2022/2023

AGRICULTURE IN HAMILTON

An Update Based on the 2021 Census of Agriculture

PREPARED BY:

INVEST IN HAMILTON

HAMILTON AGRICULTURE SNAPSHOT

source: 2021 Census

GROSS OUTPUT IMPACT

$1,339,558,451

EMPLOYMENT

2,207 workers

includes full-time, part-time and seasonal workers

21% of farms sell products directly to the consumer

27 farms sell at farmers' markets

112 farms sell directly from their farm, at stands or pick-your-own

TOP 3 FARM TYPES

32% Oilseed and Grain

16% Other Animal Production

15% Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production

679 farms

118,070 acres of farmland

174 acres average farm size

$366 million Total Farm Operating Revenue

$299 million Total Farm Operating Expenses

$67 million Revenue over expenses

AGRICULTURE IN HAMILTON

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Introduction

The City of Hamilton is home to a vibrant rural economy. The backbone to rural life in Hamilton is agriculture, which continues to be an important sector to the City. The following is a statistical overview of the agriculture sector in the City of Hamilton. The overview describes characteristics relating to the land base, the production profile, financial indicators, farm operating costs, characteristics of farm operators, and the economic impact of the agricultural production in the City. All data in this document are derived from the 2021, 2016 and 2011 Census of Agriculture unless otherwise stated. Comparisons are made between Ontario and the Golden Horseshoe (i.e. the regions of Niagara, Peel, Halton, Durham, York and Hamilton).

Hamilton's Farmland

Location	Total Farm Area (acres)	Number of Farms	Average Farm Size (Acres)
Hamilton	118,070	679	174
Niagara	208,414	1,651	126
Peel	95,583	377	254
Halton	72,920	431	169
Durham	264,518	1,200	220
York	134,414	604	223
Ontario	11,766,071	48,346	243

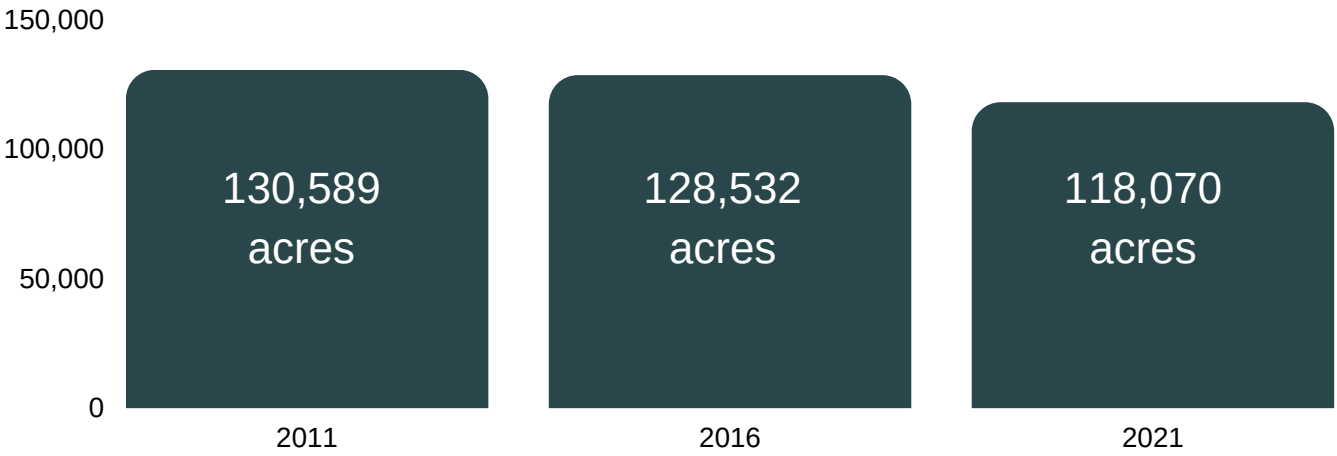
Hamilton houses approximately 1.0% of Ontario's total farm area (approximately 13.2% of the Golden Horseshoe's farm area) and 1.4% of Ontario's total number of farms (approximately 13.7% of the Golden Horseshoe's farms). The average size of a Hamilton farm has increased from 159 acres in 2016, to 174 acres in 2022, representing an increase of 9.4% - this is compared to a 2.8% increase for the entirety of the Golden Horseshoe.

Table 1: Total Farms in Hamilton

Location	2011	2016	2021
Hamilton	885	810	679
Niagara	2,014	1,827	1,651
Peel	440	408	377
Halton	469	451	431
Durham	1454	1323	1,200
York	828	712	604
Ontario	51,950	49,600	48,346

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of farms in Ontario declined by 2.5%. In Hamilton, the number of farms declined by 16.2% from 810 in 2016 to 679 in 2021. Approximately 54.2% of farmland was owned, compared to 45.8% that were leased, rented, or crop shared. As well, the average size of a farm increased by 9.4% from 159 acres in 2016 to 174 acres in 2021.

Figure 1: Farmland in Hamilton



Similar to the data seen in Table 1, Figure 1 reports that the total farmland in Hamilton has declined by approximately 8.1%, down from 128,532 acres in 2016 to 118,070 acres in 2021. Total farmland in the Golden Horseshoe also declined by 4.3% between 2016 and 2021. Although Hamilton experienced declines in both the number of farms and farmland, Hamilton's farms are the most profitable in the Golden Horseshoe (average of $104,764 per farm).

Table 2: Farm Types in Hamilton

Farm Type	2011	2016	2021	5-year % change	5-year change
Oilseed and grain farming	206	210	217	3.3%	7
Other animal production	178	144	108	-25.0%	-36
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	144	122	104	-14.8%	-18
Cattle ranching and farming	76	69	65	-5.8%	-4
Other crop farming	97	90	60	-33.3%	-30
Vegetable and melon farming	58	59	43	-27.1%	-16
Poultry and egg production	42	41	35	-14.6%	-6
Fruit and tree nut farming	57	56	33	-41.1%	-23
Sheep and goat farming	22	13	11	-15.4%	-2
Hog and pig farming	5	6	3	-50.0%	-3
Total number of farms	**885**	**810**	**679**	**-16.2%**	**-131**

More than half of Hamilton's farms (approximately 63.2%) are engaged in either oilseed and grain farming, animal production, or greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production. Oilseed and grain farming is the only farm type to show an increase in the number of farms between the two census periods. Other animal production and other crop farming have seen the largest absolute declines in farms between 2016 and 2016. Table 3 offers a more specific breakdown on these farm types.

Table 3: Detailed Farm Types in Hamilton

Farm Type (largest in 2021)	2016	2021	5-year % change
Soybean farming	81	114	40.7%
Horse and other equine production	112	81	-27.7%
Nursery and tree production	65	76	16.9%
Corn farming	55	48	-12.7%
Beef cattle ranching and farming, including feedlots	46	47	2.2%

These five farm types represent slightly more than half of all farms operating in Hamilton. Increases in the number of farms are observed among soybean farms (40.7%), nursery and tree farms (16.9%) and beef cattle ranching and farming (2.2%).

Figure 2: Most Farms Gained and Lost (2016-2021)

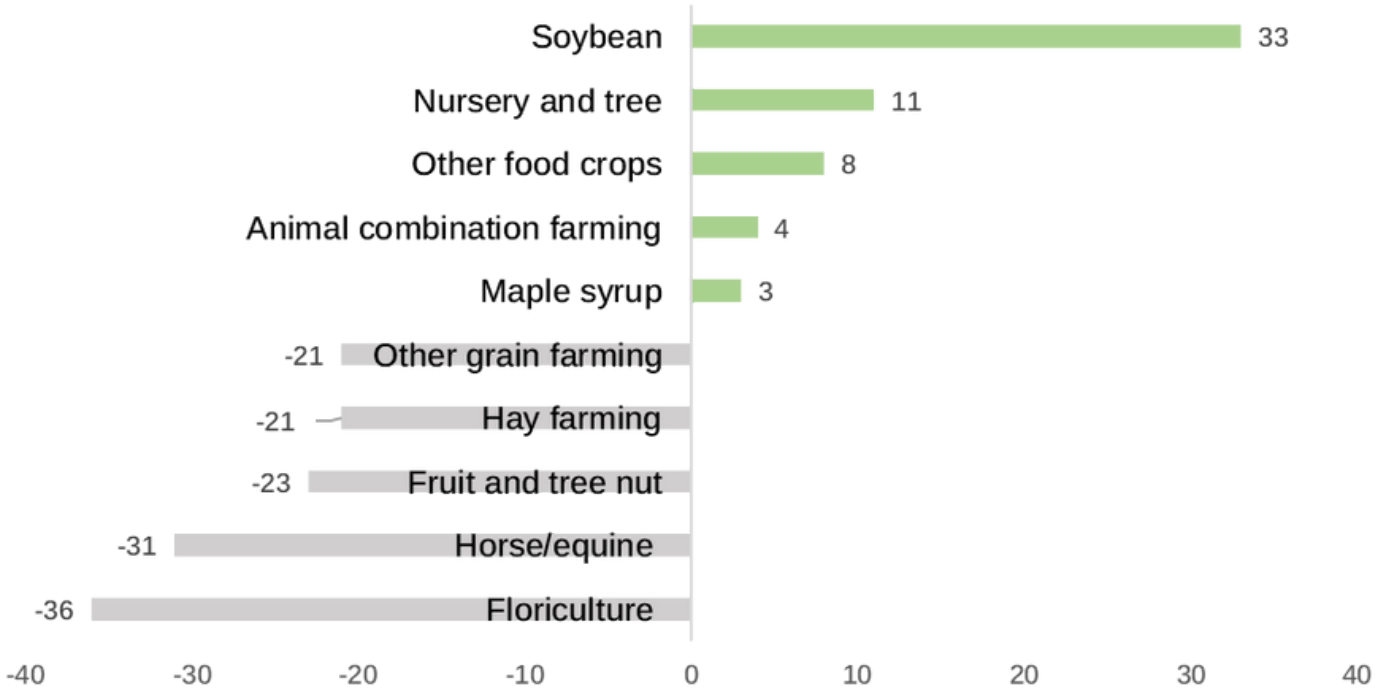
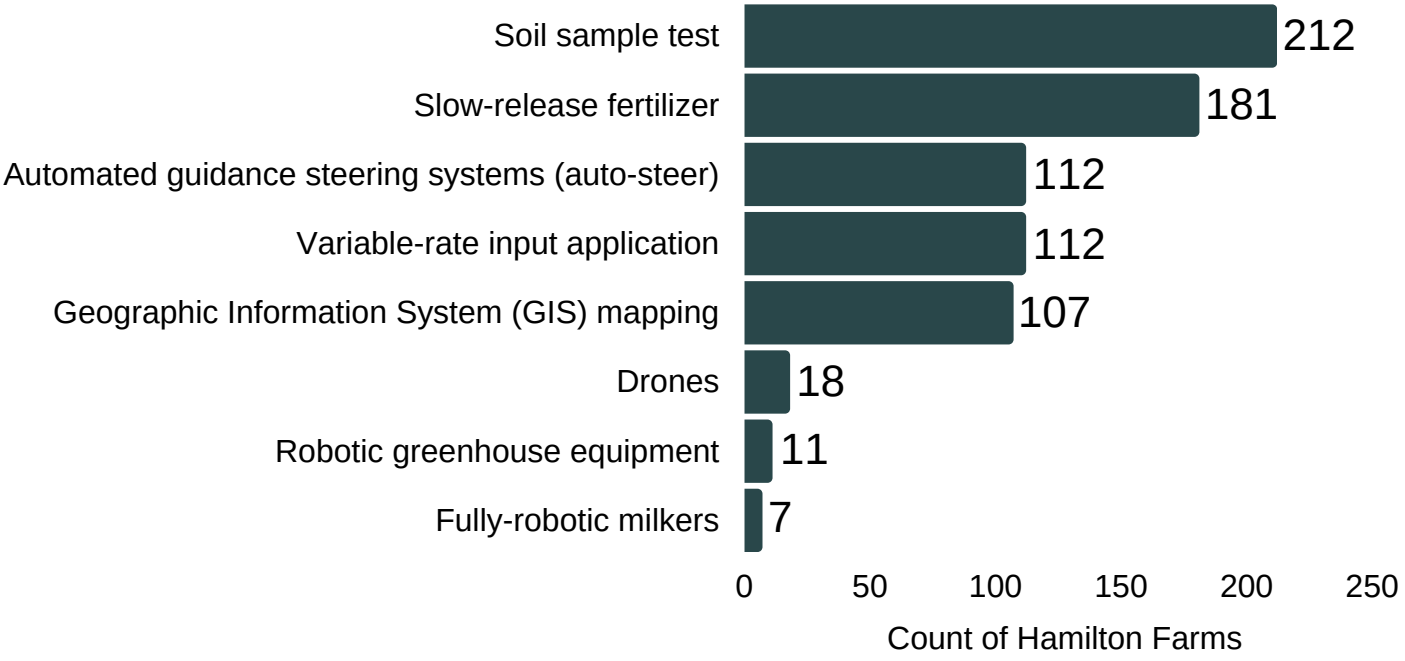


Figure 2 contextualizes the farm types where Hamilton has seen the most gains and losses between 2016 and 2021. Soybean farming is not only the most common farm type in Hamilton but saw the most recent gains. Floriculture and horse and equine production saw the largest decrease in farms.

Figure 3: Technology Used in Hamilton Farms



Farms in Hamilton are embracing innovative technology to increase their efficiency and competitiveness within the global and domestic markets. This use of technology also extends to the use of renewable energy production on farms.

Table 4: Renewable Energy Production on Hamilton Farms

Renewable Production Use	Number of Farms
Energy for Sale	70
Energy for Use in Farm	49
Total	**112**

The 112 farms producing renewable energy represent an estimated 16.5% of Hamilton's total farms. This figure is comparable to the 17.5% of farms in Ontario that produce renewable energy for use in production or resale.

Among these energy producing farms, solar power represents 69.6% of the renewable power generation mix. In Ontario, solar represents 62.4% of farm-based renewable power generation. Most of the remaining farm-based power generation (28.6%) in Hamilton is derived from geothermal energy production.

Figure 4: Total Hamilton Farm Revenue / Farm Receipts

Statistics Canada previously recorded agricultural operating revenue as "gross farm receipts". Gross farm receipts were directly reported to the Census of Agriculture by farm operators . Revenue and expense data in this report are extracted from the Agricultural Taxation Data Program and reflect the tax revenues and expenses of farms reporting to the Canada Revenue Agency. This means the 2011 and 2016 versus the 2021 revenue should be seen as two snapshots gathered through different methods, and not a natural time series.

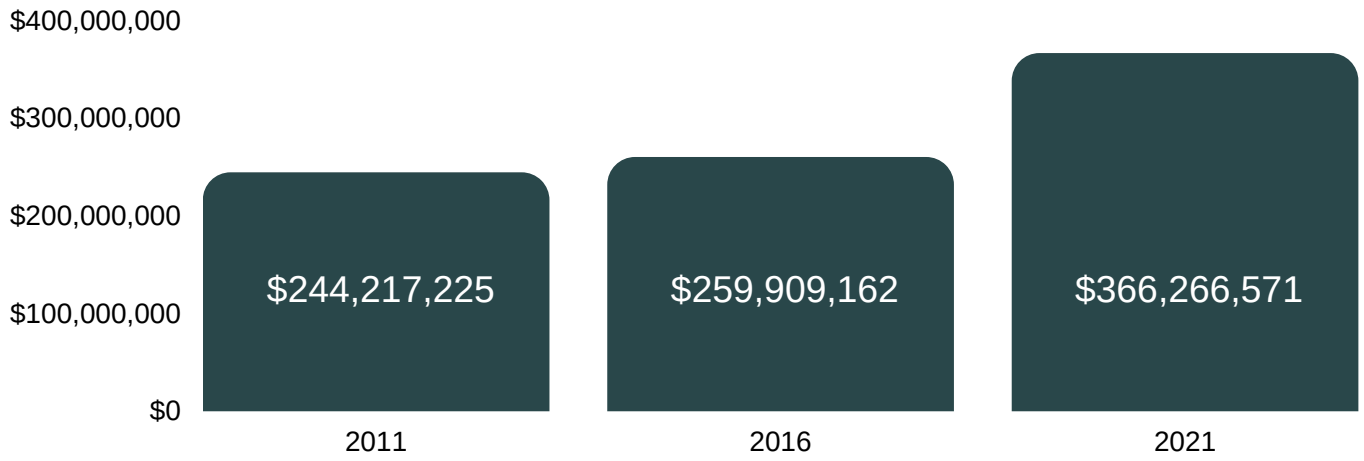


Table 5: Golden Horseshoe Farm Revenue in 2021

Location	Farms Reporting	Operating Revenue
Niagara	1,562	$1,014,290,126
Durham	1,127	$428,358,254
York	549	$390,192,193
Hamilton	**642**	**$366,266,571**
Halton	389	$161,452,883
Peel	342	$96,023,224
Ontario	**46,429**	**$19,724,857,808**

Statistics Canada previously recorded agricultural operating revenue as "gross farm receipts". Gross farm receipts were directly reported to the Census of Agriculture by farm operators

Figure 5: Total Hamilton Farm Expenses

Similar to the revenue data, farm expenses now reflect expenses reported through the Agricultural Taxation Data Program and capture data reported to Revenue Canada. Comparisons between 2011/2016 and 2021 are not natural time series and should be treated as snapshots of the times in question.

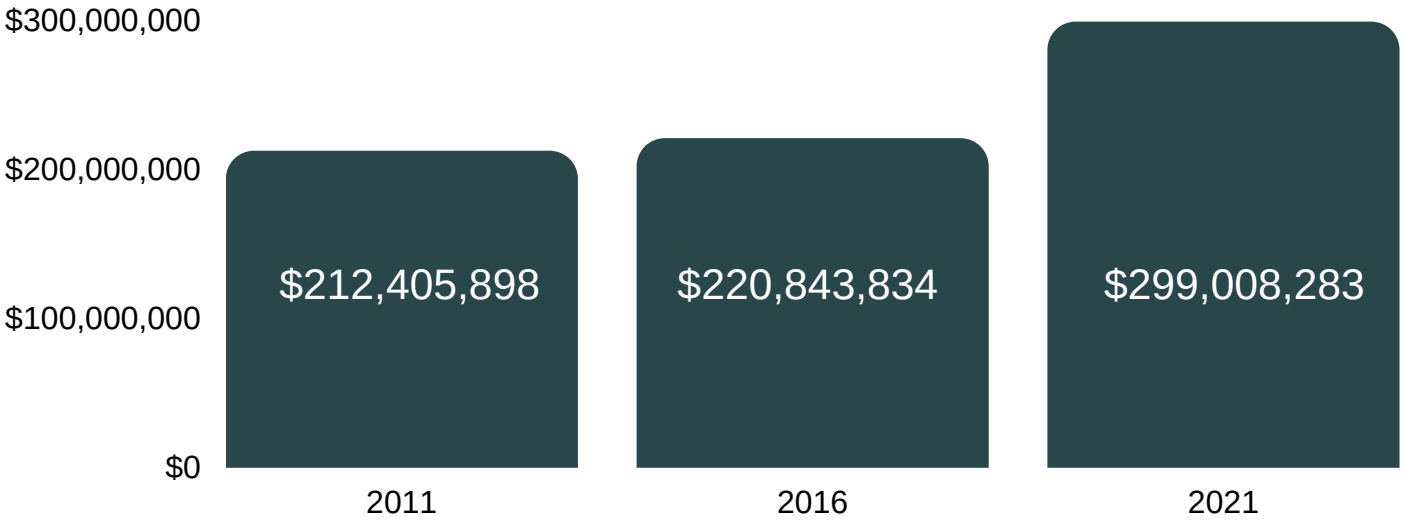


Table 6: Golden Horseshoe Farm Revenue in 2021

Location	Operating Revenues	Operating Expenses	Revenue Over Expenses
Niagara	$1,014,290,126	$860,692,246	$153,597,880
Durham	$428,358,254	$355,522,728	$72,835,526
York	$390,192,193	$337,525,290	$52,666,903
Hamilton	**$366,266,571**	**$299,008,283**	**$67,258,288**
Halton	$161,452,883	$146,888,642	$14,564,241
Peel	$96,023,224	$85,490,753	$10,532,471
Ontario	**$19,724,857,808**	**$16,458,659,469**	**$3,266,198,339**

With each successive census year, data from the Census of Agriculture report increasing levels of revenue over expenses. In 2016, expenses were 85% revenues; in 2021 expenses fell to 81.6% of revenues.

Table 7: Detailed (6-digit NAICS Code) Farm Revenues in Hamilton

The following two tables use custom Census of Agriculture data to produce a detailed breakdown of the farm types with the largest operating revenues in Hamilton.

Detailed Farm Type	Farms Reporting Revenue	Total Operating Revenue
Nursery and tree production	74	$148,388,887
Mushroom production	5	$27,318,015
Soybean farming	108	$25,624,489
Other food crops grown under cover	14	$23,462,115
Dairy cattle and milk production	18	$20,378,409

Table 8: Detailed (6-digit NAICS Code) Revenues and Expenses per Farm

Detailed Farm Type	Revenue per Farm	Expenses Per Farm
Nursery and tree production	$2,005,255	$1,628,404
Mushroom production	$5,463,603	$3,958,649
Soybean farming	$237,264	$185,159
Other food crops grown under cover	$1,675,865	$1,364,811
Dairy cattle and milk production	$1,132,134	$927,507

Figure 6: Average Age of Farm Operators

In 2021, the average age of Hamilton's farm operators was 57.9 years old. In Ontario, the average age of farm operators was 56.7 years old.

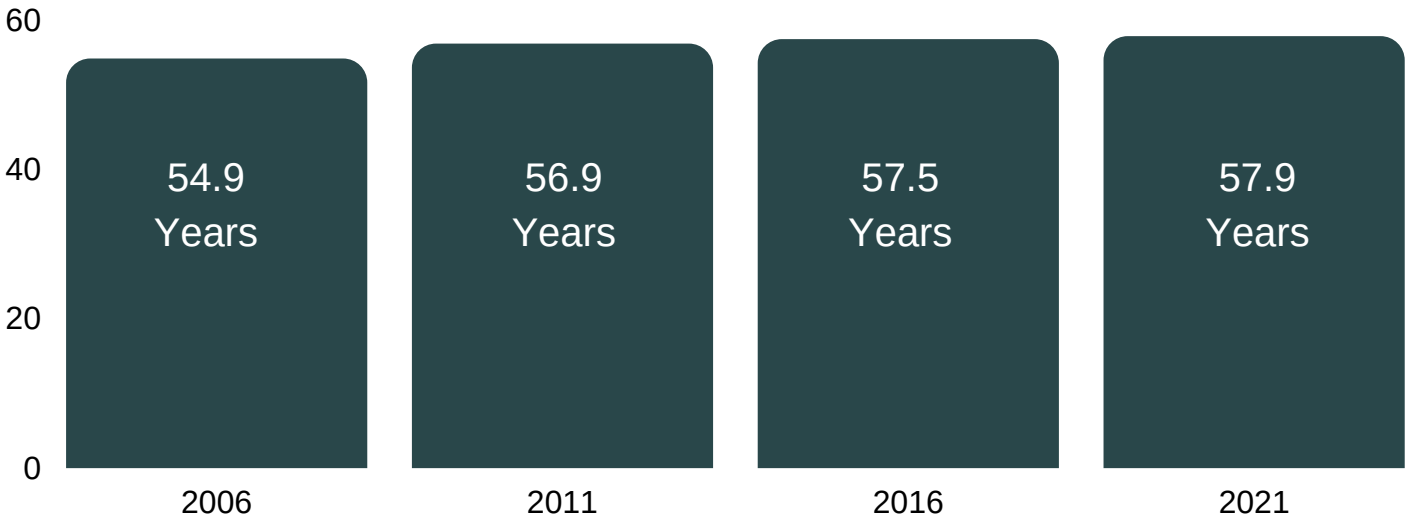


Table 9: Detailed Age of Farm Operators

Age of Farm Operators	Hamilton	Ontario
Age 35 and under	6.5%	8.3%
Age 35 to 54	29.1%	29.4%
Age 55 and older	64.8%	62.3%

Almost 65% of Hamilton's farm operators are age 55 and older. Hamilton's proportion of farm operators in the age 55 and older cohort is slightly higher than the 62.3% observed at the provincial level.

Table 10: Gender of Farm Operators

Gender of Farm Operators	Hamilton	Ontario
Men	68.3%	69.0%
Women	31.7%	31.0%

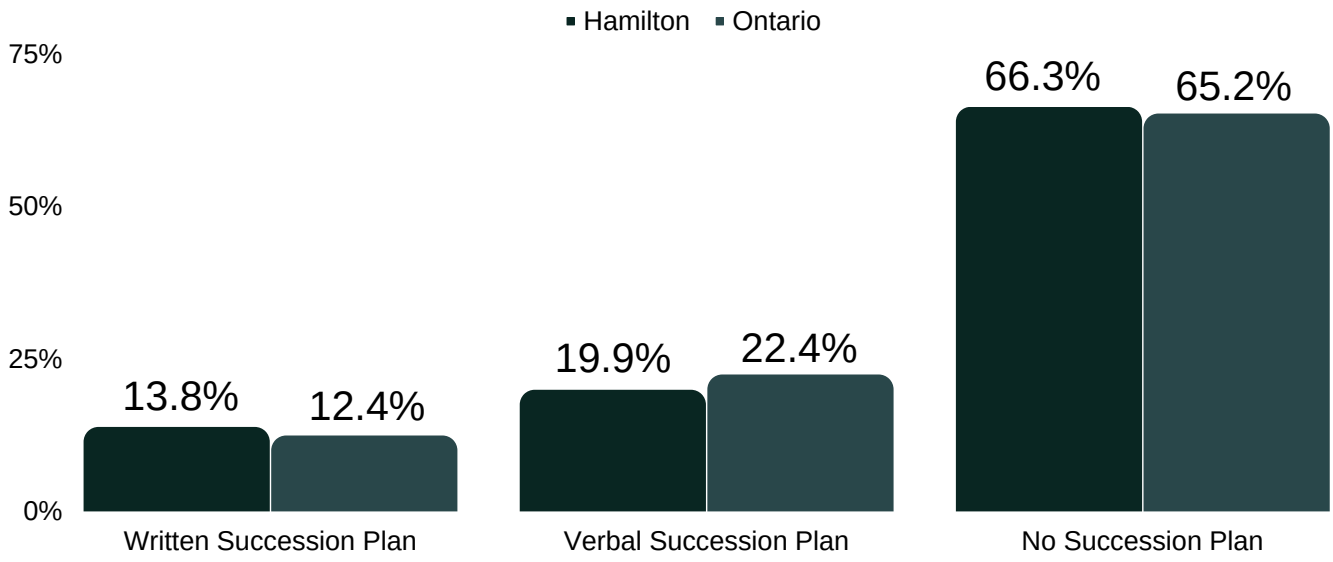
These data are inclusive of farms with single and multiple operators as to offer the most complete picture of farm ownership that can be gleaned from the 2021 census of agriculture.

Table 11: Hamilton's Agricultural Labour Force

In 2021 the Census of Agriculture began capturing the size of the agricultural labour force through a review of T4 tax forms. In past census years, the this labour force was captured through direct reporting by farm operators. As such, data from 2016 and earlier are no longer a natural time series with the 2021 data. Recognizing this caveat to the data, the 2,207 agricultural workers reported in 2021 are an estimated 20% decline from the 2,770 agricultural workers reported in the 2016 census.

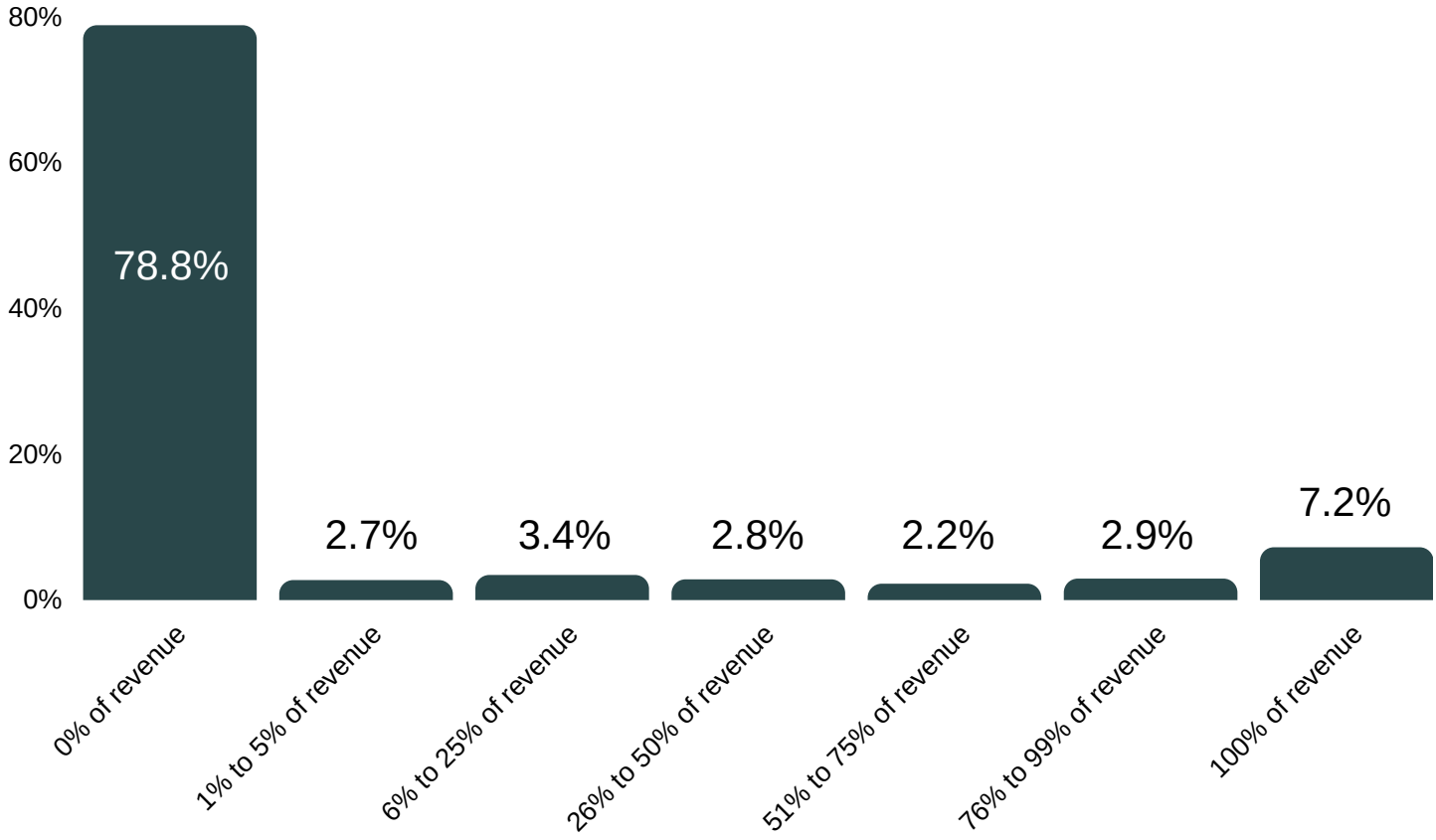
Type of worker	Employee Count	Employee %
Full-time workers (year-round)	728	33.0%
Part-time workers (year-round)	379	17.2%
Seasonal or temporary workers	1,100	49.8%
Total	**2,207**	**100.0%**

Figure 7: Hamilton Farms with Succession Plans



Although Hamilton has a slightly higher proportion of farms with both written and verbal succession plans, the vast majority of Hamilton, and Ontario, farms are operating without any defined succession plan. Implementing a succession planning program for Hamilton businesses is part of Hamilton Economic Development's 2021-2025 Economic Development Action Plan.

Figure 8: Hamilton Farms Engaged in Direct Sales



These data note that 78.8% of Hamilton farms derive no revenue from direct sales to consumers. In contrast, 7.2% of Hamilton farms derive 100% of their revenues from direct sales to consumers. Among the 144 Hamilton farms who report direct sales, Figure 9 breaks down the types of direct sale methods.

Figure 9: Direct Sale Methods among Hamilton Farms

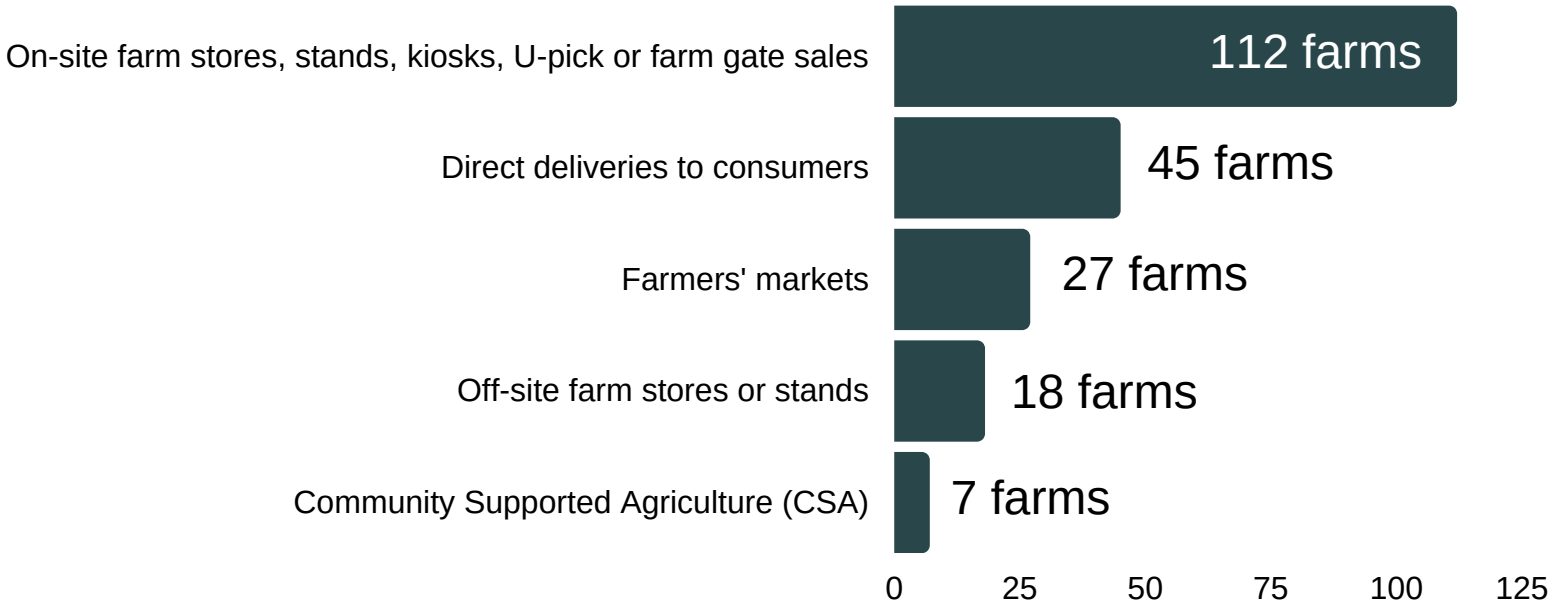


Table 12: The Economic Impact of Agriculture in Hamilton

Data from the 2021 Census of Agriculture allows for an update of the economic impact model that was developed in 2016 with the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance. As is the case with all exercises in economic modelling, these figures should be treated as strong estimates given the best data and methods currently available. With 2021 numbers, an updated estimate of $1,339,558,451 in gross output impact is attributed to Hamilton's agricultural sector.

Direct Impact	$239,836,952
Indirect Impact	$653,418,649
Induced Impact	$444,353,145
Gross Output Impact	**$1,339,558,451**
GDP Impact	$616,014,627

Understanding Each of these Economic Impact Concepts

Direct Impact: Business activity occurring as the direct result of business decisions - in the case of agriculture this can generally be understood as the direct sales of goods from Hamilton's farm sector.

Indirect Impact: Business activity from suppliers (e.g. farms) to other businesses. This can include services at the retail, wholesale, and production level.

Induced Impact: Business activity that results in spending on food, clothing, shelter, and other consumer goods and services as a result of the workforce at the businesses who create the direct and indirect impact.

GDP Impact: A way to measure economic impact that removes all the duplication of economic activity that occurs between direct, indirect, and induced economic activity. For example, when a bakery purchases flour to produce baked goods, the price of the flour includes the price of the wheat plus the value added by the miller who turned the wheat into flour. When the bakery sells the bread, the price reflects the cost of all inputs (including the flour) as well as the baker's work to turn flour, water, and yeast into bread. GDP impact provides a figure that removes all the duplication in this process.

Sources: Weisbrod and Weisbrod, Measuring Economic Impacts of Projects and Programs
Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA, Agriculture and Agri-Food Economic Profile for the Golden Horseshoe

Did you know?

That at the time of the 2021 Census, Hamilton farms (on average) were the most profitable in the Greater Golden Horseshoe?

- **Are you interested in learning more about agriculture in Hamilton?**
- **Are you interested in working with the agricultural community?**
- **Looking for more or other agricultural data in Hamilton?**

Learn more about our agricultural sector here:

https://investinhamilton.ca/industries/agri-business-and-food-processing/

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