

# DUFFERIN COUNTY



**Total Land Area (Census 2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 148,644 ha  
**Area of Census Farm (2001)<sup>2</sup>:** 78,169.9 ha  
**Area of Census Farms (2016)<sup>2</sup>:** 63,370.94 ha  
**Area of Region in the Greenbelt<sup>3</sup>:** 27,523 ha  
**Percent of Region in the Greenbelt:** 18.52%  
**Gross Farm Receipts (2016)<sup>4</sup>:** \$157.50 million  
**Gross Farm Receipts per Hectare of Census Farm:** \$2,485.30  
**Population (2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 61,735  
**Growth Rate 2006-2011<sup>5</sup>:** 4.5%  
**Growth Rate 2011-2016<sup>1</sup>:** 8.5%

Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Development Designation (Including Urban, Residential, And Employment)	<b>59 ha</b>
Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Rural Designation	<b>0 ha</b>
Land Designated As A Prime Agricultural Area With A Site-Specific Amendment To Allow Additional Uses	<b>187.8 ha</b>
<b>Total Amount of Prime Agricultural Land Loss 2000–2017</b>	<b>246.8</b>
<b>Total Prime Agricultural Land Loss as a Percentage (Per Census Farm Area 2001)</b>	<b>0.32%</b>

## 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 Dufferin 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 Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) approved by Dufferin County, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and/or the Ontario Municipal Board for Dufferin County during the years 2000–2017. The first Official Plan (OP) for Dufferin County was approved in 2015, and as such, data for the County was collected from the eight lower-tier municipalities within the County,

each with their own respective Official Plan. The lower-tier municipalities within Dufferin County are the Townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon, and Mulmur and the Towns of Grand Valley, Mono, Orangeville and Shelburne. Access to data for each of the lower-tier municipalities was provided by staff at each of the individual planning departments. The assistance of planning staff is appreciated in making this research possible<sup>1</sup>.

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 to reflect existing physical features.

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

Agricultural land use designations vary across the lower-tier municipalities in Dufferin County. In the townships of Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Melancthon and Mulmur, an *Agricultural* and a *Rural* designation are used. The *Agricultural* designation reflects prime agricultural land and specialty crop areas with highly productive class 1, 2 and 3 soils. The *Rural* designation is used for areas with lower capabilities for agriculture and class 4 to 7 soils. The town of Grand Valley also uses the *Agricultural* designation, but does not have a *Rural* designation. In the town of Mono, prime agricultural lands were not designated in the Official Plan until 2017; all agricultural lands were classified as Rural. In Orangeville and Shelburne, there are no areas designated for agriculture. For this study, lands designated as *Agricultural* were considered. As well, those lands designated *Rural* in the town of Mono were compared to the Canada Land Inventory, and then determined to be relevant if in Class 1, 2 or 3 soils.

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

**Development Designations:** Three amendments converting prime agricultural lands to a development designation were tracked in Dufferin County from 2000–2017. These amendments permitted a settlement area boundary expansion, golf course construction and the development of a private school. These amendments are captured in category 1 of Table 1.

**Rural Designation:** No amendments converting prime agricultural lands to a rural designation occurred in Dufferin County over the study period. This is reflected in the column for category 2 of Table 1.

**Site-Specific Amendments:** Site-specific amendments occurred five times throughout the study period in Dufferin County. The largest site-specific amendment permitted the lands to be developed for the Dufferin Eco Energy Park, which to date has not been developed. Other site-specific amendments permitted an existing explosive storage facility, outdoor storage and auto wrecking, development of a golf course, and the severance of a surplus farm parcel. These amendments are captured in category 3 of Table 1.

**Table 1. Prime Agricultural Area Converted Through OPAs In Dufferin 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	1	35.9	0	0
2001	1	4.1	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	0	0	0	0
2008	0	0	0	0
2009	1	0	0	18
2010	2	0	0	124
2011	0	0	0	0
2012	1	0	0	7.4
2013	0	0	0	0
2014	1	19	0	0
2015	0	0	0	0
2016	1	0	0	38.4
2017	0	0	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>187.8</b>

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

**Provincial Land Use Plans:** In Dufferin County, nearly 19% of the lands are protected under the Greenbelt Plan<sup>3</sup>. The conversion of prime agricultural lands in the county, organized by OPA application date and location relative to the borders of the Greenbelt is captured in Table 2.

**Table 2. Prime Agricultural Area Converted Through OPAs In Dufferin County By Application Date & Location Relative To The Greenbelt Plan**

	Outside the Greenbelt		Within the Greenbelt		Total
	Application date		Application Date		
	Pre 2005	2005-2017	Pre 2005	2005- 2017	
Prime agriculture area redesignated to a development or rural designation (ha)	35.9	19	4.1	0	59
Prime agricultural area with site-specific policies allowing additional uses (ha)	0	169.8	0	18	187.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>188.8</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>246.8</b>

\*Table 1 includes files based on their approval date within the 2000–2017 study time frame. Table 2 is organized based on application date so that we can determine what policy regime the approved amendments were evaluated under, and may include files that were initiated prior to the 2000-2017 study time frame.

1. Statistics Canada. 2017. *Dufferin, CTY [Census division], Ontario and Ontario [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released May 3, 2017.*
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. MMAH. 2005. “Greenbelt Outer Boundary” and MMAH, 2012. “Municipal Boundary – Upper Tier and District” data projected in UTM 17N.
4. 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).*
5. Statistics Canada. 2012. *Dufferin, Ontario (Code 3522) and Canada (Code 01) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-WXE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.*
6. Due to lack of availability of select municipal records, the hectare summary for Dufferin County may not provide a complete picture of the total amounts of prime agricultural land converted. Results should be interpreted as a best estimate given the information available.