

Places to Farm

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Alternative practices and policies for
Ontario's changing agricultural landscape

by Sally Miller



Metcalf Foundation

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Research Methodology

Research for this paper included nearly 50 interviews with farmers, planners, government representatives, and representatives from various non-profits. Interviews were qualitative, with open-ended questions and discussion of the issues. Initial interviews focused on farmers in order to ensure that strategies proposed fit their concerns and priorities. These were followed by targeted interviews with experts, planners, and government representatives.

Additional research involved a review of legislation, planning regulations, and existing innovations and models in Ontario and farther afield in Canada and abroad.

The research and the interviews focused on two key questions:

- What alternative land use practices and policies can protect agricultural land and strengthen our food system?
- What promising practices for land access can support both new and existing farmers?

Interviewees were partners and collaborators in the development and assessment of the final recommendations.

At a roundtable on farmland strategies, experts convened to review initial conclusions and to make further recommendations for the report.

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Introduction

“If a society does not value its farmers and farmland then it does not value its own capacity to grow food, and both eventually will be lost.”

— *Nina Marie Lister, “Placing Food,” 160*

Losing our places to farm

Since 1921, Ontario has lost millions of acres of farmland, much of it the best in Canada. In most cases, the loss is irretrievable. The land has been paved, built over, or mined, and will never be farmed again. Yet, while availability and access decrease, demand for farmland continues to increase. Statistics Canada reports that, between 1951 and 2001, the supply of dependable agricultural land declined by 4%, while the demand for cultivated land increased by 20%.¹

Loss of farmland has been accompanied by a loss of both farmers and farming as an economically viable way of life. Over the last 20 years, Ontario has lost 3.5 farms each day.² As a result, a significant percentage of food that could be produced and sold locally, creating jobs and infrastructure, is imported from the United States or even further afield.

The breakdown of our food system is closely interwoven with other challenges at the heart of a general social crisis, which include issues of employment, housing, and financial systems, and environmental concerns of water and land. We currently find ourselves in a situation that is increasingly unsustainable for our environment, our society, and our economy. Central to this crisis lies a problem of land use and access to farmland.

History and context

How did we arrive at this situation? Richard Olson writes that the conversion of land from agriculture to other uses is “a function of the cumulative impact of millions of individual land use decisions.”³ Complexities of policy, planning, and economic pressures intertwine to make the loss of farmland and farmers seem inevitable. It has been a long process, arguably going back to the initial settlement by British elite, loyalists, and merchants. As John Clarke points out in his seminal work on land history in Ontario, land in the 1800s was a primary currency, perhaps more valuable than actual currency.⁴ Land was used as payment to Loyalist soldiers and to the new governing elite residing in Toronto. Long-term speculation by wealthy and absent landowners was integral to the early non-Indigenous settlement of Upper Canada.

Furthermore, the Crown technically owns the land in Canada. There are no high-level private property protections here, as are contained in the U.S. constitution, for example.⁵ This means that land can be taken more easily for other uses (aggregates, highways, parks) without the same enforceable legal requirements for fair compensation.⁶

Since the 1969 Federal Task Force on Agriculture, the trend has been away from small family farms in favour of **agricultural consolidation** and more corporate styles of agriculture.⁷ The 2006 census showed that mid-scale farms — those between 70 and 800 acres — were disappearing faster than farms of any other size. The 2011 census showed that only the number of large farms — those 1000 acres or more — has increased in the past five years.⁸

Overall, the situation is very unstable. Supply management, which protects dairy and poultry farmers, is currently under attack.⁹ In industries such as beef, where prices depend on the open market, survival is uncertain. Many family farms that are central to the production of mixed crops — fruits and vegetables, livestock production for nearby markets — remain dependent on off-farm incomes to sustain themselves. “Canadian farmers — considered to be among the world’s most ‘competitive’ and ‘efficient’ producers — have been forced off the land in considerable numbers because farming is **no longer economically viable**.”¹⁰

Along with a loss of farmland and farmers comes a **loss of infrastructure**, which also threatens farming as a way of life through lack of capacity and the reduction of diverse markets. For instance, many areas of Ontario no longer have large-animal veterinarians. Some have lost essential services such as farm equipment repair and farm supply outlets. Ontario in general has lost the middle scale in the food system — mid-scale processing, distribution, marketing, and storage that is attuned to the needs of farms between 10 and 130 acres. Despite current trends, this is still the most common farm size in Ontario.¹¹ The loss of the mid-scale means that entering farmers, particularly those focused on commodity cropping or supply management, must venture into large-scale operations. This greatly increases risk and saddles new enterprises with very high debts.

Additionally, the global spectre of **land grabbing** is beginning to affect Canada and Ontario. Land grabs are land purchases by foreign investors for the purposes of speculative profit and/or long-term food security for the foreign country. Without strict rules against foreign ownership, the shift in international speculative focus from currency to land has found a ready venue in Ontario.¹² For instance, Boston-based The Highland Companies bought extensive acreage of prime farmland just north of Toronto, ostensibly for a potato farm. It subsequently became known that their goal was to create the largest open-pit quarry in North America.¹³ This revelation mobilized thousands of people to

advocate for the protection of this key watershed for farming, and the company withdrew at the end of 2012. The rules that allowed the project to move forward, however, have not changed.

Solutions for a changing agricultural landscape

The research for this paper determined that, to catalyze the development of strong regional food systems in southern Ontario, solutions are needed to:

1. Stimulate alternative land use practices and policies.
2. Identify and support promising practices to enable land access and sustainable food production for both new and existing farmers.

Results of the research confirm that alternative models of land use, access, and ownership require **changes in planning and policy**. They also require **shifts in cultural attitudes** regarding responsibility for others and long-term stewardship of the land. Many extraordinary and creative initiatives signal the growth of attitudes, stories, and commitments into a different way of thinking about land use — one that moves away from ideas of resource extraction and speculation to ideas about sustainability and long-term co-existence between people and environments.

For example, the new community of five young farming households in the Neustadt area illustrates the power of **agricultural community**. They are friends who met through farm-training programs. They settled near each other in an area where the land is still affordable. Their proximity has enabled them to help each other with equipment, tools, and marketing.

This paper considers shifts in policy, planning, and capital access to encourage the development of these kinds of alternatives, which can strengthen our regional food systems. The paper includes an assessment of alternative models from other jurisdictions and data from interviews with innovators across the province. The goal is to champion and celebrate possible solutions as well as explore directions for working together toward a more sustainable food system for Ontario. The focus is on nurturing and facilitating the many diverse and creative solutions that are already underway, while shifting the conversation toward the recognition and strengthening of local economies and healthy alternatives that are within our reach.

Strategies for farmland: Alternative land use and access

Southern Ontario is one of the most fertile areas of the country, yet many of its acres of rich and diverse farmland are currently under threat. At the core of this challenge lie complex problems of land use and access to farmland. Established farmers are retiring with no one to continue to work their land. Many new farmers cannot access land and struggle to begin the farming life for which they are trained. Urban growers — from farmers to people wishing to grow some of their own food — are searching for ways to launch their projects.

The research for this report identified seven areas where innovative and strategic action could lead to healthier land use practices and policies as well as to better practices to enable land access for new and existing farmers. These seven topic areas are divided into two parts:

Part One: Alternative land use practices and policies for a strong regional food system

1. Prioritize agriculture through planning and policy.
2. Identify and support integrated agricultural communities.
3. Maintain farmer control of agricultural choices within farmland.
4. Determine and promote the economic, environmental, and social benefits of regional food systems.

Part Two: Promising practices to enable land access and sustainable agricultural development for new and existing farmers

5. Provide support and templates for entry and succession transfers.
6. Create flexible financing.
7. Establish long-term ownership and planning options.

For each topic, we begin with a review of relevant issues and challenges. This is followed by a discussion of potential solutions and strategies. In all cases, the recommendations have been developed with input from interviewees as well as the exploration of models and solutions from other jurisdictions.

Recommendations are based on a collation of ideas and inputs from several perspectives and areas of expertise. Appendix A lists resources and links for each strategy.

Part One:

Alternative land use practices and policies for a strong regional food system

Urban sprawl and lack of zoning protection for agriculture

As Canada has become increasingly urban and its cities seek to house their growing populations, unrestricted urban sprawl and scattered development have spilled into the countryside.

In Ontario, urban sprawl is stretching up the transportation corridors and continues to be the backbone of provincial planning decisions. In Brant County, a new expressway to link the 401 and 403 highways is under consideration. It will cross some of the most fertile land in the country. Development plans also reach northward along the 400 highway, through key agricultural areas.

A lack of strong, forward-thinking planning regarding urban growth and the creation of sustainable, livable cities, as well as a lack of agricultural zoning protection, has resulted in residential development on farmland close to cities. This is especially challenging because near-urban areas contain most of the Class 1 farmland in Canada.¹⁴

The competing interests for land create a quandary. Just as farmers have a right to make a living, one could argue that developers have a right to pursue their trade and that people with title to the land should be able to decide what to do with it. Elliot Feldman writes, “Can the farmers be denied their right to sell their land for development? Can the exurbanites insulate their oases from a popular demand to share the land? Has the first occupier the right to set all terms for those who arrive in a place thereafter?”¹⁵

Loss of knowledge, expertise, and infrastructure

Almost 50% of farmers in Canada are 55 or older.¹⁶ FarmStart estimates that 75% of currently active farmers will retire in the next ten years.¹⁷ As a startling number of farmers retire without successors, we are in danger of losing their invaluable knowledge and experience. Olson writes, “We need their hard-won knowledge of farming and the land, their agriculture, if we are to have any hope of developing a sustainable agriculture.”¹⁸

With agricultural practice changing over the last few decades to larger, more industrial methods, knowledge about farming has shifted from farmers to the agricultural supply companies.¹⁹ New seeds, machinery, and purchased inputs have meant an increase in the value of the expertise of agricultural suppliers

such as Monsanto and DuPont. Government extension agents, who traditionally shared research and new knowledge, have been eliminated. Fragmentation of the farming landscape, due to non-farming development, has also reduced opportunities for peer exchange and mentoring.

Need for strong agricultural communities

New farmers need strong agricultural communities where they can find allies and mentors. It is fairly common for young farmers who have finished their internships and bought or rented land to want to spend some time as volunteers on established farms near their home farms. This provides them with the opportunity to gain specific and applied expertise. For instance, Tarrah Young of Green Being Farm worked on a nearby sheep farm before entering the sector herself.²⁰ These connections and possibilities need to be promoted and nurtured.

Community and collaboration have always been key to agricultural success. This is why the shift toward a stronger regional food system, with long-term sustainability, is cultural as well as economic. In *Land Rites and Wrongs*, Feldman and Michael Goldberg write, “Land use is a problem commonly examined by economists, lawyers and planners but rarely analyzed as a social or political issue.”²¹

As Wayne Caldwell explains, “There needs to be a cultural shift amongst farmers, because those farmers who are farming 20 and 30 acres aren’t real farmers, are they? I’m saying that absolutely tongue in cheek. I think that mind-set is out there to a degree, and it permeates not only the farm sector, but it also permeates government to a degree.”²²

Severance planning policies protect but also prevent

Severance minimums are used extensively in Ontario to prevent the creation of parcels of land small enough to attract residential uses. The minimum severance is 100-acre parcels in much of the province. Even in the Greenbelt it is usually around 40 acres.

Unfortunately, severance minimums create unforeseen barriers for genuine farmers. The high minimums conflict with many forms of agriculture that are directed toward local food markets. These farms tend to produce intensively on 5 to 10 acres and benefit from well-knit agricultural communities, nearby infrastructure, and networks for mentoring and support. New, smaller-scale farmers are no more interested than large-scale farmers in struggling with non-farm uses in the agricultural landscape. They support policies meant to reduce conversion to non-farm uses, but not the severance by-laws that make it hard for them to access small parcels.

Caldwell, who has researched and defended minimum-size lot creation, recognizes the conflict between established severance policies and new forms of agriculture that thrive on smaller lots. “I question whether that policy is sustainable in the long term, as I don’t think future generations will stand by that criteria.”²³

Lack of a national food policy

Many countries have national food policies and legislation that protect locally produced food and ensure a level of self-sufficiency and food sovereignty. Brazil, India, Britain, and Australia all have, or are developing, national food policies. Canada does not have such legislation, despite the historical power of a central government in land use decisions.²⁴ This trend leaves the food system open to competition from imported food that is cheaper than Canadian-grown products. The volatility of global commodity markets has a powerful impact on national and regional food availability and costs. Toronto has about three days’ worth of food available. A border closure or key failure in U.S. agriculture would leave Toronto, and other urban areas in southern Ontario, without the resources to feed their populations.²⁵

Canada imports more of its food than it exports.²⁶ Without ready exports from other countries, the food system would falter. What is missing is an understanding of the economic benefits of agriculture and an acknowledgement of the environmental and social benefits of local food systems. Economic analysis would provide concrete rationales for prioritizing agriculture. The assessment and quantification of these many benefits would establish a clear business case for agriculture and for a national food policy.

Strategy 1: Prioritize agriculture through planning and policy

“The frustration is that you can build cities and homes on lower-capability agricultural land, and you really would like to see more of an effort to do that rather than the willy-nilly greenfield development that has gone on. There's nothing checking urban growth onto agricultural land. ... There isn't a sense that there's a need to do that, that there's a need to protect our diminishing base of agricultural land.”

— Peter Jeffrey, interview with the author, June 2012

Agriculture and related industries are an essential part of Canada's economy, accounting for 8% of GDP and one in eight jobs.²⁷ In standard agricultural goods, Ontario provides 62.3% of Canada's soybeans and 61.7% of corn for grain.²⁸ Oilseed and grain farming, and cattle ranching are the two biggest farm industries in Ontario by number of farms. Ontario is also home to significant greenhouse operations, hay, hog, poultry, dairy, egg, sheep and goat operations, and thousands of fruit, vegetable, and nut operations.²⁹ Agriculture is also an important resource for fibre and fuel (wood as well as corn for ethanol). Beyond the standard goods for market, agriculture also provides important environmental benefits in watershed management and protection, and wildlife habitat.

On paper, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) places a high priority on agriculture. But there are, in fact, numerous land uses in practice and in legislation that trump agriculture. Mineral aggregate operations is one. Many interviewees stressed that agriculture's value to the province is underestimated.³⁰ This is reflected in actual planning choices and priorities. Making changes to the PPS is a timely strategy, since many key planning legislations are up for review over the next few years.

To effectively enact the priorities that are enshrined in planning acts, subordinate policies must include some incentives as well as better clarity around competing uses of land. As the report *Places to Sprawl* shows, if the provincial plan is not reflected in local plans or actions, it does not matter what the priorities are provincially.³¹ “Prioritizing agriculture” is a cultural paradigm shift that affects many facets of society from health care to social economies. Although essential, prioritizing agriculture is a long-term initiative and will likely be the result of a broad process of political change and historical development. It will potentially occur through changes that are already underway, such as the adoption of the *Local Food Act*.

Zoning for agriculture is a long-term solution that has been used with great success. Ontario's Greenbelt is one example. The Greenbelt took many years to come to fruition and is still considered an extraordinary result of conjuncture among provincial priorities, personal commitment from politicians, and appetite among suburban and urban residents.³²

a) Changes to the Provincial Policy Statement

The PPS was enacted in 2005, and a review is required every five years. The upcoming review gives us a critical opportunity to change the prioritization of aggregates.

One reason given for the contemplated approval of the foreign-owned mega-quarry in Toronto's watershed (Melancthon Township) was that refusal by the municipality would have no teeth. A refusal can easily be overridden by the PPS clauses that prioritize aggregate extraction.³³ These provisions appear in several clauses and in subsidiary legislation such as the *Greenbelt Act*, and are enshrined in practice. Although not simple to do, public and private commitment to make these changes has been gaining support and momentum in recent years.

In practice, the devastating consequences of aggregate extraction have yet to prove amenable to remediation or restoration.³⁴ Extraction can remove key food-producing lands in favour of windfall profits from the resources underneath. This practice seems indefensible. The money goes elsewhere — Boston, in the case of Melancthon Township. Profits are short term rather than potentially indefinite, as in well-managed agriculture. The brief boost to the local economy based on resource extraction is followed by a community forced to rebuild in a degraded environment.³⁵

The aggregate rules have been challenged by indigenous nations as well. Initial surveying and testing can currently proceed without any particular approvals. The requirements for Indigenous input and dialogue are often satisfied with token gestures.³⁶

Regional food systems and strong agricultural communities require protection and prioritization of the whole sector and its related suppliers, processors, packers, etc. Rural planning designations rarely allow for mixed use. In most counties, farmers who begin value-added processing are reassessed at the much higher industrial tax levels. For instance, Spirit Tree orchard invested in a cidery to diversify and supplement their income. The resulting retroactive change in tax status then threatened the operation's success.

The issue of allowing for mixed use was mentioned by many interviewees and was frequently included among recommendations in planning reports.³⁷ Supporting on-farm processing requires changes to planning provisions at various government levels as well as a shift in support to small- and mid-scale processing from government programs. It is not that difficult to distinguish secondary, supplemental uses on a farm from primarily commercial operations. Rules for processing only products from the farm in order to retain the farm tax status would solve the problem. The specification could also include only the local region, as in the case of VQA wines. This arrangement allows nearby farmers to work together.

b) Urban growth boundaries

Conversion to other uses is one of the greatest threats to farmland. Fortunately, conversion can be decreased through various mechanisms. These include tax regimes, zoning designations, a shift in the benefactors of non-agricultural land sales, and agricultural district protection.

In Maryland, taxes on conversion are paid by the developers who purchase the farmland. If the developer initially rents to agricultural users and then converts to development when the price is right, they are required to pay back taxes at the non-agricultural rate.³⁸ In some places, non-resident landowners cannot benefit from reduced agricultural taxes, even if they rent to a farmer. The latter device, however, risks the loss of more farmland as speculative owners simply leave the land fallow while waiting for the value to rise. Olson recommends that all windfall profits on conversions accrue to the community, to compensate for the loss of agriculture's benefits.³⁹

Zoning and agricultural district protection, through provincial mechanisms like the Greenbelt or municipal by-laws, are also able to constrain conversion. In the case of zoning protection, the boundaries need to be far enough from urban centres to discourage leapfrog speculation. Exemptions for exclusion from the zoning need to be limited. In British Columbia, failure to do so has resulted in incremental loss of the province's Agricultural Land Reserve. Farmers there can apply for a zoning exemption and then sell to a developer. Blurred or indefinite urban growth boundaries allow sprawl to overtake agricultural uses. Farmland is paved and farmers are driven further away from their markets.

Almost 10 years ago, a government committee from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs recommended that the province:

Establish clearly defined urban boundaries for residential, commercial and industrial uses to provide the agriculture industry with the confidence needed to plan its long-term investments. These boundaries should address the following requirements and/or concerns:

- Preventing fragmentation of agricultural land;
- Predictability for future land use and agricultural operations;
- Preventing 'leap-frogging' of development from protected areas into adjacent ones;
- Fulfilling urban density criteria before boundary expansion occurs; and
- Lowering infrastructure and servicing costs for urban communities.⁴⁰

Aside from the Greenbelt in Ontario and the Agricultural Land Reserve in B.C., the use of zoning designations to contain urban growth is rare in Canada. One successful example that addresses the criteria listed above is the “countryside line” that was established in the Waterloo region “to contain future growth within urban areas.”⁴¹

The Greater Golden Horseshoe Action Plan⁴² is another example of a new initiative that integrates agricultural protection with urban growth needs. This plan is one of the first attempts at comprehensive planning in key agricultural areas around the Golden Horseshoe, an area of increasing population density.

Urban densification is not only wise from the point of view of protecting agriculture, it is also an efficient and cost-effective urban development model. Scattered, large, one-family households carry significant additional costs for municipalities. Expenses come in the installation and delivery of services, inefficient transportation for commuting and shopping, and the management of resulting air and water pollution.

Densification requires city planning that makes housing options attractive to residents. Models of denser, livable cities abound in Europe and other jurisdictions. They require innovations in energy, urban green spaces, urban public transportation, bicycle accessibility and alternative transportation options. In general, effective urban growth boundaries are usually established with long horizons. For instance, they may be based on a 20-year estimate of population growth in the urban centre. They often mandate a regular review to assess changing migration and population patterns. Several interviewees also recommend that residential development focus on less farmable lands, such as rocky or hillside areas.⁴³

c) Near-urban agricultural zoning

Near-urban agricultural zoning, districts, and prioritization are essential companions to smart growth plans. Zoning designations are not the same as establishing urban growth boundaries. Zoning protects agricultural areas without necessarily defining exactly where residential growth should go (as in Waterloo’s countryside line designation). Residential growth is constrained by being subordinate to agriculture.

Ontario’s Greenbelt is considered a world leader in this kind of protection. It evolved through the work of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, to protect and promote Greenbelt farms as a priority use for the area.⁴⁴ Initial concerns about the Greenbelt have in many cases turned out to be less of an issue than expected, possibly because Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation made strenuous efforts to promote and support Greenbelt farmers. Many people recommend an expansion of the Greenbelt until better controls of sprawl are put into place.⁴⁵ In

fact, an expansion of the Greenbelt was approved in early 2013. The important efforts at promotion should also continue.

An ideal way to market the benefits of agricultural zoning is to establish and expand farming that is oriented toward the community and public good, especially near urban areas where pressure from conversion is the greatest. It is also a way to address issues of food security for high population areas. In Ontario, these areas already tend to be divided into smaller parcels and also contain most of the best farmland. This design is conducive to small-scale intensive agriculture for food marketing. For instance, Italy has designated certain districts for organic farming only, which tends to be focused on regional markets. Such designations can reduce conflict over buffer zones and drifting chemical inputs, and catalyze collaborative initiatives.

Likewise, broad provincial planning around agriculture might identify certain areas that are ideal for certain kinds of agriculture. This is a zoning process, but one developed jointly on a provincial scale, rather than piecemeal.

Strategy 2: Identify and support integrated agricultural communities

“Isolated, fragmented farms cannot function well. They need to be part of a functioning agricultural landscape.”

— Olson and Lyson, Under the Blade, 70

Farms are not isolated enterprises. Farms and farmers tend to thrive within a landscape of farms. Community promotes the sharing of equipment, knowledge, mentoring, and possibilities for renting land to other farmers as needed. These exchanges provide social networks of support in hard times, encourage innovations to address challenges, and greatly assist the integration of new farmers into the community.

As agricultural enterprises become scattered by uncontained residential development and farm sales for non-farm uses, a key loss for farmers is their tight-knit and interdependent communities. Tom Daniels and Deborah Bowers argue that when one farmer sells to development, the sale leads to the conversion of neighbouring lots, as other farmers seek similar windfall profits.⁴⁶ The trend fragments the tight-knit farming community.⁴⁷

Research for this paper confirms that agricultural communities are a primary ingredient for success in farming. Agricultural communities include secondary enterprises, such as farm supply, equipment repair, and livestock veterinarians. A strong farming community houses accountants and lawyers with agricultural expertise and contains convenient schools, retail outlets, and markets for farm products. Housing needs to be clustered for rural residents to access services and support easily, with minimal strain on municipal budgets. Nearby housing

options would also ease the problem of limited residential options on farms for new farmers.

Farm-focused communities ease the conflicts around non-farm uses. For instance, as non-farming resident populations increase, conflicts begin to occur between commuter traffic and farm machinery moving between parcels. Communities also face conflicts over standard farm impacts like noise and dust. More rural businesses would provide a better tax base. Non-commuting residents also build a better local economic system by accessing local businesses and services more regularly.

Strengthening agricultural communities should be one of the highest priorities related to land use in Ontario. Because it requires the collaboration of different levels and departments of government, this work will require time and patience to bring to fruition. However, the frequency with which agricultural communities were mentioned in interviews suggests that efforts in this direction would be enthusiastically supported.

a) Integrated services in agricultural communities

Strong agricultural communities have integrated services and suppliers near the farms. Daniels and Bowers write, “As the number of farms decreases, it becomes more difficult for the farm support businesses to survive; and once these businesses begin to disappear, the remaining farmers must spend more time and money traveling to pick up replacement parts, feed, seed, and machinery, not to mention finding shippers and processors of farm products. It simply becomes harder to farm efficiently.”⁴⁸

In Ontario, many mid-scale options, such as processing, marketing, distribution, transportation, and storage, have been lost. The rejuvenation of these missing links requires shifts in local planning rules to allow mixed rural use that is agricultural or rural focused.⁴⁹

In communities that have “branded” themselves, joint marketing and retail outlets are a natural development. The Charlevoix community in Quebec, despite a relatively forbidding climate, has created branding based on their regional cuisine and farm products. The Prince Edward County, Waterloo, and Muskoka regions have all developed branding around food production. The Waterloo region benefits from the work of Foodlink,⁵⁰ which provides networking and marketing for the diverse local food enterprises in the area. They print 40,000 of their popular local food maps every year.⁵¹

In Holland Marsh, growers with a history of working together have raised the funds to build a co-packing facility. They also brand their products under the Holland Marsh Gold label. On a smaller scale, Old Order Mennonite farmers near Kitchener/Waterloo decided to shift toward vegetable growing after they were no longer thriving in dairy and livestock. They created the Elmira Produce

Auction Co-operative (EPAC) in order to pool and sell their goods to large-scale customers such as supermarkets and the University of Guelph. One member of EPAC also opened a small-scale processing facility for jams and draws product from his neighbours to reach commercial scale. The larger scale of pooled processing would avoid the tax challenges for on-farm processing mentioned earlier. Another farmer from EPAC launched a wholesale fruit and vegetable enterprise to meet the needs of customers who were unable or unwilling to participate in the auction.⁵²

Planning authorities have strong incentives to consider more promotion of cluster development. Cluster development makes expansion of services more cost efficient, since it compresses new sewage, road, and water services into a smaller area.⁵³ Caldwell's description of the efficiency of the residential design of Hutterite communities provides an interesting model.⁵⁴ The circular pattern places residences and farm buildings close together. The farm operation radiates outward from the centre, based on the oversight requirements. Labour-intensive vegetable gardens are close to houses, livestock is farther out, and woodlots are at the outer edge. Aside from provisions for integrated and homogeneous cultures like the Hutterites, this approach has not been applied extensively in Canada.

b) Networking and mentoring in communities

In agricultural communities, networking and mentoring is rarely formalized and represents considerable volunteer time and investment. Interviewees emphasize the tremendous benefit they receive from networking and mentoring. Bryan Gilvesy commented that farmers need people to talk to. As he remarked, when the only person coming down the laneway to see you is the input salesperson, then that is the person you call when you have a problem.⁵⁵

In the incipient new agricultural communities of Ontario, it is becoming more common that young farmers continue to work together, as they did during training. At FarmStart's McVean Farm, 30 or so beginning farmers incubate their farm business together, each on their own plot. Christie Young of FarmStart described new farmers who commuted from Collingwood or Cambridge to the McVean Farm in Brampton — a long trip each way — because the support of other farmers was so crucial. She comments that “it's not [just] the land, it's the community that matters at this stage, too.”⁵⁶

Many people admire the concession in Neustadt that is home to five new farmers. These farmers initially met during five years of training with FarmStart, Everdale's Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) program. Recognizing the advantages of working together and forging an agricultural community, they settled near each other in an area where the land is relatively affordable. Their close proximity allows them to support each other

with equipment or marketing, and they are also able to access mentoring from other producers in the area. Near Neustadt, Caitlin Hall at reroot Organic Farm grows seedlings in her greenhouse for several nearby colleagues. As these new farmers expand their production, their strategy may expand to cooperation in marketing, distribution, and storage.

Angie Koch, a new farmer in the Waterloo area, hopes one day to join her friends in Neustadt. Her seedlings and other services already come from that community. She is a sustainable Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)⁵⁷ farmer. The farmers around her are mostly large-scale livestock or commodity farmers, yet they have supported and accepted her because she is clearly a hard-working farmer. She mused that “they probably think I am equal parts superstar and nuts.”⁵⁸ They were there to help her out when she flipped a machine over in the field and when she needed help unloading a big delivery. She confesses that she is missing a key farmer’s attribute — the ability to fix her own machinery — and they have helped with that as well. Her experience creates a more complex picture of community than the standard story of insider–outsider hostility. A farmer with urban origins who is serious seems able to integrate into any farming community. It is the non-farming land users who can create difficulties through lack of understanding and different lifestyles.

Ecological Farmers of Ontario (EFAO) is frequently cited as an outstanding model of mentoring. This program charges a reasonable fee for an expert farmer to come to the farm for several hours. These visits often lead to long-term relations. A quick phone call to an experienced farmer can save the new farmer weeks of puzzling and experimenting. The invaluable mentoring and mutual encouragement that occurs in the countryside should be supported through organizations such as EFAO. Small amounts of funding can provide structure, incentives, and formality to peer exchange in agriculture for networking and the strengthening of connections.

In interviews, committed young farmers emphasize that, although they want to farm, they don’t want to be isolated. As agricultural communities become increasingly fragmented, people are recreating agricultural communities using all the technology and tools at their disposal. In the United States, a virtual network for mentoring, socializing, and mutual support called The Greenhorns⁵⁹ has sprung up. Similarly, in B.C., Young Agrarians links young farmers in a virtual community of peer exchange, support, and mentoring.⁶⁰

Many interviewees mentioned the need for more formal schooling to re-establish agriculture as a career option.⁶¹ This can involve both education and financial support. Many movements to restore local agriculture, such as the worldwide Via Campesina movement, involve farmer-to-farmer training as part of their work. In Quebec, students who graduate with a degree in agriculture have access to up to \$40,000 to get started in farming.

c) Easements, land trusts, and community farms

The community land trust movement preserves agricultural communities through joint ownership and collaboration among several farmers.⁶² The appetite for protection through these new models appears to be building in some circles. These models tend to focus on community development and sustainable living. One example, the Community Farm movement in B.C., has provided a base for the protection of many area farms through land trusts or easements. Many of these farmers state that creating a secure living for themselves is more of a priority than wealth acquisition.

The Ontario Farmland Trust, established in 2002, has made some important efforts toward preserving farmland, but it is a small organization doing important work with few resources. A land trust involves removing the land from the speculative market. The land is held ‘in trust’ by a non-profit corporation or public entity. Community farms, which are managed by a group of farmers, have not appeared in Ontario yet. In the B.C. model, community farms tend to be protected for agriculture by a land trust. They can also be privately owned. In Ontario, both community farms and land trusts are currently impeded by land use regulations that prevent multiple households on a property. Whole Village in Caledon has worked to develop a version of a community farm and has struggled with rules against multiple dwellings.⁶³ Use of the *Condominium Act* with protected agricultural status may be one solution to this problem. (See “agriminiums” in the next section: *d) Residential needs on farms.*)

In the case of smaller farms in Ontario, there may be little financial incentive for easements,⁶⁴ wherein the owner gives up the right to sell to non-farmers. Easements can provide additional payments (the difference between the agricultural and development value) and ensure the property’s long-term agricultural use. Many farmers do not have a high enough income to benefit from the tax reductions that easements offer. Also, many established farmers are counting on the sale of their land in order to retire. They view land trusts unfavourably, as they will reduce their profits. Land trusts also require the holder of the trust to raise considerable sums and to maintain a land management service.

Daniel and Bowers recommend a model of “securitized installment purchase agreements” to finance gradual payment of an easement to a landowner.⁶⁵ The arrangement allows the holder of the easement (the land trust or municipality) to raise the purchase price over a period of time. The guarantee of the purchase through securitization might give the landowner the confidence to receive payments gradually, knowing that the full amount will be forthcoming as needed. This also reduces taxes on windfall profits from the one-time sale of large tracts.

Where community farms or land trusts have been implemented in Canada, the farms are innovative and successful. In Quebec, the new farmers of Tourne-Sol Co-operative Farm accessed the funding available for graduating agricultural students. They started a worker co-op that farms and supplies food through direct marketing. The farm supports five people without the need for off-farm income.⁶⁶ In Nova Scotia, Waldegrave Farm and the connected land trust house approximately eight residents. Some of them farm and some are residential investors who provide a core market for the farm.⁶⁷ The 100-acre property is protected by the Tatamagouche Community Land Co-operative.

d) Residential needs on farms

These examples of joint ownership and collaboration are testament to the value of housing more than one farmer on or near a property. One interviewee pointed out that although she herself didn't want to deal with livestock, she would like to share land with someone who did so she could include meat in her CSA. In addition, her fields could benefit from the ready supply of composted manure. Many new farmers would like to work with a small group of colleagues to farm together and live near each other in a farming community. However, additional farm residences are prohibited by severance rules, except in limited cases such as houses for farm help or trailers for migrant workers.⁶⁸

Use of the *Condominium Act*⁶⁹ offers many possibilities. New farmers could purchase equity in the buildings, structured as a condominium, while sharing or leasing the land, preferably through long-term leases. The landowner can be a municipality, a public institution like the Ontario Farmland Trust, or even a private landowner. In all cases, the sale of the land for anything but farming would be constrained by an easement or some such mechanism. As Gavin Dandy at Everdale pointed out, the problem with a public land, land trust, or easement model is that even though a renting farmer may have a long-term lease, as they do at Everdale, they do not have an opportunity to accumulate equity.⁷⁰ The opportunity through the *Condominium Act* to build equity in the buildings would be an important aspect of the model.

The arrangement would protect the land, to which residents do not have title, and create equity for tenants in the buildings. The *Condominium Act* also has interesting provisions for common areas that may fit agricultural needs. For instance, small-scale farmers would probably benefit from a shared barn and drive-shed, and perhaps access to a shared commercial kitchen. It is possible that the *Condominium Act* could be applied to land sharing as well (i.e., an "agriminium"). However, this solution comes with the proviso that people remember occasions when the legislation was used to conceal residential development, pure and simple, with no actual intention to farm.⁷¹ The model

might have to be combined with an easement or other mechanism to protect the land for farming.

As a long-term strategy, consideration should be given to creating a blended tax rate. The rate could include all buildings with the farmed property, reducing the exposure for farmers who purchase additional parcels with residences. Currently, if residences cannot be severed from large farms, they are often demolished when parcels are consolidated to avoid the higher tax rate. The blended rate would protect existing dwellings for future needs and maintain some consideration for the municipal cost of services. New residences could be clustered, as in the Hutterite model. Otherwise, the cost to the municipality would be untenable. After all, given the emphasis placed in interviews on farming by local residents and agricultural communities, it seems counter-productive to separate farm residences through either taxes or by severance.⁷² By definition, homes for the farmers should be part of the equation.

e) Redefining “farm” for tax purposes

Any property that has a minimum income of \$7,000 in agricultural products qualifies for the reduced tax rate for farms (25% of the residential rate). This provides an incentive for non-farmers to create enough agricultural activity to benefit from reduced taxes. The small income required can be achieved by buying a few horses and breeding them, or renting the land for haying. The main income for such a property owner is usually from an urban job, inherited wealth, or retirement income.

The reduced tax rate provides an incentive for wealthy people to purchase tracts of farmland primarily for residential and often seasonal use only.⁷³ The tax rate should be based on total income from all sources or on the percentage of income from agriculture. The farm tax rate could also be restricted to full-time resident farmers only. In this case, low-income farmers would still be able to receive the tax break.

Some controls regarding farmers’ rents should be enacted in areas where development and speculation pressures are forcing the value of the land above reasonable agricultural rates. If developers had less access to the farm tax rebate, they might still retain land for speculative value but decide to make up the higher taxes in higher rents to farm tenants. In this case, rent control for farmers could address the problem.

f) Control of speculative agricultural land purchases

Currently, developers speculating on its future value can purchase land, rent it to farmers, and benefit from the lower tax rate. As mentioned in Strategy 1, in Maryland, if land is converted from agriculture to development, the owner pays

residential taxes retroactively on land rented to farmers and a fee for the conversion.

Most land destined for development is offered only on short-term leases. Farmers need long-term leases to provide in-depth stewardship and to have some security for planning. Longer leases could be a requirement for the rental, although this might dissuade developers from renting the land, resulting in it being left unused. This is highly undesirable for two reasons: land is in short supply, and fallow land, if left too long, becomes difficult to convert back to agriculture.

Ideally, developers should have incentives to develop immediately and disincentives to gamble on the speculative value. Municipal planning could provide approvals that expire if the developer fails to act after a specific time period, such as a year or two.

Some people recommend abolishing the tax break entirely for non-resident farmers. This would create problems for the many farmers who have scattered parcels with only one parcel actually housing a residence. Tim Lehman notes that similar tax breaks have not been successful in the U.S. at slowing the spread of development “or even doing much to aid family farmers.”⁷⁴ Most small farmers with low net income do not have much tax exposure and derive little benefit from tax breaks.

Strategy 3: Maintain farmer control of agricultural choices on farmland

“Americans have long debated how much freedom landowners should have to use their property as they desire. There is intense disagreement over how to weigh public interest against private property rights.”

— Daniels and Bowers, *Holding Our Ground*, 31

Farmer control is a key issue raised in the interviews. This includes control over both the use of land and its disposition in the case of a transfer. Many interviewees feel that there was insufficient consultation before the *Greenbelt Act* was passed, that environmental regulations are imposed without their consultation, and that they have insufficient voice in planning and zoning decisions that affect their operations. This has created artificial conflicts wherein farmers seem to be protesting environmental protection when, in fact, their complaint is that they were not consulted. For example, Peter Jeffrey points out that the protection of Bobolinks, which has disrupted farming schedules in Ontario, seems arbitrary, given that the Bobolink’s actual territory is much more extensive south of the border.⁷⁵

One challenge is that farmers are often already over-committed in existing agricultural networks. Their availability is seasonal (mostly in the winter) and may not correspond to the province’s timelines for input. Opportunities that

affect the majority of Ontario farmers (small- and mid-scale) might mobilize new demographics not represented in existing coalitions. The agricultural representatives would have to be assured that their voices would be heard and that new initiatives could provide some ongoing measure of input and ownership options.

Blair Hamilton quotes Lawless to argue that property rights, often called a bundle of rights, have seven essential categories that can be separated and addressed with different strategies:

- a) Right to **possess**. (Exclusive physical control of the object.)
- b) Right to **use**. (Owner can use and enjoy the object.)
- c) Right to **manage**. (Right to allow use and contract over benefits.)
- d) Right to **income**. (Right to earn income from the object.)
- e) Right to **capital**. (Right to sell, consume, or destroy the object.)
- f) Right to **security**. (Ownership in perpetuity with protection from arbitrary appropriation.)
- g) **Transmissibility**. (Right to transfer the object to another through sale or inheritance.)⁷⁶

Ontario farmers report a gradual loss in most of these categories, leaving them with a slim bundle of rights. Right to use, manage, income, security, and transmissibility have all been reduced by regulations and by the basic economics of the food system (which has driven farmers into debt). The solution is not to stop environmental protection or agricultural zoning, but to engage the farming community in solutions to the problems that these provisions seek to redress.

For instance, Gilvesy argues Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) is effective in encouraging ecological stewardship, because it engages the farmer in knowledge and ownership of stewardship initiatives. The financial benefits are relatively minor at this point. Likewise, the most frequent objection raised to land trusts and easements is that they are perceived as yet one more way to take control from the farmer.⁷⁷

Land trusts also reduce several of these categories of rights and tend not to be enthusiastically received by farmers. The division of responsibility and ownership becomes complicated when the public or community benefits of agriculture are taken into account. If the public has a stake in the farmer's work, then their participation in decision making must be very clearly defined. For instance, a land trust can identify principles of sustainable agriculture for a tenant farmer without specifying how that is to be achieved. To embed organic certification in the land trust agreement might be too specific and exclude some potential farmers. Many small-scale organic farmers do not certify because it is relatively expensive. Their sales are mostly direct, through farmer's markets and CSAs where certification does not add any advantages. Nonetheless, their

sustainable and environmentally sensitive production might be ideal in meeting land trust objectives.

In the state of Maine and other areas, agricultural commissions are established to provide oversight and input into decisions that affect agriculture.⁷⁸ These commissions give local farmers input into land use policies and planning as well as a forum to discuss and debate their positions. Given the number of different planning acts that are up for imminent review, advance organization around regional agriculture might be useful. Agricultural commissions can ensure that the province has access to farmer input regarding issues of regional agriculture.

Other methods of consultation can include advisory groups, representatives on boards of environmental organizations, and support for input in rhythm with agricultural schedules (that is, with meetings funded and organized in the winter). This strategy is really a shift in governance and consultation to ensure that all forms of agriculture are represented in decisions that affect the sector.

Strategy 4: Determine and promote the economic, environmental, and social benefits of regional food systems

“We have to change our accounting principles; we have to change the way we do a variety of different things in farm business development.”

— Christie Young, interview with the author, March 2012

This strategy is one of the most essential and significant, as it supports and strengthens the case for all the other strategies. Many of the shifts in priorities described in this paper would be greatly facilitated by an analysis of the value of agriculture. Such an analysis would permit the rationalization of planning decisions that require funding, since it could be demonstrated that savings elsewhere in the system would balance the new spending. It is also the concept most uniformly recommended during interviews with farmers.

If Ontario had a way to assess the economic impact of agriculture for local food production, there would be a much more persuasive case for shifts in policies and programs. In addition to the economic benefits, measurements could include a wide range of environmental and social benefits. The information exists for much of this analysis, but it is scattered and not always available in comparable form.

Contributions to Ontario’s overall well-being include soil, air, water health, stronger local economies, and reduced health care impacts from environmental degradation or pollution. Olson writes, “Essential functions of agricultural landscapes include not only commodity production, but air and water purification, wildlife habitat, recreation, open space, and an environment for quality rural lifestyles and cultures.”⁷⁹ Such analysis would also help provincial

and local authorities make well-informed decisions to maximize the benefits of agriculture-focused development and protection.⁸⁰

Various methods exist for this assessment, including the economic analysis of localizing food, Cost of Community Services studies, measurements of environmental goods, and measurements of the health benefits of local agriculture.

Broader provincial commitment to incentives and rewards would redefine our framework for protecting farmland. It would recognize the social (such as jobs) and economic benefits that agricultural activities bring to the province. It would reflect the fact that resources like water, soil, and air are all affected by agricultural activity, and that their impact and value crosses the boundaries of individual farms.⁸¹

Payments for ecological goods and services may be cumbersome until the environmental and community benefits of agriculture are better recognized and more accurately measured. Because these strategies represent a shift in the distribution of money and incentives, they are long-term strategies. However, many models outside Canada, including in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Tanzania, and the European Union, can provide templates to help us establish our own systems for assessing and rewarding public value in land use.

a) Economic analysis to quantify the benefits of agriculture

Ontario has no comprehensive, up-to-date, or detailed analysis of the economic value of diverse agriculture. Gifts of soil health, environmental stewardship, wetland protection, watershed protection, and wildlife diversity that come from environmentally responsible farming practices are underestimated. They have important outcomes in health care costs, savings in pollution remediation, in carbon emission reduction, and in secondary benefits to our communities by integrating strong local economies that allow people to live where they work.

In Europe and the U.K., strategies that estimate the value of ecosystem services from diverse uses — farming, recreation, and conservation — are much more developed.⁸² Like the privately funded ALUS program in Canada, these public programs offer payments to farmers for watershed protection, erosion control, and other environmental goods.

In the absence of provincial commitments or direction, initiatives to link the public benefits of agriculture to reward programs have tended to develop regionally. The foresighted Huron County Planning and Development Department has worked closely with farmers to promote incentives for conservation and good stewardship.⁸³ For instance, the Huron County Clean Water Project has accumulated \$350,000 in funding. It is well promoted and supported by the local conservation authority and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Likewise, the Kawartha Farm Stewardship Collaborative promotes existing government programs, such as their new funding for pollinator habitat. ALUS provides training and financial incentives for environmental management and protection, such as wetland protection on farmland in Ontario. Until recently, ALUS was limited mostly in scope to the Norfolk area. Substantial new funding will enable it to expand its reach and provide incentives for ecological goods and services province-wide.

An issue that needs to be addressed is the struggle and insecurity around funding. These have created piecemeal programs. These programs attempt to address ecosystem services and incentives as a simple fee for a single service rather than as an integrated whole that might include social and economic goods as well as environmental benefits. For instance, the benefits of water filtration that a well-managed farm offers can include benefits to groundwater, and therefore to local health, as well as the on-farm benefits of drainage and biodiversity.

b) Economic analysis of localizing our food systems

Many jurisdictions have assessed the economic impact of localizing food. These studies focus on sales of food to local markets, the creation of jobs, and the multiplier effect of local dollars circulating to retail outlets and secondary businesses. The Crossroads Resource Center in Minnesota⁸⁴ assesses the potential and existing impact of local food and agriculture. Other economic assessments have been conducted in various regions of the U.S., such as Iowa and Michigan, as well as in Northern Ireland, where studies show substantial positive effects from localizing food.⁸⁵

In the case of the Michigan study, the focus is on replacing imports with products that can be grown in Michigan. This study is persuasive because it also assesses induced costs, such as the cost of lost imported food transportation jobs. A Waterloo study has examined the savings in carbon emissions from localizing food in that area. These kinds of concrete statistics, combined as province-wide evidence, are needed to ensure that the argument for local food and its economic impact is more than anecdotal.

In addition, a mixture of farm types adds to the resilience of farming by ensuring a diversity of food and fibre options with different markets. Holland Marsh and Greenbelt farmers, for instance, are mostly mid-scale. Nonetheless, they are highly specialized and singular in style, producing over half the province's onions and carrots for both local markets and export. As one farmer remarked concerning agricultural trends toward export-oriented consolidation, "We don't want to drive into this ditch just because there's more money in the ditch."⁸⁶

One local and very relevant study focused on the VQA wine industry. “VQA” is a designation that means the wine grapes were grown within the province rather than imported. An additional appellation of origin (“Niagara Peninsula” or “Lake Erie North Shore”) can be used if all the grapes are grown in Ontario and 85% come from the designated area. The study showed that every litre of VQA wine brought \$12.29 to the province in economic impact. The study looked at basic economic impacts, such as jobs and retail income. The impact would probably be higher if environmental and social measures were included. The recognition of a full range of value from agriculture echoes the recent movement of “agroecology.” Keith Douglass Warner writes that agroecology “recognizes that ecosystem services upon which society depends flow from managed landscapes, and that evaluating an ecosystem on the basis of a single indicator cannot capture the ecosystem’s full range of benefits.”⁸⁷

c) Need for Cost of Community Services studies

Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies assess the local economic impact of different land uses and activities on a municipality. They compare the income and expenses from different types of use in a municipality. No recent COCS studies exist for Ontario areas.⁸⁸

Although the studies elsewhere are consistent in outcomes, Ontario would benefit enormously by completing such a study with up-to-date measures. In the U.S., Daniels and Bowers reported that these studies show a \$0.21 to \$0.75 cost of services per tax revenue dollar from farms, while the cost of services for residential use totals \$1.05 to \$1.67 for every tax dollar received.⁸⁹ It is important to note that residential development *always* costs the municipality money in the long term. The more scattered the development, the more it costs as the municipality is forced to stretch sewage, water, and other services across long distances to reach the scattered residences. As Burkhard Mausberg of Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation points out, initially, housing provides a peak of income to a municipality. In the long-term, the municipality benefits more from agriculture.⁹⁰

Part of the economic value of agricultural protections is to ensure better densification, more cost-effective housing development, and lower costs of community services across all sectors. For instance, constraints on housing development will reduce the need for farmers to buy new land that is widely scattered from their home base. Scattered parcels require expensive transportation of heavy equipment on poor quality rural roads in order to service all the parcels. Better densification would also help to keep integrated agricultural communities separate from residential development. This would reduce municipal and other costs from car and truck transportation to reach farm services such as input suppliers, veterinarians, and farm equipment repair.

d) Measure environmental benefits

Methods to measure environmental impacts and benefits are often rendered in carbon emissions or converted to dollars. The conversion to dollars can be risky, since the market for carbon reductions is still immature. Ralph Martin recommends the straightforward accounting practice of testing soil organic matter (SOM). This approach would reward farmers for high or increasing levels of SOM. The assessment could result in programs tying payments (for farm or ecological services) to SOM levels. The measurement would also allow farmers to weigh the relative costs of land purchases in terms of agricultural value. A fruit and vegetable farmer might take into consideration the value of a healthy SOM level as a way to reduce the input requirement on a new parcel of land.

A more unified system for rewarding and supporting stewardship could be built on these measurements. Many programs exist that are applied piecemeal (some regulatory; some through public funds, grants, or rebates). They depend on a local authority, farm, or conservancy organization for promotion and implementation. A farmer interested in stewardship has to sort through many different programs at various levels of government. A uniform system of valuation would reduce the complexity and bureaucracy for the farmer and increase the uptake of programs.

e) Measure health benefits of agriculture

"We have a food system that doesn't think about health and a health system that doesn't think about food."

— Tony McQuail, interview with the author, March 2012

Localizing our food has important impacts on health care costs. Reduced chemical inputs are understood to reduce the potential for various diseases. Local food consumption tends to move consumers toward fresh foods and away from heavily processed foods that contain hidden sugars, salts, and fats. This shift has pay-offs in many areas of improved physical health, with impacts on obesity, diabetes, and heart problems. These impacts need to be measured.

Localized food also reduces long-distance transportation and improves air quality, resulting in reduced asthma and respiratory illness. Denser housing development to protect farmland would reduce commuting times and increase time for family and community. The model would lead to better use of public transit, increased biking and walking, and a reduction in overall transportation emissions. A study of the health impacts of food choices is currently underway at the University of Guelph.⁹¹

Many of the quantifiable impacts of local food economies match official plans and principles. Such measurements and studies provide details that would help planning officials and governments promote and justify actions to change

development patterns. As Matthew Mariola writes, “Increasingly, the platform required to resonate in the realm of public discourse must consist of economically quantifiable arguments.”⁹²

f) Recognize the public and community benefits of agriculture

Numerous public goods and benefits flow from agricultural activities. Strategies to recognize the public value of land include rewarding the public benefits from farmland stewardship, targeting key near-urban areas, supporting agricultural innovation in parks, and controlling farmers’ rents.

In Canada, cities and conservation authorities are leading the way in innovative uses of public land for food. In many cases, the public land projects can be facilitated simply by greater uniformity and communication, so that each project does not have to negotiate use agreements and rights anew. As Raj Patel points out, the divisions of property between public and private are not natural; they are renewed and renegotiated in each culture and in each moment in history.⁹³ In addition, the distinction between public and private has been questioned. The categories may have considerable overlap and mutuality.⁹⁴ Many layers of regulation control the use of public land. Recognizing the public benefits of agriculture requires a cultural shift that can form the principle for future agricultural decisions in planning, financing, and operations.

The U.S. Conservation Security Program was a national example of supporting the public benefits of agriculture. It was established by the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (the 2002 Farm Bill), and it provided payments to farmers who implemented various conservation measures. In 2008, it was replaced by the Conservation Stewardship Program.⁹⁵

In Ontario, the public value of agriculture is recognized by agricultural subsidies, favourable mortgage and loan arrangements, publicly supported marketing, and reduced taxes for farmland. Ontario and its municipalities do not publicly reward or recognize the environmental goods derived from agriculture, except in specific cases. Projects like the ALUS program attempt to unify and promote incentives for land stewardship. These programs ensure our farmland continues to protect soil and water assets indefinitely.

Land trusts based on public land cement the public good of land within a formally governed structure. The Toronto Islands Residential Community Trust is an example of this model.⁹⁶ Conservation authorities, such as Rouge Park, have begun to provide long-term leases and stewardship programs — for example, native bee boxes for pollination and watershed protection through wetland redevelopment on the farms on public land. At this point, public authorities cannot offer leases longer than the current five-year rolling leases without going through an onerous approval process with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Many interviewees identify the drastic difference between agricultural value and development value of land as the result of a failure to recognize the long-term environmental and community benefits of agriculture. For example, one Ontario farmer lived on his rented land for decades and worked to build a healthy soil base full of natural fertility and immunities. In the end, the premium value of the land for development was so high that the landowner could not resist selling it out from under him. The farmer could not realize the value of his improved soil and land assets, and could not afford to start again.

Solutions that aim to increase agricultural land value may put land purchase or rental even further out of sight for new farmers. Again, Ralph Martin's recommendation of tying farm payments to SOM — a readily measurable indicator of soil health — is a workable solution. The advantage is that it prevents the excessive rise of farmland values.

After all, the problem is not so much that agricultural land is undervalued, but that development land is overvalued by speculative amounts. Although developers may dream the boom will never end, fuel shortages alone might be enough to halt suburban sprawl. High fuel costs could make it financially unfeasible for people to live far from where they work. Given the possibility that the bottom might drop out of the market, the speculative value remains an unrealized and hoped-for premium on top of demonstrable land values.

Land use decisions and history represent a series of choices based on the relative prioritization of public and private values. Caldwell writes, "each application for the division (or consolidation) of land should be understood as a renegotiation of public and private interests with significance at a larger landscape scale. This renegotiation occurs between an individual, the local community, and the broader provincial interests in viable agricultural landscapes."⁹⁷

g) The use of public land for agriculture

Conservation lands owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) have spearheaded models for linking public good to agriculture.⁹⁸ Agriculture and the preservation of the natural environment are not mutually exclusive pursuits. Many conservation goals can be reached through farm stewardship. For instance, some areas in the province that were turned over for protection have been rented back for agriculture. The meadows that previously occupied these areas are key habitat for some birds that vanished when the forest was re-established. TRCA establishes rental agreements that exchange public and community goods — such as access to local food, education, and skills-based training opportunities — for access to land. They assist farm projects with infrastructure such as preserving farm buildings or irrigation and water access. TRCA has also championed long-term leases, replacing annual

renewal with five-year rolling leases so that a farmer continually maintains a five-year lease.

Eric Rosenkrantz was one of the first to train and incubate his farm business through FarmStart. He benefited from conversations and mentoring through a network of other farmers and incubators, and he still maintains contact with some of them. He was able to brand and establish his farm business during the three years he was on FarmStart's McVean incubator farm, located on TRCA property. When the opportunity to farm at The Living City Campus at Kortright (also TRCA property) came up, he was ready. He is now the successful farm proprietor of The Living City Farm. Access to the public land was provided in exchange for his commitment to education, farming, and promotion.

The TRCA sees the relationship as part of their new Living City vision that integrates working landscapes (farms and related operations) into conservation landscapes. Their five-year rolling lease model for farms on TRCA property, through their Sustainable Near-Urban Agriculture Policy, was also used as a template to develop a similar policy for Rouge Park, which was recently brought under the federal parks system.

If the public value of land use for food were better recognized, land would be regulated more like electricity and water. These latter goods, although provided through fee for use, are also subsidized and controlled through public authorities. Farmers' markets and urban agriculture have begun to model this use of public land to some extent. Farmers involved in public land arrangements may pay lower rents but accept greater public responsibility for training the next generation of farmers and educating the public about agriculture. As Lehman points out, "In practice, public and private are so deeply intertwined that to portray them as mutually exclusive alternatives is to miss the real choices in institutions and land use."⁹⁹

Part Two:

Promising practices to enable land access and sustainable agricultural development

Difficulties of succession in the agricultural sector

Many farmers have accumulated large tracts of land with large-scale operations that are worth millions. In order to retire, they need to realize the value buried in their assets, which means they need to sell their land and business. Numerous people in interviews cited the adage that farmers “live poor and die rich.”

Another reason many farmers need to sell outright at retirement is that they are carrying a high debt level. Interviewees point out that farmers have a right to retire and to use their asset value to live out their old age. A farmer should not have to keep farming until he or she drops at the wheel of their tractor.¹⁰⁰ We should not expect them to take a reduced payment for their assets to protect future generations when we do not expect that from other sectors.

Farmers are also likely to face the problem of children who do not want to farm. Anecdotally, it is quite common for farm children who grew up watching their parents struggle financially, work long hours, and never get a vacation or benefits to think that they might prefer some other career. The next generation of farmers may not all come from farm families.¹⁰¹

Challenges of access for new farmers

In regions where competition for land is especially high, new farmers can be challenged financially as well as by a lack of integration into the community. For example, one young farmer couple hoped to expand onto the neighbouring land as the next-door neighbours were planning to retire. But the land ended up going to the commodity farmer who had been renting (though not renting-to-own) the land. The strength of supply management and high commodity prices have created these kinds of scenarios where local farmers, wanting to take advantage of the excellent markets, compete with each other for new acreage. Established farmers are more likely to sell to people they have known for a long time.

The rise of training programs like FarmStart, Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT), and Everdale’s Farmers Growing Farmers demonstrates an appetite for farming among non-farmers. These programs attract young people who grew up in the city or suburbs as well as people looking for a second career. FarmStart also works with newcomers to Canada interested

in an agricultural career. They may have expertise in farming from their home country but are looking for training in the climate and soil demands of Ontario farming. An impressive number of alumni go on to establish farming businesses, secure land, and commit to a life of farming.

All new farming groups face capitalization challenges, whether trying to buy their parents' farm or opening a new enterprise. Succession for established farmers resembles the issue of succession planning for the wealthy classes: how to transfer assets without triggering an unreasonable tax burden for the next generation. In this case, the wealth is almost entirely in land or quota rather than cash. High taxes would mean that the next generation would have to sell the assets to pay them. Farmers do have some capital gains exemptions (recently increased to \$750,000), which help alleviate the tax burden. A gradual transition also makes good financial sense but requires a lot of planning and usually the advice of an expert. The risk for both the junior and the senior farmer is that the other party will exit prematurely. This risk may increase if intergenerational transfers begin to occur between non-family members. The risk should be transparent and accounted for in the formal agreement between the parties.

Decades-long effect of agricultural credit policies

Since the 1970s, banks and credit bureaus have willingly loaned money to farmers based on the value of their land. For decades now, lending against the value of the land has caused financial hardship. When interest rates escalated in the 1970s, banks foreclosed and many farmers lost their land.¹⁰² Rural neighbours ran “penny auctions” to save the farms. After foreclosure, the bank would send a professional auctioneer to the property to sell off the machinery and land. Neighbouring farmers would replace the bank’s representative with their own professional auctioneer, bid pennies for everything, then return the property to the original farmer. The result of generous lending has been that policies meant to assist farmers have actually contributed to farmland loss and land access challenges.¹⁰³

The National Farmers Union reports that “To earn a net income dollar today, farmers must borrow and risk seven times as much debt as they did in the 1970s, and three times as much as in the 80s.”¹⁰⁴

The high debt, high physical asset situation has made it difficult for farmers with large farms to transfer them to the next generation. New farmers (even the sons or daughters of established ones) cannot get access to the kind of credit needed to assume large mortgages or to buy the quota. And the parents are often caught in the trap that the land is their only asset; if they want to stop farming or retire, they need to sell the land.

Strategy 5: Provide support and templates for entry and succession transfers

“[Succession is about] relationships and dreams and aspirations as well as hard facts about properties and assets... it's not simple. The succession process really is probably one of the hardest things farmers will go through.”

— *Christie Young*, interview with the author, March 2012

Turnover and farm ownership transition will be a significant challenge over the next decade. Succession is a thorny and challenging issue. Programs and incentives to smooth the way for entering and retiring farmers are urgently needed. Fortunately, options for more flexible and innovative leases exist. Similarly, many gradual transfer methods already exist and, through promotion and small levels of funding support, can sustain and formalize existing practices (for instance, mentoring or incubation by a senior farmer for a new farmer). FarmStart has produced a comprehensive guidebook for these options titled *Accessing Land for Farming in Ontario*. Broader promotion and outreach would serve to implement these models.

One family's history tells the history of trends in transfer opportunities.¹⁰⁵ Bryan Gilvesy's father inherited the farm from his grandfather. When Gilvesy was nineteen, his father purchased a hundred acres and Gilvesy gradually bought him out. The price of land and the relatively minor debt allowed Gilvesy to enter and scale up in the profession — tobacco at that point — without undue risk. Now, he is looking to separate his business (organic beef) from the title to the land in the next transfer. This way, he'll keep the land and retire in his home on the sale of the business.

a) Customized lease agreements

Several interviewees raised the point that lease agreement templates are more flexible than people realize and can be created to protect the tenant from sudden and financially devastating eviction.¹⁰⁶ Interviewees had definite and contradictory opinions on whether new farmers should be able to buy land or should start with rental arrangements. The debate is not so much about the relative merits of buying versus leasing as it is about the search for security of tenure.

Long-term security is necessary for fruit and vegetable farmers who want to plant perennials or need to build their soil health. Short-term lease arrangements have been shown to lead to indifferent stewardship, wherein the greatest profit is extracted from the land as rapidly as possible regardless of the impact on land and environment. All tenure security mechanisms promote better stewardship and make farming a more secure career choice. Although

rural practice often relies on handshake agreements, this will probably become less common as new farmers come from outside the community.

For example, the dozen or so farmers in Rouge Park have had one-year leases, annually renewed, since the park was established. One prominent family managed to buy back some of their land after the province's expropriation. On this land, they have established an excellent farm market and a pick-your-own strawberry operation (a perennial crop). They have welcomed Rouge Park's offers of a beehive for pollinators and other conservation efforts. However, they also still rent other parcels from the park and use them for cash cropping without any long-term investments in stewardship, buildings, or plantings. Rouge Park is now developing a model of long-term leases in response to farmers' suggestions.

To support gradual transfers that fit the needs and resources of new farmers, lease agreements should contain clauses allowing tenants to lease-to-own. Mortgages can be supported by the landowner through low interest rates or a reduction of down payments. In some cases, the landowner can assume the mortgage and a contract is formulated for the gradual buyout of the mortgage by the new farmer. Agreements can also contain a right-of-first-refusal clause. This gives a long-term tenant a period of time to raise money to buy the land once the owner is ready to sell. Simple long-term leases also provide tenure security, especially if they are rolling leases that are automatically renewed for the length of the lease. This provision gives the farmer and landowner several years' notice before the arrangement is discontinued. Fruit and vegetable growers seek at least five-year terms and prefer ten-year terms.

b) Mentoring for transfers

Strong mentoring relations facilitate transfers of agricultural land and provide an opportunity for new farmers to start at a manageable size. They can increase their commitment and responsibility as their experience and skills increase. In order to facilitate a gradual transfer, young farmers need places to live. This is particularly true of mixed farming operations oriented to local food production, where the management of diverse livestock and crops requires an around-the-clock presence on the farm. This can be achieved through cluster housing options, co-housing options (perhaps through the *Condominium Act*) or designations like "agricultural residential."

Mentoring is crucial for succession planning. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs already provide some of this support.¹⁰⁷ A more established program that is easily accessible and detailed would greatly aid these transitions. Members of Fraser Common Farm Co-op recently held a substantial facilitated session with their members, mostly senior farmers, to address the succession issue. Heather Pritchard, a member of

the co-op and staff for the community farm network under FarmFolk CityFolk in B.C., reports that they recognized that the founders have to let go of the vision. The new farmers will want to be able to create their own projects with their own ideas. She comments, “Succession is really hard; it’s almost easier economically than personally.” Their goal is to create a “seamless, slow way to do it.”¹⁰⁸

At Everdale, farmer Gavin Dandy spoke about the inspiration he derives from young people who come to Everdale wanting to learn to farm and to spend their lives in farming. Pritchard also speaks of being re-inspired by a wave of young people dedicated to farming and to new models of farming.

Strategy 6: Create flexible financing

“Sometimes you don't have to reinvent the wheel again, just start using the wheel.”

— Janet Horner, interview with the author, May 2012

Banks and farm credit operations have been geared to farm consolidation and export-oriented agriculture. They have been systematically carrying out policies and programs that help consolidate farms to the detriment of other forms of agriculture. A healthy landscape of agriculture comprised of regional food systems and existing cash-cropping and livestock models requires many kinds of financing. Several methods and instruments can address the needs of these viable and effective forms of agriculture, such as community investment funds, community financing models, slow money, and flexible farm credit based on agricultural value.

Interest in investing in new forms of agriculture does seem to be growing and may create short-term pay-offs sooner than expected.¹⁰⁹ Many community financing models are low cost and straightforward if the amount to be raised is below a certain threshold. For instance, raising less than \$200,000 in investments for a co-op is fairly simple. Non-profits also have provisions that allow them to raise much more without undue cost. In the case of farmland, the minimum size of Ontario parcels (which tends to be 100 acres) can mean that the amount farmers need to get started is very high, and out of reach of some community-based models. Community financing strategies must be tied to changes in severance and joint farming options. These changes will need long-term commitment to take effect.

Likewise, tax strategies require long-term efforts. They involve experts and higher expenses than other options. Tax strategies are not helpful to farmers with low net income, such as small- and medium-scale fruit and vegetable producers. Changes to mortgage rules may also require significant time and expertise. Changes in down payment requirements for first-time farm owners

and the development of new regimes of “patient capital” for new types of agriculture would also require significant investments of time and energy.

Flexible financing mechanisms are being explored by a coalition of groups and individuals through FarmStart, which considers this issue to be a high priority. Many community and alternative financing models are fairly easy to implement. Food co-ops and renewable energy co-ops have a three- to five-year timeline from launching a financing mechanism to installation. For instance, the Community Power Fund (CPF) was only a few years in the planning stages before it was launched with support from the Ministry of Energy. Changes to farm credit and banking practices are much more challenging but urgently needed.

Failures in the banking system and financial structures, particularly outside Canada, have led to a burst of innovation around new models of financing. Investors who have been scared off or frustrated by conventional investment opportunities are eager for novel alternatives.¹¹⁰ Recent crises across the globe in the banking sector suggest that changes are imminent anyway.

a) Community investment funds

Many excellent models exist for regional and community development funding. For instance, the community-owned renewable energy sector receives financial support from the innovative CPF. The fund focuses on community- and farmer-owned renewable energy. The Community Economic Development Investment Funds (CEDIF) program in Nova Scotia is a broader model for project-specific funding. CEDIF’s recently established FarmWorks Investment Fund focuses on stimulating regional food enterprises.¹¹¹ FarmStart is exploring some of these models for Ontario.

Community financing has been used effectively in Maine to protect agricultural and conservation land through the land trust model. Sky Dragon Community Development Co-operative in Hamilton used community bonds to purchase a building to house various non-profit and alternative food organizations. In 2009, Toronto’s West End Food Co-op launched community bonds to raise money locally for an innovative urban food co-op. The model was subsequently used on a larger scale by the Centre for Social Innovation to buy a building with securities guaranteed by the City of Toronto. Municipal bonds have been used in the U.S. (Pennsylvania and Maine) for farmland protection.¹¹² Saskatchewan has used government guaranteed community bonds since 1990 for local enterprise investment.¹¹³ Other uses of community investment have been through various share models. For instance, one farmer offered shares in a cow for members to access raw milk in Ontario.

Local communities can be encouraged to recognize the benefits of investing in their own communities and in their neighbours. Benefits include local food

security, boosts to the local economy, and the environmental services of local farms. People who receive a regular box of the harvest from a farm see an obvious value in its survival. One farm in B.C. was saved from eviction when community investment was used to buy the farm. When the young farming couple mentioned in the introduction to Part Two wanted to buy the farm next door, the investment commitments they received were partly from their own CSA members.¹¹⁴

Community investment models are reflected in the Slow Money movement. They mirror strategies that promote gradual transfers rather than windfall profits. The State of Vermont legislated funding for land trusts through a surcharge on the land transfer tax. In addition, developers who converted land from agriculture were required to contribute to a fund to protect farmland in another area.¹¹⁵ This model returns windfall profits to the community for agricultural protection.

Standard investment, as Jim Stanford points out in *Paper Boom*, is structured largely for the benefit of wealthy investors with no particular ties to the community.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, community investors know the people who run the companies or co-ops that receive their investments. They can see the fruits of their investment in concrete structures and assets. Community investment often has lower return rates, as befits a different kind of investment. It reminds us that what benefits the community benefits everyone.

b) Flexible farm credit based on agricultural value

The time is right for more flexible financing through farm credit. Banks need to adopt a policy of lending on the long-term agricultural value of the land rather than the speculative value. The difference is fairly easy to ascertain. Most farmers are readily able to quote per acre prices in their area and to name areas where the value was dictated by development opportunities. It is common for interviewees to explain that a price (such as \$24,000 per acre) is not an “agricultural value.” That is, it would be impossible to farm successfully and service the debt necessary to pay for a 100-acre parcel at that price. The income from farming cannot be high enough to rationalize the price.

Farmers who have scrambled to purchase land based on an unrealized expectation of increased agricultural incomes carry very high debt ratios. It is a situation eerily similar to the 1970s. In that period, interest rates shot up and numerous farms were foreclosed. Today, many farms are saddled with such high debt that they cannot afford to sell the land to another farmer. They must sell to the highest bidder (developers) to retire and pay off their commitments. To inherit the farm, the next generation would need to assume a loan but with fewer financial resources than the retiring farmer. The National Farmers Union notes that “the finance sector benefits from this long-term deficit: interest payments

from farm debt represent a transfer of wealth from farm production into the financial sector.”¹¹⁷

Different debt programs might lead to more manageable debt levels. For instance, Bob Baloch, originally from a farming family in Pakistan, began farming in Canada through FarmStart. He is now looking for his own land. He discussed the challenges of finding affordable land and start-up capital. He reports that in Pakistan, farmers can access several types of friendly loans. There are loans for machinery that are zero down and have better interest rates than conventional loans; there are simple, short-term loans for seeds and fertilizer (the loan is returned when the crop is sold); and there are loans specific to poultry or dairy.¹¹⁸ These models are similar to Ontario’s feeder finance co-ops that provide short-term loans for livestock operations.

c) First-time farm purchases

The story of Field Sparrow Farms’ search for land begins with Henry and Sarah Bakker’s move to a jointly owned piece of land in the Kawartha Lakes area. Using this parcel and some additional rented land, the Bakkers began their sustainable beef operation. They developed markets in Toronto and other urban areas. They began a CSA for their beef and raised or purchased other meats to round out the subscription amounts. They began looking for their own piece of land to purchase. In one case, they found themselves bidding against a non-farmer looking for an estate and watched as the price rose well above their budget. At that point, they stepped out of the bidding war. Eventually, they found a place at the outer edge of where they could possibly farm and still reach their markets. The Bakkers were then able to begin a rotational grazing and perennial grass farm on their 100 acres.¹¹⁹

For new farmers buying land, the down payment is at least 50% compared to 10% for first-time home buyers. The high down payment is prohibitive and not substantiated by the risk level, since most young farmers already have a track record of farm sales by the time they try to purchase land. Their credit history will reflect the steady growth and stability of their operation.

With high commodity prices, cash crop farmers (corn-soy-wheat is the standard rotation in Ontario) have access to increased capital to purchase more land to put into commodity crops for export. Capital is raised on debt against assets, such as existing land and quota in supply managed sectors like dairy. High commodity prices cause land prices to go up and limit access for farmers whose sector is less flush, such as new farmers, beef farmers, or fruit and vegetable growers.

Farming is rarely highly profitable, especially for new farmers. Access to “patient capital” that fits the longer-term horizons will be essential to creating viable new farming operations. Farm loan programs typically offer better terms

than standard bank loans. It is important that these funds be available to non-traditional and start-up farmers, not only to conventional farmers.

Strategy 7: Establish long-term ownership and planning options

“Without a doubt, the most important factor affecting stewardship on rental land is the length of the lease.”

— *Ruhf, Higby, and Woloschuck* “Farmland Tenure and Leasing,” 74

Agriculture requires long-term thinking and planning. For instance, in fruit and vegetable crop production, soil health builds over many years. Income is averaged over decades as poor crop years are offset by high yield years. Livestock is technically more mobile, unless it involves perennial pasture. Nonetheless, these operations also depend on large capital investments in less mobile assets such as fencing and barns.

The relatively shorter planning horizons familiar to conventional business practices — one to five years — have spilled into the agriculture sector. This has created barriers to strong agricultural systems.¹²⁰ The long-term development arc of good farming needs to address tenure security through stable purchases, long-term leases, and recognition of necessary stewardship activities and capital. Strategies include long-term ownership structures, planning options, and reviews of food prices.

Many of the recommendations in this section are already underway but are not receiving formal government support or recognition. FarmStart and Everdale have already spearheaded long-term planning for new farmers. This important work has ensured a very high rate of success among their graduates.

Despite the attention corporate farming receives from both allies and dissenters, the majority of Ontario’s farmers are mid- or small-scale.¹²¹ They practice various long-term stewardship techniques. For instance, no-till, which reduces erosion, is now quite common. Also common are Integrated Pest Management techniques that reduce chemical inputs. Average return on investment for these techniques should be calculated in decades rather than in years. Farmers have a vested interest in long-term protection of their valuable assets.

a) Lease and ownership structures

This issue is particularly important because it unites all types of farmers in the search for long-term tenure and control over land use choices. It was a prominent topic in interviews.¹²² Standard rental agreements used in housing should not be the model for farm agreements. Contracts should consider long-term buyout options, stewardship, and farm product in lieu of rent.

See FarmStart's *Accessing Land for Farming in Ontario* for a review of possibilities.¹²³

In addition, new types of land use such as backyard and public land farming require new models that respect the need for long-term security. City Seed Farms' Erica Lemieux farms in several backyards in Toronto. She has had to develop her own land use agreements with landowners. Given the rise of this model — called “small plot intensive” farming — such agreements should be readily available to new farmers focused on urban agriculture.

b) Separate ownership and use

In Ontario, a common transfer method for larger farms is to incorporate and sell shares in the farm corporation. Gilvesy's plan is to develop a brand that can be sold separately from the land. His children could transition into farming through a gradual transfer, or he can separate the brand from the land and retire, in his home, on the sale of his business.¹²⁴ The model fosters shared equity and graceful succession.¹²⁵

Co-operative land ownership offers a long-term model that has received little experimentation or promotion in Ontario. These models also separate the farm business from the ownership title. Shared ownership can ensure stability of the land for farming regardless of transition and turnover of the farming personnel.

In B.C., FarmFolk CityFolk and The Land Conservancy have nurtured 20 community farms that have negotiated various shared ownership models. Their model recognizes that farmland is a community asset with benefits in terms of local food and jobs, environmental goods. Farms also bring social benefits such as knowledge and networks. The community or a community-minded group like a land trust holds the land to be farmed in trust through various long-term lease or shared ownership arrangements. Joint ownership, however, whether as a corporation or for the community, still struggles with issues of residence, severance, capitalization, and with challenges of succession and retirement. Joint ownership models are one part of the toolkit that must address these other issues as well.

In the U.S., the model of community land trusts has been exemplary in connecting community to agriculture and preserving farmland. The E.F. Schumacher Society promoted it first as a solution to farmland protection. The model puts the ownership of the land into the hands of the community in perpetuity (or for terms as long as 99 years). Farmers, often living and working collectively, have long-term access without title to the land. The arrangement can establish equity for long-term tenants through transferable shares in the farm businesses. Title remains with the community. The model has also been used with great success in Chicago and other urban centres for affordable housing projects.¹²⁶ Toronto's Parkdale community, led by Greenest City and the

Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre, is currently exploring the application of this model to urban agriculture and affordable housing in Toronto.

c) Long-term planning horizons

Many aspects of farming do not fit readily into standard business planning practices due to the long-term investments required. As Mariola points out, whether positive or negative, the effects of farming practices are apparent in the long term. The appropriate time scale should be integrated into farm planning timelines.¹²⁷ The development and mentoring of appropriate business planning for new farmers, as currently offered in Everdale's winter training course, is essential for a strong agricultural base. As described in Strategy 6, banks and public funders should establish long-term financing options that match the planning horizons of agriculture.

Farmers recognize the need for long-term horizons in planning, financing, and tenure. However, they tend to resist long-term tenure protection through land trusts and easements. Ontario farmers are the focus of a great deal of restriction and regulation. The trust model seems to remove even more control by putting the title in someone else's hands. Trusts, like zoning, constrain the farmer's ability to liquidate assets. It was the main initial objection to the Greenbelt.¹²⁸ It can probably be mitigated through agreements that ensure long-term oversight and fair voting rights for farmers engaged in these models.

d) The price of food

In the realm of long-term solutions, the price of food remains a critical but almost insoluble challenge. Many interviewees connected the topic of land to the price of food. The argument is that if food prices were higher, farmers would be able to keep, transfer, and access the land they need.

Although food prices have risen in Canada, they are lower than in Europe or Japan. The increase has not affected the incomes of Canadian farmers, while the price of land and inputs have increased many times. This has created an unsustainable economy for farmers. This report assumes that the price of food can only be addressed in concert with many other strategies. However, as a frequent topic in interviews, it is important to recognize that Canadian food prices remain some of the lowest in the world despite the relative per capita national wealth. Farmers' net incomes have not risen since the 1970s.¹²⁹ Yet, around 10% of Canadians struggle with chronic hunger despite low food prices. Many food security organizations (such as FoodShare and The Stop) advocate higher wages in order to give everyone better access to food.

Stimulation of local food systems can help address the problem. Canada has unfortunately been a dumping ground for U.S. surplus food. Canadian farmers cannot compete with the subsidized low prices of these imported goods, and the

result is lost food self-sufficiency. This dependence results in lost economic opportunities, which adds to the problems of poverty and food insecurity. It is difficult to go back from this position. Canadian consumers expect low prices. Their household budgets depend on the fact that only about 12% of their income is spent on food. Much higher percentages prevail in Europe and Japan, where national agriculture is also more robust.¹³⁰

At this point, consumers cannot be expected to bear the brunt of solving the problem of farmers' low incomes. Broader solutions that address everyone's needs are required. This includes strong local food production that connects more directly with consumers. Also, contrary to common opinion, a shift to local food does not necessarily increase the price of groceries. Mausberg of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation cited a recent study by St. Michael's Hospital that found that if Ontario-grown food was substituted for imports, in 83% of cases it was either cheaper or the same price.¹³¹

Conclusion: Identifying priorities for action

Imagine a strong and diverse agricultural sector that maximizes benefits in income and knowledge to local communities; that provides leadership in ecological protection; that is the bedrock of strong rural communities, stable markets, stable jobs; and that offers a likelihood of long-term sustainability despite economic or climatic challenges. How can we achieve this in Ontario?

Many of the tools exist. It is time to wield them with care and foresight. Serious consideration needs to be given to more detailed planning around the opportunities and strategies described in this paper. Once the viability and importance of different approaches is recognized, then planning to ensure the best use of resources (funding, energy, human capacity) can mean overall better outcomes for new programs. For instance, what timeline would mobilize each strategy in an integrated and supportive development spectrum? What needs to happen first? What is already underway and needs only recognition and support to facilitate existing work? What are the transition costs as agricultural methods change? What are the costs of resisting change? Wendell Berry has written, “The appropriate agricultural technology would... aspire to diversity; it would enable the diversification of economies, methods, and species to conform to the diverse kinds of land.”¹³²

The history of the various policies and programs that have led to farmland loss must inform the strategies to improve access to farmland. The complexity of this issue means that a wide range of solutions and tools are needed to support and catalyze a more resilient and sustainable system of food, fuel, and fibre production. Although there are many promising approaches, there is no simple solution to a situation that is a result of complex historical and political development.

For the most part, the strategies put forward in this report have been tried and proven effective within Canada or in other parts of the world. Recommendations require a process of planning, implementation, and stakeholder work to prioritize actions. A number of considerations affect the likelihood of success:

- a) Available capacity within specific sectors
- b) Human resource capacity across different sectors and government ministries
- c) Existing and needed resources (toolkits, templates, guidebooks)
- d) Funding required and available
- e) Adverse impact on other existing projects (export industry or housing development)
- f) Timelines

Next steps would be to engage groups and authorities already active in the sector to determine best ways to pursue the most pressing and effective strategies and recommendations. Pritchard from FarmFolk CityFolk imagines the current shifts and changes in our agricultural landscapes as though we are doing a jigsaw puzzle without the picture on the box. We may have a suspicion that some of the pieces may be lost under the rug or chewed by the dog, yet we assemble a chunk here, a chunk there. A moment will come when we can see the whole picture.¹³³ As Tony Weis points out, we must be able to recognize that current practices and decisions are not inevitable or natural. We must avoid what he calls “the illusion of inevitability.”¹³⁴

We are at a turning point in Ontario’s agricultural history, as transformations and innovations across the landscape combine with a generation nearing retirement and a rapidly growing demand for non-agricultural land uses. The creativity and resourcefulness of the farming sector continues unabated. The growing power of the local food movement has inspired innovation in land use, new farmer training, and new financing mechanisms. The resulting diverse landscape of farming promises a strong and resilient agricultural sector that will benefit from a diversity of tools.

The strategies reviewed here are each in themselves insufficient to support a rejuvenated agriculture that supplies our food sustainably into the future. Together, however, these strategies can lead to change that can ensure access to land for future farmers and long-term food sovereignty for Ontario and Canada. Like Joel Salatin’s practice of “stacking enterprises,” in which complementary grazers attend to different species in a pasture and even control each other’s pests, agriculture thrives from diverse and complementary uses of space, resources, and energy.¹³⁵

Appendix A: Resources and links

Toolbox #1: Prioritize agriculture through planning and policy

Resources: For an excellent example of the economic analysis described here, see Cantrell's Eat Fresh and Grow Jobs, Michigan at <http://www.mlui.org/mlui/projects/publications-archive/#.UeMdIhmJOK8>.

Models/Links: For more on the possibilities in the Condominium Act, see http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_98c19_e.htm.

For the Provincial Policy Statement, see <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page215.aspx>.

For other acts related to agriculture, see the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, 1998: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_98f01_e.htm.

For urban growth legislation, see the Places to Grow Act at http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05p13_e.htm.

For the Greenbelt Act, 2005, see http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05g01_e.htm.

Toolbox #2: Identify and support integrated agricultural communities

Resources: The Ontario Farmland Trust is experienced in easements and land trusts and has many templates and information to help landowners with the process. See <http://www.ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/>.

For templates and information on co-ops, see <http://www.ontario.coop/>. Ontario's co-op legislation is available online at http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90c35_e.htm.

More information on the community farm model in B.C. is available at <http://www.communityfarms.ca/>.

For an excellent toolkit for community land trusts in the U.S., see <http://neweconomicsinstitute.org/content/clt-online-handbook>.

Models/Links: See The Greenhorns at <http://www.thegreenhorns.net/> and the Young Agrarians at <http://youngagrarians.org/>.

See Shared Harvest in Dunnville for a good model of a community-focused farm in Ontario.

Toolbox #3: Maintain farmer control of agricultural choices on farmland

Resources: The National Farmers Union has mobilized many of these family farms; they are also developing youth representatives and new farmer initiatives in recognition of many of the issues mentioned here. See <http://www.nfuontario.ca/wpr/about>; and for youth initiatives, see <http://www.nfu.ca/about/youth>.

Models/Links: See Cultivating Maine's Agricultural Future for information on agricultural commissions at

http://www.farmlandinfo.org/index.cfm?function=article_view&articleID=39022.

Toolbox #4: Determine and promote the economic, environmental, and social benefits of regional food systems

Resources: For a Canadian assessment of the environmental impact of local food, see Marc Xuereb's report for the Waterloo region at <http://www.greenhealthcare.ca/localfoodlibrary/f-agriculture>.

Models/Links: For similar assessments in other regions, see Stopes, Christopher, Couzens, Charles, Redman, Mark, & Watson, Sarah. (2002). *Local Food: The Case for Re-localising Northern Ireland's Food Economy*. Belfast, Northern Ireland: Friends of the Earth (Northern Ireland); Swenson, Dave. (2009). *Investigating the Potential Economic Impacts of Local Foods for Southeast Iowa*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; Cantrell, Patty, Connor, David, Erickcek, George, & Hamm, Michael (2006). *Eat Fresh and Grow Jobs, Michigan*. Beulah, MI: Michigan Land Use Institute and C.S. Mott Group.

Resources: For the U.S. Conservation Stewardship Program, see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp/>.

Models/Links: The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (<http://www.trca.on.ca/>) has been a leader in this kind of project. A recent important public land innovation in Ontario is the Black Creek Community Farm on TRCA land, established in a priority neighbourhood in Toronto on important watershed land and led by Everdale (<http://everdale.org/blackcreek/blackcreek-project/>).

ALUS (<http://alus.ca/>) has established an excellent track record in payments for ecological goods and services. Other models from various regions (Huron County, the Kawartha Lakes area) also exist. See http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/about/EnvironmentalExcellence/STDPRO D_095425 for more information on the Kawartha Lakes area initiatives.

Toolbox #5: Provide support and templates for all transfers as well as for models of entry and succession

Resources: *Accessing Land for Farming in Ontario*. Guidebook available from FarmStart. Available at <http://www.farmstart.ca/publications/>.

Models/Links:

For information on farm taxes, see <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/policy/ftaxbac.htm>.

For information for new farmers, see <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/policy/newowners.htm>.

For more on options for young farmers in Quebec, see <http://www.fraq.qc.ca/>.

Toolbox #6: Create flexible financing

Resources: For more on Slow Money, see <http://www.slowmoney.org/>.

Models/Links: For models of community investment funds, see <http://www.cpfund.ca/> and <http://www.gov.ns.ca/econ/CEDIF/>.

For an example of public bonds for land protection, see Maine's six-time bond issues: http://www.mcht.org/news/2012/05/land_conservation_bond_heads_t.shtml.

See the West End Food Co-op for more information on a successful community bond issue (almost \$200,000): <http://westendfood.coop/>.

Toolbox #7: Establish long-term ownership and planning options

Resources: See links for community farms at <http://www.communityfarms.ca/>.

See FarmStart's *Accessing Land for Farming in Ontario* for more on long-term lease options at <http://www.farmstart.ca/publications/>.

For more on Everdale's planning course, go to <http://farmertraining.everdale.org/>.

Models/Links: The Community Land Trust Online Handbook from the E.F. Schumacher Society is available at <http://neweconomicsinstitute.org/content/clt-online-handbook>.

Appendix B: Interviews

Name of Interviewee	Affiliations	Date of Interview
Allan, Kathy	Formerly of Ontario Land Trust Alliance	May 1, 2012
Atkinson, Leslie	Gardener, Carrville Community Garden, Toronto Waldorf School	March 27, 2012
Bakker, Henry	Field Sparrow Farms	February 15, 2012
Bakker, Sarah	Field Sparrow Farms	February 15, 2012
Baloch, Bob	Farmer, The Fresh Veggies	March 6, 2012
Brisebois, Daniel	Tourne-Sol Co-operative Farm (Ferme Coopérative Tourne-Sol)	February 21, 2012
Caldwell, Wayne	Professor, University of Guelph, Rural Planning and Development; planner	May 2, 2012
Cohlmeyer, David	Farmer	March 14, 2012
Collins, Phillip	Fresh City Farm (with Ran Goel)	March 27, 2012
Contini, Anna	Foodlink Waterloo Region	April 9, 2012
Cordy, Robert	Farmer, teacher	April 12, 2012
Crosby, Donald	Farmer; National Farmers Union-Ontario Eastern member; formerly of Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	February 28, 2012
Dandy, Gavin	Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre	April 3, 2012
De Groot, Martin	Farmer and owner, Mapleton's Organics	February 22, 2012
Dhir, Sonia	Planner, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	March 29, 2012
Doncaster, Michele	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	May 9, 2012
Gilvesy, Bryan	Farmer, Y U Ranch; Chair, Alternative Land Use Services, Norfolk County	April 27, 2012
Haley, Ella	Sustainable Brant	June 5, 2012
Hall, Caitlin	Farmer, reroot organic farm	April 5, 2012
Herriott, Greg	Farmer, owner, Oilseed Works Inc.; farmer, owner, Hempola Valley Farms	April 13, 2012
Hoffman, Daniel	Farmer, The Cutting Veg	February 21, 2012
Horner, Janet	Farmer; Coordinator, Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee; FarmStart board member	May 11, 2012
Jeffrey, Peter	Ontario Federation of Agriculture	June 6, 2012
Koch, Angie	Farmer, Fertile Ground CSA	April 18, 2012

Laberge, Marc	Senior Policy Advisor, Economic Development Policy Branch, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	May 9, 2012
Learmonth, Pat	Farmer, Farms at Work	May 11, 2012
Lemieux, Erica	Farmer, City Seed Farms	February 18, 2012
Lololi, Anan	Executive Director, Afri-Can FoodBasket	May 10, 2012
Martin, Ralph	Loblaw Companies Limited Chair in Sustainable Food Production, University of Guelph	March 29, 2012
Mausberg, Burkhard	CEO, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation	May 30, 2012
McQuail, Tony	Farmer, Meeting Place Organic Farm	March 12, 2012
Mitchell, Peter	Founder, board member, Ontario Farmland Trust	April 20, 2012
Papoulias, Maria	Manager, Natural Heritage, Rouge Park	May 10, 2012
Pfenning, Wolfgang	Farmer, owner, Pfenning's Organic	April 18, 2012
Pleasance, Steve	Farmer	May 27, 2012
Pritchard, Heather	Member, FarmFolk CityFolk	July 10, 2012
Reaume, Jamie	Executive Director, Holland Marsh Growers' Association	May 15, 2012
Rosenkrantz, Eric	Farmer, Living City Farm, Kortright Centre	February 13, 2012
Scanlan, John	Farmer	May 27, 2012
Setzkorn, Matt	Policy Coordinator, Ontario Farmland Trust	March 6, 2012
Slater, Ann	National Farmers Union, Ontario Coordinator	February 27, 2012
Stevenson, Jennifer	Business Finance Program Lead, Agriculture Development, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	April 26, 2012
Stewart, Paul	Farmer	March 28, 2012
Stoddart, Harry	Farmer, Stoddart Family Farm	March 13, 2012
Tousaw, Scott	Planner, Huron County Planning and Development Department	June 7, 2012
Tunstall, Richard	Farmer, Heart's Content Organic Farmstead	June 5, 2012
Turvey, John	Policy Advisor, Environmental and Land Use Policy Unit, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	May 9, 2012
Venturelli, Alvaro	Farmer, Plan B Organic Farms	February 27, 2012
Young, Christie	Executive Director, FarmStart	March 6, 2012
Young, Tarrah	Farmer, Green Being Farm	April 5, 2012

Appendix C: Interview template

Name _____

Farm/organization name _____

Date _____

Explain project and get verbal agreement for use in publications.

Tell me about how you ended up on this land. Do you farm in other places, too, or just here?

Do you know the history of the land before you came to it?

What kinds of farming do you do here? How did you decide on methods; did you work with other farmers in the area?

Do you exchange land use for crops or do other exchanges with neighbours?

Have you had trouble hanging on to the land or getting access to land you need?

What are the challenges and restrictions you deal with?

What are solutions to these problems that you know of or have worked on?

What trends do you see in land use?

Do you expect to pass your farm or land on to another farmer when you stop farming?

Why or why not?

Have you considered options for keeping the land agricultural, such as a land trust or agricultural easement? Do these seem like viable solutions?

If a farmer wanted to keep the land agricultural, what options do you think make sense now?

What options do you see for new farmers right now? Have you worked with some to get them started?

How do you think we can go about protecting our regional food systems; what do we need?

What are the challenges to having a regional food system?

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Endnotes

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- ¹ Hofmann et al., "The Loss of Dependable Agricultural Land in Canada," 1.
- ² National Farmers Union, *Farms, Farmers and Agriculture in Ontario*, 3.
- ³ Olson, *Under the Blade*, 3.
- ⁴ Clarke, *Land, Power, and Economics on the Frontier of Upper Canada*, 300.
- ⁵ Feldman and Goldberg, *Land Rites and Wrongs* (1987a), 14.
- ⁶ Brigham in Feldman and Goldberg, *Land Rites and Wrongs* (1987b), 255.
- ⁷ Qualman and Tait, *The Farm Crisis, Bigger Farms and the Myths of 'Competition' and 'Efficiency'*, 6.
- ⁸ Statistics Canada, "Agriculture overview, Canada and the provinces," retrieved July 18, 2012.
- ⁹ Ibbitson, "Which Side of supply management's fence are you on?". *Globe and Mail*. March 13, 2012. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/which-side-of-farms-supply-management-fence-are-you-on/article627480/> Retrieved July 24, 2013.
- ¹⁰ Desmarais, *La Via Campesina*, 63.
- ¹¹ Statistics Canada, "Agriculture overview, Canada and the provinces," retrieved July 18, 2012.
- ¹² Stoddart, interview with the author, March 2012; National Farmers Union, *Losing Our Grip*; See also the work by GRAIN (www.grain.org) on land grabs globally.
- ¹³ National Farmers Union, *Losing Our Grip*.
- ¹⁴ Caldwell, *Ontario's Countryside*, 14; The situation is not unique to Ontario or Canada, no doubt due to settlement patterns of hundreds of years: See Mariola, "Losing ground," 211.
- ¹⁵ Feldman and Goldberg, *Land Rites and Wrongs* (1987b), 130.
- ¹⁶ Statistics Canada, *2011 Census of Agriculture*, retrieved Thursday, May 10, 2012.
- ¹⁷ Christie Young, interview with the author, March 2012.
- ¹⁸ Olson and Lyson, *Under the Blade*, 75; Weis, *The Global Food Economy*, 29-30.
- ¹⁹ Desmarais, *La Via Campesina*, 44.
- ²⁰ Tarah Young, interview with the author, April 2012.
- ²¹ Feldman and Goldberg, *Land Rites and Wrongs*, 2.
- ²² Caldwell, interview with the author, May 2012.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Feldman and Goldberg, *Land Rites and Wrongs*, 4; Feldman writes, "The intervention of government, even when provisions remain for private developers or owners, is pervasive or perpetually imminent. This rule has always prevailed because history has been on the side of collective or Crown ownership and use."
- ²⁵ Toronto Public Health, *The State of Toronto's Food*, retrieved July 15, 2013, 4.
- ²⁶ Caldwell quotes the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: "In spite of its agricultural productivity and diversity, Ontario currently imports three dollars of food products for every two dollars exported (OMAFRA 2009a)". Caldwell adds (*Lot Creation in Ontario's Agricultural Landscape*: 4): "From 1999 to 2006, Ontario's food imports grew 32%, compared to exports at 28%."
- ²⁷ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, *An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food System 2012*, retrieved August 30, 2012.
- ²⁸ Statistics Canada, "Highlights and analyses," retrieved August 30, 2012.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Turvey, interview with the author, May 2012.
- ³¹ Ontario Greenbelt Alliance and Environmental Defence, *Places to Sprawl*.
- ³² Mausberg, interview with the author, May 2012.

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- ³³ Jeffrey, interview with the author, June 2012.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Crosby, interview with the author, February 2012: Although the Melancthon situation is significant in terms of the attention the protests have received (thousands of people attended one protest event in heavy rain and mud), other places are under similar threat, such as Russell, Ontario).
- ³⁶ Ariss, *Keeping the Land*.
- ³⁷ See, for instance, Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee et al., *Food and Farming*.
- ³⁸ Daniels and Bowers, *Holding Our Ground*, 95.
- ³⁹ Olson and Lyson, *Under the Blade*, 225.
- ⁴⁰ Government of Ontario, *Agricultural Advisory Team Advice to the Government*, retrieved July 18, 2012.
- ⁴¹ Region of Waterloo, "Countryside Line," retrieved May 10, 2013.
- ⁴² See the plan at <http://www.gtaaac.ca/food-and-farming-action-plan/>.
- ⁴³ Crosby, interview with the author, February 2012: It also appears that developers submitting subdivision applications do not immediately trigger the severance challenges, since the entire property is initially owned by the developer.
- ⁴⁴ Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee et al., *Food and Farming*, 13: As the *Greenbelt Act* comes up for review in 2015, collaborative planning, such as the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan, addresses the need to further strengthen the support and promotion of agriculture within the Greenbelt.
- ⁴⁵ Horner, interview with the author, May 2012; Jeffrey interview with the author, June 2012.
- ⁴⁶ Daniels and Bowers, *Holding Our Ground*, 43.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 72.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 73
- ⁴⁹ On planning for mixed and integrated use, see Lister, *Planting the Seeds for Farm Innovation*.
- ⁵⁰ See foodlink.ca for more information.
- ⁵¹ Contini, interview with the author, April 2012.
- ⁵² See Miller, *From Land to Plate*, for more detail on these cases.
- ⁵³ Caldwell, *Ontario's Countryside*, 19.
- ⁵⁴ Caldwell, interview with the author, May 2012.
- ⁵⁵ Gilvesy, interview with the author, April 2012.
- ⁵⁶ Christie Young, interview with the author, March 2012.
- ⁵⁷ Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) refers to arrangements where members subscribe at the beginning of the season, when farmers are short of cash, and then receive regular shipments or pick-ups of the harvest. Originally used for fruits and vegetables, the model is now applied more widely to include meat, fish, and even wool. Originally, the model often included requirements to provide work in exchange for some of the harvest share, but this aspect has given way to a more conventional market exchange.
- ⁵⁸ Koch, interview with the author, April 2012.
- ⁵⁹ See <http://www.thegreenhorns.net/?cat=18>.
- ⁶⁰ See <http://youngagrarians.org/>.
- ⁶¹ Turvey, interview with the author, May 2012.
- ⁶² For more on the U.S. Community Land Trust model, see Swann, Gottschalk, Hansch, and Webster, *Community Land Trust Online Handbook*, retrieved March 12, 2012.
- ⁶³ McQuail, interview with the author, March 2012.
- ⁶⁴ Learmonth, *The Potential for Use of Farmland Conservation Agreements in Ontario*: This report reviews various cases to assess the financial impact of various easements and tax incentives in Ontario. The cases show that each farm will have a different outcome depending on size, existing exemptions, and income.
- ⁶⁵ Daniels and Bowers, *Holding Our Ground*, 158.

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- ⁶⁶ Brisebois, interview with the author, February 2012.
- ⁶⁷ Martin, interview with the author, March 2012.
- ⁶⁸ Caldwell, *Lot Creation in Ontario's Agricultural Landscapes*, 7.
- ⁶⁹ Including Turvey, interview with the author, May 2012.
- ⁷⁰ Dandy, interview with the author, April 2012.
- ⁷¹ For instance, Stoddart, interview with the author, March 2012.
- ⁷² This is not to mention the fact that residential severances, which were allowed for retiring farmers, were used to capitalize farms. Although this has mostly been stopped, farmers are reported to have "retired" over and over again, creating one house lot after another to pay for the farm.
- ⁷³ Levine, "This Tax Day," retrieved July 15, 2013, reviews the impact of a similar tax regime in the U.S. He concludes that the tax reduction for farmland has benefited the very wealthy more than the agricultural sector.
- ⁷⁴ Lehman, *Public Values, Private Lands*, 98.
- ⁷⁵ Jeffrey, interview with the author, June 2012.
- ⁷⁶ Hamilton, *Agricultural Land Trust Research Project*, 30; Gorsuch, *A Review of Farmland Trusts*, v: In the U.S., buyers and sellers can sell and transfer development rights in a way that is not protected in Canada in the same way — that is, a farmer who sells away development rights cannot really prevent development if the municipality wants to pursue it.
- ⁷⁷ Interviews; Hamilton, *Agricultural Land Trusts*, 13.
- ⁷⁸ See Bowell et al., *Cultivating Maine's Agricultural Future*, 7; The Agricultural Advisory Team (2004) that made many recommendations pursued in the last decade by the province recommended "agricultural advisory committees" be established in appropriate areas. It might improve the chances of effectiveness if a percentage of members were required to be farmers.
- ⁷⁹ Olson, *Under the Blade*, 2.
- ⁸⁰ Bowell et al., *Cultivating Maine's Agricultural Future*, 24: "While farms often represent a sizeable portion of a community's or region's land base, their economic contribution to the local economy is seldom recognized or acknowledged. Also, because farming is viewed by many as an industry with no future, a perception now beginning to change, but slowly, economic development efforts often ignore farm businesses and their associated processing, distribution, and marketing needs."
- ⁸¹ Pearce, *When the Rivers Run Dry*, 99.
- ⁸² Everard, *Common Ground*.
- ⁸³ Tousaw, interview with the author, June 2012.
- ⁸⁴ See <http://www.crcworks.org/>.
- ⁸⁵ See Cantrell, *Eat Fresh and Grow Jobs, Michigan*; Swenson, *Investing the Potential Impacts*; Stopes, *Local Food*.
- ⁸⁶ Dandy, interview with the author, April 2012.
- ⁸⁷ Warner, *Agroecology in Action*, 27; For a full review of the valuation of ecosystem services, see Everard, *Common Ground*.
- ⁸⁸ See Greenaway and Sanders, *The Fiscal Implications of Land Use*, for a recent study in Red Deer, Alberta.
- ⁸⁹ Daniels and Bowers, *Holding Our Ground*, 55; A B.C. study assessing the tax income from agriculture in the Agricultural Land Reserve (protected agricultural land) reports that in 80 COCS studies in the U.S., only residential uses consistently use more in services than they provide in property taxes.
- ⁹⁰ Mausberg, interview with the author, May 2012.
- ⁹¹ Martin, interview with the author, March 2012.
- ⁹² Mariola, "Losing Ground," 210.
- ⁹³ Patel, *The Value of Nothing*, 102.
- ⁹⁴ Lehman, "The Concepts of Public and Private," 34.
- ⁹⁵ Natural Resources Conservation Service, "Conservation Security Program," retrieved July 13, 2012.
- ⁹⁶ Hannley and Scott, *Land for Our Future*, 10.

⁹⁷ Caldwell *Lot Creation in Ontario's Agricultural Landscape* 94; See also Olson and Lyson, *Under the Blade*, 228.

⁹⁸ Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, *Sustainable Near-Urban Agriculture Policy* (2012b), retrieved July 13, 2012: The TRCA policy on sustainable near-urban agriculture reads:

Objectives of sustainable near-urban agriculture for TRCA lands include:

- promotes social equity and food security in communities by providing opportunities for increased accessibility to fresh, healthy and local food; provides opportunities for community economic development by helping to reduce the number of imports and by creating jobs and meaningful work for the local produce;
- reduces our ecological footprint by providing locally grown, raised and sold food, reducing food miles and greenhouse gas emissions related to food transportation and helps to reduce the impacts of climate change;
- provides a space for celebrating the cultural diversity of communities by growing a diverse range of crops;
- provides a positive influence on adjacent natural heritage; and
- complements Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) vision for The Living City by participating in growing local foods that contribute to sustainable communities.

⁹⁹ Lehman, "The Concepts of Public and Private," 34.

¹⁰⁰ Horner, interview with the author, May 2012; Several people offered in interviews the same telling joke about the farmer who won the lottery. He was asked what he intended to do with all the money and responded that he was going to keep farming until it was gone.

¹⁰¹ Reaume, interview with the author, May 2012.

¹⁰² Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Hunger striker protests family farm foreclosures," retrieved July 17, 2012.

¹⁰³ Christie Young, interview with the author, March 2012.

¹⁰⁴ National Farmers Union, *Losing Our Grip*, 19.

¹⁰⁵ Gilvesy, interview with the author, April 2012.

¹⁰⁶ Turvey, interview May 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Until 2013, these two ministries were one: the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

¹⁰⁸ Pritchard, interview with the author, July 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Stevenson, interview with the author, April 2012.

¹¹⁰ See the New Economics Foundation for important work in this regard: <http://www.neweconomics.org/>.

¹¹¹ See <http://farmworks.ca/home/>.

¹¹² Daniels and Bowers, *Holding Our Ground*, 163; Bowell et al., *Cultivating Maine's Agricultural Future*, 57.

¹¹³ See <http://communityrenewal.ca/saskatchewan-community-bonds> for more detail.

¹¹⁴ Pritchard, interview with the author, July 2012.

¹¹⁵ Hamilton, *Agricultural Land Trust Research Project*, 43.

¹¹⁶ Stanford, *Paper Boom*.

¹¹⁷ National Farmers Union, *Farms, Farmers and Agriculture in Ontario*, 14.

¹¹⁸ Baloch, interview with the author, March 2012.

¹¹⁹ Sarah and Henry Bakker, interview with the author, February 2012.

¹²⁰ See also National Farmers Union, *Losing Our Grip*, 20.

¹²¹ National Farmers Union, *Farms, Farmers and Agriculture in Ontario*, 4.

¹²² Annette Higby in Daniels and Bowers, *Holding Our Ground*, 67: "Recent studies confirm what we all know intuitively — oral and year-to-year leases offer little incentive to use resource-conserving farming practices, while long-term leases that offer relatively secure tenure stimulate good management."

¹²³ Learmonth, *Accessing Land for Farming In Ontario*.

¹²⁴ Gilvesy, interview with the author, April 2012.

¹²⁵ Horner, interview with the author, May 2012.

¹²⁶ *Hamilton Agricultural Land Trusts*, 7; See also a similar approach recommended in *Cultivating Maine's Agricultural Future* by Howell et al.

¹²⁷ Mariola, "Losing Ground," 219.

¹²⁸ Mausberg, interview with the author, May 2012.

¹²⁹ National Farmers Union, *Farms, Farmers and Agriculture in Ontario*, 13; National Farmers Union, *Losing Our Grip*, 6: "Canadian farmers' net income from the markets (with farm support payments subtracted out) has totaled less than zero. Due to a grinding farm crisis, over the past 25 years, 100% of farm families' net income has come from farm support programs, off-farm jobs, and loans"; See also Qualman and Tait, *The Farm Crisis*, 15.

¹³⁰ See www.ofa.on.ca/about/county-federation-sites/leeds/news/Food-Freedom-Day-it-%20not-just-another-meal.

¹³¹ Mausberg, interview with the author, May 2012.

¹³² Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 89.

¹³³ Pritchard, interview with the author, July 2012.

¹³⁴ Weis, *The Global Food Economy*, 162.

¹³⁵ Sarah and Henry Bakker, interview with the author, February 2012; Tarrah Young, interview with the author, April 2012.

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Alternative practices and policies for Ontario's changing agricultural landscape

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