

## Farmland Preservation

Farming and Farmland Network  
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### OVERVIEW

Ontario saw a 7.2% reduction in the available farmland between 2006 and 2016 as well as a decline in farmland accessibility due to increasing socioeconomic pressures. The challenge of keeping farmland in agricultural production requires addressing both the protection farmland from conversion as well as ensuring that farming on such land remains viable.

There are 4 pressures driving farmland loss (1) Urban expansion; (2) Consolidation and severance (typically the detachment of residential structures) on agricultural properties; (3) Financialization of food systems; (4) Public expropriation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Possible policy options categorized by their correspondence to existing policy, are listed below. Only the top two policy options per category are provided here, please see the full research paper for more options.

1. *Stand-Alone Municipal Policy Initiatives*
  - a. Promoting greater public awareness for the need to preserve farmland.
  - b. Conduct robust soil mapping studies that take into account a holistic approach to food production, such as the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study conducted by the City of Ottawa.
2. *Changes to the Planning Act and Growth Plans*
  - a. Revise exemptions to categories permitted for severance.
  - b. Requiring provincial approval for farmland conversion, rather than just municipalities.
3. *Easements, Land Trusts, & Tax Incentives*
  - a. Expansion of urban agriculture tax credits to municipalities throughout Ontario.
  - b. Provide financial support and raise awareness for land trusts & agricultural easements.
4. *Agricultural Monitoring and Standards*
  - a. Greater support for the monitoring and analysis of farmland in Ontario. Including studying the impacts of development in proximity to farmland.
  - b. Revise MDS standards to include different approaches to smaller-scale and alternative mixed-production categories.
5. *Federal Policy*
  - a. Inclusion of the preservation of farmland as a national priority within a National Food Policy, and inclusion of farmland preservation civil society groups and farmer organizations in any food policy councils responsible for its governance.
  - b. Inclusion of farmland preservation as a condition for the availability of funding and access to risk management tools in any future inter-governmental agricultural frameworks.

For an in-depth discussion of the above, please see the full research paper of the Farming and Farmland Network available at <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.