

# Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: Overview and Areas of Mutual Interest

Anishinabek Nation  
Lands and Resources Forum

November 7, 2018

# Purpose

To provide an overview of:

- The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Potential areas of mutual interest
- Key ministry programs
- How to contact the Ministry

# Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

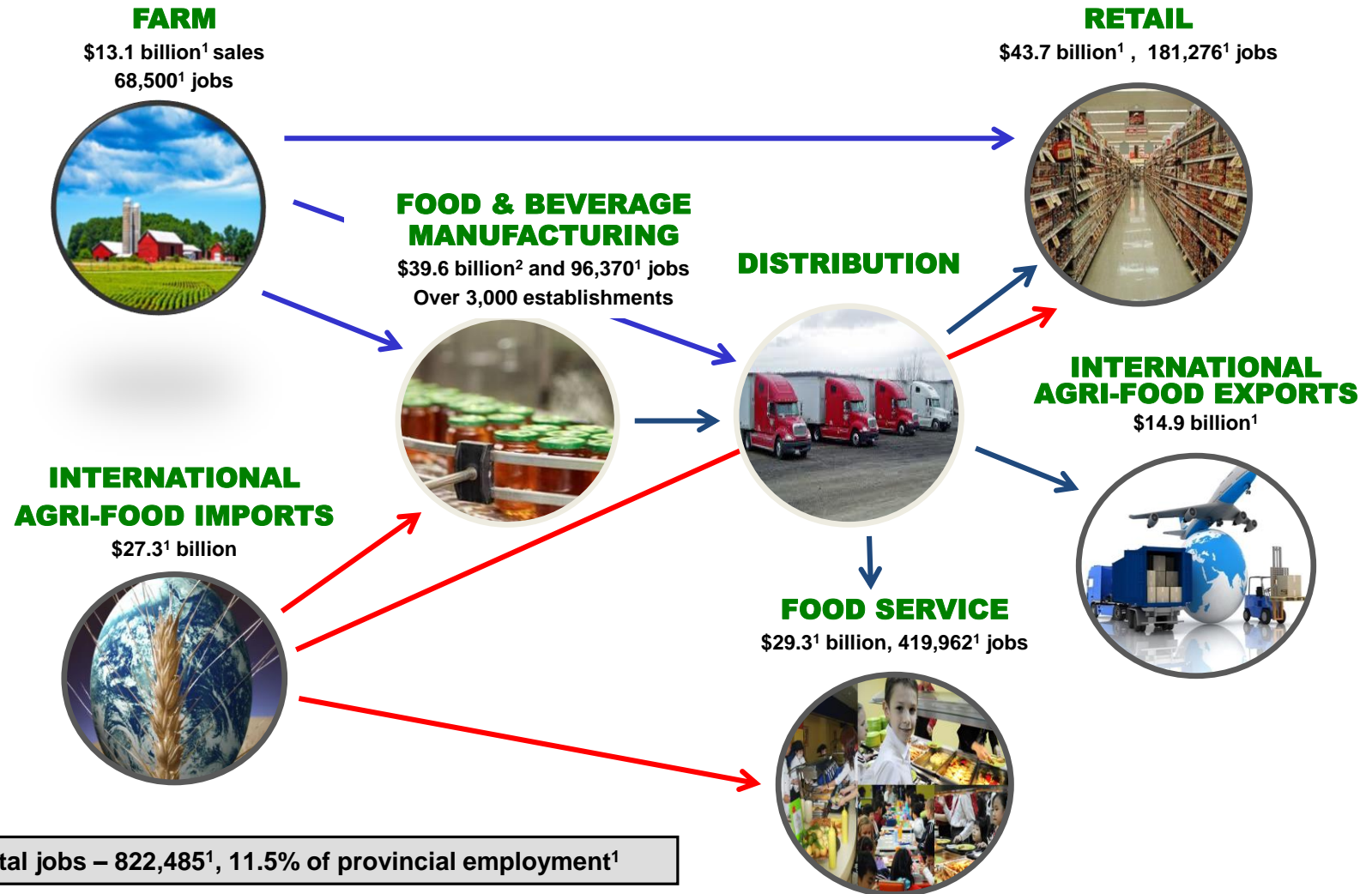
- OMAFRA is the provincial Ministry with the mandate to help build a stronger agri-food sector in Ontario.
- This is achieved by:
  - Ensuring protection and assurance in the agri-food system, such as providing inspection services that promote food safety.
  - Fostering economic development of the agri-food sector and rural Ontario.
  - Providing stewardship of Ontario's long term capacity to produce food.
- OMAFRA office locations:
  - Headquarters in Guelph
  - Nineteen regional offices



# Ontario Agriculture and Food Sector

- A growing global population is increasing the demand for safe and healthy food
- Ontario's agri-food industry has an important role in meeting increasing food needs and supporting Ontario's economy
  - About 5,000 farms in Ontario produce over 200 different commodities
  - Over 3,000 food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing plants.
- Federal and provincial governments work together on agricultural and food policy which is a constitutionally shared jurisdiction in Canada.
  - Development of national policies occur in concert with provincial governments; provinces also develop complementary programming on their own.
- Federal government has sole responsibility for trade between provinces and territories and for international trade of agricultural and food products.

# Ontario Agriculture and Food at a Glance



Source: <sup>1</sup> OMAFRA Statistics 2017; <sup>2</sup> OMAFRA Statistics 2016

# Overview of Rural Ontario

- Rural Ontario is varied and diverse, encompassing farmland and forests, small cities, hamlets and First Nation communities. Each of these have their own unique characteristics, strengths and challenges.
- OMAFRA's role in Rural Ontario is to ensure vibrant rural communities and provide a rural perspective to provincial policy and program development, working with a wide variety of groups including First Nation communities.

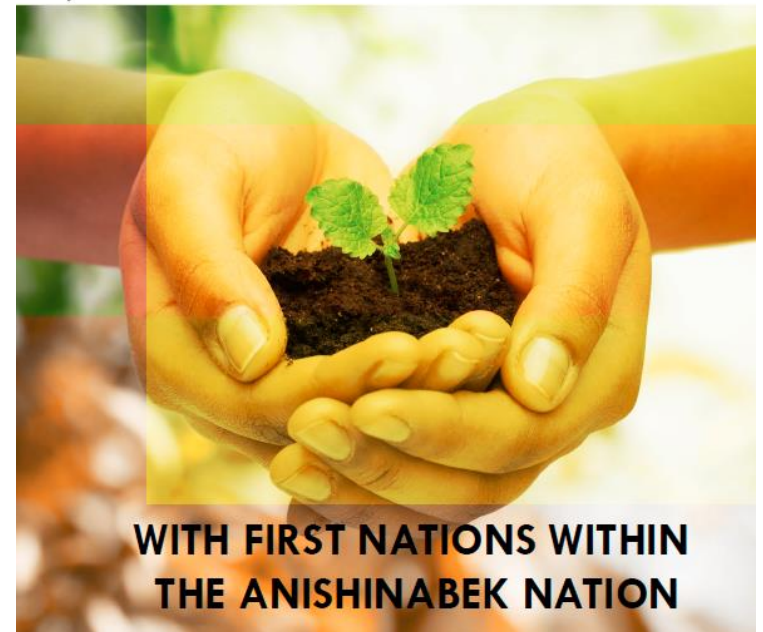


# What we have heard from First Nations

- Long history of First Nations in agriculture, e.g. three sisters (corn, beans, squash), wild rice
- Ensure that food is safe and healthy
- Ensure that food is produced in a way that protects Mother Earth
- Some communities identified potential interest in a range of agriculture and food production opportunities:
  - Aquaculture
  - Community gardens/small scale farms/greenhouses
  - Maple syrup, crops (incl. cannabis)
  - Livestock



ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS



**WITH FIRST NATIONS WITHIN  
THE ANISHINABEK NATION**

# **ENSURING PROTECTION AND ASSURANCE IN THE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM**



# Food Safety and Quality

Food safety is a government priority with shared jurisdiction between federal, provincial and municipal governments.

- Canada establishes standards and administers programs for food importers and establishments with international and inter-provincial sales.
- OMAFRA sets standards and administers programs related to specific foods (i.e., meat, dairy, fish, eggs, fresh produce, honey and maple products) processed for sale within the province.
- Food service (restaurants) and food retail (grocery stores) premises are inspected at the municipal government level.



# Animal Health and Welfare

Goal: To preserve and enhance provincial biosecurity, animal health, animal welfare, pollinator health, disease surveillance, emergency preparedness and reduce antimicrobial resistance

- OMAFRA advances farm animal health and welfare and veterinary public health through education, inspection, surveillance, research and emergency preparedness.
- OMAFRA staff develop policies, codes of practice, standards, deliver technical support to inspectors and veterinarians, and deliver preventive programs.
  - Provide inspection services in licenced livestock auction markets, dead stock facilities, animal research facilities and livestock medicine outlets.
- OMAFRA collaborates with expert staff across the provincial government, many producer and veterinary organizations, the University of Guelph, other provinces, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

# **FOSTERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR AND RURAL ONTARIO**

# Economic Development

- OMAFRA provides strategic agri-food and rural development programs and funding that support good jobs, attract investment and sustainable development of the sector including:
  - A range of local and regional economic development programs.
  - Programs and services to support information technology transfer. Staff work with farmers, agri-businesses, municipalities, and other partners to identify needs and opportunities, adopt new technologies and make sound business decisions.
  - Initiatives to expand Ontario food and agricultural sales in export and domestic markets, and provide support to the processing industry through investment attraction, and investment retention.
  - Supporting the adoption of environmental best management practices in agriculture and the agri-food sector.

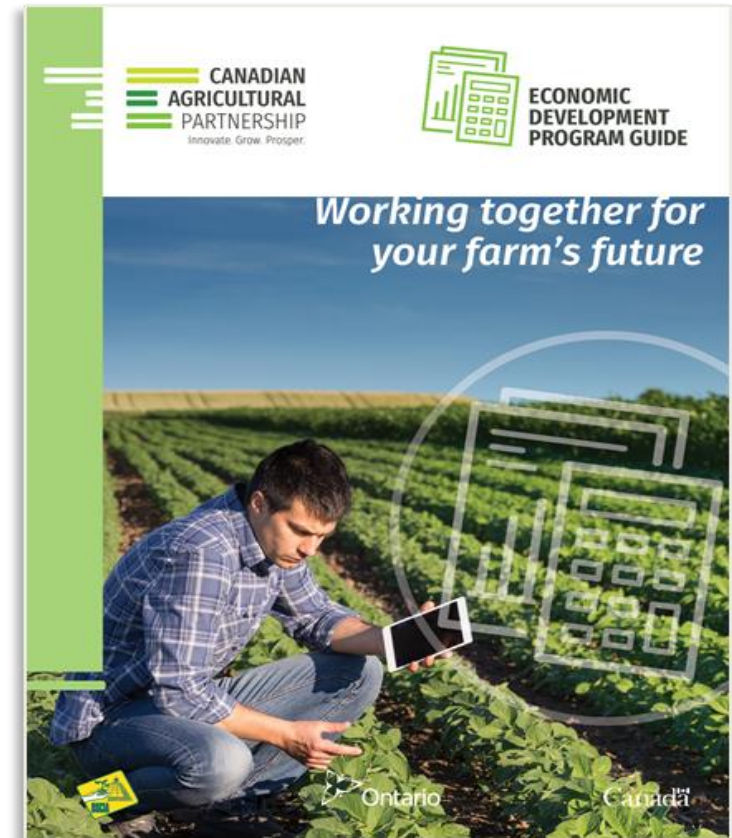
# Canadian Agricultural Partnership

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a new five-year commitment by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada's agri-food and agri-products sector.

The Partnership is designed to complement other significant federal and provincial funding available to the agri-food and agri-products sectors.

Funding supports:

1. Protection and Assurance: food safety – animal health – plant health
2. Environmental Stewardship: water quality – soil health
3. Economic Development: market development – productivity- business analysis
4. Research and Innovation



# Ontario's CAP Strategic Initiatives

**Maximize investments by working with partners on projects to achieve the best results across government priorities.**

## **Adaptability**

- Ability to be nimble and adapt programming/funding to address emerging priorities and maximize outcomes in key areas

## **Design**

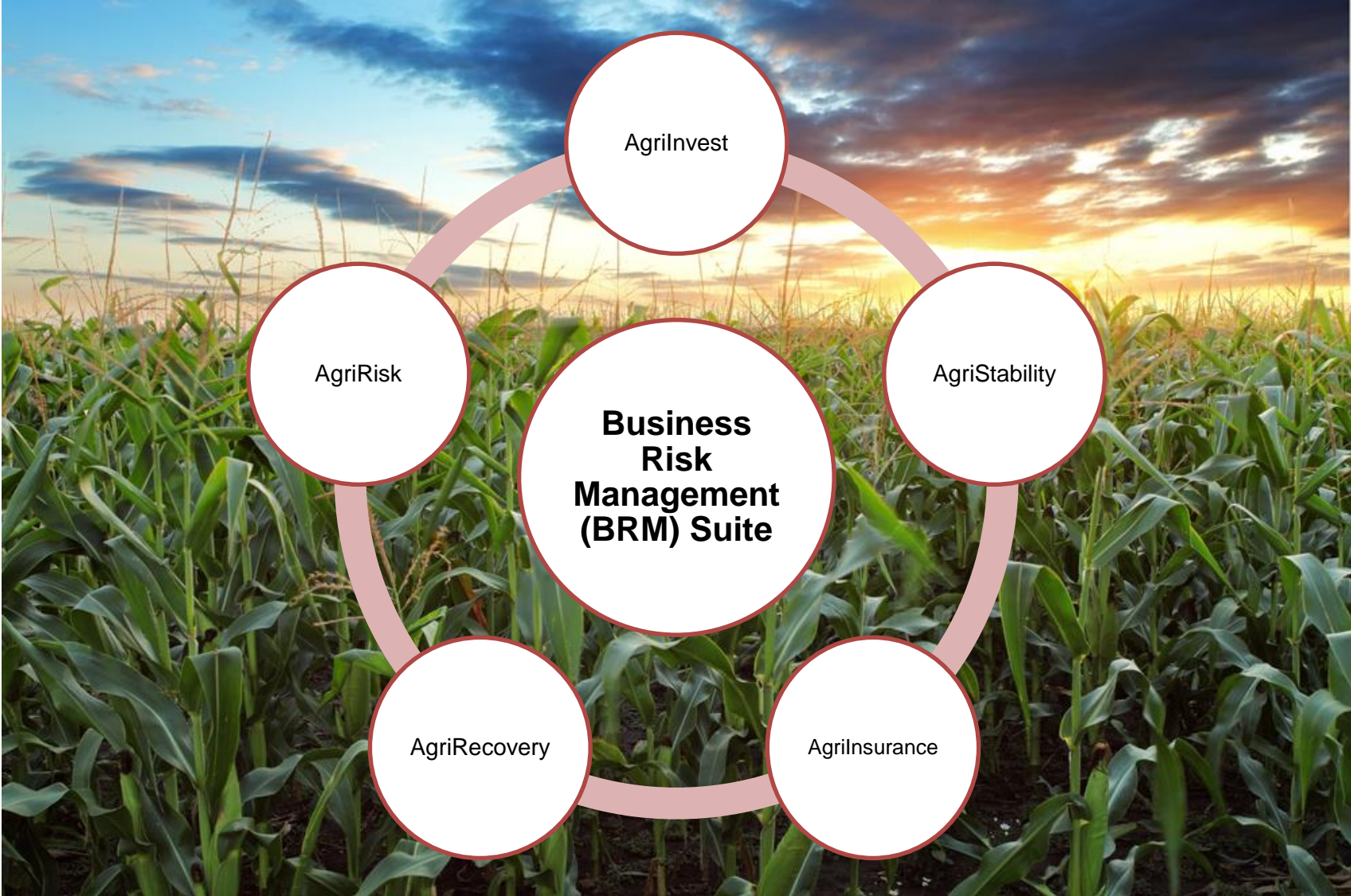
- Merit-based project evaluation
- Cost-share levels for BMPs are related to the expected benefits, costs and risks related to the the adoption of best practices

## **Seeking Broader Participation in Programs**

- Engage with our Indigenous partners and communities to understand the offerings available through the Partnership program and build greater Indigenous participation in Ontario's agri-food and agri-products sectors.



# Business Risk Management Programs



# Rural Economic Development Program

- The Rural Economic Development (RED) program funds projects that stimulate economic growth in Ontario's rural and First Nation communities and removes barriers to economic development
- Two categories of projects are eligible for funding
  - Planning: supports development of plans and strategies or funding for research and analysis
  - Implementation: projects that implement sector development plans, diversify the local economy, support marketing and branding or attract and retain workers
- Provides up to 50% of project costs to a maximum \$100,000.



# **PROVIDING STEWARDSHIP OF ONTARIO'S CAPACITY TO PRODUCE FOOD**

# Stewardship Challenges

## AGRI- FOOD SECTOR GROWTH

Ontario agriculture is an economic powerhouse contributing \$39.5B to the province's annual GDP, \$1.4B in provincial tax revenues and is a major source of jobs. It is also a major growth sector. To maintain and grow the sector, *solutions are needed to address the challenges below.*



**Soil Health**



**Nutrient Loss / Water Quality**



**Pollinator Health / Biodiversity**



**Farmland Loss**



**Climate Weather Variability**

Problem

68% of Ontario's farmland is estimated to be at erosion risk.

Increasing severity of algae blooms since 2008.

Multiple stressors have reduced pollinator health.

Only ~ 4.5 % of Ontario's land base is prime agricultural land that remains available for farming.

Projected average increases in mean annual temperature across Ontario 2.3°C (2020) and 4.1°C (2050).

Cost

Degraded soil health and productivity levels from soil erosion result in annual losses of **\$150 million.**

Non-point source nutrient loss costs the Canadian Lake Erie basin economy **\$272 million** annually.

Pollinators contribute **\$992 million** to the Ontario economy annually

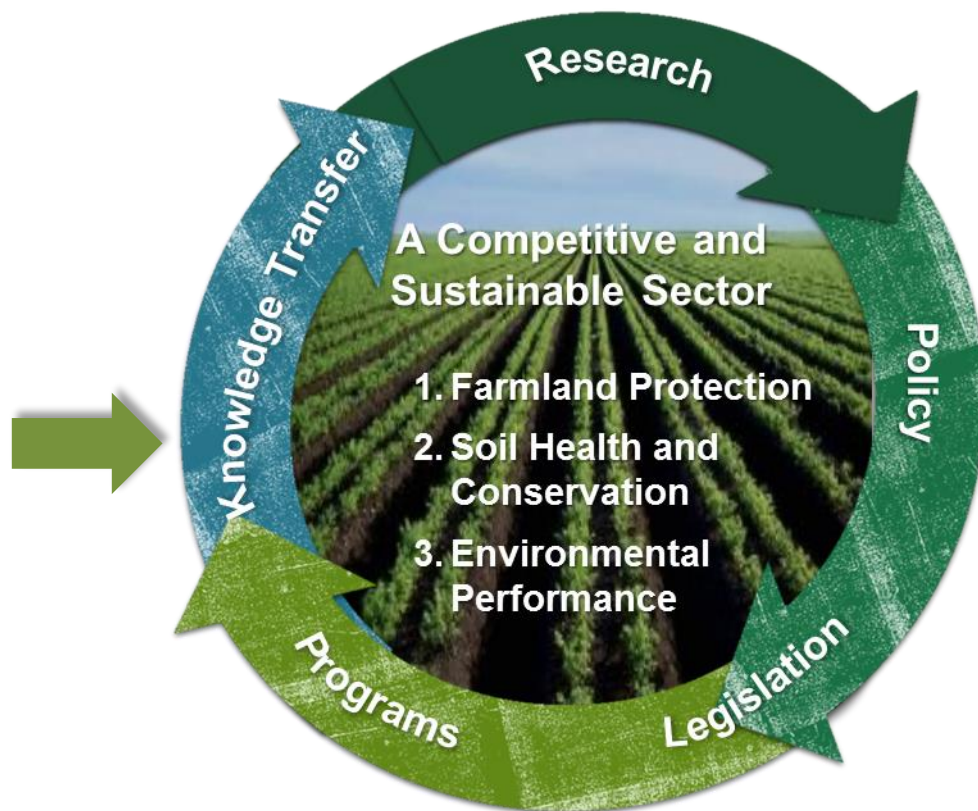
Over the past 10 years, total area in agriculture declined by almost 1 million acres (400,000 ha) in Ontario

2012 Spring frost/dry summer led to \$115 million in fruit tree crop losses

# Approach to Stewardship

## OMAFRA's Role:

- Accountability for soil health and quality
- Shared accountability for agricultural land availability, water quality and quantity, biodiversity and climate change resilience working with key ministry partners:
  - Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
  - Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
  - Ministry of Municipal Affairs
- Working with industry partners representing producers and agri-food processors



## Guiding Principles to Stewardship Approach:

- Collaboration: Partnering to improve resiliency and sustainability
- Adaptive Management: Measuring and reporting progress on activities for continuous improvement
- Innovation: Fostering innovative technologies and approaches for sustainability objectives
- Regulatory Reform: Seeking to streamline requirements and reduce regulatory burden

# Stewardship Core Areas

*Providing stewardship of Ontario's Capacity to produce food*

Area	Goal
<b>Farmland Protection and Farm Viability</b>	Support the economic success of the agri-food sector through effective farmland protection policies and resources (e.g. guidelines, information, economic development tools)
<b>Enhanced Agricultural Productivity through Soil Health</b>	Work collaboratively with the agriculture sector to improve soil health
<b>Agri-Food Sector Environmental Performance</b>	Work collaboratively with the agri-food sector to improve and demonstrate their environmental performance to ensure long term economic profitability.

# Progress on Stewardship

- Industry partners taking leadership to advance stewardship practices and innovations in agri-food production and processing
- New Agricultural System policies in the updated Provincial Plans for the Greater Golden Horseshoe designed to consistently protect farmland while supporting a thriving agri-food sector.
- Provincial soil strategy designed to help grow and sustain the province's strong agricultural sector, while protecting the environment and adapting to a changing climate.
- Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan launched February 2018 with commitments to take action to reduce phosphorus loadings and algal blooms in Lake Erie.
- Targeted funding through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership



environmental farm plan  
*sustainably farmed*



# Research and Education

- Research and innovation a critical element in promoting growth of the agriculture and food sectors.
- Each year, OMAFRA invests approximately \$75 million in research to support growth in the agricultural sector, including:
  - Partnership Agreement with the University of Guelph is an essential component of research in Ontario's agri-food and bio-products sector
    - Supports research, veterinary clinical education, laboratory services in animal health and agriculture and food
  - Open research programs
    - Competitive programs, open to public and private research organizations that address gaps, priorities and emerging issues not covered in the University of Guelph Partnership

# Going Forward

- To continue to build our relationship with Anishinabek Nation communities
- Two sessions today:
  - Economic Development session led by Rick Berthiaume, Manager, Business Development Branch to share information on:
    - Rural Economic Development Program
    - Canadian Agricultural Partnership Program
  - Agricultural Stewardship session led by Len Senyshyn, Manager, Environmental Management Branch to share information on:
    - Current work to improve environmental sustainability of agriculture
    - Collaboration on the Food Sovereignty Pilot Project

# How to Reach Us

**Regional Contacts – see Appendix**

## **Agricultural Contact Information Centre Responds to farm, agri-business and rural business inquiries**

- With experience and backgrounds in agriculture and agri-business, the centre's agents are available to answer questions, provide information to help you make decisions, and if needed, put you in touch with one of our experts.
- Phone: **1-877-424-1300**
- Email: [ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca)

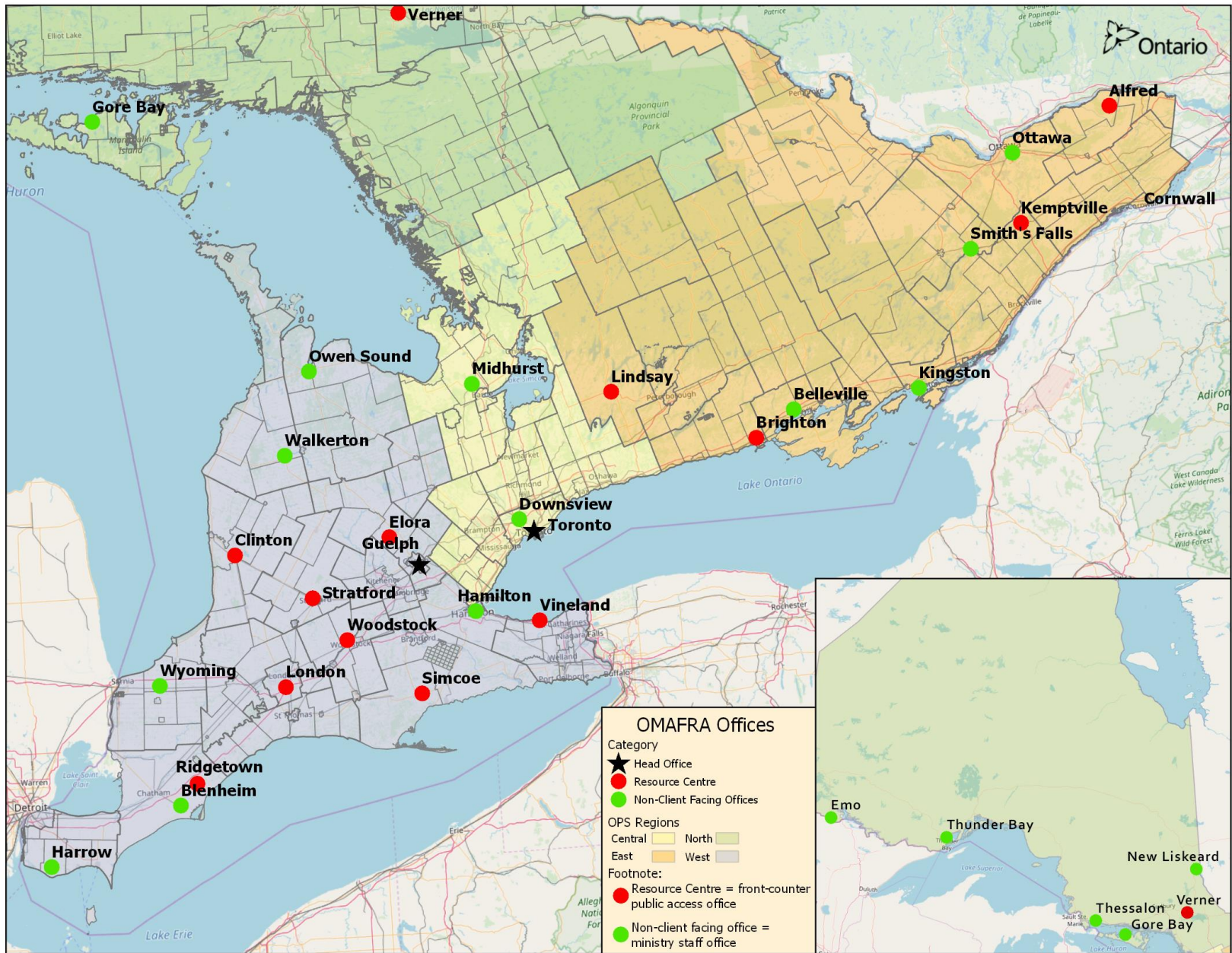


# Miigwetch (Thank you)

## Any Questions?



# APPENDIX



# REGIONAL CONTACTS: CENTRAL

Location	Regional Advisors
Guelph	Paul Bowers (519) 826-3237 <a href="mailto:paul.bowers@ontario.ca">paul.bowers@ontario.ca</a>
Elora	Gerry Horst (519) 846-3391 <a href="mailto:gerry.horst@ontario.ca">gerry.horst@ontario.ca</a>
Vineland	Kim Reep (905) 562-1873 <a href="mailto:kim.reep@ontario.ca">kim.reep@ontario.ca</a>
Simcoe	Nick Kinkel (519) 426-5191 <a href="mailto:nick.kinkel@ontario.ca">nick.kinkel@ontario.ca</a>
Owen Sound	Cheryl Brine (519) 371-4717 <a href="mailto:cheryl.brine@ontario.ca">cheryl.brine@ontario.ca</a>

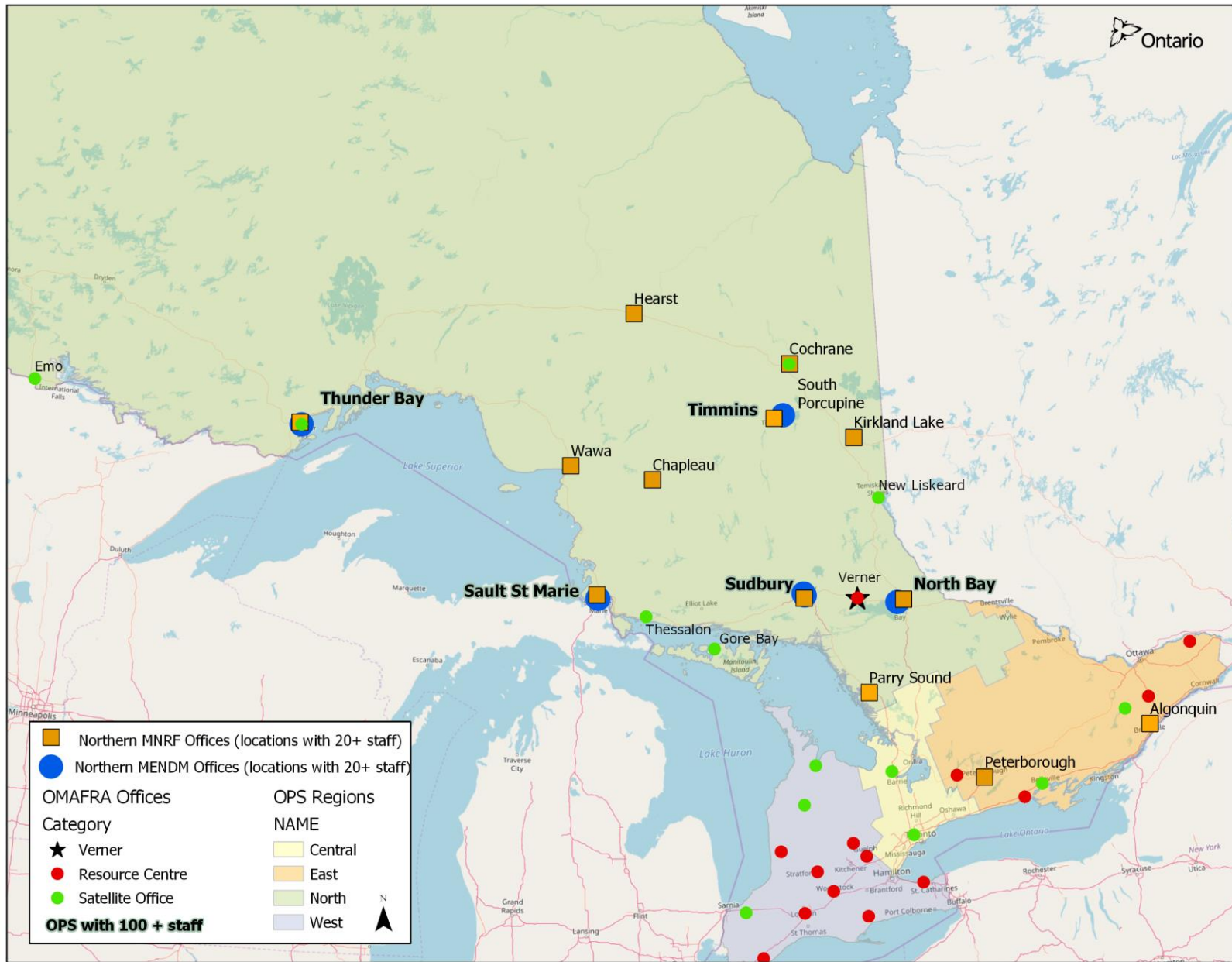
# REGIONAL CONTACTS: SOUTHWEST

Location	Regional Advisors
<b>Ridgetown</b>	Jeff Kinsella (519) 674-1335 <a href="mailto:jeff.kinsella@ontario.ca">jeff.kinsella@ontario.ca</a>
<b>London</b>	Vicki Luke (519) 873-4083 <a href="mailto:vicki.luke@ontario.ca">vicki.luke@ontario.ca</a>
<b>Stratford</b>	Vicki Lass (519) 271-6574 <a href="mailto:vicki.lass@ontario.ca">vicki.lass@ontario.ca</a>

## REGIONAL CONTACTS: EAST

Location	Regional Advisors	
Lindsay	Carolyn Puterbough (705) 324-6126; <a href="mailto:carolyn.puterbough@ontario.ca">carolyn.puterbough@ontario.ca</a>	Judy Coward (705) 324-5715 <a href="mailto:judy.coward@ontario.ca">judy.coward@ontario.ca</a>
Brighton	Karen Fischer (613) 475-4908 <a href="mailto:karen.fischer@ontario.ca">karen.fischer@ontario.ca</a>	Heather Candler (613) 475-5809 <a href="mailto:heather.candler@ontario.ca">heather.candler@ontario.ca</a>
Kemptville	Katie Nolan (613) 258-8371 <a href="mailto:katie.nolan@ontario.ca">katie.nolan@ontario.ca</a>	
Alfred	Michel Moisan (613) 679-9037 <a href="mailto:michel.moisan@ontario.ca">michel.moisan@ontario.ca</a>	
Midhurst	Catherine Oosterbaan (705) 725-7293 <a href="mailto:catherine.Oosterbaan@ontario.ca">catherine.Oosterbaan@ontario.ca</a>	





## REGIONAL CONTACTS: NORTH

Location	Regional Advisors	
<b>Verner</b>	Julie Poirier Mensinga (705) 594-2315 <a href="mailto:juliepoiriermensinga@ontario.ca">juliepoiriermensinga@ontario.ca</a>	Pierrette Desrochers (705) 594-2313 <a href="mailto:pierrette.desrochers@ontario.ca">pierrette.desrochers@ontario.ca</a>
<b>Cochrane</b>	Carole Boucher (705) 272-7130 <a href="mailto:carole.boucher@ontario.ca">carole.boucher@ontario.ca</a>	
<b>Gore Bay</b>	Brian Bell (705) 282-1638 <a href="mailto:brian.bell2@ontario.ca">brian.bell2@ontario.ca</a>	
<b>New Liskeard</b>	Barry Potter (705) 647-2086 <a href="mailto:barry.potter@ontario.ca">barry.potter@ontario.ca</a>	
<b>Thessalon</b>	David Trivers (705) 842-1582 <a href="mailto:david.trivers@ontario.ca">david.trivers@ontario.ca</a>	
<b>Thunder Bay</b>	Kendal Donahue (807) 475-1214 <a href="mailto:kendal.donahue@ontario.ca">kendal.donahue@ontario.ca</a>	