



**Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs**

# **Developing Agriculture Potential**

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**Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs  
Regional Economic Development Branch  
North Region**

# Outline

## Overview of OMAFRA and the Regional Economic Development Branch

- What we do
- Where we work
- How we work
- Northern Ontario Agri-Food Sector Strategy
- Northern Livestock Pilot

## Preparing your Community to Develop Agricultural Economic Opportunities

- Land Base
- Agricultural Support Network
- Environmental Scan
- Evaluating and Building Capacity
- Funding Options

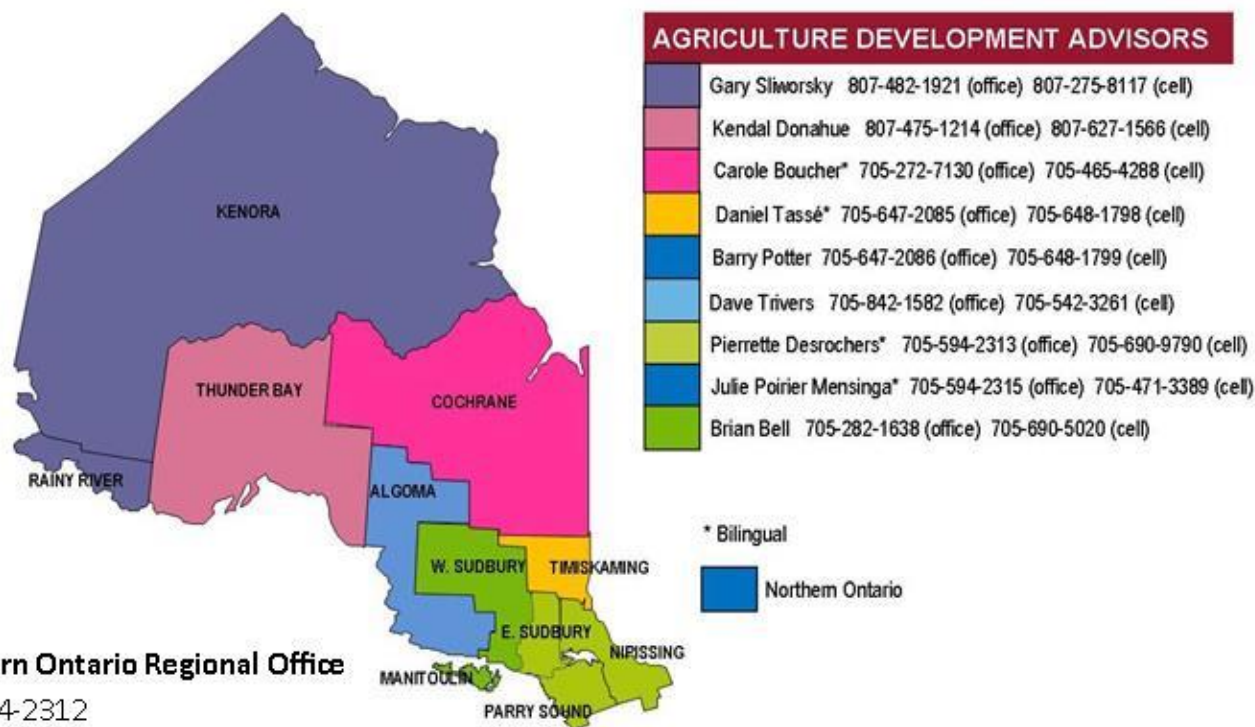
## Discussion

# Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

One of OMAFRA's main goals is to support the growth of the agri-food sector:

- Policy development (eg protecting agricultural land)
- Fund research
- Employ and provide access to specialists
- Offer funding programs
  - Canadian Agricultural Partnership
  - Business Risk Management Programs
  - Regional Economic Development Program
- Work with different industry/agricultural groups

## Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs North Region



**Northern Ontario Regional Office**

705-594-2312

**Farm North**

[www.farmnorth.com](http://www.farmnorth.com)





## **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BRANCH**

### **NORTH REGION CLIENTS:**

- Agriculture, agri-food processors and entrepreneurs
- Municipalities
- First Nations communities
- Local and provincial agriculture related organizations, associations and commodity groups



# **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BRANCH**

## **NORTH REGION CLIENTS:**

- Research organizations
- OMAFRA branches and divisions in support of the delivery of Ministry programs and services
- Other Ministries such as – Northern Development and Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, Municipal Affairs, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Environment and Climate Change
- FedNor

# AGRI-FOOD EXPANSION IN THE NORTH – POLICY CONTEXT

- The Northern Growth Plan (NGP), March 2011
  - “Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Food Processing” is one of 11 sectors named under the NGP and one of three creating a sector economic development strategy (the others are mining and forestry)
  - MNDM will coordinate development of the sector strategies through partner ministries and with stakeholders; OMAFRA will work with MNDM, other ministries and sector partners to develop a sector strategy
- OMAFRA Mandate Letter, September 2014
  - “Working with other ministries and partners to explore opportunities to develop the agricultural sector in the North. This approach should prioritize opportunities on private land.”

# WHY THE EMPHASIS ON AGRI-FOOD?

- The agri-food sector contributes \$37.6 billion to Ontario's GDP and employs more than 807,000 people.
- In Northern Ontario, the 2016 census showed that 2,237 farms generated \$209 million in gross farm cash receipts (up 9% since 2011). Aquaculture generated an additional \$23 million in cash receipts.

## Food Value Chain



# WHY THE EMPHASIS ON AGRI-FOOD?

- Studies consistently show agriculture as having a multiplier effect to the broader economy.
- There is evidence that the agri-food sector is less impacted by economic depression.



# WHY THE EMPHASIS ON AGRI-FOOD?

- Land availability
- Lower land costs
- A warming climate, new technologies and crop varieties
- Interest in local foods

# Northern Ontario Agri-Food Strategy

Strengthening the Agriculture, Aquaculture  
and Food Sector



# Northern Ontario Agri-Food Strategy

- The principles and actions that promote growth:
  - Proponent driven, government enabled
  - Responsive to regional challenges and opportunities
  - Outcome oriented
  - Enabled by a coordinated, whole-of-government collaborative approach by Indigenous, municipal, provincial and federal governments
- Five strategic directions to drive growth
  - Foster a Culture of Innovation
  - Strengthen Northern Primary Agriculture and Aquaculture Production
  - Strengthen Northern Food Processing
  - Increase Northern Consumption of Food Produced in the North
  - Increase Opportunities for Indigenous People and Communities to Participate in Economic Development in the Agri-Food Sector in Northern Ontario

# Agricultural Activity and Estimated Farm Cash Receipts for Main Commodities (\$ Millions), Northern Ontario, 2016

## Building on a Strong Foundation



# Building on a Strong Foundation

Organizations involved in research and local food:

- Rural Agri-Innovation Network (Sault Ste Marie)
- Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance (New Liskeard)
- North East Community Network
- Cloverbelt Food Co-op (Dryden)
- Local Food and Farming Coops
- Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy
- Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Partnerships with other research institutions:

- Laurentian University (Sudbury)
- College Boreal (Sudbury)
- Nipissing University
- Minnesota University

# Building on a Strong Foundation

The University of Guelph owns 2 research stations in Northern Ontario

- New Liskeard Agriculture Research Station (NLARS)
- Emo Agriculture Research Station (EARS)

Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Station



# NORTHERN LIVESTOCK PILOT

Principle: Proponent driven, government enabled

## MUNICIPAL ACTIVITIES

- Private land identification for suitable for livestock production
- Strategies to address agricultural infrastructure gaps
- Building agricultural labour capacity to support livestock expansion
- Improving relationships with Indigenous communities

## BEEF FARMERS OF ONTARIO ACTIVITIES

### Training and Education

- Indigenous training program with Collège Boréal in Kapuskasing
- Online modular training program for farming in the north
- Curriculum development

### Research

- Co-grazing sheep and cattle
- Windbreaks and bale grazing
- Dairy beef

### Resources

- BMP information resources
- Cow herd production and economic model
- Website and videos - beefnorth.com

## GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO ACTIVITIES

### Research Activities

- To understand the social, economic and environmental aspects of livestock expansion in northern Ontario

### Information Resources

- Develop information resources to support decision making
- Updated soils maps and agriculture capability information for the Clay Belt

### Pilot Sites

- Seeking a limited number of commercially scaled parcels of Crown land for agricultural operations.
- A fair and transparent process for selecting site operators/ owners
- Opportunities for applied research and demonstration



IDEAS GENERATED AT THE KICK-OFF EVENT

## NEXT STEPS

- Develop Action Plan
- Continue collaboration and partnerships
- Conduct research
- Develop information resources and tools
- Initiate the Crown land application process for the pilot sites

NLP Action Plan Release

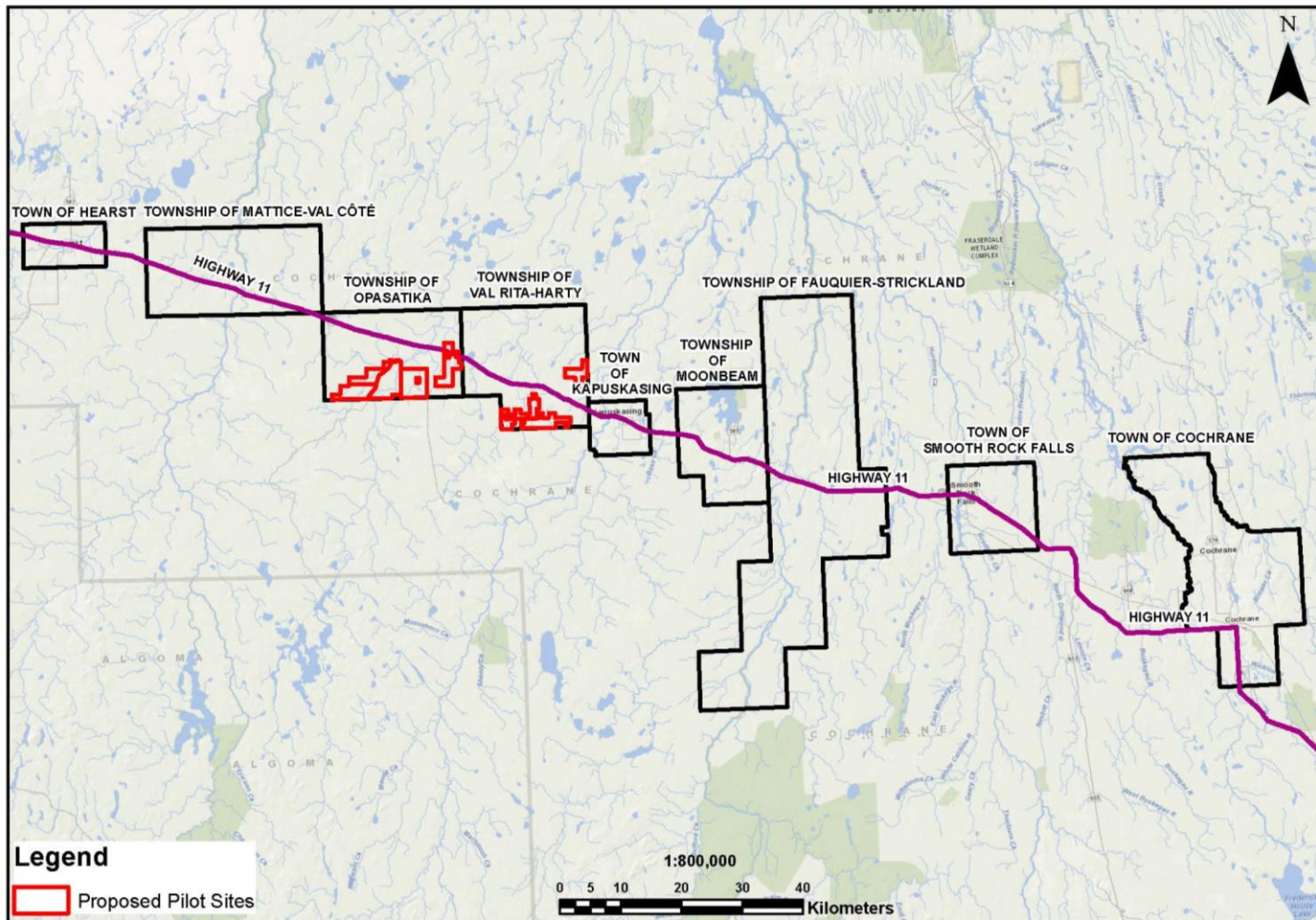


# Municipal Led Initiatives in the Great Claybelt

Mapping to Assess Agricultural Potential. Example map layers:

- Soil types
- Topography
- Ownership (eg private, crown, municipal)
- Parcel size (acreage per parcel)
- Proximity to urban centers, roads, water
- LiDAR
- Interview data

# Crown Land Pilot Sites



# PREPARING YOUR COMMUNITY TO TAKE ACTION ON AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Build a snapshot of your community
  - Agricultural Land Base
  - Agriculture Support Network
    - Regional infrastructure
    - Ag services
    - Retail and direct sales
    - Distributors
    - Processors
  - Conduct and environmental scan
2. Evaluate and build community readiness

# Agricultural Land Base

What kind of soils are in the area?

What is the soil fertility and pH levels?

What is the topography / slope like?

How stony is the land?

What kind of forest cover is there?

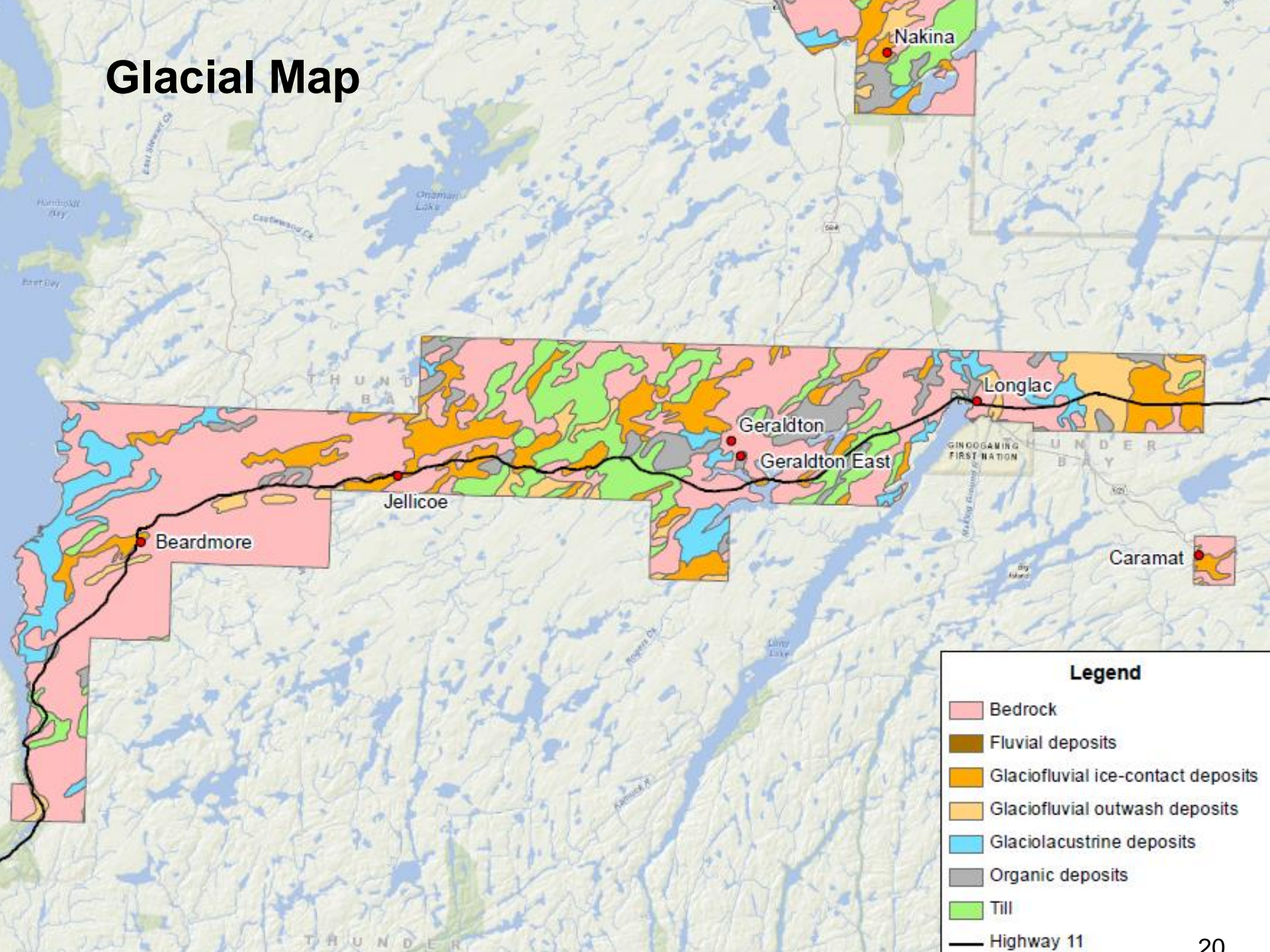
What is the proximity to water?

What is the distance to roads, markets, input providers?

What is the climate (precipitation, daylight temperatures)?

What are the parcel sizes and what is the ownership?

# Glacial Map



# Agricultural Support Network

Crop input suppliers

Agronomic services

Livestock supplies, animal care items and barn supplies

Hardware and building supplies

Machinery dealers

Large animal vets

Processors

Training / mentorship



# Conduct An Environmental Scan

## PESTO Analysis

- Political – political climate, shifts in thinking, changes to programs or regulations, changes in administration or leadership
- Environment/Economy/Education – changes in funding or spending, the general economic state of the region, educational needs, environmental trends or impacts
- Social – changing demographics, cultural trends
- Technological – trends in technology, communication

## SWOT Analysis

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

# Evaluating and Building Community Readiness

- Knowledge and Awareness – Is agriculture seen as a priority sector (eg Is agriculture included in your Official Plan and Economic Development Strategy)? Has your community identified opportunities to support agriculture (eg knowing your assets)?
- Leadership – Are elected officials supportive? Are there community leaders that are supportive?
- Collaboration – Are local businesses, organizations, and community leaders willing to work together? Are there relationships between communities and with economic development organizations?
- Resources – Are there resources to support agriculture economic development (time, people, budget)?
- Engagement – Are there positive attitudes in the community towards agriculture?

# Funding Options

## Rural Economic Development Program


- What RED funds:
  - Planning (developing plans and strategies, conducting research and analysis)
  - Implementation (implementing sector development plans, diversifying the local economy, undertaking marketing and branding activities, attracting and retaining skilled workers)
  - 50% eligible costs to \$100,000
- Who can apply:
  - A legal entity that is a not-for-profit
  - A municipality
  - A local services board
  - An Indigenous community or organization
- Next intake:
  - July 30, 2018 – September 28, 2018

# Funding Options

## Canadian Agricultural Partnership

- What CAP funds:
  - Protection and Assurance (eg food safety and traceability)
  - Environmental Stewardship (eg soil health)
  - Economic Development
    - Business Analysis
    - Market Development
    - Productivity, Technology Solutions
    - 50%
    - In some cases 75%
- Who can apply:
  - Organizations (legal entity that is a not-for-profit)
  - Collaborations (2 or more legal entities)
- Next intake:
  - May 11 to July 19, 2018

# Interested Individuals

 Ontario  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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Northern Livestock Pilot

Growth Plan for Northern Ontario

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## Growing the Agri-Food Sector in Northern Ontario


### The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario - an Overview

The **Growth Plan for Northern Ontario** (released in 2011) is a strategic framework that will guide decision-making and investment planning in Northern Ontario over 25 years (to 2036). The Plan focuses on ways to leverage economic, social and natural capital more strategically, and on approaches to attract a wider range of opportunities to the North. It is a plan to stimulate growth by creating a diversified northern economy, stronger communities, a healthy environment and a skilled, adaptive and innovative workforce.


Northern Ontario Agri-Food Strategy



Northern Livestock Project



Starting a Farm in Northern Ontario



Resources

Northern Agriculture Development Advisors



AgMaps - Agricultural Information Atlas

Farmzone

BeefNorth

FarmNorth

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation



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