



# **MUSKOKA'S FOODSHED**

A STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD IN A CREATIVE RURAL ECONOMY

FINAL REPORT

**MUSKOKA'S FOODSHED: A STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD IN A CREATIVE RURAL ECONOMY - FINAL REPORT**

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## Executive Summary

Recent visioning workshops and surveys undertaken by the District Municipality of Muskoka ('the District') indicated an importance for local food and agriculture within the region. Promoting agriculture and local food production are amongst the top priorities of the District. The existing practices, products and industries all help to shape a small, but vibrant food culture within Muskoka. The District has therefore approached the research group to create a foodshed strategy; the overall strategy will promote and facilitate a stronger local food system, while supporting existing local food and creative economy practices.

The following report is a collection of material that forms the foodshed strategy. The report first introduces the context of the District, and the concepts of local food and creating a creative economy. In addition is a summary of demographics, followed by a collection of local food inventories for the District. The scope of the foodshed is then identified, and, finally, the overall Foodshed Strategy is presented. This consists of three major sections; the first is the identification of the overarching guiding principles, followed by the goals, and lastly by the specific strategies to achieve these goals and principles.

The guiding principles of the strategy are economic prosperity, community connections, and education and food literacy. From these principles, the research group developed the seven goals:

1. Establish a Co-operative Food Network with Food Hub(s),
2. Re-localize agricultural processing in Muskoka's Food Hubs,
3. Encourage local spending,
4. Build culinary tourism and connect tourists to food,
5. Improve food literacy for youth and the community,
6. Promote farm livelihoods, and
7. Create opportunities for new farmers

These goals lay out strategies such as establishing a food hub, creating a Muskoka food brand, implementing a community dollar, strengthening workshops and programs, as well as establishing funding and employment programs. Some of the strategies identified can be undertaken in the short-term, while others will take longer to implement. The strategies suggest ideas for local action, either by the District or interested individuals or groups. The District and Muskoka as a whole have a strong foundation on which to grow, a reality acknowledge in the proposed strategies and that suggest room for growth.

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**Why Local Food?**

Recent trends in energy markets, environmental concerns and human health have shown the detrimental effects of an industrialized food system (Donald, 2009). In addition to the decreased nutritional value of food travelling vast distances, the agri-food industry is creating homogeneity amongst farmed species and causing contamination through the use of herbicides and pesticides (Pollan, 2008). These problems are worsened by rising energy costs and their direct effects on global food prices.

Thus, the need to re-localize and de-industrialize our food systems is quickly becoming recognized as vital to human well-being and economic prosperity. Otherwise known as food security – the ability to feed oneself healthily and affordably – governments are becoming very interested in how to create and sell food that is grown and produced locally. In addition to health benefits and resilience to global energy markets, local food and food security are also being associated with successful attempts at local economic development.

Currently employing one in every eight jobs and accounting for approximately 8% of Canada’s GDP, the agricultural industry is vital to the Canadian economy (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2006). Yet, despite Canada’s vast landscape, lands designated as ‘Class 1, 2, or 3 Agriculture’ are in short supply. Much of this prime agricultural land is located in and around the Greater Toronto Area and is in high demand for urban development. This represents a major challenge to Canadian food security where, if the trend continues, large cities such as Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, will no longer be able to feed themselves (Lister, 2007). For this reason, it is important that all levels of Canadian governments explore ways to grow healthy foods in lands not designated as prime for agriculture.

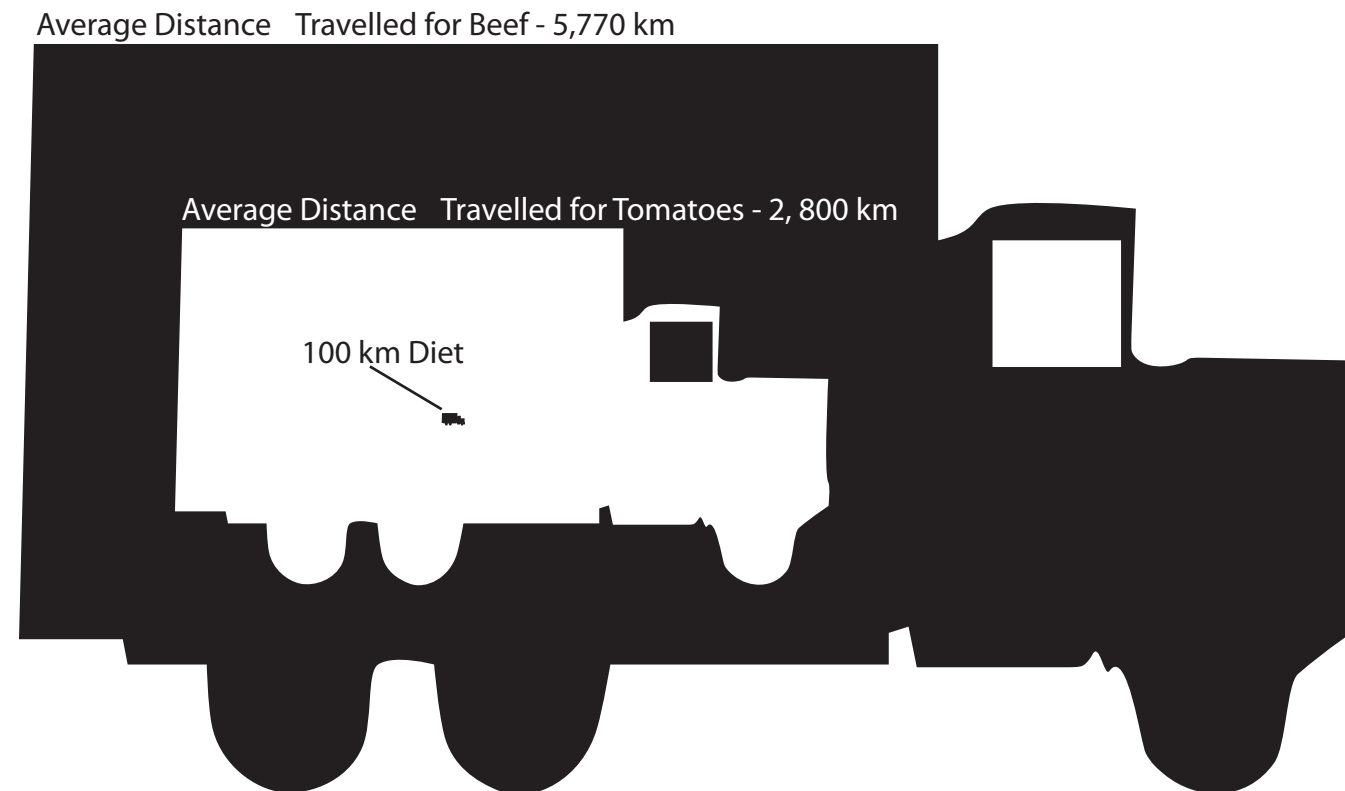


Figure 1.1: Today’s food industry is anything but local; food products crisscross continents and oceans on their way to the dinner plate. A paradigm shift is certainly necessary before a system resembling the 100 km diet can emerge.

*“the need to re-localize and de-industrialize our food systems is quickly becoming recognized as vital to human well-being and economic prosperity”*

Food Price Index, 2000 vs. 2010

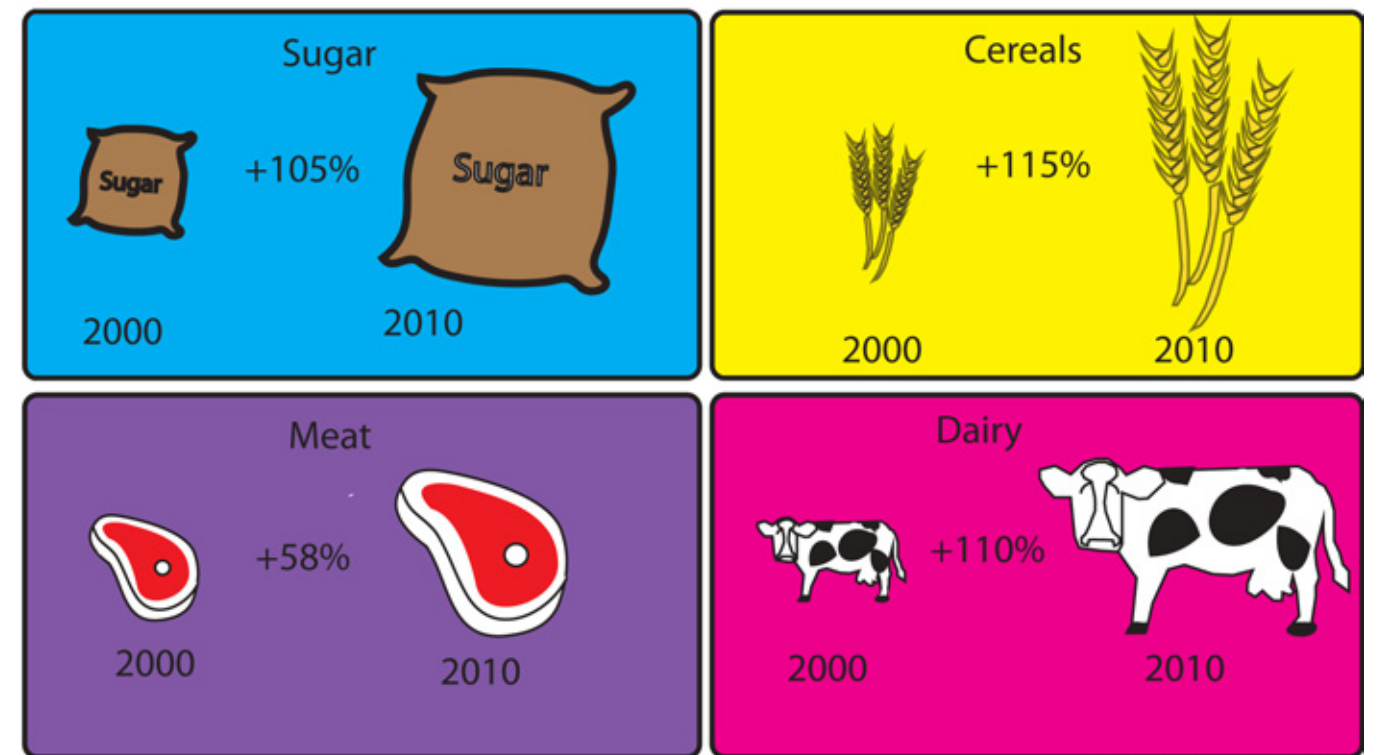


Figure 1.2: A decade of rising food prices, due to, among other things, increasing consumer demand and energy costs, is bringing attention to the long ignored food sector.

### Why Muskoka?

Muskoka (henceforth meaning the physical area and the community of the District Municipality of Muskoka, but not its government) provides an excellent illustration for the exploration of agriculture on lands outside of the traditional 'Class 1, 2 or 3 Prime Agricultural' lands. Quite simply, the region is not known for agriculture. Located approximately 200 km north of Toronto, Muskoka is predominately known for its rugged, beautiful landscape and waterfront cottages. Given the rocky soil and expensive real estate, the physical and economic conditions are not ideal for the growing and harvesting of food.

Despite this, agriculture does exist in the region and has for generations. The existing farming operations are mainly small in scale and family operated, and like most similar farms across Ontario, they are currently under threat from industrial-size farms and land speculation. At the same time, however, agriculture and other food-related industries are being seen as vital components in the effort to create more sustainable, healthier societies.

The District Municipality of Muskoka ('the District Municipality') – the region's upper-tier municipality – also now views the previously undervalued industry of agriculture as a potentially critical facet of its future prosperity and has recently undertaken efforts to strengthen its agriculture and food related industries (The District Municipality of Muskoka Planning and Economic Development Department, 2011). To this end, the District Municipality has commissioned the research group to develop a foodshed strategy for Muskoka, complete with recommendations for strengthening and nurturing a sustainable, rural and creative agricultural economy.



Figure 1.3: Muskoka's Canadian Shield terrain is not suitable for industrial-scale agriculture and as a result the area is dotted with small, family-owned farms.

### Why the Creative Economy?

The creative economy is an economy driven by ideas, innovation and knowledge where people are paid to think, innovate and collaborate and there is a shift from routine-oriented jobs to creativity-oriented jobs. Research has shown that creative class jobs are strongly related to higher wages and economic growth.

Creativity is important in all job sectors. Creative class workers can work in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture, adding value through creative problem solving and innovation. While the agricultural sector is losing jobs, and other sectors are growing slowly, the creative sector is rapidly growing and generating new jobs (Baeker et al., 2009).

In order for the District Municipality and Muskoka to create a local food system, the Muskoka's creativity needs to be tapped. For the last ten years, Ontario's food sector has grown 2-3% annually, but the creative food economy sub-sector (defined as local, organic, specialty or ethnic foods) has grown much faster, estimated between 15% and 25% each year (Donald, 2009). This rapidly growing sector of the economy can provide an opportunity for Muskoka. While its marginal soil precludes it from competing in a traditional agricultural paradigm, there are opportunities to advance a creative food economy, finding synergies with sectors like tourism and retail in the process. By building on existing assets – local farmers, food processors, restaurateurs, retailers and community leaders – Muskoka can build a creative rural economy, provide employment opportunities, strengthen communities, engage youth and more.



Figure 1.4: Creativity can transform a cheap commodity, such as cranberries, into a valuable niche product, such as cranberry wine; local processing is instrumental in capturing the full value of local agricultural products.

# 2. DEMOGRAPHICS

The research group has compiled the following demographic information (see Appendix A) of Muskoka in order to understand the factors specific to the region that will shape the foodshed strategy. Factors identified relate to population, the work force and income levels.

*“there are significantly more baby boomers and retirees than there are youth joining the workforce”*

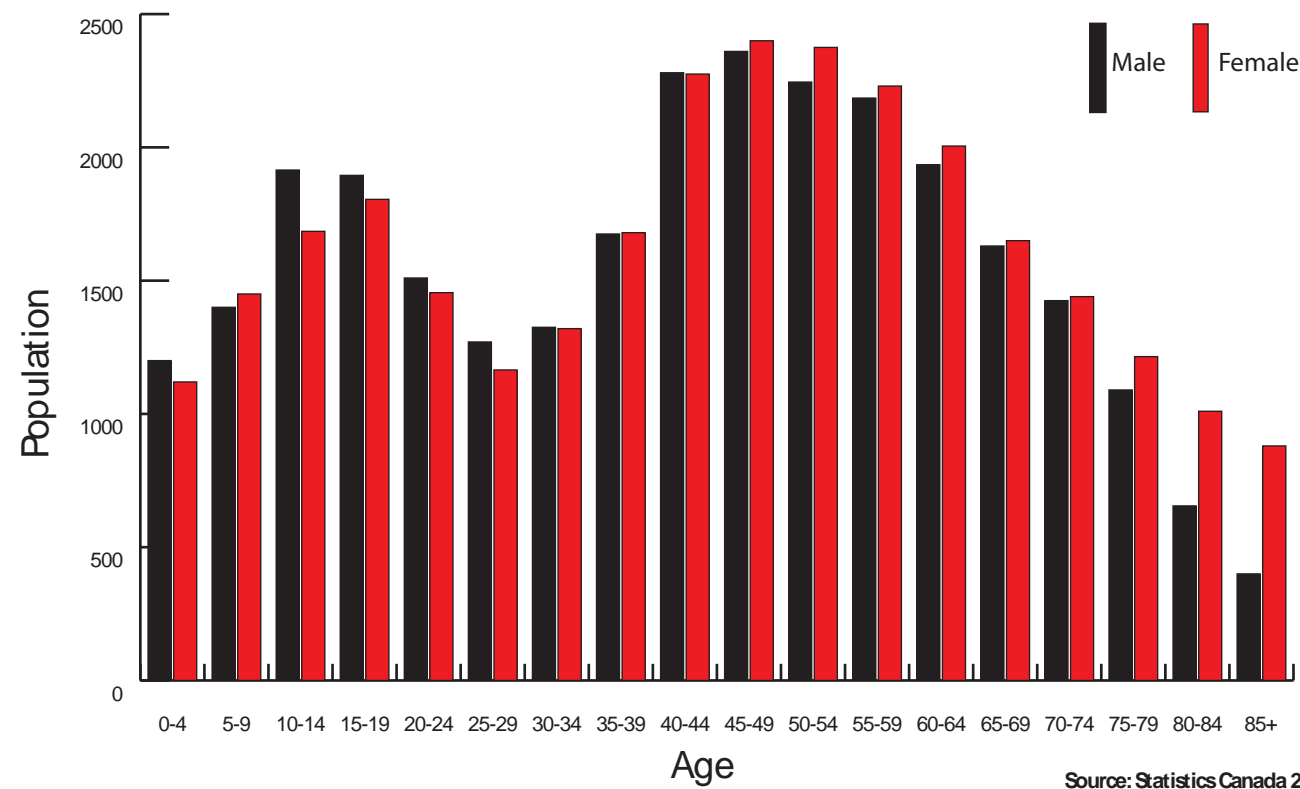


Figure 2.1: The population of Muskoka is aging; there are significantly more baby boomers and retirees than there are youth joining the workforce. A significant portion of the population is between the ages of 40 and 59, while one of the least significant portions is those aged 20 to 34.

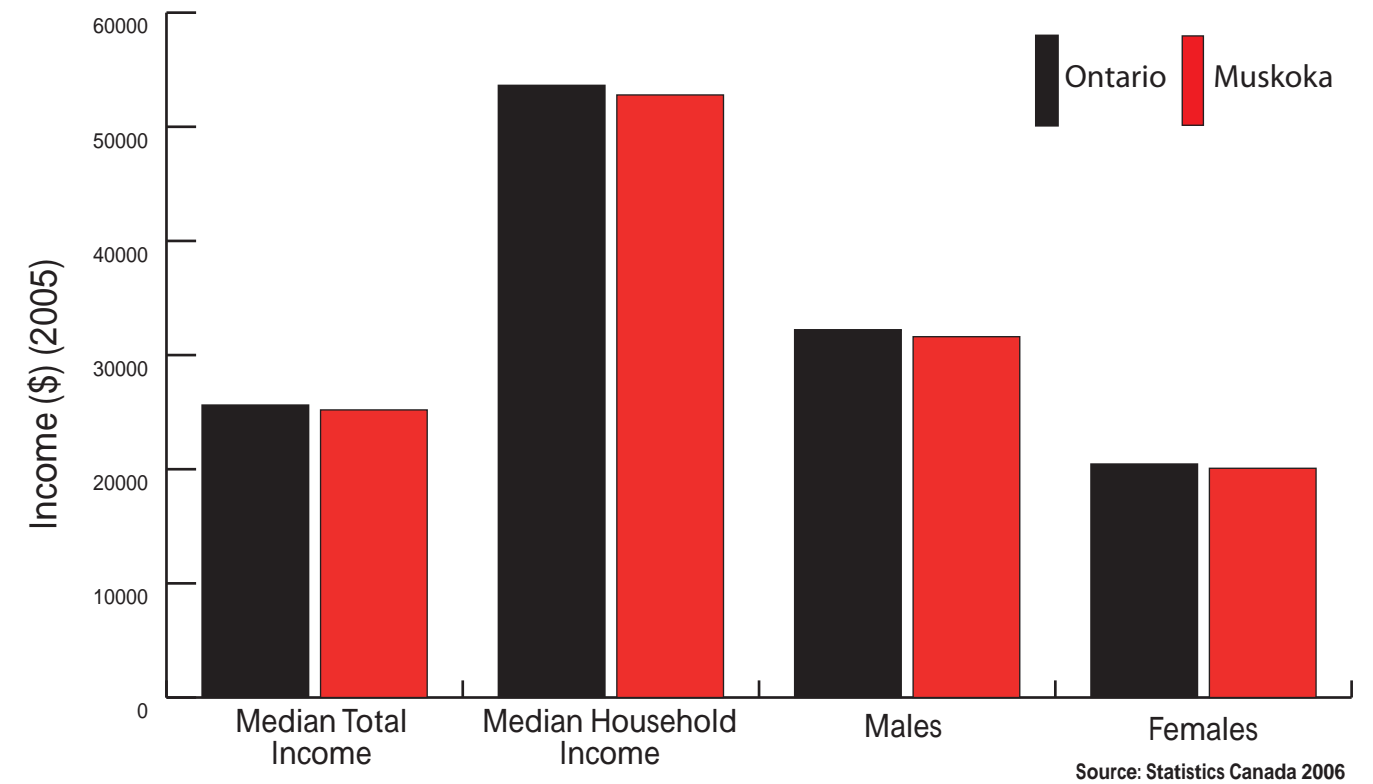


Figure 2.2: Muskoka has a lower median income than the overall Province of Ontario. It also has lower median incomes for males and females, significantly higher percentages of income from government transfers, as well as significantly higher percentages of income from sources other than employment and government transfers. However, incidences of low income are significantly lower than the provincial and national averages.

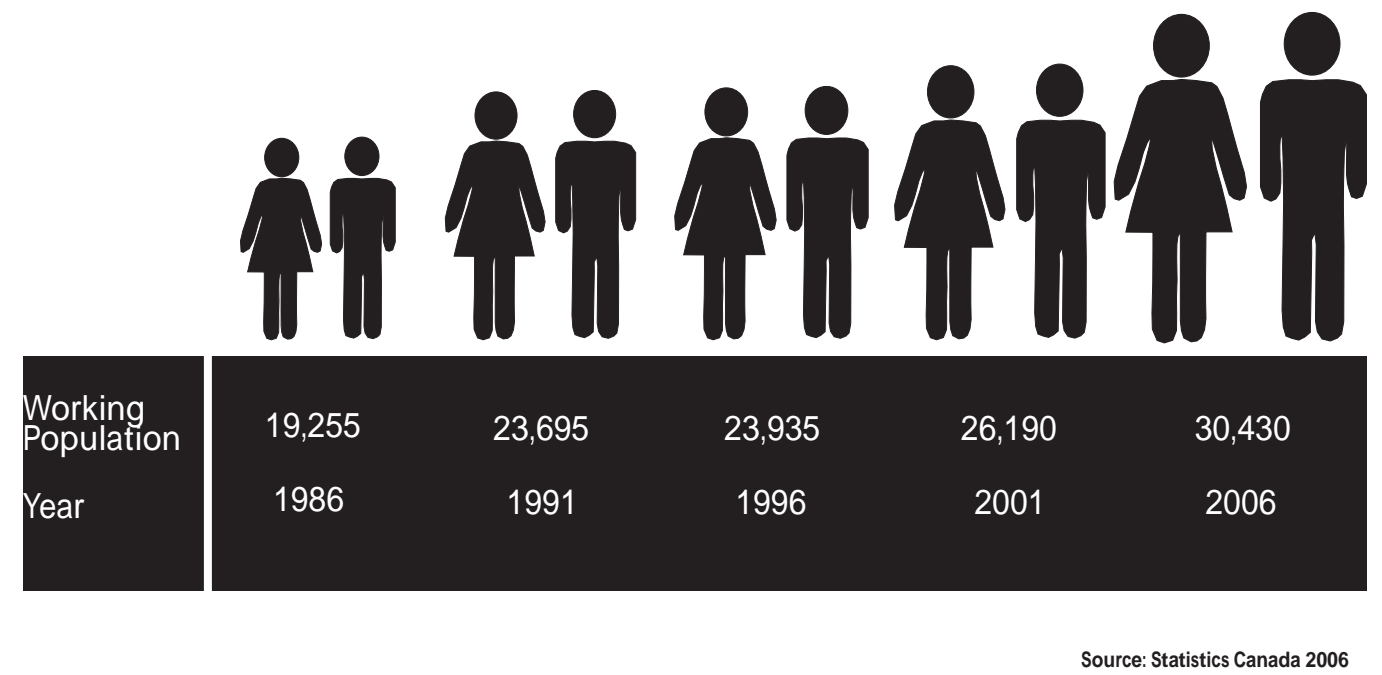


Figure 2.3: Growth of the workforce has been consistent with population growth; the labour force grew 63% between 1986 and 2006, when it was at over 30,000 individuals.

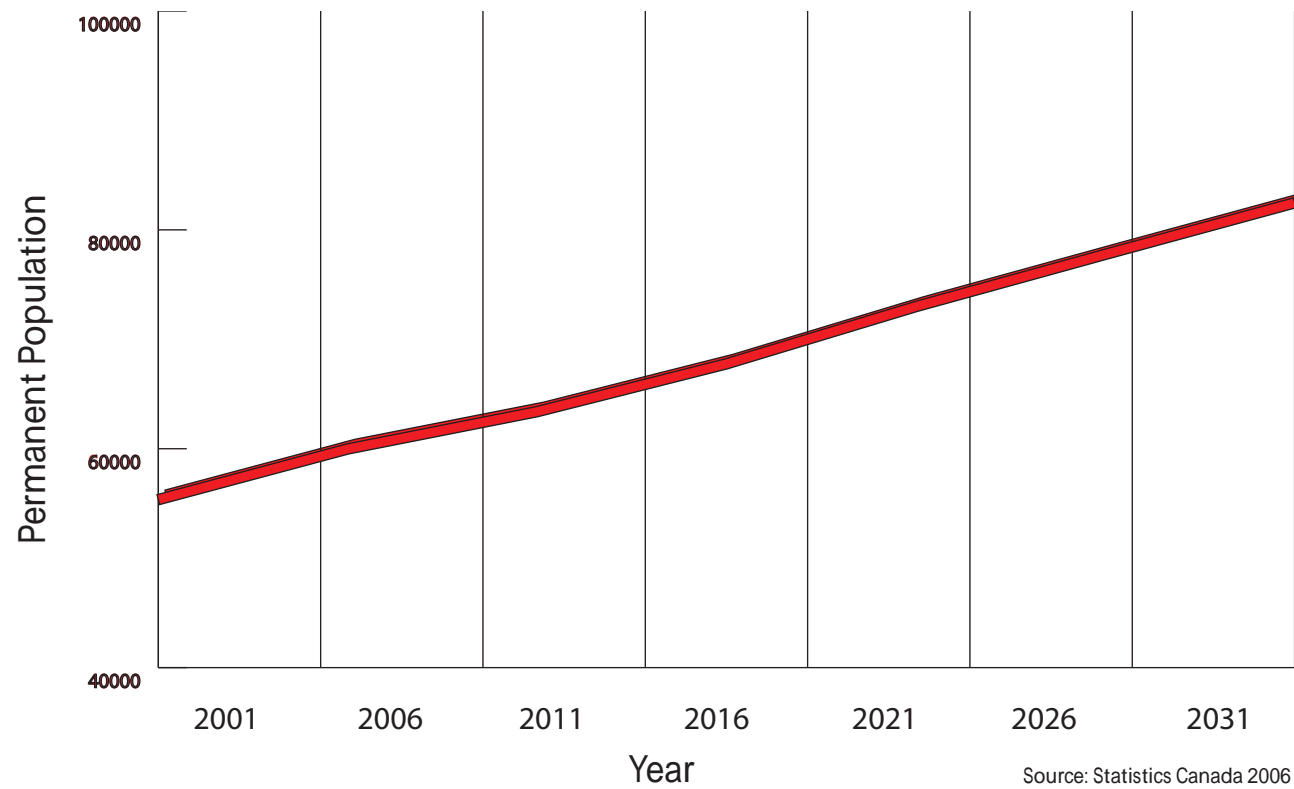


Figure 2.4: While Muskoka is known for summer cottages, the permanent population is growing and expected to continue to rise. In 2006, the population of Muskoka was 57,563, and it is projected that by 2031 the permanent population will be over 80,000 residents. This is nearly a 30% increase over the next 20 years, however, the population aged 0-14 is projected to increase by only 15%. Additionally, in 2006 an estimated seasonal population of 75,626 made for a total population over 130,000 during cottage months.

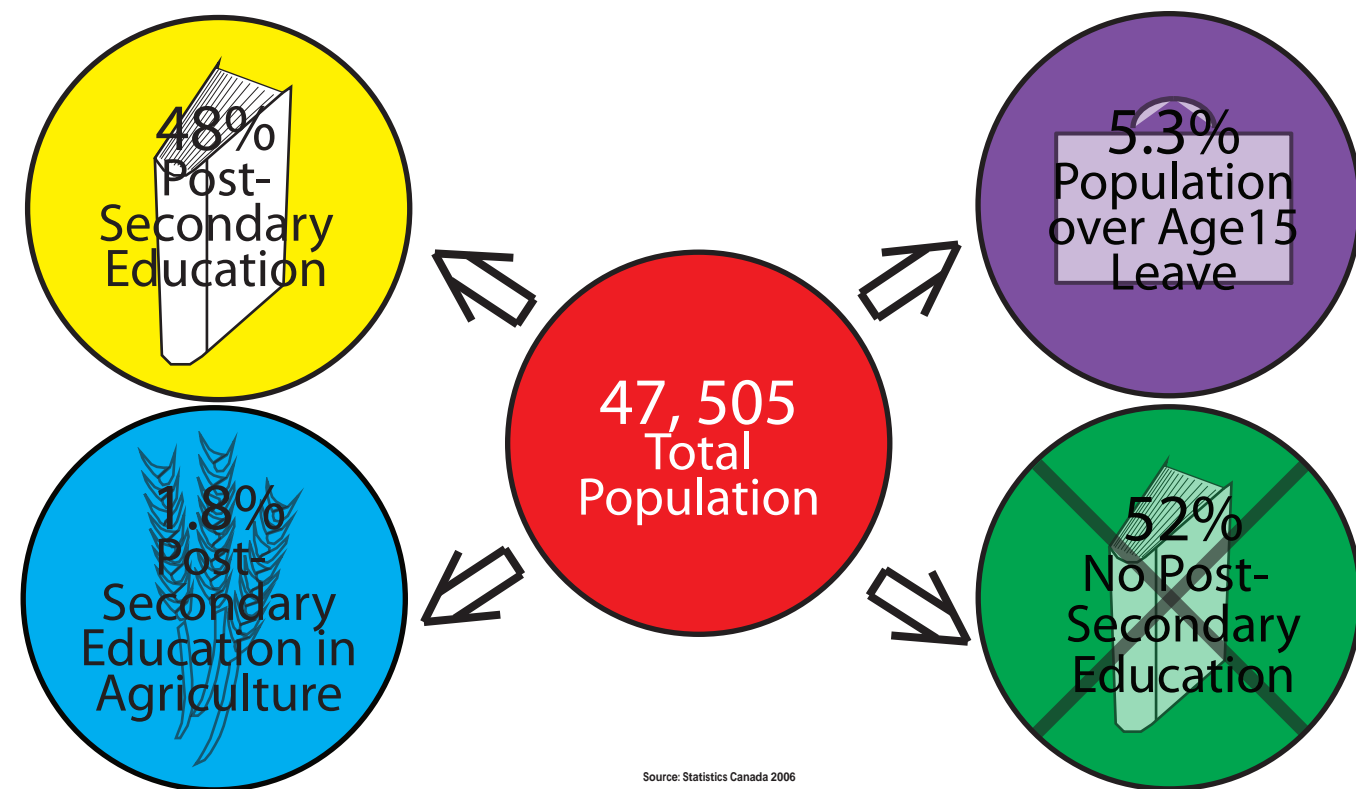


Figure 2.6: Nearly half, 48%, of Muskoka residents have completed post-secondary education. Interestingly, 1.8% of the population or approximately 840 residents, have degrees in agriculture, natural resources and conservation. Between 2001 and 2006, 5.3% of youth in Muskoka left. This figure is lower than in Nipissing or Parry Sound, however, combined with an already existing smaller share of young workers, there is clearly a need to retain youth and engage them with Muskoka's economy.

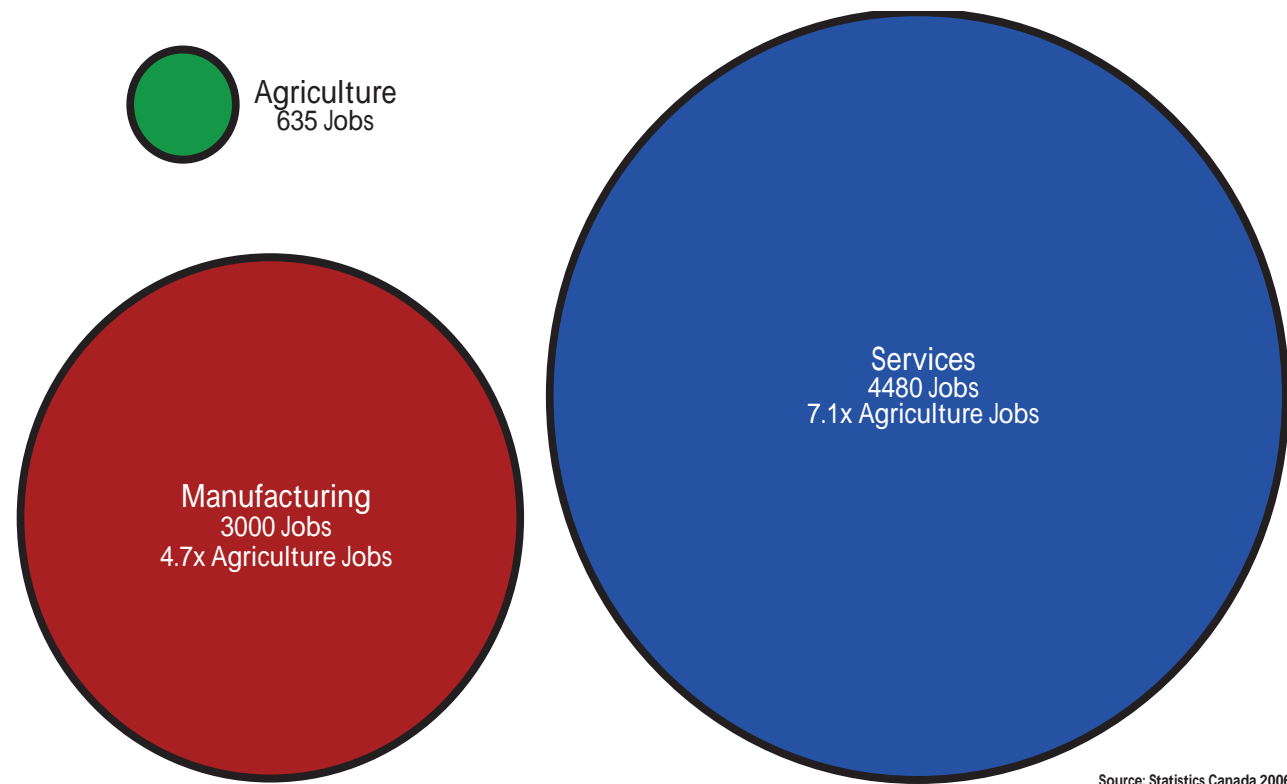


Figure 2.5: The percentage of the Muskoka workforce in agriculture is not very significant; only 635 Muskokans work in agriculture, compared to, for example, 3,000 in Manufacturing, and 4,480 in Business Services.

*“while Muskoka is known for summer cottages, the permanent population is growing and expected to continue to rise”*

# 3. MUSKOKA FOODSHED

## Foodsheds

The term ‘foodshed’ describes the flow of food from producer to consumer; it is a means to describe a food system that connects local producers with local consumers. The research team has used the term foodshed as a geographical area that supplies a population centre with food. The mapping of local food systems can be focused specifically on potential local foodsheds; areas of nearby land that could theoretically provide part or all of a district’s food needs. The foodshed analysis of Muskoka shows a complex network of relationships between actors including policy makers, producers, distributors, retailers and consumers within and surrounding Muskoka. While this analysis is limited in complexity (due to time constraints) it does recognize local food systems and the relationship of a variety of factors that are political, economic, biological, social and cultural. Factors to determine a foodshed seem simple, such as the amount of food one person requires, total number of people that require food and the amount of land necessary to produce said food. However, these are in fact complex relationships. Several additional key factors and assumptions play pivotal roles in determining the foodshed such as soil classification, type of crops grown, weather pattern and changes, distribution, and processing as well as political and social issues.

## Soil Data Analysis

The classifications of the mineral soils are grouped into 7 classes on the basis of soil survey information (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada-CLI). Soils classed as 1, 2, 3 or 4 are considered acceptable of sustained use for cultivated field crops. The predominant soil class found within the District of Muskoka is “unclassified” (see Appendix B), the principal reason being that these lands are water areas, forest reserves, national/provincial parks, urban areas, unmapped areas or designated irrigation courses. The subsequent soil types in order of predominance are 3, 4, 2, 7 and organic and can be found through Muskoka.

## Foodshed Analysis

The mapping of the local foodshed did not address the location of populated areas, but did recognize where these populations obtain their food. The analysis also examined the capacity for the District of Muskoka to produce more of its own local food, based on the quality, quantity and location of its agricultural lands relative to a populated geographic location. Climate zone and crop data (see Appendix B) were used to establish production, retail and processing zones. The foodshed is defined by two interconnected regions, the initial region is outlined by the District of Muskoka boundaries. These boundaries are political, economic and social and recognize the objectivity of different groups’ participation in the production and control of local food. The district boundary shows a collaborative effort to build a strong and sustainable local food economy; it reinforces the concept of local food purchasing and shows a preference of locally produced food over industrialized establishments. The subsequent boundary is defined by a 100 km district radius, which recognizes distribution, biological and processing factors. This boundary also recognizes the need of the local community to distribute local goods beyond the municipal boundary for economic reasons. It also identifies the regional biological factors that do not adhere to political boundaries such as soil type and weather conditions.

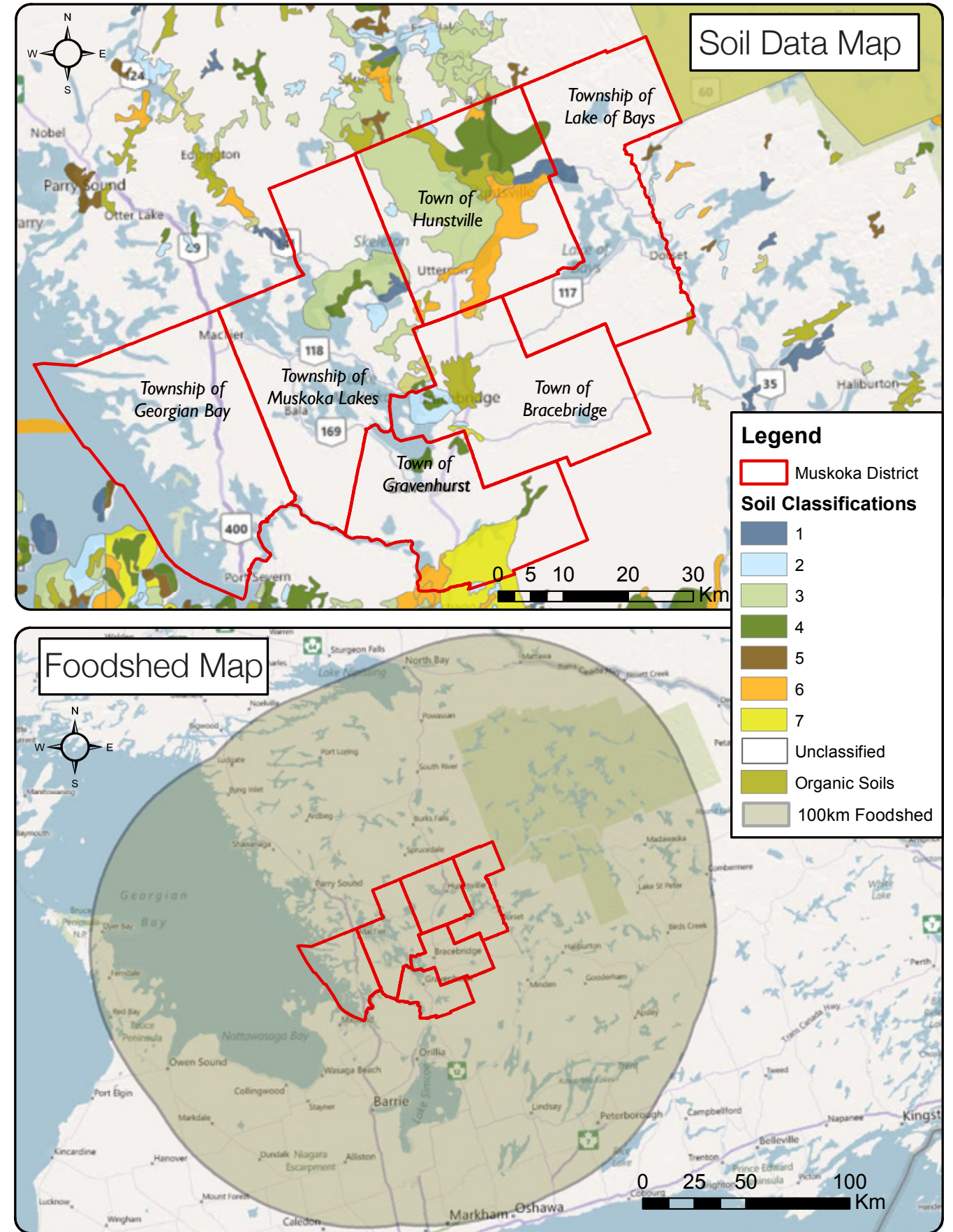


Figure 3.1: The Foodshed Map depicts the boundaries of Muskoka, which for practical purposes also form the foodshed boundaries for the purposes of this foodshed strategy. The 100 km foodshed, a common delineator for a local diet is outlined in contrast. A complex foodshed definition also includes factors such as soil types, climatic conditions, etc.



The research group has established three local food inventories for Muskoka (see Appendix C). These include *Where Does It Come From?*, *Where Can I Buy It?* and *Where Can I Eat It?* Together these inventories show the chain of local food in Muskoka from growing and processing to sales and consumption. Due to the limitations of the research period, these inventories may have missed some local food operations.

### Where Does It Come From?

Local food in Muskoka is grown mainly on 27 different farms that range in scale from small backyard farms, such as *Four Season Greens*, to larger, more diverse farms, such as *Brooklands Farm*.

Statistics Canada identified a total of 199 farms in Muskoka, however Savour Muskoka only recognizes 27 of these as providing local food. It is these 27 farms that the research group has chosen to identify in the inventory. The majority of these farms are located in the Townships of Huntsville and Muskoka Lakes, with some elsewhere in Muskoka as well as slightly outside its political boundaries. The *Where Does It Come From* inventory also identifies 18 culinary artisans in Muskoka which process food for local consumption and include products such as ice cream (*Belly Ice Cream Company*), meats (*The Cottage Butcher*), and beer (*Lake of Bays Brewing Company*). Similar to the farms, the recognized culinary artisans span Muskoka, but are mainly situated within the Township of Huntsville.

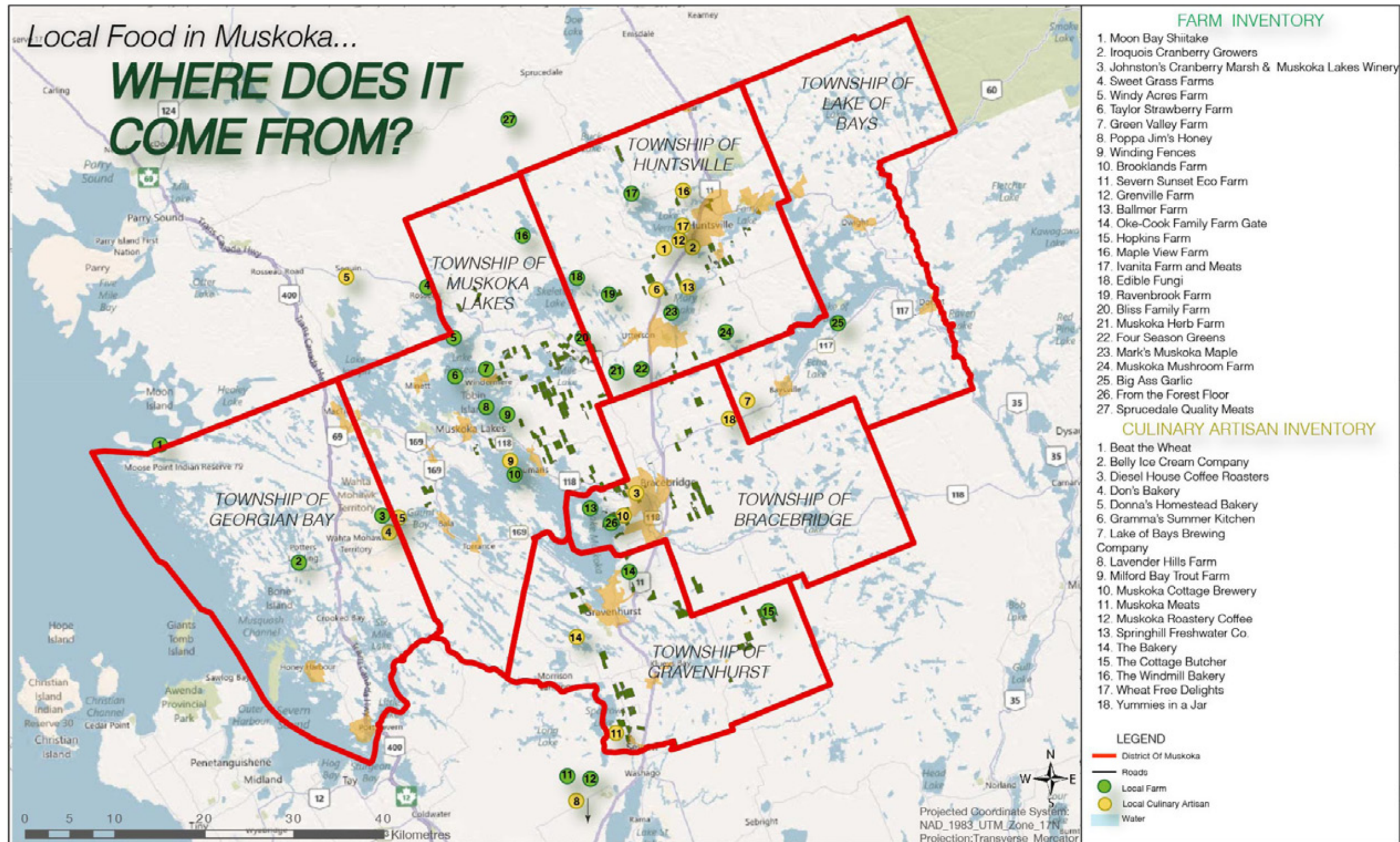


Figure 4.1: The *Where Does It Come From?* inventory maps 27 farms and 18 culinary artisans supplying local food products to Muskoka.

**Where Can I Buy It?**

The *Where Can I Buy It?* inventory maps retailers, food cooperatives, food distribution centres and farmers' markets. It also includes small and medium scale retailers, food co-ops, food banks and seasonal markets. In total there are 21 recognized establishments to obtain local food within Muskoka, not including farms that sell directly to customers.

All identified establishments provide local food to Muskoka in some way. The soup kitchen service at *The Table Soup Kitchen Foundation* in Huntsville, for example, aims to use only local foods for the meals it provides.

Its meals are sponsored by local restaurants and stores, and in cases where the meals are not sponsored, the foundation purchases individual items from local sources. Furthermore, the identified farmers' markets are hubs that sell local food on particular days of the week throughout the growing season. For example, the *Baysville Farmers' Market* operates on Friday afternoons from July to September, and features products from twelve vendors including fresh produce, meats, baked goods and preserves. *Tredki Acres* is another unique location to purchase local food, as it is a farmers' market on wheels. The organization delivers fresh, local food items directly to customers during the growing season; it offers a variety of products including coffee, fresh produce, dairy and preserves.

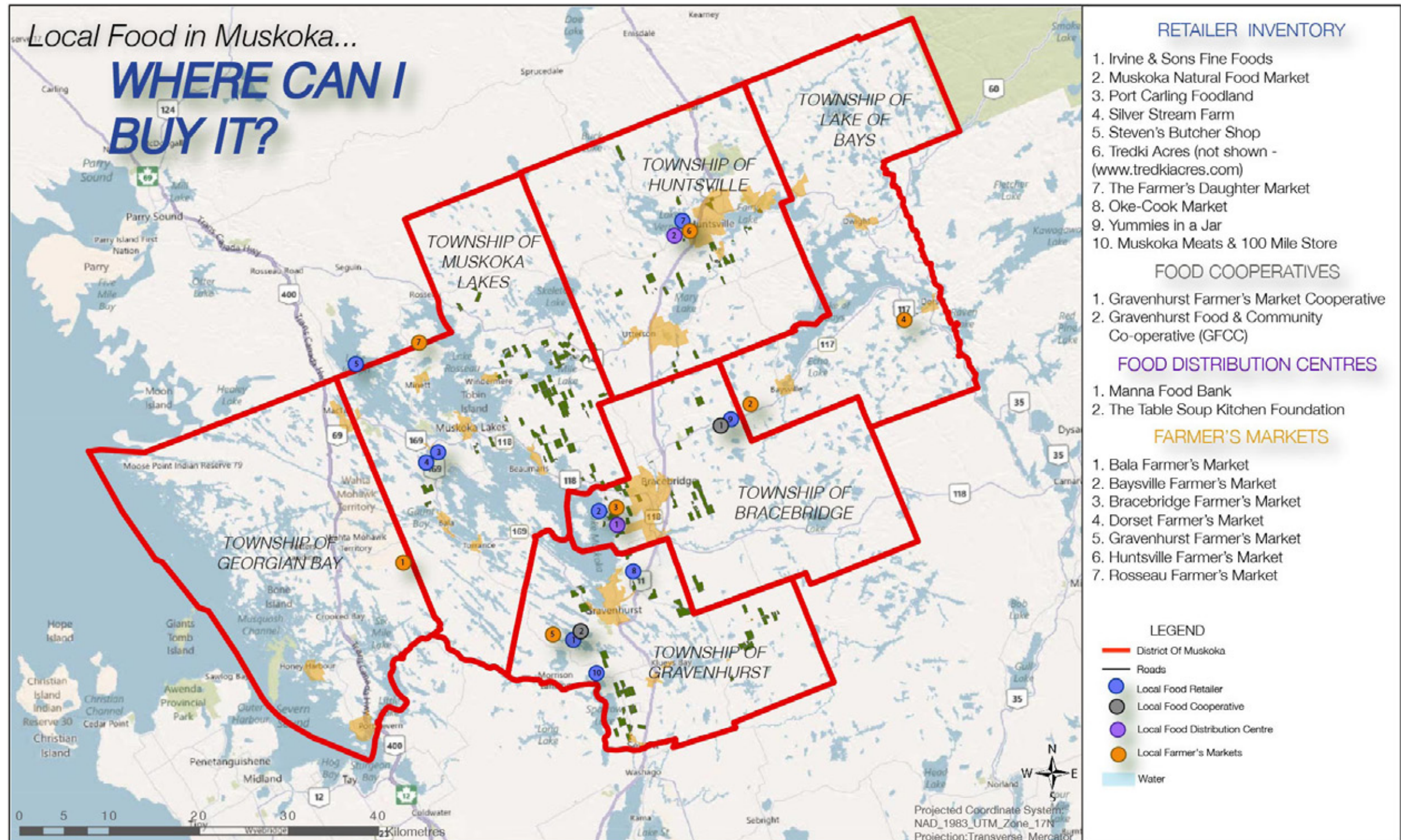


Figure 4.2: The *Where Can I Buy It?* inventory maps 21 establishments, such as retailers, food cooperatives, food distribution centres and farmers' markets, where Muskokans can obtain local food.

### Where Can I Eat It?

The *Where Can I Eat It?* inventory is a collection of restaurants and chefs that use local food from within Muskoka. This list includes restaurants, lodges, resorts, inns, cafés and the like. For example, the *Seven Main Café* in the Township of Huntsville embraces the idea of providing local products. Their coffee comes from the *Muskoka Roastery Company* and the majority of their other products are seasonal and home made with local goods, much of which comes from fellow Savour Muskoka members. The majority of these local food options in Muskoka are located in the Townships of Huntsville and Bracebridge.

These three inventories identify two main hubs for local food and agriculture within Muskoka; the Townships of Huntsville and Bracebridge. They are home to many of the places where food is grown, sold and consumed. This is unsurprising as these two townships are also where much of the population is located.

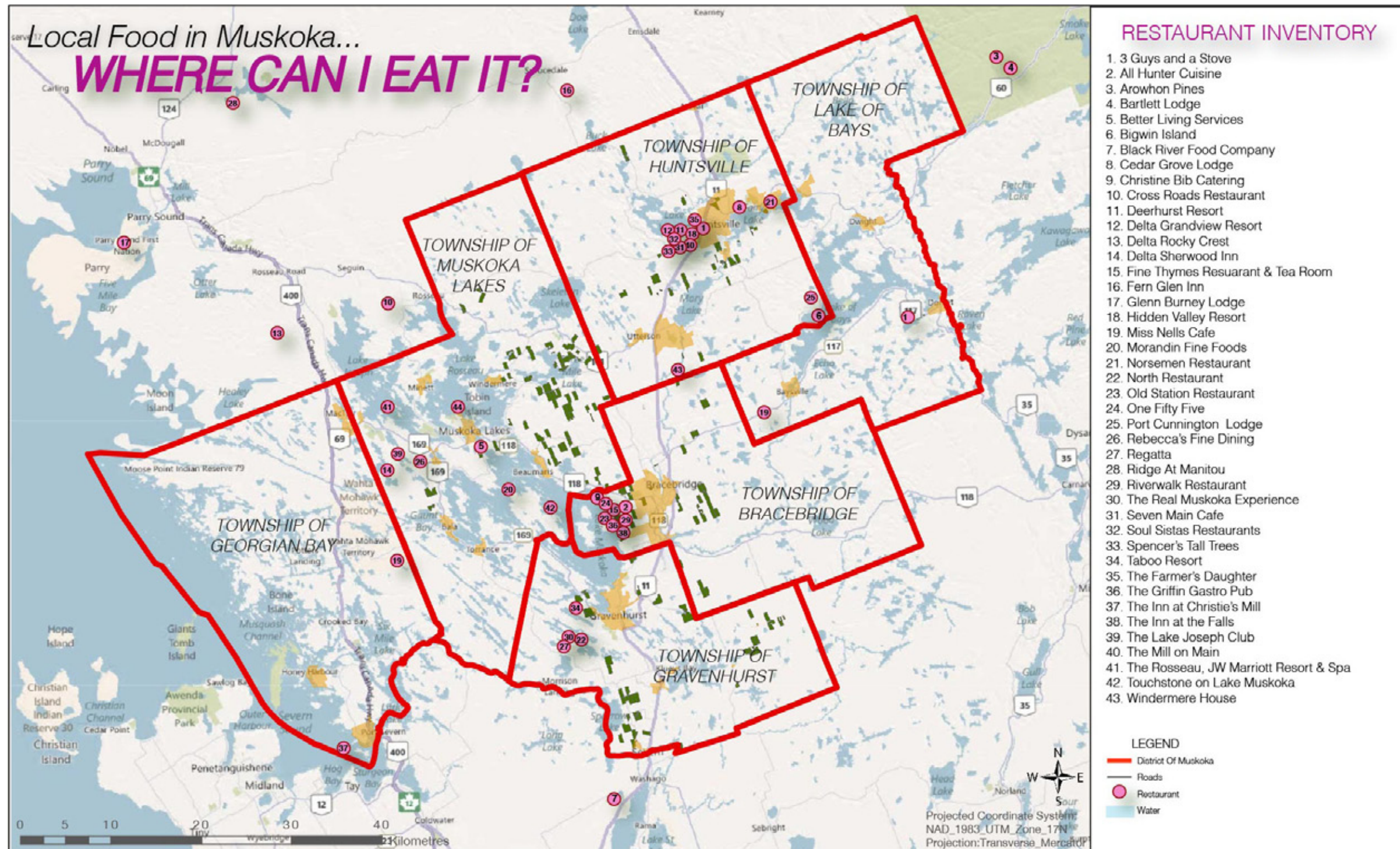


Figure 4.3: The *Where Can I Eat It?* inventory maps 43 establishments, such as restaurants and cafés, where Muskokans can eat local food.

The research team has created the Muskoka foodshed strategy by defining guiding principles, goals, and finally the list of implementable strategies. The guiding principles and goals were shaped with information gained during a stakeholders meeting in September, 2011, as well as extensive background research (see Appendix D) and group collaboration. The three guiding principles discussed below are the main components the research group aims to address with the foodshed strategy; these include economic prosperity, community connections and education. These principles help to shape the six goals, which in turn, were the basis for the strategies identified in Section 5 of this report.

## Guiding Principles

- *Economic Prosperity*

Economic prosperity is the idea of a thriving, successful local economy in Muskoka. By properly utilizing the current assets in Muskoka and drawing on all available resources, this can be achieved. A key aspect of this is keeping the economy local; products that are grown or produced in Muskoka should be sold within, or as close to the producer whenever possible. Through this process, specialty foods, niche markets and high value products can retain the highest and best value for the individual producers and the local economy.

- *Community Connections*

Food holds a strong gathering component; it acts as a way for people to come together. Through the concept of local food, the Muskoka community can convene to further enhance the significance of food and agriculture. The opportunity for people to gather and share knowledge and resources exists within Muskoka. This idea of gathering will enhance community building especially between stakeholders and Muskoka's residents, which will further benefit the community allowing for connections to be established and remain permanent.

*“the three guiding principles...include economic prosperity, community connections and education”*

- *Education and Food Literacy*

Education is one of the most important aspects for the future success of Muskoka. Current residents hold a wealth of knowledge of food and local assets. It is important to continue to offer and enhance learning opportunities as a primary source for residents and tourists to become and remain food literate. In addition, increased formal education on the process of local food production benefits Muskoka in many ways. Starting from a young age, it is important to encourage youth to be actively involved in understanding the value of where food comes from. This will help to inform future generations and possibly influence some residents to stay in Muskoka and pursue their interest in local agriculture practices.

## Goals

Goals have been established to shape the foodshed strategy and suggest the best means for the District Municipality and Muskoka to identify the agricultural opportunities and enhance local food production in Muskoka. The guiding principles will be achieved through the following goals:

1. Establish a co-operative food network and food hub(s),
2. Re-localize agricultural processing in Muskoka's food hubs,
3. Encourage local spending,
4. Build culinary tourism and connect tourists to food,
5. Improve food literacy for youth and the community,
6. Promote farm livelihoods, and
7. Create opportunities for new farmers

Strategies have been formed as the best ways of implementing these goals. Strategies are suggested for both the short-term ('quick wins'), as well as the long term. These strategies present ideas to the District Municipality, as well as groups and organizations in Muskoka.

*“goals have been established to shape the foodshed strategy...strategies have been formed as the best ways of implementing these goals”*

### Establish a Co-operative Food Network with Food Hub(s)

A cooperative network and food hubs will allow for a greater connected local agricultural system in Muskoka. Within this network, re-localizing agriculture will be at the forefront of issues and initiatives. A network of a large variety of farmers, processors, community individuals, stakeholders and the like, will create a co-operative approach to re-localizing agriculture in the most effective and efficient manner.

#### Strategy 1) Co-operative Food Network Steering Committee

Create a committee of local food stakeholders and community members to identify and address issues, and create a stronger community network connected to food and agriculture in Muskoka.

A Muskoka steering committee will create a partnership amongst organizational and individual stakeholders and the District Municipality. The steering committee will have a variety of goals and objectives including:

- Formulating a Food Charter with the District Municipality to aid in the implementation of its food policies.
- Identifying issues and concerns that the cooperative members might have.
- Creating new avenues for connecting the farmers.
- Communicating with the District Municipality and lower-level municipalities so that they can better help the cooperative and the local food movement in Muskoka.
- Establishing connections with neighbouring communities and organizations for trade.
- Identifying opportunities in the community for partnerships.
- Advocating for policy submissions to provincial and federal governments to create a more favourable regulatory environment for local agricultural production.

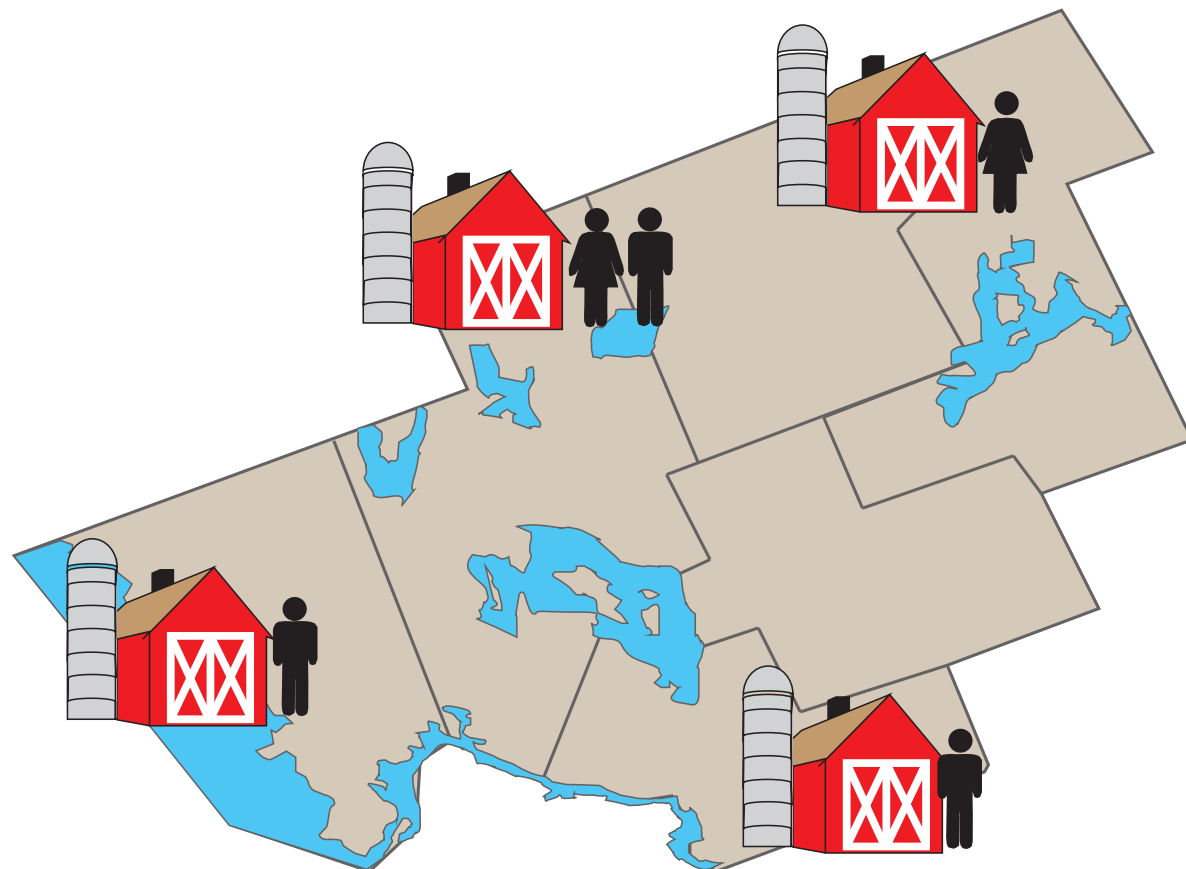


Figure 5.1.1: The Co-operative Food Network Steering Committee will be formed of local food interests, such as farmers and also chefs and restaurateurs, retailers, NGOs, individuals, etc.

The responsibility for creating the steering committee should lie with the District Municipality, as well as interested community organizations. Once the co-operative network is established (discussed in Goal 1, Strategy 2), the responsibility for maintaining the steering committee should lie there.

#### Strategy 2) Co-operative Food Network

Form a co-operative food network to act as an umbrella organization for food and agriculture in Muskoka.

Creating a co-operative food network is a vital first step in establishing an effective and coherent foodshed strategy. Such an organization will build on the work of Savour Muskoka and include various stakeholders such as farmers, processors, restaurateurs, retailers, educators, community members and consumers. Having the organization take the form of a co-operative is a key component. A co-operative will ensure that a business model is developed to serve the currently disparate functions of the Muskoka food system; such as production, processing, marketing and sales. Furthermore, the network will serve as a place to learn about food by providing shared information, as well as workshops and education programs. A co-operative will allow for all the members to acquire a financial stake, while it also gives its members governance, ownership, and control over the association. A co-operative farm network will be important in going forward with many of the strategies discussed throughout the remainder of this report.

The responsibility for creating a co-operative lies in the hands of the Steering Committee and the community itself. The co-operative could arise from the work Savour Muskoka has already completed or could start off as a new organization.

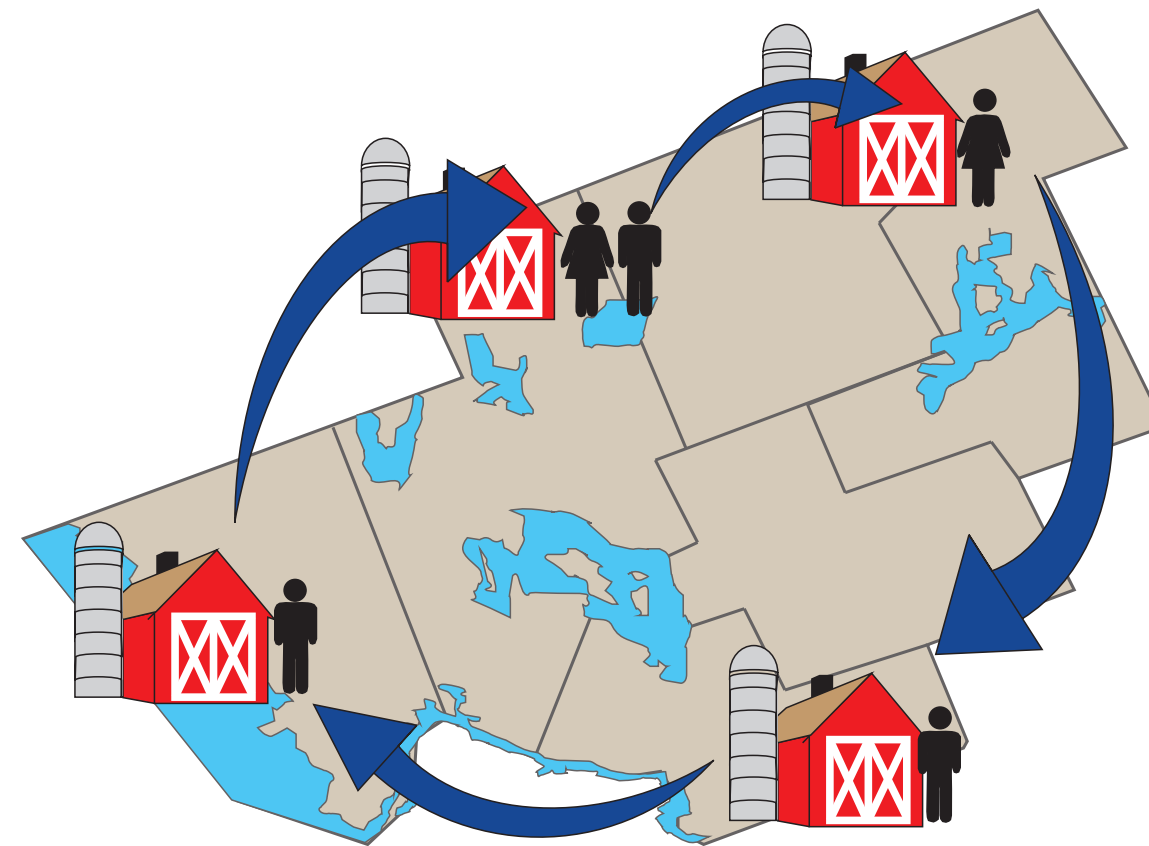


Figure 5.1.2: The primary purpose of the Co-operative Food Network is to create one umbrella organization under which local food interest can further the goal for a stronger Muskoka food system.

**Strategy 3) Food Hub(s)**

Establish food-hub(s) throughout Muskoka as a central operating space for the co-operative network.

The aforementioned co-operative network will eventually require a physical location for stakeholders not only to meet, but also to carry out the many associated functions. These functions include the aggregating, processing, storing, marketing, selling and distributing of Muskoka agricultural products. In the short term, establishing food hubs will require taking advantage of existing spaces. Such assets might include processing and storage amenities (walk-in freezers and dry storage), church and school kitchens (processing/canning of produce), and community centres and restaurants (retail and processing). There is also useful space and kitchens in some local grocery stores.

In the long term, a dynamic food hub model will provide an opportunity to engage entrepreneurs, producers, and consumers under a single roof. As such, entrepreneurs can contribute capital investment and new businesses, producers have access to processing facilities and retail markets, and consumers can purchase Muskoka products, benefiting the local economy. While coalescing these functions under a single roof is necessary, there is no limit to the number of food hubs which could be established. The conditions in Muskoka, however, mean that a single food hub can be created or a series of smaller hubs can be created in Muskoka's different towns.

Food hub(s) will not only allow the co-operative to carry out its many associated functions, but will also act as a hub to implement many of the other strategies outlined in this report. The space, for example, could be

used for local food workshops to improve food literacy in the community (Goal 5, Strategy 3) and/or it could be used as a location from which to distribute local food baskets (Goal 3, Strategy 2).

The responsibility for this will lie in the hands of the co-operative, once developed. The co-operative will take the initiative to gain access to existing spaces and, when enough resources are obtained, to create a new food hub space or spaces.

Precedent:

Wild Island Foods Co-operative, British Columbia

<http://bcics.uvic.ca/galleria/bc.php?tourtype=1&story=45>

*“in the short term, establishing the food hub will require taking advantage of existing assets...in the long term, a dynamic food hub model will provide an opportunity to engage entrepreneurs, producers, and consumers under a single roof”*



Figure 5.1.3: Food hub(s) will provide physical locations where activities such as processing and selling of Muskoka food products can take place. Additional activities may include workshops for healthy eating, canning, gardening, etc.

### Re-localize agricultural processing in Muskoka's Food Hubs

A major identified issue within Muskoka is the lack of local processing options. Currently, farmers are forced to send their products elsewhere, which leads to a decline in the value farmers receive for their products. Much of the difficulty with local processing is due to provincial and federal legislation. However, keeping all aspects of food local is an important component of Muskoka's foodshed strategy.

#### Strategy 1) Existing Assets

Make use of community and church kitchens for small-scale processing, eventually moving on to food hubs when facilities become available.

Presently, co-operative processing can take place in underutilized community kitchens, such as those found in churches, schools and grocery stores. Precedents exist where spaces similar to these are offered for free or at a nominal fee. These kitchens provide prime space for processing such as canning, preserving and freezing food to prepare food programs, conduct workshops or package food for local food baskets.

In the long term, local processing will take place in a food hub (as described in Goal 1, Strategy 3), which will feature equipment such as walk-in fridges and freezers, ovens, commercial mixers, food dehydrators, food smokers, vacuum sealers and other professional equipment.

The responsibility for this will lie with the aforementioned co-operative. Spaces are available throughout the communities of Muskoka for which the co-operative can negotiate use.



Figure 5.2.1: Existing community assets in churches, schools and community centres are numerous and can be employed for small-scale processing, as well as processing workshops.

Precedent:

Toronto Community Kitchen Profiles <http://www.foodshare.net/kitchen08.htm>

Anson Community Kitchens, North Carolina <http://www.nvbdi.org/kitchen.htm>

#### Strategy 2) Abattoirs

Lobby the provincial government for increased regulatory and fiscal support for small-scale local abattoirs.

“Small, locally-owned, provincially-inspected, multi-species meat and poultry abattoirs are essential to the survival of family farms and rural communities,” and thus the entire concept of local meat (Peterborough Social Planning Council, 2011). However, their existence is threatened by regulatory and financial burdens.

In order for these small, locally-owned abattoirs to supply the demand for local meat, the regulatory structure must be stable and conducive to their small-scale operation. Furthermore, it must allow for the development of sound business plans to which banks will loan. As such, it is necessary to lobby the Provincial Government for both regulatory and fiscal support for small, locally-owned abattoirs. In addition, local support must be present for local abattoir business plans.

The responsibility for lobbying the Provincial Government should lie with the District Municipality. Cooperation with other rural municipalities on this issue is more likely to bring about results. The responsibility for supporting local abattoir initiatives lies with the Co-operative Food Network and its interested members and partners. Support may take many forms, from joint facilities to guaranteed demand for services.

*“small, locally-owned, provincially-inspected, multi-species abattoirs are essential to the survival of local livestock farms and thus the entire concept of local meat”*

**Encourage local spending**

Demand for locally grown products is noticeably present in Muskoka. As agricultural production increases to meet this demand, it is important for the benefits to remain local. By encouraging local spending, residents will have access to the highest quality products available and revenues will benefit the local economy through enhanced reinvestment.

**Strategy 1) Community Dollar**

Establish a Muskoka Dollar to be used towards local food, related products and local services.

Developing a form of community currency will encourage residents and tourists to keep their spending local. There are a variety of options for managing community currency. The *Salt Spring Dollar* in British Columbia, for example, operates like gift certificates. They are purchased on par with the Canadian Dollar and can be used for almost any goods and services in the community. The interest gained through the associated trust account is used to support local community initiatives. Similarly, the *Toronto Dollar* puts 10 cents from every dollar purchased towards a community project fund. Thus one of the primary benefits from the implementation of a local currency can be funding for community initiatives. It is also possible for discounts to be created specifically for purchases made in a local currency, thus benefitting the customer and further encouraging the use of the local currency and local spending in general.

The Muskoka Dollar will be used by participating businesses towards local agriculture and related products, and local services. The Muskoka Dollar could be used towards many of the other strategies discussed in



Figure 5.3.1: The Muskoka Dollar will create a chain reaction of local purchasing while simultaneously providing funds for local community development.

this report. Tourists could use it, for example, to participate in culinary trails and local food festivals (Goal 4, Strategies 3 & 4). Furthermore, it could be used to purchase the local food basket (Goal 3, Strategy 2) or any other goods with the Muskoka Food Brand (Goal 4, Strategy 1). Any funds raised through the implementation of a Muskoka Dollar will benefit local food, perhaps through support of the Co-operative Food Network and Food Hubs (Goal 1, Strategies 2 & 3), the agricultural land-trust and farm incubator (Goal 7, Strategy 3), etc.

The responsibility for creating and administering the Muskoka Dollar lies with a local organization such as the Co-operative Food Network, Savour Muskoka, etc. in co-operation with a local financial institution.

Precedents:

Salt Spring Dollar, British Columbia <http://saltspringdollars.com/>

Toronto Dollar [www.torontodollar.ca](http://www.torontodollar.ca)

**Strategy 2) Local Food Basket**

Continue building on and expanding the local food basket program, connecting it to the food hub.

A local food basket currently exists in Muskoka. The District Municipality has put in significant efforts recently to expand the initiative. It should continue to expand and promote the food basket as it provides a simple and convenient way for both residents and tourists to purchase local products. FoodShare's Good Food Box in Toronto is very similar to that of Muskoka, purchasing produce bi-weekly from local farmers and the Ontario food terminal, then delivering it to various areas of the city. "Even at the planning stage, a top priority

*"By encouraging local spending, residents will have access to the highest quality products available and revenues will benefit the local economy through enhanced reinvestment"*



of the GFB [Good Food Box] was to ensure that the produce was very fresh and of the best quality, with a good balance of staples and luxury items” (Scharf, 1999, p. 123).

The goals of the food basket are to increase low-income residents’ access to good food, promote healthy eating, support local farming, encourage sustainable agriculture and promote community development. The Local Food Basket in Muskoka could be connected to a number of the other strategies discussed here. For example, the food basket could be filled with Muskoka Food Brand products (Goal 4, Strategy 1).

The responsibility for the food basket currently lies with the District Municipality. With the development of the Co-operative Food Network and Food Hubs (Goal 1, Strategies 2 & 3), there may be potential for a partnership or sharing of responsibility. For example, food basket pick-up locations may be at Food Hubs. Continued collaboration with community groups will allow more quality local food to reach more Muskokans through the food basket initiative.

Precedent:

FoodShare’s Good Food Box - <http://www.foodshare.net/goodfoodbox01.htm>

### **Strategy 3) Government Procurement of Local Food**

Create a policy within the District Municipality that a certain percentage of its food procurement be locally sourced with this percentage increasing with time.



Figure 5.3.2: A local food basket initiative in Muskoka is already underway and in partnership with the strategies proposed in this report has the potential to reach many more Muskokans.

A policy within the local government itself, will be implemented to purchase local food. This policy could, and should, be adopted by lower-tier municipalities, local school boards and other public institutions. A precedent exists in Markham, Ontario where the municipality has a policy to “support local food production by sourcing it for Town facilities and functions, and encouraging local and healthy food sourcing in schools and institutions” (Town of Markham, 2011). Halton Region also approved a local food procurement initiative in 2008 and in 2010 became the “first region in Canada to adopt local sustainable food procurement practices for its municipal food services” (Clean Air Partnership, 2011).

For Halton Region, this involved ensuring all food used by their corporate caterer (Lewisfood) is first certified through Local Food Plus: a certifier of local and sustainably produced and processed foods (Halton Region, 2009). ‘Local food’ here, however, is defined as coming from within Ontario. Halton’s work is a good precedent for the District Municipality to consider as it, too, is a regional government. The recommendation for the District Municipality, thus, is that it stipulate that any food it purchases must have a certain percentage (increasing with time) sourced within the boundaries of Muskoka.

It is the responsibility of the District Municipality to ensure that such a policy is written into its municipal policy.

Precedent:

Halton Region, Ontario – <http://www.halton.ca>

Town of Markham, Ontario – <http://www.markham.ca>

*“create a policy within the District Municipality that a certain percentage of its food procurement be locally sourced with this percentage increasing with time”*

**Build culinary tourism and connect tourists to food**

Muskoka is a well-known tourist destination in the Province of Ontario. There is therefore an opportunity to build synergies between the food and tourism sectors by connecting existing tourists to local food, increasing tourism in winter and the ‘shoulder seasons’ of spring and fall, and establishing Muskoka as a culinary tourist destination.

**Strategy 1) Muskoka Food Brand**

Create and promote a recognizable Muskoka Food Brand, which will be used to identify the region’s unique agricultural and artisan products.

A strong brand will create a link between fresh, high quality, unique food and Muskoka. This brand will be placed on all (participating) Muskoka grown and produced products, featured on restaurant menus in the region and have its own shelf space in local stores.

There are two nearby examples of local food brands. Niagara Region’s brand ‘Niagara Original’ is a cross-sectorial brand that has variations for different industries (culinary, agri-tourism, parks). The Kawarthas Region also has its own brand – ‘Kawartha Choice FarmFresh’ - and slogan, ‘As fresh as local gets... KAWARTHA CHOICE’. Both initiatives have been successful at bringing farmers, artisans, restaurateurs and other culinary groups together under one name.

This brand will need the support of an effective, innovative and unique advertising campaign that makes use of both traditional and new media. New media refers to forms of advertisement through the use of interactive websites, social media and even smart-phone applications that direct visitors to Muskoka-branded food and products. Partnerships could be created with post-secondary institutions, such as Ryerson University’s Digital Media Zone.

There are many synergies between a Muskoka Food Brand and other strategies. The food brand can be linked to the Co-operative Food Network (Goal 1, Strategy 2). The co-operative will be a potential home for the brand. Furthermore, the brand can be linked with the Muskoka Dollar (Goal 3, Strategy 1) whereby the dollar is used towards Muskoka-branded food and products.

The responsibility for the Muskoka Food Brand will lie with a community organization. Savour Muskoka, for example, has already begun to take on initiatives by bringing together several of Muskoka’s chefs, farmers and culinary artisans. Its work creating local inventories, connecting stakeholders and providing resources has created a strong foundation for a Muskoka food brand.

Precedents:

Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh <http://www.kawarthachoice.com/>

Niagara Original <http://www.niagaraoriginal.com/>

**Strategy 2) Signage**

Adjust regional and municipal bylaws to allow farmers and food-related businesses to display site-specific signage; develop Muskoka tourism signage.

Muskoka currently has restrictive signage bylaws that prevent farmers from using site-specific signage to promote their agricultural businesses. In addressing this issue, the recommendation is to adjust the District Municipality’s signage by-law No. 89-112, to include a clause in section E.1) ‘Signs Permitted without Permits’, reading as: One site specific sandwich board, not exceeding 2 m<sup>2</sup>, and not exceeding a height of 1m, will be permitted on land denoted Rural. Additionally, Muskoka tourism signage, similar to the Ontario blue tourism signage, can be placed on roads around the region to direct visitors to local attractions. The tourism signage can feature the Muskoka Food Brand creating a distinct link to all local food activities.

The responsibility for this strategy should lie with the District Municipality.

**Strategy 3) Culinary Trails**

Establish culinary trails connecting tourists with farms, restaurants and retailers producing, serving and selling local food.

The creation of culinary trails - geographically organized collections of farms, restaurants and retailers - is a way to create unique experiences for tourists, while also building connections between agriculture and tourism. Visual imagery, maps and points of interest will be laid out to make planning a culinary tourism trip easy. Visitors can visit and explore tourist-ready farms, eat at a restaurant serving fresh, local Muskoka food and finish the day off at a retailer selling artisan food and products. This can be modeled after many similar trails that exist in Ontario and internationally, including the Niagara Culinary Trail, the Vermont Farm Trail or the Prince Edward County Taste Trail. Connections and synergies with other types of touring can be



Figure 5.4.1: A by-law amendment is necessary in order to allow the necessary signage to facilitate business at Muskoka farms and food related businesses.

explored, such as fall colour drive trails, bike touring or arts trails (such as the Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour).

The responsibility for this should lie with chambers of commerce, organizations, such as Savour Muskoka or community groups in Muskoka. Muskoka Futures, the organization that developed the Autumn Studio Tour could, for example, add to their work and build the culinary trails system.

Precedents:

Niagara Culinary Trail – <http://www.niagaraculinarytrail.com>

Vermont Farm Trail – <http://www.vtfarmtrail.com>

Prince Edward County Taste Trail – <http://www.tastetrail.ca>

Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour – <http://www.muskokaautumnstudiotour.com>

#### Strategy 4) Local food festivals

Establish annual local food festivals in Muskoka and incorporate local food into existing festivals and events.

Muskoka already features festivals including *Beer Fest* and the *Field-to-Fork* tasting event, but these events are limited in their scope. A larger, destination festival, such as the Fall Flavours Festival in Prince Edward Island, will attract a significant tourist presence, extend the tourist season, generate economic growth and support employment in the region.

Local food can also be incorporated strongly into existing festivals and events, such as the Gravenhurst

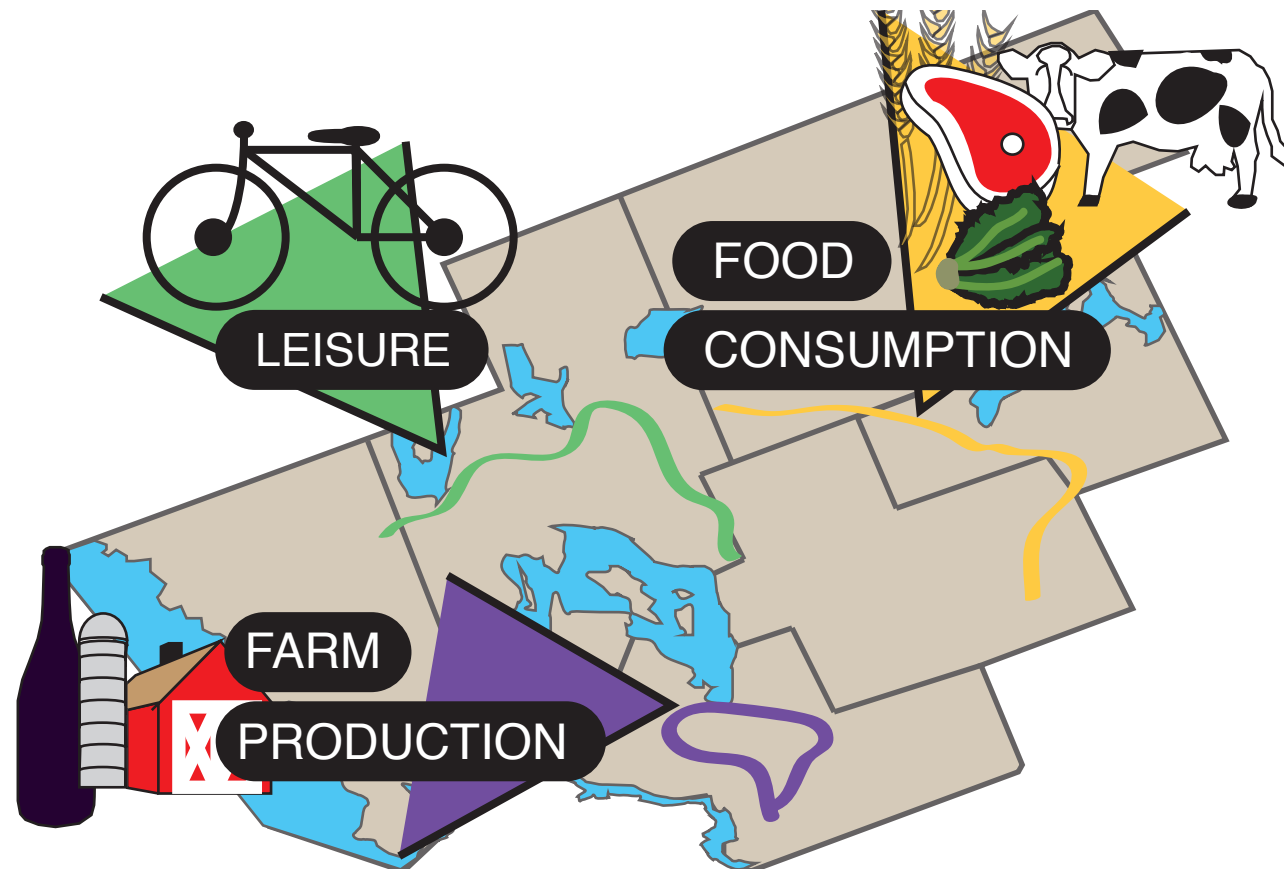


Figure 5.4.2: Building on the Muskoka Autumn Studio Tour, a set of culinary and related trails can be created in to encourage visits to local farms and artisans specializing in local products.

Winter Carnival or the Muskoka Lakes Music Festival. Local food can be combined with other attractions to the benefit of both. This will work especially well in the winter, where local food could be combined with outdoor attractions such as cross-country skiing, snowmobiling or snowshoeing, all of which are popular in Muskoka. There are several steps that can be followed to obtain maximum benefits from food festivals:

- Make a plan
- Partner up
- Get grants
- Get local chefs involved
- Showcase your best
- Provide information
- Involve the media
- Support your members
- Evaluate

(For an extensive list and explanation of the steps outlined above refer to Appendix E).

The responsibility for this should be shared by the six lower-tier municipalities, Muskoka Tourism and organizations including Savour Muskoka. A co-operative approach to the festivals will allow them to be greater in scope and to benefit from the strengths of each organization.

Precedents:

Fall Flavours Festival in Prince Edward Island - <http://www.fallflavours.ca/>



Figure 5.4.3: Food is a natural gathering point and culinary festivals are popular worldwide. Food festivals in Muskoka have great potential to build on its strong tourism industry and its growing local food scene.

**Improve food literacy for youth and the community**

By ensuring that youth and the general community are food literate, residents can make better informed decisions on purchasing and consuming local food products. Knowing where food is grown, what seasons allow for which products and implementing education programs will help residents become more food literate.

**Strategy 1) School Curriculum Programs**

Introduce curriculum-based program in elementary and secondary schools throughout Muskoka.

There is a disconnect between food and the current elementary and secondary school curriculum that needs to be addressed. Within secondary schools, it is common to have a ‘food and nutrition’ class where students are taught culinary skills and various recipes, depending on the school. Students should be taught ‘real life skills’ and therefore Food Literacy should be integrated in a way that connects nutrition, health and the importance of local food into the current school curriculum, in its entirety. It can be taught throughout all the required courses; math, science, social sciences, health, history, etc. Not only is it important to integrate these lessons in the curriculum but also to ensure that they follow students from formal learning to the lunchroom (informal). An example of an activity that could link local food into the elementary school curriculum is to visit a farm as a field trip activity and have the student learn about a vegetable or crop grown, then have them cook/bake something with that item. This would allow for students to understand from where what they are consuming comes.



Figure 5.5.1: Re-introducing the concept of food from field to table in the education system is important in increasing food literacy. The earlier such teaching begins, the better.

The responsibility for implementing and encouraging this strategy lies primarily with local school boards and parents in order to directly effect the current elementary and secondary school curriculums.

Precedents:

Centre for EcoLiteracy ‘Rethinking the School Lunch’ <http://www.ecoliteracy.org>

Field to Table Lunch Programs – <http://www.foodshare.net>

**Strategy 2) Relationships with Post-Secondary Schools**

Create working relationships with post-secondary programs and local farms and businesses.

Within Muskoka there is an opportunity to create relationships between local farmers, food related activities and post-secondary programs. Both Nipissing University and Georgian College have campuses in Muskoka. Relationships will be made that will allow for local food to be purchased and used at campuses, co-op and internship programs to be set up between youth and farmers, as well as employment for the developing food tourism in the region. Muskoka is not just limited to universities within its boundaries, there are also several opportunities to network and create relationships with universities all across the province. An example of a successful alliance is between Ryerson University’s Hospitality and Tourism Management program and Prince Edward County, as well University of Guelph’s Local Food Program and local farmers.

The responsibility for this strategy lies primarily with local post-secondary institutions, perhaps with the assistance of the Co-operative Food Network (Goal 1, Strategy 2).

*“By ensuring that youth and the general community are food literate, residents can make better informed decisions on purchasing and consuming local food products”*

Precedents:

Ryerson University's Hospitality & Tourism linking with Prince Edward County <http://www.buildanewlife.ca/site/index.php/Collaboration-Centre/Collaboration-Centre/Collaboration-Centre.html>

University of Guelph's Local Food Program <http://www.hospitality.uoguelph.ca/sustainability/>

### Strategy 3) Local Food Workshops

Create local food workshops to educate local residents, farmers and tourists.

Within Muskoka it will be beneficial for improving overall food literacy by implementing local food workshops and seminars. Currently there are workshops being run within Muskoka, such as the Fall Farm Workshops, and it would be beneficial to build and expand on these programs. Workshops will be held at the Food Hubs (Goal 1, Strategy 3), and could cover issues and skills ranging from nutrition for specific age groups to winter gardening methods to farm-specific skills.

This strategy can be achieved through the collaborative work of the Co-operative Food Network, the Food Hubs, farmers, local food organizations and other interest groups from Muskoka, such as Savour Muskoka.

Precedents:

Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre <http://www.everdale.org>

Guelph – Wellington Local Food Workshops <http://www.guelphwellingtonlocalfood.ca>



Figure 5.5.2: Ensuring that food served in cafeterias and elsewhere in school is reflective of lessons students learn in nutrition is helpful in creating good food habits and a better understanding of the importance of healthy food.

### Strategy 4) Meal Programs

Implement nutritious breakfast and lunch programs within elementary and secondary schools, where appropriate.

Canada is one of the only G8 countries that do not have a national school nutrition program. Therefore it is up to various organizations and school districts to provide such services. The nutrition education being suggested for the curriculum is ultimately undermined when food made available within the school does not follow what is taught, such as unhealthy snacks and meals through school cafeteria, 'special food days' (often pizza and pop lunches) and vending machine items. FoodShare has had great success with their "Fresh Produce Program", which provides direct access to healthy produce, as has "Good Food Café" at one of the Field to Table schools. All of these initiatives are partnered with the mission to reintroduce food education into the curriculum and at schools in order to cultivate food literacy.

The responsibility of this strategy lies with school boards working with nutritionists, chefs/cooks, local organizations and local farmers to ensure that all food being served to children meets nutrition and health standards.

Precedents:

FoodShare <http://www.foodshare.net>

Stratford Northwestern Secondary School "Screaming Avocado" <http://www.stratfordnorthwestern.ca>

*"Canada is one of the only G8 countries that do not have a national school nutrition program. Therefore it is up to various organizations and school districts to provide such services"*

**Promote farm livelihoods**

Farmland is a valuable non-renewable natural resource that serves a variety of important economic and environmental functions. Muskoka offers a unique landscape of small-scale farms, which is a type of farm declining at an alarming rate within Ontario. Through the promotion of farm livelihoods, farmers can be encouraged to stay in the business and youth can be motivated to start out in this industry.

**Strategy 1) Building on Existing Planning Tools**

The use of planning tools, such as official plans and zoning within Muskoka, as well as at the lower-tier municipality level to encourage farm growth and new farms.

Through the use of the Official Plan, further encouragement of “rural” land-use designations will help to keep farmers in Muskoka. It is also important for the District Municipality to continue existing efforts within the Official Plan by encouraging the development of new agricultural land. Similar to the District of Muskoka, the demand for urban expansion including farmland is seen in Markham, Ontario. Markham has worked to protect their “white belt” and to encourage the continuation of agricultural production. Furthermore, the Provincial Policy Statement acts as an important document outlining promotion and expansion requirements within municipalities. Working with existing interest groups – Savour Muskoka, Muskoka Farm Fresh – will help to keep the idea of agricultural promotion a current topic. The Co-operative Farm Network (Goal 1, Strategy 2), will act as an interest group promoting best practices of planning tools. As well, there are multiple incentive based programs available to farmers at the upper levels of government (Goal 6, Strategy 3).

*“The District of Muskoka offers a unique landscape of small-scale farms, which are reducing at an alarming rate within Ontario”*

The responsibility for the strategy should lie mainly in the hands of the District Municipality, and Muskoka’s lower-tier local municipalities. In order to ensure best practice, as mentioned, they should work with existing interest groups in Muskoka. For a more detailed analysis of appropriate planning tools and policies, refer to the Local Food Solutions report, “Agriculture in Muskoka; Tools for a Sustainable Future”.

Precedents:

Town of Markham, Ontario – <http://www.markham.ca>

**Strategy 2) Sources of Alternative Farm Income**

Lobby provincial and federal governments to enact legislation that creates new funding opportunities for farms based on their ecological performance.

Carbon credit systems currently exist in some parts of the world and an Ontario Based Carbon Credit System is set for release in 2012 in Ontario and Quebec. Companies pay to own/lease portions of land, which contain “carbon credits”. Examples of eligible land include land farmed with sustainable agricultural practices, forests and natural habitat systems. As carbon credit systems continue to evolve, prices paid to offset emissions should continue to rise to the benefit of those with carbon credits for sale. As the Ontario and Quebec System is implemented, farmers can research the requirements for eligibility and use community meetings to inform each other. Additional income for non-farmable land on existing farms can help farmers to balance their books and/or to reinvest in the productivity of their farm. Furthermore, there is potential for collaboration with Muskoka Watershed Council and its Envirocredit program, which currently



Figure 5.6.1: The ecological benefits provided by farmers and rural land owners is beginning to receive recognition in some jurisdictions. Payment for these ecological benefits could become a source of income for many farmers.

allows individuals, small businesses and corporations in Muskoka to offset their carbon emissions.

Another method of alternative income on farms can be seen in Switzerland's Agricultural Policy. Farmers are paid on a system of ecological performance measures in order to create "valuable habitats for animals and plants. Among other things, the farmer receives additional payment for extensive meadow-land, reed-beds, natural field margins, permanent flowery meadows and rotated fallow fields, hedges, copses and wooded river banks and standard fruit trees (with trunk and crown)" (Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture, 2004). An ecological performance system would benefit Muskoka farmers financially and other Muskokans through the preservation of local natural systems.

It is not within the scope for the District Municipality to implement either a carbon credit or ecological payment program on its own or to be responsible for any funding source that may be required. However, it is within its scope to lobby the provincial and federal governments for such a program, with the support of local farmers, residents and organizations.

Precedents:

Environmental Farm Plan

[http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/programs/canada\\_ontario\\_environmental\\_farm\\_plan\\_efp.htm](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/programs/canada_ontario_environmental_farm_plan_efp.htm)

Going Forward Environment and Climate Change

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/environment.htm>

Swiss Agricultural Policy <http://www.blw.admin.ch/org/00022/index.html?lang=en>

### Strategy 3) Assistance Programs

Maintain a working inventory of programs and funding sources available to Muskoka farmers.

There are multiple Non-Government and Government based organizations offering assistance to farmers within Ontario. Programs offer a wide spectrum of support services and financial programs for new farmers starting out, and to provide assistance for existing farmers.

It is the responsibility of the Co-operative Food Network (Goal 1, Strategy 2) to maintain a working inventory of relevant farm assistance programs for Muskoka farmers. For the beginnings of such an inventory see Appendix F.

*“an ecological performance system would benefit Muskoka farmers financially and other Muskokans through the preservation of local natural systems”*



Figure 5.6.2: Switzerland's Agricultural Policy not only pays farmers to engage in sustainable farming practices, but also to maintain a Switzerland's countryside, which is very popular with both local and foreign tourists.

**Create opportunities for new farmers**

By building on existing programs and tax incentives, new farming opportunities can be made available within Muskoka. As farmers continue to age within Muskoka, opportunities will arise for new farmers to take over existing farms. New forms of farming as well as adequate government funding will help to make this transition possible and efficient.

**Strategy 1) Summer Farm Employment Program**

The creation and funding of a program to subsidize the full time employment of local youth on Muskoka farms during summer months.

Similar programs exist provincially. For example, the Province of Alberta runs a Summer Farm Employment Program which covers the cost for half of a full-time youth farm worker's wage, up to \$400 per month. In Ontario, the similar Rural Summer Job Service subsidizes youth farm worker's wages by \$2 per hour. A Muskoka summer farm employment program would complement the existing incentive with the goal of providing an additional incentive for Muskoka farmers to employ and provide hands-on experience to Muskoka youth considering a career in agriculture.

The responsibility to create and fund this strategy should lie with the District Municipality, specifically through its existing employment services. Collaboration with the Ontario Rural Summer Job Service and other provincial services, such as Ontario Works, may be necessary and/or useful.

*“As farmers continue to age within Muskoka, opportunities will arise for new farmers to take over existing farms.”*

Precedents:

Summer Farm Employment Program <http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/progserv.nsf/all/pgmsrv35>

Rural Summer Job Service <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/rsj/index.htm>

**Strategy 2) Hydroponic Farming Course**

The creation of a course in hydroponic agriculture geared towards Muskoka residents interested in entering the farming industry.

Hydroponic farming is a quickly growing industry. Courses have been offered by the Toronto District School Board in at least one school as part of their curriculum. In addition, Four Season Greens in Muskoka is currently experimenting with aquaponics, a related technology. Hydroponics is also an easily scalable technology, not dependent on soil quality or even the sun, as demonstrated by PodPonics from Atlanta. A hydroponic farming course in Muskoka would provide budding farmers, as well as restaurateurs and others, the skills and connections necessary to produce fresh local produce year-round. The hydroponic farming course can be linked with a few of the other strategies suggested. The course, for example, could also be established through the post-secondary relationships (Goal 5, Strategy 2). The course may be highly complex, and promoting it through a college or university can broaden its depths.

The responsibility to create such a course lies with a community group, an educational centre or a group of individuals interested in learning hydroponic farming skills.



5.7.1: Encouraging farmers to hire local youth can provide youth with the necessary experience and skills to seriously consider a career in agriculture. Local subsidies can help make this a reality.



Precedents:

Four Season Greens <http://fourseasongreens.com/>

PodPonics <http://www.podponics.com/>

### Strategy 3) Agricultural Land-trust and Farm Incubator

The establishment of agricultural land trusts with a mission to provide access to land and education to burgeoning farmers with a focus on creating sustainable farming practices.

Land trusts are common and successful; among the best known of these is the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Agricultural land trusts also exist locally; a notable example is the Ontario Farmland Trust, which operates programs such as the Stewardship Fund with Stratford and Perth County, as well as FarmLINK Ontario. Organizations providing farming education include Everdale. However, the clearest example of such a model exists in Rhode Island with the Urban Edge Farm operated by the Southside Community Land Trust where beginner farmers are given land on the farmland trust and assistance in starting their own farm. Such a model creates a system in which young farmers have access to land, skills training and an opportunity to build a life as a farmer in Muskoka.

The responsibility to create and operate such a land trust lies with a local organization, such as the Muskoka Heritage Trust. Collaboration with the Ontario Farmland Trust may be particularly useful and effective. One of the sources of funding for this programme could be from the interest earned by the Muskoka Dollar (Goal 3, Strategy 1).



Figure 5.7.2: Hydroponics and aquaponics offer Muskokans the possibility of growing fresh produce year-round indoors or outdoors.

Precedents:

Nature Conservancy of Canada - <http://www.natureconservancy.ca>

Ontario Farmland Trust – <http://ontariofarmlandtrust.ca>

FarmLINK Ontario – <http://www.farmlink.net>

Everdale - <http://everdale.org>

Urban Edge Farm – <http://southsideclt.org/urbanedge>

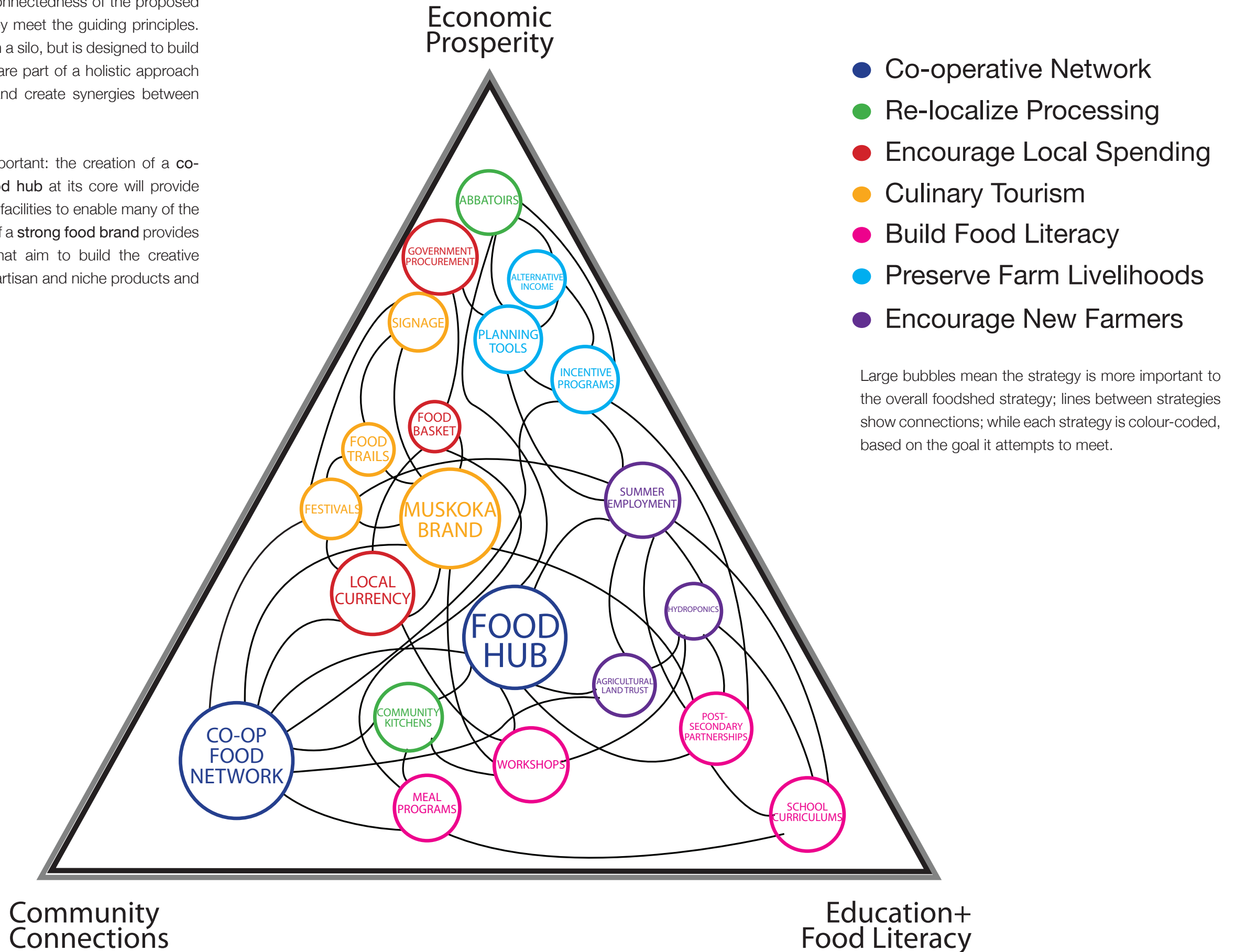
*“beginner farmers are given land on the farmland trust and assistance in starting their own farm”*



Figure 5.7.3: The preservation of farmland can double as an agricultural school for youth struggling to establish their own farm.

This 'web' demonstrates the interconnectedness of the proposed strategies, while displaying how they meet the guiding principles. Each strategy is not meant to exist in a silo, but is designed to build on other strategies. The strategies are part of a holistic approach that attempts to cross-cut goals and create synergies between different initiatives.

Three strategies are particularly important: the creation of a co-operative food network with a food hub at its core will provide support, resources, knowledge and facilities to enable many of the other strategies; while the creation of a strong food brand provides the context for many strategies that aim to build the creative economy and focus on high-value, artisan and niche products and expensive.



5.8.1: The strategy web.

GOAL	STRATEGY	The District Municipality of Muskoka	Area Municipalities	Co-Operative Food Network	Community Organization (e.g. Savour Muskoka)
Establish a Co-operative Food Network with Food Hub(s)	1) Co-operative Food Network Steering Committee	✓			✓
	2) Co-operative Food Network				✓
	3) Food Hub(s)			✓	
Re-localize agricultural processing in Muskoka's Food Hubs	1) Existing Assets			✓	
	2) Abattoirs	✓		✓	
Encourage local spending	1) Community Dollar			✓	✓
	2) Local Food Basket	✓		✓	
	3) Government Procurement of Local Food	✓			
Build culinary tourism and connect tourists to food	1) Muskoka Food Brand				✓
	2) Signage	✓	✓		
	3) Culinary Trails				✓
	4) Local food festivals		✓		✓
Improve food literacy for youth and the community	1) School Curriculum Programs	Other: Local School Boards			
	2) Relationships with Post-Secondary Schools			✓	
	3) Local Food Workshops			✓	✓
	4) Meal Programs				✓
Promote farm livelihoods	1) Building on Existing Planning Tools	✓	✓		
	2) Sources of Alternative Farm Income	✓			✓
	3) Assistance Programs			✓	
Create opportunities for new farmers	1) Summer Farm Employment Program	✓			
	2) Hydroponic Farming Course				✓
	3) Agricultural Land-trust and Farm Incubator				✓

Figure 5.8.2: The responsibility for the entirety of the foodshed strategy belongs to the whole Muskoka community, not just one government or organization.

**5.8. STRATEGY SUMMARY**

The guiding principles, goals and strategies identified by the research group are developed to provide a solid foundation for the District Municipality and Muskoka to move forward with creating a vibrant and creative rural economy and local food system.

In order to aid the District Municipality and Muskoka in effectively implementing the strategies outlined in this foodshed strategy, the research group has identified strategies as Next Steps, Quick Wins and Long Term Goals.

### Next Steps

The initiatives identified in Goal 1 should be the initial priority in order to achieve a successful foodshed strategy. Establishing a Co-operative Food Network Steering Committee and the Co-operative Food Network will facilitate many of the other strategies outlined in this report. The research group recognizes that the completion of a dedicated Food Hub facility is a long-term project, however this strategy can take shape initially by using existing spaces, including church kitchens and community centres.

### Inventory

Building on the three inventories outlined in Section 4 is an important initiative to be undertaken. Such inventories can be the basis for user-friendly tools to help connect producers and consumers, as well as to document the available resources within Muskoka for future local food initiatives.

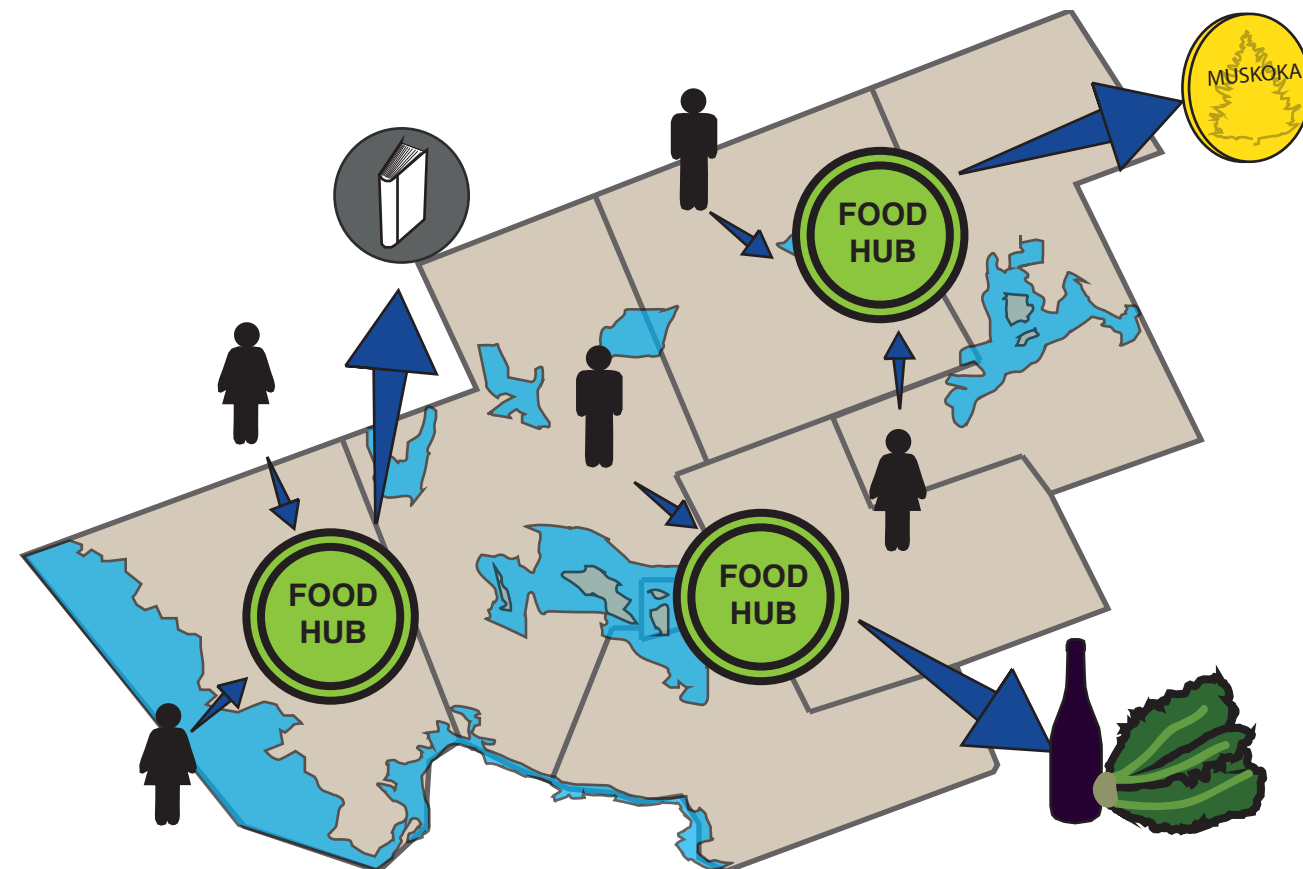


Figure 6.1: Many strategies, e.g. food workshops, the Muskoka Dollar, local processing, etc., are partially dependent on the establishment of the Co-operative Food Network and Food Hubs.

### Quick Wins

The strategies outlined in this report vary in the time and resources necessary for implementation. The following strategies, the research group suggests, are simple and can be recognized as quick wins:

- Co-operative Food Network Steering Committee (Goal 1, Strategy 1)
- Existing Assets (Goal 2, Strategy 1)
- Government Procurement of Local Food (Goal 3, Strategy 3)
- Signage (Goal 4, Strategy 2)
- Culinary Trails (Goal 4, Strategy 3)
- Local Food Workshops (Goal 5, Strategy 3)
- Meal Programs (Goal 5, Strategy 4)
- Sources of Alternative Farm Income (lobbying begins in the short-term) (Goal 6, Strategy 2)
- Summer Farm Employment Program (Goal 7, Strategy 1)
- Hydroponic Farming Course (Goal 7, Strategy 2)

### Long Term Goals

The research group has identified the following strategies as being more resource-intensive and long-term:

- Food Hub (Goal 1, Strategy 3)
- Abattoirs (Goal 2, Strategy 2)
- Community Currency (Goal 3, Strategy 1)
- School Curriculum Programs (Goal 5, Strategy 1)
- Agricultural Land Trust and Farm Incubator (Goal 7, Strategy 3)
- Sources of Alternative Farm Income (outcome of lobbying in long-term) (Goal 6, Strategy 2)

### Concluding Statement

This document is a collection of innovative goals and strategies that can ultimately reconnect Muskoka to its local food. Ryerson University School of Urban and Regional Planning students involved in creating this foodshed strategy for the District Municipality and Muskoka are grateful for the opportunity to share ideas and create this final document.

*“this document is a collection of innovative goals and strategies that can ultimately reconnect Muskoka to its local food”*

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Major field of study	Muskoka (CD)		
	Total	Male	Female
Total population 15 years and over <sup>63</sup>	47,505	23,190	24,315
No postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	24,695	11,525	13,165
Education	2,065	615	1,450
Visual and performing arts, and communications technologies	900	390	510
Humanities	960	440	525
Social and behavioural sciences and law	1,985	625	1,360
Business, management and public administration	4,130	1,525	2,605
Physical and life sciences and technologies	555	315	240
Mathematics, computer and information sciences	445	215	225
Architecture, engineering, and related technologies	5,495	5,235	260
Agriculture, natural resources and conservation	840	620	220
Health, parks, recreation and fitness	3,610	765	2,845
Personal, protective and transportation services	1,835	930	910
Other <sup>64</sup>	0	0	0

### Income Levels for Permanent Population 15 Years and Older (2006)

Income	Canada	Ontario	Muskoka
Median 2005 total income (\$) )	25,615	27,258	25,197
Median 2005 Household Income (\$) )	53,634	60,455	52,790
Males—2005 total income (\$) )	32,224	34,454	31,611
Females—2005 total income (\$) )	20,460	21,669	20,083
Employment Income (%) )	76.2	77.4	68.8
Government Transfer Payment (%) )	11.1	9.8	13.0
Other Source of income (%) )	12.7	12.9	18.1
Incidence of Low income (%) )	15.3	14.7	7.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006 (Income 2005)

### Permanent Population Projections by Age

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Change 01-31
<b>Total</b>	55,350	59,980	63,390	67,760	72,990	77,760	82,470	27,120
<b>0-14</b>	9,550	9,390	9,270	9,550	10,130	10,540	10,960	1,410

	Agriculture/resource-based	Construction	Manufacturing	Wholesale trade	Retail trade	Finance and real estate	Health care and social services	Educational services	Business services	Other services
Muskoka	635	4,220	3,000	665	4,685	1,375	2,730	1,515	4,480	6,890

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006

Figure 2.1.2: Due to an overall increasing population, the working-age population, although proportionally small, is on the increase

## Labour Force

### Growth in Muskoka's Labour Force

	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	Change 1986 –2006	
						#	%
<b>Muskoka</b>	19,255	23,695	23,935	26,190	30,430	11,175	63

	Percent Youth Out-Migration (15-29 years of age) Between 2001 and 2006
<b>Muskoka</b>	5.3%
<b>Nipissing District</b>	7.1%
<b>Parry Sound District</b>	17.6%

Source: Youth Out-Migration in Northern Ontario 2006 Census Research Paper Series: Report #2

Age	Muskoka	
	Male	Female
<b>0-4</b>	1,200	1,120
<b>5-9</b>	1,400	1,450
<b>10-14</b>	1,915	1,685
<b>15-19</b>	1,895	1,805
<b>20-24</b>	1,510	1,455
<b>25-29</b>	1,270	1,165
<b>30-34</b>	1,325	1,320
<b>35-39</b>	1,675	1,680
<b>40-44</b>	2,280	2,275
<b>45-49</b>	2,360	2,400
<b>50-54</b>	2,245	2,375
<b>55-59</b>	2,185	2,230
<b>60-64</b>	1,935	2,005
<b>65-69</b>	1,630	1,650
<b>70-74</b>	1,425	1,440
<b>75-79</b>	1,090	1,215
<b>80-84</b>	655	1,010
<b>85+</b>	400	880
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,395</b>	<b>29,170</b>

## APPENDIX B – CLI SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Class 1

Soils in this class have no significant limitations in use for crops. The soils are deep, are well to imperfectly drained, hold moisture well, and in the virgin state were well supplied with plant nutrients. They can be managed and cropped without difficulty. Under good management they are moderately high to high in productivity for a wide range of field crops.

Class 2

Soils in this class have moderate limitations which restrict the range of crops or require moderate conservation practices. The soils are deep and hold moisture well. The limitations are moderate and the soils can be managed and cropped with little difficulty. Under good management they are moderately high to high in productivity for a fairly wide range of crops.

Class 3

Soils in this class have moderately severe limitations which restrict the range of crops, or require special conservation practices. The limitations are more severe than for Class 2 soils. They affect one or more of the following practices: timing and ease of tillage, planting and harvesting, choice of crops, and method of conservation. Under good management they are fair to moderately high in productivity for a fair range of crops.

Class 4

Soils in this class have severe limitations which restrict the range of crops, or require special conservation practices, or both. The limitations seriously affect one or more of the following practices: timing and ease of tillage, planting and harvesting, choice of crops, and method of conservation. The soils are low to fair in productivity for a fair range of crops but may have high productivity for a specially adapted crop.

Class 5

Soils in this class have very severe limitations which restrict their capability to producing perennial forage crops, and improvement practices are feasible. The limitations are so severe that soils are not capable of use for sustained production of annual field crops. The soils are capable of producing native or tame species of perennial forage plants, and may be improved by use of farm machinery. The improvement practices may include clearing of bush, cultivation, seeding, fertilizing or water control.

Class 6

Soils in this class are capable only of producing perennial forage crops, and improvement practices are not feasible. The soils provide some sustained grazing for farm animals, but the limitations are so severe that improvement by use of farm machinery is impractical, terrain may be unsuitable for use of farm machinery, the soils may not respond to improvement, or the grazing season may be very short.

Class 7

Soils in this class have no capability for arable culture or permanent pasture. This class also includes rock land, other non-soil areas and bodies of water too small to show on maps at mapping scale.

Class 8 – Unclassified Areas

Class\_A=8, Subclas\_A1= BLANK - Unmapped Area  
 Class\_A=8, Subclas\_A1= Z - Water Area  
 Class\_A=8, Subclas\_A1= T - Forest Reserves  
 Class\_A=8, Subclas\_A1= O - National Parks  
 Class\_A=8, Subclas\_A1= B - Urban Areas  
 Class\_A=8, Subclas\_A1= W - Provincial Parks  
 Class\_A=8, Subclas\_A1= I - Irrigated Rating Only

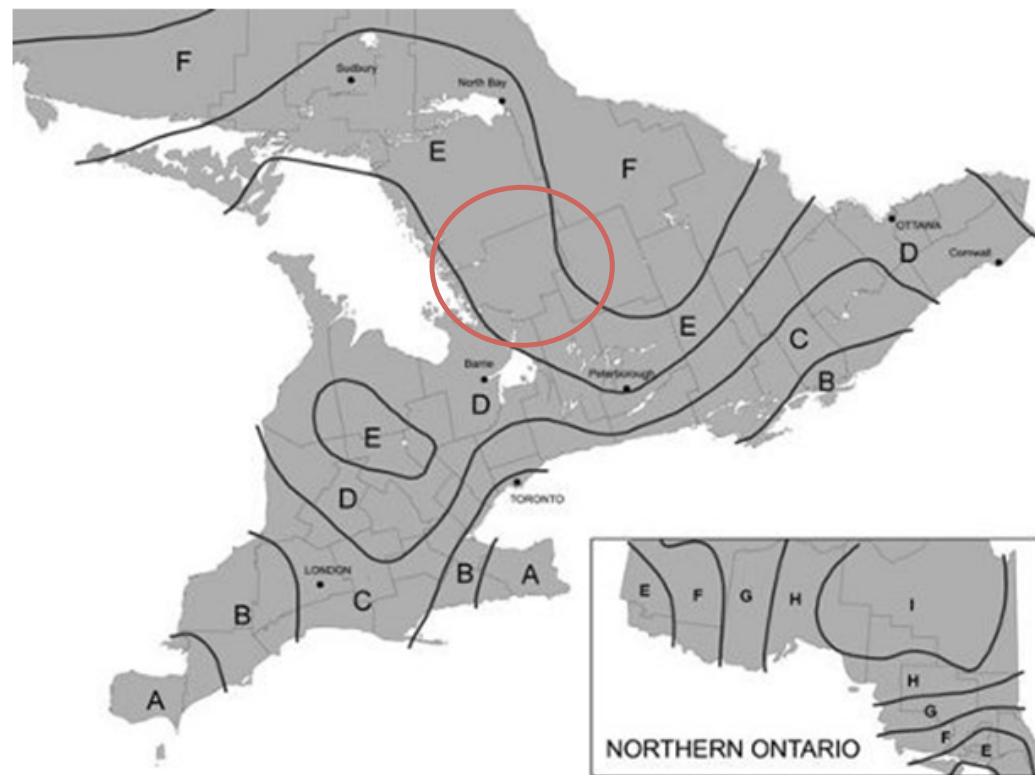
Class 0 Organic soils.(Not placed in capability classes).

(Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2011)

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**APPENDIX C - Climate Zones and Planting Dates for Vegetables**



(Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011)

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA – Zone E

**Table 1.** Average Frost-Free Period in Climatic Zones of Ontario (1976-2005)

Zone	Frost-Free Period (Average in Days)	Average Date of Last Spring Frost	Average Date of First Fall Frost
A	170-190	April 25	October 20
B	160-170	April 30	October 13
C	150-170	May 3	October 8
D	130-165	May 11	October 1
E	125-145	May 17	September 26
F	115-125	May 24	September 22
G	100-115	May 27	September 17
H	100-110	June 3	September 16
I	90-100	June 7	September 9

(Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011)

**Table 2a.** First Field Seeding or Planting Dates for Commercial Production - Frost Hardy Crops

Crops	Zone A	Zone C	Zone E
Asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, lettuce, onions (set, seed, Spanish), radishes, rhubarb, peas, spinach, parsnips, early potatoes	April 1 - 15	April 15 - 25	April 25 - May10

**Table 2b.** First Field Seeding or Planting Dates for Commercial Production - Semi-frost Hardy Crops

Crops	Zone A	Zone C	Zone E
Beets, carrots, cauliflower, celery, late potatoes, early sweet corn	April 15 - 25	April 25 - May 10	May 5 - 15

**Table 2c.** First Field Seeding or Planting Dates for Commercial Production - Semi-frost Tender Crops

Crops	Zone A	Zone C	Zone E
Snap beans, sweet corn, tomatoes	May 1 - 15	May 15 - 25	May 25 - June 5

**Table 2d.** First Field Seeding or Planting Dates for Commercial Production - Frost Tender Crops

Crops	Zone A	Zone C	Zone E
Lima beans, cucumbers, eggplant, muskmelons, peppers, pumpkins, squash, watermelons	May 20 - 30	May 25 - June 5	June 5 - 15

(Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011)

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APPENDIX A – WORKING INVENTORY		
	Contact Information	Inventory #
<b>RESTAURANTS/CHEFS</b>		
3 Guys and a Stove <i>Chef: Jeff Suddaby</i>	143 Highway 60 East Huntsville, ON P1H 2K6 Ph: (705) 789-1815 info@3guysandastove.com	1
Ali Hunter Cuisine <i>Chef: Ali Hunter</i>	Ph: (705) 641-1433 mail@alihuntercuisine.com	2
Arowhon Pines <i>Chef: David Cooke</i>	Arowhon Rd, Algonquin Park Muskoka Region, ON Ph: (705) 633-5661 resort@arowhonpines.ca	3
Bartlett Lodge Dining Room <i>Chef: Jakob Lutes</i>	P.O. Box #10004 Huntsville, ON P1H 2G8 Ph: (705) 633-5543 bartlett@globalserve.net	4
Bearfoot Gourmet <i>Chef: Mackenzie Taylor</i>	2676 Muskoka Road 117 Baysville, ON P0B 1A0 Ph: (705) 767-1100 bearfootgourmet@bellnet.ca	
Better Living	107 Maple St Box 204 Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0 Ph: (705) 646-4215 kelly@betterlivingservices.ca	5
Bigwin Island Golf Club <i>Chef: Philip Anthony Leach</i>	P.O. Box 5611 Huntsville, ON P1H 2I5 Ph: (705) 635-2582 jsiddall@bigwinisland.com	6
Black River Food Co. <i>Chef: Becky Lennerton</i>	Old Grist Mill Muskoka Region, ON Ph: (705) 689-1617 blackriverfood.co@sympatico.ca	7
Cedar Grove Lodge	P.O. Box 5104 Huntsville, ON Ph: (705) 789-4036 info@cedargrove.on.ca	8
Christine Bib Catering <i>Chef: Christine Bib</i>	Muskoka Region, ON Ph: (705) 646-1462	9

Cross Roads Pub and Grill <i>Chef: Richard LaLonde</i>	2 Cardwell Rosseau, ON P1P 1R2 Ph: (705) 732-4343 mail@crossroadspubandgrill.ca	10
Eclipse Restaurant – Deerhurst Resort <i>Chef: Rory Golden</i>	1235 Deerhurst Dr Huntsville, ON Ph: (705) 789-6411	11
Fern Glen Inn Bed and Breakfast	1462 Fern Glen Rd RR#1Emsdale, ON P0A 1J0 Ph: (705) 636-1391 info@ferngleninn.on.ca	16
Fine Thymes Restaurant and Tea Room	95 Manitoba St Bracebridge, ON P1L 2B3 Ph: (705) 646-2424	15
Glenn Burney Lodge	49 Glenn Burney Rd Parry Sound, ON P2A 2X3 Ph: (705) 746-5943	17
The Birches Restaurant – Hidden Valley Resort <i>Chef: Scott Cribb</i>	1755 Valley Rd Huntsville, ON P1L 1Z8 Ph: (705) 789-2302 gm@hvmuskoka.com	18
Twigs at Christies Mill Inn at Christies Mill – <i>Chef: David Scoffield</i>	236 Port Severn Rd North Port Severn, ON Ph: (705) 538-2354	38
Kai Restaurant and Lounge	125 Medora St Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0 Ph: (705) 765-6983 http://www.kaimuskoka.com	
Lake Joseph Dining Room – Delta Rocky Crest <i>Chef: Patrick Louch</i>	Hamer Bay Rd at the top of Lake Joseph Parry Sound, ON Ph: (705) 375-2240 plouch@deltahotels.com	13
Miss Nelle’s Cafe	2 Bay Street Baysville, ON Ph: (705) 767-2181 Karen@missnelles.ca	19
Morandin Fine Foods <i>Chef: Sandra Morandin</i>	RR#6 Bracebridge Bracebridge, ON Ph: (705) 764-8065	21

	info@morandincatering.com	
North Restaurant and Lounge <i>Chef: Alain Irvine</i>	530 Muskoka Rd North, Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1G3 Canada Ph: (705) 687-8618 northrestaurant@gmail.com	23
One Fifty Five <i>Chef: Michael Rickard</i>	155 Manitoba St Bracebridge, ON P1L 1W2 Ph: (705) 645-1935	25
Port Cunnington Lodge <i>Chef: Eric Gagnon</i>	1079 Port Cunnington Lodge Rd Dwight, ON P0A 1H0 Ph: (705) 635-2505	26
Rebecca's Casual Fine Dining Inc.	3842 Hwy 118, West Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0 Ph: (705) 765-0244	27
Regatta Steak and Seafood Grille	1110 Bay St Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1Z9 Ph: (705) 687-9410	28
Riverwalk Fine Dining <i>Chef: David Friesen</i>	1 Manitoba St Bracebridge, ON Ph: (705) 646-0711 club1@muskoka.com	30
Rosewood Inn – Delta Grandview Resort <i>Chef: Ken Schulz</i>	939 Hwy 60 Huntsville, ON P1H 1Z4 Ph: (705) 789-1871	12
Seven Main Café	7 Main Street West Huntsville, ON P1H 2C5 Ph: (705) 789-3107 info@sevenmaincafe.ca	32
Delta Sherwood Inn – Sherwood Dining Room	1090 Sherwood Rd off Hwy 169 (north of Glen Orchard) Port Carling, ON Ph: (705) 765-3131	14
Soul Sista's	68 West Rd. Unit 3 Huntsville, ON P1H 2B9 Ph: (705) 571-0678 SoulSistas@soulsistas.ca	33
Spencer's Tall Trees <i>Chef: Randy Spencer</i>	87 Main St West Huntsville, ON	34

	Ph: (705) 789-9769 talltrees@on.aibn.com	
Elements – Taboo Resort Golf and Spa <i>Andrew Dymond</i>	1209 Muskoka Beach Rd, Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1R1 Ph: (705) 687-2233 Reservations: (800) 461-0236 Fax: (705) 687-7474 reservation@tabooresort.com	35
Taste Restaurant at Touchstone <i>Chef: Guy Bedard</i>	1869 Muskoka Rd 118 West Bracebridge, ON P1L 1W8 Ph: 1-866-928-1098	42
The Farmer's Daughter	118 Highway 60 Huntsville, ON P1H 1C2 Ph: (705) 789-5700 muskoka@fresheverything.ca	36
Griffin Gastropub	9 Chancery lane Bracebridge, ON P1L 2E3 Ph: (705) 646-0706	37
The Mill on Main <i>Chef: Ali Hunter</i>	50 Main St East Huntsville, ON P1H 1C7 Ph: (705) 788-5150 themillonmain@live.ca	40
The Moon River Lookout <i>Chef: Ken Bol</i>	1002 Walker St Bala, ON P0C 1A0 Ph: (705) 762-2393 info@moonriverlookout.com	20
The Norseman Restaurant and Walkers Lake Resort	1040 Walker Lake Dr Huntsville, ON P1H 2J6 Ph: (705) 635-2473 dining@norsemen-walkerlake.com	22
The Old Station Restaurant <i>Chef: Mackenzie Taylor</i>	88 Manitoba St Bracebridge, ON P1L 1W3 Ph: (705) 645-9776 mike_warr@hotmail.com	24
The Real Muskoka Experience – Muskoka Steamships and Muskoka Boat and Heritage Centre <i>Chef: Alain Irvine</i>	Muskoka Steamships 185 Cherokee Lane Gravenhurst, ON Ph: (705) 687-6667 meghansmith@realmuskoka.com	31
The Ridge at Manitou Golf Club	160 Inn Road, RR No.1	29

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<i>Chef: Philip Patrick</i>	Parry Sound, ON P2A 2W7 Ph: (705) 389-9577 info@ridgeatmanitou.com	
The Rousseau, A JW Marriott Resort & Spa <i>Chef: Shaun Crymble</i>	1112 Judhaven Rd Minett, ON Ph: 1-866-764-6388 info@redleavesmuskoka.com	41
The Trillium Resort and Spa	Clearwater Lake Rd Port Sydney, ON P0B 1L0 Ph: (705) 385-1212	43
Water's Edge Wine Bar and Grill – The Lake Joseph Club <i>Chef: Mackenzie Taylor</i>	1072 Elgin House Rd Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0 Ph: (705) 765-2040 jmacarthur@clublink.ca	
Windermere House <i>Chef: Mark Marchment</i>	2508 Windermere Rd Box 68 Windermere, ON P0B 1P0 Ph: (705) 769-3611 jscaife@windermerehouse.com	44
<b>CULINARY ARTISANS</b>		
Beat the Wheat	Huntsville, ON P1H 1H3 Ph: (705) 205-1143 beat.the.wheat1@gmail.com	1
Belly Ice Cream Company	Farmers Markets Huntsville, ON Ph: (705) 788-6112 bellyicecreamcompany@gmail.com	2
Board's Honey Farm	6866 Highway 534 West (approaching Restoule) Muskoka Region, ON Ph: (705) 729-2939 shop@boardshoneyfarm.com	
Diesel House Coffee Roasters	1080 Taylor Court Bracebridge, ON P1L 10A Ph: (705) 646-0887 todd@dieselhousecoffee-roasters.ca	3
Don's Bakery	3117 Hwy 169 Bala, ON P0C 1A0 Ph: 705 762 3937	4
Donna's Homestead Bakery	Rosseau, ON	5

	Ph: (705) 732-2064	
Gramma's Summer Kitchen	1445 North Mary Lake Rd, R.R. # 2 Huntsville, ON P1H 2J3 Ph: (705) 789-8409 grammajj@sympatico.ca	6
Lake of Bays Brewing Company	P.O. Box 17 2681 Muskoka Rd. 117 Baysville, ON P0B 1A0 Ph: (705) 767-2313	7
Lavender Hills Farm	RR #2 Muskoka Region, ON Ph: (705) 329-3043 info@lavenderhillsfarm.ca	8
Milford Bay Trout Farm	Hewlitt Rd (between Bracebridge and Port Carling off Hwy 118) RR#6 Bracebridge, ON P1L 1X4 Ph: (705) 764-1797 rwuhde@rogers.com	9
Muskoka Cottage Brewery	13 Taylor Rd Bracebridge, ON Ph: (705) 646-1266	10
Muskoka Meats	2288A Hwy 11 North Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1R1 Ph: (705) 687-3283 dave@muskokameats.com	11
Muskoka Roastery Coffee	8 Crescent Rd. Unit B-1 Huntsville, ON P1H 0B3 Ph: (705) 789-9592 roaster@muskokaroastery.com	12
Springhill Freshwater Co.	1555 Brunel Rd. Huntsville, ON P1H 1C1 Ph: (705) 789-8700 springhillfreshwater@bellnet.ca	13
The Bakery	141 Brock St Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1X2 Ph: (705) 687-2579	14
The Cottage Butcher	3173 Muskoka Rd 169 Bala, ON	15

	P0C 1A0 Ph: (705) 762-5995	
The Windmill Bakery	969 Muskoka Rd. #3 North Huntsville, ON Ph: (705) 789-4324	16
Wheat Free Delights	13 Cann St Brendale Square Huntsville, ON P1H 1K7 Ph: (705) 789-9503 wheatfreedelights@gmail.com	17
Yummies in a Jar	PO Box 141 1002 Earth Park Rd Baysville, ON P0B 1A0 Ph: (705) 767-2578 thecook@yummiesinajar.com	18
<b>FARMS</b>		
Ballmer Farm	1035 South Monck Drive Bracebridge, ON P1L 1W8 Ph: (705) 645-9107	13
Big Ass Garlic	RR#1 1926 Muskoka Rd #117 Baysville, ON P0B 1A0 Ph: (705) 766-2748 bigassgarlic@hotmail.com	25
Bliss Family Farm	178 South Lancelot Rd Utterson, ON P0B 1M0 Ph: (705) 789-3079 anniembliss@hotmail.com	20
Board's Honey Farm	6866 Highway 534 West Muskoka Region, ON Ph: (705) 729-2939 shop@boardshoneyfarm.com http://www.boardshoneyfarm.com	
Brooklands Farm	1375 Butter & Egg Rd Milford Bay, ON P0B 1E0 Ph: (705) 764-1888 info@brooklandsfarm.ca http://www.brooklandsfarm.ca	10
Debanna Farms	2352 Hwy 518 West Muskoka Region, ON	

	P0A 1Y0 Ph: (705) 224-8019 diva7gould@vianet.ca	
Edible Fungi	54 Old Aspdin Rd Huntsville, ON Ph: (705) 789-5850 mushrooms@madeinmuskoka.com http://www.madeinmuskoka.com/edible_fun gi/home.htm	18
Four Season Greens	83 Deer Lake Rd Port Sydney, ON P0B 1L0 Ph: (705) 385-2987 FourSeasonGreens@cogeco.ca	22
From the Forest Floor	155 John St Bracebridge, ON P1L 2E1 Ph: (705) 644-1258 wisnicki@muskoka.com http://www.fromtheforestfloor.com/	26
Green Valley Farm	1039 Russ Hamel Rd., RR #1 Utterson, ON P0B 1M0 Ph: (705) 385-2423 pam.fry@sympatico.ca	7
Grenville Farms	1142 Graham Rd RR#1 Severn Bridge, ON P0E 1N0 Ph: (705) 689-6431	12
Gypsy Whole Foods	652 Sieber E Burks Falls, ON P0A 1C0 Ph: (705) 382-3561 gypsywholefoods@xplornet.com	
Hopkins Farm	1039 Hopkins Rd RR#3 Gravenhurst Barkway, ON P1P 1R3 Ph: (705) 687-0765	15
Hubbert's Maple Products	199 Maple Rd RR#1 Sundridge, ON P0A 1Z0 Ph: (705) 384-7847 bhubbart@vianet.ca	
Iroquois Cranberry Growers	2664 Muskoka Rd 38, Box 260 Bala, ON P0C 1A0	2

Iroquois Cranberry Growers	2664 Muskoka Rd 38, Box 260 Bala, ON P0C 1A0 Ph: (705) 762-2354 info@iroquoiscranberries.com www.iroquoiscranberries.com/	2
Ivanita Farms & Meats	222 Fowler Rd Huntsville, ON P1H2N5 Ph: (705) 789-0837 ivanita@bellnet.ca	17
Johnston's Cranberry Marsh	1074 Cranberry Rd Bala, ON P0C 1A0 Ph: (705) 762-3203 ontario@cranberry.ca http://www.cranberry.ca	3
Mandanoodin Farm	121 Royston Rd Burks Falls, ON P0A 1C0 Ph: (705) 382-9804 jc9804@xplornet.ca	
Maple View Farm	312 Yearly Rd Huntsville, ON P0B 1M0 Ph: (705) 789-4022 mapleviewmaplesyrup@hotmail.com	16
Marks Muskoka Maple	Lynx Lake Rd, #20 R.R. #2 Huntsville, ON P1H 2J3 Ph: (705) 789-8569 lupton@vianet.ca	23
Moon Bay Shitake	Box 369 Mactier, ON P0C1H0 Ph: (705) 375-0978	1
Muskoka Herb Farm	Stephenson Road #2 and Highway 11 Port Sydney, ON Ph: (705) 706-2226 mosmus@vianet.ca	21
Muskoka Mushroom Farms	PO Box 5590 Huntsville, ON P1H 2L5 Ph: (705) 787-1115 igf@surenet.net	24
Oke-Cook Farm – Market and Tail	1230 Campbell's Road	14

Over the River Orchards	519 Hill 14 Road Muskoka Region, ON Ph: (705) 492-7977 helgamertins@yahoo.com	
Poppa Jim's Honey	1647 Windermere Road, RR#2 Utterson, ON P0B 1M0 Ph: (705) 769-3791 grscook@sympatico.ca	8
Ravenbrook Farm	214 North Lancelot Road Utterson, ON P0B 1M0 Ph: (705) 788-7289 ravenbrook2007@yahoo.ca	19
River Mill Farmers' Market	River Mill Park Huntsville, ON Ph: (705) 636-9750 farmersfeedus@hotmail.ca http://www.rivermillpark.ca	
Rockhill Farm	#2170 Hwy. #520 Burks Falls, ON P0A 1C0 Ph: (705) 382-9851 rockhill@xplornet.ca	
Seed to Green Farms	147 Fern Glen Rd., Emsdale, ON P0A 1J0 Ph: (705) 783-3310 seedtogreenfarms@gmail.com www.seedtogreenfarms.com	
Severn Sunset Eco-Farm	1316 Graham Rd Severn Bridge, ON Ph: (705) 689-3637 severnsunset@gmail.com http://severnsunset.wordpress.com	11
Sprucedale Quality Meats	RR1 Sprucedale, ON N0A 1Y0 Ph: (705) 685-7747	27
Sweetgrass Farm	1270 Hekkla Rd (Corner of Gross Rd, big red & white barn) Rosseau, ON P0C 1J0 Ph: (705) 732-2283 wildeddu@vianet.ca	4
Taylor Strawberry Farm	1490 Deebank Rd	6

	Windermere, ON P0B 1P0 Ph: (705) 769-2368	
That Potted Lady	136 Bayview Dr Parry Sound, ON P2A 1G0 Ph: (705) 342-7612 marshalls@vianet.ca	
The Donkey's Shack and Feed Store	2532 Doe Lake Rd Gravenhurst, ON Ph: (705) 687-4062	
Walkling's Farm	1131 Three Mile Lake Rd RR#1 Utterson, ON P0B 1M0 Ph: (705) 385-3292 lorna.walkling@sympatico.ca	
Winding Fences	110 2 Ambleside Lane Utterson, ON P0B 1M0 Ph: (705) 769-1418 windingfences@gmail.com www.windingfences.ca	9
Windy Acres Farm	Highway 141 -one kilometer NW of Bent River Store on east side/hwy Utterson, ON P0B1M0 Ph: (705) 769-1954 arthurr52@yahoo.ca	5
<b>RETAILERS</b>		
Irvine & Sons Fine Foods – Catering	North Restaurant & North West Restaurant 530 Muskoka Rd. N. Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1G3 Ph: (705) 687-8618 <a href="mailto:Irvinefinefoods@bellnet.ca">Irvinefinefoods@bellnet.ca</a>	1
Muskoka Natural Food Market	Bracebridge Shopping Centre Bracebridge, ON Ph: (705) 645-5471	2
Port Carling Foodland	Bruce Wilson Rd. & Hwy 118 Port Carling, ON P0B 1J0 Ph: (705) 765-3720 <a href="mailto:Kadanoff@sobeys.com">Kadanoff@sobeys.com</a>	3
Silver Stream Farm		4
Stephen's Butcher Shop	8 Harris St Port Carling, ON	5

	Ph: (705) 765-3936	
Tredki Acres Mobile Farmer's Market	Muskoka Region, ON tredkiacres@xplornet.ca	6
The Farmer's Daughter Market	118 Highway 60 Huntsville, ON P1H 1C2 Ph: (705) 789-5700 muskoka@fresheverything.ca	7
Oke-Cook Market	1230 Campbell's Road Bracebridge, ON P1L 1X1 Ph: (705) 645-5866	8
Yummies in a Jar	PO Box 141 1002 Earth Park Rd Baysville, ON P0B 1A0 Ph: (705) 767-2578 thecook@yummiesinajar.com	9
Muskoka Meats and 100 Mile Store	2288A Hwy 11 North Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1R1 Ph: (705) 687-3283 dave@muskokameats.com	10
<b>FOOD COOPERATIVES</b>		
Gravenhurst Farmer's Market Cooperative	In the special events field at Muskoka Wharf (across the road from Boston Pizza) Gravenhurst, ON	1
Gravenhurst Food and Community Cooperative (GFCC)	220 Winewood Ave. E. G1 Gravenhurst, ON P1P 1X8 Ph: (705) 687-3382 <a href="mailto:join@gravenhurstcommunityco-op.com">join@gravenhurstcommunityco-op.com</a> <a href="http://www.gravenhurstcommunityco-op.com">http://www.gravenhurstcommunityco-op.com</a>	2
<b>FOOD DISTRIBUTION CENTRES</b>		
Manna Food Bank	325 Fraserburg Rd Bracebridge, ON Ph: (705) 646-0114 <a href="mailto:info@mannafoodbank.ca">info@mannafoodbank.ca</a>	1
Table Soup Foundation	P.O. Box 5411 Huntsville, ON P1H 2K7 Ph: (705) 783-5827 <a href="mailto:tablesoup@gmail.com">tablesoup@gmail.com</a>	2
<b>FARMER'S MARKET</b>		
Bala Farmer's Market	Muskoka Lakes Sports Park	1

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Bala Farmer's Market	Muskoka Lakes Sports Park Bala, ON Ph: (705) 762-5663	1
Baysville Farmer's Market	Arena Parking Lot, University St. Baysville, ON	2
Bracebridge Farmer's Market	Memorial Park on Manitoba St, beside the Norwood Theatre. Bracebridge, ON <a href="mailto:bracebridgefarmersmarket@yahoo.ca">bracebridgefarmersmarket@yahoo.ca</a>	3
Dorset Farmer's Market	Main St Dorset, ON	4
Gravenhurst Farmer's Market	In the special events field at Muskoka Wharf (across the road from Boston Pizza) Gravenhurst, ON	5
Huntsville Farmer's Market	Canadian Tire Store parking lot. Hwy #60 and King William Street. Huntsville, ON	6
Rousseau Farmer's Market	Waterfront	7



## LABOUR & PRODUCTION

Labour and production are a major component to understand for the District of Muskoka's foodshed strategy. In order to have a strong agricultural economy, there needs to be a labour force in place so that a farm can be productive. At the same time, the labour force needs to be dedicated to the long hours and strenuous work that comes with the task; they also need to be skilled and knowledgeable about the local conditions and natural systems. While the number of farms in the District of Muskoka has declined, there has still been a growing interest in local farming. Through this attraction, the need for readily available skilled labour is on the rise; leading to the issue that for increased production there needs to be an actual labour force. Regardless of farm size, there is always work to be accomplished.



Figure 2.2.1: **School programs are needed to instill agricultural skills early on**

To best expand the skill base needed to be competent in agricultural work, it is important that people understand the processes involved with farming. Parker et al. (2009) provides the context of the importance of being informed at a young age. Through the use of a partnership between the United States Government and Community Colleges, a program has been generated “to grow educational and business partnerships that strengthen math, science, and technology skills of college agriculture, food, and natural resource (AFNR) students” (Parker et al., 2009, pg. 978). By using the provided educational tools, students are

introduced to the variety of future agricultural opportunities at a young age; starting in kindergarten and going through until grade twelve. This helps to further explore careers related to agricultural production, therefore having the potential to expand the labour force within the industry. An expansion of services helps students continue the study of careers related to agriculture by:

- Providing model resources for integrating math, science, and technology into agricultural programs;
- Distributing instructional materials through workshops, Webinars and a Web-based clearinghouse ([www.agrowknow.org](http://www.agrowknow.org));
- Hosting national and regional conferences to inform faculty and to encourage networking and skill building;
- Facilitating teamwork among high schools, colleges, universities and industry partners; and
- Shaping agricultural education through participation on the National Council for Agricultural Education. (Parker et al., 2009, pg.978)

Through the use of similar initiatives within an Ontario based context, an expansion of agricultural production within the curriculum can help to educate students on their Province's food systems. Specifically, local school boards could tailor programs with their farming communities. This notion was expressed at the District of Muskoka and Savour Muskoka stakeholder meeting on September 22, 2011. The importance of education was stressed; local residents would be better educated in farming

practices, as well as buyer awareness of the labour required to produce the goods consumers are purchasing.

Although education is an important aspect in the generation of skilled-based knowledge in attracting labourers, it is not the only method that can be used. Specific to the District of Muskoka, there needs to be the demand for labour itself. By exploring Persson (1983), a context is provided for the need of labour on small farms within Sweden. Although the information used is dated by today's standards, it shows a context that labour has always been an issue in regards to the practice of farming. Farm size is used to determine the required labour force to ensure appropriate production. If a farm is small, the amount of labour will be less, as will be the amount of production the farm can generate. As farms grow, the labour required to meet the level of production will be greater. The current needs of the District of Muskoka are for labour of all shapes and sizes. According to the information gathered at the District of Muskoka and Savour Muskoka stakeholder meeting, there is a desire for people to work on local farms, but the necessities on the farms may not be available. Typically there is the need of steady income and accommodations. There is no safe guarantee that a worker can be paid, be paid well, or have a place to live while working on a farm. Persson's (1983) article examines the use of part-time farms which are not common in the District of Muskoka. Part-time farming can be an effective tool for farmers to gain additional income and to teach a labour force. A part-time farm is seen as “a way for rural society to exploit urban resources in the form of a differentiated labour market” (Persson, 1983, pg. 60). Through less intensive farming, yet extensive use of land, local economies can find complimentary income sources. Persson (1983) expresses how the use of part-time farming also helps to increase production through specific produce surplus that would otherwise not have been grown, while also helping reduce other production obstacles.

It is important to note that a steady labour force is very important to the District of Muskoka. The Government of Canada (2011) has formulated a report explaining the concerns of labour for specific areas, future job outlook, and current wages. This information can be used as a tool to explore and identify the issues that the District of Muskoka are facing. ‘Muskoka-Kawarthas’ are grouped together as a general area by the Government of Canada. This area is part of the declining number of farms in Ontario, as well as the decline in the available labour force on these farms. “The number of general farm workers in the labour force fell by almost 18% between 2001 and 2006, from 1,315 to 1,080” (Government of Canada, 2011, pg. 1). This represents one fifth of the labour force; which would be extremely significant in any other industry within Ontario. This is not to say that it isn't significant within the farming industry, but that it is all-relative (as the number of farms decreases, so will the labour force). At the same time, more farms are at risk of closing without a labour force to take them over. The Government of Canada (2011) explains that the age of farmers is on the rise with more than 40% being over 50 years of age, while some farmers are well over the retirement age of 65. Without a labour-force available and interest in taking over these farms, there will continue to be a steady decrease for farming in the District of Muskoka.

Agricultural production in Muskoka, as in any environment, faces both challenges and opportunities. Poor soil quality is a prime issue cited by many farmers in the area. This is particularly challenging given



Figure 2.2.2: **Reduced input farming as used on Brooklands Farm reduce the burden on marginal soils**

the burden that agriculture can have even on environments with a natural abundance of high quality soil, which in Ontario tend to be located further to the south and enjoy the added advantage of a longer growing season. In the District of Muskoka, where the natural resource base, particularly the soil quality, is much less advantageous for agricultural production, such farming techniques are likely to be relatively more taxing and thus more damaging. In researching the issue of agricultural sustainability in Southern Ontario, Stonehouse (2004) finds that organic farming (i.e. farming without the use of any synthetic additives) and to a lesser extent reduced input farming (i.e. conventional farming techniques used in a less extreme manner) meeting the challenges of sustainable agriculture; the depletion of the natural resource base is less extreme and will remain agriculturally viable for a longer timeframe. Additional findings include the small size, but greater diversity of production of organic farms in comparison to other farms (Stonehouse, 2004). In terms of profitability, reduced input farms were first, followed by organic farms and then conventional farms (Stonehouse, 2004).

Despite the challenges to agriculture posed by Muskoka's limited arable land, its short growing season is becoming less of a challenge with time. Findings by Budong, Xuebin, Kai, Yang, & O'Brien (2010) indicate that in Canada between 1895 and 2007, there has been an increasing trend in the length of the growing season and in the associated available heat and that the winter temperature is less damaging and the frost-free periods are longer. Agricultural production in Muskoka can only benefit from such trends and could result in a greater possible diversity of products, as well as better yields and less frost-related losses.

Better farming techniques and longer growing seasons, however, cannot change regulations that limit agricultural production in certain sectors: dairy, eggs and poultry. As reported by Baker et al. (2010), since the 1960s Ontario has regulated the production of milk, eggs and poultry. A quota system ensures

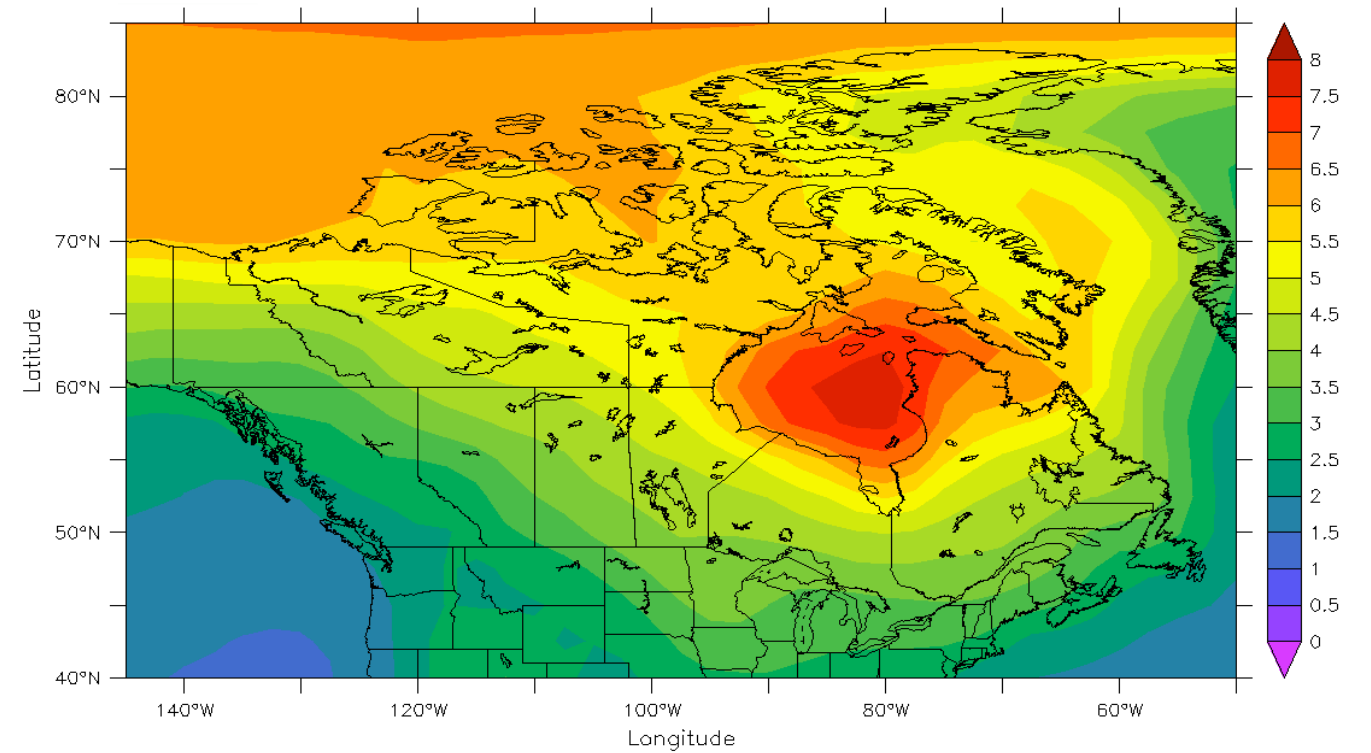


Figure 2.2.3: **21<sup>st</sup> century winters in Muskoka may be on average 3°C warmer than a century earlier.**

limited production, guaranteed prices and standardized products (Baker et al., 2010). However, this type of supply-managed system can create challenges for small-scale and/or specialized producers, of which many are found in Muskoka. For example, while Ontario law permits farms producing up to 300 broiler chickens per year outside the quota system, within the system the smallest quota is for production of 14,000 quota units per year (about 91,000 chickens) and thus effectively makes



Figure 2.2.4: **The small-scale and specialized nature of Muskoka farming does not fit the agro-industry facilitated by current regulations**

any operation producing between 300 and 91,000 birds per year illegal (Baker, 2010). For production of these three foodstuffs in Ontario, to diversify beyond mass-produced standards and to respond to growing demand for specialized products, Baker et al. (2010) suggest increasing the scale and scope of quota exemptions, decreasing minimum quotas and establishing specialty market quotas. Improving the potential of bottom-up agricultural innovation and growth can only be beneficial to a marginally productive farming region such as the District of Muskoka where creativity and specialization are essential for success and where competing on

standardized products with industrial-scale farms is a dead end.

## PROCESSING

Another major challenge for the District of Muskoka in establishing a successful local food system is the lack of processing facilities. Processing refers to the changing of any raw agricultural resources into marketable and sellable goods. It could include the creation of pies or jams out of produce, the butchering and packaging of livestock, or the use of milk to create cheese (Legal Barriers to Local Food, pg. 23). The District of Muskoka currently suffers from a lack of local, small and medium-scale processing options. As the Metcalf Foundation and the Ontario Farmland Trust (2009) have noted, the processing of agricultural products is vital in the creation of local food systems. Re-localized food processing “creates new networks of production and processing, markets for new farmers and new links between local farmers, processors, consumers, chefs, retailers and wholesalers” (Carter-Whitney, 2010, pg. 16).

Thus, to create a viable and thriving local food system, the District of Muskoka must find a way to process its agricultural products within the District, or make better use of the processing that already exists. In order to do so, the barriers to local processing must be understood. Two works, sponsored by the Metcalf Foundation and the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, respectively, give us these insights.

In *Bringing Local Food Home* (Carter-Whitney, 2008), the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy clearly outlines the legal and regulatory barriers to localized processing. Unfortunately, it is difficult to come to a clear solution as the barriers pervade local, provincial, and federal governmental regulations. The report finds that “some existing regulations have been developed within the context of large-scale production and distribution, and internationally-traded food; creating barriers for smaller scale local producers” (Carter-Whitney, 2008, pg. 23). Farms specializing in livestock are especially susceptible to suffer, as small, localized abattoirs have significantly decreased due to the dominance of large, federally inspected slaughterhouses that cater to large supermarket chains (Carter-Whitney, 2008, pg. 24).

Also, federal jurisdiction over health inspections means that municipal governments cannot inspect local facilities themselves. Meat producers are regulated by Provincial legislation, such as Ontario’s Food Safety and Quality Act (2001), which expressly prohibits the sale, transport, delivery or distribution of a farm-slaughtered carcass, part of a farm slaughtered carcass, or a farm slaughtered product. These regulations make it extremely difficult for any livestock farmer not of industrial-size to bring meats to their local markets.

Small and medium scale produce processing is also affected by provincial and federal legislation. The report, *Nurturing Fruit and Vegetable Processing in Ontario* (Carter-Whitney, 2010) published by the Metcalf Foundation highlights three main barriers; food safety regulation, property tax assessment policy, and minimum wage regulation. Much of the current policies and regulation promote large-scale food processing enterprises, but are a great challenge for any local processing options, as was also noted in *Bringing Local Food Home*. Many small-scale farmers find the regulations to be overwhelming or too costly to comply with and lack the support to move forward. Overall, it is noted that Ontario could benefit from regional food processing clusters. The report offers several recommendations including; creating an alliance of small and medium food processors, establishing funding/regulation/policy support at all government levels, strengthening investment and legislation for cooperatives, stimulating agriculture

processing enterprise zones to extend tax credits to food processors, and establishing support in paying employment costs (Carter-Whitney, 2008, p8-9).



Figure 2.3.1: **Reducing barriers for processors is vital in adding value in a creative agricultural economy**



Figure 2.3.2: **Making wine out of cranberries is a local example of successful value-adding processing**

While local and small scale processing is a challenge in the District of Muskoka and elsewhere, there are some that exist. Muskoka Meats, located near Gravenhurst, for example, is a 100-mile store that processes meat within the District. Similarly, there are a few wineries within the District, including Muskoka Lakes Winery, which processes local cranberries into wine. There are also honey farms, maple syrup producers, breweries and canneries (Savour Muskoka). However, there is nothing of substantial size and efficiency.

Examples of local processing are also evident in other areas of North America. A prime example is the Dakota Growers Pasta Company (DGPC) located in North Dakota. DGPC uses a cooperative approach to turn farmers’ wheat into flour and pasta products. Funding for the operation was received from a number of agriculture organizations. The co-op means that wheat farmers in North Dakota have a guaranteed place to sell their product without shipping it miles away. DGPC has experienced huge success and is one of the United States most efficient pasta processors (Carter-Whitney, 2010). Another example is Grove Squeezed LLC, which is a mobile citrus processing operation located in Florida. The organization has a mobile trailer of several cars that is used by farmers to complete in-field juicing; Grove Squeezed has developed a way to shorten the time between harvest and extraction, thereby significantly reducing the factors that affect the fruit’s physiology (Grove Squeezed, 2003). The trailer offers flexibility that the organization believes will be beneficial to the food processing industry. Mobile processing is also becoming an option for abattoirs, as well as freezing units and the like (Carter-Whitney, 2010).

By understanding and working with the regulations set in place, it is possible for the District of Muskoka to establish a local processing network. Putting a focus on District-scaled processors that benefit the entire area can have great benefit. There are many options and opportunities available, such as the mentioned mobile processors and co-ops, to take into consideration.

## YOUTH AND NEW FARMERS

Another critical component to creating a viable and sustainable foodshed strategy for the District of Muskoka is through youth engagement, education, financing and community connections. Children and youth are the future of the food industry and educating them on food systems and production as well as providing opportunities to allow for young farmers to succeed is necessary. There are currently several programs, centres and funding incentives available to assist youth in entering the agriculture industry.

### School Programs

The ten good food ideas, identified in the “2020: Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario” (Baker, 2010) publication, have an emphasis placed on informing youth about healthy eating, becoming more educated in locally sourced food, and making the right food choices (Baker, 2010). An example of a program that is currently introducing local food into the school system is the American National Farm to School Network, which is supported by the Kellogg Foundation. This initiative includes approximately 2000 programs in 40 states and focuses on direct connections between farms and schools. Currently 34% of United States’ schools use locally sourced food and another 22% are looking to also incorporate a similar approach into their school (Baker, 2010).

Food Share (2011) in Toronto also has existing school programs in place. Starting with children in elementary schools the Food Share program works to improve communities’ access to healthy affordable and sustainably produced food through community based programs and policy recommendations.



Figure 2.4.1: A major challenge facing Muskoka agriculture is the lack of succession of ageing farmers

Within Food Share, is a school program called ‘Field to Table’ that promotes food literacy from kindergarten to grade 12. This particular program has had great success within the city of Toronto. Food Share’s Strategic Plan 2009-2011 outlines a key priority with youth engagement, and the intention to reintroduce them to the food system.

Furthermore, the Albion Hills Community Farm and Learning Centre, a 76-acre site in the Albion Hills Conservation Area in Caledon, is the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority’s newest venture in near urban agriculture. This particular site focuses on food production, education (young, new and existing farmers), community gardens and the public. It is meant to act as a charitable hub and learning centre for agriculture. This particular farm includes local organic food production, education programs which encourage community awareness through hands on workshops, school visits, community garden programs and demonstration plots (Toronto Regional Conservation Authority, 2011).

There are also a number of existing programs and organizations that allow children and youth the opportunity to have contact with and experience farms on a firsthand basis. These can include field trips, workshops, and spending the day as a farmer. Everdale Organic Farms, for example, is a community-based centre, which aims to re-educate people about the origins of their food, community, and farmers. Everdale offers farm skills training and farm planning programs. These programs range from one-day workshops to three season internships (Everdale Organic Farm, 2011).

### Young Farmers

There are several University and College programs that aim to educate youth in food systems, farming, and sustainable agriculture. The University of Guelph’s Ontario Agricultural College offers programs specific to farming and agriculture. Furthermore there is Trent University’s Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program, Fleming College Sustainable Agriculture program, and Ryerson University’s Hospitality and Tourism program just to name a few. There is also a wide range of college programs available such as greenhouse technician as well as viticultural and horticultural programs.

One of the largest barriers facing new and young farmers, however, is the high cost associated with setting up their own farm or agricultural business. This is especially difficult for young farmers who have recently completed either an internship or university/college program. Saving money during the programs and having to pay off student loans hinders their ability to have the financial means to start up their own venture (Mitchell, Hiltz, Asselin, & Mausberg, B., 2007). It was also indicated that there is a lack of practical education training for individuals wishing to pursue farming as a career. More training should be available in the areas of business planning, marketing, and familiarization with Ontario agriculture as a whole (Mitchell et al., 2007). Through a survey handed out to students of the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training in Ontario (C.R.A.F.T), expressing the idea of a farmer internship program which provides training to would be new farmers in organic agriculture in partnership with the University of Guelph, found that there is a strong desire for new farmers to want to include educational programs in their farming business, but they cannot financially support them (C.R.A.F.T Ontario, 2009).

## YOUTH AND NEW FARMERS

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Figure 2.4.2: **Low margins in an industrialized food system deter youth from entering farming**

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## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Another component lacking in the District of Muskoka's agricultural production is social capital. A comprehensive system where local farmers could connect and share information would certainly benefit the area. A strong example of a support system lies within the Toronto Food Charter. This document is an example of a degree of political willpower that can greatly support any food system. It includes principles that help move the food industry in a certain direction, such as emphasizing the importance of healthy local food, prioritizing on sustainable methods of agriculture and a large focus towards social justice for those directly involved in the industry (City of Toronto, 2000). A large portion of the ideals and values set out in the Charter includes concepts of creating a local food business around Toronto (City of Toronto, 2000). Without a social network where local food can be emphasized, attempts to sell and market local food is inadequate. Taking from the principles of the Toronto Food Charter, it is understood that what lacks in the District of Muskoka is a social network where local food can come forth.

A food charter acts as a legally stamped and therefore enforceable document to help address the challenges of a healthy and vibrant population. The District of Muskoka has the opportunity to create a document that will help to shape the provision of "access to an adequate supply of nutrients, affordable and culturally appropriate food" (City of Toronto, 2001). The Food Charter functions as a document that will tell the story of the District of Muskoka as well as how people grow, produce, and use food. It is important to note the relationship of providing food and having the food provided at the same time. This also ties in to the necessity of food security within the District of Muskoka foodshed strategy. By developing a Food Charter, the local communities and larger surrounding communities will have



Figure 2.5.1: Greater public knowledge of and connections to farming benefits local agriculture

a defined interest; further helping other related government objectives. Directly and indirectly, other objectives that come from a food charter include "public health nutrition and food safety programs, to the advocating of improved income, employment and housing policies, to the promotion of community gardening" (City of Toronto, 2001). The District of Muskoka can therefore retain additional benefits through the implementation of a Food Charter. Communities will have a greater sense of the importance that comes from all aspects of the local economy. Farmers, artisans, chefs, and local residents are the important components in the success of a Food Charter.

A very broad understanding of why social networks are important in creating strong communities comes forth in Dhillon's article, "The Role of Social Capital in Sustaining Partnership" (2009). The article defines social capital as the networks, trusts, norms and values that are shared amongst many individuals who are attempting to reach a common goal (Dhillon, 2009). Dhillon (2009) points out that a strong amount of social capital can have both positive and negative effects. For example it creates the ability to exclude members outside of that community, or the ability to create social safety nets for those who are in the community. Regardless of whether these systems are positive or negative, a major concept within this article is that at the root of any Social Network, multiple layers of socialization exist, thus much of the lower levels of socialization depend on an inner most important level, which must focus the overall groups direction (Dhillon, 2009).

This importance towards inner levels of organization within social groups is existent in Luna and Tirado's (2008) article that looks at business associations and their contributions to social networks in Mexico. These associations help connect smaller businesses or farms with their needed assistance, such as in the articles primary case study, where a strawberry farmer required assistance to deal with an oncoming virus and needed a biotechnology company's assistance (Luna, 2008). The local Business Association (BA) acts as a supporting organization, connecting different groups with one another. "The strongest links exist between firms and BAs, and between BAs and government, whereas collaboration with universities is usually confined to the provision of business advisory services by private institutions of higher education mainly committed to teaching" (Luna, 2008, pg. 8). Overall, the article attributes BA's to having better resources to connect different groups, as this local form of assistance is less subjected to political or economic pressures (Luna, 2008).

Rather than analyzing the framework of social systems, in Bourke's article entitled "Public Libraries: Building Social Capital Through Networking", a general understanding is brought forth that a physical space or common meeting spot must be developed for any social network to take shape (Bourke, 2005). In this article, the role of the public library would ideally be transformed into one that caters to the creation of social networks, attempting to be a physical meeting space (Bourke, 2005). Much like the articles dealing directly with the framework of social networks, Bourke's article attributes strong social capital towards the many layers of socialization existent within social networks (Bourke, 2005). "Over a period of time networks can be developed into partnerships. For partnerships to be truly successful there needs to be a strong element of trust between the parties" (Bourke, 2005, pg.3). It is through this gradual development of trust that strong networks are developed, eventually allowing for a social support system that all members of the community could potentially fall back on.

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Figure 2.5.2: **Discourse between stakeholders increases awareness of resources and opportunities**

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## TOURISM

Another important component of developing a food-shed strategy is building the links between tourism and local food in the District of Muskoka. There is a significant amount of literature that delves into food and tourism, the clustering of creative industries (many that are food-related) as well as the beneficial rural-urban relationships that should be encouraged as part of this strategy.

Henderson (2009) talks about the many benefits of a tourism strategy that incorporates food – arguing that food can be central to the branding of a destination and even its economic development. Agricultural investment and output can rise; synergies can form amongst proximate businesses; small-scale farms and local communities can benefit through increased jobs; and environmental benefits can be accrued through the consumption of food that is not imported from halfway across the world. She argues that benefits are not limited to simply economics, but have a significant social and environmental component.

Baeker (2008) discusses how traditional dependence on agriculture leaves rural areas vulnerable, especially in the age of declining industrial bases and increasing farm consolidation. Tax bases are reduced, and along with the capacity to pay for basic services and infrastructure. While the District of Muskoka does have a more diverse economy than most rural areas, the relative lack of fertile land and the small farm size make the region poorly suited to compete in the global agricultural marketplace. Baeker (2008) suggests rural diversification through increased creativity, culture and creation of a sense of place. He offers the example of Prince Edward County and its turnaround. A report commissioned in 2004 concluded that the County had no competitive advantages in a traditional economic paradigm, so a new one was constructed, based on quality of place using four pillars - agriculture, tourism, arts/culture/history and commerce/industry. Agriculture focused on high value products like wine and cheese, products that form part of the region's brand. The focus was not on doing things the traditional way, but taking advantage of quality of place to strengthen each pillar. This strategy would be especially viable in Muskoka, with its scenic beauty, large seasonal property owner base and outdoor amenities.



Figure 2.6.1: Local agriculture, processing and retailing can be a tourist draw in itself

Alonso and Liu (2011) outline the case of the Blackwood River Valley in Western Australia, a rural area developing its food and wine tourism potential. They talk about the need to attract 'quality' tourists – those with both disposable income and an appreciation for a region's genuine features – food, arts and culture. They advocate for visitors centres, to engage in tourist development as well as to promote local food and services and coordinate the constituent elements of the region, which are quite independently diverse, in order to attain the desired single image. They also advocate for more collaborative partnerships, which boost synergies among area players and increase the sense of place. They call for both vertical relationships - such as between restaurants and food producers, as well as horizontal relationships – such as those between two different restaurants or food stores. This cross-promotion benefits a wide variety of players in the region.

Culinary trails and food branding is one way to collaborate for mutual benefits. In the Kawarthas - a region which has much in common with Muskoka, both geographically and culturally – their Kawartha Choice FarmFresh program has created a network of local farms, producers, chefs and retailers, putting their stamp of approval on a wide variety of local food (Peterborough and the Kawarthas Tourism, 2011). The 'Culture-Nature-Food' approach in its tourism strategy tells a story about the Kawarthas and strengthens its sense of place through the links between culture, the natural environment and fresh, local food, all things Muskoka is rich in. The Niagara Culinary Trail (2011) is a comprehensive guide to farms, retailers, restaurants, farmers' markets, food processors, bed-and-breakfasts and much more laid out in a reader-friendly and intuitive way. Through the use of visual imagery, maps and geographically organizing points of interest, they make planning a culinary tourism trip easy. The trail helps connect the agriculture and tourism industries in Niagara, something that could be beneficial in Muskoka. Vermont's farm trail (2011) is another excellent example. Although simple, the use of a map to display tourist-ready farms, farmers markets and restaurants is effective. Winter farms and farmers markets are also identified.

The research of Gossling et al. (2011) approaches this issue from a different angle. They argue that because food production and consumption contribute significantly to global climate change, changes in the management of food in the tourism sector could lower greenhouse gas emissions. As an established tourist destination already, further co-operation between chefs and food producers could have benefits in the mitigation of climate change.

## CONCLUSION

The aforementioned challenges to labour and production, processing, youth and new farmers, tourism, community connections and creative rural economy, will require addressing in a coherent, rational way by RP Solutions in order to develop an effective foodshed strategy for the District of Muskoka. It is clearly understood that these varying issues are interconnected as well as mutually-reinforcing, and that any solutions offered must consider the complexity of these relationships. To this end, RP Solutions has compiled local food inventories with respect to the production, consumption and cultural assets for agriculture in Muskoka.



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Figure 1.2: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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Figures 2.1.1-2.1.6: Statistics Canada 2006

Figure 2.2.1: takesunset.com

Figures 3.1-3.3: Savour Muskoka

To obtain maximum benefit from Food Festivals:

1. Make a plan - putting your event proposal in writing seems like extra effort and work. However, it is worth it. It provides your Board, members and partners with a clearer indication of what you are planning to do. We found it invaluable in communicating and negotiating with our potential partners. As well, the plan can serve as a to-do list to help in organizing and managing the thousands of tasks that need to be done for a successful event.

2. Partner up - look for existing organizations and events with which you can partner up. This makes hosting a food festival so much easier. In our case, the Ukrainian Village has the venue, infrastructure, track record and resources already in place. Adding in the Prairie Heritage Food Festival was a natural fit, greatly increasing our odds of success. It is a win-win situation for all parties. We were pleasantly surprised by how many organizations were interested in getting involved with us. Most of these were public organizations (city, provincial) looking for ways to enhance the attendance and attractiveness of their events. Good food always makes friends! We are looking at possibly partnering up with some of these organizations and their events in the future. Ideally, we hope to host 3 to 4 food festivals in different venues each year. A side benefit is that many of these organizations are now looking at offering some of our products, e.g., bison burgers, as part of their regular food service.

The other partnering that needs to take place is with other complementary associations. The Alberta Elk Association, Alberta White-tail and Mule Deer Association, Alberta Bison Association and the Alberta Fruit Growers all have offices in the same building in Leduc, just minutes away from the Edmonton international airport. This arrangement really facilitates communication, sharing and working together. Also, as a group, we are much more attractive to potential external partners. We can bring greater resources, connections and expertise to any marketing initiative.

3. Get grants - non-profit deer and elk associations promoting locally-grown products in events that attract tourism likely qualify for various grant programs. Most states and provinces have programs to support such initiatives. Find out what is available and apply for these funds. It is much easier to hold a successful event if you have some seed funding with which to work. Remember though, along with grants comes accountability. So be sure to understand and comply with all the obligations attached to any grant funding. Also contact your local Chamber of Commerce for support that they may be able to provide.

4. Get local chefs involved - we were pleasantly surprised at how many quality chefs were interested in getting involved with our festival. In fact, we finally had to restrict the number of chefs just so that the event could remain manageable. Chefs are interested in showcasing their talents (and restaurants) to the public. They are also interested in unique, locally-produced products that can differentiate them from their competitors. Many restaurants, especially those catering to foreign tourists, love to feature regional cuisine. Because of this interest, we are looking at a special event just for chefs to showcase their capabilities with these specialty products.

We also have contacted the local college which has a chef's program to see whether some of their second-year students could assist with our event. This has a dual benefit - having knowledgeable help for the event, and preparing future chefs to work with venison.

5. Showcase your best - make sure that the products you serve at these events are your very best. Otherwise you will be doing our industry more damage than good. This is why it is useful to have experienced chefs involved as part of your event. They will make sure that everything tastes

great, because their egos and reputations are at stake. Also, when selecting suppliers or taste samples, exercise the same level of quality control.

6. Provide information - you need to educate the consumer. Be sure that at these events you have people and information available on such things as nutritional/health benefits, cooking tips, recipes, places to buy, web sites, and where people can call/click to find vendors and more information. People will be interested in our products; help them to become regular customers.

7. Involve the media - a public relations expert once told me the best way to get reporters out is to offer lots of free and delicious food. Make sure the media is aware of your food festival. This can be done by sending out press releases, appearing (with food samples) on radio and television morning shows, and inviting the media to a special breakfast or meal. At the Prairie Heritage Food Festival, we also have a local media celebrity serving as a guest chef. Getting the media involved in judging food competitions, serving food and other activities should also be considered. Don't forget to do regular advertising as well.

8. Support your members - remember that the whole purpose of the exercise is to help your association members sell their deer, elk or reindeer products. As such, your members must be given the first option to provide the food for the event, and the opportunity to promote and sell their own products. Profitable members are happy members and will continue to support your association.

9. Evaluate - take some time and effort to evaluate how well your event did - that is the only way you can continually improve. Here are some factors you may want to consider:

- a. Attendance - detailed statistics should be collected as to the number of visitors to your Festival.
- b. Financial results - how profitable was the Festival?
- c. Booths - how many vendors rented booths, and how satisfied were they with the event in terms of visitors, leads and sales?
- d. Events attendance - how many people attended each of the information, demonstration and presentation sessions, as well as the pancake breakfast?
- e. Interest and inquiries - how many inquiries were there for each industry, and how many brochures were given out by the associations?
- f. Increased sales - this can be difficult to measure, but members should be surveyed to measure any new sales or contracts that could be directly attributed to the Festival.
- g. Other benefits - the participating partners should be asked to identify any other benefits they received as a result of the Food Festival.

Farmer Assistance programs/organizations		
Organization	Contact Information	Services
<b>Government Organizations</b>		
<a href="#">AAFC</a> (Federal) Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	<b>Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada</b> 1341 Baseline Road Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5 Telephone: 613-773-1000 Fax: 613-773-2772 Email: info@agr.gc.ca	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provides information and programs for those who raise animals or who grow plants for food, feed or industrial use. Agricultural producers will find information about economic forecasts and statistics, policies and acts, incentive programs and other services.
<a href="#">OMAFRA</a> (Provincial) Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	<b>Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs</b> 1 Stone Road West, Guelph, ON N1G 4Y2 General Inquiry: 519-826-3100 Toll Free: 1-888-466-2372 Media Hotline: 519-826-3145	Agricultural Information Contact Centre Foodland Ontario Invest in Ontario Statistics Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program Inspection Programs List of Agriculture, Food and Rural Organizations Accessibility Service Standards Job Opportunities Service Ontario Environmental Farm Plan

<a href="#">AGRICORP</a>	<b>Agricorp</b> Post Office Box 4398, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 5Y3 Toll Free: (866) 327-3678 Phone: (519) 826-3232 Fax: (519) 826-4118 Email: fbr@agricorp.com	Farm Business Registration Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS)
<a href="#">Foodland Ontario</a> - Foodland Ontario	<b>Foodland Ontario</b> 3rd Floor NE, 1 Stone Rd W, Guelph, ON N1G 4Y2 General Inquiry: 888-428-9668 Fax: 519-826-3460 E-mail: foodland.omafra@ontario.ca	Foodland Ontario is a long-established consumer promotion program of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. From its inception in 1977, Foodland Ontario has partnered with producers to achieve the maximum penetration of the Ontario market by Ontario-produced fresh and processed agricultural products.

**Agricultural Associations/Organizations**

<b>4-H Ontario</b>	<b>4-H Ontario</b> 5653 Hwy 6 North RR#5 Guelph, Ontario N1H 6J2 Toll Free Phone: 1-877-410-6748 Phone: (519) 824-0101 Fax: (519) 824-8759	4-H Ontario is an organization of leaders building leaders. Over 6000 youth 9-21 years of age, and a grass roots network of 1900 trained, screened Volunteers pledge their Head, Heart, Hands and Health as members of community based clubs. With projects encompassing agriculture, food, health and the environment, 4-H Ontario's "Learn To Do By Doing" clubs, camps and conferences have a successful 96 year history in developing competence, confidence, connection, character and caring within rural and urban youth.
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<b>AAC</b> - Agricultural Adaptation Council	<b>Agricultural Adaptation Council Ontario AgriCentre</b> Suite 103, 100 Stone Road West Guelph, ON N1G 5L3 Telephone: 519-822-7554 Fax: 519-822-6248 Email: info@adaptcouncil.org	The Agricultural Adaptation Council is a non-profit, grass roots coalition of 66 agricultural, agribusiness and rural organizations dedicated to providing financial resources to help Ontario's agriculture and agri-food industry remain profitable, grow and maintain its economic strength.
<b>AGCare</b> - Agricultural Groups Concerned About Resources and the Environment	<b>Ontario AgriCentre</b> 100 Stone Road West, Suite 106 Guelph Ontario N1G 5L3 Phone: 519-837-1326 Fax: 519-837-3209 email: agcare@agcare.org	AGCare, Agricultural Groups Concerned About Resources and the Environment, is a coalition of farm organizations committed to communicating about agriculture and the environment. We are the voice of Ontario's 45,000 farmers who grow fruit, vegetables, and field crops on environmental issues.
<b>FarmCentre</b> - Canadian Farm Business Management Centre	<b>Canadian Farm Business Management Council</b> 250 City Centre Avenue, Suite 300 Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7 Tel: 1-888-232-3262 or (613) 237-9060 Fax: 1-800-270-8301 or (613) 237-9330 Email: council@cfbmc.com	The Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC) is the only national organization in Canada devoted exclusively to developing and distributing advanced farm management information. The Council's wide range of information products such as CD-ROMs, books and DVDs cover topics of relevance to farmers such as succession planning, marketing, human resources and finance.
<b>Flowers Canada Association</b> - Canadian Floral Industry	<b>Flowers Canada</b> (Retail & Distribution Sector) 99 Fifth Avenue, Suite 305 Ottawa, ON K1S 5P5 Phone: (800) 447-5147 Fax: (866) 671-8091 Email: flowers@flowerscanada.org	Flowers Canada is a strong advocate for the floriculture industry in Canada and works with all levels of government to support employment growth and career opportunities in retail, to promote and sustain retail investments in communities from coast-to-coast, and to enhance consumer choice and industry competitiveness. Flowers Canada Retail also provides its members with a full range of services and programs including education and accreditation, best practices, networking, advocacy, and industry specific research.
<b>AMI</b> - Agricultural Management Institute	<b>Agricultural Management Institute</b> 200-120 Research Lane, Guelph, Ontario N1G 0B4 Tel: 519-822-6618 Email: ami@takeanewapproach.ca	The AMI provides funding for projects that develop business management tools, information, resources, and training for farm families, farm managers, and farm business advisors. In addition to funding projects, AMI links producers to the resources that are available and conducts research that can be shared with the industry.
<b>CHC</b> - Canadian Horticultural Council	<b>Canadian Horticultural Council</b> 9 Corvus Court Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2E 7Z4 Tel: (613) 226-4880 Fax: (613) 226-4497 Email: webmaster@hortcouncil.ca	The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) is a voluntary, not-for-profit, national association which represents the dynamic and diverse sector of Canadian agriculture and provide services such as; access funding from provincial government, research, monitor plant health etc.
<b>COG</b> - Canadian Organic Growers	<b>Canadian Organic Growers</b> 323 Chapel St, Ottawa, ON. K1N 7Z2 Phone: 613-216-0741 Fax: 613-236-0743 Email: office@cog.ca	COG's membership is diverse and includes farmers, gardeners, processors, retailers, educators, policy-makers, and consumers. Not all COG members run certified organic operations, but they share a vision for a sustainable bioregionally-based organic food.

<a href="#">CTFO</a> - Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario	<b>Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario</b> 9251 County Road #1 Palgrave, ON L0N 1P0 Telephone 1-800-661-3530 Fax 905-729-0548	Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario also present, for new or prospective Christmas Tree Farmers, a Grower Education Program which features management information gained through our members' many years of experience.
<a href="#">DFO</a> - Dairy Farmers of Ontario	<b>Dairy Farmers of Ontario</b> 6780 Campobello Road Mississauga, Ontario L5N 2L8 Phone#: (905) 821-8970 Fax #: (905) 821-3160 Email: questions@milk.org	Ontario agriculture and are proudly owned and operated by the farm families of Ontario's dairy farms. The farmgate value is about 20 per cent of the province's agricultural production. DFO markets milk on behalf of all Ontario dairy farms to the processing industry DFO is owned, operated and completely financed by the about 4200 dairy farm families in the province The Ontario marketing system, under the Milk Act works to get farmers their incomes directly from the marketplace and is dedicated to serving customers.
<a href="#">IFAO</a> - Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario	<b>Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario</b> PO Box 821, Markdale, ON N0C 1H0 Telephone: 519 986-3560 Fax: 519 986-3811 Email: ifao@ifao.com	Promote sustainable crop production by conserving and enhancing agriculture's basic resource — soil health. Develop effective relationships with researchers, agribusiness, organizations and government agencies to further the development and adoption of innovative, practical and economical technology. Provide a forum for information and idea sharing. Encourage members to participate in IFAO by taking part in workshops and meetings, farm trials, serving on project committees, and hosting farm tours.
<a href="#">LFP</a> - Local Food Plus	<b>Local Food Plus</b> 1965 Queen Street East, Suite #2 Toronto, ON - M4L 1H9 Phone: 416-699-6070 Toll Free: 1-888-856-6070 Fax: 416-699-6076 Email: judy.yee@localfoodplus.ca	Local Food Plus (LFP) is Canada's premier solutions provider for local sustainable procurement. We are an award winning charitable non-profit committed to growing local sustainable food systems. We certify farms and processors for environmentally and socially sustainable practices, make connections throughout the supply chain, do public speaking and community outreach to help eaters understand the many pluses of local sustainable food systems, and help buyers of all different sizes find Certified Local Sustainable food.
<a href="#">OAA</a> - Ontario Aquaculture Association	<b>Ontario Aquaculture Association</b> P.O. Box 124 9050 Hwy 6, Unit C Little Current ON P0P 1K0 Telephone: 705-368-1345 Fax: 705-368-0685 Email: ontarioaquaculture@manitoulin.net	Aquaculture is the cultivation and harvesting (farming) of finfish, shellfish and aquatic plants. The NOAA coordinates various activities such as farm site tours, development of Best Management Practices, and public relations and education.
<a href="#">OBA</a> - Ontario Beekeepers' Association	<b>Ontario Beekeepers' Association</b> 8560 Tremaine Rd. Box 476 Milton, ON L9T 4Z1 Phone: 905-636-0661 Fax: 905-636-0662 Email: info@ontariobee.com	-Takes beekeepers concerns and suggestions to provincial and federal levels of government. -negotiates for improved crop insurance , honey regulations , CAIS program. -works towards mite-resistant bee stock. -organizes courses on beekeeping, queen rearing, integrated pest management. -educates through schools, teachers' kits, newspaper articles, farm periodicals. -is a contact for honey and honey/bee related items for the general public, domestic or export buyers, and for hives for pollination for growers .

<a href="#">OCA</a> - Ontario Cattlemen's Association	<b>Ontario Cattlemen's Association</b> 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, ON N1K 1B1 Phone: (519) 824-0334 Fax: (519) 824-9101 Email: leanne@cattle.guelph.on.ca	The Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA) is a grassroots organization that provides leadership to cattlemen from all sectors of the industry.
<a href="#">OFAC</a> - Ontario Farm Animal Council	<b>Ontario Farm Animal Council</b> Ontario AgriCentre, Suite 106 100 Stone Road W. Guelph, ON N1G 5L3 Phone: 519-837-1326 Fax: 519-837-3209	The Ontario Farm Animal Council (OFAC) is a registered, non-profit agricultural, educational organization. OFAC represents Ontario's 35,000 livestock and poultry farmers plus many other agricultural groups and businesses involved in animal agriculture and food production.
<a href="#">OFVGA</a> - Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association	<b>Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association</b> Unit 105, 355 Elmira Rd. N. Guelph, Ontario N1K 1S5 Tel: 519-763-6160 Fax: 519-763-6604 Email: info@ofvga.org	The OFVGA serves as the official representative for the province's fruit and vegetable sector to national and international bodies. The organization takes a leadership role in lobbying issues to government, makes vital contributions to research and food safety, assists in the co-ordination of activities for non-regulated crops, handles media inquiries, clears commodity grade specifications and inspection changes, and oversees container introductions and specifications
<a href="#">OGVG</a> - Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers	<b>Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers</b> 245 Talbot Street West, Suite 103, Leamington, Ontario N8H 1N8, Canada Phone: 519-326-2604 or 1-800-265-6926 Fax: 519-326-7842 Email: admin@ontariogreenhouse.com	Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) is a not-for-profit organization. Promotes the development, sale and export of agricultural products. Provides educational opportunities related to agriculture and rural life. Facilitate lines of communication between the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers and marketers.
<a href="#">OMSPA</a> - Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association	<b>Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association</b> Office Administrator 275 County Road 44, R.R.#4 Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0 Canada Phone: (705)696-2408 Email: store@ontariomaple.com	OMSPA is an active member of the North American Maple Syrup Council and the International Maple Syrup Institute. By being a member of OMSPA you are a member of these organizations. OMSPA has received financial support from NAMSC for research activities and members can attend the Annual Meeting for both organizations at a location within North America.
<a href="#">OSCIA</a> - Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association	<b>Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association</b> 1 Stone Road West Guelph ON Canada N1G 4Y2 Tel: 519-826-4214 or 1-800-265-9751 Fax: 519-826-4224	<b>Strategic Directions:</b> 1. Producer Education 2. Development and Delivery of Stewardship Programs 3. Local Association Development 4. Addressing Consumer Concerns on Agricultural Environmental Issues
<a href="#">OWA</a> - Ontario Woodlot Association	<b>Ontario Woodlot Association</b> 275 County Road 44, R.R. #4 Kemptville, Ontario K0G 1J0 Telephone: (888) 791-1103 or (613) 258-0110 Fax: (613) 258-0207 E-mail: <info@ont-woodlot-assoc.org>	The Ontario Woodlot Association is a non-profit organization with a network of regional chapters located across the province. The OWA brings woodlot owners together to share ideas and learn about forest management. We promote sustainable forestry practices in private forests to ensure the viability of these forests for future generations.
<a href="#">TORC</a> - The Ontario Rural Council	<b>The Ontario Rural Council</b> 5653 Highway #6 N. RR#5 Guelph, ON N1H 6J2 Phone: 519-826-4204 Fax: 519-826-4208 Email: info@ruralontarioinstitute.ca	The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) is a non-profit organization that brings together forty member organizations and other rural stakeholders to inform and influence rural policy, programs and research development. TORC members represent non-profit organizations, private sector corporations and the public sector.

## 8.6. APPENDIX F ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

<p><b>Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre</b></p>	<p><b>Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre</b>  P.O. Box 29  Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0  Canada  Tel: 519-855-4859  Fax: 519-855-6531  E-mail: info@everdale.org</p>	<p>Everdale is a community-based learning centre that strives to help people regain the story of their food, community, farmers, and supper. To accomplish this we deliver a wide range of hands-on learning programs on food and farming to people of all ages and backgrounds:</p>
<p><b>Ontario Farmland Trust</b></p>	<p><b>Ontario Farmland Trust</b>  Alexander Hall  University of Guelph  Guelph, ON, Canada  N1G 2W1  Phone: (519) 824-4120 x 52686  Fax: (519) 824-5730  Email: farmland@uoguelph.ca</p>	<p>The Ontario Farmland Trust is a non-government, non-profit, charitable organization that has been established to work with farmers, rural communities and other interested parties to promote the protection of farmland in the province of Ontario</p>
<p><b>FarmStart</b></p>	<p><b>FarmStart</b>  5420 Hwy 6 N.  Orchard Park Office Centre  Guelph, ON N1H 6J2  Mailing address: P.O. Box 1875  Guelph, Ontario N1H 7A1  Tel: 519-836-7046  Fax: 519-341-4741  Email:</p>	<p>FarmStart is a not-for-profit organization working toward increasing the presence of young and new farmers, operating their own farm enterprises, within the agriculture community.  our goals are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support a new generation of farmers</li> <li>- Promote sustainable business models</li> <li>- Coordinate and communicate innovative, new and local market research</li> <li>- Develop farm facilities, resources and linkages important to new and young farmers.</li> <li>- Develop effective land tenure and stewardship arrangements</li> </ul>

