



# PLAN THE BRUCE: AGRICULTURE

## Interim Report

October 2, 2020



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bruce County is embarking on a journey to a new County Official Plan. To make sure the Official Plan guides growth and development in a way that resonates with residents, visitors, business owners, community leaders and other stakeholders, discussion papers are being prepared exploring potential issues and best practices and supportive land use policies that may be appropriate for the County.

The work by the County to establish a context for the official plan update provided a valuable base for this background review of Bruce agriculture and agri-food sectors. The continued health of the agriculture sector is a major priority and focus of ongoing work in Bruce County.

The review of global agriculture trends noted that the sector faces uncertainty. A common thread through the review of provincial trends was that agriculture is dynamic with change a constant fact of life for the farming community.

The profile for agriculture in Bruce County confirms that it is home to a large, prosperous, diverse and expanding agricultural sector with a high concentration of livestock operations.

Mapping of Proposed Prime and Potential Prime Agricultural Areas was prepared and is intended to serve as a draft for public and agency comments. The public review and comments will help to affirm the mapping or may determine which of these areas should be included in vs excluded from the Prime Agricultural Area in the new County Official Plan.

The report considers options and provides recommended directions in the table on the next page focused on the following key agricultural land use topics:

- Minimum size for new agricultural lots.
- Surplus farm dwelling severances.
- New Residential lots in woodlots.
- Industrial and commercial uses on farms
- Urban-Agriculture Edge Planning.
- Cannabis production.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
Prime agricultural area mapping	1	Consult community for input on Prime Agricultural Areas and Potential Prime Agricultural Areas
Minimum size for new agricultural lots	2	No change to the baseline minimum size for new farm lots (100 acres in Agricultural, 50 acres in Rural)
	3	More policy detail to support proposed smaller lots
	4	Special Policy Area that allows 50-acre farm lots in the original 50-acre survey area
Surplus farm dwelling severances	5	Consider trade-offs between irregular vs rectangular lot shapes
	6	Consider removing bona fide farmer owner requirement for more applicant flexibility
New residential lots in woodlots	7	Consider continuing to allow new residential lots in woodlots in the Rural Area
	8	Review population decline with Hamlet growth in Plan the Bruce: Good Growth
Industrial and commercial uses on farms	9	Broaden permitted uses to reflect more flexible Provincial policy and guidelines
	10	Develop made-in-Bruce Agricultural System policy
Urban-Agriculture Edge Planning	11	Identify specific areas with urban-agricultural edge issues and opportunities
	12	Investigate potential to implement Farm Enterprise Zones
	13	Investigate benefits of Community Planning Permit system for edge planning
Cannabis production	14	Develop policies to address directing facilities to agricultural and rural vs industrial locations

This Interim Report is intended to provide a foundation for policy directions for the agricultural and rural areas. Now that the stage is set, the County will lay out a road map for the community engagement process on the 14 Recommended Directions above.

# Agricultural Discussion Paper

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# 1 Introduction

Bruce County is embarking on a journey to a new County Official Plan.

To make sure the Official Plan guides growth and development in a way that resonates with residents, visitors, business owners, community leaders and other stakeholders, the County undertook Bruce GPS in 2018 and 2019. Bruce GPS was a community visioning process that resulted in a Vision Statement and 8 Guiding Principles to inform the new Official Plan. The Plan the Bruce: Agriculture project is based on Principle 3: to “support our key economies, including supporting a thriving agriculture community”.

Building on the Guiding Principles, County Council committed to prepare and circulate Discussions Papers. These papers will provide a base for conversations in the community about the next steps needed to bring the Guiding Principles to life in land use policies.

PLANScape was retained to collaborate with Bruce County to prepare this Interim Report. The final Discussion Paper for Plan the Bruce: Agriculture will be prepared after community engagement and further analysis. The County also established a Plan the Bruce: Agriculture Advisory Committee to provide input as the process moves forward. Members of the Committee include political representatives from across the County many of whom are farmers, and others with extensive links to the farming community. This group met with staff and the consultants and provided valuable feedback and discussion of agricultural challenges in the Bruce County community.

## 1.1 Key Bruce County Documents and Initiatives

In preparing this report, background was provided by the strong base of corporate strategies that articulate a clear vision for Bruce.

### 1.1.1 Current County Official Plan

The original County Official Plan was approved in 1999. In 2010, the Province approved a major update to the County Official Plan. Of particular relevance to farming, the Plan establishes the Agricultural, Rural and Hazard Land Areas that make up most of the countryside in Bruce County. In each of these areas (called “designations”), the Plan sets out in detail the objectives, the uses that are permitted and the conditions under which new lots can be created.

### 1.1.2 Corporate Strategic Plan

In 2013, the County adopted a “Corporate Strategic Plan” for the period from 2013 to 2023.

Key to this strategic plan are the principles of innovation and prosperity. In developing policies to support a thriving agricultural community adherence to these principles will be key. The focus on open communication and soliciting ongoing meaningful input from residents and stakeholders will ensure that the direction of agricultural land use policies will be realistic and appropriate.

### 1.1.3 Economic Development Strategic Plan

In 2017, Bruce County developed an Economic Development Strategic Plan titled “Find Yourself in Bruce County”. This Strategic Plan outlined a number of actions to support the agricultural industry and was based on an operational review that concluded that a rural development program building on farming, agriculture and beyond was an appropriate focus. Throughout the Strategy, the agricultural sector is highlighted as a key sector. Agri-food processing and value-added production are highlighted as areas to explore.

### 1.1.4 Agriculture BR+E Study

In 2018, Bruce participated in an Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) study jointly with Grey and Simcoe Counties. This was a large, complex study that provided significant insight into the successes, challenges and opportunities in the agriculture and agri-food sector in the three counties. Findings of the study including the importance of community, the interest in expanding existing businesses, challenges associated with expansion and the diversity of interests of those employed in the agriculture and agri-food sector.

Key high-level findings of the BR+E study confirmed a general satisfaction with existing circumstances and a positive outlook for the future. Key points related to agricultural land use include:

- The primary market for 88% of all interviewed businesses was local or regional. Very few businesses exported. Inter-provincial trade may be more beneficial to explore and support for local agri-food businesses than international destinations.
- Over half of interviewed businesses plan to expand.



- Farmers rated numerous factors related to doing business in the community as quite high. However, there are issues related to specific programs including the impact of non-farm uses that trigger Minimum Distance Separation regulations for future operation expansions.
- For some producers selling meat products directly to consumers the proximity and capacity of abattoirs was identified as problematic. The need and interest in special diet abattoir services is limited.
- There is a lot of food processing already happening across the region, with many businesses having commercial kitchens on site or close by.
- For those participating in farmers' markets, being a vendor is important for building customer relations, accessing new customers and sales/income.
- On-farm retail and farm gate sales are being undertaken by 58% of farms interviewed. Farms face significant barriers when diversifying into commercial activities or when expanding those existing operations. In particular, issues related to signage, regulation, distance separation, zoning and planning, staffing and marketing are problematic.
- The majority of businesses indicate their industry is growing. Many have made significant recent investments in equipment and machinery.
- Retailers and consumption businesses are most likely to see themselves as part of tourism. This most likely also explains the predominance of tourism businesses reporting being open year-round.
- Primary producers were less likely to engage in tourism as inviting tourists onto working farms may or has negatively impacted/had repercussions to agricultural operations.

These conclusions provide interesting insight into maintaining or enhancing the existing Official Plan policies to support agriculture and agri-food sectors.

### 1.1.5 Summary

The work by the County to establish a context for the new official plan provided a valuable base for this background review of Bruce agriculture and agri-food sectors. The foregoing document review shows that the continued health of the agriculture sector is a major priority and focus of ongoing work in Bruce County.



## 1.2 Broader Trends Affecting Bruce County Agriculture

### 1.2.1 Globally

Although the politics of trade tend to dominate the media and certainly have an impact on global agriculture, there are other ongoing issues of significance that are impacting agriculture and agri-food production. Global trends in agriculture include shifting farm structure; acceleration in technology; consumer concerns and preferences; and access to critical resources such as water.

Around the world, changing technology that supports the use of robotics and computer-based precision management is resulting in a shift to larger farms, with fewer operators. In the European Union between 2005 and 2010 the average farm size grew by 3.8%<sup>1</sup>. Similar trends are evident around the world. Advances in technology are allowing new forms of food production with vertical farming and greenhouse production accounting for increasing volumes of production. Concern over the use of fossil fuels has led to evolving green energy solutions.

Changes in consumer trends are a factor. The decrease in demand for meat in North America is countered by the increasing demand in Asia. Issues with food safety have impacted food markets and opened opportunities for countries such as Canada which has an established and respected reputation for well regulated, safe food production. Not only has this opened new markets for Canadian products, it has attracted food processors to the County.

Climate change is a growing issue and presents both opportunities and risks to agriculture, food processors and rural communities. We are already seeing the effects climate change has on the area, including heat waves, extreme storm events, seasonal variations, drought and pests. These changes have a direct influence on agricultural production.

Access to water, essential to support life and for food production, is a right being increasingly challenged. Canada has a disproportionate supply of the world's fresh water. Through responsible management this is becoming a huge asset for Canadian agriculture.

The dominant theme running through global agriculture trends is uncertainty.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commissions, Structure and Dynamics of EU Farms: Changes, Trends and Policy Relevance, EU Agricultural Economics Briefs, No 9, October 2013. Pg. 2.

## 1.2.2 Ontario

The strength of Ontario's agricultural sector lies in the variety of commodities that are grown in the province and the value of the agri-food sector. In 2019, the sector contributed \$47 billion to Ontario's GDP and \$8.1 billion in wages and salaries.

According to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), some of the challenges facing agriculture in the province in 2019 included "market disruptions, trade issues, labour disputes and weather. Red tape reduction, natural gas expansion, broadband infrastructure, the *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act* and the latest 'Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act'<sup>2</sup>" are areas the OFA is working on with the Ontario government to reduce challenges.

### Farmland Area

The changes in the farm profile in Ontario over time vary from trends at the national level. The decline in farmland in Ontario over time has been significant.

Whereas the national percentage decline in farmland area between 1951 and 2016 was 9%, in Ontario it was 47%.

### Farm Size

Average farm size in 2016 was 249 acres. Variations in size between different types of farms and farming areas in Ontario are also notable because of the range in the type of farming that occurs. For example, the average farm size in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 2016, where tender fruit and grape production predominates was 54 acres; in Saugeen Shores where cash crop predominates it was 410 acres.

## Farmland Rental

Despite increasing farm size, the percentage of farmland that is rented in Ontario has not changed significantly.

In 1991, 26% of farmland in Ontario was rented. In 2016, the rate was 29%. Farmland value and rental rates also vary from region to region. In 2018, a survey conducted by the University of Guelph<sup>3</sup> on behalf of the OFA provided some interesting insights into farmland rental rates per acre, sale prices per acre and percentage of farmland sales made by farmers (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 - Farmland Rental Rates, 2018**

Survey of Farmland Rental Rates and Farmland Values by Region 2018			
Municipality	% of sales by farmer	Rental rate per tillable acre	Sale price per tillable acre
Bruce	92.5%	\$200-	\$10,000
Peel	5%	\$75	\$65,000
Durham	50%	\$100	\$10,000
Niagara	50%	\$100	\$17,900
Grey	80%	\$100	\$8,000
Huron	90%	\$300	\$15,000

Source: 2018 Farmland Value and Rental Value Survey, Summary of Findings, March 2018  
<https://ofa.on.ca/resources/2018-fvrsv-survey-report/>

Clearly, proximity to the fast-growing regions around Toronto has an impact on these variables.

## Farm Operators

Although there was a 5.8% decrease in the number of farm operators between 2011 and 2016, there was an increase in the percentage of women operators from 28.4% in 2011 to 29.7% in 2016.

While the average age of operators continued to increase, between 2011 and 2016 the percentage of operators under 35 years old rose from 8.2% to 9.4%.

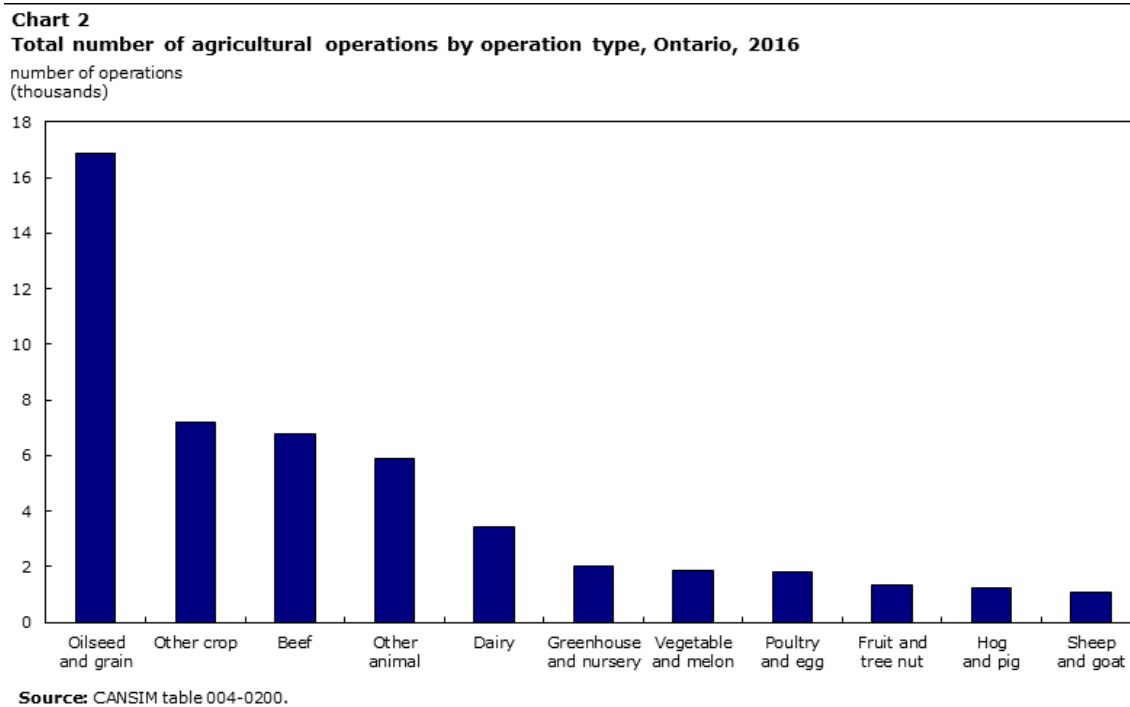


## Commodity Changes

The fastest growing sectors in Ontario include greenhouse, where “the area dedicated to greenhouse flower and vegetable production grew by 17.7% from 2011 to 151.5 million square feet in 2016”<sup>4</sup>.

The largest number of agricultural operations by operation types in Ontario in 2016 shown in Figure 2 below, were oilseed and grain followed by “other crops”, then beef<sup>5</sup>.

Figure 2 – Ontario Farm Operations by Type, 2016



Other trends of interest in Ontario reported by Statistic Canada include:

- The number of broilers, roasters and Cornish fowl in Ontario increased by 6.0% from 2011 to 33.8 million birds in 2016. With just over one-third of the total national inventory, Ontario ranked first in terms of broilers, roasters and Cornish fowl.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/95-640-x/2016001/article/14805-eng.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/95-640-x/2016001/article/14805-eng.htm>



- The number of dairy cows in the province decreased by 1.9% from 2011 to 311,960 head in 2016, while the number of farms reporting dairy cows declined 14.2%.
- Milk production increased by 9.9% over the period between censuses (CANSIM table 003-0011, accessed April 25, 2017). The decline in the number of dairy cows was offset by increased production per animal attributable to improvements in animal nutrition, genetics, and production practices.
- The number of beef cattle declined 8.1% from 2011 to 710,617 head in 2016, as some producers sold stock to take advantage of higher prices and retire or shift to other types of agricultural production. The number of farms reporting beef cattle declined 14.7%.
- Ontario had the second largest number of pigs in the country, increasing from 3.1 million in 2011 to 3.5 million in 2016, while the number of farms reporting hogs rose from 2,556 to 2,760. The growth was due to better market conditions, which boosted the price of pigs relative to the period preceding the 2011 census. Prior to the 2011 Census of Agriculture, the pig sector had been beset by high feed costs, disease and low pig prices, resulting in significantly fewer farms and a smaller pig herd (CANSIM table 002-0068, accessed April 25, 2017).
- The sheep flock declined by 8.9% from 2011 to 321,495 animals in 2016.<sup>6</sup>
- The percentage number of farms reporting using computers for farm management increased from 39% in 2001 to 56% in 2016.
- Total capital value for farm properties rose from \$51 billion in 2001 to \$132 billion in 2016. 90% of this value was attributable to land and buildings, the value of which more than tripled during the period.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/95-640-x/2016001/article/14805-eng.htm>



### 1.2.3 Summary

Agriculture and agri-food businesses are interconnected with global and provincial factors that influence local changes.

Structural shifts in the farming profile are apparent in Ontario. The Province leads the county in greenhouse production. Two thirds of greenhouse vegetables produced in Canada are grown in Ontario. The introduction of cannabis to the market has caused considerable disruptions to this sector as it adjusts to new demands.

Dairy continues to be a strong sector despite a decline in the number of dairy cows between 2011 and 2016. During that period, although the number of cows declined, the output per animal increased due to improved nutrition, genetics and milking practices<sup>7</sup>. Impacts from urban growth are also contributing to a shift in dairy production. Many areas in the Golden Horseshoe which historically were home to dairy operations, are experiencing significant growth. As this growth results in conflicts with livestock operations, operators are retiring and selling their quota or moving out. Operators who want to continue in dairy and other livestock- based sectors, are looking for alternative locations where conflict with non-farm uses are minimized.

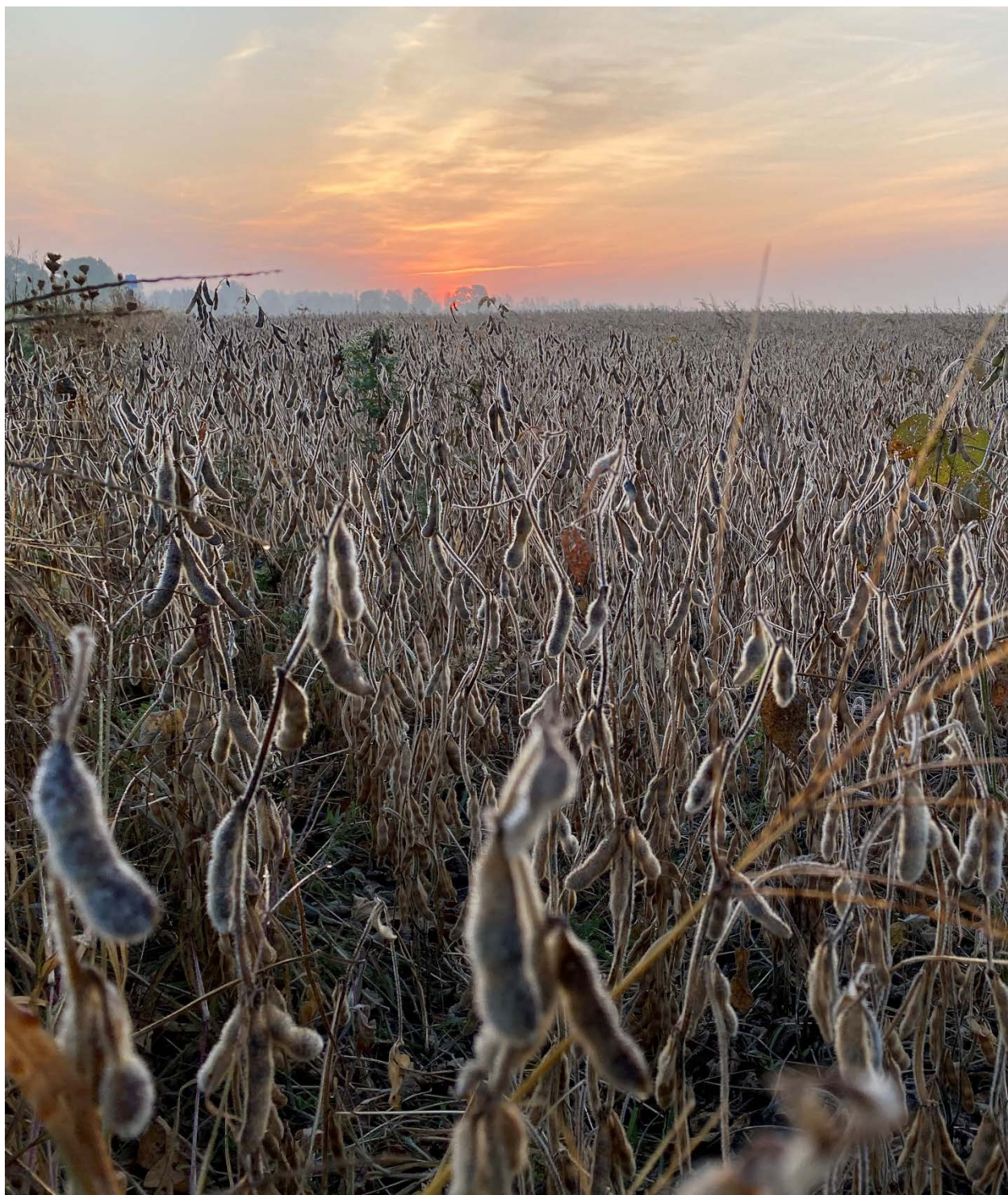
Attracting and retaining labour is a growing problem for the agricultural sector in Ontario. Although mechanization is reducing the demand for labour, it increases the levels of skills required. Larger operations are capitalizing on greater use of technology to address labour shortages, but many other operators are struggling to deal with this issue. In Bruce, the opportunities offered by other sectors (e.g. Bruce Nuclear) compete with the agricultural sector for labour.

Global and provincial trends that impact agriculture in Bruce County include the promotion of advancing technologies, emerging markets as access to incomes grows, shifting demands for certain commodities, larger farms, and impacts of climate change.

A common thread through the foregoing sections is that agriculture is dynamic such that change is a constant fact of life for the farming community.

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<sup>7</sup> Labour Market and Socio-economic Information Directorate, Service Canada, "Sectoral Profile 2018, Agriculture Ontario 2018"



Soybeans, Brockton

## 2.0 Bruce County Agriculture Profile

While global and provincial trends provide useful context for understanding trends in agriculture, it is also essential to understand what is happening in Bruce.

In undertaking background research about agriculture in Bruce County, care was taken to understand the specific circumstances that impact and characterize the agricultural sector in Bruce. The geographic location of the Bruce Peninsula differentiates production levels and the type of agriculture practiced, from areas in other parts of Ontario. Growth pressures within the Greater Toronto Area have had significant impact on agricultural operations in that area; this is not a significant factor in Bruce County.

To understand the specific nature of agriculture in Bruce, a statistical profile of the sector, based on the Statistics Canada's 2016 Agricultural Census<sup>8</sup> was conducted and reviewed with members of the Agriculture Advisory Committee. Additional data from Farm Credit Canada (FCC) on land prices was reviewed. Lot sizes, ownership and patterns of use were assessed based on Municipal Property Assessment Code (MPAC) data provided by the County. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) sources were also consulted to update the profile.

Major trends apparent from the analysis confirm many similarities with national and provincial trends but also highlight some differences.

Based on this research, a profile of agriculture in the County was developed.

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<sup>8</sup> Note that to protect confidentiality numbers may be suppressed in census data. This can skew the results. Where there was a concern that this had occurred, efforts were made to confirm data from OMAFRA or MPAC data.

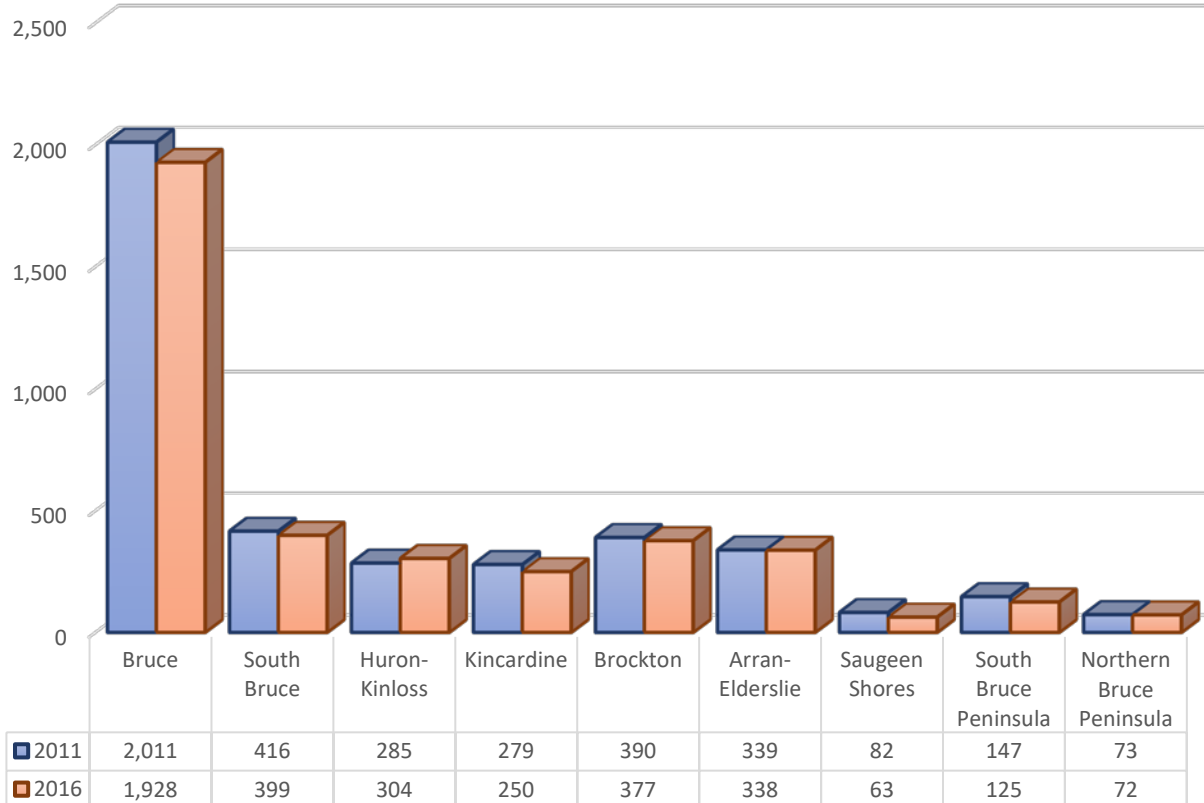


## 2.1 Farms

### 2.1.1 Number of Farms

As is the case across Ontario, the number of farms in the County declined by 83, or 4%, between 2011 and 2016 (Figure 3). It also declined in all local municipalities, except in Huron-Kinloss where an increase of 19 farms was reported between 2011 and 2016. The increase in farm numbers in Huron-Kinloss may be attributable to the influx of Mennonite and Amish farmers into that Township. This group tend to farm smaller parcels and contribute less to the trend of farm consolidation.

FIGURE 3 - TOTAL NUMBER OF FARMS, 2011 & 2016

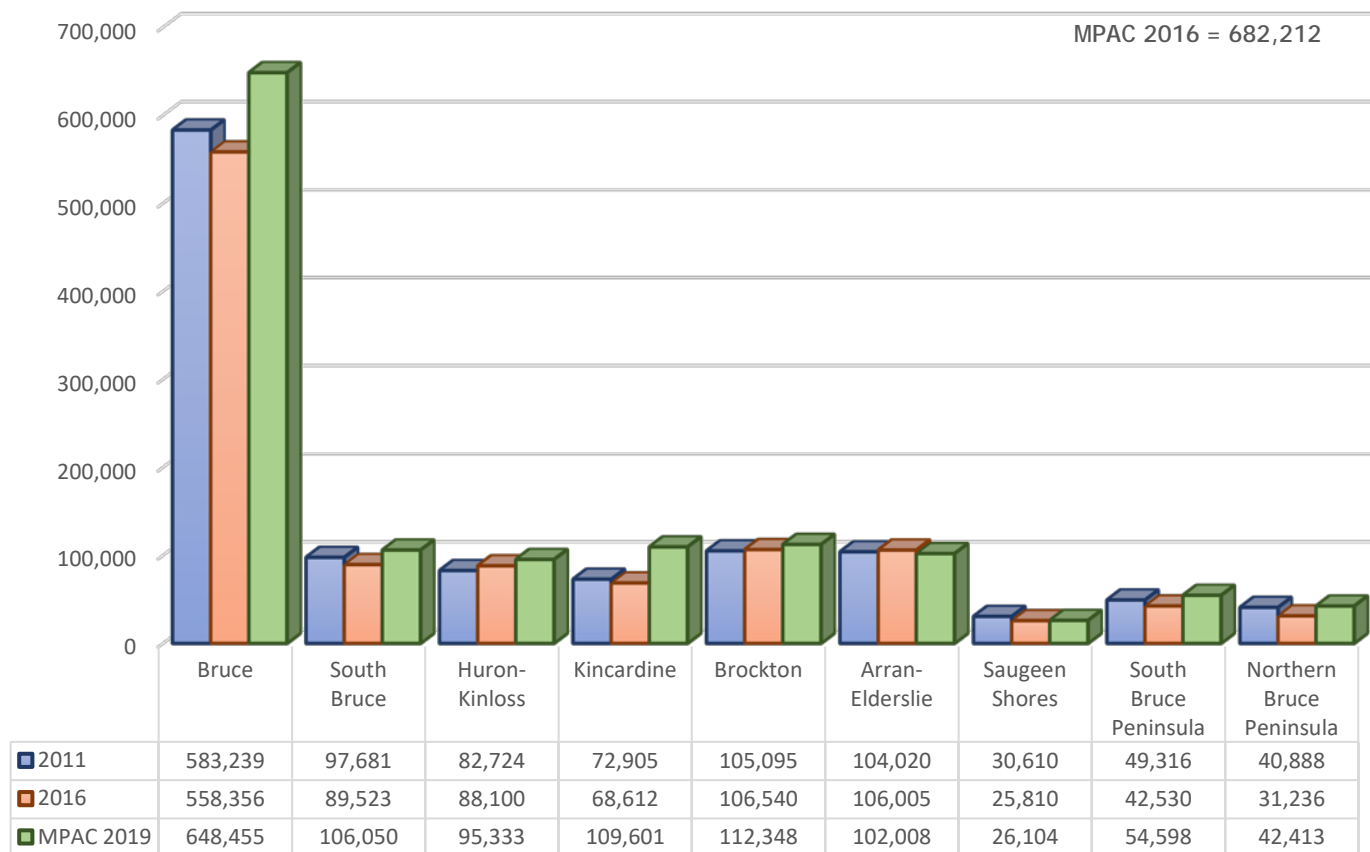


Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0404-01 - Farms classified by total farm area

## 2.1.2 Farmland Area Under Production

Farmland area can be more difficult to verify statistically, given the variation in how farmland is classified by different agencies. The Agricultural Census tracks land under production as reported by farmers. MPAC tracks land according to tax code. As noted on Figure 4 below, the Agricultural Census numbers reported a decrease in farmland area under production in Bruce County between 2011 and 2016, most notably in Northern Bruce Peninsula. However, the MPAC data reported a significant increase in assessed farmland. In discussions with the ACC, which is comprised of local politicians and farmers, the opinion was that the MPAC numbers are more representative of the farmland area in the County.

**FIGURE 4 - TOTAL FARM AREA (ACRES), 2011 & 2016  
MPAC 2019**



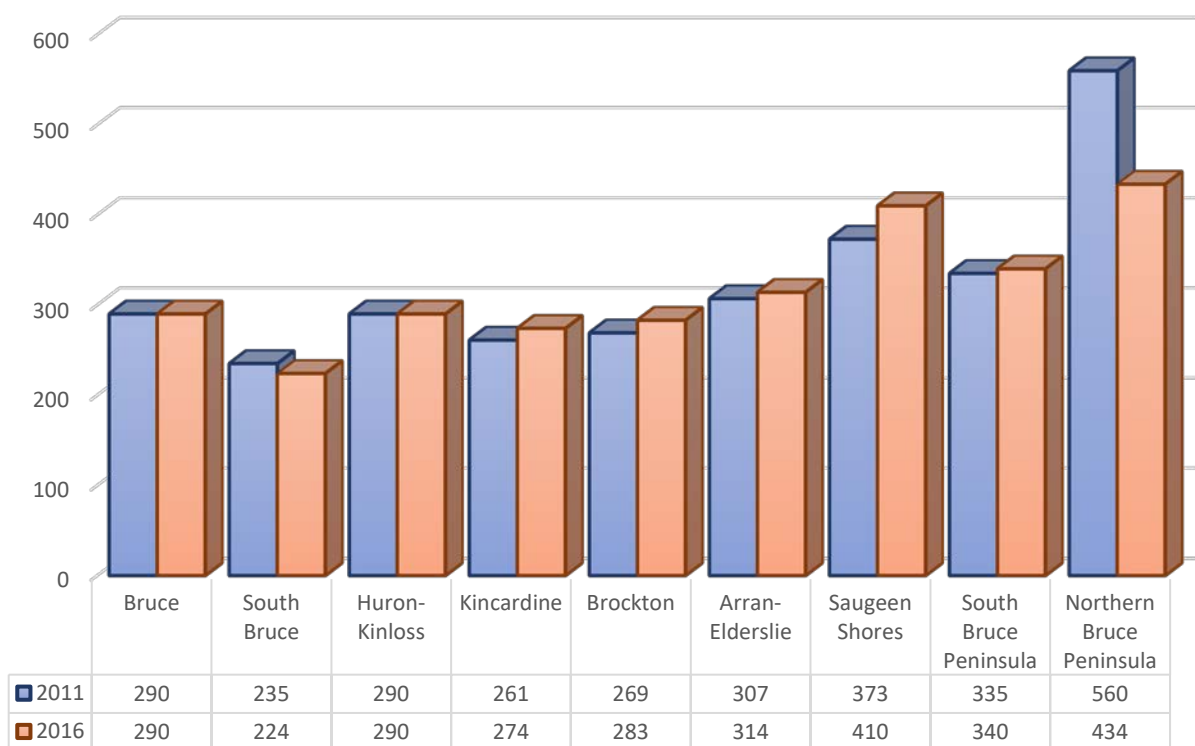
Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0407-01 - Tenure of land owned, leased, rented, crop-share, used through other arrangements or used by others



### 2.1.3 Farm Size and Ownership Patterns

The average farm size stayed constant in Bruce County between 2011 and 2016. As noted on Figure 5 below, there were fluctuations in several local municipalities, most notably in Saugeen Shores where average farm size increased and in Northern Bruce Peninsula where average farm size decreased.

**FIGURE 5 - AVERAGE FARM SIZE (ACRES), 2011 & 2016**



Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0404-01 - Farms classified by total farm area

Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0407-01 - Tenure of land owned, leased, rented, crop-share, used through other arrangements or used by others

The increase in Saugeen Shores occurred in the category of 240 to 399 acres. Given that over the same period, the number of farms decreased in the Township, the change in the number of operations could in part, be attributed to farm consolidations.

In Northern Bruce Peninsula, there was a decrease in the number of very large farms reporting, specifically in the categories of 1,120 to 1,599 acres and 2,880 to 3,519 acres. The representative on the Agricultural Advisory Committee questioned this trend. County wide, the number of farms in the largest categories increased.

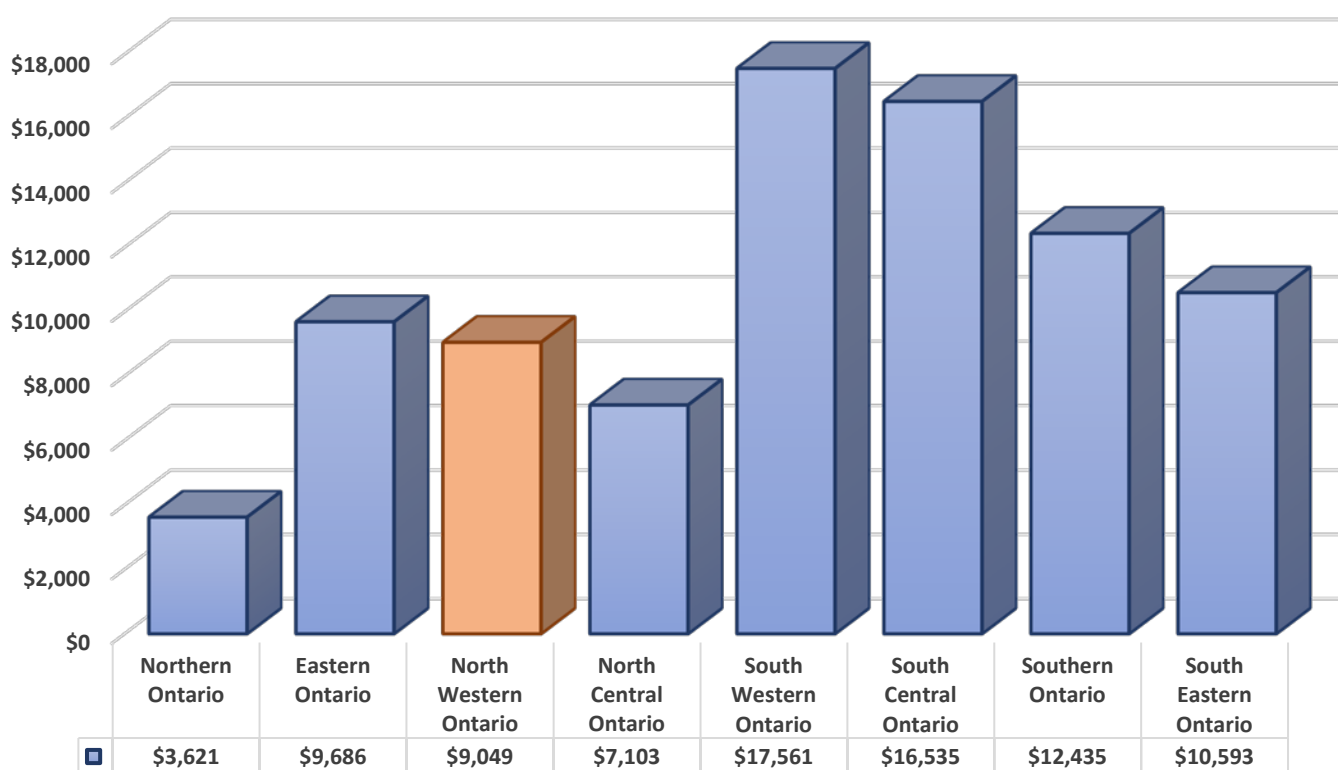
The presence of Mennonite and Amish farmers may account for the increase in the number of smaller farms in certain local municipalities. Huron-Kinloss and the Northern Bruce Peninsula both experienced increases in the number of farms between 10 and 69 acres and 70 and 129 acres between 2011 and 2016, respectively. In Brockton, the number of farms between 10 and 96 acres increased by 16 between 2011 and 2016. During the same period the number of farms in Arran-Elderslie between 10 and 69 acres increased by 3.

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## 2.2 Land Values

According to Farm Credit Canada (FCC), the North Western Ontario region, which is comprised of the Counties of Bruce and Grey, experienced the highest provincial percentage increase in value at 7.6%. The provincial average increase was 3.6%. While this increase is notable, the value per acre (Figure 6) is lower than in other areas of southern and eastern Ontario. According to FCC analysts, the upward trend in land prices in the Bruce area is due to livestock-based production seeking land away from the development pressures, incompatible land uses, and land-based fragmentation being experienced in many parts of south-central Ontario.

FIGURE 6 - LAND PRICES - \$/ACRE

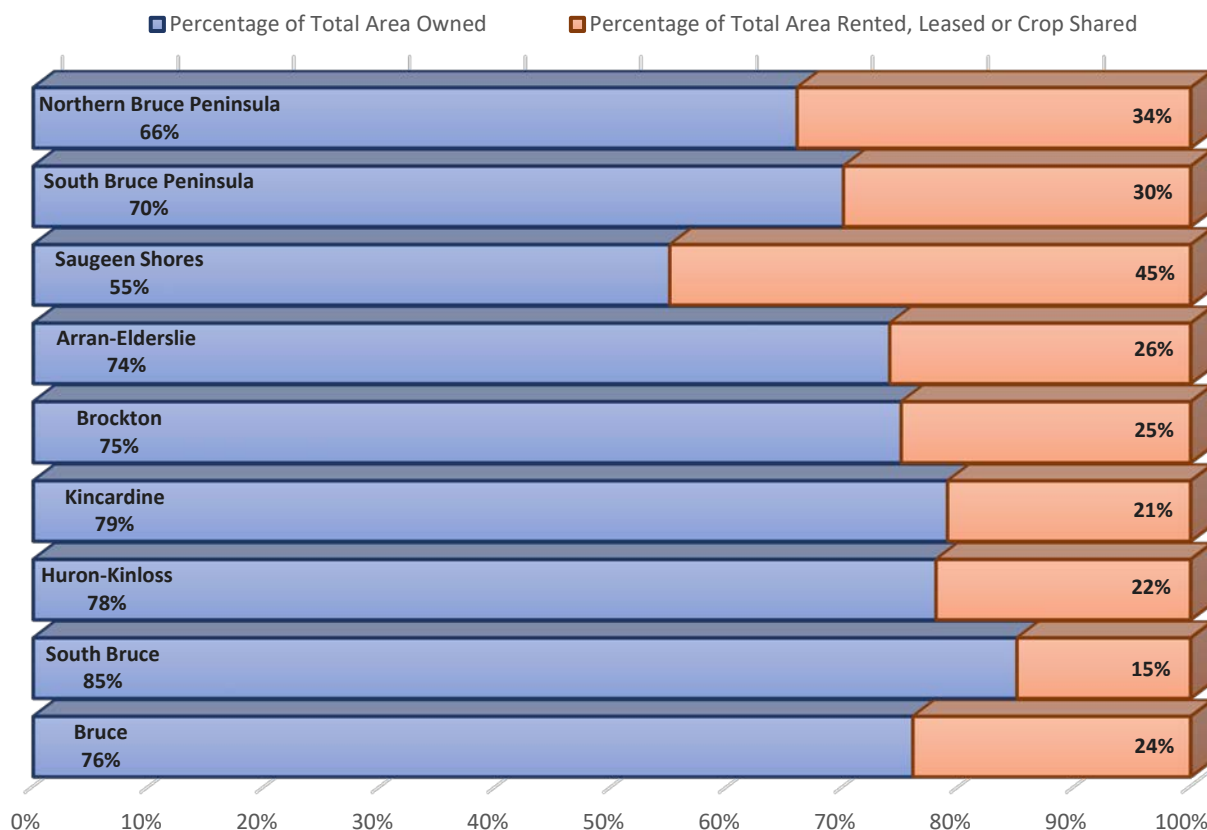


- North Western Ontario - Includes Bruce County
  - % Change in Farmland Values (2017 - 2018)
  - Ontario - Increased 3.6%
  - North Western Ontario - Increased 7.6%
- Source - Farm Credit Canada 2018 FCC Farmland Values Report; Covers period from January 1 to December 31, 2018; Published April 29, 2019

## 2.3 Farmland Rental

The rental rate (percent of farmland that is rented) for farmland in Bruce County in 2016 was 24%, lower than the provincial average which was 27%; and slightly lower than it had been in 2011 when it was 26%. **Figure 7** shows that Saugeen Shores has highest rental rate for farmland. This is consistent with the County analysis of MPAC data which indicated there was a higher rate of vacant farmland and vacant land designated residential/ commercial/ industrial, owned by a non farmer but with a portion being farmed, in Saugeen Shores.

**FIGURE 7 - PERCENTAGE OF FARMLAND AREA, OWNED & RENTED, 2016**



Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0407-01 - Tenure of Land Owned, Leased, Rented, Crop-shared through other arrangement or used by others.

Percentage of Total Area Rented/Leased/Crop Shared is calculated by subtracting Area Owned from Total Farm Area.

## 2.4 Farm Products

To understand the type of farming occurring in Bruce County, there are two relevant categories: a breakdown of farm type by commodity, and categorization of production by gross farm receipts (GFR's).

Farm type by commodity is determined based on the commodity which generates 50%+ of the farm income (**Figures 8A & B**). Based on that breakdown **Figure 8B** indicates that cattle account for largest number of farm operations, followed by cash crop and dairy.

This commodity mix remained relatively constant between 2011 and 2016 with some adjustments. The number of dairy operations declined in South Bruce, Huron-Kinloss, Kincardine and Brockton but remained stable in Arran-Elderslie, Saugeen Shores and South and North Bruce Peninsula. The number of cattle operations declined in all municipalities except Huron-Kinloss. Cash crop operations were up or remained stable in all municipalities except Huron-Kinloss and Saugeen Shores. The production profile in South Bruce Peninsula remained stable.

**FIGURE 8A - NUMBER OF FARMS BY FARM TYPE, 2011 - BRUCE COUNTY**

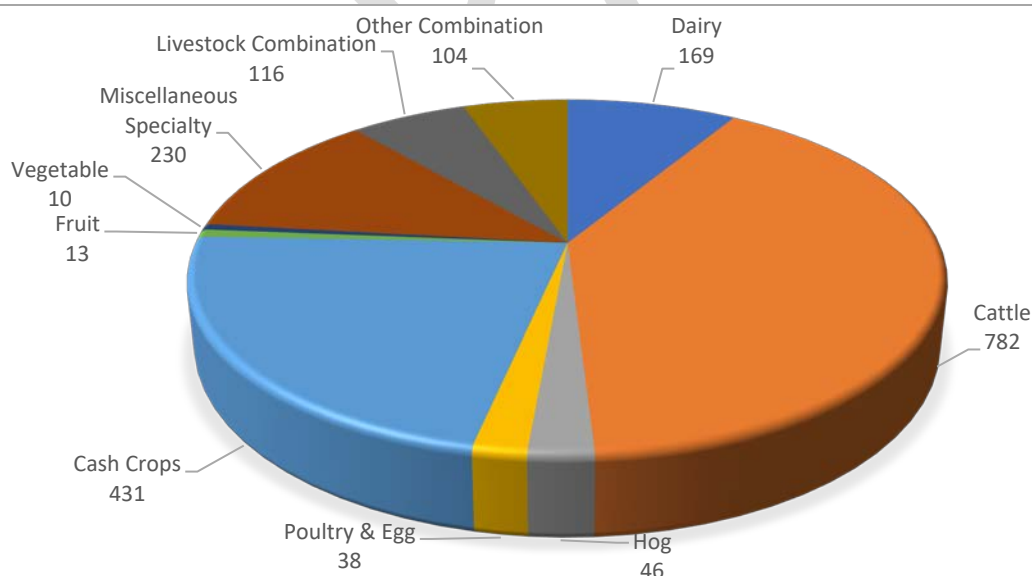
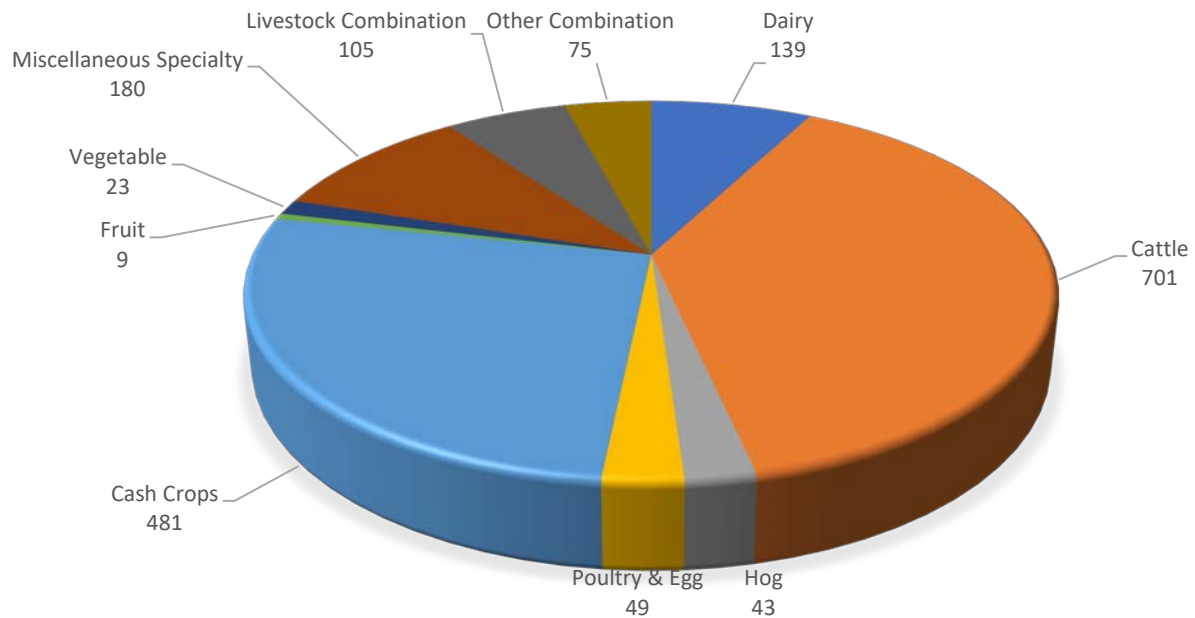




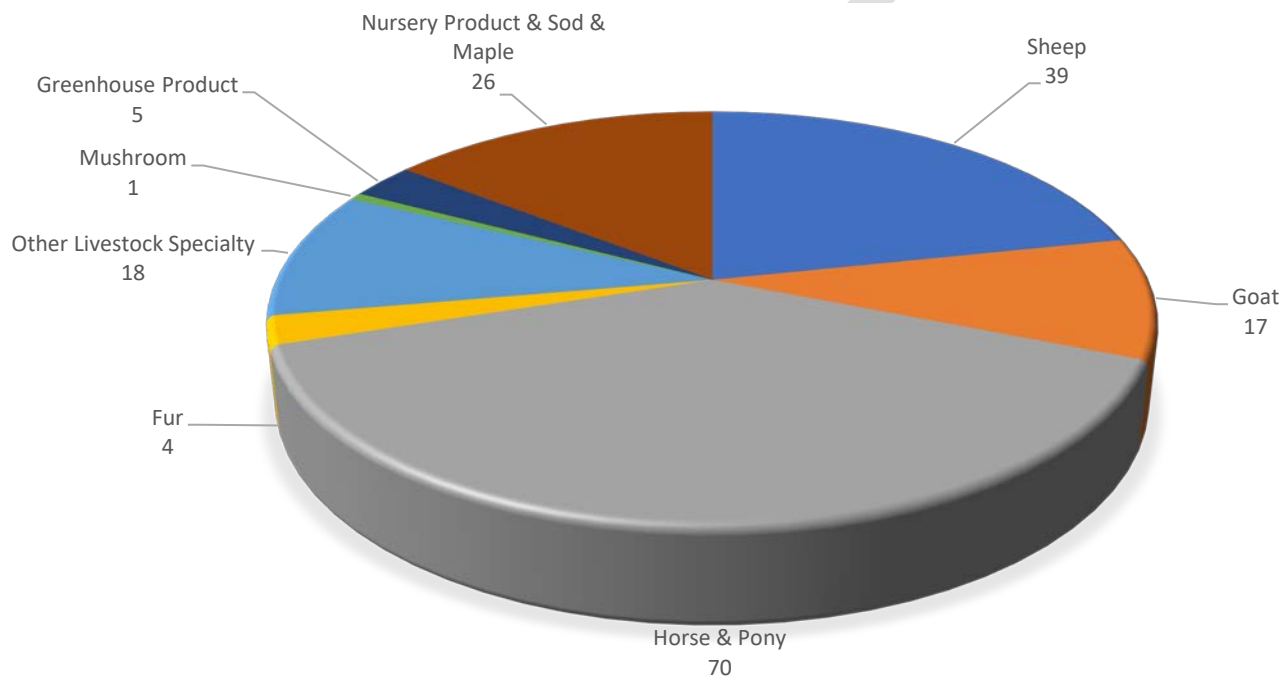
FIGURE 8B - NUMBER OF FARMS BY FARM TYPE, 2016 -  
BRUCE COUNTY



Statistics Canada. 32-10-003-01 -Farms Classified by Farm Type

Miscellaneous specialty as a category, bundles several commodities. A further breakdown of the miscellaneous specialty category is shown on Figure 9. This category captures livestock commodities which include sheep, goats and horses. The number of operations in these livestock categories declined or remained stable in all of the municipalities with the exception of Huron-Kinloss, where the number of sheep operations increased and in Arran-Elderslie, where the number of sheep and horse operations each increased by one.

**FIGURE 9 - MISCELLANEOUS SPECIALTY TYPE, 2016**



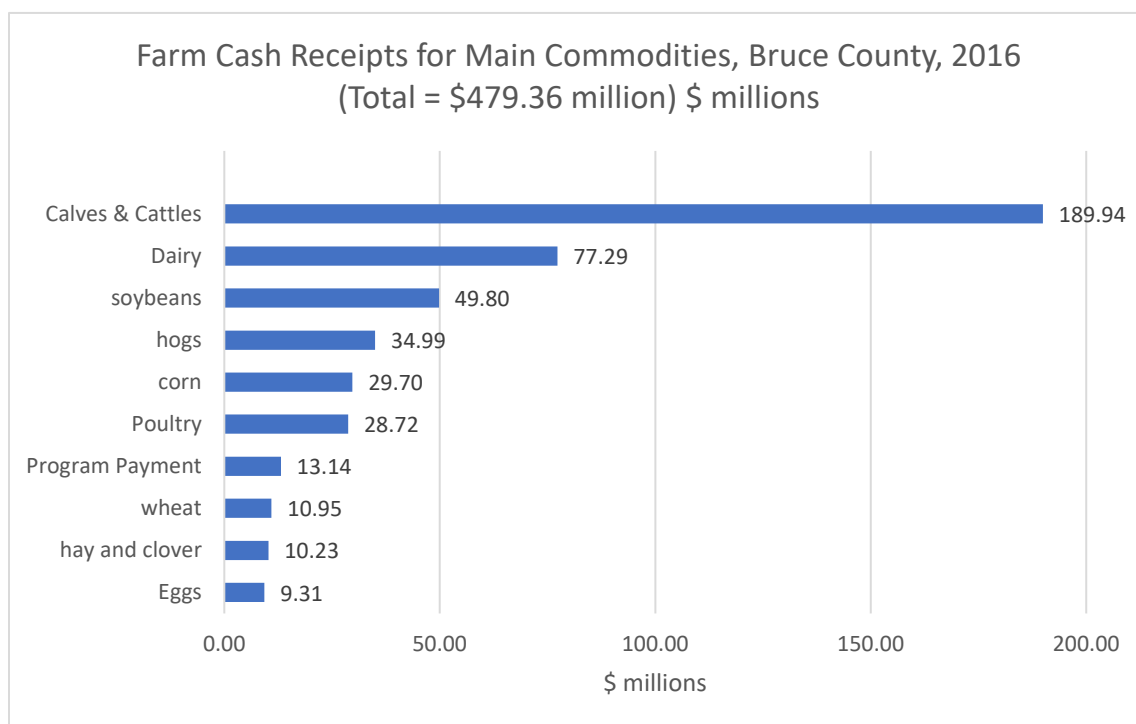
Statistics Canada. 32-10-003-01 -Farms Classified by Farm Type



Given that farm type breaks the commodity grouping down by number of farms, to understand the relative value of each grouping it is also important to review the breakdown by value. This is shown on Figure 10 below which provides a breakdown of the GFR's generated by the top 10 commodity groups for Bruce in 2016.

This breakdown indicates that on the basis of GFR's, cattle was the lead commodity followed by dairy, soybeans then hogs.

**Figure 10 - Breakdown of GFR's by top 10 commodity groups for Bruce, 2016**

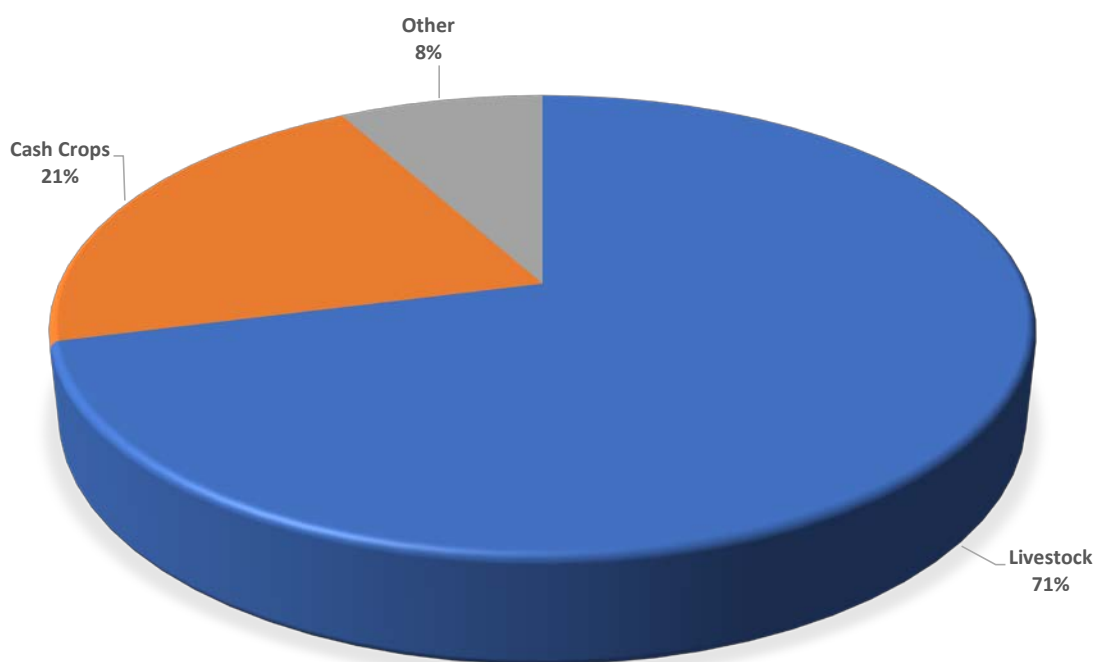


Source: County Profiles/Western Ontario/Bruce: Ag Profile Bruce County,  
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/county/index.html>

This breakdown confirms the importance of the livestock sector in Bruce County.

As shown on Figure 11 below, 71% of the GFR's generated in the County came from livestock-based commodity groups, while 21% came from cash crop.

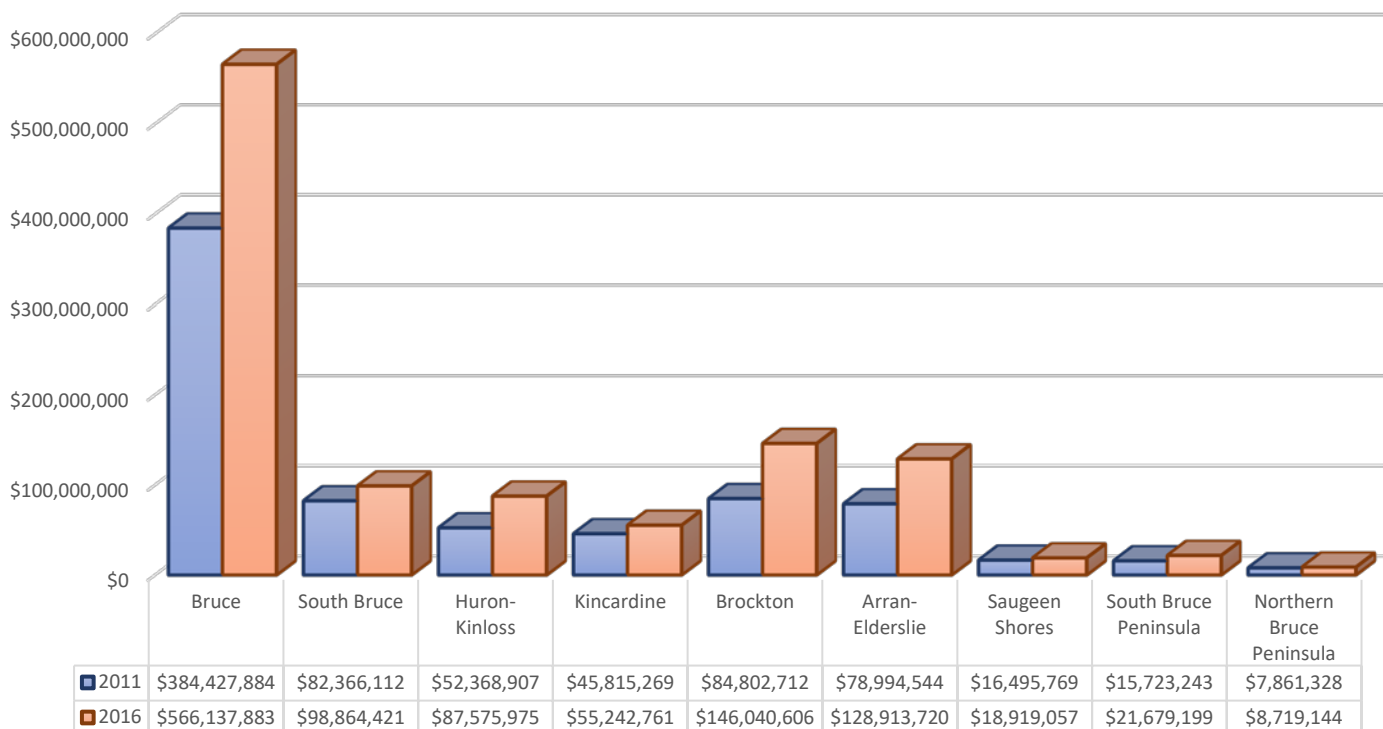
FIGURE 11 - COMBINED GFR'S BY TYPE OF SECTOR



## 2.5 Farm Income and Operating Costs

Figure 12 summarizes the total GFR's generated in Bruce in 2011 and 2016 based on all commodity groups and confirms a significant increase in GFR's in all local municipalities between 2011 and 2016. This summary reflects the increasing productivity of County farming operations but will also be influenced by the commodity prices in effect at that time. Some of these, notably for cattle, have since decreased. In 2018, OMAFRA tracked GFR's for Bruce at an approximate total of \$533,020,000.

**FIGURE 12 - TOTAL GROSS FARM RECEIPTS (\$), 2011 & 2016**



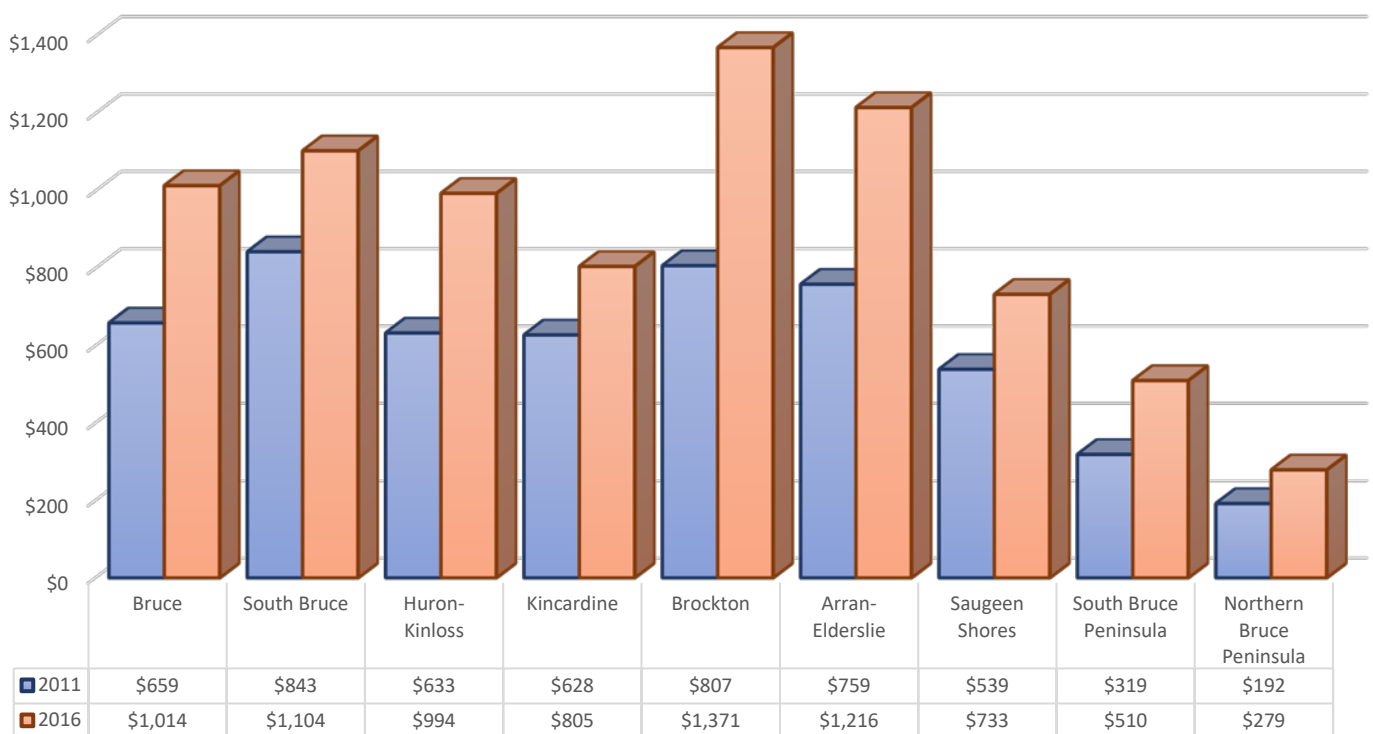
Statistics Canada. 32-10-0436-01 - Farms classified by total gross farm receipts in the year prior to the census





Based on a per acre value, Brockton and Arran-Elderslie had both the highest value and highest increase in GFR's between 2011 and 2016. All the municipalities experienced an increase in GFR's per acre in the period. (Figure 13)

**FIGURE 13 - GROSS FARM RECEIPTS PER ACRE (\$),  
2011 & 2016**



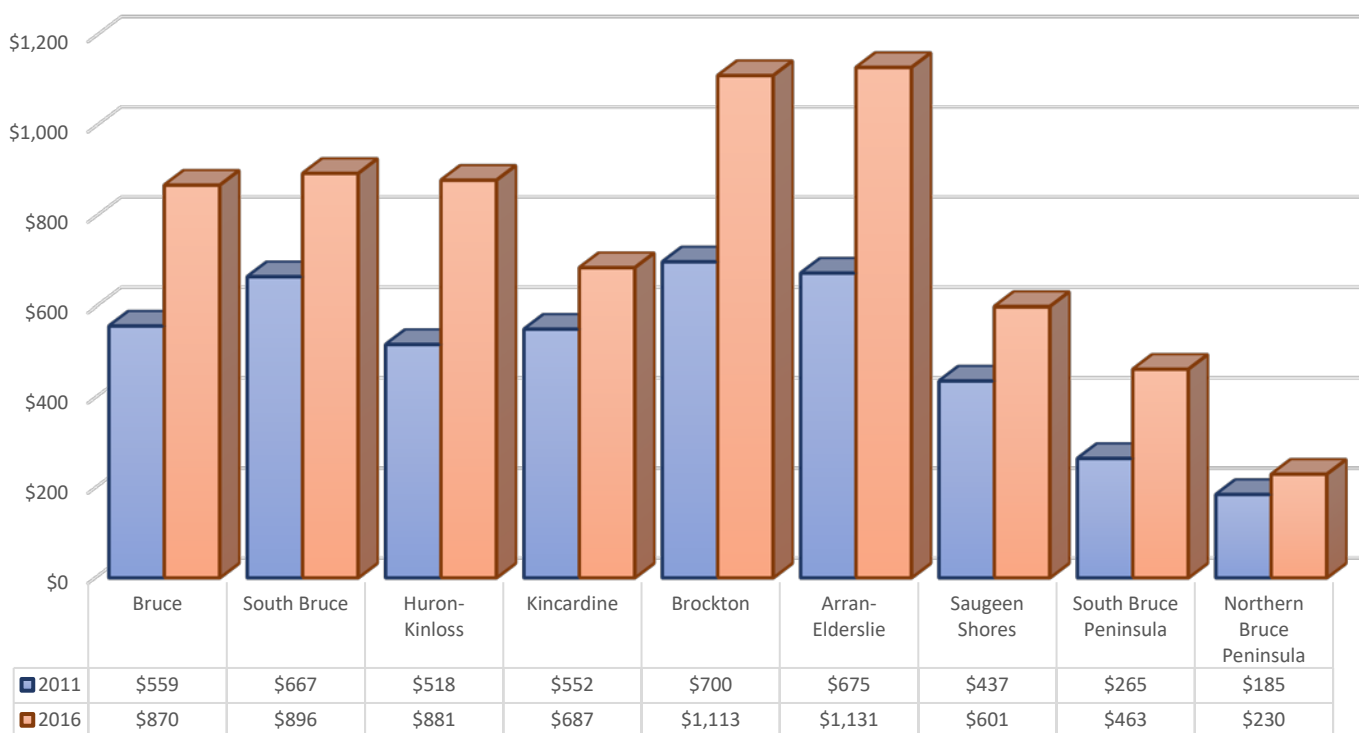
Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0407-01 - Tenure of land owned, leased, rented, crop-share, used through other arrangements or used by others

Statistics Canada. 32-10-0436-01 - Farms classified by total gross farm receipts in the year prior to the census

Although the rising value of GFR's is a positive indicator for Bruce County, the effect of the increase is mitigated by the parallel increase in operating costs per acre (Figure 14).

Between 2011 and 2016, GFR's increased by 32%; during the same period operating costs per acre rose by 35%. Given the ratio of costs to revenue, productivity both generally and per acre must rise for operators to be profitable.

**FIGURE 14 - FARM OPERATING COSTS PER ACRE (\$),  
2011 & 2016**



Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0438-01 - Farm business operating expenses in the year prior to the census

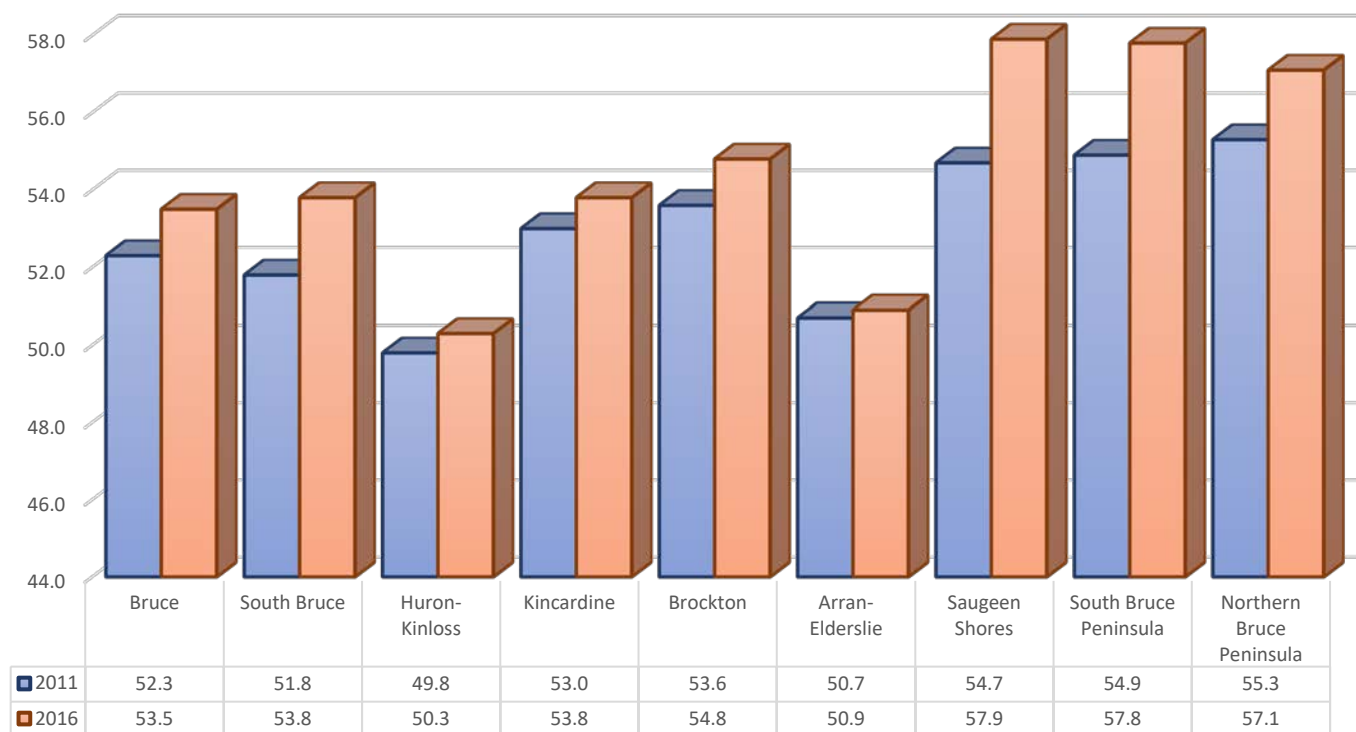
Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0407-01 - Tenure of land owned, leased, rented, crop-share, used through other arrangements or used by others

## 2.6 Farm Operators and Jobs

### 2.6.1 Operators

Generally, the age of farm operators is rising across the province and the statistics for Bruce (Figure 15) confirm the County is following that trend. There are however several points to be considered in reference to the farm operator profile. Statistics Canada allows reporting of 3 operators per property and as is confirmed by comparing the number of farms to the number of operators, this can result in a situation where multiple generations are reported. In 2011 for example, there were 809 more operators than farms, in 2016 there were 792 more operators. This multi generational distribution can skew the age profile. Regardless, it is a concern that the operator profile is aging.

FIGURE 15 - AVERAGE AGE OF FARM OPERATORS, 2011 & 2016

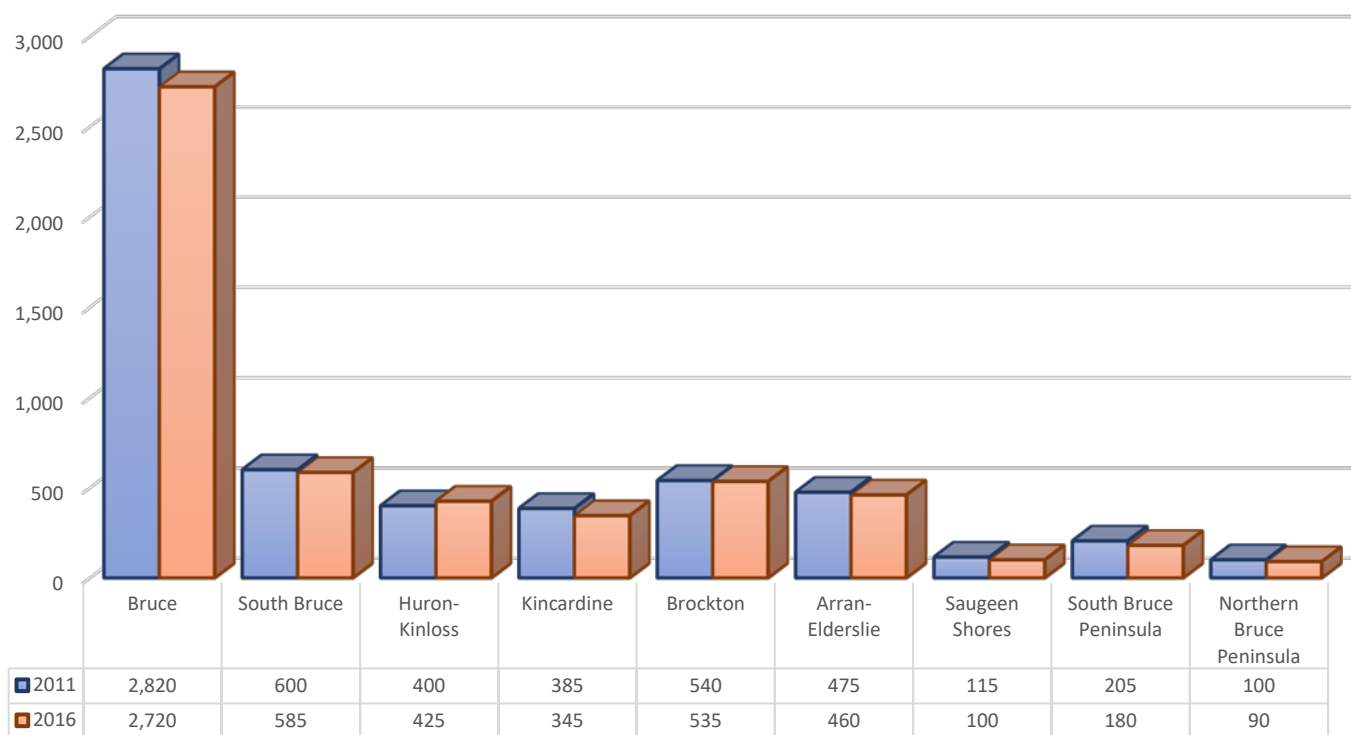


Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0442-01 - Farm operators classified by number of operators per farm and age

The number of operators declined between 2011 and 2016 in Bruce generally and in all the local municipalities except for Huron-Kinloss where the number increased by 25 (Figure 16). These statistics support two trends apparent in the agricultural sector. With advances in technology more is being done on farm with less labour. Fewer operators are efficiently farming larger areas.

In Huron-Kinloss the influx of Mennonites who farm much smaller plots by traditional methods, probably results in a higher number of operators. This, coupled with an increased focus on vegetable production which is a labour-intensive commodity, will increase the number of operators.

FIGURE 16 - TOTAL NUMBER OF OPERATORS, 2011 & 2016



Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0444-01 - Number of Farm Operators by Average number of hours per week worked for the agricultural operation in the calendar year prior to census.

## 2.6.2 Jobs

The agricultural cluster is part of the larger agri-food cluster, essential components of which include:

- Primary agriculture
- Farm input and service providers
- Food beverage and tobacco processing
- Food retail / wholesale; and
- Food service.

Bruce County employment in these sectors in 2016 is summarized in Figure 17 below.

**FIGURE 17 - EMPLOYMENT, 2016**

Bruce County 2016	Bruce County	Ontario
Agri-Food Employment, 2016 Census of Population	5,910	786,120
Crop and Animal Production (111-112, 1151-1152)	2,425	89,365
Food and Beverage (311-312)	510	89,930
311 - Food manufacturing	420	77,595
312 - Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing	90	12,335
316 - Leather and allied product manufacturing	10	1,500
411 - Farm product merchant wholesalers	40	4,255
413 - Food, beverage and tobacco merchant wholesalers	110	39,540
4183 - Agricultural supplies merchant wholesalers	60	3,270
445 - Food and beverage stores	985	170,805
722 - Food services and drinking places	1,770	387,455

As a cluster, agri-food is a significant part of the Bruce County economy, providing 5,910 jobs.

## 2.7 Summary of Bruce County Agricultural Profile

Key points from the preceding sections are set out below:

- There were 1,928 farms in Bruce County in 2016, 83 fewer than in 2011, a reduction of 4%.
- Cattle accounted for the largest number of farm operations (701), followed by cash crop (481) and dairy (139).
- The average farm size was 290 acres in both 2011 and 2016
- 59% of farm properties are 100 acres or larger, and 29% of farm properties are between 50 and 100 acres
- Bruce and surrounding Counties have lower farmland prices per acre than the rest of Ontario south of Canadian Shield, while also seeing a higher price increase from 2017-2018 (7.6%) than the Ontario average (3.6%).
- 24% of the farmland acreage in Bruce County is rented out which is lower than the Ontario average (27%). The higher proportion of owned vs rented land in Bruce is a healthy sign because owners tend to make more long-term investments in their lands than those who rent land, as a general rule.
- 71% of Gross Farm Receipts come from livestock-based commodity groups
- Between 2011 and 2016, Gross Farm Receipts increased by 32%; during the same period, operating costs per acre rose by 35%.
- There were 2,720 farm operators in Bruce County in 2016, and the average farm operator age rose from 51.8 in 2011 to 53.5 in 2016.
- There were 5,910 jobs in the overall agri-food sector in 2016, with 2,425 in Crop and Animal Production.

The profile for agriculture in Bruce confirms that it is home to a large, prosperous, diverse and expanding agricultural sector with a high concentration of livestock operations.





Apples and corn, Arran-Elderslie

## 3 MAPPING PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREAS

### 3.1 Background

Prime Agricultural Areas are identified to ensure that the most important farming areas are protected from uses that would conflict with farming over the long term. Protecting these resources and uses for the long run helps farmers, and the businesses that rely on them, to:

- Plan for family or business succession
- Plan investments and improvements
- Adapt to innovations and opportunities
- Reduce or avoid nuisance complaints.

For the purposes of land use planning, the term 'Prime Agricultural Area' is defined by the Province and relies in part on the Canada Land Inventory. The Canada Land Inventory created a system for mapping soil capability for agriculture into Classes. The Classes are on a scale from 1-7 with 1 being the best soil for farming.

Under Provincial policy, Prime Agricultural Areas means "areas where prime agricultural lands predominate" and includes:

- areas where the Canada Land Inventory identified soils with agricultural capability of Class 1-3 **and associated lands** where the Canada Land Inventory identified soils of Class 4 - 7 lands,
- and**
- **additional areas** where there is a local concentration of farms that exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture.

Emphasis was added to the above because it is a common misunderstanding that Prime Agricultural Areas should only be areas where the soils are Class 1 - 3, while the definition is actually much broader.

## 3.2 Prime Agricultural Areas and Land Use Planning

Official Plan “Land Use Schedules” are maps in the Official Plan that show land use designations that Council has put in place for the long-term benefit of the community as a whole. Designations are different categories in which specific land uses are permitted. For example, in the Residential designation, neighbourhoods are the main priority and residential uses are allowed. Industrial uses that generate high noise levels or odours are typically only allowed in the Industrial designation. Similarly, in the countryside, areas where agriculture is the main priority are designated by mapping the Prime Agricultural Area. The Prime Agricultural Area map is then one of the foundations to build the County Official Plan Land Use Schedule.

In the current County Official Plan, Agricultural and Rural are the two main Official Plan designations for farming areas outside of the urban and hamlet communities. The Agricultural designation was established as an area to meet the Province’s definition of a Prime Agricultural Area. It is intended to protect farming and agri-business with policies that prevent new residential lots and other land uses that would conflict with farming or would limit the flexibility of agricultural uses to change and grow in the future. The Rural designation was established for areas that are mainly for farming but are not considered to be Prime Agricultural due to the characteristics of the land, limitations caused by incompatible land uses, or both. There is more flexibility than in the Agriculture designation to consider other land uses.

It is worth noting that the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae, which are intended to protect livestock operations from new incompatible uses, are applied in the same manner in either the Agricultural or Rural designation.

### 3.3 LEAR Mapping Method

In 2018, The Province updated the Prime Agricultural Areas mapping across the Greater Golden Horseshoe through a process called Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR). Bruce County had wanted to update its agricultural mapping for several years to confirm the Prime Agricultural Areas of the County. As a result, the County reached out to the Province and a similar LEAR exercise ensued.

To start this process, the County was provided mapping from the Province to use as a base for identifying Prime Agricultural Areas. The map was based on the LEAR method used in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The LEAR mapping set up a grid across the County landscape with scores using a combination of: the soil capability for agriculture (CLI classes discussed above); the percent of land in agricultural production; and the amount of parcel fragmentation. The score on an individual grid cell is also influenced by the scores on neighbouring cells in the grid.

It should be noted that, unlike the County Official Plan which was based primarily on soil capability, with many properties in both Agricultural and Rural, the LEAR scoring typically applies to the entire parcel. The LEAR system included lands above a certain score in the draft Prime Agricultural Area, while lands with a lower score were shown as 'Potential', to consider including in the Prime Agricultural Area. Lands that scored low were not shown on the map and may be designated Rural.

This approach resulted in two proposed mapping categories that needed to be reviewed for this interim report:

1. Prime Agricultural Area
2. Potential Prime Agricultural Area

The LEAR method provided a consistent County-wide approach while also recognizing that there are certain local land use factors and details that may not have been captured in the initial run of the mapping system by the Province. Therefore, locally a series of changes to the mapping was warranted and considered the merits of removing and adding Prime and Potential Prime Agricultural Areas.

The approach to these changes generally followed the municipal refinements process outlined for the LEAR mapping in the Greater Golden Horseshoe as a base, with some additional consideration of the Bruce County landscape.



### 3.4.1 LEAR Map Review

The review was largely a desktop exercise in visually comparing the mapping with a combination of other maps, including: aerial photography; soil capability; parcels; topography; drainage, including tile drainage; crop production; zoning; and the official plan. Windshield surveys were also conducted for additional local context.

#### 3.4.1.1 Site-specific Official Plan or Zoning Exceptions

Parcels with site-specific exceptions to the Official Plan or Zoning By-law that allow other land uses were removed from the map. Lands with such site-specific uses have typically already gone through a public planning process at some point in the past and were removed to recognize those existing approvals.

#### 3.4.1.2 Identifiable Boundaries and Contiguous Areas

To promote contiguous areas and avoid small or narrow isolated areas, identifiable boundaries such as roads, railways, large water bodies and settlement boundaries, can be used to guide the refinement process. Depending on the circumstance, the resulting changes included: remove from or add to the Prime Agricultural Area; remove from or add to the Potential Agricultural Area; reclass from Prime Agricultural Area to Potential Prime Agricultural Area; or reclass from Potential Prime Agricultural Area to Prime Agricultural Area. In rare instances, following identifiable boundaries and/or promoting contiguity resulted in splitting large parcels (generally to be avoided in the LEAR system) which was justifiable for integrity of the larger system.

#### 3.4.1.3 Settlement Boundaries

In locations where the LEAR mapping extended into existing settlement areas that are designated in the Official Plan, those areas were removed from the map.

#### 3.4.1.4 Natural Features

Natural features in which agricultural uses are not ongoing were reviewed. The focus was properties that are entirely within larger natural features, or areas where there is an extensive pattern of many smaller natural features that dominate the landscape overall. Depending on context, the refinement process removed from the Prime Agricultural Area, or reclassified from Prime Agricultural Area to Potential Agricultural Area,

### 3.4.1.5 Parcel Fragmentation

Areas where parcel fragmentation may be so extensive, often in conjunction with some degree of non-agricultural zoning or uses, that it prevents agriculture from being the predominant use, were reviewed and in some cases were removed from Prime Agricultural Area or reclassified to Potential Agricultural Area.

### 3.4.1.6 Neighbouring Municipality Edges

Areas where there was a difference at the boundary with an adjacent Official Plan were reviewed. Depending on the context, the refinement process removed from or added to the Prime Agricultural Area or reclassified from Prime Agricultural Area to Potential Agricultural Area.

### 3.4.1.7 Large Areas of Lower Capability Soils

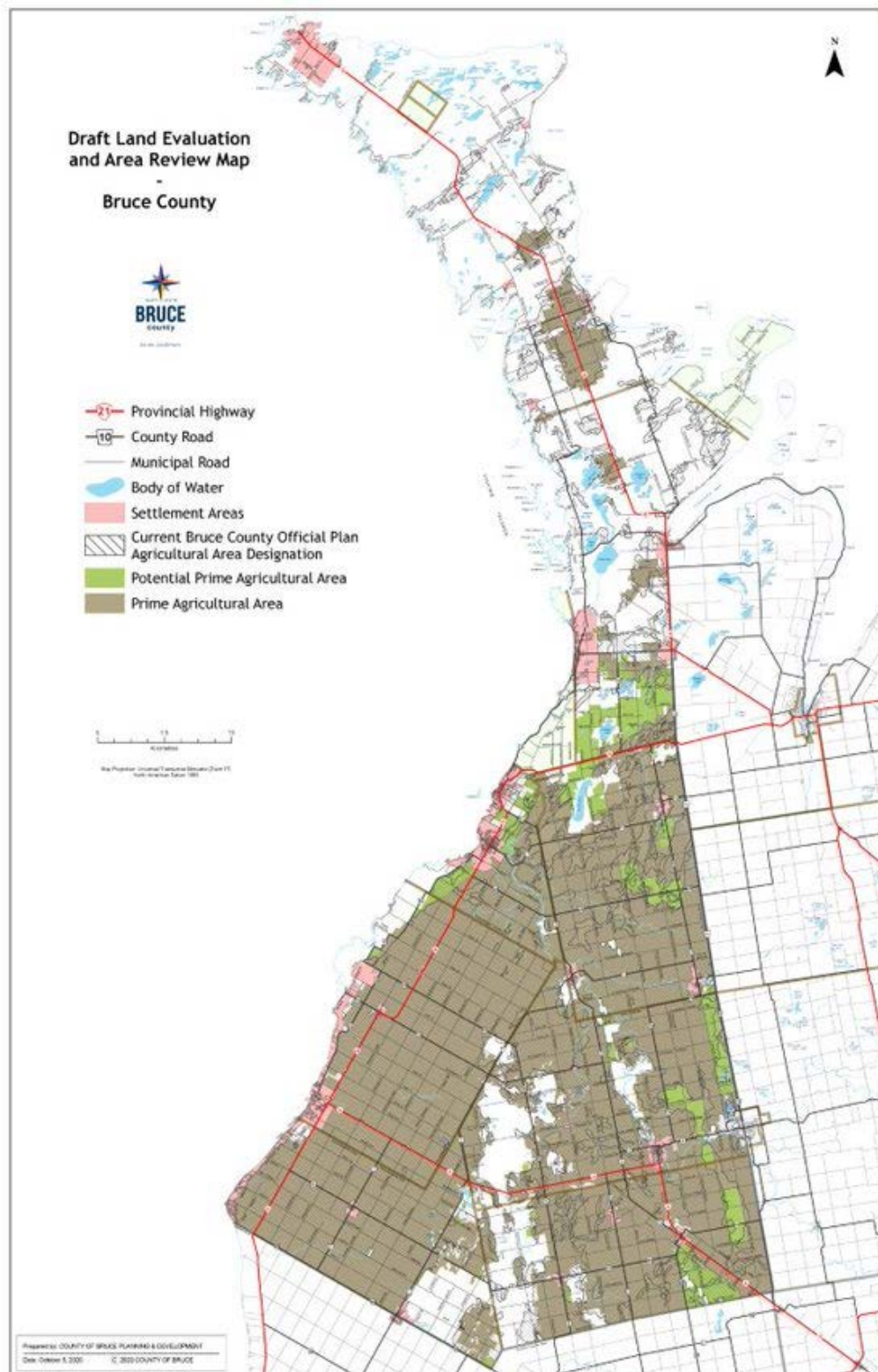
In reviewing the mapping, a few large contiguous areas (i.e. taking up most of a concession block) of lower capability soils (lower than Class 3) that were identified on the LEAR map as Prime Agricultural Area were reclassified as Potential Prime Agricultural Area. This was done to highlight these areas for further review and comment to confirm that they meet the definition of a Prime Agricultural Area.

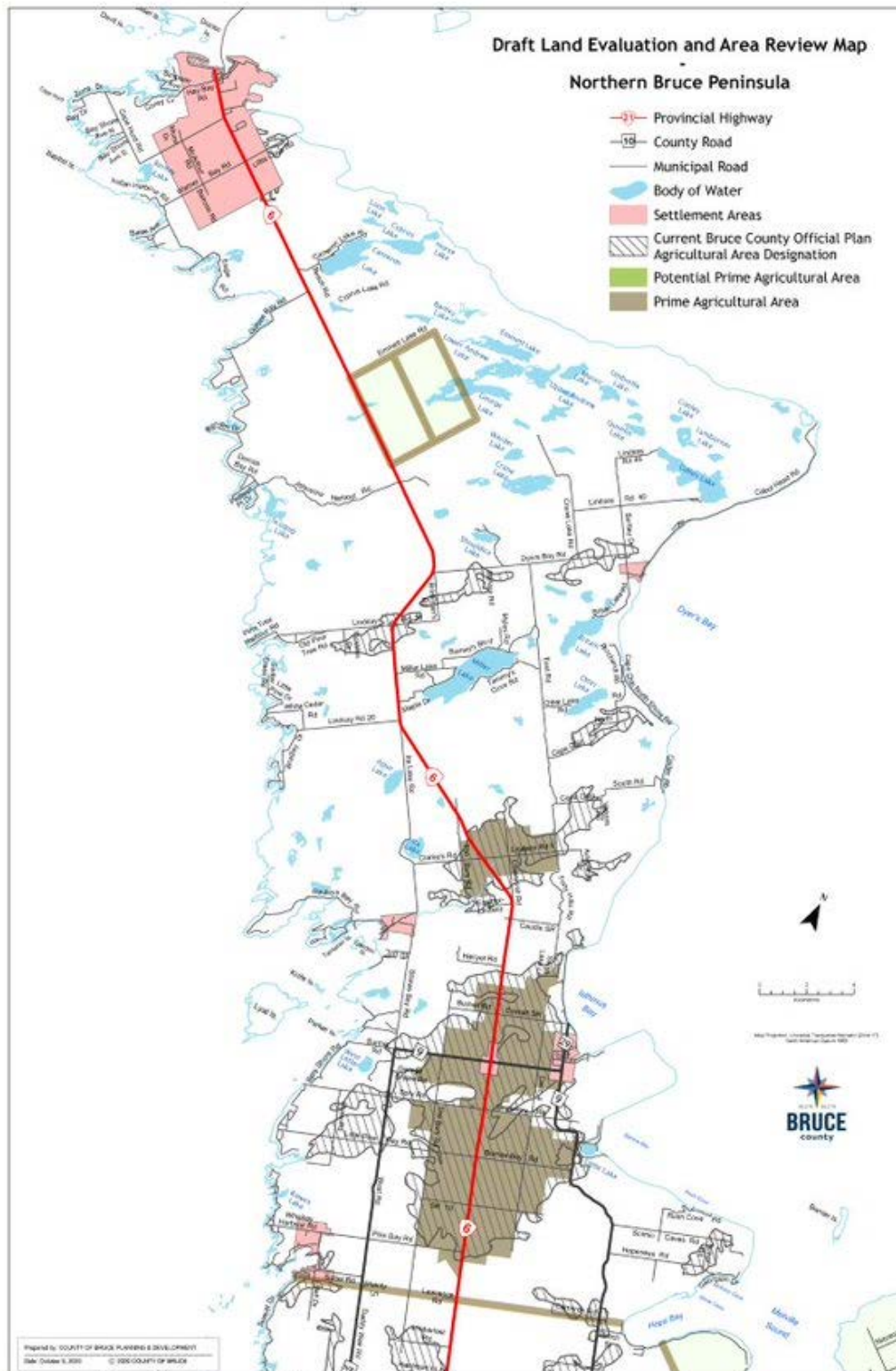
## 3.5 Proposed Prime Agricultural Mapping for Bruce County

The Draft Land Evaluation and Area Review maps on the following pages show the proposed mapping for Bruce County of the Prime Agricultural Areas and the Potential Prime Agricultural Areas that resulted from the process described above. The Agricultural Area designation in the current County Official Plan is also shown. This mapping is intended to serve as a draft for public comments and review.

The public review and comments on the individual Prime and Potential Prime Agricultural Areas will help to affirm the mapping.



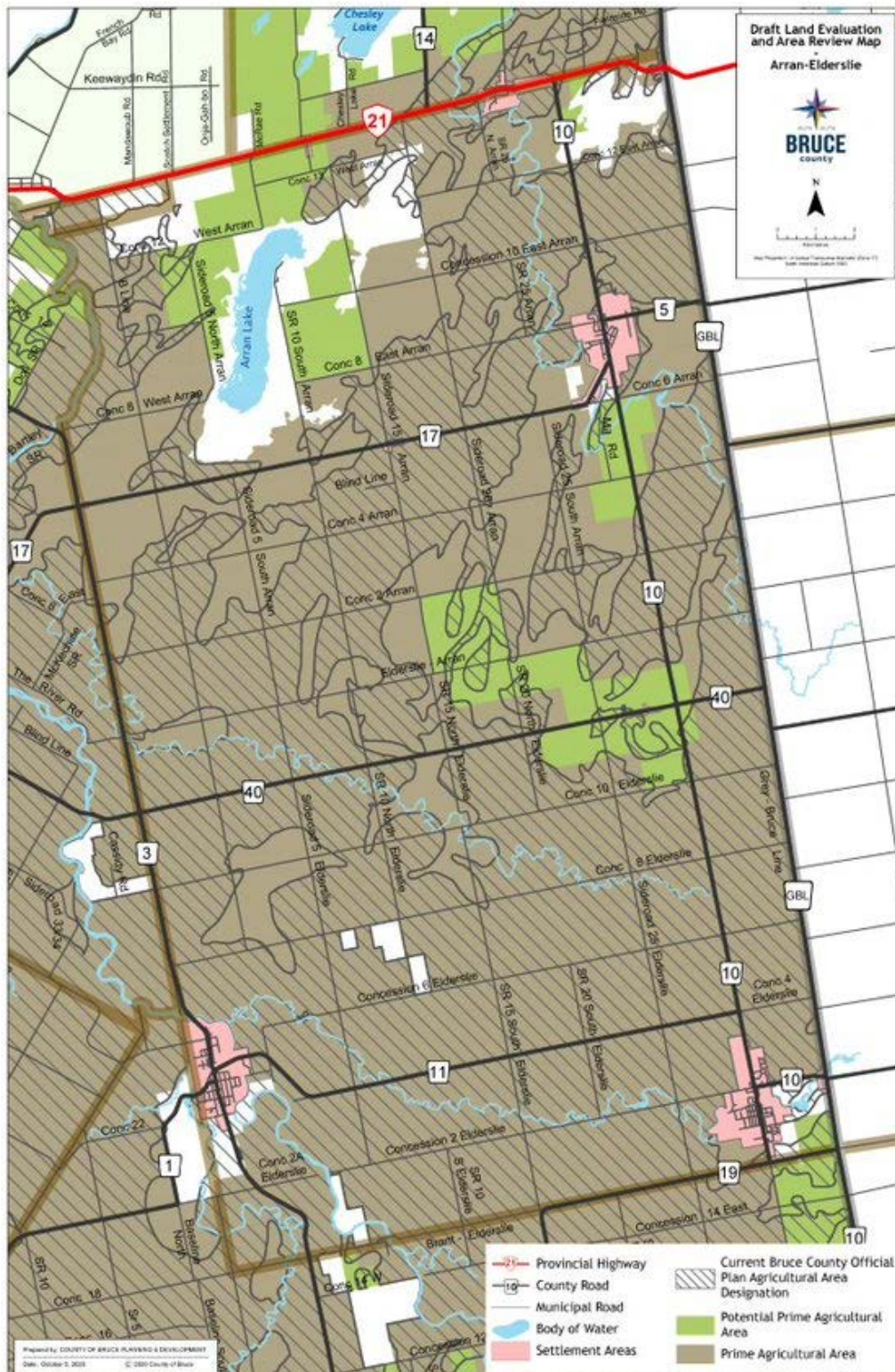




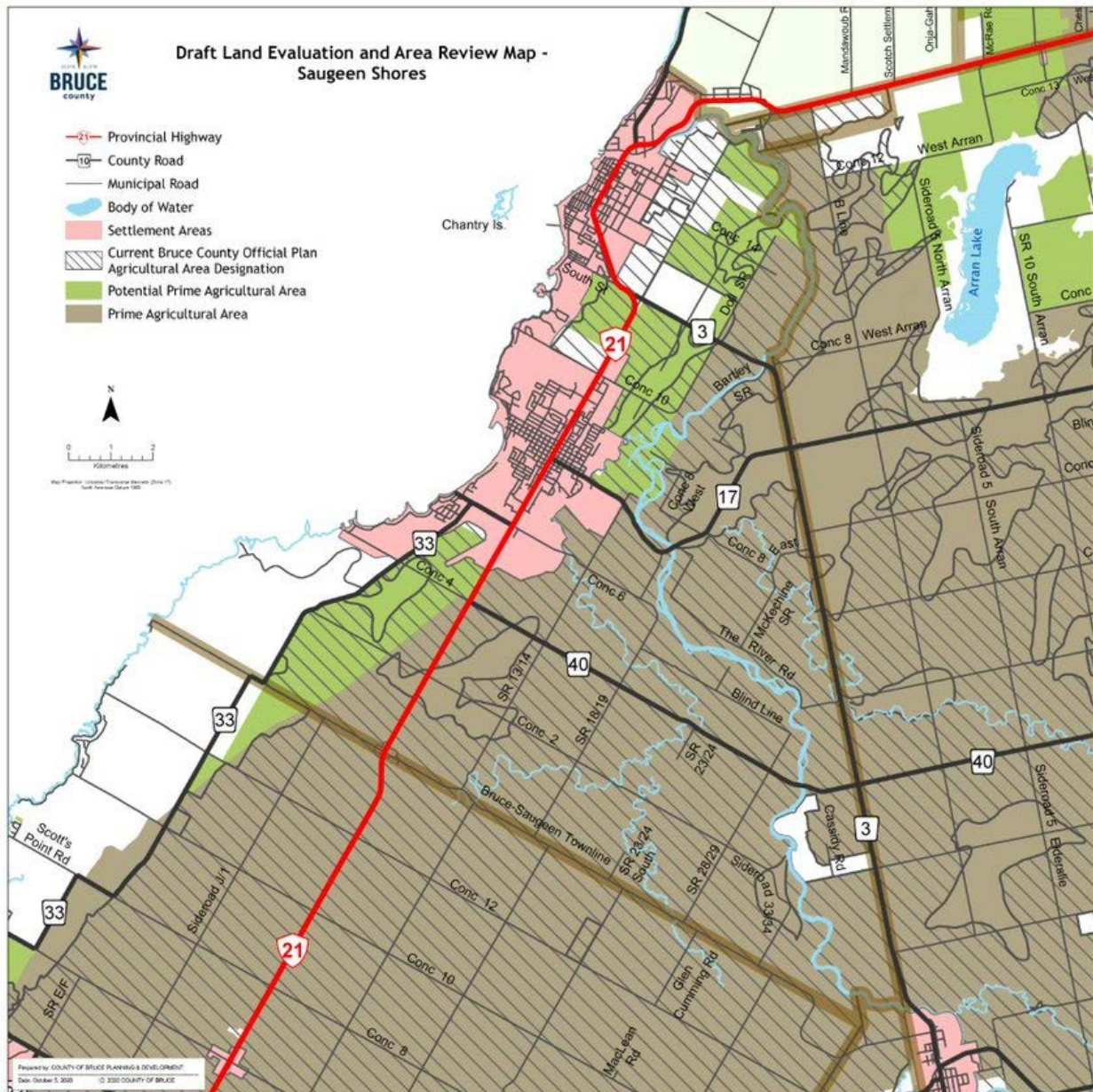












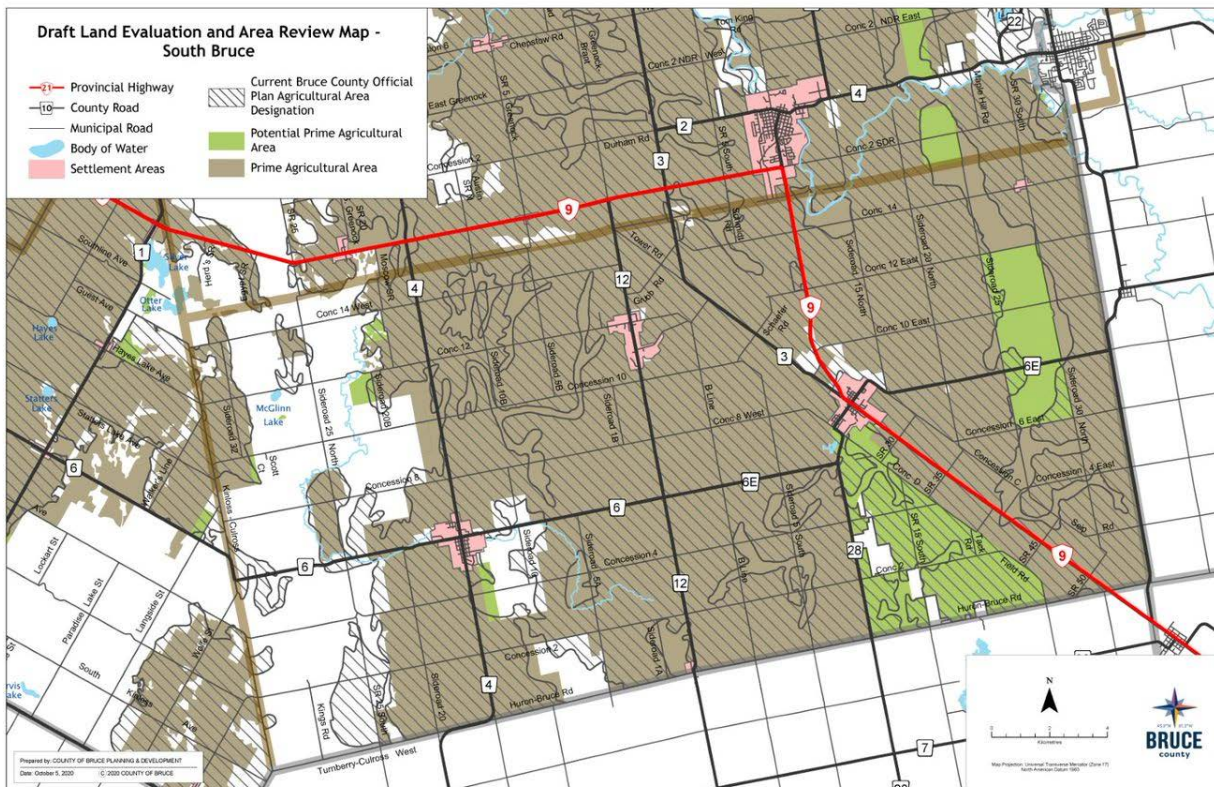




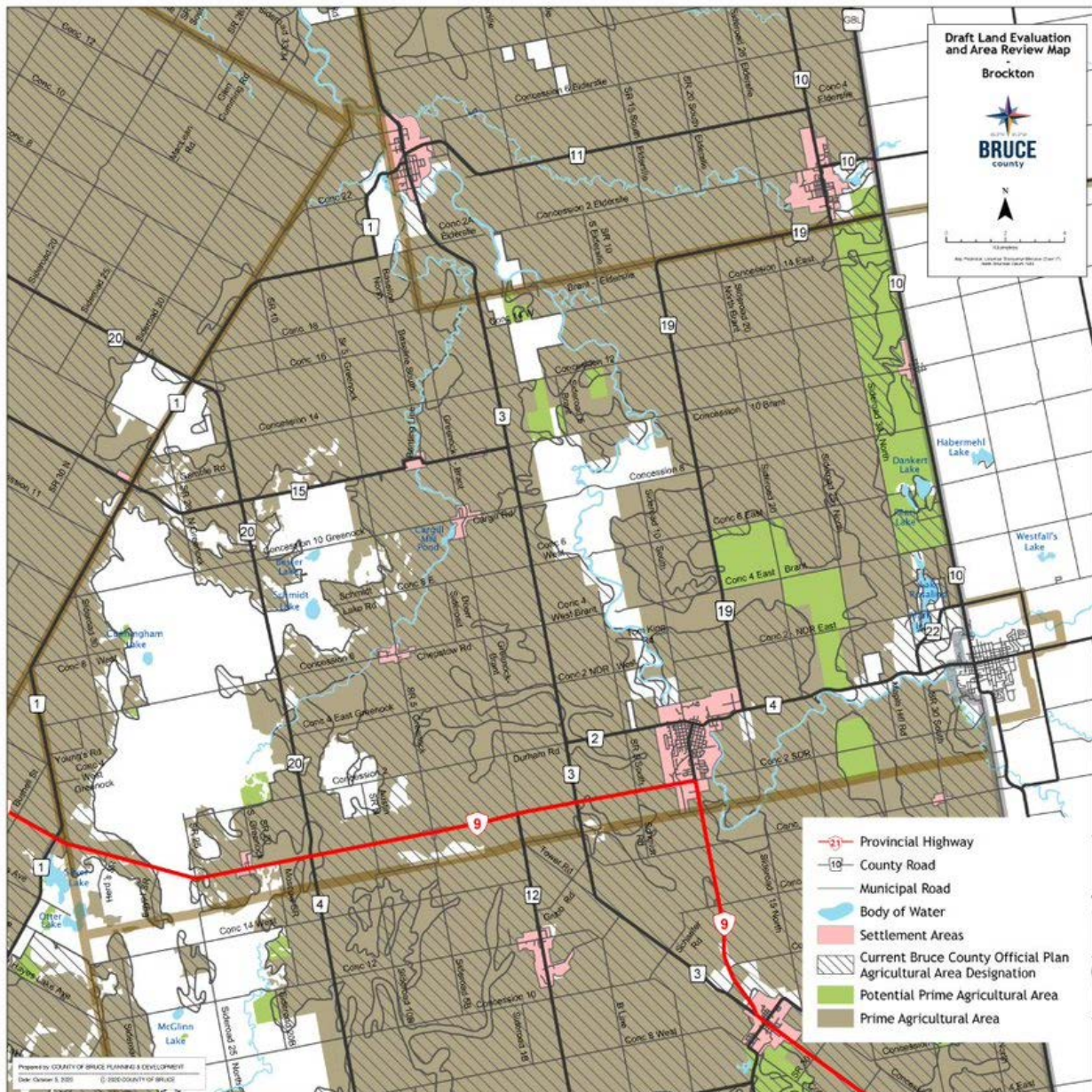
















Pasture, Arran-Elderslie

## 4 Agricultural Land Use Policy Discussion

Five key topics were identified by County Council as a focus for policy discussion for Plan the Bruce: Agriculture. A sixth topic around cannabis production was identified by the Plan the Bruce: Agricultural Advisory Committee. Given the length of this chapter, the topics are listed below by section reference for convenience:

4.1 Minimum size for new agricultural lots.

4.2 Surplus farm dwelling severances.

4.3 New Residential lots in woodlots.

4.4 Industrial and commercial uses on farms

4.5 Urban-Agriculture Edge Planning.

4.6 Cannabis production

The sections that follow will go through each of the above topics, drawing on: County strategies related to the key agricultural sector (see Chapter 1); the Bruce County Agriculture Profile (see Chapter 2); additional data compiled for this report; and an understanding of Provincial direction on agricultural land use planning. This Section explores these issues, discusses policy options and provides recommended directions for the County to engage with the community on, in developing the new Official Plan.

As noted in Section 3.2, in the current County Official Plan, the two main designations for farming areas outside of the urban and hamlet communities are Agricultural and Rural. These terms are reintroduced here as background as they will be referred to throughout the remainder of the report.

The **Agricultural** designation was established as an area to meet the Province's definition of a **Prime Agricultural Area**. It is intended to protect farming and agri-business with policies that prevent new residential lots and other land uses that would conflict with farming or would limit the flexibility of agricultural uses to change and grow in the future. The **Rural** designation was established for areas that are mainly for farming but are not considered to be Prime Agricultural due to the characteristics of the land, limitations caused by incompatible land uses, or both. There is slightly more flexibility in the Rural than in the Agriculture designation to consider other land uses.

## 4.1 Minimum Size for New Agricultural Lots

The challenge of establishing an appropriate minimum lot size for new farm properties through the severance process is an ongoing issue in many rural municipalities, including Bruce County.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee expressed concerns that the larger minimum lot size requirements could drive the cost of entering the sector out of the reach of new farmers, or farmers looking to serve niche markets with commodities that can be viable on smaller acreages. Another factor that was raised regarding minimum farm lot size is the market for smaller lots that may be generated by the growing Mennonite and Amish communities. For these groups, their practise of farming using non mechanized equipment is often suited to a smaller lot size.

### 4.1.1 Data and Policy Observations

#### 4.1.1.1 Historical Township Survey Patterns

The lots established by the original Township surveys had a major influence on the pattern of farm parcel ownership that extends to this day. Much of the rationale for the use of 100 acres as a minimum size for new lots across most of Southern Ontario has its basis in the fact that 100 acres was the size of a farm lot in the original surveys, and is the basic underlying architecture of the parcel fabric even today.

There were, however, also some sections of Bruce County where the original survey lot pattern created 50 acre lots. An example is described well in the excerpt below from the history of Kincardine "Kincardine: 1848 - 1984":

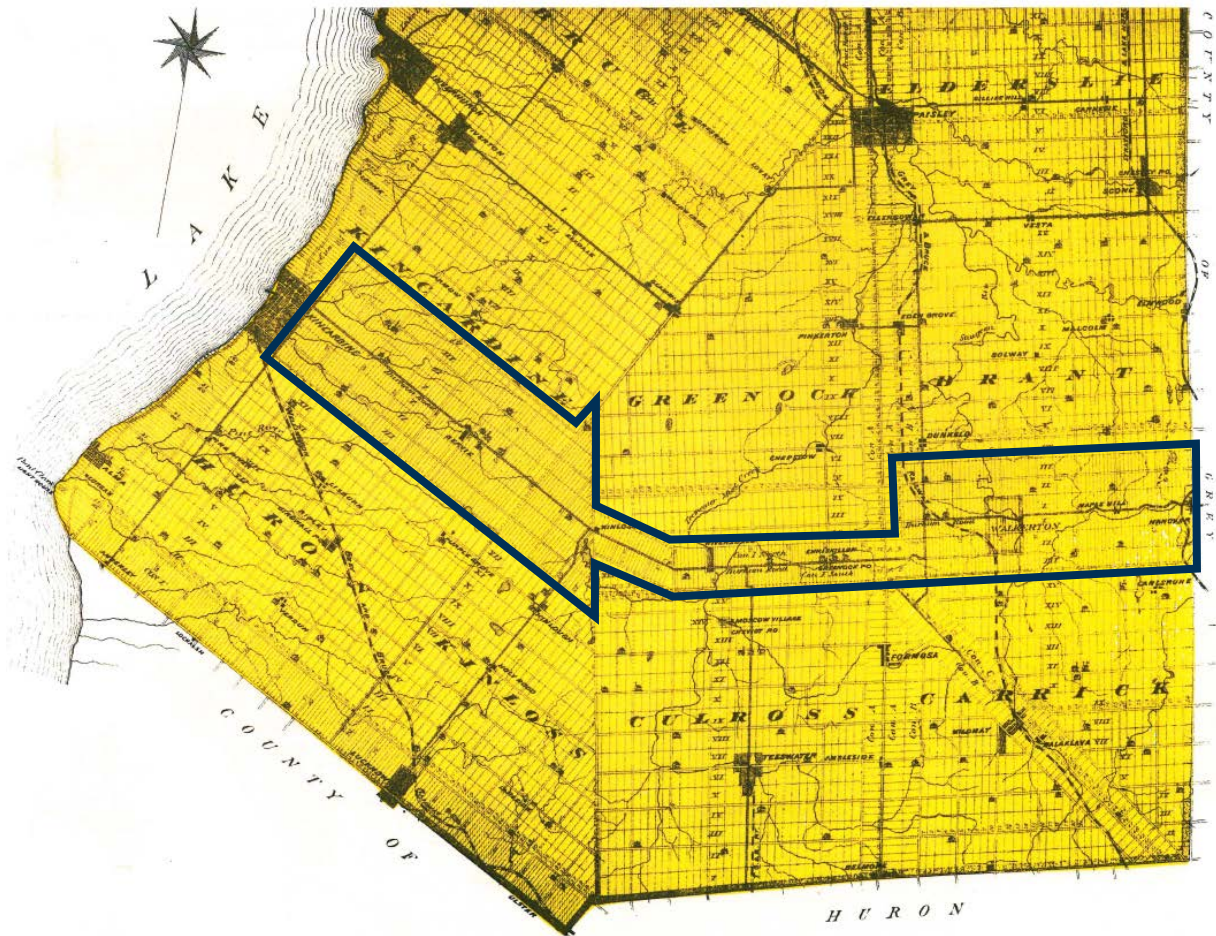
"To attract the attention of prospective settlers to the district about to be surveyed, the Government decided to open up a colonization road from the County of Simcoe to the mouth of the Penetangore River on Lake Huron, and to offer as a free grant to settlers a fifty acre farm lot on one of the two concessions north or south of this road. The decision was passed August 26, 1848."

This 50-acre lot fabric is unique in Bruce County and in Southern Ontario and exerts a local influence on the agricultural landscape that is still visible to some extent and affects farming patterns today.

Areas with an original 50-acre settlement survey centred on "Durham Road" are highlighted by the dark blue boundary added to the following map excerpts from the Bruce County Historical Atlas.



Bruce County Historical Atlas with original 50-acre Survey area bounded in blue



#### 4.1.1.2 Current Lot Fabric

There are over 6,600 lots that have an agricultural code in the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) system in Bruce County. The size distribution of these lots in the County and local municipalities is shown in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18 - Agricultural Lot Size (acres) Distribution

	Less than 10	10-49	50-99	100-199	200+	TOTAL
<b>Bruce County %</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Bruce County Lots</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>2,450</b>	<b>2,796</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>6,633</b>
Arran-Elderslie Lots	33	132	420	476	37	1,098
Brockton Lots	35	212	510	467	33	1,257
Huron-Kinloss Lots	28	114	398	447	30	1,017
Kincardine Lots	29	136	114	504	30	813
North Bruce Peninsula Lots	13	44	156	164	35	412
Saugeen Shores Lots	12	68	151	79	4	314
South Bruce Lots	28	150	467	486	29	1,160
South Bruce Peninsula Lots	11	107	234	173	37	562

From the above, it is noted that:

- there is a broad distribution of existing lot sizes across the County;
- lots of 100 acres in size or larger are most prevalent (45 %); and,
- the second largest category is lots in the 50 - 99-acre category.



#### 4.1.1.3 Vacant Lot Inventory

As context for the discussion on the need to create new lots, and in particular, lots that are smaller than the 100-acre minimum size that is generally required, further data were assembled. The inventory of agricultural lots with no buildings or structures was pulled from the MPAC data and organized by size category, shown in Figure 19 below.

Figure 19 - Vacant Agricultural Lot Size Distribution

Lot Size (acres)	Less than 10	10-49	50-99	100-199	200+	TOTAL
<b>Bruce County</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2,304</b>
Arran-Elderslie	16	55	162	141	6	380
Brockton	9	76	178	105	8	376
Huron-Kinloss	14	52	198	133	6	403
Kincardine	1	64	218	150	11	444
Northern Bruce Peninsula	6	19	67	67	12	171
Saugeen Shores	2	21	56	23	0	102
South Bruce	12	57	132	72	2	275
South Bruce Peninsula	7	35	59	47	5	153

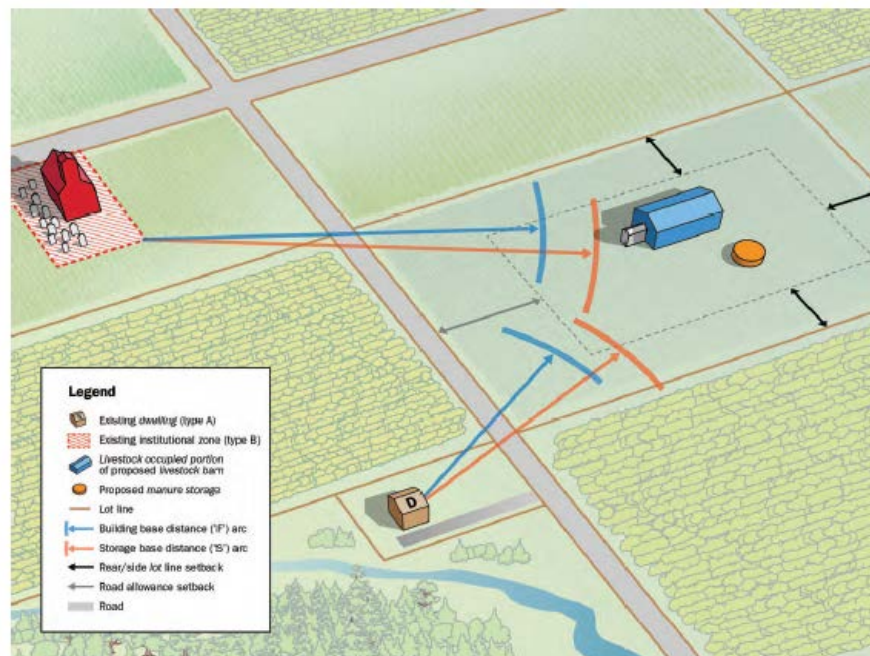
An existing agricultural lot with no buildings or structures is comparable to the product of a severance to create a new farm lot,. While additional research is required to determine where these lots are located and the use that is being made of them, and it is understood that existing lots are not necessarily available for purchase, the following points in Figure 19 above are highlighted:

- There are 379 vacant lots between 10 and 49 acres;
- Four of the top five municipalities in terms of the number of lots in the 1-49-acre category are the four municipalities with the original Durham Road 50-acre survey;
- There are 1,070 vacant lots between 50 and 99 acres; and
- Lots in the 10-49 and 50-99 acre categories exist in every local municipality.

#### 4.1.1.4 Relationship Between Lot Size and Ability to Meet Minimum Separation Distances for New or Expanded Livestock Barns and Manure Storage

Minimum distance separation (MDS) formulae are defined as: "...formulae and guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time, to separate uses so as to reduce incompatibility concerns about odour from livestock facilities.<sup>9</sup>" MDS requirements have to be met for building permits and planning approvals. An example of MDS requirements is shown on Figure 20 below (Note - there are different distances for barns and manure storage):

**FIGURE 20 - MDS ARCS- NEW LIVESTOCK**



Source: The Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document, Publication 853, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, pg. 90

In this illustration, the new livestock barn and manure storage need to meet separation distances for a church, a non-farm residence across the road, and side and rear property boundaries with adjacent farm lots. The farm lot on the diagram provides reasonable area and options for siting the facilities.

<sup>9</sup> Province of Ontario, Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2014, pg. 45.

On a smaller lot, the farmer would likely have to reduce the size of the operation.

For Bruce County context, hypothetical MDS calculations were prepared for a new dairy barn of typical size. The building permits for the new operation would need to be **229m** from less sensitive uses (such as a rural industrial use or a non-farm residential lot) and **457m** from more sensitive uses (such as a settlement boundary, a cluster of non-farm residences or an existing approved non-farm use like a restaurant); the manure storage would need to be **306m** from the less sensitive uses and **612m** from the more sensitive uses.

To give a sense of the scale of these separation distances on farm properties:

- a typical 200-acre lot is about 800m wide;
- a 100-acre lot is about 400m wide; and
- a 50-acre lot is about 200m wide.

If the farmer is proposing the operation described above on a 200 acre lot, and depending on how long the lane to the new barn will be, he or she will likely have a fair bit of flexibility to meet the requirements since little or possibly none of the distance separation would actually extend beyond their property.

If the same proposal is on a 100-acre lot, much more of the MDS distance will extend beyond the property. Therefore, the pattern of land uses in the immediate area may impact the ability to site the new facilities.

Siting this operation on a 50-acre lot would likely not be feasible in most cases due to nutrient management considerations, but even if a plan for off site manure disposal could be developed, there would be very little siting flexibility.

The observations above are a large reason why, in parts of Ontario where the land base has become more fragmented with non-farm uses, livestock-based operations have been forced to go out of business or relocate.

#### 4.1.1.5 Current Bruce County Policy

The current Bruce County Official Plan **Agricultural** policies about the minimum size for a new agricultural lot are cited below:

"It is the intention of County Council to encourage the retention of large farming areas within the County. These areas will be largely unencumbered from non-agricultural uses by restricting the establishment of non-agricultural uses. A minimum farm size of generally 40 hectares (**100 acres**) has therefore been established for new or remnant farm parcels, subject to the consent policies of Section 6.5.3 [Land Division Policies], and except as provided elsewhere in this Plan.

**Smaller, specialized**, farm parcel sizes will only be permitted if the owner can demonstrate that:

- i) The size of both the parcel to be severed as well as the parcel to be retained is appropriate for the type of agriculture proposed for each parcel;
- ii) The size of both the parcel to be severed as well as the parcel to be retained is appropriate for the type of agriculture for the area where the parcels are located and the size of both parcels are common for the area; and
- iii) The size of both proposed parcels permit them to be used for other types of agriculture in the future."

The current County Official Plan **Rural** policy about the minimum size for a new agricultural lot is cited below:

"In the Rural designation newly created farm lots should generally be 20 hectares (50 acres). It is not intended to prevent the creation of smaller farm parcels where they are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain for future changes in the type or size of the agricultural operation."

To summarize, both the Agricultural and Rural policies establish a standard minimum size for new farm lots (100 acres for Agriculture and 50 acres for Rural); and, provide consideration to create lots that are smaller than those standards where certain criteria can be met.

Of the over 240 site-specific changes (Official Plan Amendments or OPAs) since 1999 when the current County Official Plan first went into effect, County Council has

approved 14 OPAs to reduce the minimum farm lot size requirements: 11 in Agricultural and 3 in Rural.

#### 4.1.1.6 Summary of Farm Lot Size Data and Observations

The options, recommended direction and discussion in the next section is informed in large part by the following key points about **Bruce County**:

- There are local areas with a unique legacy from the original 50-acre settlement survey that is still visible to some extent and affects farming patterns today;
- There are 379 existing vacant lots in the 10-49-acre category;
- Lots of 100 acres or larger are the most prevalent (45% of agricultural lots) and lots between 50 and 99 acres are the second largest category (37% of agricultural lots);
- 71% of Gross Farm Receipts come from livestock-based commodity groups
- Larger lots provide greater flexibility for meeting separation distances that have to be met when siting new, or expanding existing, livestock barns and manure storage;
- The current County Official Plan Agricultural and Rural policies:
  - have a standard minimum size for new farm lots (100 acres for Agriculture and 50 acres for Rural); and,
  - provide consideration to create lots that are smaller than those minimum size standards where certain criteria can be met; and,
- Of the over 240 site-specific changes (Official Plan Amendments or OPAs) since 1999 when the current County Official Plan first went into effect, County Council has approved:
  - 11 OPAs to reduce the minimum farm lot size requirements in the Agricultural Area
  - 3 OPAs to reduce the minimum farm lot size requirements in the Rural Area.



## 4.1.2 Options and Recommended Direction

In considering minimum farm lot size policies to support agriculture, the importance of the prominent livestock and cash crop sectors must be addressed. Lot sizes should protect the integrity of the agricultural area and support viable operations. Given this, the 40 ha standard is an appropriate baseline for the Agricultural Area, and there is no identified need to change the 20 ha minimum in the Rural Area.

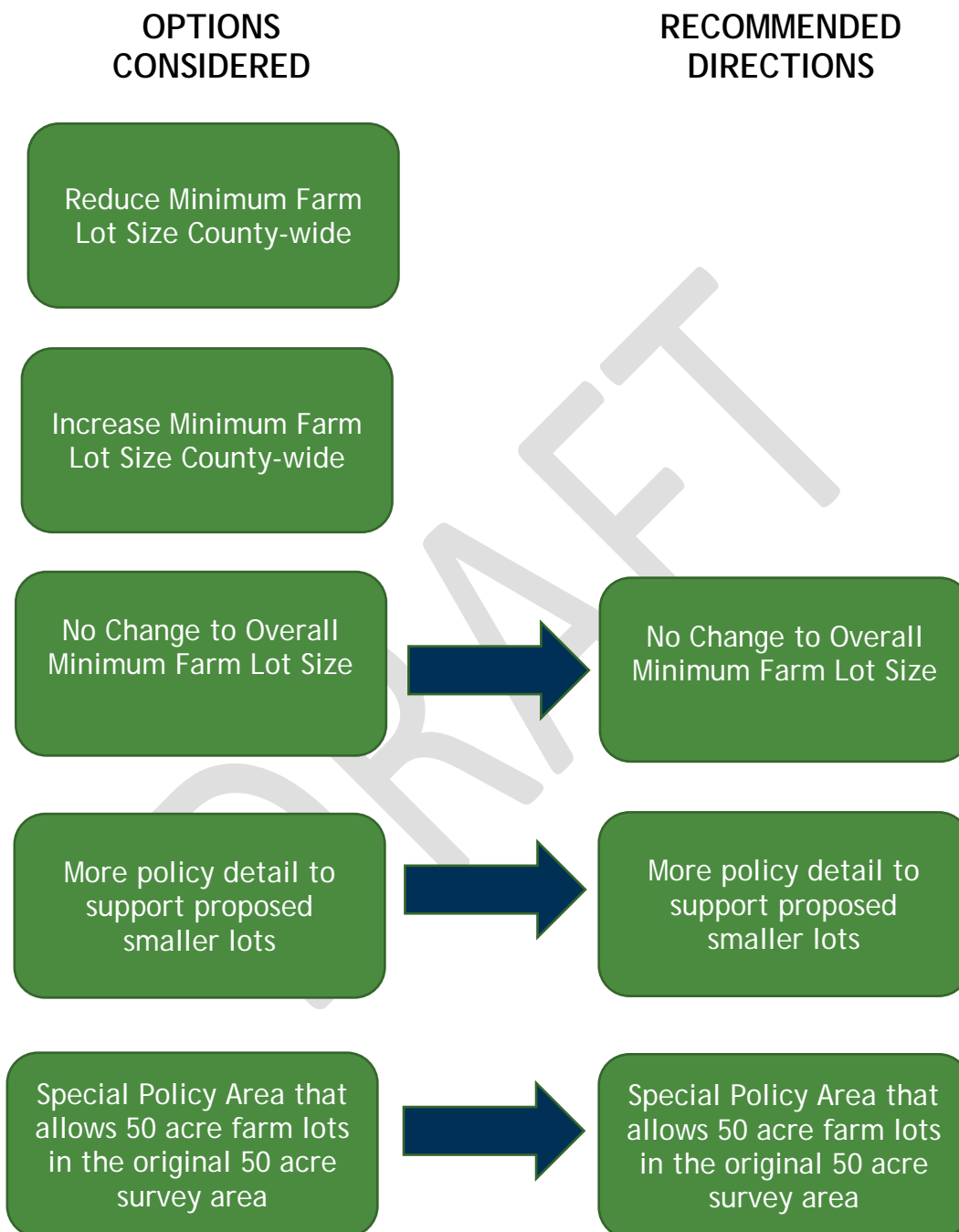
While the average farm size in Bruce is 290 ha, and this may appear to provide an argument to increase the minimum farm lot size, farms are increasingly made up of multiple separate parcels. An increased minimum would be onerous to achieve given that the base parcel fabric in most of the County is 100 acres.

In considering a lower minimum requirement County-wide, it was noted that demand for smaller parcels may be attributed in part to Mennonite and Amish farmers who tend not to use mechanization. Their farming practises are based on smaller footprints. Anecdotally, demand for smaller lots discussed with the Agricultural Advisory Committee was also attributed to new farmers seeking an affordable option for getting into farming. Smaller lots may be seen as affordable initially; however, the price and fixed operating costs on a per acre basis for a smaller lot are higher than for a larger lot, so the revenue per acre needs to also be higher for sufficient return to be sustainable. Although certain high value, intensively cultivated crops can support a farm operation on a smaller lot, the increasingly rigorous restrictions applied to agriculture, fluctuating commodity prices and advances in technology are generally resulting in larger farm sizes as noted above.

At the same time, it is recognized that alternative standards should be considered and supported by flexible policies that facilitate smaller farm lots where justified, while continuing to control fragmentation. The current Official Plan does provide consideration of smaller new farm lots; however, it does not set out a clear pathway for implementation which may have resulted in little application of the policy. This is the basis for the recommendation to develop more detailed criteria in the policies. Detailed criteria will provide clarity for applicants to justify the creation of smaller specialized, farm parcel sizes.

Lastly, recognizing that there are local areas that were originally settled with a 50 acre farm lot pattern, it is recommended to consult the community on the merits of a special policy for these areas that would allow new lots to be 50 acres in size, which in some cases may restore the historic lot pattern, along with other policies to ensure no impacts on surrounding operations.

Options considered, and recommended policy directions to be carried forward for further consultation with the community in the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture discussion are displayed below:





## 4.2 Surplus farm dwelling severances

Policies regulating surplus farm dwellings are an issue for all municipalities in Ontario that have prime agricultural areas. In Bruce County, this is due in part to the changing nature of farming noted earlier, with the increased consolidation of lots into larger farm operations, particularly in the cash crop sector. As a result, some existing houses that used to be the main farmstead, are surplus to the farm.

### 4.2.1 Data and Policy Observations

The ability to create retirement lots and infilling lots in prime agricultural areas was eliminated across Ontario by the Province in the 2000s; accordingly, surplus farm residences are the **only** type of new residential lot that can be permitted.

The justification for allowing surplus farm dwellings to be severed is well founded. The practise provides a farmer with capital to fund farm expansion and removes the obligation to become a landlord and manage rental housing. The surplus farm dwelling provides housing for local residents and retains population in the rural area. This in turn helps support existing rural infrastructure such as schools, community centres and businesses. At the same time, the prohibition on building a house on the retained farm parcel maintains the agricultural productivity of the lands.

On the negative side, severing a dwelling from a farm property and removing the right to establish a new one means that there is no longer the option to live on the remnant property if it is sold to a new operator starting out. Severing these dwellings often results in the removal of farm buildings due to controls such as Minimum Distance Separation (MDS). Establishing a non-farm residential use in an area introduces a potentially conflicting use and imposes an MDS requirement that could impede expansion of livestock operations on farms in the area.

Provincial policy is quite specific and restrictive on how this issue is handled. Under Section 2.3.4 of the PPS 2014 and carried forward in the PPS 2020 (effective May 1, 2020), surplus dwellings can be severed but only if the lot only includes enough land for the residential use and new residences are not permitted on the retained farm parcel. Surplus dwellings must also be existing and habitable at time of severance.

#### 4.2.1.1 Current Bruce County Policy and Surplus Farm Residence Severances

Surplus farm residence severances are permitted in the Bruce County Official Plan. The main elements of the current **Agricultural** policies about surplus farm residence severances are summarized below:

- The owner of the lands to severed is a bona fide farmer
- Severed lots shall be limited in area and only large enough to include the house, accessory buildings (provided that including the accessory buildings doesn't make the lot too big), well and septic system
- The remnant agricultural lot is zoned to prohibit a house in the future
- Minimum Distance Separation requirements are met
- The existing house must be habitable when the application is made.

From 2015 through 2019, there were 99 surplus farm severance applications in Bruce County. With few exceptions for those proposals that did not meet Official Plan policies, all of the lots were approved. Surplus Farm Severance proposals as a general rule, are not contentious in the community.

The policy set out above was compared to the recently approved Grey County Official Plan and the Bruce and Grey policies are quite similar. It would appear then that the current Bruce County policies, though dated, have largely stood the test of time. That said, we are aware, anecdotally from discussions with applicants, Councils, and the Agricultural Advisory Committee, that there are a few issues arising from implementation in recent years:

- Concerns have been raised about the approach whereby the new severed lot line closely follows the outline and minimum setbacks from the existing farm lane, house and outbuildings which often results in an irregular as opposed to a traditional rectangular parcel. There have also been those who support this approach in order to minimize land area removed from production;
- There have been questions around the need to require the applicant to be a bona fide farmer, and whether this is too inflexible;
- Given the number of lots already created, some have questioned if there should be a specified date for the existing house to have been established as a way to further regulate this activity by ensuring the house was not a new build;
- There is a viewpoint that the requirement to prohibit a new house on the retained lot is counter productive to making that lot attractive to younger farmers who may be looking to acquire the parcel to establish a new farm.

## 4.2.1 Options and Recommended Directions

Although the surplus farm dwelling severance policies are working well for the most part, the development of this Discussion paper provides a fresh opportunity to consider different approaches to certain issues.

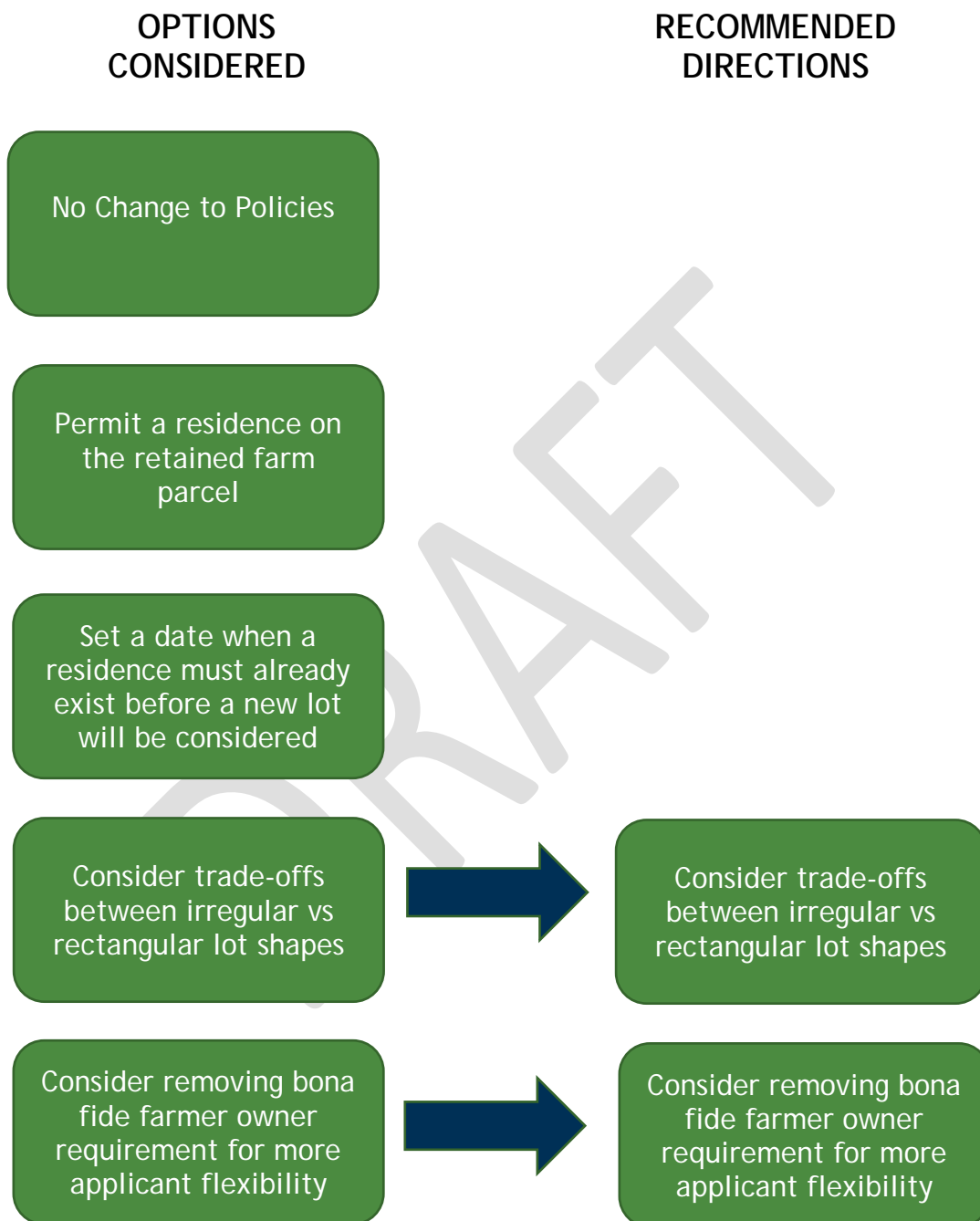
The premise and justification for allowing surplus residence severances includes the points that: farmers do not want to be landlords; and removing unneeded houses by way of severance has little or no impact on production. Permitting a house on a vacant retained agricultural parcel would be counter productive to the underlying reason for permitting this type of severances and is not recommended as a direction.

In terms of the trade-offs between irregular lot shapes (reducing the size of severed lots and avoiding cultivated areas) and rectangular lot shapes (clearly understood ownership boundaries, clear zoning implementation), it is recommended that the next phase of this project provide for a planning discussion in the community around this issue. The lot shape discussion would also be an opportunity to review if barns should be included as accessory buildings and whether zoning regulations restricting livestock on the severed lot are appropriate

In terms of the current criteria that the owner be a bona fide farmer, this is a made in Bruce policy that is not specifically required by the Provincial Policy Statement. It is recommended that the next phase of this project review whether this restriction is a reasonable control or is too inflexible.

Some municipalities set a requirement on the time which a surplus farm dwelling must be in existence before a severance will be considered. This approach was also included in the Greenbelt Plan. Such policies are typically a response to concerns about speculative construction to create future “surplus residences”. There is no evidence at this time that this is an issue in Bruce County. Therefore, this is not recommended for further engagement because it could lead to more Official Plan Amendments for legitimate applications that may not meet the specified timelines.

Options considered, and recommended directions to be carried forward for further consultation with the community in the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture discussion are displayed below:



## 4.3 New Residential Lots in Woodlots

This topic explores whether residential lots should be allowed in woodlots on farms given that the land is unlikely to be cultivated. For the purposes of this discussion, “woodlots” refers to smaller wooded areas on farms that are not considered to be “significant woodlands”. The criteria for establishing significant woodlands, how they will be designated and mapped, and the merits of allowing new residential lots in significant woodlands is the subject of the Plan the Bruce: Natural Legacy Discussion Paper and therefore will be addressed through that work.

### 4.3.1 Data and Policy Observations

#### 4.3.1.1 Changing Nature of Farming and Rural Population

As noted earlier, the trend is to larger farms often comprised of multiple, physically separated properties. This reflects the fact that the farm population is declining in most areas and is an issue of increasing concern and reflects part of the overall changing nature of rural communities. The Agricultural Advisory Committee noted examples of declining class sizes in rural schools as a seriously concerning outcome of this trend. There are some who see new lots in the agricultural area, including in woodlots, as a way to remedy the population decline problem.

#### 4.3.1.2 Ontario Federation of Agriculture Concerns About Land Use Compatibility

In February 2020, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) reiterated its position that non-farm residential lot creation should not be allowed in prime agricultural areas. The OFA’s release below summarizes succinctly the rationale for limiting non-farm lot creation in prime agricultural areas.

“Rural severances were once common practice in municipalities across rural Ontario when lots were severed for residential use, farm retirement lots or to create a surplus residence for a farm operation. Today, after several changes to the PPS, with the exception of residence surplus to a farming operation, the creation of new non-farm residential lots in prime agricultural areas is not permitted.

OFA supports this land use policy and opposes residential lot creation in prime agricultural areas. OFA developed a Consolidated Agricultural Land Use Policy Statement in 2001, combining provincial land use planning-related policies, statements and submissions. In this statement, OFA clearly opposed non-farm lot creation in prime agricultural areas – a position we continue to hold today.

OFA's position is based on solid rationale and not just the loss of productive agricultural land. A variety of studies – including OFA's Cost of Community Services case study – found that scattered rural residential development actually costs more for municipalities to provide services for than the property tax revenue received. There are also Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) consequences when non-farming developments occur in agricultural areas. For example, a one-acre, non-farming lot in a prime agricultural area effectively sterilizes the surrounding 250 acres from hosting a new livestock barn or manure storage facility. It may also limit the expansion of an existing livestock or poultry farm within that 250-acre area.

Data from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in the 1990s indicated that farm retirement lots only stayed in the hands of the retired farmer for approximately two to three years before they were sold, often to non-farmers. Conflict can then arise when residents who are unfamiliar with the realities of farming and farm practices move to rural areas. While the Farming and Food Production Protection Act helps farmers manage nuisance complaints about odours, dusts, noises, etc., farmers must still manage complaints from neighbours and defend their farm practices.

Severing agricultural land for non-farm residential or commercial building lots removes farmland from production forever. The ongoing loss of prime agricultural land in Ontario can't be ignored. Census data from 1996 to 2016 shows a steady decline in farmland area – from 13.8 million acres to 12.3 million acres over this 20-year period. Today, Ontario's farmland represents less than 5% of the province's overall land area.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.3.1.3 Current Bruce County Policy

The only type of new residential lot permitted in the **Agricultural** area in the Official Plan is for a surplus farm residence.

The **Rural** policies allow an original Crown surveyed lot to be subdivided into three (3) non-farm lots or non-farm residential lots, including the retained, subject to certain criteria, including that the entire lot is designated Rural and that MDS requirements can be met. The Rural policies for new residential lots generally allow lots in woodlots that are not significant woodlands.

<sup>10</sup> OFA Larry Davis, Director "OFA Commentary OFA opposes residential severances on prime ag land" Feb 14, 2020 <https://ofa.on.ca/newsroom/ofa-opposes-residential-severances-on-prime-ag-land/>



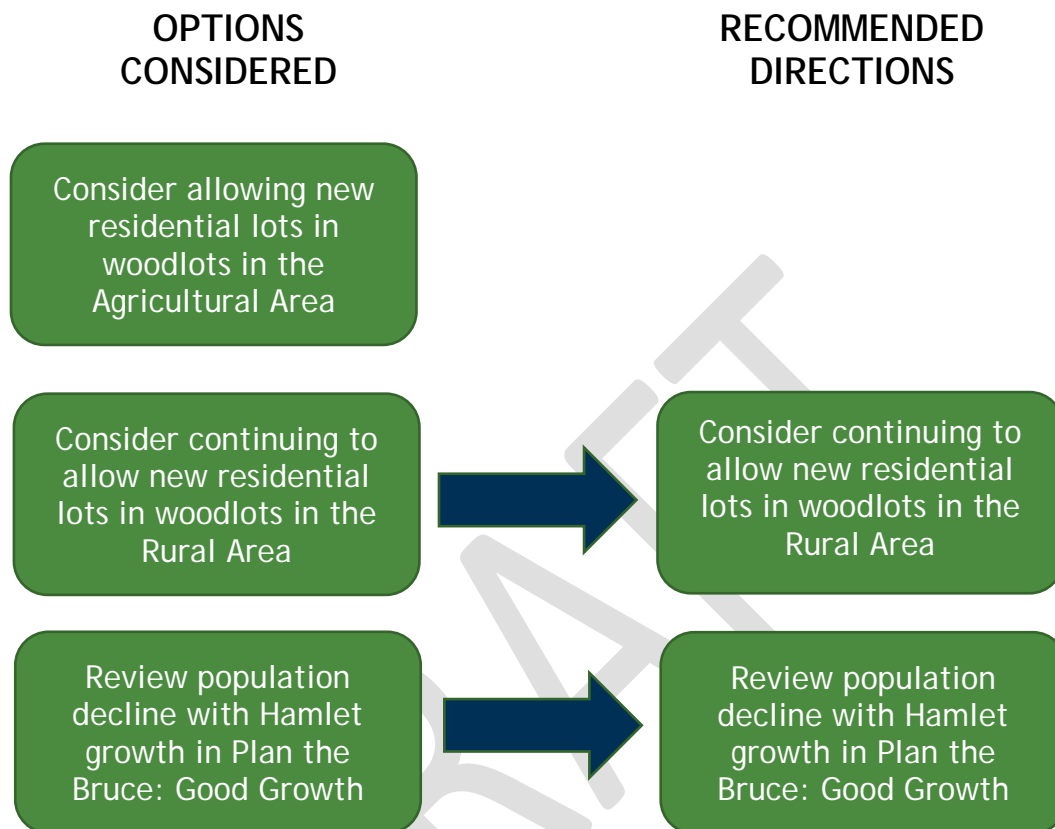
### 4.3.2 Options and Recommended Directions

Creating new lots in woodlots in the Agricultural Area is not recommended, in light of the Bruce County Agricultural Profile, which underscores the importance of protecting livestock operations from incompatible uses and given the Ontario Federation of Agriculture rationale for opposing new residential lots in prime agricultural areas. The impact of Minimum Distance Separation requirements on livestock operations are not reduce or mitigated by the fact that the residential use would be in a woodlot.

Creating or permitting more non-farm residential development in active farming areas is not the solution to rural population decline because it cannot occur at a large enough scale or in an efficient land use pattern. A more effective approach would be to explore the potential to promote and accommodate growth in the many hamlets in the County.

In the Rural Area designation, limited new residential lots are currently allowed; however, the policies do not directly address the question of whether new lots should be allowed in woodlots, so further community discussion on this option is recommended.

Options considered, and recommended directions to be carried forward for further consultation with the community in the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture discussion are displayed below:



## 4.4 Industrial and commercial uses on farms

Since the most recent Official Plan update that was approved in 2013, the Province expanded flexibility for agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas to consider on-farm agriculture-related, agritourism and on-farm diversified uses. This Discussion Paper development provides an opportunity to review the merits of incorporating this greater flexibility into Bruce County's policy framework.

### 4.4.1 Data and Policy Observations

#### 4.4.4.1 Agri-Food Businesses in Bruce County

In 2017, Bruce County partnered with Grey County in inventorying and mapping the location of agri-related businesses. This mapping in the following pages are colour coded as shown in the adjacent legend. Although not updated to current businesses, the maps do show that:

- There are agri-food businesses in the countryside in all parts of Bruce County;
- The pattern tends to follow the major road corridors;
- There are also clusters of agri-food businesses in, and close to, the urban areas.

#### Bruce Ag Business

●	Farm/Producer
●	Processor
●	Distributor
●	Consumer Access
●	Inputs and Services
●	Assets and Infrastructure

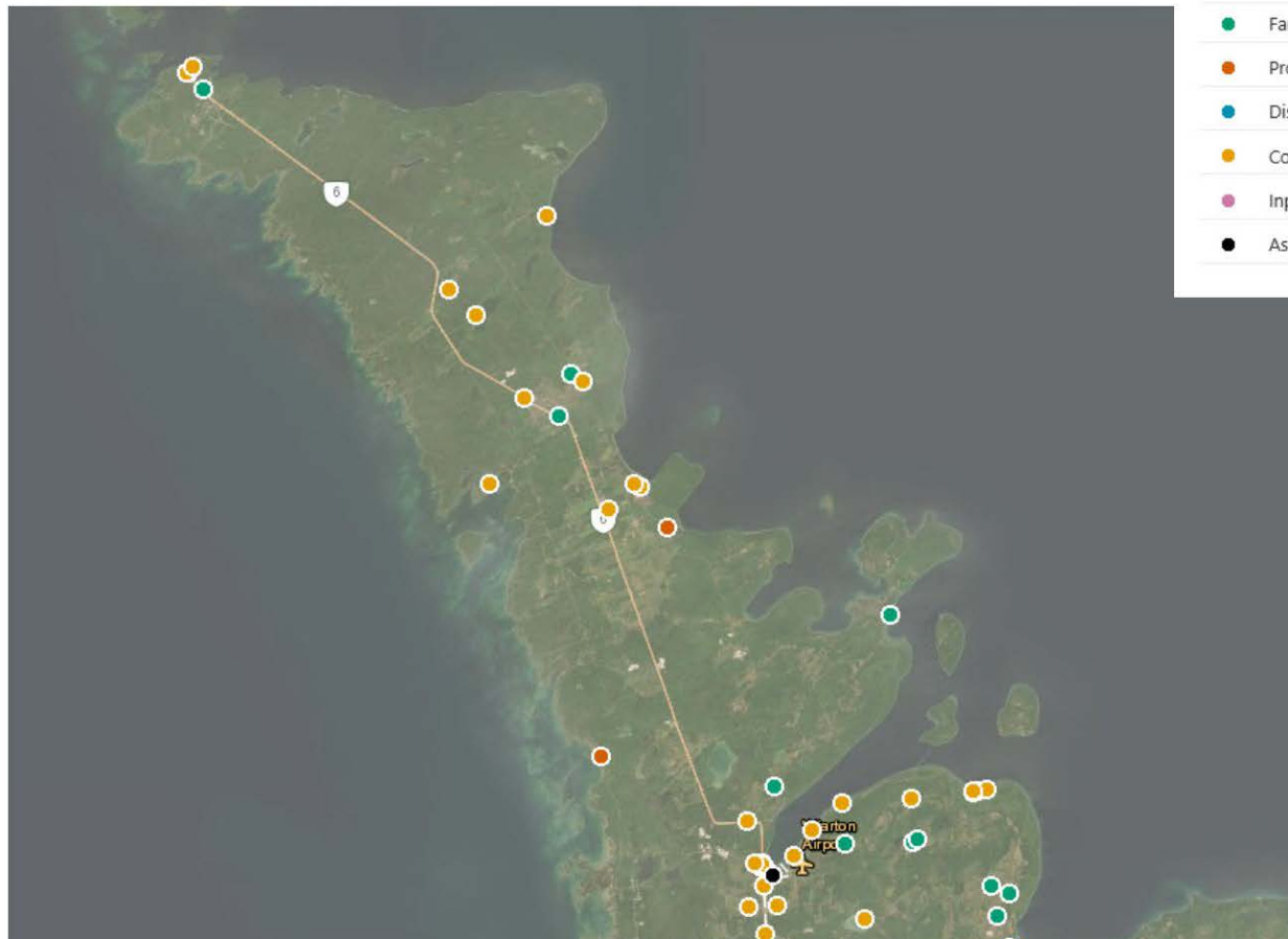


Base Map Source: Grey County Agri-Food Asset Map  
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## AGRI-FOOD ASSET MAPPING INFORMATION

### Bruce Ag Business

- Farm/Producer
- Processor
- Distributor
- Consumer Access
- Inputs and Services
- Assets and Infrastructure



January 24, 2020



Base Map Source: Grey County Agri-Food Asset Map  
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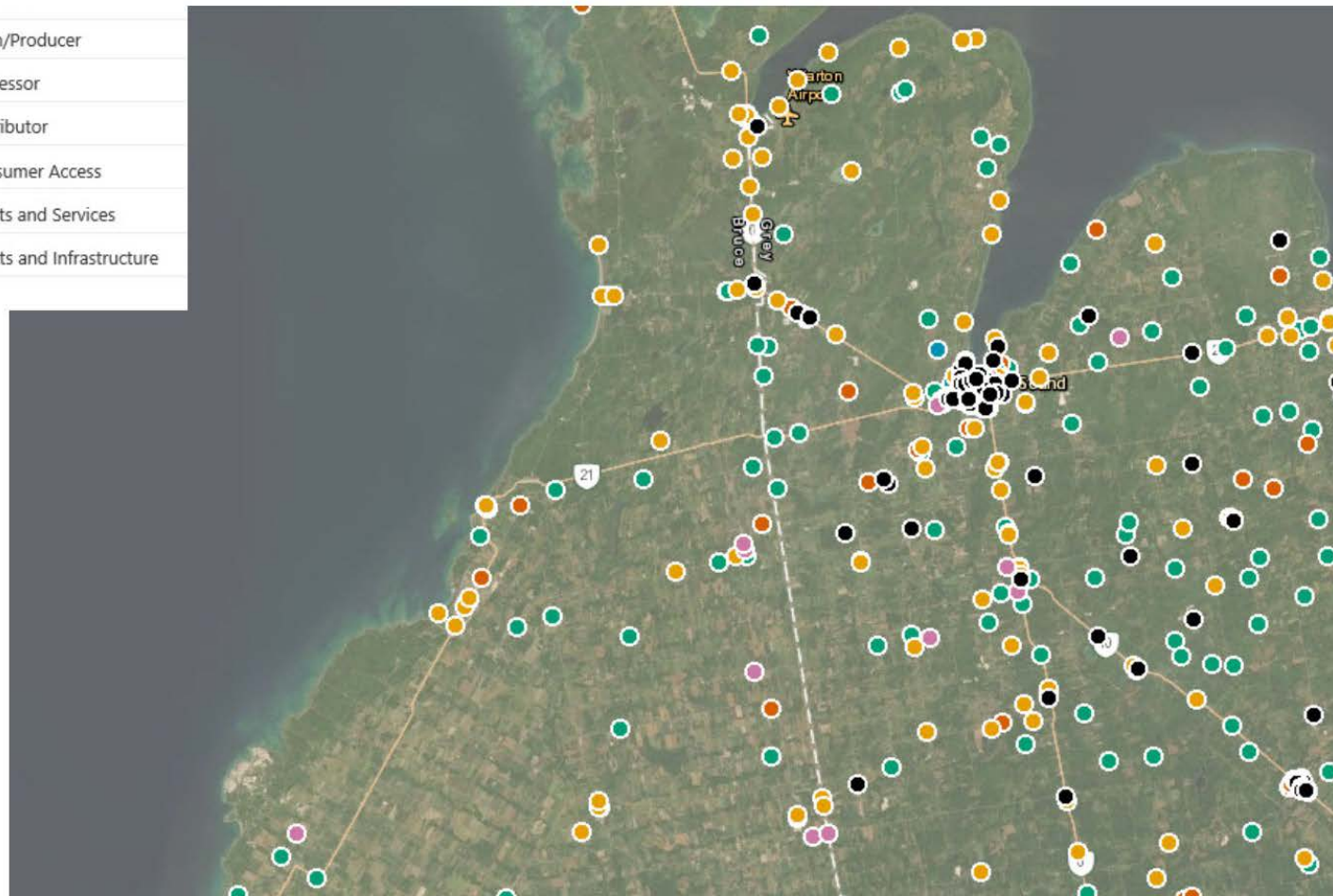
### Bruce Ag Business

- Farm/Producer
- Processor
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January 24, 2020

### -AGRI-FOOD ASSET MAPPING INFORMATION







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#### Bruce Ag Business

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January 24, 2020

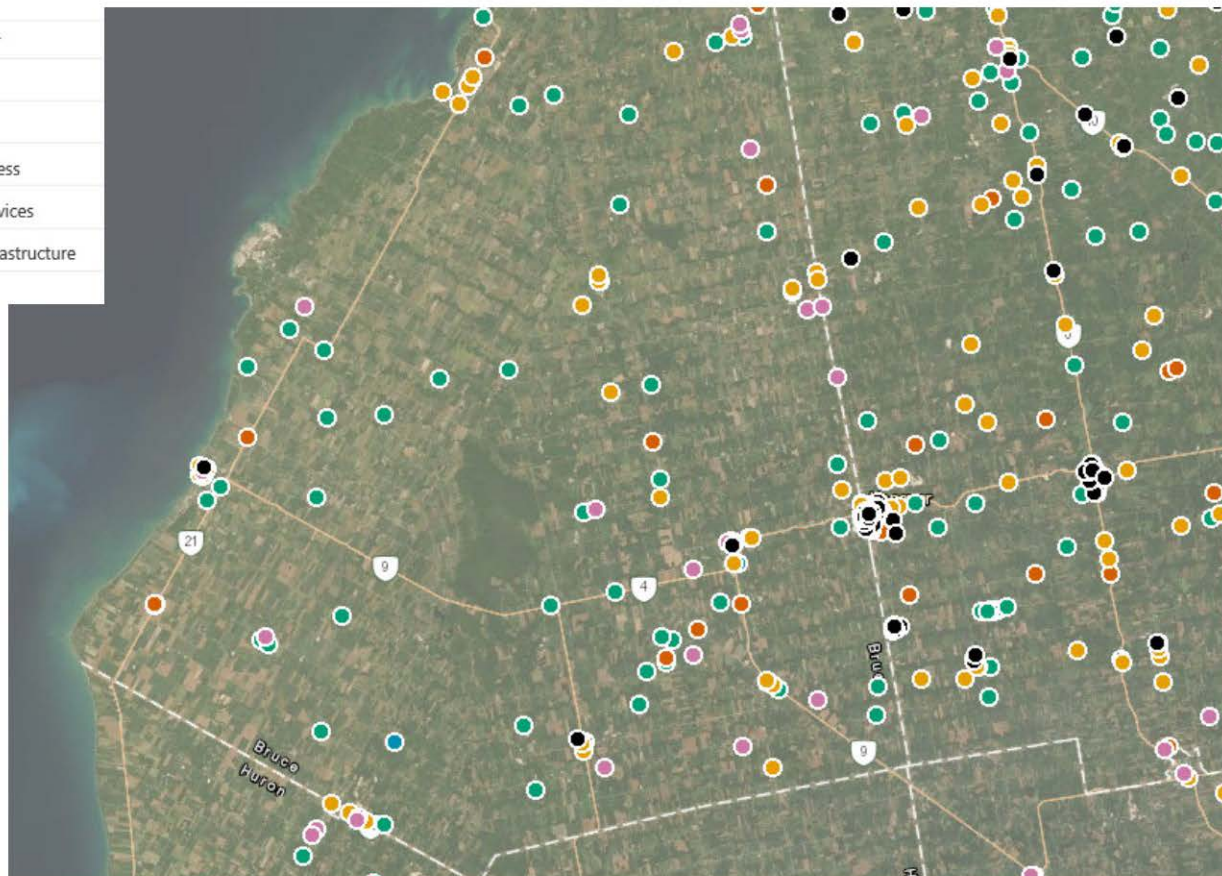


FIGURE 20C—AGRI-FOOD ASSET MAPPING INFORMATION

#### 4.4.4.2 Agricultural Systems

An “agricultural systems” approach was added to the PPS in 2020. The updated PPS encourages “use of an **agricultural system** approach to maintain and enhance the geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the **agri-food network**.<sup>11</sup> This is a sound approach and is compatible with the County’s Economic Development program’s objectives and results from the Agriculture Business Retention and Expansion Study(noted in Section 1.1).

The PPS 2020 defines the agricultural system as: “A system comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:

- a) An agricultural land base comprised of **prime agricultural areas** including **specialty crop areas** and **rural lands** that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture; and
- b) An **agri-food network** which includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.”<sup>12</sup>

The *agri-food network* is defined as:

“...within the **Agricultural System**, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional **infrastructure** and transportation networks; on-farm buildings and infrastructure; distributors, and primary processing; and vibrant agriculture-supportive communities.”<sup>13</sup>

The Province also provided detailed guidelines in “The Provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas (Publication 851)” which provide direction on:

- The types of uses permitted under the provincial definition of agriculture-related and on-farm diversified use,
- The appropriate scale of such uses,
- Processes that should be required to approve such uses,
- The number of uses permitted on a single farm property,
- If there are circumstances under which a severance be considered and what they are; and,
- Avoiding potential conflicts.

<sup>11</sup> PPS 2020, Section 2.3.2 pg. 26

<sup>12</sup> PPS 2020, Section 6 pg. 40

<sup>13</sup> PPS 2020, Section 6, pg. 40

#### 4.4.4.3 Current Bruce County Policy

Industrial and commercial uses are allowed on farms in the **Agricultural Area** to a limited extent as cited below from the current Official Plan:

##### **"Home Industries and Home Occupations**

1. Home occupations and small-scale, home industries are permitted in the Agricultural designation. These are small businesses carried out as secondary uses to the main permitted uses, and take place on the same property as the primary use. These uses are allowed provided they do not conflict with the surrounding uses, and do not remove large amounts of farmland from production.
2. A home occupation is a commercial use carried on within the primary residence, and does not change the character of the building as a residence. A home industry is a small-scale, industrial use and is conducted within an accessory building located on the same property as the owner/operator's principle residence. The Municipal Zoning By-Law will establish regulations for the size, scale and operations of these businesses.

##### **Farm Related Commercial and Industrial Uses**

Small scale industrial and commercial development directly related to, and compatible and supportive of, an agricultural operation, including grain drying and stables may be permitted providing the following policies are considered:

- a) The commercial or industrial operation cannot reasonably be located in an urban, rural hamlet industrial area and must be located in proximity to an agricultural operation;
- b) Such uses shall be located to conform with the Provincial Minimum Distance Separation Formula;
- c) The industrial or commercial use shall not require large volumes of water or generate large volumes of effluent;
- d) The location of commercial and industrial uses shall be suitably buffered from adjacent residential uses by means of distance separation and landscaping, fencing and site design."

In 2010, the Provincial Policy Statement underwent a major update that introduced more flexibility for industrial and commercial uses on farms in the prime agricultural area. These changes were not captured in the current Official Plan. The current Official Plan and the updated, more flexible Provincial Policy Statement overlap for the most part, while the main differences are:

- The Provincial Policy Statement permits “on-farm diversified uses” which includes value added agricultural products that do not necessarily have to be directly related to, or limited to the products from, the farm on which they are located; previous versions of the PPS limited these to the products from the specific farm that the use is on, and this more limited direction is what is in the current Official Plan.
- The Provincial Policy Statement updated the definition of agriculture-related uses to say that they are directly related to farm operations in the area; previous versions of the PPS limited these uses to the farm on which the use is located, and this more limited direction is what is in the current Official Plan.
- The Provincial Policy Statement permits agri-tourism uses which are farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation; these are not expressly included in the permitted uses in the current Official Plan.

The narrower range of uses in the current Official Plan may explain part of the concern noted in the Agriculture and Agri-food Value Chain Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) study for Bruce, Grey and Simcoe Counties in which respondents noted planning related processes as a barrier for advancing or expanding commercial or industrial uses on a farm property.

#### 4.4.2 Options and Recommended Directions

Although the current Official Plan permits most of the uses allowed in the updated Provincial direction, this discussion is an opportunity to consider widening the range of uses.

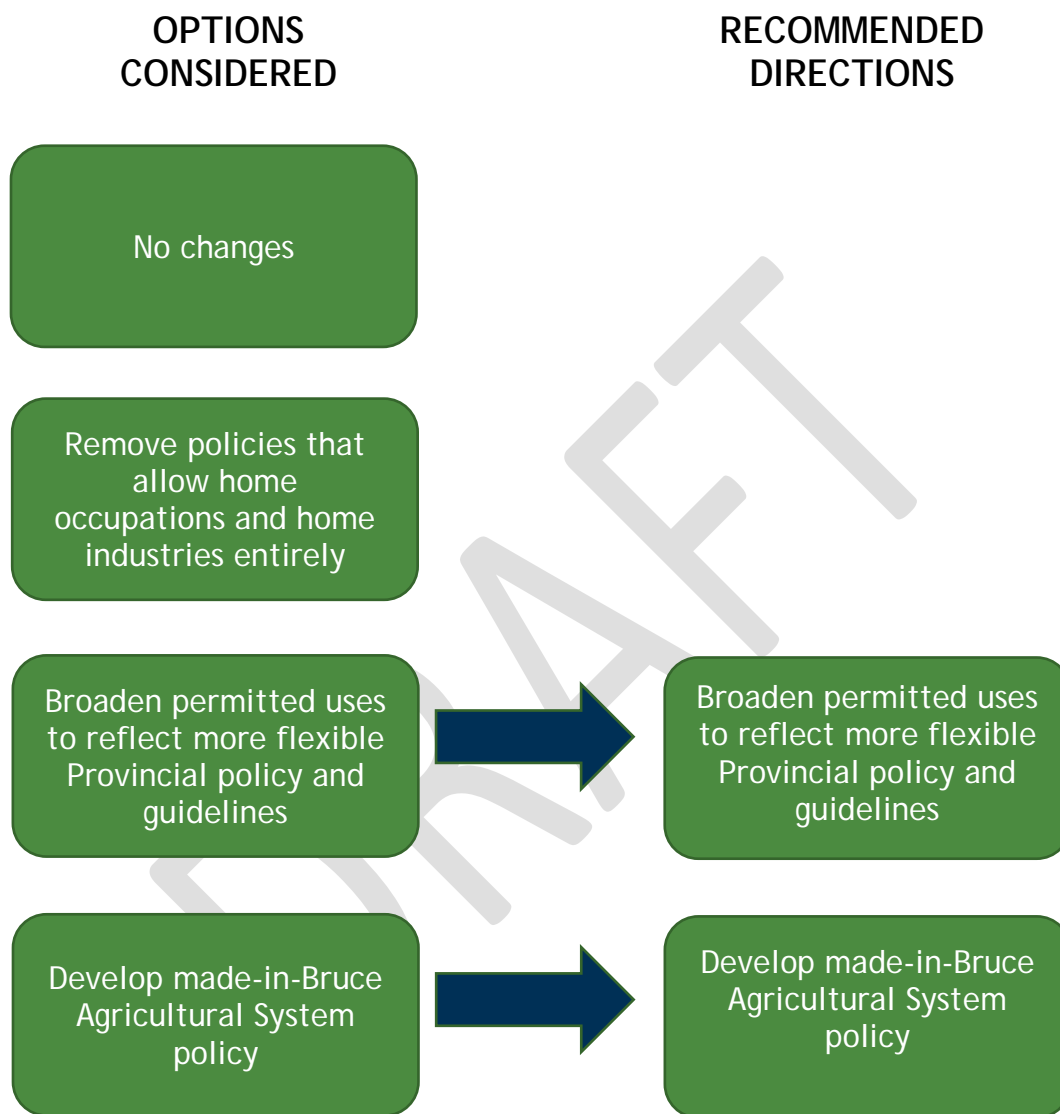
Certain agri-food uses are appropriate in the agricultural area as agriculture related, agritourism or on-farm diversified uses. The 2017 agri-food asset mapping and the 2018 County BR+E study confirmed that many of them are currently operating on area farms. Integrating agri-food businesses into the agricultural area will strengthen the rural economy and support the farm sector. However, a balance must be struck between accommodating businesses that capitalize on appropriate opportunities, while preventing them from dominating primary production.

The Provincial guidelines noted earlier include several examples, definitions and suggested directions to ensure farmland is protected, permitting appropriate accessory on-farm uses and directing dominant commercial or industrial uses within other designations. New policies for Bruce County can include a series of “tests” to direct certain uses to specific areas through the County.

Developing an agricultural systems approach for the new Official Plan would reinforce the inter-relationships between agriculture and agri-business, nearby communities, and highlight potential positive and negative impacts of proposed industrial or commercial uses on farms. This approach will also provide some flexibility in addressing the distinct local farming communities throughout the County.



Options considered, and recommended directions to be carried forward for further consultation with the community in the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture discussion are displayed below:



## 4.5 Urban-Agriculture Edge Planning

An area where there is often pressure for land use changes and new lots is at the interface of rural areas and settlement areas; this is also an area where opportunities for commercial uses on farm may be greater while at the same time there is a greater potential for conflict between rural and urban uses.

### 4.5.1 Data and Policy Observations

Although there is a general awareness of the potential for both opportunity and conflict in areas close to settlements, there is a lack of specific data describing the issue in the Bruce County context. Moreover, it is likely, though not documented, that this issue is different from community to community within Bruce County. It is also noted that the issue of urban-agricultural edges is heightened in areas where urban expansion is contemplated. This work will be informed by the Plan the Bruce: Good Growth project.

#### 4.5.1.1 Other Jurisdictions

There are several examples of a wide range of approaches to manage urban-agriculture edge planning:

- British Columbia developed edge planning controls establishing an agricultural land preserve in the Lower Mainland a number of years ago that have set the standard for many other areas.
- The Region of Waterloo has implemented successful countryside line management policies that fix permanent urban boundaries on the basis of natural heritage features. This approach has the benefit of building in extensive buffers to provide adequate separation of use.
- In 2015, MHBC prepared a report on Edge Planning in support of a Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) that was ongoing in the Town of Caledon. This report included site-specific design tools such as fencing, buffer design, etc.
- The Wellington County Official Plan prohibits major development within a 1km fringe around urban centres and hamlets.

#### 4.5.1.2 Farm Enterprise Zones

"Farm enterprise zones" are nodes where businesses and services directly related to agriculture and agri-food are clustered with the focus being on small settlements and incorporating the agricultural land around them. These are relatively new and were developed initially in the United States but could be explored in Bruce County where there is a proven ability to innovate in rural economic development. Allowing commercial or industrial uses as part of an identified "cluster" (e.g. within an existing settlement area) in proximity to farms may be a reasonable alternative in addition to on-farm uses if the policies are appropriate and supported by economic development programs.

#### 4.5.1.3 Community Planning Permit Systems

An implementation technique that is available to guide land use change in urban-agriculture edge areas is a Community Planning Permit system. This relatively new planning process essentially merges "zoning" with "site plan" processes and offers flexibility and conditional approval for a predictable and efficient planning process. If policies providing for such a system were added to the Official Plan, the County and / or a local municipality could utilize this approach in the future.

#### 4.5.1.4 Current Bruce County Policy

The current Bruce County Official Plan has a general policy that applies to situations where a proposal is near the edge of another land use, stating:

"If the parcel is near the edge of the land use designation, the policies that apply to the adjacent land use designation should also be reviewed to determine if there are policies dealing with the interface area between the two designations that may have an impact on development. This is particularly important when urban, rural and natural environment land use designations abut."

The current County Official Plan does not contemplate Farm Enterprise Zones or Community Planning Permit systems.

## 4.5.2 Options and Recommended Directions

The Plan the Bruce: Good Growth project provides an opportunity to assess and document which communities have, or are forecasted to have, growth pressures at their urban limits, and to collect data on the specific potential conflicts.

Factors that need to be considered in avoiding conflict include:

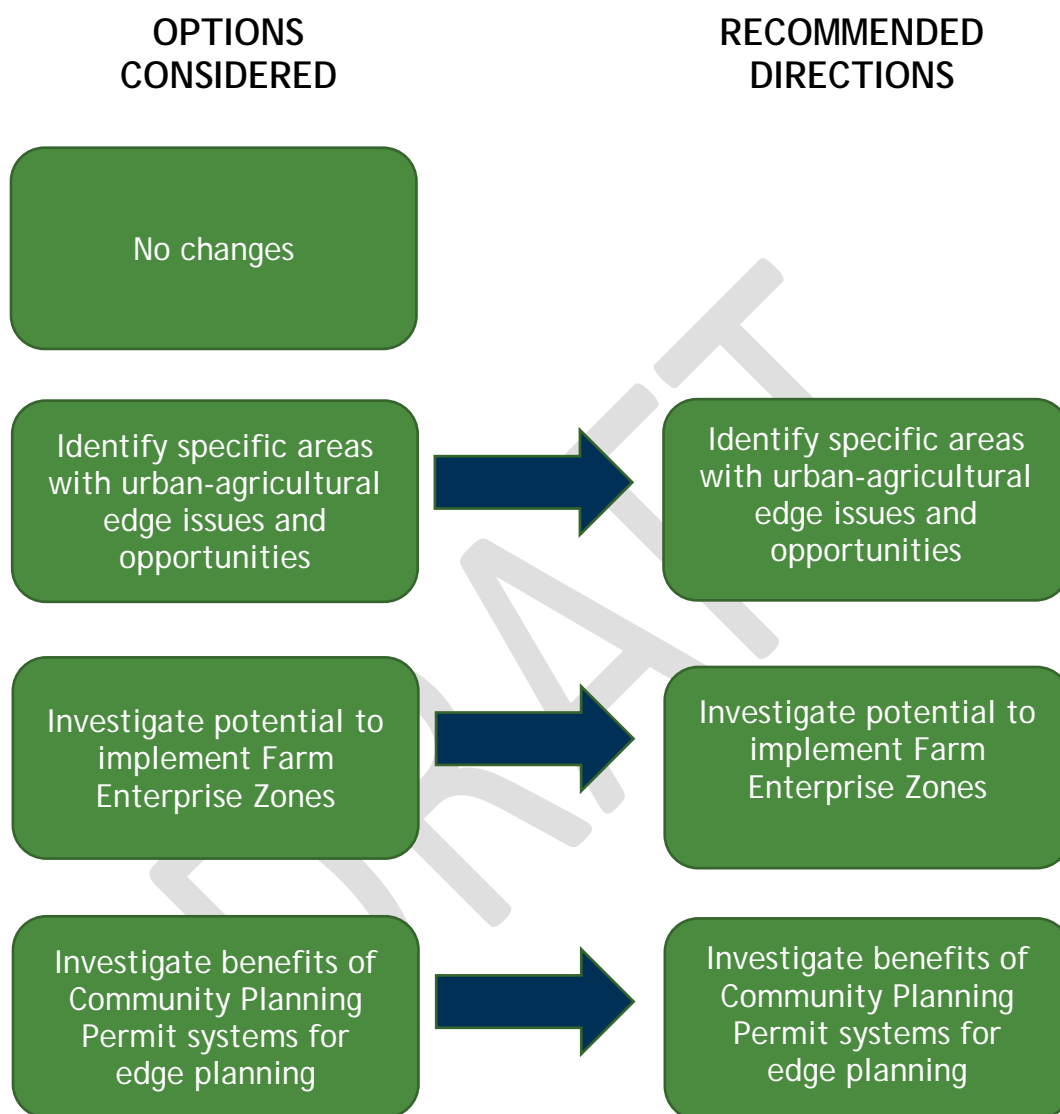
- The nature of farm operations in the area.
- Environmental or topographic constraints.
- The type and density of urban/residential development that is contemplated at the edge of the community boundaries.
- Potential MDS requirements.
- Potential for establishing or maintaining sufficient buffers to mitigate conflict.
- Minor boundary adjustments to ensure urban and agricultural uses are separated.
- Protection of the right to farm with minimum disruption.
- Public education regarding agricultural practises.

Buffering and separation of uses are the two most important tools for mitigating conflict and separating uses.

Farm Enterprise Zones are worth investigating further as a potential way to identify and promote agri-business opportunities that arise from the proximity between urban and agricultural uses.

Community Planning Permit systems are worth investigating further as a potential way to make the process more efficient for regulating land use change in the urban-agriculture fringe.

Options considered, and recommended directions to be carried forward for further consultation with the community in the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture discussion are displayed below:





## 4.6 Cannabis Production

With the legalization of cannabis and the licensing of operations, Cannabis has emerged as an agricultural planning issue in many communities. The Agricultural Advisory Committee identified the need to review this topic in this project.

### 4.6.1 Data and Policy Observations

In Bruce County at the time of preparing this Discussion Paper, a site has been pre-zoned in an industrial park in Walkerton and an operation has been approved in South Bruce. There is a large operation in a Business Park in Kincardine. There are two new rezoning applications to permit facilities in Brockton. One application is in the East Ridge Business Park and is a proposed new build. The second application is located at 165 Kincardine Highway as a reuse within the former Energizer Plant. Both applications have Business Park zoning.

Cannabis production involves the growing of a plant so from a land use impact perspective, it can be considered an agricultural use similar to the growing of other crops within greenhouses such as tomatoes or cucumbers.

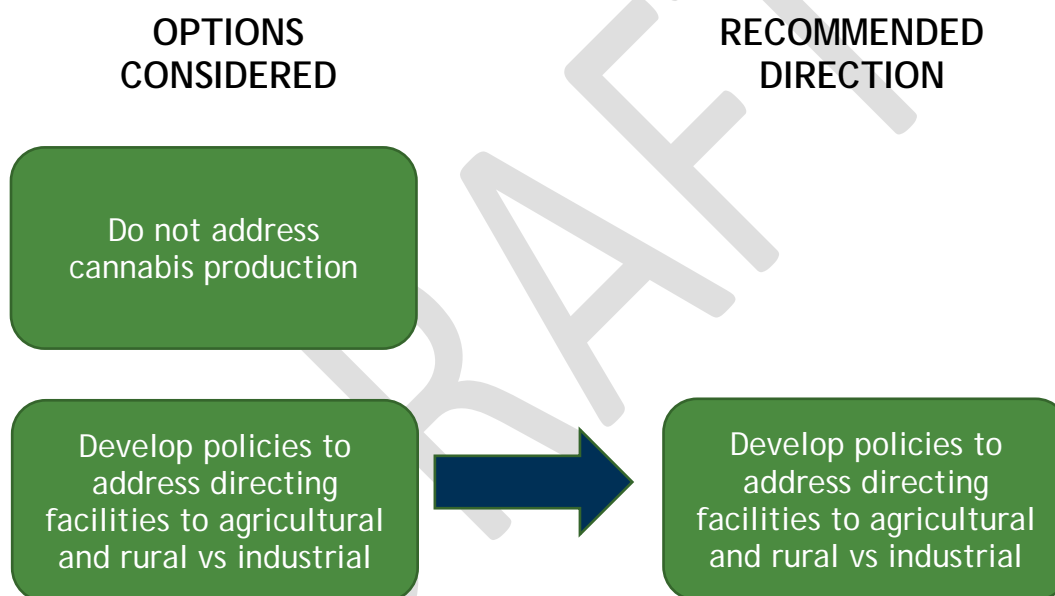
Municipalities throughout Ontario have considered cannabis growing facilities to be agricultural in some instances and industrial in other instances. There has been much debate on whether cannabis growing facilities are classified as either an agricultural or an industrial land use. The challenge lies around the fact that the components of the operation that are related to the cultivating of cannabis can be seen as agricultural whereas the warehousing, production and shipping components of an operation could be considered industrial. It could be argued that the cultivating of cannabis is typically the principal use with the other components being “accessory” components of the principal use.

The current County Official Plan does not have specific policies or definitions for regulating or directing cannabis production.

#### 4.6.2 Options and Recommended Direction

Managing the location of this use and the structures associated with it should be addressed. It is recommended to develop specific policies to address the types of operations that will be directed to designated employment or enterprise areas and those that will be permitted in the Agricultural or Rural designations. The distinction should be based on the nature, extent and scale of the warehousing, production and shipping activities proposed.

Options considered, and recommended directions to be carried forward for further consultation with the community in the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture discussion are displayed below:







Farm gate sales and sheep, Brockton

## 5 Summary of Recommendations

To provide a base for the public consultation process in the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture discussion, the recommended directions listed below are offered to inform the public consultation and policy development process as it moves forward.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
Prime agricultural area mapping	1	Consult community for input on Prime Agricultural Areas and Potential Prime Agricultural Areas
Minimum size for new agricultural lots	2	No change to the baseline minimum size for new farm lots (100 acres in Agricultural, 50 acres in Rural)
	3	More policy detail to support proposed smaller lots
	4	Special Policy Area that allows 50-acre farm lots in the original 50-acre survey area
Surplus farm dwelling severances	5	Consider trade-offs between irregular vs rectangular lot shapes
	6	Consider removing bona fide farmer owner requirement for more applicant flexibility
New residential lots in woodlots	7	Consider continuing to allow new residential lots in woodlots in the Rural Area
	8	Review population decline with Hamlet growth in Plan the Bruce: Good Growth
Industrial and commercial uses on farms	9	Broaden permitted uses to reflect more flexible Provincial policy and guidelines
	10	Develop made-in-Bruce Agricultural System policy
Urban-Agriculture Edge Planning	11	Identify specific areas with urban-agricultural edge issues and opportunities
	12	Investigate potential to implement Farm Enterprise Zones
	13	Investigate benefits of Community Planning Permit system for edge planning
Cannabis production	14	Develop policies to address directing facilities to agricultural and rural vs industrial locations



## 6 Next Steps

This Interim Report is intended to provide a foundation for policy directions for the agricultural and rural areas. Now that the stage is set, the County will lay out a road map for the community engagement process on the 14 Recommendations. This process will culminate in a final Agriculture Discussion Paper to be integrated into the County's new Official Plan.



Farmer appreciation in the community, Paisley