

Strategic Directions for Agricultural Development in Northeastern Ontario

Building a Vibrant and Sustainable Agricultural Future

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has a long and important history in Cochrane District's Northeast Communities (NeCN). However, the sector faces significant challenges, including an aging farm population, limited succession planning, infrastructure gaps, and market access barriers.

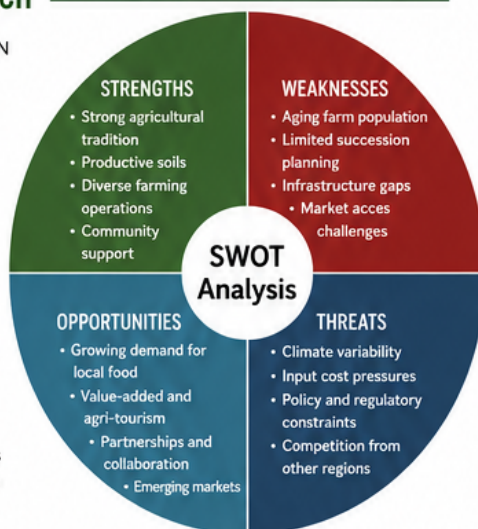
This research identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for agriculture in the region and developed strategic actions to expand and diversify agricultural development for a resilient and thriving future.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This study was undertaken for the NeCN Agriculture Steering Committee and involved a comprehensive review of existing data and literature, detailed fieldwork, and interviews with farmers, agribusinesses, service providers, and community stakeholders.

The research found that the region has soil types and climate conditions suitable for a range of agricultural products. Key barriers are largely socio-economic, including market access, infrastructure, investment, and policy support.

The result is a set of 23 strategic actions with implementation ideas to strengthen and expand agriculture across a range of scales and business models.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: 23 ACTIONS FOR GROWTH

Market Development Increase sales of local products and promote agricultural opportunities beyond the region.	Infrastructure Investment Improve on-farm and community infrastructure to support production and value addition.	Building Local Capacity Expand skills, training, and resources to enhance local agricultural capacity.	Partnerships & Collaboration Strengthen linkages among stakeholders, agri-businesses, researchers, and potential markets.	Policy & Recognition Advocate for greater recognition and support from municipal, provincial, and federal governments.	Innovation & Diversification Explore and support unconventional and emerging agricultural opportunities.
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RESEARCH CREDITS

Principal Researcher: Wayne Caldwell
 With contributions from the NeCN Agriculture Steering Committee and regional stakeholders

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KEY FINDINGS

- Agriculture Has Strong Foundations**
 The region has productive soils, a favourable climate for many crops and livestock, and a commitment to farming.
- Challenges Are Mainly Socio-Economic**
 Barriers include aging farm operators, limited succession, infrastructure gaps, market access, and investment constraints.
- Opportunities Are Significant**
 Local food demand, value-added products, agri-tourism, and new markets can drive growth and resilience.
- Collaboration Is Key**
 Strong partnerships among producers, communities, organizations, and governments are essential for progress.
- Strategic Action Is Needed**
 A coordinated set of 23 actions can help unlock the full agricultural potential of the Northeastern Ontario region.

WHY IT MATTERS



Agriculture supports local economies, creates jobs, and sustains rural communities.



Strengthening the sector enhances food security, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.



Strategic investment today will ensure a vibrant, diverse, and resilient agricultural future for the region.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Full reports, backgrounds, and implementation strategies are available.

Project website:

www.waynecaldwell.ca/projects/strategic-directions-for-agricultural-development/

This study includes two reports:

- Report 1 – Background, fieldwork findings, and SWOT analysis
- Report 2 – Strategic actions and implementation strategies