

The Future of Peterborough Food & Farming: A Call for Reflection & Discussion



Prepared by:

The Peterborough Social Planning Council in partnership with Farms At Work

October, 2011



*“The food produced, distributed and sold within a region can play a major role in how well the dietary needs of the population are met. Communities that have ready access to a sustainable supply of healthy, locally grown and produced foods are less vulnerable to external factors that can affect the nutritional quality and/or quantity of foods available. Municipal government and municipal policy have multiple levers to shift the food system.” **Peterborough Community Food Network***



A United Way Member Agency

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Executive Summary

The Purpose of this Discussion Paper

The purpose of this discussion paper is to raise awareness about our changing farm community within the context of local food production. It serves to pose questions about change in the Peterborough area, as well as provide a picture of the evolution that has occurred in the past decades. Further, we hope that by asking questions, we increase the interest of the public about the important role that agriculture plays in our economic and social fabric. Finally, this paper is intended as an awareness raising document that will support the intent of the upcoming “**Bring Food Home**” conference scheduled in Peterborough for October 27 to 29, 2011.

Methodology

In November, 2010, the Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) hosted a meeting with a number of food producers to discuss the report “**Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario**”.

Following that meeting, the Peterborough Social Planning Council working in partnership with Farms at Work, reviewed the demographic trends from Statistics Canada regarding the agricultural community. The researchers conferred with representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs and Sustain Ontario. A review of work completed by the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation provided an overview of the impact of the farm economy.

The following questions supplement the intent of the County of Peterborough’s Vision Statement (1991) which reads:

“Peterborough County is a very special place for people, where planning and stewardship protect a diverse landscape, lifestyle and sense of community.

To achieve this vision, the County will:

- *Respect and protect its traditions of rural lifestyle*
- *Maintain and enhance its quality of life through managed, orderly growth and development*
- *Protect the integrity of the environment*
- *Preserve and promote the County’s heritage and culture*
- *Provide an efficient, helpful cost-effective form of county government”*

Questions to Guide our Future Planning

The following questions should be considered by local, provincial and federal decision makers as well as community change agents, as we look at the planning of Peterborough county and city:

1. How will the loss of farm families impact the social fabric of the farm community?
What impact will this have on small community service centres and schools?
2. What would we need to do to produce enough food to feed Peterborough County/City?
What is Peterborough's role in providing food to Ontario?
3. What is the role of public education in ensuring food literacy among all age groups
and sectors of our community?
4. What role can land use planning take in protecting the future of farming in our
County? How are the recommendations in Menu 20/20 reflected in other important
documents affecting Peterborough such as the Places to Grow legislation?
5. As a community, how does Peterborough increase awareness of the link between good
food and good health?
6. Can encouraging new farmers to establish businesses in Peterborough help support a
strong agricultural community for the future and keep farmland in production?
7. Are there areas of production where the County could increase local production to
better satisfy local demand?
8. How are we planning to ensure that our local primary processing infrastructure will be
sufficient into the future? (Eg. abattoirs, mills, freezing and canning facilities).
9. Are our local regulatory decisions keeping pace with the needs of farm businesses to
eg diversify into small on-farm processing activities, or host farm help on the farm?
10. What is the impact of the increasing price of farmland and the costs of land,
machinery, buildings and quota as barriers to new entrants?
11. How will we enable our farm community to recover the value of their environmental
contributions/ecological goods and services (eg. protection of water and habitat) from
agriculture?
12. What role will urban agriculture play in our future?

The Future: Peterborough Food & Farming



The Purpose of this Discussion Paper

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The Background

In November, 2010, the Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) hosted a meeting with a number of food producers to discuss the report “**Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario**” written by Sustain Ontario. To quote the report:

“Ontario is growing good food ideas. These ideas are based on recognition that through food, a variety of social, cultural, environmental, and economic problems that Ontarians face can be addressed. They represent solutions to a broken food system in which farmers find it challenging to make a living growing food, and consumers find it difficult to make the good food choices they want to make.”

This paper is part of a series of papers commissioned by the Metcalf Foundation. *Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario*, unlike the other papers in this series, does not look at a single issue, but draws on a range of good food ideas currently being discussed in Ontario, and knits together ten that would contribute to health and economic viability along the food chain. Each of the ideas has multiple societal benefits, involves many stakeholders, and requires integrated policy support. The Metcalf Foundation wanted to explore the local interest for co-operative, integrated work with the goal of transforming Ontario’s farming and food systems.

In late 2008 Sustain Ontario was formed as a provincial alliance that would research and develop policy proposals related to healthy food and local sustainable farming. Sustain Ontario’s mandate is to advocate for a food system that is healthy, ecological, equitable, and financially viable.

Findings of the report “Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario”:

The report documents discussions with people across the province to better understand the farm and food landscape. It describes the local responses to global efforts to *Bring Food Home*. These efforts are not intended to forestall trade, but to question and rethink the terms of trade. They reflect an increased interest in cooking and eating local food, improving school food programs, and developing local, sustainable institutional procurement policies. People who care about food are seeking out new ways to source it, connect with farmers, and bridge urban and rural divides. Community Shared Agriculture, food box programs, and farmers’ markets are multiplying. Farmers are seeking new ways to market the fruits of their labour and connect directly with consumers.

Since our initial meeting in November 2010, the PSPC has been researching some of the issues documented in Menu 2020, and participating in a number of local and provincial discussions on changes happening in the food producing community and the agricultural sector. This discussion paper is meant to provoke thought on what we in Peterborough County need to do in the future to sustain our ability to produce local food. It is not intended to provide all the answers. Its purpose is to encourage questions.

The Ontario Context for understanding the farm crisis:

Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario documents the following startling facts.

The period of mid-1980s to the present illustrates the shocking impact of global restructuring in the farm and food sector. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture notes (as quoted in Menu 2020):

- Statistics from pork, beef and horticulture indicate massive losses on all products sold for export.
- Horticulture continues to lose money to low cost, low quality imported foods as well. Such imports are blamed for the recent fruit and vegetable processing plant closures in South-western Ontario. The ripple effect of such industry devastation must also be considered.
- Over 752,000 jobs in Ontario alone rely on a solid farm sector — many of which keep our rural communities alive.
- Agriculture is linked to transportation, processing and the retail industries, to name a few. Since 1985, the average market net income for farmers has been below that of 1930’s levels (“**Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario**”).

Again, **Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario** describes the main problems in the sector:

- 52% of Ontario’s farmers are losing money.

- Between 1996 and 2006, Ontario lost 15% of its farms.
- Most Ontario farmers earn most of their income from off-farm jobs.
- Ontario farmers are aging, and few new farmers are taking their place.

These trends are compounded by rising energy prices, increasingly onerous regulatory regimes, and the steadily falling percentage of income that consumers spend (and expect to spend) on food (24% in 1960, 11% today).

The implications of these facts:

First, the value chain that connects farmers to consumers is out of balance. **A greater proportion of the food dollar that consumers spend is going to those in the middle of the chain** — mostly large-scale processors and distributors — and is not reaching the original producers of food.

Second, Ontario’s agriculture policy is skewed towards **exporting food, not producing food for local consumption**. Over the past decade, exports have grown by 28%, while imports grew by 32%. The upshot is the absurdity known as “redundant trade,” whereby products are both exported as commodities and imported as food. Such trade represents lost economic opportunities.

Third, the **fastest-growing local markets are underserved**. These include markets for products from local and organic or sustainable producers, as well as processed food created by small and medium-sized enterprises. These businesses represent potential jobs and other economic opportunities that are not being realized.

Fourth, Ontario’s countryside is being hollowed out at the same time as farmland close to urban markets is disappearing due to city expansion. **Urban sprawl not only has cultural, environmental, and economic ramifications, but also represents a permanent loss of agricultural potential for Ontario.**

The farm crisis exists even though poll after poll suggests that Ontarians care deeply about farmland preservation and the economic viability of rural communities. That concern tells us that the time is right for gathering support for efforts to bring about real change in the Ontario food system.

The ten good food ideas presented in “Menu 2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario” are as follows:

1. Support producers of locally consumed fruit, vegetables, and meats.
2. Make room for new farmers and alternative markets within the supply managed system.
3. Harvest the whole value of ecological goods and services from agriculture.
4. Plant urban Ontario.
5. Implement a school food program, and embed food literacy in the curriculum.
6. Support community food centres.

7. Establish local food infrastructure through regional food clusters.
8. Expand public procurement of local, sustainably produced food.
9. Link good food with good health.
10. Plan for the future of farming and food.

These ideas come from initiatives that are currently being promoted by food and farm leaders across Ontario. These leaders are part of an increasingly strong and dynamic civil society sector involved in building, organizing, and advocating for food system sustainability. The sector includes non-profit community groups, environmental organizations, small and medium-sized food enterprises, municipal agencies, health units, commodity organizations, and educational institutions — all working to fix broken food systems.

Additionally, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) released its report “Planning Food Systems in Ontario: A Call to Action”. The document identified that Issues associated with food systems present many challenges related to community planning. Important planning issues include:

- Using good planning principles to connect the planning needs of urban and rural communities and promote efficient, complementary land use systems.
- Incorporating food systems into the framework of planning policies such as Places to Grow, the Greenbelt and the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Including consideration for food systems in an integrated community sustainability plan, Official Plan, secondary plan, zoning by-law, and public health reports.
- Understanding and connecting stakeholders in multiple geographic regions to break down institutional barriers in addressing the impacts of planning policies on food systems.

Locally We Need to Consider the Future of our Farmland:

This discussion document is framed around a series of questions, as follows:

The question:	Why is it important to our community?:																				
How much does agriculture impact the economic health of Peterborough?	<p>Based on the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation’s report “Agricultural Economic Impact & Development Study”, 2006, the following information documents the importance of agriculture to our community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Kawartha Lakes/Peterborough area contributed approximately 2% of the gross farm receipts generated in Ontario in 2001. (The gross receipts for 2006 was 77,655,643 resulting in an 11.6% change.) ○ \$156 million in gross farm receipts was generated in 2001, translating into the following impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A total impact in excess of \$353 million (\$85 million in direct impact, \$207 million in indirect impact, \$62 million in induced impact, and a labour income impact in excess of \$56 million) ▪ For each one-dollar reduction in the output of any of the top five commodity groups there will be, at a minimum, a two-dollar reduction in total regional economic output. 																				
How is the agricultural sector changing in our community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Since 1971, the County has lost 28% of its farms. This represents the loss of 460 farm businesses. According to the Census of 2006, there were 1192 farms in the County at that time. ○ 70,000 farmland acres (22%) went out of production in the County from 1971 to 2006 ○ The average age of farm operators in the County was 52.7 years in 2001. By 2006 it had risen to 54.7. This suggests that about half the farmers in the County may retire in the next 10-15 years. Meanwhile the number of younger farmers is declining 																				
How much agricultural land is still in production and how much are we losing to development?	<p>Area of Census Farms by County, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006 (acres)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="358 1377 1546 1703"> <thead> <tr> <th>Counties & Districts</th> <th>1991</th> <th>1996</th> <th>2001</th> <th>2006</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Kawartha Lakes</td> <td>353,778</td> <td>378,692</td> <td>360,690</td> <td>356,946</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peterborough</td> <td>270,782</td> <td>261,673</td> <td>258,642</td> <td>249,429</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Province</td> <td>13,470,653</td> <td>13,879,565</td> <td>13,507,357</td> <td>13,310,216</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As the chart above indicates, Peterborough has gone from a total of 270,782 acres dedicated to farming in 1991 to 249,429 in 2006 – a loss of 21,353 acres.</p>	Counties & Districts	1991	1996	2001	2006	Kawartha Lakes	353,778	378,692	360,690	356,946	Peterborough	270,782	261,673	258,642	249,429	The Province	13,470,653	13,879,565	13,507,357	13,310,216
Counties & Districts	1991	1996	2001	2006																	
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The question: Why is it important to our community?:

Number of Census Farms by County, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006

Counties & Districts	1991	1996	2001	2006
Kawartha Lakes	1,668	1,710	1,516	1,537
Peterborough	1,430	1,369	1,202	1,192
The Province	68,633	67,520	59,728	57,211

From a long-range historical perspective, the total number of farms in 1991 was 1,430 in Peterborough County, this has been reduced to 1,192 according to the 2006 census.

Change in Ontario Farmland and Census Farms; 2001-2006

Region	Farms reporting 2006	Area in hectares 2006	Farms reporting 2001	Area in hectares 2001	5-year change in farms	% change in farms	5-year change in area	% change in area
Central Ontario CAR	8,705	778,936	8,938	798,487	-233	-2.6%	-19,551	-2.4%
Hastings CD	1,146	121,886	1,190	123,861	-44	-3.7%	-1,975	-1.6%
Prince Edward CD	520	58,926	535	57,960	-15	-2.8%	966	1.7%
Northumberland CD	1,031	97,594	1,104	102,655	-73	-6.6%	-5,061	-4.9%
Peterborough CD	1,192	100,940	1,202	104,669	-10	-0.8%	-3,729	-3.6%
Kawartha Lakes CD	1,537	144,451	1,516	145,966	21	1.4%	-1,515	-1.0%
Durham CD	1,686	132,212	1,709	133,662	-23	-1.3%	-1,450	-1.1%

(Source: after Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Agriculture, Farm Data and Farm Operator Data, Cat. No. 95-629-XWE)

In the five years between 2001 and 2006 some 2,517 census farms and 79,780 hectares of farmland dropped out of the census. This was about 1.5% of the province's total farm area. Most of the net decline occurred in the southern part of Ontario. Specifically, the Eastern Ontario CAR declined by 28,478 hectares and 469 farms; the Southern Ontario CAR declined by 20,382 hectares and 966 farms; the Central Ontario CAR declined by 19,551 hectares and 233 farms; and the Western Ontario CAR declined by 15,431

The question:	Why is it important to our community?:
	hectares and 693 farms. (Source: McCallum, Charlotee PhD, Farmland Requirements for Ontario’s Growing Population: 2010 to 2036 , Ontario Farmland Trust, 2011)
Why do we need to be encouraging new farmers to establish businesses in Peterborough?	<p>The “City of Kawartha Lakes and Greater Peterborough Area Agricultural Economic Impact and Development Study” identified the encouragement and support of potential new farmers as a key recommendation in 2006.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some 60% of current farmers are looking to sell or transfer their farms in the next ten years – the average age of Peterborough farmers 4 years ago (in 2006) was close to 55 years (Source: FarmStart) • Most farms do not have a successor in the next generation who plans to take over the farm business – the number of farmers under 35 is low and declining • Thousands of acres of farmland are going out of production, and many farms are purchased by non-farmers – from 1971 to 2006, more than 70,000 acres went out of production in Peterborough County • The trend on the remaining farms is often towards expansion and a focus on international and commodity markets • New entrants are generally interested in producing food tailored to local and specialty markets – this keeps food sales dollars in the local community • New farm businesses also feed the local economy with demand for local agricultural services (eg fencing, construction), goods (eg feed and seed) and processing capacity (eg milling, abattoirs) <p>Source: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/index-eng.htm</p> <p>How many new farmers are out there?</p> <p>There is no definitive answer to this question, and this is why outreach and support are badly needed in all areas of Ontario, including Peterborough County. However, here are some facts that give a sense of the growing interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FarmStart (a non-profit located in Guelph and working province-wide) has put approximately 1100 people through its various new farmer programs since 2009 • An online survey of new farmers in 2009/2010 drew more than 400 responses from across the province – the survey was designed by Farms at Work staff and Fleming College • In November 2008, a New Farmer Forum hosted in Lindsay through the FarmON Alliance (Farms at Work is the Central Ontario partner in the Alliance) drew over 100 attendees • Farms at Work has about 250 farms on a regional email list, many of whom are new farmers or are in the process of exploring farming as an option

The question:	Why is it important to our community?:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleming College’s new Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture has a first cohort of 15 students this year • Trent University is taking students in September 2011 for its new degree program in Sustainable Agriculture • A growing number of additional programs are available in other colleges and universities across the province.

What is Peterborough’s role in providing food to Ontario?	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Farm Cash Receipts for Main Commodities, Peterborough, 2007 (Total = \$68.0 million)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Commodity</th> <th>Value (\$ millions)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dairy</td> <td>17.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poultry</td> <td>9.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cattle & Calves</td> <td>7.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Floriculture, Nursery & Sod</td> <td>3.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Soybeans</td> <td>2.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corn</td> <td>1.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sheep & Lambs</td> <td>1.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Sources: 2006 Census of Agriculture and Economic Development Policy Branch, OMAFRA Jan-09</p> </div>	Commodity	Value (\$ millions)	Dairy	17.8	Poultry	9.0	Cattle & Calves	7.5	Floriculture, Nursery & Sod	3.8	Soybeans	2.1	Corn	1.8	Sheep & Lambs	1.4
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What are the emerging resources to support a changing agricultural community in Ontario?	<p>Changing directions to save our capacity to produce our food</p> <p>Here are some of the things that are happening that will rejuvenate our ability to continue to produce our own food:</p> <p>Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh: Kawartha Choice FarmFresh consists of a dynamic group of farmers, producers, chefs and retailers who promote and sell agricultural products grown and produced in the Kawartha Region.</p> <p>Peterborough Community Food Network: This growing network includes more than 50</p>
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The question:	Why is it important to our community?:
	<p>food-related organizations, programs and concerned citizens in the County. It meets once a month and has recently made a submission on the City Official Plan. It is convened by the City-County Health Unit.</p> <p>FarmStart: The objective of FarmStart is to support and encourage a new generation of farmers to develop locally based, ecologically sound and economically viable agricultural enterprises.</p> <p>There are many challenges in agriculture today but there are also many exciting opportunities. By thinking about agriculture in new and innovative ways we can meet the challenges head on with a variety of solutions that promote a sustainable, healthy and regional food supply.</p> <p>Successful farms make important contributions to the health and vibrancy of both rural and urban communities. FarmStart encourages new farmers to engage in entrepreneurial strategies that creatively turn challenges into opportunities.</p> <p>(Geographic region: provincial non-profit in Guelph)</p> <p>Farms at Work: Farms At Work is a non-profit, charitable project whose mission is to promote healthy and active farmlands within the region of east central Ontario. It is a partner in the provincially coordinated FarmON Alliance. In order to accomplish its mission, Farms at Work is engaged in attracting and supporting new farmers to the region and farm stewardship.</p> <p>(Geographic region: regional non-profit charitable project)</p> <p>By the Bushel Community Food Co-operative: By the Bushel is a stakeholder co-op with three categories of shares (consumer, producer, employee). Consumers buy local from the co-op and all shareholders have a vote on the Board.</p> <p>Locally, the directions of provincial policies, specifically initiatives such as “Planning Peterborough to 2031: How the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Will Impact Peterborough” must be considered against the findings of Menu 2020. Specifically the directions supporting the findings of the Metcalf Foundation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change traditional patterns of urban development, emphasizing compact and transit supportive communities • reduce urban sprawl and help maintain agriculture lands
What are the benefits of maintaining a	<p>A strong agricultural community provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control over food security, quality and safety • ability to respond to changing cultural demands for variety in food

The question:	Why is it important to our community?:
strong agricultural community profile?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancement of the environment through careful agricultural management techniques • preservation of biodiversity • preservation of our history and traditions • opportunities for alternative lifestyle and employment choices that are land based • provision of recreational opportunities for non-rural residents • support for a strong agri business economy <p>(Source: GPAEDC: “City of Kawartha Lakes and Greater Peterborough Area Agricultural Economic Impact and Development Study”, 2006)</p> <p>The food produced, distributed and sold within a region can play a major role in how well the dietary needs of the population are met. Communities that have ready access to a sustainable supply of healthy, locally grown and produced foods are less vulnerable to external factors that can affect the nutritional quality and/or quantity of foods available. Municipal government and municipal policy have multiple levers to shift the food system. This is the focus of the Peterborough Community Food Network which is comprised of over 50 organizations, programs and community advocates.</p>

Note: Please refer to further tables included in the Appendix

Questions to Guide our Future Planning:

Finally, we must consider the following questions around our food production capabilities for the future:

1. How will the loss of farm families impact the social fabric of the farm community?
What impact will this have on small community service centres and schools?
2. What would we need to do to produce enough food to feed Peterborough County/City?
What is Peterborough's role in providing food to Ontario?
3. What is the role of public education in ensuring food literacy among all age groups
and sectors of our community?
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11. How will we enable our farm community to recover the value of their environmental
contributions/ecological goods and services (eg. protection of water and habitat) from
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12. What role will urban agriculture play in our future?

Appendix

Some Local Comparative Facts About Our Agricultural Community:

	1971	1991	1996	2001	2006
Peterborough County					
farmers under 35				125	110
35-54				830	710
55 and over				740	875
total				1695	1695
Average age				52.7	54.7
# acres		270,782	261,673	258,642	249,429
# acres 1971	319821				249429
gross farm receipts (2000 and 2005)				69,575,597	77,655,643
number of farms	1652	1430	1369	1202	1192
Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Agriculture					
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-629-x/2007000/4123856-eng.htm					
City of Kawartha Lakes & the Greater Peterborough Economic Impact & Development Study, Planscape, 2006					

Farms by Industry Group 2006 Census (Number of Farms)

Item	Peterborough	Province	Percentage of Province
Dairy cattle and milk production	73	4,937	1.48
Beef cattle ranching and farming	421	11,052	3.81
Hog and pig farming	8	2,222	0.36
Sheep and goat farming	37	1,365	2.71
Poultry and egg production	28	1,700	1.65
Other animal production	197	7,573	2.60
Oilseed and grain farming	63	13,056	0.48
Vegetable and melon farming	22	1,769	1.24
Fruit and tree nut farming	8	1,892	0.42
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture	51	2,822	1.81
Other crop farming	284	8,823	3.22

Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/index-eng.htm>

Total Gross Farm Receipts, 2006 Census (farms reporting)

Item	Peterborough	Province	Percentage of Province
\$10,000 to \$24,999	309	10,828	2.85
\$25,000 to \$49,999	148	7,397	2.00
\$50,000 to \$99,999	95	6,521	1.45
\$100,000 to \$249,999	83	7,965	1.04
\$250,000 to \$499,999	59	5,589	1.06
\$500,000 to \$999,999	21	2,745	0.77
\$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999	5	1,098	0.46
\$2,000,000 and over	2	568	0.35

Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/index-eng.htm>

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Further references may be found at Sustain Ontario's website:
<http://sustainontario.com/resources/research-and-reports>