



CULTIVATE GREY

DISCUSSION PAPER

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INTRODUCTION



Cultivate Grey considers the rural and agricultural areas outside of our towns, cities, and villages. These areas make up the bulk of the land in Grey County. These areas are important to Grey's residents, businesses, and visitors for a variety of reasons. Thriving rural areas are crucial to both our economy and quality of life. Resource production outside of our settlement areas is responsible for a large portion of Grey's economy. For the purposes of this report, when we talk about 'resource production', we generally mean farming, forestry, and aggregates (including gravel, sand, and stone extraction).

A 2015 Grey County Infographic noted that the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sector in Grey is nearly six times the national average and four times the provincial average. According to the County's recent Local Agri-Food Study, Grey's total gross farm receipts for 2011 were \$288,295,498. In the 2016 Census of Agriculture this number climbed to \$463,676,995. Innovation in the rural economy and the local food movement are also further transforming these areas into great places to visit or start a business. Figures 1, 2, and 3 below give some context as to the value of the rural resource sectors to the Grey County economy.

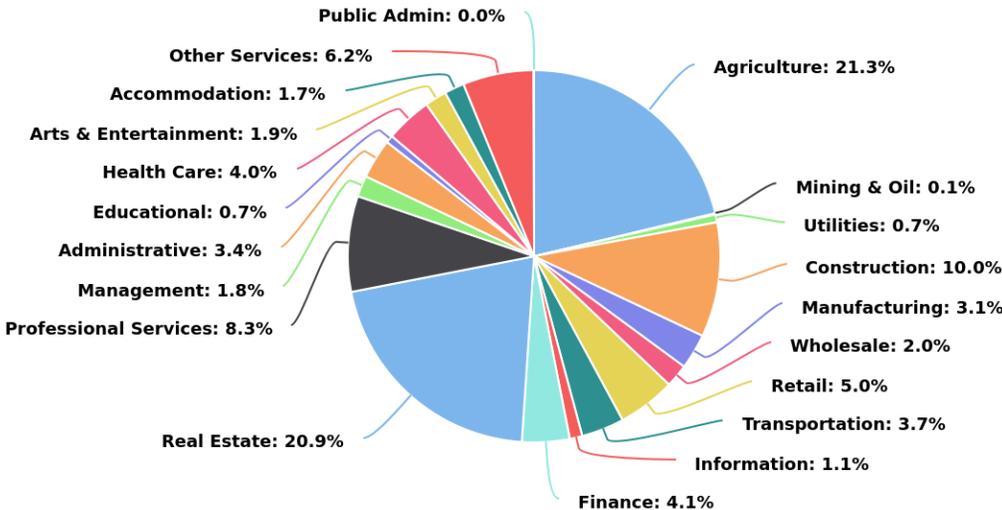
INTRODUCTION



Figure 1: Total Gross Farm Receipts 2011 to 2016 (Source Statistics Canada)

FARMS CLASSIFIED BY TOTAL GROSS FARM RECEIPTS	2011	2016
Total gross farm receipts (excluding forest products sold) (dollars)	288,295,498	463,676,995
Farms, under \$10,000	695	538
Farms, \$10,000 to \$24,999	514	488
Farms, \$25,000 to \$49,999	316	339
Farms, \$50,000 to \$99,999	229	268
Farms, \$100,000 to \$249,999	240	295
Farms, \$250,000 to \$499,999	154	188
Farms, \$500,000 to \$999,999	65	125
Farms, \$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999	21	42
Farms, \$2,000,000 and over	14	21

Figure 2: Business Industries June 2016 (Source Grey Community Profile / Business Register)



INTRODUCTION



Figure 3: Business Industries June 2016
(Source Grey Community Profile / Business Register)

Key Sectors by Industry



The Province requires the protection and wise use of resources in the Planning Act and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). Through the Recolour Grey consultation completed to date, we know the community also wants to see the rural and agricultural areas protected. While the ‘rural charm’ of Grey County depends on these areas, we don’t want to lose sight of the fact existing residents and businesses (e.g. farmers, aggregate extraction, forestry, etc.) need to make a living here. The County’s Official Plan needs to balance protection of these lands with the ability for economic growth and resource use. To put it another way, we need to enjoy and prosper from these lands without compromising our children’s ability to do so in the future.

Based on the comments received, we’ve broken this topic up into four sub-theme areas:

1. Protection of farmland
2. Food production and support for the local food movement
3. Growing the rural economy through innovation and on-farm business
4. Other resource development including aggregates and forestry



INTRODUCTION

Using the talents of university students and consultants, we have completed a number of background studies that touch on some of these sub-theme areas. The Province has also recently updated some of their guidelines which are useful in creating new County Official Plan policies. Key documents to consider under Cultivate Grey are:

1. Provincial Policy Statement 2014
2. Minimum Agricultural Lot Sizes Study 2016
3. Minimum Distance Separation Guidelines 2017
4. Draft Grey County Local Agri-Food Strategy 2017
5. Ontario Professional Planners Institute Call to Action on Planning for Food Systems 2011
6. Grey County Apples Study 2011
7. Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas 2016
8. Grey County On-Farm Business Study 2015
9. Grey County Aggregate Resources Inventory Master Plan 2004



PROTECTION OF FARMLAND

We currently have three designations within the County Official Plan that permit farming.

AGRICULTURAL – our best land for crops and livestock. Within this designation farm lot sizes are required to be 40 hectares or greater and new lot creation is very restricted.

SPECIAL AGRICULTURE – our apple and grape growing lands in Meaford and The Blue Mountains. New lot creation in Special Agriculture is also restricted; however, farm lot sizes are generally 10 hectares or greater based on the special requirements and microclimates needed to grow apples and grapes.

RURAL – contains much of the remainder of the lands outside of settlement areas. Policies around lot creation and businesses are more flexible in this designation as a broader range of lot sizes and development types are permitted.

Between the three designations noted above, many farm types are permitted from commodities livestock or crop production, to niche crops and local food production.

Other designations across the countryside include Mineral Resource Extraction (discussed later in this paper), Wetlands, and Hazard Lands (discussed in the Natural Grey paper).

Our primary tools in the Official Plan for protecting farmlands are mapping and land use policies. The County, through a study completed with the Province in the 1990's, mapped out where our Agricultural, Special Agriculture, and Rural lands are. This study looked at soil classes and where farming was occurring in large pockets to map out each of these designations. This mapping is reflected in our County Official Plan. We are not planning to re-do this study as part of the Recolour Grey process, and will rely on our current mapping.



PROTECTION OF FARMLAND

Once the designation boundaries are determined we need to come up with policies for these three designations to protect the farmland. These policies will outline how new lots are created and what uses are permitted within these designations. We need to consider not only crop and livestock production, but also the entire food system including processing, and infrastructure needs. While the County Plan will support all types of farming and farm operations, support for agricultural practices that protect soil and water integrity will be promoted. We also need to consider basic human needs like farm dwellings and accommodations for on-farm help.

The PPS is strict for Agricultural and Special Agriculture lands but gives more flexibility for Rural lands. One of the keys to considering permitted uses in these areas is to think about what uses support farming (e.g. farm businesses) and what uses may conflict with farming operations (e.g. new residential plans of subdivision).

The protection of farmland also needs to consider other resource uses, including aggregate extraction and forestry. The Province allows aggregate extraction on Agricultural, Special Agriculture, and Rural lands if the lands are appropriately rehabilitated back to a farm use. Forestry is also a permitted use in these areas; however, with increases in commodity prices we are seeing increasing pressure to clear forested areas for farming.



PROTECTION OF FARMLAND

The County's recent *Minimum Agricultural Lot Sizes Study* recommended that the County maintain our current minimum farm lot sizes in the Agricultural designation, but recommended we explore policies to:

- Permit the establishment of small farm operations and creation of small lots at the periphery of designated settlement areas as defined by Grey County.
- Restrict severances of less than 40 hectares, as they are not a solution to increase farmland affordability.
- Implement policies that maintain a 40 hectare minimum, but allow reductions to lot size with certain requirements such as: proof of diverse and economically viable agricultural operations.
- Create a Community Improvement Plan that supports agriculture in a variety of ways.
- Create a land bank that is municipally owned and leased out to local farmers.

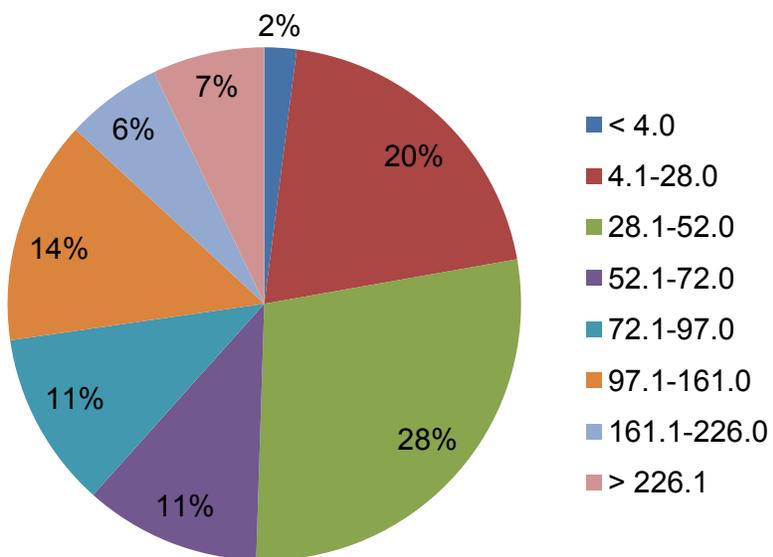
Not all of the above can be addressed in an official plan. However, we would like to explore some of these ideas further. We don't see the need to change farm lot sizes across the County in the Agricultural, Special Agriculture, and Rural lands. We would like to consider criteria for new or innovative farm operation types that are appropriate for an alternate lot size. Individual exceptions for smaller lot sizes, which meet the criteria, could accommodate some of these innovative farm operation types. This study also concluded that Grey currently has a wide variety of lot sizes across the County (see Figure 4). This generally meets the diverse needs of different farm operation types. It was also noted that smaller farms generally cost more per hectare than larger farms. The risk of a smaller farm being used for non-farm purposes also adds to this price inflation.



PROTECTION OF FARMLAND

Figure 4: Farm Lot Size Distribution in Hectares
(Source: Minimum Agricultural Lot Sizes Study)

COUNTY OF GREY FARM LOT DISTRIBUTION





PROTECTION OF FARMLAND

We may also consider the need for further residential lot creation in the Rural designation. While the PPS does provide for some flexibility in this designation, we recommend the majority of the new residential development be directed towards settlement areas where services and facilities are already in place. A ban on new Rural residential lot creation may be too extreme but further controls may need to be considered.

Updates to our County plan will also be needed based on the PPS 2014, which requires us to consider lot creation for agriculture-related uses, such as grain elevators.



Grain Elevator in
Georgian Bluffs



PROTECTION OF FARMLAND

Changes to the Province’s Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formula will also help protect farmland. MDS requires separation between new or expanding farm and non-farm uses. We want to clarify our policies for surplus farm dwelling severances where farmers buy additional land and remove the house from the farmlands.

The 2011 *Grey County Apples Study* also recommended buffer zones between different land use types to reduce potential conflict. This Study also notes the changes to the apple industry as a result of the new high-density plantings of apple trees. While this type of planting is specific to the apple industry, it is also symbolic of the changes in farming technology. Changes in technology, growing techniques and policies around the protection of farmland need to be flexible so that new techniques and methods can be allowed.



FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

We support all types of farm operations whether they grow commodity crops, livestock, or food for local sale and consumption. We see two trends in agriculture; commodity farming using large farm sizes and niche/local food farming using small farm sizes.

Commodities agriculture generally requires large farm operation sizes, while local food farming uses smaller lot sizes. As a result, we see the overall number of farms increasing but the size of operations decreasing slightly. Figure 5 below illustrates these trends between the years 2011 – 2016.

Figure 5: Changes in Farm Sizes and Numbers 2011 – 2016
(Source: Local Agri-Food Strategy)





FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

According to the 2016 Census of Agriculture, the total number of farms in Grey County was 2,304. The largest number of farms is between the 10 – 69 acres and the 70 – 129 acre categories.

Local food production is often done on smaller pieces of land and can sometimes include on-farm sales, value-added processing or agri-tourism elements. For the purpose of this report, the term agri-tourism also includes agri-food-tourism.





FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

Grey's recent Local Agri-Food Strategy recommends that planning needs to support the entire 'food system'. These sentiments are also echoed by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute's (OPPI) 2011 *Call to Action on Food Systems*. This food system includes not only the land and growers, but also the network and infrastructure required to prepare, sell, ship, and distribute the food. Planning for food systems needs to consider both commodities and local food farmers.

Grey County policies need to be flexible to allow for all types of farm operations, including value-added processing and uses that support the food system and a diverse rural economy. Farmers markets, agri-tourism, abattoirs, wineries/cideries, cold storage (such as the Bay Growers Co-operative pictured above) and large-scale processing facilities are important to the food system. They should be encouraged throughout the County.

While not strictly within the scope of an official plan, the ability to distribute local food to people in need also came up a number of times at Recolour Grey consultations. Along with flexibility for on-farm businesses, the County Plan should promote innovative food distribution networks including gleaning or second harvest operations. The reduction of food waste across the County is also a key consideration in this regard.

The County and local municipalities should consider infrastructure requirements and road safety around large farm equipment and the growing horse and buggy population. The transportation network is explored in detail in the Move Grey paper.



GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

In the last review of the County Official Plan, one of the primary concerns was allowing larger on-farm businesses and greater flexibility in the types of businesses permitted. On-farm businesses help the rural economy by allowing farmers to have a secondary source of income. On-farm businesses also provide services to rural areas (e.g. farm machinery repair or a grain elevator). Without these businesses, farmers might have to travel into town for some farm services, which may be inconvenient with large farm equipment. More recently through the local food movement and agri-tourism, on-farm businesses also provide valuable educational opportunities for non-farmers and tourists.





GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

With the new PPS in 2014, the Province expanded the permissions for on-farm businesses through the following definitions.

“Agricultural uses: means the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment.

Agriculture-related uses: means those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity.

On-farm diversified uses: means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products.”

The Province further clarified these uses through their 2016 Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas. A summary of the types of uses in each category has been included as Figure 6. Within the guidelines, it clarifies that agricultural and agriculture-related uses must be permitted in rural and agricultural areas without size restrictions, if they can be serviced appropriately. On-farm diversified uses must be restricted in size to ensure that they remain secondary to the farm use.

GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS



Figure 6: Permitted Uses in Agricultural, Special Agriculture, and Rural Designations

AGRICULTURAL USE	AGRICULTURE-RELATED USE	ON-FARM DIVERSIFIED USE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing of all types of crops • Raising of all types of livestock • Barns / manure storage • Pastureland • Feedlot • Fish farm • Mushroom farm • Christmas trees/nurseries • Greenhouses • Grain dryers • Feed storage i.e. bunkers / silos • Machine shed • Temporary or permanent accommodation for seasonal or full time farm labour • Cold storage (for own farm's use) • Indoor/outdoor riding arenas/tracks • Minimum amount of processing to make a produce saleable (e.g. evaporating maple sap, or extracting honey) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple storage and distribution centre • Farm gate sales of locally grown produce/goods • Agricultural research centre • Winery using predominately local grapes • Cidery using predominately local fruit • Flour mill for local grain • Grain dryer / storage for multiple local farmers • Farm equipment repair shop • Livestock assembly yard, or stockyard for local farmers • Auction for local produce, • Farm input supplier e.g. seeds, feed, fertilizer, etc • Abattoir selling / processing local meat • Food processing plant for local produce (e.g. cider-making, pitting, canning, quick-freezing, packing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home occupations (e.g. professional office, bookkeeper, land surveyor, art studio, hairdresser, massage therapist, daycare, veterinary clinic, kennel, classes or workshops) • Home industries (e.g. sawmill, welding or wood working shop, manufacturing / fabrication, seasonal storage of boats or trailers, biomass pelletizer) • Café/small restaurant, cooking classes, food store (e.g. cheese, ice cream), • Agri-tourism uses (e.g. farm vacation suite, bed and breakfast, hay rides, petting zoo, farm-themed playground, horse trail rides, corn maze, seasonal events, equine events, wine tasting) • Value-added uses (e.g. processor, packager, cheese factory, bakery) • Retail uses (e.g. farm market, antique business, tack shop)



Photo: Glenn Walker

GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

The *2015 On-Farm Business Study* highlighted the numbers and types of on-farm businesses being approved in the County since 2005. The vast majority of these businesses, especially in recent years, have been for on-farm woodworking or metalworking shops. Figure 7 shows on-farm businesses approved since 2005 via official plan or zoning amendment. In Figure 7 you can see the concentration of on-farm businesses around the southern part of the County where there is an increasing Mennonite population.

On-farm Woodworking Operation in Southgate
(Photo: Glenn Walker)





Photo: Glenn Walker

GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

These on-farm manufacturing businesses have been a boost to the rural economy and have allowed farmers to upgrade some otherwise marginal farmland, through helping fund tile drainage and other improvements.

While local food and agri-tourism are both strong sectors within Grey, the majority of the new on-farm businesses are for manufacturing and not farm gate sales or on-farm processing. Figure 8 below shows the types of on-farm uses permitted between 2005 and 2014.



High-tech On-farm Manufacturing in Southgate
(Photo Glenn Walker)

GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS



Figure 7: On-Farm Businesses 2005 – 2014 (Source: On-Farm Business Study)

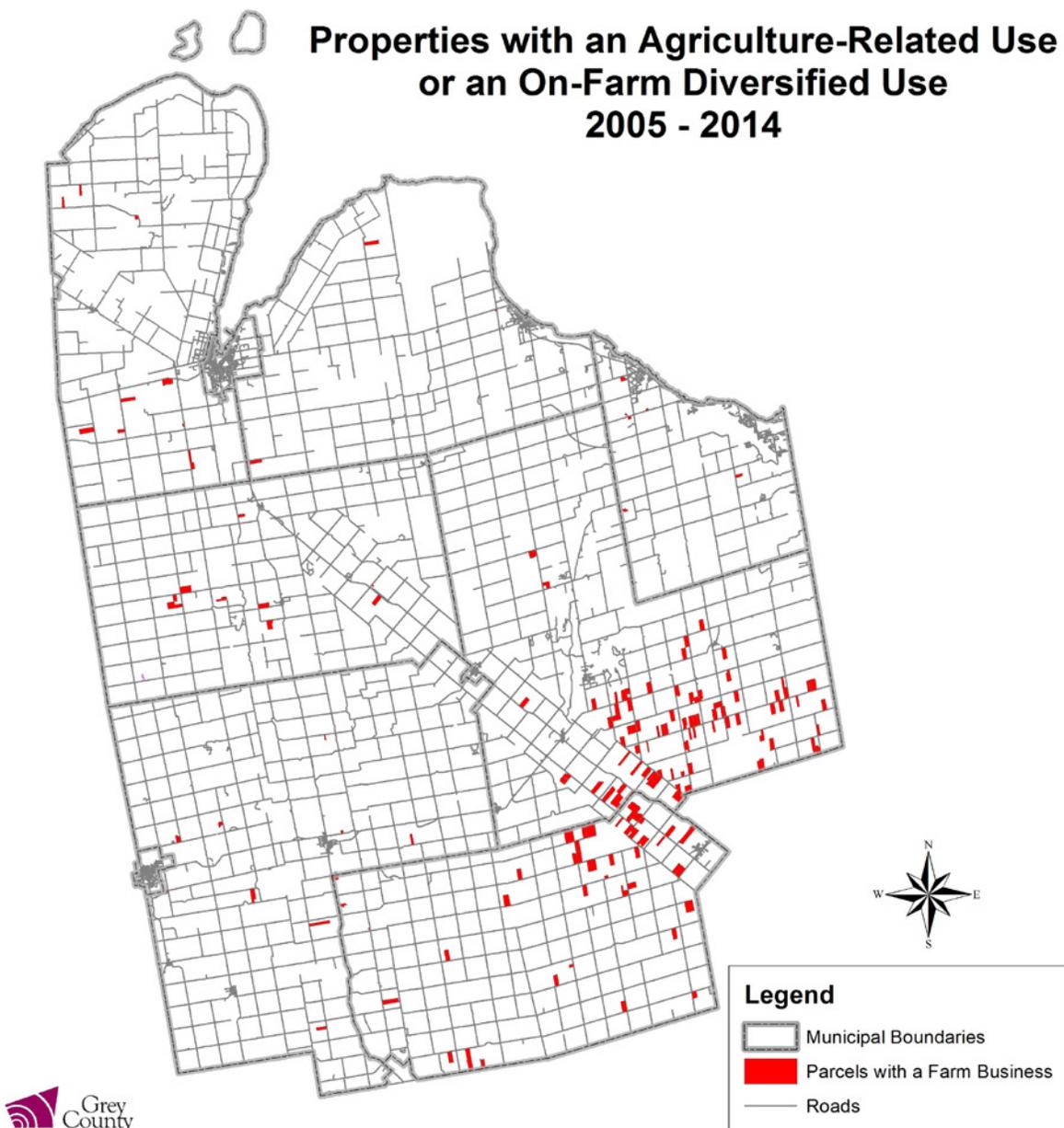




Photo: Glenn Walker

GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

Figures 7 and 8 are based on zoning and official plan amendments. They do not include on-farm businesses within the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) area. Within the NEP we have seen more wineries and cideries being permitted than in areas outside of the NEP.

With this change in policy, Grey now needs to decide how to promote on-farm innovation and businesses, but also how to keep up with them. Existing infrastructure and utilities (e.g. roads, gas, hydro, broadband, etc.) are not always in place to service the businesses being located across the countryside. While this topic will be addressed more thoroughly in the Move Grey paper, it bears a reference here as it relates to both farms and on-farm businesses.

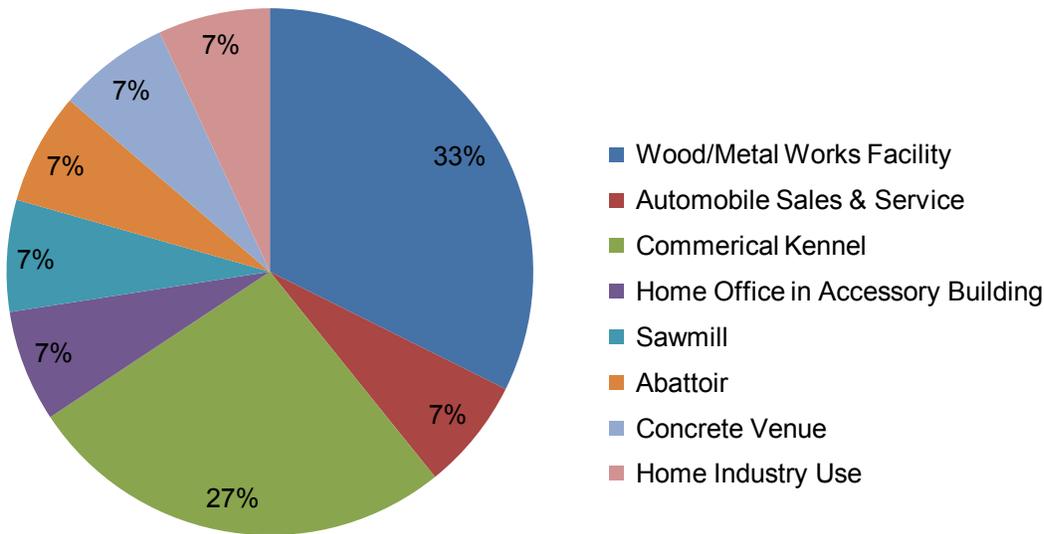
The other challenge we're facing with respect to such businesses is the cumulative effects, both from a land use compatibility and infrastructure standpoint. Throughout the Recolour Grey consultations, we heard comments both in support of and in opposition to increasing on-farm businesses. Some of the opposition related to the cumulative impacts of having multiple manufacturing operations within close proximity to one another. Noise, traffic, road safety, and emissions were concerns raised in this regard. Municipalities in southern Grey County have also been challenged with the cumulative impacts of such manufacturing operations on rural roads, which weren't designed for heavy traffic. While each individual business may only have 1 – 2 trucks per day, the cumulative impact of all the businesses is taking a toll on rural infrastructure. Development Charges are an appropriate tool for municipalities to use to help recoup some of the costs to infrastructure from on-farm manufacturing.

GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

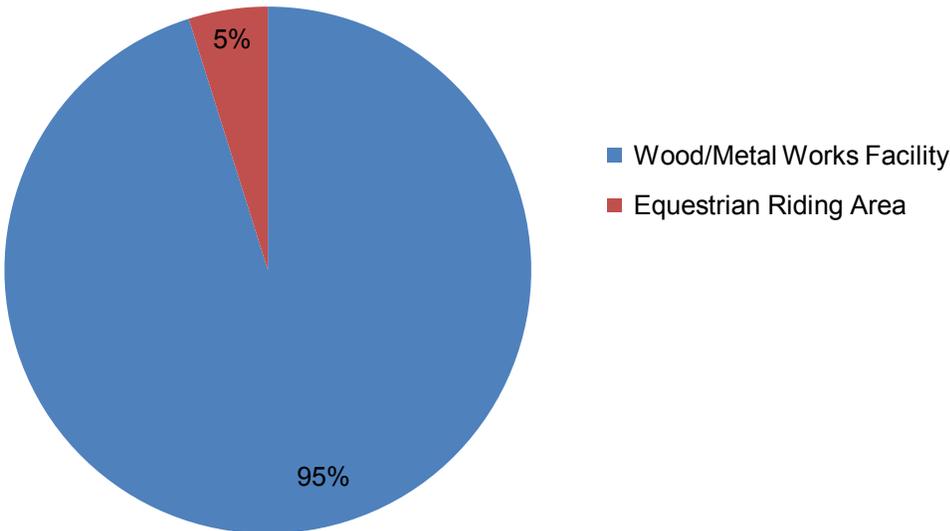


Figure 8a and 8b: Types of On-Farm Uses Permitted 2005 and 2014
(Source: On-Farm Business Study)

2005 ON-FARM BUSINESS APPLICATIONS



2014 ON-FARM BUSINESS APPLICATIONS





GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

We are seeking a balance between on-farm businesses, farming, rural residents, and tourist uses. We also want to balance those uses permitted in the countryside, as there are some similar uses that should be directed to business parks in settlement areas. Should an on-farm diversified use get too successful, it may be beneficial to look at relocating the use to a settlement area, depending on the nature of the use. The relocation of a successful use is easier in theory than in practice. However, there was a recent brewery in rural West Grey, which has since relocated and expanded to the business park in Hanover.

The On-Farm Business Study provided a summary of other municipal policies across the Province. The Study recommended that Grey look at clear policy wording that provides transparency to both the applicants and neighbours. Looking at appropriate on-site buffering and site plan controls will also be an important policy consideration around on-farm businesses. Other important considerations for the Plan will be to identify where said businesses are located on farms, the location of parking or outdoor storage, proper screening, and signage. In some cases, it will be necessary to apply Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) D-6 Guidelines, which assess the separation between industrial and sensitive land uses.



GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

Examples of an On-farm Business as Viewed from the Road
(top photo in Southgate, bottom photo in Chatsworth)





OTHER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING AGGREGATES AND FORESTRY

In 2004 the County completed the Aggregate Resource Inventory Master Plan (ARIMP), to map the County’s sand and gravel resources across the County. A similar study has not yet been completed for the County’s bedrock resources. The recommendations of the ARIMP were implemented in the County Official Plan in 2012, through the last five year review official plan amendment # 80 (OPA 80).

Figures 9 and 10 give an indication of the County’s aggregate extraction levels.

Figure 9: License and Wayside Production by Lower and Upper Tier Municipality (Source TOARC 2015 Annual Statistics)

MUNICIPALITY	TONNAGE
Chatsworth	466,019.88
Georgian Bluffs	479,263.65
Grey Highlands	1,167,664.13
Meaford	516,807.90
Southgate	369,838.21
The Blue Mountains	213,609.30
West Grey	859,823.23
GREY COUNTY TOTAL	4,073,026.30



OTHER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING AGGREGATES AND FORESTRY

Figure 10: Annual License and Wayside Production by Upper Tier Municipality (in Million Tonnes) (Source TOARC)

Municipality	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Grey County	3.4	3.2	3.3	2.9	3.5	3.0	2.6	2.8	3.2	4.1

Although the County has approved a number of new pit operations over the last 10 years, the policy framework at the Provincial level has not changed much with respect to aggregates. The PPS 2014 does provide for ‘comprehensive rehabilitation’ which is defined as;

“Comprehensive rehabilitation: means rehabilitation of land from which mineral aggregate resources have been extracted that is coordinated and complementary, to the extent possible, with the rehabilitation of other sites in an area where there is a high concentration of mineral aggregate operations.”

We support the notion of comprehensive rehabilitation. However, we have trouble understanding how it will be practically implemented at a planning level where pit or quarry applications come in one-by-one (over a period of years or decades).

Another emerging trend in the rehabilitation of extraction operations is to consider a maximum disturbed area, before progressive rehabilitation must occur. For example, a 40 hectare licensed pit may include a maximum disturbed area provision of 4 hectares. In effect what this means is that although 40 hectares of materials can be removed, the pit operator can never be working in more than 4 hectares of the pit at once. They then have to start rehabilitating the areas they’ve worked in, before moving onto the next



OTHER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING AGGREGATES AND FORESTRY

portion of the pit. Another way of thinking about this is to say that it's a 4 hectare transitional pit, rather than a 40 hectare pit (i.e. the pit size at any given time would only be 4 hectares). These figures are given for example purposes only, and 4 hectare disturbed areas may not be feasible in all operations, especially in those where extraction is occurring below the water table.

One of the principle concerns of Grey County residents and staff is the impact of aggregate haul routes on County and local roads¹. Haul route agreements (including monies for road upgrades) are common-place for most new pits and quarries, but doesn't apply to older operations sited before the County asked for such agreements. The Province is currently looking at increasing the aggregate levies collected for each tonne extracted, such that municipalities will get additional funds for road maintenance. We support this approach by the Province (subject to determining what the final dollar value will be), as it is fair to both existing and future aggregate operators, and not only levied against the new operations. This topic will be discussed further as part of the Move Grey discussion paper.

As part of the Recolour Grey consultations we also heard comments that we need to map out where all existing haul routes in the County are. While we see some merit in this from an infrastructure perspective, this becomes very difficult to do, as not all pits and quarries have defined haul routes. That being said, it may be something to consider on a 'going forward' basis as the County approves any new extractive operations.

¹ While we also have concerns over the impact of gravel and stone trucks on our roads, we would be remiss not to mention that 'government' (all three levels) is the biggest consumer of aggregates.



OTHER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING AGGREGATES AND FORESTRY

During the consultations, it was also noted that we need to do a better job of educating the public and real estate agents of where there is likelihood for pits and quarries in the future.

While not strictly the role of the Official Plan, this is something staff would like to pursue both within the Plan, and through possible promotional efforts (e.g. pamphlets at realty or municipal offices). The County Plan currently maps where approved extractive operations are, and where quality sand and gravel resources exist for future extraction. Further education on what this mapping means would be helpful in the objective of preventing future land use conflicts.

The County Plan supports forestry across the countryside, especially when it's done on a sustainable basis. Additional policy consideration is needed regarding the intersection of the County Official Plan with the County's Forest Management By-law and our Significant Woodlands mapping. The intersection between food production, resource use, and sustainability should also be explored in the Plan. These topics will be discussed further as part of the Natural Grey discussion paper.

We are also recommending removing all references in the County Plan to renewable energy, wind, solar, bio-gas etc., based on the Province's Green Energy Act. This Provincial legislation took away the power of official plans and zoning by-laws to regulate renewable energy. Most of these references have already been removed, but there are a few residual references in the County Plan.



GREY COUNTY PLANNERS ROLE IN CULTIVATING GREY

A number of factors related to Cultivate Grey are within the control of the County and member municipalities through our official plans and zoning by-laws. Our plan will need to:

- Map Agricultural, Special Agriculture, Rural, and Mineral Aggregate lands across the County.
- Provide detailed policies on permitted uses within these areas, which are consistent with the PPS.
- Provide restrictions on new lot creation in some of these areas to minimize future land use conflict, and maximize resource production.
- Support on-farm businesses and diversification, especially where it contributes to the overall food system.
- Balance the need for rural growth, with the desire to maintain healthy settlement areas.
- Balance farm, non-farm, and resource uses across the countryside.
- Support infrastructure development which is helpful to food systems and resource use.
- Remain open to new technologies in farming, business, and resource use.



GREY COUNTY PLANNERS ROLE IN CULTIVATING GREY

However there are also a number factors which are out of the control of County planning, including:

- market / commodity / land prices,
- changes in technology,
- major changes in farm or resource use brought on by market collapse, disease/blight, invasive species, or international trade deals.
- individual activities or property standards on a farm.

It is also worth noting that a number of the following policy options being recommended would serve not only the objectives of the Official Plan, but also meet the recommendations of Economic Development's Local Agri-Food Strategy. Particularly under items 1 and 2, the consultation that took place as part of Recolour Grey and the Local Agri-Food Strategy yielded a number of similar comments. Support for the food system, on-farm diversified uses, and considering niche farm operations are all overlapping themes between both projects. County Planners and Economic Development Officers will work together on the below policy options.



CULTIVATE GREY – POLICY OPTION SUMMARY

1. PROTECTION OF FARMLAND

- Map Agricultural, Special Agriculture, and Rural lands across the County.
- Provide policies on new farm lot creation in the Agricultural, Special Agriculture, and Rural designations to minimize future land use conflict, and maximize resource production.
- Clarify policies related to surplus farm dwelling severances.
- Provide criteria for farm lot creation which considers smaller lot sizes for local food and niche farming production on a case-by-case basis.
- Support agricultural practices that protect soil and water integrity.
- Clarify policies in the plan relating to the new Minimum Distance Separation 2017 guidelines.
- Consider restrictions on new residential lot creation in the Rural designation.
- Balance the need for rural growth, with the desire to maintain healthy settlement areas.



CULTIVATE GREY – POLICY OPTION SUMMARY

2. FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

- Ensure planning policies consider the entire food system, including supportive uses and infrastructure.
- Support agri-tourism as an educational linkage between farming and urban residents.
- Provide supportive policies for gleaning or second harvest programs.
- Consider permissions for local food uses in proximity to settlement areas.
- Consider urban-agriculture and food production policies where appropriate.
- Consider policies which address buffering between farm and non-farm uses,.
- Remain open to new technologies in farming and on-farm business.



CULTIVATE GREY – POLICY OPTION SUMMARY

3. GROWING THE RURAL ECONOMY THROUGH INNOVATION AND ON-FARM BUSINESS

- Provide detailed policies on permitted uses within the countryside, which are consistent with the PPS and the Province’s Permitted Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas Guideline.
- Ensure the on-farm business policies are transparent to both farmers and non-farm neighbours.
- Support on-farm businesses and diversification, especially where it contributes to the overall food system.
- Provide criteria for on-farm businesses which considers site plan measures, and potential impacts on neighbours.
- Support cross sectoral partnerships and research to increase understanding and adoption of best practices in food production, processing, and distribution.
- Consider policies which allow for the severance of agriculture-related uses.
- Provide policies that support the development of agricultural community improvement lands.
- Support infrastructure development across the country-side which supports farming, the rural economy, and resource uses.



CULTIVATE GREY – POLICY OPTION SUMMARY

4. OTHER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING AGGREGATES AND FORESTRY

- Map Mineral Aggregate Extraction operations, as well as resource rich lands where future extraction can occur.
- Clarify the lot creation policies within proximity to existing extractive operations and resource rich lands.
- Consider further clarification on policies regarding aggregate haul routes.
- Provide more education on resource extraction as it relates to potential land use conflict.
- Provide policies on the comprehensive rehabilitation of extraction operations.
- Consider policies on maximum disturbed areas within extraction operations.
- Clarify the relationship between County Official Plan policies and the County's Forest Management By-law.
- Balance farm, non-farm, and resource uses across the countryside.



WHAT'S NEXT?

This Cultivate Grey paper will be presented to County Council. Staff will then prepare draft policies to address the items highlighted above, taking into account Council's feedback, and the community conversations we've had to date. We will then have further conversations with the community in the summer and fall of 2017 to see if these policies address the needs of the community now and into the future. Following this, we will then bring the complete official plan document for Council to consider.