



Agriculture in Northern Ontario: Ten Myths

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Most photos provided by Farmnorth.com and Marie-Pier Drolet (taken at La Chèvre laitière de Hearst Ltée).

Introduction

There are significant opportunities related to agricultural development within the Highway 11 corridor in the Clay Belt; however, economic, social and environmental barriers have limited the expansion of the agricultural sector. Through the study *Understanding the Barriers to Livestock Production in the Clay Belt: An Economic, Social and Environmental Analysis*, it has become evident that many of the barriers identified by participants were actually perceptions and not reality. In an effort to address these perceptions, the research team (Université de Hearst and Guelph University) has identified 10 myths related to agriculture in northern Ontario. The full details on these myths, including a discussion on the realities of each are included in this document.

Overview of the Ten Myths

- 1) Language
- 2) Jobs
- 3) Social Activities/Recreational Opportunities
- 4) Weather
- 5) Healthcare
- 6) Post-secondary Opportunities
- 7) Nothing Grows in the North
- 8) No Agriculture Services in the North
- 9) Isolation/Remoteness
- 10) No Youth

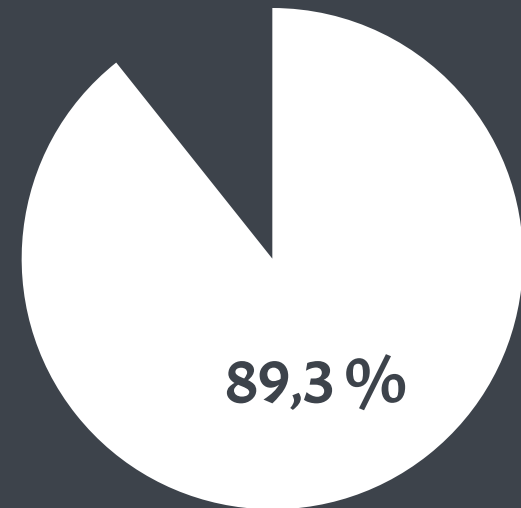


Myth:

Northern Ontario's population, including farmers, only speak French.

Reality:

While a large part of the Clay Belt's population is fluent in French, most of it is bilingual. In fact, a total of **89,3 %** of the population in the Clay Belt considers themselves bilingual or speaks only English.



Source: Statistics Canada (2018). Census Profile, 2016 Census - Select from a list [online]. Retrieved July 12th, 2019 from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/search-recherche/lst/results-resultats.cfm?Lang=F&TABID=1&G=1&Geo1=&Code1=&Geo2=&Code2=&GEOCODE=35&type=0>



Myth:

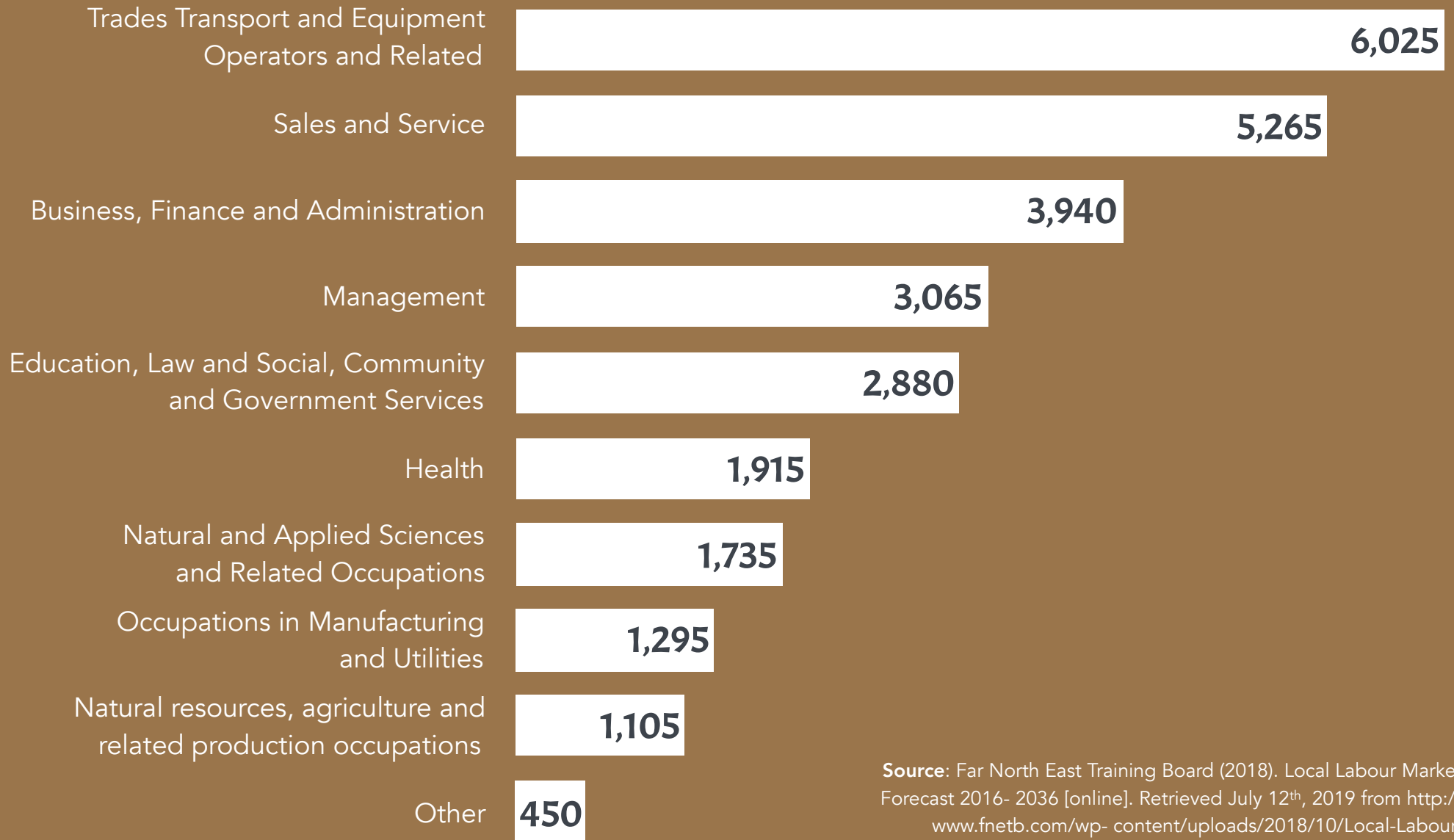
There are no job opportunities in northern Ontario.

Reality:

There are many and diverse jobs in northern Ontario including those in the service sector, tourism industry and mining, among others. In fact, a study conducted by the Far North East Training Board (FNETB) with data from Statistics Canada predicted that between 2016 and 2036, a total of **43,2 %** of the region's employed labour force will retire. This represents a total of 27,675 retirements (these retirements will occur in the area serviced by the FNETB, which includes the communities along the Highway 11 Corridor from Hearst to Latchford, and also includes the communities of Timmins, Chapleau, Gogama, Elk Lake, Hornepayne and the James Bay area).

Reality:

The occupations that will be in demand with these retirements are in different sector, as listed below :



Source: Far North East Training Board (2018). Local Labour Market Forecast 2016- 2036 [online]. Retrieved July 12th, 2019 from <http://www.fnetb.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Local-Labour-Market-Forecast-2016-2036-Part-One.pdf>



Myth:

There are limited social and recreational opportunities in the north.

Reality:

Most communities in the Clay Belt offer a diverse range of social and recreational activities for a variety of age groups and interests. For more information, visit the following links:

✓ **Town of Hearst:**

<https://www.hearst.ca/en/visitors/100-things-to-do-in-hearst/>

✓ **Town of Kapuskasing:**

<http://www.kapuskasing.ca/en/playing/Activities-and-Sports.aspx>

✓ **Town of Smooth Rock Falls:**

<https://www.smoothrockfalls.ca/living-here/recreation-activities/>

✓ **Town of Cochrane:**

<http://www.cochraneontario.com/visitors/things-to-do/>



Myth:

It is always cold in northern Ontario.

Reality:

While winters may be longer in the north, summer temperatures are not so different than those in Southern Ontario. In fact, if we compare average summer temperatures between Kapuskasing and Guelph, the difference is only two or three degrees Celsius.

Daily mean temperature per month,
in degrees Celsius

	May	June	July	August	September
Kapuskasing	9.1	14.6	17.4	16.0	11.1
Guelph	12.2	17.1	19.7	17.6	14.1

Source: Environment Canada (2019). Historical Data [online]. Retrieved July 12th, 2019 from http://climate.weather.gc.ca/historical_data/search_historic_data_e.html



Myth:

Healthcare services in northern Ontario are extremely limited.

Reality:

While access to specialists is limited in northern Ontario, most communities have access to doctors, dentists and nurse practitioners.

For a list of all health services across northern Ontario, visit the following link:

<https://www.northeasthealthline.ca>.

Myth:

There are no post-secondary opportunities in northern Ontario.

Reality:

Across northern Ontario, there are numerous universities, colleges and technical institutions. Here is a list of some post-secondary institutions in northern Ontario.

- ✓ Algoma University (Sault Ste Marie)
- ✓ Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology (Sudbury)
- ✓ Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology (North Bay)
- ✓ Collège Boréal (Sudbury and several other campuses across northern Ontario)
- ✓ Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology (Thunder Bay)
- ✓ Lakehead University (Thunder Bay)
- ✓ Laurentian University (Sudbury)
- ✓ Nipissing University (North Bay)
- ✓ Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology (Timmins)
- ✓ Université de Hearst (Hearst, Kapuskasing and Timmins)
- ✓ University of Sudbury (Sudbury)

Nothing Grows in the North



Myth:

The climate and landscape
do not permit agriculture.

Reality:

There are vast regions in northern Ontario with suitable soils and climate to produce a range of crops and livestock. This range is widening, as mentioned in the Literature Review and Jurisdictional Scan:

“With new technologies and a warming climate, crop yields are improving and the range of crops that can be grown in northern Ontario is also increasing”(Caldwell et al., 2018). As the average number of heat units has increased so has the number of crops available because of the increasingly favourable conditions (Northeast Community Network (NECN), 2018). For example, corn silage, soybeans, winter wheat and rich pastures that can support cattle farmers are becoming increasingly common in the region.” (Understand the Barriers to Livestock Production in the Clay Belt: An Economic, Social and Political Analysis. Literature Review and Jurisdictional Scan, p. 6)

No Agriculture Services in the North



Myth:

Services that support the agricultural sector are not available in northern Ontario.

Reality:

There are concentrations of agricultural services in a number of communities, that service broader areas. A few examples include abattoirs, veterinarians, farmer's markets, farm equipment sales and rentals, feed and seed, livestock sales and transport, certified crop advisors, value-added services and hardware, and building supplies. A map of these services is available at this following link:

<https://www.enhancinglocalfood.com/farm-services>.



Myth:

Residents live in isolation within remote communities.

Reality:

Many communities in northern Ontario have a strong sense of community with well-developed social networks to support area residents.

Myth:

Residents live in isolation within remote communities.

Reality:

Many youth choose to pursue their education in the north and choose to work in the north. In the last few years, an entrepreneurial movement has been observed in the Clay Belt, where young entrepreneurs moved back into the region to launch various businesses and initiatives. For example, la cordonnerie Francoeur de Kapuskasing, La Chèvre laitière de Hearst Ltée and la Fromagerie Kapuskoise.



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