



Ontario's Greenbelt Agriculture Backgrounder

Ontario's Greenbelt

- Extends 325 kilometers from Rice Lake in Northumberland County to the Niagara River and is about 80 kilometers wide at its widest point
- Protects about 728,000 hectares or 1.8 million acres of countryside, including some of the most valuable agricultural land in Canada

Agriculture in the Greenbelt

- The Greenbelt protects about 40,000 hectares of the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area and the entire Holland Marsh, known as Ontario's "vegetable basket" - over 6,000 hectares.
- The southern Greenbelt region topped \$1.2 billion in farm product sales in 2001, and generated \$4.1 billion in estimated economic spin-off activity (e.g., employment, farm services and supplies).
- There are over 7,000 farms in the Greenbelt.
- The Greenbelt produces over one quarter of Ontario's apples (26%); 87% of Ontario's peaches; 50% of Ontario's sour cherries; over 85% of Ontario's grapes; and 42% of Ontario's raspberries.
- The Holland Marsh is Ontario's "vegetable basket." Enough carrots are grown in the Holland Marsh to provide every man, woman and child in Canada with four pounds every year.
- Niagara's 2.1 million tender fruit trees (peaches, pears, plums, cherries, grapes) produce about 800,000 baskets of fruit that would stretch along the QEW from Kingston to Niagara Falls.

Local food & our climate crisis

- Our average meal travels about 2,500 kilometres to our plates. .
- What we eat is responsible for 20%-25% of Canada's greenhouse gases.
- Only 10% of fossil fuel used for food production is actually used on the farm, the other 90% is used for transportation, packaging and marketing.

Major farm products from the Greenbelt:

- **Greater Toronto Area:** Horticulture (flowers, ornamental plants, trees and shrubs), dairy, poultry, beef cattle and specialty farms, including sheep, lamb, goat, horse, pony, deer and mushroom.
- **Hamilton:** Poultry and eggs, horticulture, greenhouse fruits & vegetables and specialty farms.
- **Niagara:** Horticulture, tender fruit (peaches, pears, plums, cherries, grapes), wine, poultry and eggs.
- **Holland Marsh:** Main crops are carrots and onions. Other crops include lettuce, celery, potatoes, cauliflower, beets, radish and parsnips.

Public Opinion

- A 2006 Toronto Star/Decima Research poll showed that an overwhelming majority (89%) of GTA residents support the Greenbelt's goal of curbing urban sprawl and protecting area farmland.
- The majority of southern Ontario residents (87%) believe that the Greenbelt is one of the most important contributions of our generation to the future of Ontario. (EnviroNics poll, 2007).
- In a 2007 EnviroNics poll, 94% of respondents agreed that the Greenbelt is important for ensuring we have a local source of food.

Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

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Possibility grows here.