



The Politics, Economics, And Culture Of Smaller-Scale, Family Farming In The Parry Sound District

PROJECT DATA FACT SHEET: RESOURCES

MARCH 2019

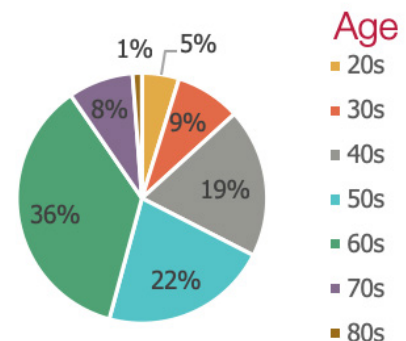
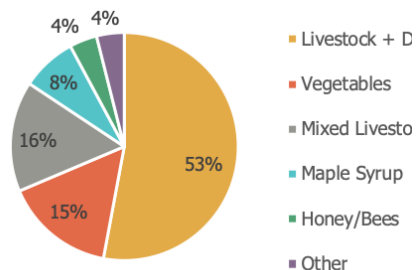
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PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

Funding: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the University of Guelph.

Goals: To develop an in-depth understanding of food production in the Parry Sound District by collecting data on farmers' experiences, values and priorities, and farming challenges and innovations, in order to inform policy and public dialogues at local, provincial, and national levels.

Participants: Interviews with 82 participants from 52 farming households since 2017.



OVERVIEW OF KEY RESOURCE DEFICITS

Not enough local abattoirs:
55 % of livestock farmers raised this issue

Implications: Increased costs of transporting animals; increased costs for processing (profit margin implications) due to less competition

In addition: Closest egg-grading station in Massey (up to 3.5 hours away)

However: The opening of the poultry processing plant in Powassan (Proudfoot Rd) led some people to either return to poultry production or increase production. New infrastructure does make a difference in individual farmer household production decisions.

Illustrative quotes:

*"And production costs are so much higher in the north. Our butchering costs and travelling costs, because nothing is close by. Sprucedale does a great job, but they're quite expensive."
(Mixed livestock farmer)*

*"Transportation, large abattoirs. If the opportunity arose we could produce more than the local markets and abattoirs could handle. That is stopping us moving forward."
(Poultry farmer)*

Not enough large animal veterinarians: 60% of livestock farmers or beekeepers raised this as a key problem

Implications: Preventable animal and hive losses; inadequate emergency animal care; high costs of veterinarian care; frustration, stress.

Illustrative quotes:

"You can't carry prescription medicines now, you have to get them from the vet, but they don't come and look at the bees, so what's the point?... One of the medicines is preventative, and if you can't prove to the vet that you have the disease, you can't buy the medicine." (Beekeeper)

"There aren't enough large animal vets around. They can be pretty good, but it would be nice if they were closer. So you don't want to call them in a hurry. They say their main job is to train you, not do the work. But still, you need to buy meds from them." (Mixed Livestock Farmer)

"One of the problems around here is that there are no vets. No one is taking over. We need to have more vets and we need access to medicines more freely because if we don't doctor them, they will end up dead... We need more vets on the road, available to us." (Beef farmer)

High costs of essential supplies and equipment (feed, fertilizers, fencing, equipment), limited labour support, limitations to external expertise: Raised by almost all participants, regardless of farming sector

Implications: Unfenced areas (predator, environmental outcomes); paying higher transportation costs for less expensive supplies (trade-off between costs of supplies and costs of transportation); supporting non-local supplies businesses; barriers to increased production/farm expansion

Illustrative quotes:

"The biggest challenge, and I preach this, the biggest challenge I have is infrastructure. Because once we lost the beef farmers, we lost the co-op, and the sales barn. We have a couple of feed stores that can't meet my size demand. 8 bags of minerals at \$40/bag/month... I like to support the local community, but then Grand Valley Fortifiers in Cambridge will deliver for \$37/bag, and put it in my shed. So it's a Catch-22." (Beef farmer)

"It's hard to get certain kinds of things in the North. If you want a piece of equipment, there are no dealers here. If you want organic barley, there's no one around. So you're limited and remote. And it's not the distance so much as the size of the community." (Mixed livestock and vegetable farmer)

When I do get ahold of the right person – salesmen and so on – they don't want to deal with you because you're too small. You can't get them to come up here. And at Guelph (university). It's hard to get answers." (Vegetable farmer)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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ADDITIONAL PROJECT FACT SHEETS AVAILABLE INCLUDE:

- Farmer Perceptions of Sustainability;
- Farmer Values and Practices;
- Potentials for Agricultural Expansion in the District;

Documents with more in-depth information also available