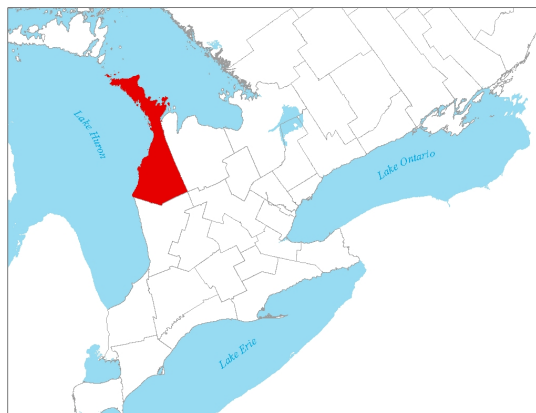


# BRUCE COUNTY



**Total Land Area (Census 2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 4,090.20km<sup>2</sup>  
**Area of Census Farms (2016)<sup>2</sup>:** 225,958 ha  
**Area of Census Farms (2001)<sup>2</sup>:** 247,449 ha  
**Gross Farm Receipts (2016)<sup>4</sup>:** \$566.1 Million  
**Gross Farm Receipts per Hectare of Census Farm:** \$2,505.33  
**Population (2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 68,147  
**Growth Rate 2006-2011<sup>5</sup>:** 1.2%  
**Growth Rate 2011-2016<sup>1</sup>:** 3.1%

Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Development Designation (Including Urban, Residential, And Employment) 2000–2017	<b>43.18 ha</b>
Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Rural Designation 2000–2017	<b>0 ha</b>
Land Designated As A Prime Agricultural Area With A Site-Specific Amendment To Allow Additional Uses 2000–2017	<b>92.89 ha*</b>
<b>Total Amount of Prime Agricultural Land Loss 2000–2017</b>	<b>136.07 ha</b>
<b>Total Prime Agricultural Land Loss in Relation to Census Farm Area 2001</b>	<b>0.05%</b>

\*Note: this includes 25 OPAs that were used to facilitate severances

## 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 17-year study period from 2000–2017. This summary is meant to provide detail of the findings in Bruce 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 Loss* research project.

Please note that in the case of the Bruce County, due to complications related to COVID-19, access to data was restricted. Though 69 OPAs were captured, only 35 could be verified. As a result, the remaining OPAs have been excluded from this study. The resulting data only captures the timeframe 2007–2017 and the findings as a result do not present a complete picture of land use changes occurring across the region. As such, the methods for this summary are not considered by any

means exhaustive and the findings are not directly comparable to other municipal jurisdictions within the context of the study. This partial summary may instead be used to independently indicate directional trends regarding the conversion of prime-agricultural land within the Bruce County.

### **Methods in Brief**

The study involved the examination of Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) approved by Bruce County, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and/or the Ontario Municipal Board for Bruce County during the years 2000–2017. The first Official Plan (OP) for Bruce County was first approved by County Council in 1997, the Minister of Municipal Affairs in 1998, and the Ontario Municipal Board in 1999. Bruce County has eight lower-tier municipalities: the Town of Saugeen Shores; the Municipality of Kincardine; the Municipality of Brockton; the Town of South Bruce Peninsula; the Township of Huron-Kinloss; the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie; the Municipality of South Bruce; and the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula.

Each of the lower tier municipalities within the County have their own local Official Plan which generally relate only to the primary and secondary communities. The Town of South Bruce Peninsula and the Township of Huron-Kinloss's OPs are more comprehensive and apply to the geographic extent of their municipality. Each of these lower tier OPs conform with Bruce County's Official Plan and the County remains the signing authority. Staff at the Bruce County Planning Department generously provided data for the entire county during an in-person office visit and the consolidated Official Plan served as the primary reference.

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 contributions to farmland conversion. Housekeeping type amendments arise as OP schedules are updated to align land use designations with more accurate parcel lines, or to reflect existing physical features. Likewise housekeeping has not included any OPAs regarding aggregate operations. Many of the OPAs captured in Bruce County were used to facilitate a severance, however whether these new parcels remain in agricultural production. These OPAs were recorded as a separate category so they be considered or disregarded as appropriate.

## **Agricultural Land Use Designations in Bruce County**

In Bruce County, agricultural designations are intended to permit primarily agricultural uses, supportive uses, and non-farm development by the severance of surplus dwellings. The primary use of agriculture is for livestock though there are also cash crops. Bruce County is unique in its encouragement of a range of farming sizes with the belief that the variety will ensure agriculture remains a long-term sustainable economic activity and allow new farm businesses to be established. They maintain a minimum farm size of 40 hectares (100 acres) and consider severances on the basis if the parcel to be retained is appropriate for the long-term application of agriculture and location proposed. Bruce County's OP prioritizes prime agricultural soils preservation in compliance with Section 2.3.5 of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

### **Trends in Agricultural Land Conversion**

**Development Designations:** Over the course of the study period, three OPAs were captured that redesignate agricultural land to a development designation, totaling 43.18 hectares captured in category 1 of Table 1. This includes OPA 163-12 which redesignated 40.34 hectares in 2012 in order to permit the outdoor storage of construction equipment, fleet vehicles, and materials related to construction and excavating, a construction business, a limousine/chauffeured transportation service business; and an accessory office for the permitted uses. OPA 206-16 redesignated 2.04 ha in 2016 to expand an existing operation to allow for additional equipment storage areas, parking for future employees, and a new warehouse of fertilizer blending and storage. The third OPA was 227-17 in 2017 which redesignated 0.8 hectares

**Rural Designation:** Rural areas have been identified as generally non-prime agricultural soils in Bruce County, based on the Canada Land Inventory mapping. As a result, no amendments of this nature have been captured in Bruce County under category 2 of Table 1.

**Site-Specific Amendments:** Site-specific policy amendments were used in Bruce County on seven occasions during the course of the study to allow additional uses within the Prime Agricultural Area. These uses totaled 180.57 hectares. The average size of these OPAs was 3.62 hectares. The largest was OPA 216-17 in 2017 that applied to 60 hectares of land in order to allow for a severance into three parcels. The smallest OPA was OPA 215-16 in 2017 which applied to 0.08 hectares of land in order to exempt owners of the land as it relates to bona fide farmer policies and facilitate severance of surplus farm dwelling. As noted above, the extent of which these OPAs removed agricultural land from production is unknown and should be taken into consideration when interpreting this data, particularly as these OPAs were primarily used to permit severances. These amendments are captured in category 3 of Table 1.

**Table 1. Prime Agricultural Area Converted Through OPAs In Bruce County By Adoption Date (2000-2017)**

Year of 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	0	0	0	0
2004	0	0	0	0
2005	0	0	0	0
2006	0	0	0	0
2007	3	0	0	3.83*
2008	2	0	0	8.44*
2009	0	0	0	0
2010	3	0	0	2.76*
2011	4	0	0	7.53*
2012	4	40.34	0	1.89*
2013	4	0	0	11.79*
2014	2	0	0	7.12*
2015	0	0	0	0
2016	4	2.04	0	3.91*
2017	9	0.8	0	65.37*
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43.18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>92.89</b>

*\*Includes OPAs that were used to facilitate a severance. It is unclear how much land these OPAs removed from agricultural production.*

*\*\*Totals may not add due to rounding.*

### **Provincial Land Use Plans:**

Within Bruce County, the Niagara Escarpment covers the easterly portion of the Bruce Peninsula within the County. This land is protected under the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), which was established in 1985. The NEP is further situated within the Greenbelt however NEP lands are governed by the requirements of NEP and are not subject to the polices of the Greenbelt Plan<sup>7</sup>. That being said, the two policies underwent a coordinated review in 2015. Development applications within this defined region are processed by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. No amendments relevant to this study were approved within the NEP during this study's timeframe<sup>6</sup>.

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- 1 Statistics Canada. 2017. *Bruce, CTY [Census division], Ontario and Northwest Territories [Territory]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.  
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).
  - 2 OMAFRA (adopted). 2017. Area of Census Farms (Acres) by County, Ontario: 1991, 1996,2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016. With data from Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture.
  3. Statistics Canada. Table 004-0233 –Census of Agriculture, farms classified by total gross farm receipts in the year prior to the census, every 5 years (number of farms reporting unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database).
  - 4 Statistics Canada. 2012. *Bruce, Ontario (Code 3531) and Canada (Code 01)* (table). *Census 2011*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.
  5. Statistics Canada. 2012. *Grey, Ontario (Code 3506008) and Grey, Ontario (Code 3506)* (table). *Census Profile*. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.  
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 26, 2020).
  6. Niagara Escarpment Commission. 2017. *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, Office Consolidation December 21, 2018.  
[http://files.ontario.ca/appendixappendix\\_-\\_niagara\\_escarpment\\_plan2017](http://files.ontario.ca/appendixappendix_-_niagara_escarpment_plan2017)