

Kawartha Lakes Agricultural Action Plan

Growing success

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Importance of agriculture in the City of Kawartha Lakes

The agricultural sector contributes significantly to the economy and quality of life in the City of Kawartha Lakes. In an economic impact assessment conducted in 2006 it was estimated that primary agriculture in the City of Kawartha Lakes and the Greater Peterborough area contributes in excess of \$353 million annually to the area economy. It is the main economic activity in the City and the backbone of the rural community. Despite its size and the support given to the sector by the City of Kawartha Lakes, agriculture is currently vulnerable to many negative forces including economic trends affecting food prices and production, world trade issues, an aging farm population, lack of succession planning, an increasing disconnect with decision makers, pressure for urban growth, encouraging non-agricultural development, and a lack of understanding about the significance of the agricultural sector in the broader communities.

To address these issues and stimulate the sector, the Council of the City of Kawartha Lakes has identified the development of an Agricultural Action Plan as a Strategic Priority. An Agricultural Action Plan Steering Committee was formed in August, 2009 to manage the development of this Action Plan and is comprised of members from the Agricultural Development Advisory Board (ADAB) and the Victoria Haliburton Federation of Agriculture (VHFA). Development of the plan is supported by the City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) Economic Development Office and the Victoria Haliburton Federation of Agriculture, with additional funding support by the FedDev Southern Ontario and the Kawartha Lakes Community Futures Development Corporation.

The agricultural sector is more than farms and farmers. It includes the entire agri-business sector: agricultural suppliers (equipment, fertilizer, seed, feed, etc.); agricultural support businesses (financing, accounting, veterinary services, electrical and service contractors); manufacturers; processors; distributors (wholesale, retail, warehouse); and evolving agricultural industries (e.g. bio-energy opportunities).

Consultation

In preparation for developing the Kawartha Lakes Agricultural Action Plan, the Steering Committee consulted extensively with the agricultural community and used the input received to articulate a plan for the industry as it moves forward. A survey of agricultural operators, a Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Survey and an Agricultural Industry Planning Workshop were conducted to canvass opinions. The strategic planning

workshop was held on February 18, 2010, to identify appropriate actions to address issues and opportunities identified through the polling process. The session was well attended with over 45 participants representing all facets of Kawartha Lakes agriculture. The input received at the workshop supplemented the 130 written surveys returned and the 30 BR+E interviews conducted. A further public meeting was held on March 18, 2010 to consider the draft vision statement and proposed actions.

The development of this Kawartha Lakes Agricultural Action Plan is based on the input from the surveys, workshop and public meeting, the knowledge of the Steering Committee, the expertise of the consulting team and background research that has been done regarding the Kawartha Lakes agriculture sector. The detailed results of these activities can be found in the appendices attached to this document. The Action Plan includes a review of challenges and opportunities, a vision statement, ongoing activities which should be continued and supported, additional specific short and long-term actions designed to implement the vision, and criteria established to test the effectiveness of the Plan.

Agricultural Action Plan

Challenges and opportunities

This extensive consultation confirmed that while the agriculture sector is generally well served in the City, there are challenges and opportunities the local community can act upon to strengthen it.

- The diverse primary production profile provides significant opportunities to link with other components of agri-business and expand the range of business activities. Farmers and non- farmers could benefit from assistance in identifying and understanding potential linkages.
- The business of farming is complex and includes many associated activities. In response, policies need to be flexible and accommodating.
- Agri-business operators are generally optimistic about the future and have plans for expansion.
- Employment needs in the sector are complicated. To respond to the needs of the sector, a variety of labour programs, designed in consultation with the agri-business sector, are needed.
- There is strong interest in producing bio based products; and increasing linkages to the local food market.
- Barriers to improving business were identified as complex regulation, lack of marketing, challenges with distribution and lack of economies of scale.
- Creation of new alliances and co-ordination of existing agencies were identified as opportunities for expanding businesses.
- The City of Kawartha Lakes is trusted as a facilitator and supporter of agri-business.

Vision for the agricultural community – growing success

Through an extensive consultation process, the agricultural industry (primary producers, processors, suppliers, and retailers) developed a vision for agri-business in Kawartha

Lakes. It is a vision of a vibrant, competitive industry that is recognized as being a critical part of the community and economic fabric of the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Vision for agriculture:

The agricultural community of farms and agri-businesses in the City of Kawartha Lakes is a dynamic, economic, social and environmental driver. Agriculture is an integral component of the City; one that successfully optimizes resources and people to achieve a community that is innovative, diverse, balanced, sustainable and prosperous, and has the world as its market.

This vision is the basis for an Action Plan to support agriculture. The Plan's objectives are based on the vision and the identified actions are designed to implement it. All actions taken will be measured to ensure they will contribute to realizing the vision.

Objectives of the action plan

The objectives of the Action Plan to fulfill the vision are to:

- Guide the maintenance and growth of agriculture in the City through the development of sustainable land use policies for all areas of economic activity;
- Recognize a healthy and productive agricultural industry is an important element to the City's heritage, identity and economic base;
- Maintain the agricultural land base and prevent infiltration of conflicting uses that put the agricultural sector at risk;
- Promote financial sustainability for future generations to continue farming;
- Raise awareness of the quality of the farming and agri-business sector in the City through informed media;
- Support a broad definition of agriculture to allow flexibility of production, strong, financially viable farms that adapt to market fluctuations and other value-added factors that may change over time;
- Create a focus on educational programs that provide training for agricultural leadership, expertise and innovation;

- Promote the provision of skilled jobs and agricultural career opportunities in the industry as opportunities for young people and new agri-business operators to become established;
- Identify and explore the development of new markets, crops, agricultural products, value-added processing and value-chain partnerships, locally, regionally and internationally;
- Protect the right to farm and conduct agri-business without overly onerous municipal restrictions; and
- Promote long-term food security for Canadians and the local community.

To successfully promote the sector, farmers and agri-businesses, the community must be united in purpose and persuasive in building widespread support. Economic prosperity will be built on partnerships, with support from all levels of government.

The Action Plan is designed to achieve these objectives and encourages their continuation and the enhancement of pre-existing activities and services. In addition, it focuses on new actions for both short- term and long-term implementation. The actions identified here are not all that could be implemented; however, they are the most effective measures to ensure that the agricultural sector in the City of Kawartha Lakes remains stable and will thrive in the 21st century.

Leadership

The Steering Committee recognizes that there are actions that could be taken to support agriculture that are not included in the plan. However including everything in the plan would make it unwieldy, so those actions identified through the consultation process as being critical, were given priority.

Successful implementation of the Action Plan will require a facilitator with the ability to encourage, co- ordinate, direct, measure and when necessary, act. The Steering Committee cannot perform this role, the City can. Therefore, upon completion of the Plan, the Steering Committee will disband and hand over implementation to the City of Kawartha Lakes. However, in doing so they emphasize that the City cannot and should not act alone. It will be a facilitator and a resource. To be successful, the Action Plan requires the support of farmers, agri-businesses, governments and the community. There

must be unity in purpose, consistency in action and monitoring for success. All parties must understand, accept and assume their share of responsibility.

To be successful, the Action Plan implementation will need strong leadership. The leadership and ownership attitudes established through the preparation of the Agricultural Action Plan need to be continued to ensure the implementation of the plan.

The Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Office will be responsible to ensure that each activity within the Action Plan has a lead organization identified for implementation.

Council of the City of Kawartha Lakes as well as other government (CFDC, OMAFRA, AAC) and non- government (VHFA, Soil & Crop Stewardship, Kawartha Conservation, Health Unit) organizations will be expected to work co-operatively to ensure that funding and staffing are in place to implement the actions outlined in this plan.

Actions

Building on success

Support for the agriculture sector comes in many forms in Kawartha Lakes, including:

- The Agricultural Development Advisory Board which advises City Council on matters relating to agriculture;
- The Agriculture Development Officer within the City's Economic Development office;
- A local Service Ontario Centre ;
- The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs staff including Rural Development staff, Forage and Grazing Specialists, Regional Information Coordinator and Regional Veterinarians;
- Agriculture and Agri-food Canada; and
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

The City of Kawartha Lakes has a strong history of supporting the development of the agricultural sector and will continue to:

- Assist agriculture sector businesses
 - Identify opportunities and locations for new business and production facilities in the City of Kawartha Lakes;
 - Assist businesses in identifying and accessing available funding opportunities;
 - Assist agricultural businesses with the development approval processes;
 - Attract production and processing investment, agri-tourism, culinary-tourism, farm visits, and local food access;
 - Liaise with Council and other City departments to identify and respond to issues and policies affecting agriculture and related businesses and to improve the understanding of and response to industry needs; and
 - Maintain an inventory of agriculturally related businesses and monitor this inventory to identify trends, business opportunities or changes that could impact the sector.

- Build partnerships
 - Enhance the partnerships among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, supply and distribution services and consumers to provide input on potential linkages and how they could work;
 - Co-ordinate with local community and general farm organizations to encourage leadership in implementing the Plan. [focus initiatives and coordinate activities (KM)];
 - Work with other organizations to develop a local food policy to ensure improved access to farm products throughout Kawartha Lakes;
 - Participate and co-ordinate with other municipalities and regions and other organizations and agencies in working toward common goals; and
 - Develop a roster of champions to assist with initiation of various activities.

- Develop & implement marketing strategies

- Assist farmers with marketing strategies that facilitate access to local and international markets.
- Develop and promote agriculture education and awareness programs
 - Maintain an inventory of educational programs available to producers and make the listing available through the Economic Development website so farmers are aware of them and duplication is avoided.
 - Enhance the profile of and promote agriculture in Kawartha Lakes, including:
 - Develop displays for local and regional events promoting the strength of production agriculture as well as the agri-business support sector;
 - Provide regular media profiles to identify successes and advancements in local agriculture and agri-business which contribute to the economic strength of the area;
 - Raise awareness about the contribution of agriculture to the economy, environment, local character and quality of life in Kawartha Lakes; and
 - Continue support of the Kawartha Choice FarmFresh marketing program to promote consumption of local products and opportunities for farmers to connect directly with the local consumers at farm markets, the farm gate and through direct linkages between restaurants, retailers and producers.
 - Encourage educational institutions at all levels to:
 - Include agricultural programming in their curriculum;
 - Continue to support the “Taste of Kawartha Country” and “Agribusiness & You” education events for primary and secondary institutions to encourage teaching about agriculture and agri-business career opportunities;
 - Expand the agriculturally related programming at local post secondary institutions, such as the Sustainable Agriculture Program and cross programming with other related courses such as the Resource

Management and the Heavy Equipment School at Fleming College;
and

- Identify opportunities for applied research between educational institutions/research facilities and farmers and processors.

New initiatives – short-term

Simplify the approval process for agricultural business expansion.

Work with the other City Departments and Divisions to review procedures and processes to make it easier to establish or expand an agriculturally related business in Kawartha Lakes. Identify common road blocks and address system issues to facilitate solutions. Establish a zoning and development approval process that is clear and supportive of agricultural activities. Simplify and coordinate requirements for site plans and other development approvals related to agriculture. Ensure that appropriate municipal departments and committees have access to required input on agricultural issues and link with appropriate environmental and conservation authorities to work together for mutual benefit.

Develop marketing strategies that facilitate access to local and international markets.

Assist in the identification of emerging markets including key consumer groups. Track changes in ethnic profiles that could impact the demand for certain products.

Identify the gaps within the key features/components of the production-chain infrastructure.

Encourage activities to fill identified gaps in the value chain. Required actions may include introduction of new crops, markets, local processing capacity, or enhanced distribution systems.

Implement supportive official plan policies.

Ensure that the new City of Kawartha Lakes Official Plan supports economic prosperity for agriculture, and provides a future for agriculture and agri-businesses. The Official Plan needs to include recognition that agricultural land is a resource that must be protected.

The Plan needs to emphasize that agriculture requires large contiguous areas uninterrupted by residential occupation to operate most effectively. To achieve this, large contiguous agricultural areas must be maintained and protected by prohibiting potentially conflicting non-farm development in agricultural areas.

Develop a local food policy or charter

Develop a local food policy or charter which will ensure food security for the local community and strengthen production, processing and distribution of food. Facilitate the development of a local food distribution network for members of Kawartha Choice FarmFresh, such as a cooperative marketing agency or wholesale/retail market. Promote Kawartha Lakes as a destination for agri-tourism and visitors with the continuation of Kawartha Farmfest farm tours or food trails to introduce urban residents to local growers. Encourage the use of local product at government functions and school food programs. Work with the Kawartha Lakes Public Health Department to promote consumption of local food and retention of local food production as a positive contribution to healthy living.

Update the 2006 Agricultural Economic Impact Study

To reflect 2006 Census statistics and continue to update it in order to track and identify trends in the agricultural sector.

Long-term initiatives

Implement a strategy to expand agri-business opportunities in Kawartha Lakes.

- Identify and facilitate opportunities for farmers within the new energy generation sector; and
- Investigate value-added opportunities for agriculture both on-farm and off-farm and the actions required to support them, including potential for small scale start up businesses and co-operative businesses.

Encourage employment programs and programs to assist new operators.

- Coordinate with other organizations to develop a skilled labour and training

strategy, establish a qualified labour pool, and identify funding to promote the Farm Labour Pool such as is currently available at the Victoria County Career Services;

- Coordinate assistance for succession planning to secure the long-term future of farming; and
- Encourage co-operative, mentoring and apprenticeship programs to encourage young farmers to enter the industry and for supporting them when they are starting out.

Promote Kawartha Lakes as a destination for agri-tourism and culinary-tourism

Promote the continuation of Kawartha Farmfest farm tours and the development of food trails to introduce urban residents to local growers and restaurants serving local food.

Provide strategic municipal land use planning support, direction and development

Provide input to strategic and land use planning processes to ensure that the City's planning and regulatory frameworks are supportive of agriculture and agri-business growth and development.

- Ensure that value-added, agricultural support activities are permitted at appropriate scales throughout the agricultural areas. Monitor and develop policies that allow value-added and agri-entertainment operations to ensure that they are sufficiently flexible to allow farmers to generate additional revenue while ensuring that operations are compatible with surrounding agricultural uses.
- Use zoning to build in minimum distance separation criteria on the non- agricultural land to allow farmers to retain maximum operational flexibility on farm land.
- The Agricultural Development Advisory Board should be included as part of the (peer) review process for applications pertaining to Prime Agricultural and Rural Areas.

Secure financial support

Encourage the Provincial and Federal governments to provide adequate ongoing funding

support for agriculture and related activities. This support may include:

- Grant programs, low interest/deferred payment loans, and safety net programs for startup and existing agricultural enterprises; and
- Cooperative approaches to managing natural heritage systems and agricultural land use.

Implementation

The identified tasks are wide ranging and responsibility for various tasks will need to be assumed by the appropriate agencies. Although the Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Office can act as coordinator, responsibility for securing commitments to implement the plan must come from the agricultural community. To assist in this, as a first step to implementing the Action Plan, the implementation table included as part of the Plan should be completed in consultation with identified partners. Undertaking the process of focusing on each task, assigning responsibility, securing cooperation, identifying partners and establishing measures for success is the best way to move the Plan forward.

Measurements of success

Successful implementation of the Plan should result in noticeable improvements and strengthening of the agricultural industry in Kawartha Lakes. It is often difficult to quantify such measures; however, an attempt has been made to establish benchmarks or targets which are noted on the implementation table. Some are general in nature; others are qualitative.

To be a success, the Action Plan must remain relevant and compelling. To ensure this happens, the Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis by the agricultural community in a process where successes are identified, failures addressed and adjustments implemented.

Summary chart of recommended actions

Ongoing/continuing actions

Task	Lead	Partners	Measurement of success
Assist agriculture sector businesses	CKL Economic Development	OMAFRA, Kawartha Conservation	Increase in diversity of farms; Increase in economic activity; Increase in tax revenue; Increase in building permits.
Build partnerships	CKL Economic Development	OMAFRA, general farm organizations, commodity organizations, private sector	Increase number of collaborative projects undertaken; Amalgamation of organizations and new organizations emerging.
Develop & implement marketing strategies	CKL Economic Development	Private sector businesses	Increase in sales revenue; Increase in employment; Increase in product diversity

Task	Lead	Partners	Measurement of success
Develop and promote agriculture education and awareness programs	Kawartha Lakes Ag Awareness Committee	CKL Economic Development, School Boards, 4-H, Junior Farmers' Association, Ag Societies, Historical Societies	Public survey results show increased knowledge and awareness

Short term actions over the next 18 months

Task	Lead	Partners	Measurement of success
Simplify the approval process for agricultural businesses in general	CKL Development Services	Kawartha Conservation, Kawartha Real Estate Board, MP, MPP, private sectors – legal, developers, construction, etc.	Decrease in complaints; Decrease in approval times.
Develop Market Strategies that facilitate access to local and international markets	CKL Economic Development & regional municipalities	ADAB, LAS, CFIA, CLGA, Chambers of Commerce, Livestock Associations, Manufacturing Associations	Increase in export sales Increase in profitability of agricultural businesses
Identify the gaps within the key features/components of	CKL Economic Development	MP, MPP, General farm organizations, MP, MPP, private	Annual focus group discussions held number of gaps

Task	Lead	Partners	Measurement of success
the production-chain		sector	identified and addressed;
Implement Supportive Official Plan Policies	CKL Development Services	Council, VHFA, ADAB	By-in from CKL Council & staff; Agricultural industry operating in a proactive way
Develop a Local Food Charter	Victoria Stewardship Council & Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit	CKL Economic Development, Toward balance Support Network, OMAFRA, Kawartha Field Naturalists, Kawartha Conservation, commodity and general farm organizations, private sector businesses	Charter in place; Policies and actions developed.
Update the 2006 Agricultural Economic Impact Study	OMAFRA	CKL Economic Development, VHFA, commodity organizations	Statistics updated, circulated and utilized

Long-term initiatives

Task	Lead	Partners	Measurement of success
Implement a strategy to expand agri-business opportunities in Kawartha Lakes	CKL Economic Development	VHFA, private sector businesses, OMAFRA	Increase in number of agricultural businesses; Increase in number of products and markets Increase in profitability
Encourage employment programs and support new operators entering the industry	OMAFRA	Rural Ontario Institute, CFBMC, Agriculture Canada, VCCS, Workforce Development Board	Increase in number of local programs and number of attendees; Increase in employment; Decrease in average age of operators
Promote Kawartha Lakes as a destination for agri-tourism and culinary-tourism	CKL Economic Development	KCFF, RTO 8, KRA, Chambers of Commerce	Number of new promotion tools offered; Increase Tourism Statistics verified through exit surveys
Provide Strategic Municipal Land Use Planning Support, Direction and Development	CKL Development Services & ADAB	VHFA and other general farm organizations	Fewer complaints; Increase in strategies supported

Task	Lead	Partners	Measurement of success
Secure Financial Support	CKL Economic Development	OMAFRA, MP, MPP, IRAP, KL CFDC, AAC	Increase in number and money obtained

Definitions:

4-H – Kawartha Lakes 4-H Association AAC – Agriculture Adaptation Council

ADAB – Agricultural Development Advisory Board – Committee of CKL Council – advising on matters affecting or pertaining to the agriculture sector.

CFBMC - Canadian Farm Business Management Council CFIA – Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Chambers of Commerce – including Lindsay & District, Bobcaygeon and Area, Fenelon Falls and the Kinmount Committee for Economic Development and Planning.

CKL Economic Development

CKL Development Services – City of Kawartha Lakes Development Services Department – includes Planning, Economic Development, Building & By-law

CLGA – Canadian Livestock Genetics Association IRAP – Industrial Research Assistance Program

Junior Farmers' Association – Kawartha Lakes Junior Farmers' Association KL CFDC - Kawartha Lakes Community Futures Development Corporation KRA – Kawartha Restaurant Association

LAS – Lindsay Agriculture Society MP – Member of Parliament

MPP – Member of Provincial Parliament

OMAFRA – Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

RTO 8 – Regional Tourism Organization 8 – includes Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough, and Northumberland VCCS – Victoria County Career Services

VHFA – Victoria Haliburton Federation of Agriculture