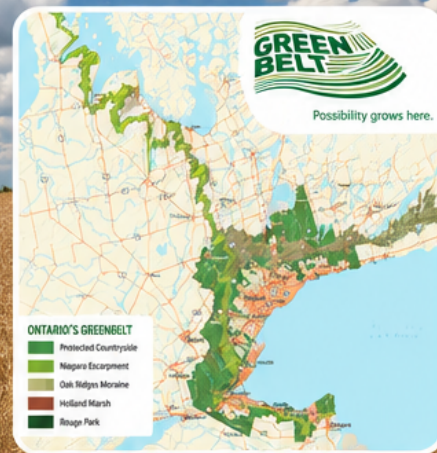




FARMING IN ONTARIO'S GREENBELT: POSSIBILITY GROWS HERE

Protecting Land by Supporting Farmers

Ontario's Greenbelt is one of the world's largest permanently protected agricultural landscapes. This research explores how we can protect not only farmland, but also the long-term viability of the farmers who steward it.



BACKGROUND

Since the adoption of the Greenbelt Plan in 2005, there have been questions about how the Plan affects the ability of farmers to operate and grow their businesses. This study examined the realities of farming in the Greenbelt through extensive consultations with farmers, planners, conservation authorities, and agricultural organizations across the region.

The Greenbelt provides long-term certainty for agriculture and recognizes the important role farming plays in our food system, economy, environment, and quality of life.



KEY FINDINGS

Most challenges faced by Greenbelt farmers arise from factors that affect agriculture across Ontario—not from the Greenbelt Plan itself.



Multiple and overlapping regulations



Inconsistent policy interpretation between municipalities and agencies



Limited understanding of agriculture within planning processes



Regulatory complexity and approval delays



The need to balance environmental protection with viable farm businesses

Farmers strongly support the Greenbelt's protection of agricultural land and see important opportunities in proximity to a large and growing market.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The study proposes practical actions to strengthen both agricultural viability and environmental stewardship:



Support value-added agriculture and local food systems



Improve coordination between governments and agencies



Strengthen understanding of agriculture within planning practice



Provide greater consistency in policy implementation



Recognize farmers as partners in environmental stewardship



Protect farmland by supporting economically sustainable farm businesses



Protecting Ontario's farmland requires more than protecting the land—it requires policies that support the long-term success of the farmers who steward it.



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