

Agricultural System in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Consultation

What is the purpose of the Agricultural System?

The Agricultural System is being developed to identify and protect the agricultural land base across municipalities, while recognizing that planning and economic development should be coordinated to enable the agri-food sector to thrive alongside rapidly-growing communities and infrastructure.

The Agricultural System has two components to support a viable, thriving agri-food sector: an **agricultural land base** comprised of *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands* that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture; and an **agri-food network** which includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector, such as regional *infrastructure*, on-farm buildings, agricultural services, distributors and processors.

Three *draft* tools have been provided to implement the Agricultural System in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and OMAFRA is looking for feedback until October 4, 2017. The draft tools are: an agricultural land base map, an online Agricultural System Portal, and Implementation Procedures.

Draft Agricultural Land Base Map: What is it, where is it, and what should I look for?

The draft map of the Agricultural Land Base was produced by the province to identify prime agricultural areas in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to provide more continuity across municipalities and identify candidate lands for prime agriculture area or rural lands designations as part of the agricultural land base.

The map may be refined by municipalities during their Official Plan review which will take place between now and July 1, 2022 to conform with the four updated provincial land use plans. The draft Map can be viewed at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/agsys.jpg>, or in closer detail in the draft Agricultural System Portal (http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/gis/WCAG_AGOL/index.html?appid=3cbd2393a1e548949450e21d90646353) by clicking on the third icon near the top of the screen and checking boxes 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.2. Your property or neighbouring land may be identified as candidate land for prime agricultural area or rural area designation. This designation will not occur until after the municipality conducts an Official Plan Review.

Draft Agriculture System Portal: What is it, where is it, and what should I look for?

The publicly-available online Agriculture System Portal for the Greater Golden Horseshoe has 60 mapping layers that identify spatial density of agricultural production, and locations of drainage and transportation infrastructure, processing and storage facilities, and other support businesses and infrastructure. The purpose of the Portal is to assist with planning and economic development to enhance the value chain and protect essential services for the agriculture and agri-food sector. The ability to map clusters of agri-food assets and infrastructure, as well as identify gaps in the Agricultural System, will help municipalities and other support organizations to make informed decisions. The Portal will also be used to assist with Agricultural Impact Assessments.

The draft Agricultural System Portal can be found here (http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/gis/WCAG_AGOL/index.html?appid=3cbd2393a1e548949450e21d90646353). By clicking on the third icon near the top of the screen, you will be able to see a wide variety of data sets available as mapping layers. On an ongoing basis, the data will be updated and more mapping layers will be added to the Portal.

Agricultural production is mapped as spatial density of farms instead of physical locations, for privacy considerations. However, for farm businesses that advertise on directories such as GreenbeltFresh.ca, your farm will be identified in that map layer (e.g. Pick-Your-Own farms or On-Farm Markets).

Draft Implementation Procedures: What is it, where is it, and what should I look for?

The Draft Implementation Procedures are guidelines to help municipalities and other implement the Agricultural System policies in their communities. The document can be found here: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/improc.pdf>.

Farm businesses may want to review this document to learn about the potential initiatives that municipalities will be undertaking to support agriculture and agri-food. Local Federations of Agriculture may want to partner with their municipalities or other local organizations to participate in these initiatives.

What's next?

OFA will provide a formal submission to OMAFRA for the October 4, 2017 deadline. Visit OMAFRA's website to learn more or to submit your own feedback: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/agsys-ggh.htm>