



# *Where Local Lives*

## SOUTH CENTRAL ONTARIO REGION

A Guidebook For Purchasing Local Food All Season Long  
In South Central Ontario Region





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# INTRODUCTION

## *Why Local Matters*

Buying local means purchasing directly from members of your community. Supporting entrepreneurs like farmers and small business owners makes a world of difference. Buying local will directly invest in your economy, as thriving businesses will hire residents and source nearby goods and services. Making the conscious choice to support local will also benefit the environment, as it reduces the distance travelled by your food and agricultural products – keeping fresh from field to fork.

## 5 REASONS WE LOVE *Local Food*

1

Preparing fresher, local food is far tastier than food off the supply chain.

2

A shorter path from harvest to your plate, keeps the maximum amount of nutrition.

3

Buying local directly supports farmers, the local economy & builds community.

4

Shipping & cooling food for thousands of miles wastes fuel energy.

5

You'll know exactly where your food comes from, and the farmer that grew it.

Definitions of “local food” vary, but the focus is always on the distance between where food is produced and where it is sold. This can range from being in the same country to the same province, or even the same region or town.

## *This Guidebook Will:*

1. help you to identify local foods in Ontario,
2. give snapshots of where you can find local food across South Central Ontario, and
3. give you tips and tricks on how to extend those local products.

# IDENTIFYING LOCAL

*Looking for Local?*

LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING LOGOS ON YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD PRODUCTS:



*Beef*

*Dairy*



*Chicken*

*Turkey*

*Eggs*



*Pork*

*Seafood*

*Fruit & Vegetables*



*Beer & Wine*



*In addition, look for phrases like:*

- **PRODUCT OF CANADA**
- **GROWN IN ONTARIO**
- **PRODUCT OF ONTARIO**

You can always ask your local grocer if you are unsure.

**MADE IN CANADA:** Means the food was prepared in Canada, but the ingredients may or may not have come from Canada.

**PRODUCT OF CANADA:** Means the food was made in Canada and all or nearly all of the ingredients are from Canada. Small amounts of non-Canadian ingredients, like spices, are allowed.<sup>1</sup>

### *Dining out or Ordering in?*

Looking for local at your favourite restaurants? The FeastON certification program helps restaurants demonstrate their commitment to purchasing from local farms. Check out FeastON certified restaurants near you, **here**.



### *Not sure what is in season?*

Check out **Foodland Ontario's food availability guide**.

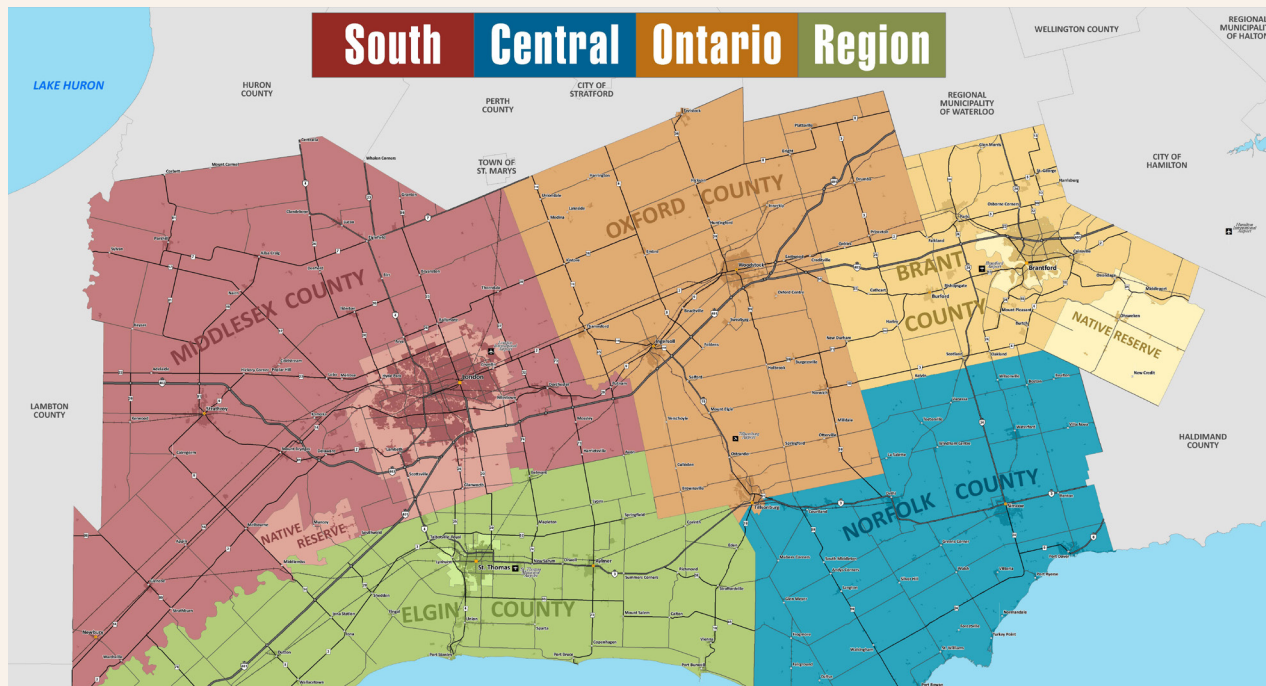




# WHERE LOCAL LIVES

## *South Central Ontario*

Local food lives in South Central Ontario. Whether you are a foodie seeking gourmet flavours, or just shopping for groceries, you can find it grown locally in South Central Ontario. In this section you can find regional food guides, fun farm facts, and spotlighted local producers to go check out – any time of the year.



To seek out local all over Ontario, visit **Ontario Farm Fresh's** website. Ontario Farm Fresh promotes and unites Ontario farms, agri-tourism destinations, pick-your-owns (PYO), roadside markets, farmgate producers, local meats, wineries, berries, community supported agriculture (CSA) and much more!

## *Purchasers Committed to Local*





## SCOR FOODHUB

The goal of the SCOR Foodhub is to bring together small to mid-sized local food producers to increase market access and ensure that local product is enjoyed in the community it was produced in. Through hard work, advocacy and community building, the Foodhub has enabled the approximately 36 local small to mid sized food producers to supply 12 major buys (8 public institutions and 4 large private companies). The SCOR Foodhub has also been able encourage the following initiatives :

- Help to change how hospitals can spend dollars on local food,
- Support for the Ontario Student Nutrition Program,
- Support local producers,
- Promote the importance of supporting local producers
- Held Local Food Recognition Day Awards Ceremony to recognize “Local Food Champions” in the SCOR Region



*Look what our farmers are growing in South Central Ontario*







# COUNTY OF BRANT

## *Did You Know?*

There are 15 farmers markets and on-farm retailers located throughout the County of Brant, all selling local products. Half of these farmers markets are open year-round.

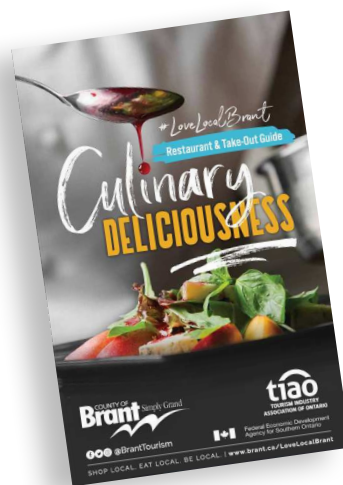
Elberta Farms\*  
Brantview Farms / Howell Road\*  
Kristis Farm Kitchen\*  
The Stand Burford  
Scotview Orchard  
Little Brown Cow\*  
Drongkowskis\*  
Chary Picker Farmers Market

Brant County Garlic Company  
Devon Acres Organic Farm  
Clovercroft Farm\*  
Vangro Farms Country Market  
Browndale Farm and Market\*  
Winney Mills\*  
Windmill County Market\*

\*open year-round

## *Where Local Lives*

For local eats throughout the County of Brant, check out the **Brant Local Dining Guide**. The guide includes all of the restaurants in Brant and lets you know whether the restaurant is dine-in, take-out, and/or has a patio.



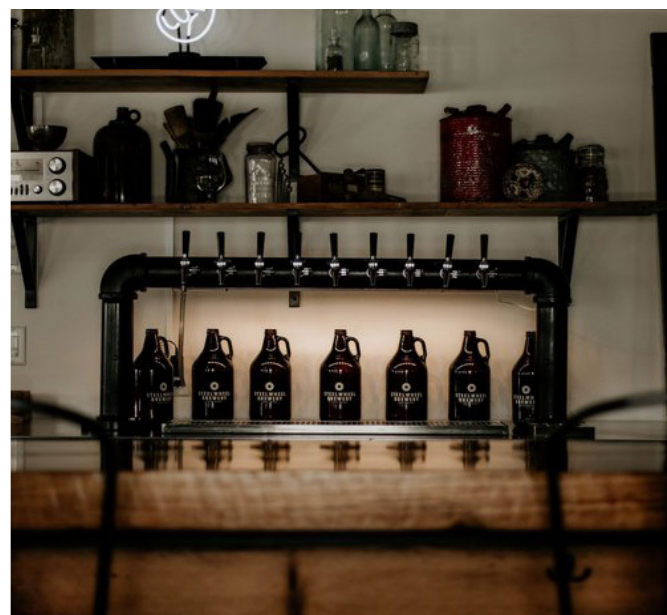




## Seasonless Spotlight

### STEEL WHEEL BREWERY

County of Brant's first craft brewery, Steel Wheel Brewery is located on a hop farm, just outside Brantford. Set in an 1890's farmhouse, Steel Wheel Brewery features its own tasting room and seasonal outdoor patio where customers can taste a variety of small-batch brews. Learn more [here](#).



### MOORE FARMS

The Moore Family has operated their farm for over a century. Moore Farms offers seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables (including u-pick strawberries) in season, and farm fresh eggs, cheese, and snacks year-round. In addition to these table-ready products, Moore Farms also grows Feed Grain for livestock. Check out their website [here](#).

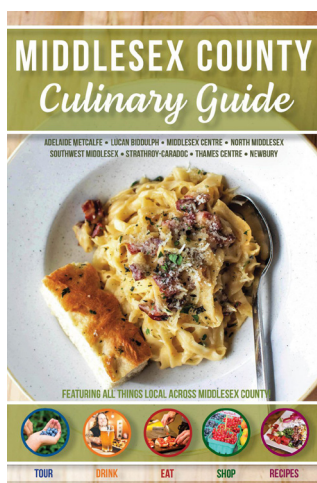
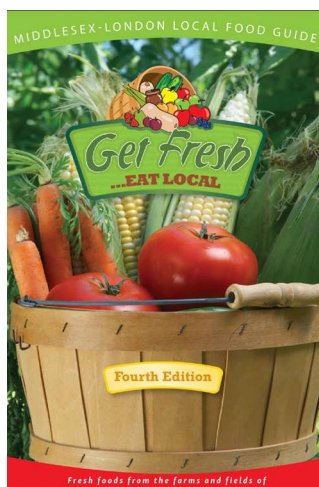


# MIDDLESEX COUNTY

## *Did You Know?*

In one month, over 20 million eggs are produced in Middlesex County. End to end, these egg cartons would stretch from London to Brockville!

## *Where Local Lives*



- Check out this **Middlesex Local Food Guide** where you will find information about different seasonal farm products in the County, a Farm Fresh Map, and local food directory.
- The **Middlesex County Culinary Guide** is your guide to all things local across the County. This interactive guide provides all you need to know about where you can tour, drink, eat and shop local in Middlesex. It even includes some recipes from local businesses that feature fresh local ingredients.

- Check out these **Profile Videos** that feature local businesses in Middlesex County.
- CTV London produced the excellent **Fields to Forks** video series that features many local agribusinesses in Middlesex County.





TY

## *Seasonless Spotlight*

### WHITE CREST MUSHROOMS

White Crest Mushrooms is a family farm located near Putnam that produces portobello and cremini mushrooms all year-round. You can shop at their retail outlet called Good Family Food Retail Outlet located at their farm. Find out more [here](#).



### HEEMAN'S GARDEN CENTRE

Heeman's Garden Centre has all of your nursery, garden and seasonal decorating needs, located just east of the London airport. Heeman's also sells jams and sauces, honey, and hard cider made on-farm throughout the year. **Click [here](#)** for more information on what Heeman's has to offer.



# ELGIN COUNTY

## *Did You Know?*

Elgin's long history of being the centre of Ontario agriculture can be traced back beyond 1860, when wheat farming dominated the area. These days, Elgin is still one of the dominant regions in Ontario agriculture, but with a much more diverse range of crops.

## *Where Local Lives*

- **Savour Elgin** is a culinary trail throughout Elgin County that highlights some of the best restaurants, farms, wineries, and other culinary attractions that are local and unique to the area.
- Celebrate the abundant and diverse bounty of local farms and businesses in Elgin at **BuyLocalBuyFresh.ca**. Find a digital map of all the spots to buy local farm products. Be sure to make time on your food basket shopping trip to visit the local artisans and the Quilt Trail businesses in Elgin!
- Elgin County Tourism publishes a visitor guide each year highlighting the wonderful local destinations in Elgin County including highlights from each of the charming locales in Elgin. Find out where to eat, shop and experience local **here**.







## *Seasonless Spotlight*

### TALBOTVILLE BERRY FARM MARKET

You can find local year-round at Talbotville Berry Farm Market - a 100+ acre family farm and urban market located just outside St. Thomas. At the market, you can find seasonal produce and seasonless preserves and meats from the farm, foods from other local farms, and takeout. Learn more at their website [here](#).



### QUAI DU VIN ESTATE WINERY

The Quai family first planted their vineyards north of Sparta in 1972. Set in an idyllic location, Quai du Vin's range of wines are made from 100% Ontario grown grapes, including grapes from their 22 acre vineyard. They offer winery tours from 30 - 60 minutes in length, and expanded tours that include food and wine pairings. [Click here](#) to visit their website and book in advance.



# NORFOLK COUNTY

## *Did You Know?*

Norfolk County is known as Ontario's Garden. The County is one of Ontario's fruit heartlands, producing 53% of the sour cherries in Ontario, 14% of the apples, and 13% of the strawberries. The County is also one of Ontario's fastest growing wine regions.

## *Where Local Lives*



- Visit **Norfolk Tourism's** website to find out all you need to know about local food and seasonal eating in Norfolk County.
- For the wine and beer aficionados, check out the **Norfolk County Toast to the Coast Trail** – a collection of wineries and breweries along Ontario's beautiful South Coast. Discover what makes Norfolk County one of the best kept secrets in Ontario wine and beer!
- Check out this wonderful clip that highlights what **Ontario's Garden** has to offer and meet some of **Norfolk County's bright entrepreneurs** and find out what they love about their home.
- While you seek out the fresh foods and local products in Ontario's Garden, take some time to explore some of the many **trails that Norfolk County has to offer.**





## *Seasonless Spotlight*

### VG MEATS

The four Van Groningen brothers combine to make VG Meats. The local, familyowned company has proudly been serving Ontario families high quality meat since the 1970s. The business currently operates two retail locations in Simcoe and Cayuga, each one near to one of their family farms. To learn more about the products they offer, visit their website [here](#).



### UNCLE BOB'S ONTARIO POPPING CORN

You can meet all your snacking needs at Uncle Bob's Ontario Popping Corn, who produces Local Food Plus certified, non-GMO popcorn. You can find their products at several local grocery chains, online, or at their family farm in Norfolk County. [Click here](#) for more information on where to get your snacking fix.



# OXFORD COUNTY

## *Did You Know?*

Oxford County is the Dairy Capital of Canada! 11% of all dairy cattle in Ontario are raised in Oxford County. In 2016, there were 305 dairy farms in Oxford county. In Oxford County you can find a variety of artisan cheesemakers and fresh milk products that can be delivered right to your door.

## *Where Local Lives*

- Check out the **Oxford Fresh Map** for your guide to farms, food, & local fare.
- Looking for a farmer's market or local food retail location in Oxford? Look no further than the Tourism Oxford webpage, **here**.
- Want to immerse yourself in local food? Check out **Oxford Bytes** to stay updated on the latest on local food in Oxford.
- Want to learn how to prepare your favourite local ingredients from Oxford County? Check out the free list of crowd-pleasing recipes, **here**.
- Want to learn even more about businesses across Oxford County? Check out the **We Grow Together** series on YouTube.
- Explore some of what makes Oxford County legenDAIRY by **exploring our cheese trail** – all season long. What can you expect?
  - 24 stops along the self-guided trail for you to choose from and explore at your own pace
  - Customized trips using easy to access pre-populated routes on Google Maps





## Seasonless Spotlight

### UDDERLY RIDICULOUS

**Greg and Cheryl Haskett** are the third-generation Oxford County farmers behind Udderly Ridiculous gourmet goat milk ice cream. Their award-winning ice cream can be ordered for **delivery** across Southwestern Ontario, or purchased in **grocery stores** across Ontario. **Learn more** about what makes goat milk ice cream so delicious and why it's a great alternative for those who can't digest cow milk.



### GUNN'S HILL ARTISAN CHEESE

Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheese is a small artisan cheese plant nestled within the rolling hills of Gunn's Hill Rd., in Oxford County, Ontario. The milk used to create the cheeses comes from the neighbouring family dairy farm,

Friesvale Farms, where the finest Canadian milk is produced. To ensure cheeses that are of top quality and taste Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheeses are hand crafted using traditional cheese-making methods. Visit their **website** to learn more and to order cheese online.

# TIPS & TRICKS EXTENDING THE

## *Preserving*

Not all locally grown products are available year-round. Remember to check the Food Availability Guide to learn about what local products are available at different times throughout the year.

There are ways you can extend the shelf-life of your favourite local products. Here are a few ideas, below.



## ROOT CELLARS & COOL STORAGE ROOMS

A root cellar is a structure, usually underground or partially underground, used for storage of vegetables, fruits, nuts, or other foods. Four main factors to considering root cellar storage include proper temperature, proper ventilation, light-blocking ability and the humidity level. For more information on safe storage tips, please visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency page, [here](#).

## DRYING / DEHYDRATING

One of the oldest methods of preserving food is drying. Drying preserves your food by removing the moisture so that bacteria and molds are prevented from growing. You can dry your food with an oven, microwave, dehydrator and even by air-drying. Foods that are great candidates for drying include hot peppers, mushrooms, herbs, tomatoes, and most fruits. To learn more about how to safely dry/dehydrate your food, please visit this tip page, [here](#).

## CANNING

Canning is probably what most people think of when you think of food preservation. Beautiful jars of all colours and sizes stacked along a shelf. Canning, in fact is a great way to preserve a number of foods. Everything from pears, peaches, jams and jellies, tomatoes, asparagus, pickles, hot peppers, and homemade salsa – and more, can all be canned. There are a few different types of canning: water bath canning and pressure canning. Either way you choose, canning is a great way to extend the season. You can find information at your local library or online to guide you in your adventures in canning. For canning safety information, please visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency page, [here](#). The Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs also has an informational page on home canning, [here](#).



# SHELF LIFE OF YOUR FAVOURITE LOCAL PRODUCTS

## FREEZING

Freezing food is one of the easiest, most cost-effective ways of extending the season and supporting local producers. A variety of foods can be frozen and then used throughout the year.

### *Tips and Tricks for freezing:*

- Most vegetables freeze better when blanched first, read about blanching [here](#).
- Lay food on a cooking sheet or flat surface
- Line cookie sheet with wax or parchment paper
- Make sure individual pieces are not touching one another
- Once frozen store in an airtight bag
- Write the date frozen on the bag

## FERMENTATION

Fermentation is a process where helpful microbes process starches and sugars in food and break them down into simpler compounds by using molds, yeasts or bacteria. This adds nutritional value to the food and helps preserve it for a longer time without going bad. Popular foods that are fermented include kefir, miso, kimchi and sauerkraut. For more information on fermenting including some tested recipes, visit the US National Centre for Home Food Preservation site [here](#).

## SMOKING

Another flavourful way to preserve foods is to smoke them. Meats such as poultry and fish can be dried, flavoured, and preserved through the smoking process. Smoking meat for preservation is one of the oldest methods of food preservation. There are many great smokers on the market for just about every budget.

## OTHER METHODS

Other methods for preserving foods include immersion in alcohol, and pickling using a variety of vinegars, salts and sugars. Immersion in alcohol is a great way to make flavoured extracts for baking and cooking. You can also use the immersion in alcohol method to preserve and enjoy fruits such as cherries, pears, strawberries, peaches, raspberries, blueberries and more. Pickling can be a great way to preserve some of your favourite local products. For safety tips related to pickling, please see 'Canning', above. To get inspired, **check out these 20 pickling recipes** from food bloggers of Canada.

- Learn more about how to preserve by checking out Chef Murray Zehr's page, [here](#).

# KEEPING UP WITH LOCAL

## *Local Food Champions*

Now that you know how to recognize local, where to find local (all year-round), and how to preserve local, you are ready to go shop! Keep up with local by following some of South-Central Ontario's local food champions:



- Norfolk County's own Jason Mayo is a local food champion who posts amazing local food recipes and pics. A contestant on MasterChef Canada seasons 1 and 4, Jason is a must follow!



@extra.spicy.mayo



@MayoJason



- Andrew Campbell is a farmer, award winning communicator & passionate farm advocate. Andrew speaks on agriculture and local issues through his podcasts, videos and social media.



@freshairfarmer



@FreshAirFarmer



- Cindy Walker from Chocolatea is a local food champion out of Ingersoll in Oxford County. Chocolatea handcrafts chocolates from locally sourced cream and sells a wide variety of loose leaf teas.



@mmm.chocolatea



@mmmChocolatea



- The Norfolk Fruit Growers Association is an organization of producers in Norfolk County that grows, stores, packs and markets apples. Follow their Twitter and Instagram for great snapshots of their members and to learn all you need to know about Norfolk apples!



@NorfolkApples



@NorfolkApples

- And for the young local food champions out there, check out this local food colouring book that you can print off for free. Find it **here!**



## LINKS

FeastON certified restaurants	<a href="https://ontarioculinary.com/restaurants/">https://ontarioculinary.com/restaurants/</a>
Foodland Ontario's food availability guide	<a href="https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide">https://www.ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide</a>
Ontario Farm Fresh	<a href="http://ontariofarmfresh.com/">http://ontariofarmfresh.com/</a>

## COUNTY OF BRANT

Brant Local Dining Guide	<a href="https://www.brant.ca/en/invest-in-brant/resources/">https://www.brant.ca/en/invest-in-brant/resources/</a>
Steel Wheel Brewery	<a href="https://steelwheel.ca/about">https://steelwheel.ca/about</a>
Moore Farms	<a href="https://mooreberries.ca/">https://mooreberries.ca/</a>

## MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Middlesex Local Food Guide	<a href="https://www.middlesex.ca/sites/default/files/Get_fresh_MAP_standard_web.pdf">https://www.middlesex.ca/sites/default/files/Get_fresh_MAP_standard_web.pdf</a>
Middlesex County Culinary Guide	<a href="https://www.visitmiddlesex.ca/plan/maps-guides/middlesex-county-culinary-guide">https://www.visitmiddlesex.ca/plan/maps-guides/middlesex-county-culinary-guide</a>
Middlesex Local Business Profile Videos	<a href="https://www.investinmiddlesex.ca/business-profiles/21">https://www.investinmiddlesex.ca/business-profiles/21</a>
CTV London Fields to Forks Video Series	<a href="https://london.ctvnews.ca/fieldstoforks">https://london.ctvnews.ca/fieldstoforks</a>
White Crest Mushrooms	<a href="https://ttmf33.wixsite.com/whitecrestmushrooms">https://ttmf33.wixsite.com/whitecrestmushrooms</a>
Heeman's Garden Centre	<a href="https://store.heeman.ca/">https://store.heeman.ca/</a>

## ELGIN COUNTY

Savour Elgin Culinary Trail	<a href="https://elgintourist.com/Savour/Markets">https://elgintourist.com/Savour/Markets</a>
Buy Local Buy Fresh Elgin	<a href="https://www.buylocalbuyfresh.ca/">https://www.buylocalbuyfresh.ca/</a>
Elgin County Visitor Guide	<a href="https://issuu.com/elginst.thomastourism">https://issuu.com/elginst.thomastourism</a>
Talbotville Berry Farm Market	<a href="https://talbotvilleberryfarm.com/">https://talbotvilleberryfarm.com/</a>
Quai du Vin Estate Winery	<a href="https://www.quaiduvvin.com/">https://www.quaiduvvin.com/</a>

## NORFOLK COUNTY

Norfolk Tourism	<a href="https://www.norfolktourism.ca/norfolk-farms/">https://www.norfolktourism.ca/norfolk-farms/</a>
Toast to the Coast Trail	<a href="http://ontariosouthcoastwine.com/winemap/">http://ontariosouthcoastwine.com/winemap/</a>
Norfolk Tourism Video	<a href="https://youtu.be/hkpwGEoovtI">https://youtu.be/hkpwGEoovtI</a>
Norfolk Tourism Local Entrepreneurs Video	<a href="https://youtu.be/_PIGfLaE1KU">https://youtu.be/_PIGfLaE1KU</a>
Norfolk County Trails Map	<a href="https://www.norfolkcounty.ca/visiting/norfolk-maps/downloadable-pdf-maps/#trail">https://www.norfolkcounty.ca/visiting/norfolk-maps/downloadable-pdf-maps/#trail</a>
VG Meats	<a href="https://vgmeats.ca/">https://vgmeats.ca/</a>
Uncle Bob's Ontario Popping Corn	<a href="https://www.ontariopoppingcorn.com/">https://www.ontariopoppingcorn.com/</a>

## OXFORD COUNTY

Oxford Fresh Map	<a href="http://www.oxfordfresh.ca">www.oxfordfresh.ca</a>
Tourism Oxford	<a href="http://www.tourismoxford.ca">www.tourismoxford.ca</a>
Oxford Bytes	<a href="https://www.tourismoxford.ca/listing/articles.aspx?categoryid=743">https://www.tourismoxford.ca/listing/articles.aspx?categoryid=743</a>
Oxford Local Recipes	<a href="https://www.tourismoxford.ca/listing/articles.aspx?categoryid=787">https://www.tourismoxford.ca/listing/articles.aspx?categoryid=787</a>
We Grow Together YouTube Series	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCfAddejnT-aaTZMZJeNsdg">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCfAddejnT-aaTZMZJeNsdg</a>
Cheese Trail	<a href="http://www.oxfordcountycheesetrail.ca">www.oxfordcountycheesetrail.ca</a>
Udderly Ridiculous	<a href="https://www.udderlyridiculous.ca/">https://www.udderlyridiculous.ca/</a>
Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheese	<a href="https://www.gunnshillcheese.ca/">https://www.gunnshillcheese.ca/</a>





## PRESERVING FOODS

Canadian Food Inspection Agency Food Storage Instructions	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/safe-food-storage.html#a4">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/safe-food-storage.html#a4</a>
University of Minnesota Drying Food Instructions	<a href="https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/drying-food">https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/drying-food</a>
Canadian Food Inspection Agency Canning Instructions	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/home-canning-safety.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/home-canning-safety.html</a>
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Canning Instructions	<a href="http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/botulism-2011.htm">http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/botulism-2011.htm</a>
US National Centre for Home Food Preservation Freezing Instructions	<a href="https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/blanching.html">https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/blanching.html</a>
US National Centre for Home Food Preservation Fermentation Instructions	<a href="https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can6a_ferment.html">https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can6a_ferment.html</a>
Food Bloggers of Canada Pickling Recipes	<a href="https://www.foodbloggersofcanada.com/pickling-recipes/">https://www.foodbloggersofcanada.com/pickling-recipes/</a>

## GLOSSARY

**Agri-tourism** - The Province of Ontario defines agri-tourism as “those farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation”. Source: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. (2016). “Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas: Publication 851”. Retrieved from: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/permitteduses.htm>.

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** - Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is an organized process involving the distribution and growth of organic produce. This connects farmers with the community at large. Every spring, residents subscribed reach a local organic farm to subscribe for a “share” of the year’s harvest. Source: CSA Farms.ca. (n.d.). “What is CSA?”. Retrieved from: <https://csafarms.ca/>.

**Farmgate producers** - Farmgate producers are farmers who sell products from their farm directly to consumers. This can take place on the farm through activities such as roadside stands, farm retail markets or u-pick operations, or off-farm through activities such as vending at a farmers market or selling directly through online sales and direct delivery. Source: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. (2016). “Direct Farm Marketing in Ontario – A Primer”. Retrieved from: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/16-025.htm>.

**Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)** - An “organism whose genome has been engineered in the laboratory in order to favour the expression of desired physiological traits or the generation of desired biological products”. Source: Encyclopedia Britannica. (2020). “Genetically Modified Organism”. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/science/genetically-modified-organism>.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation:



**Kimberly Earls**  
Executive Director  
SCOR EDC  
4 Elm Street  
Tillsonburg, Ontario  
scorregion.com

**Christian Zavarella**  
Research Analyst  
SCOR EDC

## OFA Lead:



**Danielle Collins**  
Policy Analyst  
Ontario Federation of Agriculture  
danielle.collins@ofa.on.ca  
519-821-8883  
Guelph, ON  
ofa.on.ca

## Wilton Consulting Group:



**Krista Kapitan**  
Research Analyst  
Wilton Consulting Group  
krista@wiltongroup.ca  
226-203-3578  
Fergus, ON  
wiltongroup.ca

**Riccardo Peggi**  
Research Associate  
Wilton Consulting Group

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