis of the University of Guelph's *Measuring Farmland Conversion* research project.

Methods in Brief

The study involved the examination of Huron County's Official Plan (OP) and Official Plan Amendments (OPAs). For data collection in Huron, the original files which document OPAs approved by the County and/or the Ontario Municipal Board during the years 2000 to 2014 were accessed at the Huron County Planning and Development offices in Goderich, Ontario. The assistance of staff at Huron County Planning and Development is appreciated in making this research possible. Changes in farmland availability have been captured in three categories:

- 1) Prime agricultural areas redesignated to a development designation (including but not limited to urban, residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational designations);
- 2) Prime agricultural areas redesignated to a rural designation;
- 3) Land designated as a prime agricultural area with a site-specific amendment to allow additional uses.

Housekeeping type amendments have not been tallied as contributing to farmland conversion. Housekeeping type amendments arise as OP schedules are updated to align land use designations

with more accurate parcel lines, or alternatively, to reflect existing physical features or hamlets that had been excluded from previous OP schedules.

Agricultural Land Use Designations in Huron County

Agricultural activity in Huron County occurs in the *prime agricultural area*. Huron County recognizes that there are both prime and non-prime agricultural lands within the county, however it has designated in its Agricultural Resource Map that the entire county is a *prime agricultural area*⁶. Secondary or rural designations are not used.

Trends Agricultural Land Conversion

Development Designations: Over the course of the study period, two amendments pertained to the redesignation of *Prime Agricultural Areas* to a development designation, totaling 25 hectares. One of these amendments pertains to an 18-hectare expansion of the Exeter settlement area while the other pertained to the redesignation of a prime agricultural area within the village limits of Brussels. This type of farmland conversion is summarized by adoption date in category 1 of **Table 1**.

Rural Agriculture: Huron County does not use a rural land use designation to define areas outside the *Prime Agricultural Area* but where agriculture remains the primary use. This type of amendment was not seen in Huron County, and zero OPAs were captured under category 2 of **Table 1**.

Site-specific Amendments: Site-specific policies were not used in Huron County’s Official Plan to permit additional uses in the *Prime Agricultural Area*. No amendments were captured under category 3 of **Table 1**.

TABLE 1 PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREA CONVERTED THROUGH OPAs IN HURON COUNTY BY ADOPTION DATE (2000-2014)

Year of County OPA adoption or approval by the OMB	Number of OPAs related to the conversion of prime agricultural area	CATEGORY 1 Prime agricultural area redesignated to a development designation (ha)	CATEGORY 2 Prime agricultural area redesignated to a rural designation (ha)	CATEGORY 3 Land designated as a prime agricultural area with additional site-specific permitted uses (ha)
2000	0	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0	0
2002	0	0	0	0
2003	1	7	0	0
2004	0	0	0	0
2005	0	0	0	0
2006	0	0	0	0
2007	1	18	0	0
2008	0	0	0	0
2009	0	0	0	0
2010	0	0	0	0

2011	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	2	25	0	0

*Totals may not add up due to rounding

Agricultural Area Gain: In Huron County, land was added to the *Prime Agricultural Area* on several occasions during the study period. An OPA in Central Huron redesignated a block of *Extractive Resources Area* to *Prime Agricultural Area*. Two other OPAs, also in Central Huron, added land to the *Prime Agricultural Area* from the *Natural Environment* designation. This study captured a total of 10 hectares added to the *Prime Agricultural Area* in Huron County.

Provincial Land Use Plans: Huron County does not fall into the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment, nor Places to Grow Plan. Official Plan Amendments in Huron County are not subject to the policies of these provincial land use plans.

¹ Statistics Canada. 2012. Huron, Ontario (Code 3540). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.

² OMAFRA (adopted). 2012. Area of Census Farms (Acres) by County, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011. With data from Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture.

³ MMAH. 2005. "Greenbelt Outer Boundary" and MMAH, 2012. "Municipal Boundary - Upper Tier and District" data projected in UTM 17N.

⁴ Statistics Canada. 2014. Table 004-0233 - Census of Agriculture, farms classified by total gross farm receipts in the year prior to the census, CANSIM.

⁶ Huron County. Consolidated September 24 2015. Huron County Official Plan. Planning and Development Department.