



LAND USE PLANNING FOR DIRECT MARKETING AND AGRI-TOURISM IN ONTARIO

Jurisdictional Analysis and Best Practices

Ontario farmers have diversified beyond traditional commodity production through on-farm markets, pick-your-own operations, value-added processing, educational experiences, and agri-tourism attractions. This study examined how land use planning can better support these enterprises while protecting Ontario's agricultural land base.

Prepared for the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association (OFFMA)—now Agritourism Ontario—this research identified best practices that balance agricultural protection with innovation and rural economic development.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS



Reviewed planning approaches across Ontario municipalities and comparable jurisdictions



Identified best practices for Official Plans and zoning by-laws affecting farm diversification



Examined producer and municipal perspectives on planning challenges and opportunities



Developed guiding principles supporting compatible, sustainable on-farm diversification



Advanced policy recommendations balancing agricultural protection with rural entrepreneurship



Produced a practical reference for municipalities, planners, and Ontario's agricultural sector



WHY IT MATTERS

Direct marketing and agri-tourism have become integral components of Ontario's agricultural economy, providing farmers with new income opportunities while strengthening connections between producers and consumers.

This research recognized early that planning policy needed to evolve alongside these changing business models.

Rather than viewing innovation as a challenge to agricultural preservation, the study demonstrated that thoughtfully designed planning policies can both protect prime agricultural land and encourage diversified farm businesses.

Many of the principles explored—including farm diversification, value-added agriculture, compatibility, and supportive planning frameworks—have since become well-established elements of Ontario's rural planning practice.



RESEARCH IMPACT

This project helped establish a framework for municipalities seeking to accommodate direct marketing and agri-tourism while maintaining the long-term protection of agricultural resources. By bringing together municipal experience, producer perspectives, and policy analysis, the report provided practical guidance that contributed to a more consistent and supportive planning approach across Ontario.



PROJECT LEAD

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PREPARED FOR

Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association (OFFMA), now Agritourism Ontario

