

New and Young Farmers

Farming and Farmland Network
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OVERVIEW

Three challenges, and their contributing factors, have been identified for new and young farmers in Ontario:

1. **Access to Farmland:** growing farm size, increasing value of farmland, lack of succession plans (especially to new entrants), less land available for rent
2. **Capital:** increasing value of farmland, requirement of a business plan, lack of funding opportunities, onerous funding applications, increasing cost of equipment and training
3. **Knowledge and Training:** lack guidance for business plans, lack of paid internships, broad scope of knowledge required (technical skills, marketing, production, human resources and financial)

EXAMPLES TO BUILD UPON

- In France the government provides early retirement incentives to encourage earlier farm succession and increase preparedness of new farmers
- Organizations such as the Rural-Agri Innovation Network and the Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance provide assistance to farmers applying for grants

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Policies should be put in place that recognize the strategic significance of farmland in providing food security to Ontarians, and prevent its commodification by investors.
2. Retiring farmers should be incentivized to work with new entrants and family members to ease financial access to land, and avoid transition under duress.
3. Qualifying new entrants to farming should be provided with financing options that reduce and/or spread over time the cost of acquiring farmland. These could be tied to business success, to ensure that they are directly related to lasting new farm entrepreneurship. Land trusts could facilitate this process.
4. Develop a funding program that assists new farmers in developing a learning plan, identifying relevant learning opportunities (workshops, conferences or courses), assists with cost of training and/or travel and provide opportunities to share what was learned with other farmers.
5. Develop specific recommendations for regional agricultural economic development.

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/>.