

Agriculture in Ontario's Greenbelt

*Facts and Figures from the Canadian
Agricultural Census 2001-2006*

932,436 acres of farmland

In addition to its significant natural heritage features, the 1.8 million acre Greenbelt contains 932,436 acres of farmland. This farmland covers slightly more than 50% of the total area of protected land within the Greenbelt, and comprises 7% of the total area of farmland in Ontario. This area lost a considerable acreage of farmland prior to the implementation of the Greenbelt. Between 2001 and 2006, the total area of farmland in the Greenbelt declined by 8.5% outpacing the rest of the province, where farmland area decreased by 1%.

9075 farmers on 6261 farms

The Greenbelt is distributed across 14 municipalities and includes 6261 farms that are operated by 9075 farmers.

Greenbelt farms represent 11% of the provincial total. Durham Region contains the highest number Greenbelt farms with 1573, followed by Niagara with 1200 farms. Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough and Bruce County have the fewest number of census farms within the Greenbelt area with 58, 41 and 29 farms respectively.

Although Bruce County contains the fewest number of farms, these farms occupy over 15,000 acres of farmland within the Greenbelt.

Greenbelt Census Division	Total Number of Farms (2006)	Total Farmland Acreage (2006)
Peterborough	41	7538
Kawartha Lakes	58	9953
Bruce	29	15524
Wellington	148	20602
Dufferin	155	26892
Simcoe	176	28571
Northumberland	175	38428
Halton	381	54332
Peel	304	56654
Grey	282	66941
Niagara	1200	72804
Hamilton	907	120466
York	832	134853
Durham	1573	278879
Total Greenbelt	6261	932437



Agriculture in Ontario's Greenbelt

Facts and Figures 2001-2006

Shrinking farms?

The average size of a farm in the Greenbelt is 149 acres, down from 151 acres in 2001. Average farm size varies considerably across the municipalities, from 61 acres in the Niagara Region to 542 acres in Bruce County.¹ Farms in the Greenbelt are smaller than the provincial average which is 243 acres, an increase from 236 acres in 2001.

Farm diversity

As with size, farm types vary considerably within the Greenbelt. According to the 2006 census data, the most common type of farm in the Greenbelt is "other animal"² with 1195 farms, or 19% of the total, followed by beef (930 farms, 15%) and fruit and tree nut farming (886 farms, 14%). The prominence of different types of farming varies between regions, as well—697 of the 886 Greenbelt fruit farms (79%) are located in Niagara, while Durham is home to 49% of dairy and 35% of beef farms.

Hamilton, home to 907 Greenbelt farms, illustrates an interesting scenario of agricultural diversification in terms of farm type—although 26% of the Greenbelt poultry farms are located in Hamilton, the municipality's agricultural sector is not clearly dominated by one type of production, as is the case in nearby Niagara. Other animal production outweighs greenhouse and nursery operations by a mere fraction of a percent as the region's most common farm type (16.9% to 16.5%).

1 When comparing regions or counties within the Greenbelt, data is drawn only from farms within the Greenbelt boundary and is not reflective of the aggregated regional or county data, which may be different.

2 Other animal production includes horses, ponies, deer, bison, llama, alpaca, rabbits, bees, etc.



Agriculture in Ontario's Greenbelt

Facts and Figures 2001-2006

Crop production

Nearly 70% of farmland in the Greenbelt is used to produce field crops, although a substantial amount of the provincial production of fruits and vegetables occurs on Greenbelt farms as well. The five top field crops in terms of total acreage were alfalfa/alfalfa mixtures, soybeans, corn for grain, wheat, and other tame hay. Favourable climate and soil conditions accommodate 88% of the province's fruit and tree nut farms within the Greenbelt boundary. Most of these farms are located in the Niagara Region.

Specialty crops

Greenbelt farms represent 35% of greenhouse and nursery operations, 22% of all vegetable farms, 19% of "other" animal producers in the province. Greenbelt producers account for 20% of greenhouse crops in the province and 84% of Greenbelt greenhouse space is dedicated to floriculture. There are 52 certified organic farms in the Greenbelt—9% of the province's total (541), an increase of 2% from 2001. The number of certified organic farms in the province increased by 52% over the same period.

Farm finances

In 2005, the Greenbelt reported a total of \$1.1 billion in gross farm receipts, representing 11% of the total gross farm receipts for the province. As a share of the provincial total, total gross farm receipts in the Greenbelt declined from 12.4% in 2001 to 11.4% in 2006. In 2005, the average net revenue per farm in the Greenbelt was \$23,069 which was slightly lower than the average for the rest of Ontario (\$26,569). However, on a per acre basis, the average net revenue per acre of farmland in the Greenbelt in 2005 was \$155 which was higher than the average for the rest of Ontario (\$109). Within the Greenbelt the highest average net revenue per farm values in 2005 were in Niagara (\$45,098), Halton (\$30,043), York (\$28,702), Peel (\$27,291), and Hamilton (\$26,383). On a per acre basis, the highest average net revenue values were in Niagara (\$743), Halton (\$210), Hamilton (\$199), York (\$177), and Peel (\$146).



Agriculture in Ontario's Greenbelt

Facts and Figures 2001-2006

Greenbelt Farms at a Glance

1.8 million acres protected land
932,000 acres protected farmland
14 municipalities
6261 farms
149 acre farms*
537,956 acres owned by operators
394,480 acres rented by operators
25.2 million square feet of greenhouses
51 certified organic farms
\$1.1 billion gross farm receipts
\$23,069 net farm revenue per farm**
\$155 net farm revenue per acre**
9075 farmers
54 year old farmers*

* average

** 2005 average

Accurate statistical information on the economic characteristics, activities and performance of Greenbelt agriculture is essential to create policy and programs that will ensure the viability of farm businesses. This document provides a brief overview of many of the statistical realities of the agricultural economy within the Greenbelt at the highest order of accuracy available through the Canadian Agricultural Census 2001 and 2006. The data was drawn from custom tabulated dataset drawn according to the physical boundaries of the Greenbelt territory thereby reflecting an accurate portrayal of the agricultural activities within the actual Greenbelt region.

A more detailed report, entitled *Overview of the Agriculture Sector in the Ontario Greenbelt and Comparison to the Rest of Ontario 2001-2006* is available for in-depth exploration of the data discussed in this document. The information contained in this publication and in the full report may be used as a tool to measure the performance of Greenbelt agriculture and to identify areas of successful implementation of the Greenbelt Plan.