

# Lot Creation Policies and the Future of Agriculture in Wellington County

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The Wellington Federation of Agriculture (WFA) is the largest farm organization in the County of Wellington with over 1500 members. Wellington County is a hub of agricultural innovation, research, and leadership in the province. Protecting and preserving the highly productive agricultural land for the purpose of growing, harvesting, and producing food, fuel and fiber is the WFA's priority.

Putting this  
into land use  
context for  
Wellington  
County

## Wellington County Statistics



Total Farm Area - 523,903 acres

Total Farms - 2617

Average Farm Area - 200 acres



Total Farm Operating Revenue - \$1,173,464,610

Contributes \$841 million to Ontario's GDP



12,260 jobs and 6,556 full-time equivalent jobs associated with primary production



81% of soils in Wellington County are Class 1-3

According to Ontario Farmland Trust, Ontario is already losing 319 acres of farmland every day (farmland transitioned to other uses)



# Current vs Proposed Lot Creation Policies

## 2.3.4 Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments

2.3.4.1 Lot creation in *prime agricultural areas* is discouraged and may only be permitted for:

- agricultural uses*, provided that the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations;
- agriculture-related uses*, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate *sewage and water services*;
- a *residence surplus to a farming operation* as a result of farm consolidation, provided that:
  - the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate *sewage and water services*; and
  - the planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective; and
- infrastructure*, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights-of-way.

2.3.4.2 Lot adjustments in *prime agricultural areas* may be permitted for legal or technical reasons.

2.3.4.3 The creation of new residential lots in *prime agricultural areas* shall not be permitted, except in accordance with policy 2.3.4.1(c).

## 2.3.5 Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas

2.3.5.1 Planning authorities may only exclude land from *prime agricultural areas* for expansions of or identification of *settlement areas* in accordance with policy 1.1.3.8.

## 2.3.6 Non-Agricultural Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas

2.3.6.1 Planning authorities may only permit non-agricultural uses in *prime agricultural areas* for:

- extraction of *minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources*; or
- limited non-residential uses, provided that all of the following are demonstrated:

## 4.3.3 ~~2.3.4~~ Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments

1. ~~2.3.4.1~~ Residential lot creation in *prime agricultural areas* is ~~discouraged and may only be permitted~~ in accordance with provincial guidance for:

a) new residential lots created from a lot or parcel of land that existed on January 1, 2023, provided that:

- agriculture is the principal use of the existing lot or parcel of land;
- the total number of lots created from a lot or parcel of land as it existed on January 1, 2023 does not exceed three;
- any residential use is compatible with, and would not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations; and
- any new lot:
  - is located outside of a *specialty crop area*;
  - complies with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;
  - will be limited to ~~the~~ minimum size needed to accommodate the use ~~and~~ while still ensuring appropriate sewage and water services;<sup>47</sup>
  - has existing access on a public road, with appropriate frontage for ingress and egress; and
  - is adjacent to existing non-agricultural land uses or consists primarily of lower-priority agricultural lands.

b) ~~a residence surplus to a farming operation~~ a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, provided that:

- the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use ~~and~~ while still ensuring appropriate sewage and water services; and
- the planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective.

2. Official plans and zoning by-laws shall not contain provisions that are more restrictive than policy 4.3.3.1 (a) except to address public health or safety concerns.

3. Non-residential lot creation in *prime agricultural areas* is discouraged and may only be permitted, in accordance with provincial guidance, for:

<sup>47</sup> 2.3.4.1 c) 1.



## Impact of Bill 97 and PPS changes for Wellington County

- allowance of 3 new residential lots per farm
  - ✓ Average farm size 200 acre, which provincially averages 3.5 parcel per farm
- allowance of 2 additional dwelling units (ADU) per lot
  - = total of 3 dwellings per lot x estimated lot size of 1 acre (assuming an average lot size of 1 acre – which is probably on the low side)



2617 farms x 3 lots of 1 acre x 3.5 parcels/farm = 27,478 acres



**27,478 farmland acres lost in Wellington County**

**27,478 lots + 2 ADU/lot = 82,434 dwellings on mainly prime ag land**

- The overall impact of farmland loss is much, much larger with virtually all prime agricultural land exposed to many residences and related MDS impacts.
- Not only will this policy lead to the loss of farmland it will impact farms in many ways (ranging from impacts on land values, to trespass, to road safety, to concerns over odour, dust, noise, etc).



## **The current landscape from “Retirement lots” to Lot severances with Additional Dwelling Units**



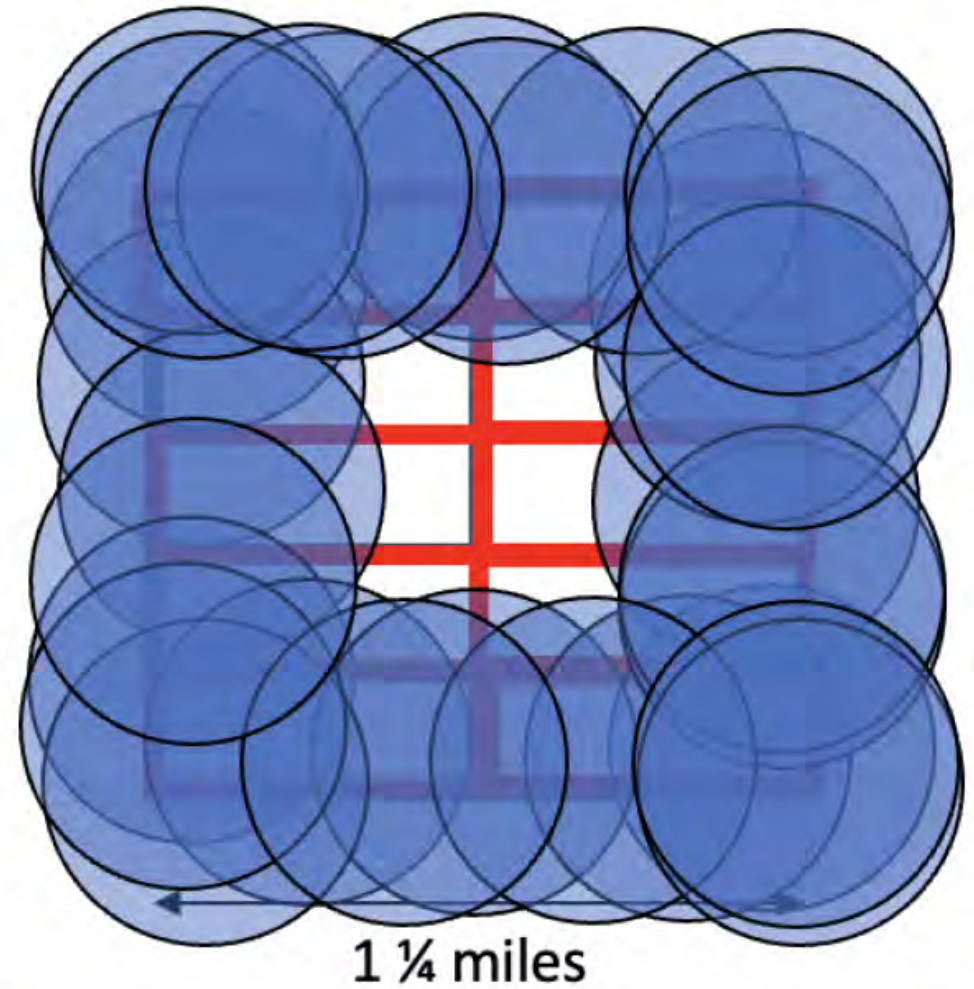
## What the future could look like: Additional MDS Restrictions from 30 new severances on a typical concession block (one side of the road only)....



- The area identified as restricted is based on the application of Minimum Distance Separation for a proposed 2000 feeder hog operation on liquid manure

(note: for a 4000 feeder hog barn the distance would be even greater – radius of 700 metres)

Area restricted by severances granted (552 metre radius\*)





# Economics of Livestock Agriculture in Wellington

Between 2016-2021 the County has reported farm growth in several commodities:

- \* Beef Cattle (+122)
- \* Dairy Cattle (+23)
- \* Poultry and egg (+35)
- \* Sheep and goat (+35)

Based on consumption habits, Wellington County farmers produce enough livestock annually to feed -

Dairy Products - 7 x the population of Wellington County

Beef - 7 x the population of Wellington County

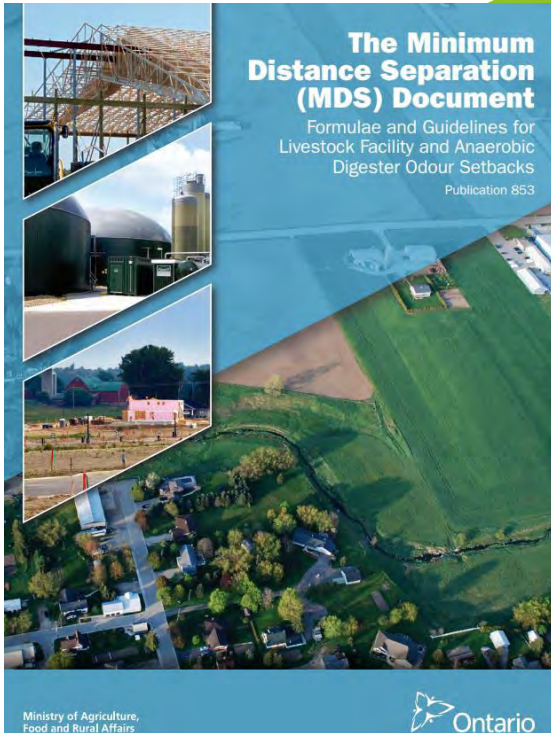
Chicken - 7 X the population of Wellington County

Turkey - 4 x the population of Wellington County

Eggs - 3 x the population of Wellington County

New lot creation policy will ultimately reduce opportunities to create and expand livestock in Ontario.

**Is this the beginning of the end for animal agriculture in Wellington County**







## Economics of Field-crop Agriculture in Wellington

- Wellington County covers only 0.2% of total land area in Ontario, but it supports 5% of the Province's field crops
- Wellington County farmers produce 4% of Ontario's corn, 4% of Ontario's soyabeans and 7% of the province's wheat cash receipts.
- Soil Quality and optimal climate uniquely positions Wellington County for field crop production
- 324 farms in Wellington grow specialty crops including -
  - \* vegetable and melon
  - \* fruit and tree nuts
  - \* Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture
- 38% of farms have gross receipts of over \$1 M
- Proximity to markets give farmers, agri-businesses opportunities to diversify revenue streams, through specialty crop markets, agritourism, or direct-to-consumer sales

**Wellington County is a leader in field crop Production**



## **Economics of Agriculture in Wellington**

Wellington County's Agri-Food System contributes...

\$2.8 billion to Canada's GDP, which is 5.0% of the Ontario agri-food industry's total contribution.

35,943 jobs to the Canadian economy, nearly two thirds of which are in the food manufacturing and retail portion of the value chain.

\$496 million in labour income within farm and upstream jobs.

## **Impact of Bill 97 and PPS changes**

- Revoked municipal comprehensive reviews
- Reduced or revoked density targets from the Growth Plan
- Greenbelt changes moves prime agricultural land out of the Greenbelt and marginal land into the Greenbelt
- Natural heritage policies and related definitions remain under consideration.
- In defining Additional Dwelling Units there is not a clear definition stating the ADUs can be severed at a later date
- Cost of Community Servicing Studies have clearly shown that residential lots in the rural area cost the municipality more than the tax revenue received to provide residential services
- Provincial Ministerial Zoning authority to overturn local planning decisions
- The Province has identified additional prime farmland to be included in the urban boundary in addition to the County's comprehensive future land needs assessment

**27,478 acres + urban boundary expansion + Provincially identified additional Farmland**



# How does this impact our farm



Next Steps – what agriculture needs  
from all levels of local government and  
all residents of Wellington County

**Strongly** worked comments opposing  
late creation in the rural areas is needs.

<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-6813>

# Thank you



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<https://www.wfofa.on.ca/>

