

GREENBELT FARMERS: ECONOMIC NETWORK CASE STUDIES

Understanding the Agricultural Systems that Support Farm Viability and Rural Prosperity



INTRODUCTION

Agriculture in Ontario's Greenbelt contributes significantly to local economies, food production, and rural communities.

This research explored how farms are connected to a broad network of businesses, services, institutions, and communities that collectively support agricultural viability and economic prosperity.

The study examined seven Greenbelt farm operations to better understand the relationships that sustain farming and the importance of protecting both farmland and the broader agricultural system.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The project utilized detailed case studies of seven farm operations representing a range of commodities, scales, and business models across Ontario's Greenbelt.

Through interviews with farmers and analysis of their business relationships, the research documented the extensive economic networks that support modern agriculture.

The findings demonstrate that successful farming depends on much more than land alone. Farms rely on suppliers, processors, transportation providers, financial institutions, service businesses, labour, consumers, and local communities.

The study helped strengthen understanding of agricultural systems planning and the importance of considering agriculture as an interconnected economic network.

KEY FINDINGS



1 Agriculture Operates as a Network

Farm viability depends on a broad system of suppliers, services, processors, markets, labour, infrastructure, and communities.



2 Farmland Remains the Foundation

Access to productive agricultural land remains essential for long-term farm viability and food production.



3 Every Farm is Different

The case studies revealed significant diversity in commodities, scale, labour requirements, production methods, and business strategies.



4 Agriculture Creates Extensive Economic Benefits

Farm businesses support a wide range of local and regional enterprises, generating employment and economic activity far beyond the farm gate.



5 Agricultural Systems Planning Matters

Protecting both farmland and the supporting agricultural network contributes to resilient rural economies and long-term food security.

THE AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

At the centre of the agricultural system is the farm.



Together these connections form an Agricultural System that supports farm viability and rural prosperity.

CASE STUDY FARMS

- Almet Farms
- Grimo Nut Nursery
- Eek Farms
- Tomar Farms
- Kauzlaric Family Farms
- Ovino Farms
- Joe Loewith and Sons Ltd.



WHY IT MATTERS

- Supports local jobs and businesses
- Builds resilient agricultural systems
- Strengthens regional economies
- Supports long-term rural prosperity
- Protects food production capacity
- Reinforces the importance of agricultural systems planning

LEGACY OF THE RESEARCH

This research helped advance the concept of Agricultural Systems Planning by demonstrating that farmland protection alone is insufficient. Effective planning must also recognize and support the broader network of businesses, infrastructure, services, labour, and markets that sustain agricultural production.



Possibility grows here.



RESEARCH CREDITS

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Full report available at: <https://www.greenbelt.ca/research-report/greenbelt-farmers-economic-network-case-studies/>