


Office of the Regional Clerk

2201 St. David's Road, P.O. Box 1042, Thorold
 ON L2V 4T7
 Tel: 905-685-1571 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215
 Fax: 905-687-4977
 kevin.bain@niagararegion.ca
 www.niagararegion.ca

October 7, 2011

CL 12-2011, October 6, 2011
ICP 12-2011, September 28, 2011
ATF September 23, 2011 Minutes

Ms. Rose Caterini, City Clerk
 City of Hamilton
 71 Main Street West
 Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Agricultural Task Force
September 23, 2011 Minutes

Dear Ms. Caterini,

Regional Council, at its meeting of October 6, 2011, approved the following recommendations of its Integrated Community Planning Committee:

That the minutes of the Regional Chair's Agricultural Task Force meeting of September 23, 2011, be received and the following recommendations be approved:

That correspondence item ATF 28-2011 respecting the Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Action Plan 2021 – Summary, be received and endorsed; and

That the Regional Municipalities of Durham, York, Peel and Halton, the Cities of Toronto and Hamilton, and the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, be so advised.

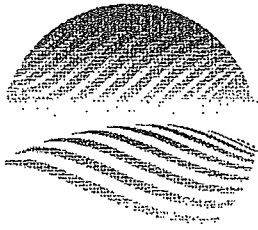
A copy of correspondence item ATF 28-2011 is enclosed for your information.

Please distribute to the appropriate persons.

Yours truly,

Kevin Bain
 Regional Clerk
 :nld

cc: Mr. P. Robson, Commissioner Integrated Community Planning
 Ms. T. Donnia, Project Manager, Community & Corporate Planning
 Ms. S. McPetrie, Administrative Assistant Integrated Community Planning
 Mr. M. Roach, Manager Public Works Financial Services
 Ms. M. L. Macara, Legal Services



Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Action Plan 2021

Summary

ATF 28-2011



Securing the Future of Food and Farming in Ontario's Golden Horseshoe

The Golden Horseshoe of Ontario, stretching along the shores of Lake Ontario, is not only the fastest growing region of Canada with a diverse and sophisticated urban population, it is a vast, rich agricultural area and home to one of the largest food and farming clusters in North America. Comprised of the Regions of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, York and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto, the Golden Horseshoe produces over 200 different types of agricultural crops and contains the majority of Ontario's food processing operations, head offices of major food retail merchandisers, Canadian headquarters of global consumer branded food companies and Ontario's food distribution centres. Characterized by thousands of vibrant entrepreneurs in food and farming, the Golden Horseshoe is home to both heritage family farms and flourishing family businesses founded by first generation Canadians.

As farmers in the Golden Horseshoe, we see a wealth of opportunities for the Golden Horseshoe to grow as an internationally renowned centre for food production. However there are challenges that are impeding the growth of food and farming in the region.

Strong leadership, progressive policies and cooperative action are required to address these challenges and capitalize on opportunities. In this day when food production is a growing concern in many nations, we owe it to future generations to ensure that the Golden Horseshoe retains and expands its role as a leading food and farming cluster.

This plan is a call to action to take on this challenge. We invite you to join our group of farmers, industry leaders and politicians to implement this plan to make the Golden Horseshoe the leading food and farming cluster in the world.

Signed By



Nick Ferri
Chair
Greater Toronto
Area Agricultural
Action Committee



Peter Lambrick
Chair
Golden Horseshoe
Food and Farming
Action Plan Steering
Committee

Photo credit: Anne Howden Thompson

Photo credit: Anne Howden Thompson

"Think of agriculture as the solution provider to society."

John Oliver, President of Maple Leaf Bio-Concepts and
Lojon Associates International, in Oshawa, ON

This summary is derived from the complete strategy and action plan.
References for statistics cited in this summary are given in the full report.

WHY THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE?

Ontario's Golden Horseshoe is home to one of the largest food and farming clusters in North America. The region's superb agricultural land is complemented by a moderate climate and access to an abundant supply of fresh water. The one million acres of farmland under production within the boundaries of the region generate in excess of \$1.5 billion in gross farm receipts annually from a production profile that includes 200 different agricultural commodities. Both provincially designated specialty crop areas in Ontario, the tender fruit and grape lands of the Niagara Peninsula and the vegetable producing "muck" soil of the Holland Marsh are located in the Golden Horseshoe. It is home to the majority of Ontario's tender fruit and grape production and the majority of the province's floriculture greenhouses.

When the value of the food processing component of the cluster is factored in, the annual economic activity is estimated to be \$12.3 billion across the food and farming cluster in the Golden Horseshoe. This direct economic activity, in turn, is estimated to contribute \$35 billion annually to Canada's economy through the multiplier effect. Food processing businesses in the region now employ more workers than the auto industry. In support of all of this activity, the Golden Horseshoe has significant, broadly based research and innovation capacity within its boundaries.

As one of the pillars of the Golden Horseshoe's diversified economy, the food and farming cluster has great potential for sustainable growth over the next ten years and beyond. A rich endowment of soil, water resources and infrastructure combined with access to a large diverse market, an abundant, educated labour force and outstanding research capabilities are among the advantages that stand to propel the cluster forward.



"The country's largest manufacturing sector is no longer one that produces auto parts or high-tech gadgets like BlackBerrys. It's food. The sector is the country's largest manufacturing industry by sales, the most recent statistics show. Sales set a record last year, topping \$80 billion – more than textiles, paper, machinery and aerospace combined."

Globe and Mail, July 20, 2011

WHY DO WE NEED A PLAN?

The potential for the Golden Horseshoe food and farming cluster to grow cannot be taken for granted. There are challenges that need to be understood and addressed. The food and farming cluster is diverse. Paradoxically, while the defining characteristics noted on page 3 make the cluster resilient, there has been a lack of focus and collective purpose in formulating integrated policies to support and nurture its growth.

Key challenges faced by the food and farming businesses in the region are complex. The challenges include:

- fierce competition for land which:
 - drives land prices beyond the reach of farmers and results in the conversion of farmland to other uses;
 - impedes the development of new business and the expansion of existing businesses;
- lack of public awareness about the opportunities and advantages associated with the food and farming cluster;
- multiple, disjointed regulations and policies that detract from the ability to do business efficiently;
- congestion that negatively affects the efficient movement of goods and the cost of transportation;
- rising costs of energy and uncertainty over the impact of global climate change;
- expanding urban-based infrastructure that impacts the ability to farm efficiently;
- lack of integration among different parts of the cluster; and
- gaps in infrastructure that frustrate integration.

By addressing and managing these challenges, farmers, government, business and other stakeholders will help the cluster flourish.

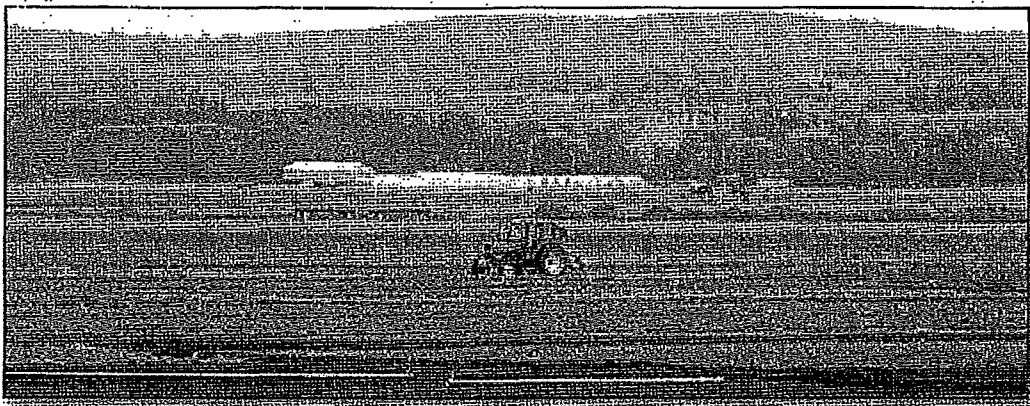


Photo credit: <http://news.ontario.ca/omafra/en/2010/04/quebec-ontario-trade-and-cooperation-agreement.html>

HOW DID THE PLAN START?

The implementation of the Greenbelt Act in 2005 was the catalyst that brought many of the parties involved in food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe together. They became aware of their common interests and recognized that by working together, they had the potential to:

- support economic viability for all components of the food and farming cluster;
- better protect the agricultural land base;
- build better regional connections throughout the food and farming value chain; and
- reduce regulatory barriers to enable the cluster to thrive.

In response to this opportunity, in August 2009, the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, in co-operation with the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee (GTA AAC)¹, the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, Greater Toronto Countryside Mayors' Alliance², the Region of Niagara and the City of Hamilton, met to discuss the issues related to food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe.

As the discussion progressed, it became apparent that everyone present was addressing similar challenges, investing in similar projects across the Golden Horseshoe and working to support components of the food and farming cluster. With the enactment of the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the timing was opportune to act. The GTA AAC, Region of Niagara, City of Hamilton and Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation joined forces, secured funding, consulted with stakeholders, government agencies and industry representatives and collaborated to create a strategy and action plan to support food and farming across the Golden Horseshoe and in the Holland Marsh.

This **Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021** is the result of the ensuing collaboration. This plan is a call to action to protect what we have and to enrich it.

1 The GTA AAC is comprised of representatives from governments and organizations associated with agriculture, agri-food business and the local food system in the City of Toronto and the Regions of Durham, Halton, Peel and York. For more information about the GTA AAC go to www.gtaaac.ca

2 Greater Toronto Countryside Mayor's Alliance municipalities include: City of Pickering, Municipality of Clarington, Townships of Scugog, Uxbridge, Brock, King, East Gwillimbury and the Towns of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Aurora, Newmarket, Georgina, Milton, Caledon and Halton Hills

FOOD AND FARMING CLUSTER

A food and farming cluster is comprised of enterprises and institutions involved in growing, harvesting, processing and distributing food, beverage and bioproducts derived from agriculture. The phrase is used to describe the combined activities and outputs of primary production (farmers), food processing, food service providers [including hotels, restaurants, and institutions], food wholesalers/distributors and food retailers/merchandisers. Each component has its own input suppliers and service providers. "Food and farming" also includes ornamental plants, equestrian activities, and the production of bioproducts and bio-energy. A cluster is defined as a geographic region with a sufficient number of activities with similar or related needs and interests to generate external economies of scale and produce innovation. A food and farming cluster is comprised of enterprises and institutions involved in growing, harvesting, processing and distributing food, beverage and bioproducts derived from agriculture. Essential supporting activities that are a vital part of the cluster are those that provide services, impart skills and training, undertake research and innovation and enable commercialization.

WHAT WILL THE PLAN ACHIEVE?

This Food and Farming Action Plan for the Golden Horseshoe provides a blueprint for supporting and growing a thriving, integrated food and farming sector in the Golden Horseshoe. It responds to the common challenges and opportunities the area shares. These challenges and opportunities arise from the large concentration of population, growth pressures, juxtaposition of agricultural and urban land uses, myriad of regulations and overlapping agencies, and cluster of food and farming enterprises located within it. The plan focuses on **enhancing competitiveness, promoting sustainability and removing barriers** that stand in the way of achieving these goals.

*"We're going to be making the difference.
We're going to be there to lead the re-diversification
of agriculture production in Ontario".*

Dr. Jim Brandle, CEO, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

WHY A TEN YEAR TIME FRAME?

The action plan covers a ten year period from 2011 to 2021. This timeline was chosen in response to election timetables at the municipal and provincial levels, census cycles, and to incorporate the scheduled review of the Greenbelt Plan in 2015. A ten year time frame allows sufficient time to achieve the longer term goals, and is of manageable duration when asking partners for commitments.

WHAT ARE THE KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS?

Success depends on strong leadership and a commitment from the diverse partners identified in the plan, to work together towards common goals. If each partner does their part, with the assistance of strong and focused leaders, the result will be the emergence of a stronger, more secure food and farming cluster in the Golden Horseshoe. The cluster will be an engine for economic growth that will sustain food production and healthy living in the region and beyond for future generations.

One of the fundamental guiding principles established by the Steering Committee³ in preparing the Action Plan was to avoid duplication of effort and build on existing work that addresses food and farming issues. Each of the partners in this process has been working on advancing food and farming interests. This Action Plan builds on past results and incorporates plans that are ongoing. Where one partner is advanced in the management of a particular issue, their lead role will continue and the positive experiences and lessons learned about the issue will be applied to the entire Golden Horseshoe.

The plan must be implemented as a complete package. "Cherry picking" individual parts will not achieve the goals. The actions and tasks must work together as a co-ordinated plan.

³ The Steering Committee members are listed on page 19

WHAT ARE THE KEY OPPORTUNITIES?

The timing of this Action Plan is opportune. There is a convergence of circumstances that support implementation of a successful plan.

Actions need to focus on specific goals:

- create a positive environment for investors;
- seed new enterprises through commercialization and incubation;
- attract global enterprises as their preferred investment destination;
- protect the land base for agriculture and create the circumstances that support profitable, sustainable farming in the Golden Horseshoe;
- raise public awareness about the contribution of the food and farming cluster to health;
- grow the food and farming cluster by using the experience and connections of the Golden Horseshoe's diverse population to open markets for food and farming products in countries with rapid economic and population growth;
- build first class infrastructure to service the food and farming cluster; and
- increase access to locally grown food, promoting a consumer culture of quality over price and celebrating regional product.

"Canada is positioned to leverage the trust we Canadians have in our safe food supply to gain the confidence of the world. Canada can become renowned for food of outstanding quality as Switzerland is for the integrity of its finance sector."

Dr. Gord Surgeoner, President, Ontario Agri-Food Technologies

Photo credit: <http://www.actionplan.gc.ca/initiatives/eng/index.asp?mode=3&initiativeID=315>



CHOOSING THE ACTIONS

This plan focuses specifically on actions that support food and farming businesses in the Golden Horseshoe. To assess which actions should be included in the plan, representatives of the food and farming cluster used three fundamental tests:

- Is the action addressing a Golden Horseshoe specific issue?
- Will the action make a real difference to the future of food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe?
- Is the action realistic and therefore achievable?

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

To be successful, the actions must be implemented by:

- Assigning lead responsibilities to committed, capable partners who can provide the necessary leadership, sustain consensus and achieve results;
- Establishing clear goals and corresponding measures for success;
- Establishing timelines for important implementation milestones; and
- Monitoring progress achieved, reporting on outcomes, and celebrating wins.

"The Future is not a place we are going, it is a place we are creating."

John Schaar, University of California.

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre



The Action Plan

The food and farming cluster in the Golden Horseshoe is diverse and multi-faceted with tremendous potential to expand. The essential elements of this cluster are well-established, anchored in the prime agricultural land base. What makes the Golden Horseshoe so unique and well suited to food and farming includes:

- a combination of rich soil, abundant fresh water and a moderate climate;
- a well established food and beverage manufacturing sector, linked to the food and beverage processing cluster;
- a concentration of food retail and food service businesses driven by entrepreneurs;
- access to abundant skilled labour; and
- multi-modal transportation systems.

The partners supporting this action plan include representatives from all parts of the food and farming cluster. Together they endorse this vision for the food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe:

THE VISION

The Golden Horseshoe is globally renowned as a vibrant food and farming cluster, characterized by profitable farming operations, a thriving hub of food processing, food retail and food service businesses, extensive research capacity, innovative technology, and a wide range of healthy and safe products.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

The action plan focuses on achieving five outcomes.

A. GROW THE CLUSTER

Grow the Golden Horseshoe so it becomes the leading food and farming cluster in the world, renowned for healthy and safe products.

B. LINK FOOD, FARMING AND HEALTH

Educate current and future consumers about the importance of locally sourced food and farming products for enhancing their health and well-being.

C. FOSTER INNOVATION

Encourage and support innovation to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the Golden Horseshoe food and farming cluster.

D. ENABLE THE CLUSTER

Align policy tools and their application to enable food and farming businesses to be increasingly competitive and profitable.

E. CULTIVATE NEW APPROACHES

Pilot new approaches to support food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe.

A. GROW THE CLUSTER

Grow the Golden Horseshoe cluster so it becomes the leading food and farming cluster in the world, renowned for healthy and safe products.

Farming and food are vital contributors to the economy of the Golden Horseshoe, providing food to families and bioproducts to industry while creating jobs and healthy communities. Agricultural production and food processing are estimated to generate \$12.3 billion in output annually in the Golden Horseshoe. This direct output, in turn, stimulates \$35 billion of total estimated annual economic activity across Canada's economy.

Ontario's food and beverage manufacturing sector, a vital part of the food and farming value chain, employs over 110,000 people directly and over 100,000 more in related industries. The majority of this workforce activity occurs within the Golden Horseshoe.

The unique physical land features combined with high quality soils and moderate climate have given the area a wealth of agricultural and economic opportunities. The region is also one of the most densely populated, culturally diverse areas in Canada, with a population of 8.1 million in 2011, projected to grow to 11.5 million by 2031. These factors, combined with the area's food processing sector and proximity to the American market, give the Golden Horseshoe opportunities not found in other areas of the province – access to domestic and international markets, a skilled labour force, transportation infrastructure and a wide variety of post-secondary educational institutions.



Photo credit: <http://www.planetmattersandmore.com/sustainable-agriculture-2/what-is-local-food-defining-local-food/>

"Walmart Canada is estimated to be the fourth largest buyer of fruits and vegetables in Canada. Their pledge is to buy 100% local in season."
The Grower, March 2011

At the same time, the cluster faces the following barriers to growth:

- development pressures;
- an aging infrastructure;
- pressure on profitability;
- expensive land and rising labour costs;
- competition from the importation of low-cost offshore food products;
- aging farm operators; and
- gaps and inefficiencies in the food value chain.

There is a compelling need to build awareness of the value of this sector in relation to the provincial economy and implement strategies necessary to renew and grow this cluster.

Eating local food has a 3:1 economic impact on the local economy, according to research done for Local Food Plus. Hence, increasing the consumption of locally grown and processed food will yield important benefits.

Strategy: Grow the cluster by coordinating economic development, finding the voids, filling the gaps, and building on strengths in the Golden Horseshoe.

Task 1: Implement the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan.

- 2: Align and strengthen dedicated economic development and planning resources to support the food and farming cluster in the Golden Horseshoe.
- 3: Make solutions to infrastructure gaps to support the food and farming industry a top priority.
- 4: Leverage the cultural diversity of the Golden Horseshoe to expand existing and cultivate new markets.

"Collaboration among farmers, processors, retailers and research and innovation leaders is essential if we are going to be a highly productive and competitive sector. This plan sets the course for a new and innovative way of conducting business in agriculture and agri-food."

Donald Ziraldo, Chairman, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

B. LINK FOOD, FARMING AND HEALTH

Educate current and future consumers about the importance of locally sourced food and farming products for enhancing their health and well-being.

Access to nutritious, affordable, safe and culturally diverse food is a foundation for an active, healthy life.

Unhealthy eating leads to increased risks for serious and long-term chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. In 2003, Health Canada estimated the total economic burden of unhealthy choices in Canada at approximately \$6.6 billion per year.

However, consumer trends indicate Canadians are making healthier food choices. An Angus Reid poll in February 2011 shows that 76% of Canadians are making healthier food choices compared to three years ago. People aged 55 and over led the pack, with 80% of them making healthier eating choices compared to 76% of those ages 35 to 54 and 73% among those ages 18 to 34.

Eating more fresh food was cited as the most common way people are improving their dietary habits; 42% of respondents were taking that approach as compared to 38% who said they had reduced their salt intake and 36% who have cut down on fat.

The study also shows that about two-thirds of consumers are influenced by nutrition information on food packages while cost is cited as the largest barrier to buying healthy food.

Food safety is also a consumer concern and Canadians are increasingly wary of the safety of imported food products (Decima Poll, 2010). According to Canadian Food Inspection Agency (2011), over 70% of food products sold in Canada are imported and most of the domestic products contain imported ingredients. These products and ingredients come from more than 190 countries which have varying levels of food safety controls.

"In Canada, public trust in our food supply is high, a fact that's been proven repeatedly in studies carried out by Ipsos Reid for AGCare and Ontario Farm Animal Council. But as increasingly fewer Canadians know how food is produced and where it comes from, and special interest groups are using fear to push their agendas with retailers, government and media, those numbers won't stay high forever."

Lillian Schaer, Food and Farming Canada, January 2011

"Canada imports more than 53% of its vegetables and over 95% of its fruit. Red meat imports have risen 600% over the last 40 years. In fact, in 15 years, our food imports increased by 160% while Canada's population increased by only 15%. Ontario, with some of Canada's best farmland, has annual food imports valued at \$4 billion – from bananas to more exotic citrus and other fresh and processed products. For each apple exported from Ontario, five are imported. For pears, the ratio is one exported for every 700 imported."
(EatRealEatLocal.ca)

Many of these imports take days or weeks to reach our shelves. Local food can be on our plates within hours.

Farmers and food processors in the Golden Horseshoe, with their wealth of healthy and safe product offerings, can have a vital role in meeting these changing consumer demands, if the systems are in place to support the farm and food cluster.

Strategy: Work closely with a broad range of stakeholders to educate and inform consumers about healthy food products from Golden Horseshoe.

Task 1: Increase local food literacy with a focus on youth.

2: Mandate local health units within Golden Horseshoe communities to promote increased consumption of local food.

3: Expand the use, management and impact of the Foodland Ontario brand.

Photo credit: <http://chairsundertrees.com/2011/05/farmers-markets-and-the-environment/>



C. FOSTER INNOVATION

Encourage and support innovation to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the Golden Horseshoe food and farming cluster.

The keys to being competitive in today's world markets are *innovation* and *flexibility*. It is essential to implement new ways of doing business. The Golden Horseshoe has significant, broadly based research and innovation capacity focused within its boundaries that can help food and farming businesses to achieve this goal. The Holland Marsh Muck Research Station focuses on specific attributes of the region. Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, established in 2007, provides a new collaborative model, representing industry, government and universities, to drive innovation and commercialization in horticulture. Numerous world class universities and colleges located in the region conduct leading research into issues related to health and well being. The University Health Network, located in the City of Toronto, is a world leader in health research. Businesses in the Golden Horseshoe have ready access to Guelph's outstanding agri-food research expertise.

Strategy: Position the agriculture, food processing, food retail and food service sector in the Golden Horseshoe as "the place to do business".

Task 1: Identify and develop avenues that provide access to business planning, capital, opportunities for market development and enable commercialization of new food and farming products

2: Attract entrepreneurs and skilled people to the food and farming cluster.

3: Invest in training and applied research that supports and grows the cluster.

"We are in the consumer satisfaction business. To be successful, you have to innovate to meet the changing needs of Canadian consumers. We think that we have a better chance of being successful if we are innovating to address their concerns."

Richard Glover, President, PepsiCo Beverages Canada, National Post, August 2, 2011

Photo credit: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/growingforward/> Image number: 1028462



D. ENABLE THE CLUSTER

Align policy tools and their application to enable food and farming businesses to be increasingly competitive and profitable.

To attract and retain food and farming businesses, the Golden Horseshoe must be viewed as a desirable place to do business. Canada has a reputation for well-regulated businesses producing safe products. However, regulation can also result in frustrating delays and increased costs of doing business. Within the boundaries of the Golden Horseshoe there are seven regional governments and 36 local municipalities, each of which has a set of planning policies and regulations. Added to that are six conservation authorities and multiple provincial and federal agencies each with separate mandates and regulations. The process for doing business in this cumbersome regulated environment can be streamlined and the cost lowered without compromising public good.

"Farmers are Ontario's biggest land-owning business segment, and need to be at the table either personally or through elected representatives when decisions are made that affect farming."

Owen Roberts, University of Guelph,
September 2011



Photo credit: <http://www.eyefetch.com/image.aspx?ID=1396338>

Strategy: Harmonize regulations, provide one-stop shopping for approvals and create an "open for business" environment.

Task 1: Harmonize and improve policy tools in the Golden Horseshoe (eg: provincial policies, Official Plans, taxation, regulations) for consistent implementation responsive to the needs of food and farming businesses.

- 2:** Strengthen protection of prime agricultural land in the Golden Horseshoe while demonstrably supporting profitability for farmers.
- 3:** Establish a food and farming champion to drive a one-window approach in each region to enable food and farming businesses to succeed.
- 4:** Align provincial and municipal taxes and fees to support food and farming businesses and innovation.

E. CULTIVATE NEW APPROACHES

Pilot new approaches to support food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe.

The Greenbelt is the common bond that defines and differentiates the Golden Horseshoe.

Greenbelts are works in progress around the world. There are valuable lessons to be learned and applied as the concept evolves. One of the prominent goals of greenbelts is to protect and promote food production; however when the Ontario Greenbelt was established, farmers within it were concerned that their interests were not addressed. This Action Plan will address those concerns, monitor the evolution of the Greenbelt and set up a mechanism for providing input to the scheduled 2015 review to ensure the Greenbelt supports food and farming.

Farming in the Golden Horseshoe has its own set of challenges. Although there are advantages related to the good soil, moderate climate, and access to market, there are disadvantages associated with farming in an urban or near urban environment. The impacts of uncertainty and changing circumstances related to climate change, growth patterns and policy shifts must be considered. Steps need to be taken to build on the advantages and counter the disadvantages of farming in the Golden Horseshoe.

"Ten years ago if anyone had suggested that I would be attending a farmer appreciation event hosted by the Regional Conservation Authority, I would have laughed at them. Yet, there I was, not only attending, but pleased to be making a presentation to celebrate the success of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program."

Nick Ferri, Chair, Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group and
Chair, Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee

Strategy: Be a leader in developing programs to support food and farming.

Task 1: Actively participate in review of the Greenbelt in 2015.

- 2:** Design, pilot and implement a system to acknowledge and reward farmers for environmental goods and services.
- 3:** Develop realistic local food, beverage, bioproducts and ornamentals procurement policies for public agencies.
- 4:** Conduct research into the shifting conditions affecting farming and in urban and near urban areas.

MOVING FORWARD

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

Other groups and agencies are already addressing many of the issues that have been identified here but the actions being taken are disjointed. Coordination, cooperation and maximizing use of resources will be key requirements in implementing this action plan. The plan will not duplicate efforts; it will build on existing efforts and achieve success through cooperation. The plan will be aligned with complementary initiatives such as the national food strategy. The plan is not static. It is a dynamic, living plan, like the cluster it promotes. Therefore, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021 must be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

LEADERSHIP

Because the implementation of the action plan involves a series of actions that will occur under the leadership of different champions, there will be a vital role for an overarching body committed to monitoring the process, working with the partners on their different tracks, measuring success and making adjustments when required. In order to implement the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021, a new governance model will be created.

Comprised of representatives of the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee, the City of Hamilton, the Greenbelt Foundation and the Region of Niagara, the **Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA)** includes farmers, industry representatives, economic development officers, politicians and agency representatives, all with a common interest: fostering the food and farming cluster in the Golden Horseshoe. Supported by the seven senior municipal governments in the Golden Horseshoe, and working with committed partners at the provincial and federal levels, this team is in place with the energy and commitment to oversee the implementation of this action plan.

"Agriculture is the backbone of a strong and healthy Canada. It's one of this country's top five industries, contributes \$130 billion to our economy each year and provides one in eight jobs. The bottom line is that agriculture matters to Canada."

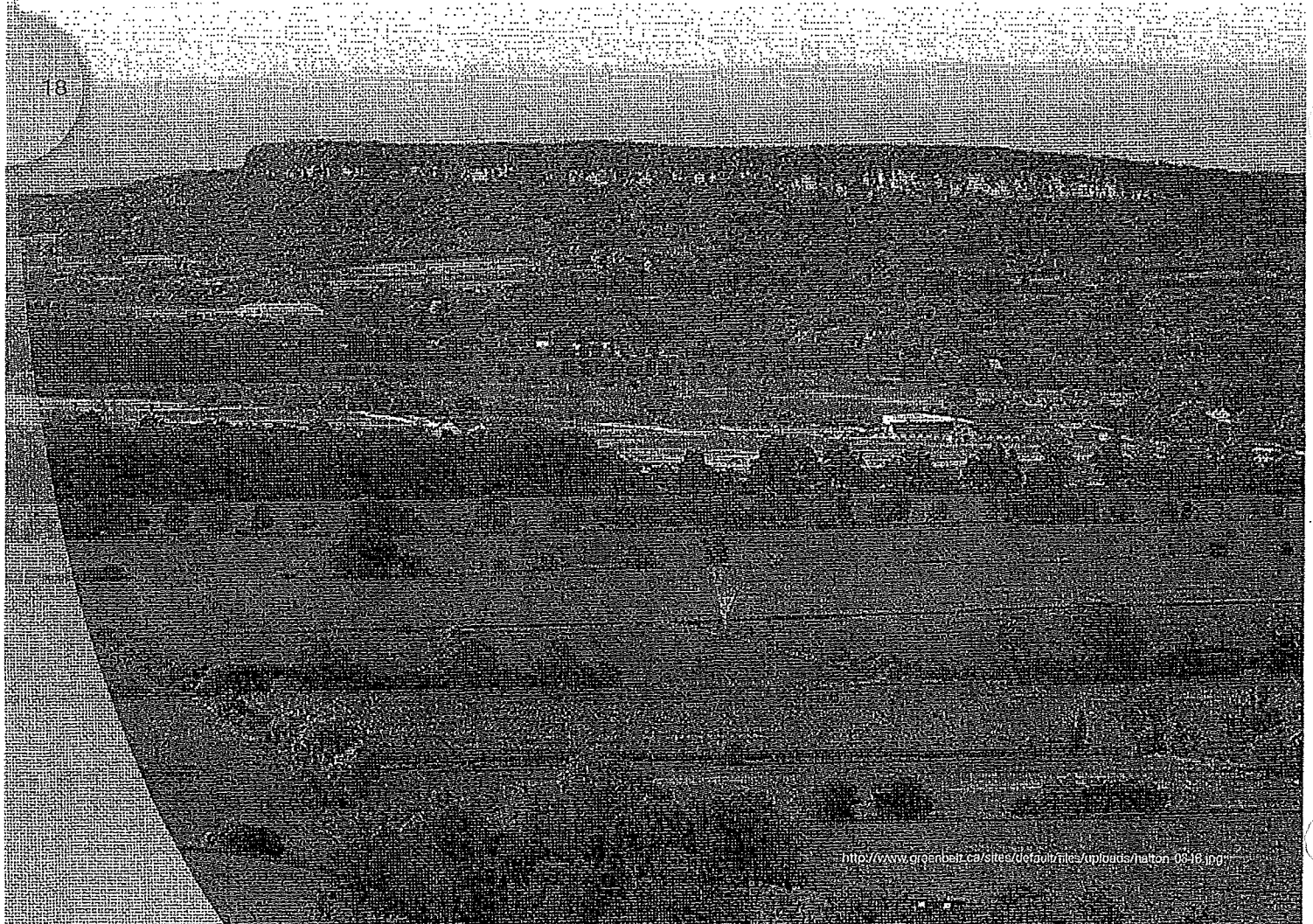
Greg Stewart, President and CEO of Farm Credit Canada, August 30, 2011

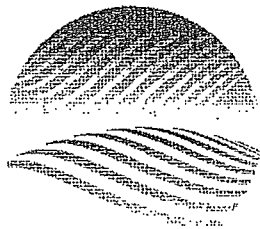
Photo credit: <http://www.famfamilyvt.com/>

NEXT STEPS

There is much to be done. We are determined that in 10 years we will have achieved our vision. We are convinced that that the Golden Horseshoe will be:

- globally renowned as a vibrant food and farming cluster, characterized by profitable farming operations and a thriving hub of food processing, food retail and food service businesses; and
- recognized and valued for its extensive research capacity, innovative technology, and a wide range of healthy and safe products.





Golden Horseshoe

Food & Farming Action Plan 2021

Funding Provided By:

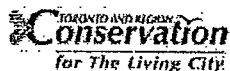


Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada



Possibility grows here



Peel Federation of Agriculture
Halton Federation of Agriculture
Durham Federation of Agriculture

York Federation of Agriculture
Hamilton - Wentworth Federation of Agriculture
Niagara North Federation of Agriculture

Steering Committee Membership

Nick Ferri

Chair, GTA AAC, Peel Federation of Agriculture

Peter Lambrick

*Chair, Steering Committee for Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021,
Halton Region Federation of Agriculture*

Sue Coverdale

City of Hamilton

Fiona Nelson

Toronto Food Policy Committee

Kathy Macpherson

Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

Jamie Reaume

Holland Marsh Growers Association

Patrick Robson

Region of Niagara

Barb Shopland

Co-ordinator / Committee Member

Marlene Werry

Region of Durham

Janet Horner

Executive Director, Greater Toronto Agricultural Action Committee

