

# OFA FACT SHEET

June 2025

## Transportation issues and opportunities for Ontario agriculture

### Overview

Provincial road design is the responsibility of Ontario's Ministry of Transportation. Municipal governments are responsible for municipal road design, road allowances and by-laws, which means standards can vary across the province.

Ontario's *Highway Traffic Act* covers rules about vehicles, licensing, and transportation. Many of these rules affect farmers who use tractors, equipment, and trucks on the road. It's up to farm owners and equipment operators to understand the laws about farm vehicles, load limits, licenses, and towing.



**Challenge:** Ontario's agriculture sector is increasingly impacted by transportation-related challenges. Climate change, poor rural infrastructure, urban encroachment, new rail and highway projects, and outdated regulations threaten farm productivity, food supply chains, and safety on rural roads and in rural communities.

**Solution:** Modernizing transportation policy and infrastructure with agriculture in mind is critical to preserving Ontario's food security, rural economies, and global competitiveness.

### Key concerns and issues

#### Road safety and slow moving vehicles



Around **8.5 million**

vehicles drive about 136 billion kilometres in Ontario each year.

Annually, there are about 200,000 accidents, 50,000 with injury and over 500 fatalities.

Collisions between cars and slow moving vehicles are 5.5 times higher and result in 3.8 times more fatalities than collisions between two cars, per kilometre on the road.



Rural road design and infrastructure sometimes lack safety for large, slow moving farm equipment. Infrastructure is often not well-maintained or updated. Signage is needed to alert motorists about slow moving vehicles or the potential for mud on the road from farm vehicles.

**We all must share our roads responsibly to make sure everyone gets to where they are going and home again safely.**



#### Did you know...

Since 2021, Ontario farmers have invested in approximately 30 different projects across Ontario through OFA's Revive Fund to promote road safety and slow moving vehicles?

# Solutions OFA is asking for



## Slow moving vehicles and road signage:

- 1 **Initiating local government review and improvement of slow moving vehicle signage**—especially in construction zones, school zones, and rural areas—so signs are clear, effective, and get noticed.
- 2 **Collaboration between municipalities, Ministry of Transportation and farmers** for signage to alert motorists to potential for mud on roadways from agricultural activities.



## Infrastructure improvements for safer roads:



- 1 **Investing in rural roads, bridges, and infrastructure** to keep them safe, reliable and accessible for everyone, including farm vehicles.
- 2 **Making road shoulders wider and safer** by avoiding steep drop-offs into ditches.
- 3 **Using highway safety audits in farm areas** to reduce crashes and improve how bridges and underpasses are designed and maintained. For example:

**Build roundabouts that work for large farm equipment** by making them wide enough and flattening curbs so long or wide loads can pass through safely.

**Design road curves near bridges and underpasses so large farm vehicles** don't have to reverse to get through.

**Maintain safe heights under power lines** after resurfacing roads so tall equipment can pass underneath.

## Municipal road considerations:

- 1 **Encouraging municipalities to access agricultural expertise** when making decisions on local transportation projects so provincial standards and exemptions for farm equipment are respected.
- 2 **Targeting wider municipal road lane minimums** of 3.3 m for roads with speed limits above 40 km/h and 3.5 m for speed limits over 50 km/h.
- 3 **Keeping vertical clearances for power lines** especially at entrances into fields.





## Inspection and licensing



Ontario has fewer farms than it used to, but today's farms are bigger and use larger equipment and vehicles. The Ministry of Transportation allows some exceptions to help farm businesses use equipment and vehicles safely on public roads, but current rules and inspection systems don't fully match how farming works today. That's why it's important for these rules to change and keep up with modern farming needs.

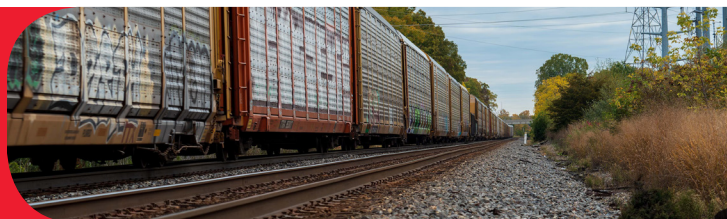
### Solutions OFA is asking for:

**Creating a graduated commercial driver's license for farm use** to help new or young drivers.



**Modernizing farm equipment rules in the *Highway Traffic Act*** to better match the size and type of equipment farmers use today.

## Infrastructure



Ontario farms rely on strong transportation networks to move food, supplies, and equipment—both locally and along major trade routes like the Windsor-to-Montreal corridor. These connections are key for getting products to domestic and global markets.

OFA supports investments in transportation projects that help open access to markets in Europe and Asia—like the new High-Frequency Rail Network between Toronto and Quebec City.

However, the current plan for this rail line would use about 11,000 acres of rural and farmland, cutting through properties and potentially damaging important farm infrastructure like drainage systems and irrigation.

We believe it's critical to protect farmland and minimize the impact on agriculture as these major projects move forward.

### Did you know?

Canada is the world's eighth largest exporter of agricultural production. In 2023, we exported nearly **\$99.1 billion** in agriculture and food products.\*

\*Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, [agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/overview](https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/sector/overview)

### Solutions OFA is asking for:

**Including Agricultural Impact Assessments** in transportation project planning to help mitigate these effects.

**Maintaining rural road connectivity**, especially around new rail developments so lower volume roads aren't dead ending at the rail line.

# Excerpts from recent OFA Viewpoints focused on transportation issues:

“ Road safety is a big focus for OFA, as is advocating for better roads and transportation infrastructure and regulations that reflect the needs of our modern agriculture industry – one of the biggest pillars of the provincial economy. ”

Louis Roesch, Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture  
Farmers, motorists urged to share the road this spring, May 2025



“ Rural Ontario needs infrastructure investments to attract and keep residents and businesses and be competitive. Well-maintained roads and bridges, affordable energy and accessible high speed internet are critical to the rural economy. ”

Clint Cameron, Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture  
Rural infrastructure investments a critical election priority of farmers, February 2025



“ Ontario’s rural economy relies on well-functioning roads, bridges and drainage to support the production and transportation of goods and services. ”

Crispin Colvin, Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture  
OFA, industry stakeholders connect with municipalities over common interests, September 2023



## More information

OFA is actively involved on a wide range of transportation issues, making sure the concerns and needs of farmers and rural communities are put in front of decision-makers.

This includes the issues above but also farm vehicle classification and licensing, load restrictions, tire stewardship and much more.

More information, including fact sheets, government submissions and resources, is available at [ofa.on.ca/transportation](https://ofa.on.ca/transportation). For questions about any information included in the fact sheet, please contact [comms@ofa.on.ca](mailto:comms@ofa.on.ca).

