



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

### PROJECT FACT SHEET: SUSTAINABILITY

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### PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

**Project 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 households 2017-2018.



### SUSTAINABILITY TRIAD: ECONOMICS-ENVIRONMENT-COMMUNITY

To farmers, sustainability means economic viability (52% of participants) AND environmental protection (50% of farmers)

*"Being able to have money in the bank, make a profit and still not have to go against your morals and what you stand for. And still be able to do improvements and keep going forward with it." (Mixed livestock farmer)*

*"We should be leading the way. We're not just landowners – you want to pass it on in better shape than you got it. We try to make it better every year." (Vegetable farmer)*

*"The big picture – the ability of the farmer to make a living, but not destroy the environment or his source of income. So that 40 years from now, it's equivalent to what it is today, or better." (Beef farmer)*

*"The Endangered Species Act is part of our philosophy. We have a management program for grassland birds, and we try to avoid prime habitats, and not cut for hay until they're done nesting...I think it's being a steward of creation, and trying to work with the natural system, to steer it." (Mixed livestock farmer)*

## Sustainability also means community

*“Build a strong community as much as we can...we go to church, we participate in local organizations, we support the local butcher. We try to work with the natural system and build a resilient local community system.” (Mixed livestock farmer)*

*“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 [farming] community.” (Mixed livestock and vegetable farmer)*

*“Isolation from other agriculture, and there’s a lack of services all round...There’s very little in the way of options, for example, agreements and choices to hire others.” (Dairy farmer)*

## IMPLICATIONS

**Economics – Environment – Community:** Policies at all levels of government to support the three dimensions of sustainability are critical to the future of farming in the Parry Sound District:

- Market, pricing, and program policies that facilitate **economic** sustainability
- Policies and resources to assist farmers’ support for and actions towards **biodiversity** and **environmental care**
- Infrastructure and supply-access supports to help build and sustain strong **farming** communities and rural lives in the long-term

## FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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### ADDITIONAL PROJECT FACT SHEETS INCLUDE:

- Resources;
- Values and Practices;
- Livestock Expansion Potentials.

Documents with more in-depth information also available