



Agenda

Tuesday, October 17

Riverside Place, 55 Riverside Drive, New Liskeard

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm – Meet and Greet

Informal drop-in with local food samplings.

Wednesday, October 18

8:15 am to 7:00 pm - Bus Tour of Farms and Food Business in Temiskaming District

Participants have a choice to be pick up at

8:15 am – Waterfront Inn

8:35 am – Riverside Place

8:50 am – Holiday Inn

Bus Tour Destinations

Gwillimdale North

Gwillimdale Farms is family owned and operated by the Hambly's. The Owners, John and Cristina, and their children are 4th and 5th generation farmers. They are one of Ontario's largest growers, packers and shippers of fresh root vegetables including carrots, potatoes, parsnips, onions and beets. They grow on over 2,000 acres, primarily based in Bradford, Ontario, just north of Toronto (part of the Greenbelt).

In 2016, Gwillimdale Farms began buying land in New Liskeard, Northern Ontario. They continue to expand their expertise growing in the rich black muck found in the north. Their team has ambitious goals for continuous and sustainable growth.

[Gwillimdale Farms - About Us](#)

Koch Farms

For Norman Koch, president of Koch Farms/Agri-Sales Inc., Koch Logistics Inc. and Koch Grain Elevator (Earlton) Inc., diversification has been the key in growing the successful family-run venture.

With a peak summertime workforce of between 30 and 35 employees, Norm shares the load with his sons, Chad, who handles the field work and equipment and Rob, who's in charge of the elevators and helps on the logistics side. Melanie, daughter-in-law works in the office with his wife, Gwen.

The operation includes grain elevator capacity for 1.8 million bushels, a fleet of 15 highway transport trucks, and 10,000 acres in crops, mainly growing oats, wheat with some canola, corn and soybeans.

The Koch family migrated to the area from New Hamburg in 1986. Norm had worked in the Claybelt since the early 1970s, building and repairing farm silos.

Lunch – Dida's Restaurant

[DIDA'S \(didas.ca\)](#)

Bison Du Nord

For Pierre Bélanger, Bison Du Nord founder and owner, the adventure started in 1972, with a novel idea for the time: why not turn rugged Ontario farmland into a bison farm? Buying the first few bison was relatively easy compared to all that needed to be accomplished over the next several decades. Today's strong and healthy herd of 400 animals is a testament to Pierre's vision and business acumen. They are proud to say that they are among the oldest bison farms in Canada, and one of the largest in Eastern Canada.

From one generation to the next, they are passionate about what they do and they love to talk bison! Raising a family on the farm not only makes for great stories - it also inspired the Bélanger children (and grandchildren!) to get involved. Now working side by side, Pierre and his son Charles make an unstoppable pair. Both are committed to the well-being of bison and share a love of nature, hard work and adventure.

Proud to support the local food scene on both sides of the Ontario/Quebec border, they enjoy meeting those who are curious about bison. They are one of the stops on the [Lake Temiskaming TOUR du Lac Témiscamingue](#), a unique tourism circuit between both provinces. In 2023, the farm is hosting Ontario Culinary's [Feast on the Farm: Temiskaming Shores](#), bringing together some of Ontario's best in the local food and drink space. And for the last 20 years, Bison du Nord has been a popular food kiosk for the thousands who attend the [Foire gourmande de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue et du Nord-Est ontarien](#), in Ville-Marie, Quebec. We even earned the People's Choice Award in 2016 with our delicious

<https://bisondu nord.com/>

Portena Farm

Dairy farm with 4 Lely milking robots. Operators Carmen Portena and Keil McCormick moved from southern Ontario a few years ago to take over this farm.

Thornloe Cheese

Since 1940 Thornloe Cheese has produced a respected brand of award-winning cheese and butter products in Northeastern Ontario. Their secret to quality is in the techniques of old-fashioned cheese making and quality of milk. Fresh milk is utilized from neighboring farms all within a 25KM foot print in this unique Northern agricultural region.

Throughout the years Thornloe Cheese has been owned by several businesses and today proudly is a 100% Canadian, farmer-owned cooperative. In 2019 Gay Lea Foods, a 100% Canadian owned and operated dairy co-operative acquired Thornloe and continues to support the operations today.

Thornloe Cheese is a landmark and part of the regional heritage, as well an active partner with Culinary Tourism activities and is known best for its wide variety of cheeses, fresh cheese curds and ice cream!

<https://www.thornloecheese.ca/>

Diner – Whiskey Jack Brewery

<https://www.whiskeyjackbeer.ca/>

7:00 pm – 10:00 pm - **Optional extended social**

Thursday, October 19

Riverside Place, 55 Riverside Drive, New Liskeard

8:15 am - Coffee and Networking

8:45 am - **Opening Ceremony / Official's Greeting**

9:10 am - **Economic Contribution of Agriculture in Northern Ontario**

Stephanie Vanthof, Member Service Representative, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

9:20 am – **Asset Mapping for Agriculture Economic Development**

Session Chair: Chloe Langlois, Economic and Business Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Northern Regional Land Inventory Project

Joanne Baril, Chair, Northeast Community Network

ConnectON / ConnectNorth

Charles Cirtwill, President and CEO, Northern Policy Institute

William Dustan, Research Analyst, Northern Policy Institute

10:20 am – Break (20 min)

10:40 am – Indigenous Agriculture

Session Chair: tbc

Temiskaming First Nation Harvest Baskets

Tara Dantouz, Natural Resources Manager, Timiskaming First Nation

Building Ties – collaboration between Quebec, Ontario and First Nations

Kalyn Banks, Executive Director, ACFO-Temiskaming

11:25 am – Rural Planning – Supporting Agriculture Expansion

Session Chair: Ken Mott, Rural Planner, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Opportunities and Challenges for Building and Planning in Northern Ontario

David Barton, Chief Building Official, Timiskaming District

Jennifer Pye, Planner, City of Temiskaming Shores

TBC

Erik Acs, Rural Planner, Niagara Region

Announcement of OMAFRA's upcoming training on Permitted Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas

Helma Geerts, Policy Advisor, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Nancy Rutherford, Rural Planner, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

12:25 pm – Lunch and Networking (1 hr)

1:25 pm – Building Food Supply and Value-Chains

Session Chair: Emily Seed, Executive Director, Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance

The role of the Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance

Emily Seed, Executive Director, Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance

Sourcing Local and Northern Ontario Ingredients

Genevieve Sartor, Owner, New Grain Kitchen Restaurant

Wholesale and Distribution – how businesses from small communities can access bigger markets

Pamela Hamel, President, Food by Nature

Northern Ontario Pavillion at the Royal Winter Fair

Guy Paquette, Initiatives Officer, Fednor

2:15 pm – **Sustainability**

Session Chair: tbc

Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture

TBC, Climate Risk Institute

Experimental Acres Pilot Project

Jordan Grigg, Sustainability Program Coordinator, County of Wellington

3:00 pm – **Closing Remarks**

3:10 pm - Adjourn