



# 2015 Farmland Forum

## Pursuing Diverse & Collaborative Approaches to Farmland Protection



**Friday, March 27, 2015 – Durham Banquet Hall & Convention Centre**

### **PROGRAM**

**10:00 Registration**

**10:30 Welcome & Opening Remarks**

*Norman Ragetlie, Chair, Ontario Farmland Trust*

**10:45 Protecting Farmland for Future Generations: An Introduction**

*Wayne Caldwell, School of Environmental Design & Rural Development, University of Guelph*

**11:15 PANEL // Tools for Communicating the Importance of Farmland Preservation in Ontario**

There are many different approaches being used to explain the value of Ontario farmland and communicate the importance of farmland protection. What approaches are effective, and how do they work together to achieve this shared goal? What can we learn from different perspectives and diverse farmland protection efforts across the province?

**Grassroots Community Mobilization**

*Mary Delaney, Chair, Land Over Landings*

**Promoting the Economic Value of Ontario Farmland & Agriculture**

*James Berry, Communications Manager, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation*

**New 'Cost of Community Services' Fiscal Analysis Tool for Municipalities**

*Ben Lefort, Farm Policy Researcher, Ontario Federation of Agriculture*

**Municipal Councillor Perspective**

*Bill Hodgson, Niagara Regional Councillor, Chair of Agricultural Policy & Action Committee*

**12:15 Local Food Lunch**

**1:15 Finding the Right Language: Creating Policy that Enables Vibrant Local Farm Economies**

The language we use to support agriculture in provincial policy and municipal Official Plans continues to evolve. The new terms 'agriculture-related uses' and 'on-farm diversified uses' emerged in the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement; and the Province is in the process of developing PPS 'Permitted Use Guidelines' for agricultural areas. At the same time there is a need for better understanding of what is meant by 'agriculture systems' in the Greenbelt Plan. Municipalities can find it difficult developing, interpreting and implementing policy in their own plans that both enables diverse agricultural uses and restricts types of development that might conflict with farm activities. Are we finding the right policy language to support farming in our communities?

*Helma Geerts, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs  
Janet Horner, Greater Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance*

**1:45 Coffee Break**

**2:00 Farming in the Park: Toward a new National Urban Park Model that Supports Agriculture & Farmland Protection**

In spring 2011, the Government of Canada announced its intent to create the country's first national urban park in the Rouge Valley east of Toronto. Parks Canada has since been busy consulting with community stakeholders to develop the Rouge National Urban Park concept and management plan. The park builds on decades of foundational work by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Rouge Park Alliance and local conservation groups. It will span 58 square kilometres and is a diverse assembly of natural, cultural, agricultural and recreational lands. Most uniquely, the new national park model includes a vision for the permanent protection of more than 5,000 acres of farmland, long-term partnerships with local farmers and strong support for agriculture on these lands. Learn more about this history and inspiring vision for the future of farming on these special lands.

**History and the Evolution of Rouge Park Planning for Agriculture**

*Mike Bender, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority*

**Rouge National Urban Park Concept**

*Pam Veinotte, Superintendent, Rouge National Urban Park*

**Challenges to Farming on Public Lands and Near-Urban**

*Mike Whittamore, Whittamore's Berry Farm*

**3:00 Saving Farmland, Growing Cities: New Approaches to Farmland Preservation in California**

*Daniel O'Connell, San Joaquin Valley Program Manager, California, American Farmland Trust*

California's precedent-setting climate legislation, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, has been instrumental in spurring farmland conservation policy and practice in the state. In this context, American Farmland Trust has been at the forefront of connecting greenhouse gas reduction targets and cap-and-trade investments with good land use planning - including firm urban growth boundaries and funding for farmland protection easement agreements with farmers. Programs such as the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP) hold promise to link greenhouse gas reductions to increased farmland protection, urban revitalization, and other ecological and economic co-benefits. California's progressive

approaches to enhanced farmland protection offer new, bold ideas to consider and debate in Ontario.

**4:00** **Social Time** *cash bar*

**4:30** **Dinner and Keynote // Learning from Pennsylvania's Model for Collaborative Farmland Protection**

*Doug Wolfgang, Director, Bureau of Farmland Preservation, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture*

Pennsylvania has seen \$1.3billion invested in farmland protection over the past 25 years. The state's agricultural easement program partners with 57 county programs and 60+ land trusts, and has resulted in more than 4,700 farms and 500,000 acres being protected by easements. The largest farmland protection program in the U.S., demand for the program from farmers continues, with 1,900 farms still on the waiting list. Pennsylvania credit the success of the program to the willingness of farmers, widespread public support and partnership between government and non-government agencies. What can Ontario learn from this model of public investment, partnership and community engagement?

**6:00** **Wrap up & Concluding Remarks**