



Agriculture in Ontario – Facts and Figures

Economic Importance

- Ontario's farming and food processing sector has annual sales of more than \$30 billion, making it the second largest goods-producing sector in the province
- 700,000 jobs depend on Ontario's farming and food processing sector
- One in seven Canadians are employed by the agri-food system
- Agriculture also contributes to job creation in such areas as transportation, science, education, banking and retail
- In 2005, Canadians spent 10.6 percent of their disposable income on food
- Ontario exports more agri-food products than any other province (a total of \$8.4 billion in 2003)

Food Independence

- North Americans have the lowest grocery bills in the world: of every dollar Canadians earn, about 12.5 cents are spent on groceries and food
- On average, one Ontario farmer produces enough food to feed 120 people for an entire year
- About half of Canada's agricultural production is exported; this includes direct sales and those goods that are eventually used as part of other products
- In 2007, Ontario dairy farms produced 2.5 billion litres of milk
- There are more than 3.5 million hectares of field crops grown in Ontario
- There are almost 21,000 hectares of fruit grown in Ontario (most commonly apples, grapes and peaches), 61,000 hectares of vegetables and 17,000 hectares of potatoes
- On average, Ontario turkey farms have flocks of about 10,000 birds
- There are more than 90,000 beef farms and ranches in Canada
- Organic farming is Canadian agriculture's fastest growing sector; currently most of the organic goods sold in Canada are imported – the exception to this is the dairy industry as the majority of organic products are produced in Canada and many here in Ontario

Environmental Stewardship

- More than 26,000 Ontario farmers have completed Environmental Farm Plans (EFP) since 1993; EFPs are assessments voluntarily prepared by farm families to increase their environmental awareness in up to 23 different areas on their farms
- Between 1983 and 2003, Ontario farmers reduced their pesticide use by more than 50 percent and use continues to decline by about three percent every year
- About 65 percent of Ontario's corn and soybean crops are genetically modified; these crops can help reduce the need for pesticide use

- Genetically modified corn, in particular, also helps produce an abundant supply of livestock feed and is helping to drive the booming ethanol market which has dramatically increased the return for corn farmers
- If all gas in Ontario had a five percent blend of ethanol, we would create a market for 50 million additional bushels of corn every year, not to mention a greenhouse gas emissions reduction of the equivalent of taking 200,000 cars off the road

Family Farms and Values

- While farmers make up 2.4 percent of all Canadians, they make up just 1.6 percent of Ontarians
- More than 98 percent of Canadian farms are family businesses; 92 percent of Ontario's farms are family owned and operated
- There are about 60,000 farms in Ontario
- About 180,000 people in Ontario live on farms

This is just a sampling of the information available about the important contribution that farmers make to this province. For more facts about agriculture in Ontario, visit www.growourfarms.ca.

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