



# SUSTAIN

Alliance for healthy, just and sustainable food & farming  
Working across Indigenous Territories / Ontario

## Support New Entrants\* and Protect Foodland\*

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- Loss of productive land reduces land access options for new entrants, harms rural communities, and is a threat to local food supply through the fragmentation of farming communities, loss of employment, and loss of local and farm/harvest-related businesses and services.
- After a century of foodland loss with little attention to meaningful protection, Ontario's foodland faces growing pressures from aggressive urban development and growth, weak provincial policy guidance, and erratic and ineffective zoning protections.
- New entrants to food production struggle to secure land tenure beyond short-term land access making it difficult to invest in production systems, support infrastructure, startup costs, and build soil quality.

\*New entrants include Indigenous people entering into food harvesting, fishing and agriculture; intra-family new farmers who are successors to a family farm; rural and urban people entering farming (young and older) with no access to land; new Canadians; and temporary foreign farm workers, seeking pathways to citizenship.

\*Foodland includes forests, farmland, and water.

### Recommendations

- Amend provincial land-use policy to **ensure long-term foodland protection**.
- **Close loopholes** and ensure municipalities **prioritize foodland protection**.
- Safeguard foodlands by **placing strict limits on the expansion of urban boundaries** into natural and food-producing lands.
- Stop the use of Minister's Zoning Orders to fast track development projects.
- Tie development permissions to mitigation requirements that **require developers to reserve a percentage of the land for foodland use**.
- **Integrate urban farming spaces into urban planning** citing demonstrable health and community development benefits of community farming.
- Reduce existing barriers to urban food production and selling urban-produced food by **amending municipal/regional zoning and by-laws**.
- Create government-supported programs for **removing some food/farmland from the market** (ie. **agricultural land easements, purchasing for public stewardship, long-term leasing on public lands**, etc) so that new entrants can access it to develop businesses that support food production in Ontario.
- Create **targeted Long term Microloan programs** to support farm businesses.

These policies have been created with the input of 90+ Ontario organizations collaborating over 4 months and have been vetted by the Sustain Board as of February 4, 2025. For more information, please go to:

<https://sustainontario.com/vote2025/>