

# Agriculture Economic Development Initiatives

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## Examine Your Agriculture Community

Projects	Details
SWOT Analysis (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) Environmental Scan	Sector Research/Economic Impact Studies – compare statistics, strengths of the community; employment; industries; occupations; GDP; growth; gross farm receipts; area of farmland
Asset Mapping Project/ Cluster Analysis	Identify the assets that are unique to the community and develop a strategy to support these unique assets/clusters  Identify gaps in cold storage, distribution, processing and packaging infrastructure, and develop plan to support more efficient use of existing facilities or investment in new ones
Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Project	A BR+E program (through OMAFRA) uses trained volunteers to visit businesses and conduct confidential interviews with owners or managers. Data analysis and action planning is then undertaken to address issues and opportunities

## Promote Your Agriculture Community

Projects	Details
Local Food Map	Flavour Trails – including farms, markets, restaurants, wineries, cideries and other food experiences
Culinary/Agri-Food Tourism Strategy	Develop a plan for destination tourism for agri-food experiences
Agri-Food Investment Strategy	Create a Business Attraction brochure and campaign to promote the location of new agri-food businesses and investments in the community
Local Food Education & Awareness Project/“Buy Local” Campaigns	Educational campaigns with local schools, public health, consumers, and community agencies to promote the importance of local food in the community  “Farm Bucks/Market Bucks” – redeemable vouchers for local farm or farmers’ market purchases
Directional and Farm-Gate Signage Project	Support the development of a branding and sign design project for promoting local farm-gate and direct farm marketing sales
Import Substitution and Local Procurement	Institutional procurement policies to give advantage to local producers
Community Leadership and Sector Champions	Encourage linkages between champions and leaders in the agri-food sector by promoting and supporting events and projects to strengthen the message

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## Support Your Agriculture Community

Projects	Details
Community Improvement Plans (CIPs)	CIPs can support agricultural businesses, through grant or loan programs, such as: value-added agriculture in Norfolk County, Haldimand County, and Elgin County
Encourage Supportive Land Use Policies	Modify land use policies to reduce restrictions for agriculture and agri-food businesses (e.g. Complete the Checklist to Support Agricultural Growth in Your Municipality)
Support Ag Organizations/Increase Capacity for Ongoing Projects	Promote farm gate, on-farm and farm market opportunities to consumers, as well as events that promote those opportunities
Invest in Ag Infrastructure – Processing, Storage and Distribution	Inventory appropriate existing municipally-owned lands for potential agricultural leases and incorporate a land lease and new farmer incubator into municipal land lease arrangements for a “food hub”
Strengthen the Value Chain	Invest in abattoirs, food hubs, agricultural incubators, community kitchens  Develop collaborative networks where producers and processors can exchange market information and improve local and regional linkages
Encourage Co-Ops and Community Networks	Develop a plan to increase the use of private, community and local government facilities for commercial food production and processing, community kitchens, food recovery, and distribution activities
Create a “Community Investment Fund”	A “Community Investment Fund” can be created by working with multiple investors (e.g. retired farmers, financial institutions, government agencies, business immigrants, etc.) which provides patient debt and equity capital for community economic development in the region, which can focus on value-added agri-food businesses as an investment stream
Encourage Linkages Across Municipalities	An upper-tier municipality (either a county or a regional municipality) can coordinate a strategy for participation from lower-tier municipalities, or it can be many lower-tier or single-tier municipalities that agree to align their agri-food strategies
Hire an Agriculture Development Officer/Local Food Coordinator	Hire a development officer or coordinator with a focus on agriculture and/or local food initiatives to support the development of the sector