

Community Focus Bulletin: ***Creating Community Conversations***



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Where does food fit into the future?

For the past five years, the **Future of Food and Farming Working Group (FFFWG)** of Sustainable Peterborough has researched food and farming trends and needs in the city and county, based on the Sustainable Peterborough Plan. The community goal for food and agriculture for 2036 is “we will feed ourselves sustainable with local, healthy foods”. Three strategies were identified in the Plan:

- Maintain adequate farmland availability to support our sustainable agricultural needs.
- Facilitate the production, storage, processing, distribution, and marketing of local, healthy food.
- Encourage farmers to practice good environmental stewardship.

The continuing changes to our climate and to the demographics of our farming community and consuming public remind us that we are planning for a different future.

On March, 19, 2018 the **FFFWG** held its’ fourth summit. Over 80 participants attended, representing the farming community, government decision makers and community groups concerned about the future of food and farming. The focus of the summit was on protecting farmland.

Presentations and discussions at the summit emphasized that preserving food-producing lands, planning our communities in a sustainable manner and promoting the importance of local food are imperative to our future as a community, as a province, and as a nation.

“The decisions made today by our community in 2018 about our agricultural lands and our food and agricultural systems will impact future generations and their ability to feed our communities.”

Participants reflected on questions that should be considered by decision makers:

- Should we be doing more to protect farm land? Should we be doing more than what is proposed by the province?

- Is the reduction in the number of farmers and farm businesses a concern?
- Should climate change affect planning? How?
- Are their strengths/weaknesses in the existing food system/market linkages?
- How can municipal Official Plans help to encourage better utilization of agricultural lands in Peterborough County

(For results of the discussion see the full report at www.sustainablepeterborough.ca/community-plan)

“Planning Locally for the Future of Food & Farming”

**(Fourth Summit of Sustainable Peterborough’s Future of Food & Farming Working Group),
March 19, 2018)**

The proceedings from the summit were shared with municipal, provincial and federal decision makers.

How do the platforms of the provincial parties address the issues and questions documented on March 19th, 2018 at the summit?

The following is an overview of platforms provided by the four parties:

Local Issues:	What the platforms are saying (parties presented in alphabetical order):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting farmland and local food production • Improve the rural infrastructure • Provide incentives for the next generation of farming 	<p>Green Party platform includes development of a National Agricultural and Food Policy which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide food security by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moving towards regional food self-sufficiency across Canada, as we begin the shift to organic agriculture as the dominant model of production; ○ Supporting the ‘200 kilometre diet’ and locally grown food through expansion of farmers’ markets and local culinary tourism activities; ○ Promoting rooftop gardens, cultivation of green urban space for agriculture, food production in cities and suburbs, and community gardens; ○ Protecting the right of farmers to save their own seed;

Local Issues:	What the platforms are saying (parties presented in alphabetical order):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase supports for local food production • Support rural infrastructure for vibrant rural communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce corporate control of the food supply by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reforming agriculture regulations to challenge corporate concentration; ○ Ensuring that farm support payments are farm-based (not production-based) to encourage more farms and more farmers; ○ Encouraging organic farming methods to improve farm profitability and sustainability. • Stop the loss of agricultural land to development by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calling for negotiated agreements with the provinces to secure the preservation of the prime agricultural land in Canada; ○ Reinstating the Canada Land Inventory program with adequate funding to update and keep current a comprehensive record of land capability and land use as a vital ongoing aid to local planning; ○ Providing sufficient fiscal incentives to other levels of government, including municipalities, to preserve farmlands under their jurisdictions. • Support environmental stewardship by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting and improving the quality of water in our streams, lakes, and aquifers; ○ Restoring the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Board and its conservation measures; ○ Working with provinces to ensure that all livestock waste is recycled safely and contamination by agricultural run-off is avoided; ○ Introducing cost-shared programs to help farmers protect wildlife habitat areas and marginal lands, maintain water quality in streams, lakes and aquifers, and retain and improve soil quality;

Local Issues:	What the platforms are saying (parties presented in alphabetical order):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating a national Environmental Farm Plan Program to provide new funding sources for implementation at the farm level. ● Assist farmers in climate change adaptation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encouraging farming methods that increase carbon sequestration and decrease water requirements; ○ Establishing GHG emission targets for all components of the agri-food system, and collaborating with industry to meet targets; ○ Restructuring Canada’s Business Risk Management Programs to help farmers cope with climate risk, especially in disaster assistance.
	<p>The Liberal Party platform states it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to help to create jobs in the agriculture and agri-food sector, supporting the Risk Management Program and supporting the ongoing modernization of agri-food ● Will support farmers and the agri-food sector by supporting research, creating jobs and protecting global competitiveness. The plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renews a 10-year agreement with the University of Guelph that will see \$700 million invested in agri-food education, research and innovation 2. Reiterates full and continued support for supply management system, its producers and its processors 3. Calls on the federal government to provide transitional assistance for agriculture businesses and worker affected by the CP-TPP and to support them to seize new opportunities that trade agreements present 4. Supports expanded access to international markets for agricultural products while ensuring that a modernized NAFTA does not place any new restrictions on the movement of agricultural goods across North America 5. Will continue to find ways to improve the Risk Management Program, including working with the federal government to improve their risk management programs

Local Issues:	What the platforms are saying (parties presented in alphabetical order):
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Invests \$120 million over the next three years in the food and beverage sector, the largest purchasers of farm products 7. Will work with wine, cider, spirits and beer producers to develop a new strategy to grow the beverage alcohol sector 8. Cuts farm electricity rates in half, through the Fair Hydro Plan 9. Helps farmers and agri-food businesses improve energy efficiency and save money, while fighting climate change 10. Protects farmland, green spaces and water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing investments in critical infrastructure. The plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will work with banks, credit unions and municipalities to ensure that banking solutions are available across rural Ontario 2. Invests \$206 million over 10 years in infrastructure in northern and rural Ontario, as part of bilateral agreement with the federal government 3. Is building and renewing hospitals in all parts of the province 3. Improves access to mental health care services and for rural youth 4. Adds 5,500 personal support workers to Ontario's workforce to provide more home care, prioritizing northern and remote communities 5. Expands access to child care in rural communities 6. Improves access to services and supports for survivors of sexual and domestic violence in rural communities 7. Overhauls the consultation process school boards use when considering school closures 8. Invests \$20 million in the Rural and Northern Education Fund to improve education programming in small communities
	<p>The NDP platform states the party will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defend supply management for Ontario's farmers, • protect Ontario's Production Insurance Program • work with farming groups to ensure young farmers can get their foot in the door. And we will expand the government's definition of farming and food production to include new definitions such as urban farming.

Local Issues:	What the platforms are saying (parties presented in alphabetical order):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undo the cuts to the Slots at Racetracks Program (SARP), and build a long-term plan to revitalize this sector and protect the livelihood of these family farms. • cut hydro bills by 30 per cent and get rid of time-of-use charges, “ensuring rural users pay the same delivery costs as urban users,” the party platform says. • The NDP’s platform notes rural infrastructure as a priority in its platform. • Broadband Expansion Fund: A 10-year, \$1 billion dollar fund for bringing broadband service to rural and northern Ontario.
	<p>The Progressive Conservatives platform will be released fully costed platform before the election. Media coverage indicates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Ontario PC Government will increase the Risk Management Program cap by \$50 million to help farmers and other producers better manage risks outside of their control. • Ontario PC Government will make broadband and cellular infrastructure projects eligible under the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF), and put up to \$100 million specifically towards funding these projects.

Sources and Resources:

<https://www.greenparty.ca/en/policy/vision-green/economy/agriculture-food>

<http://www.farms.com/ag-industry-news/ndp-election-promises-for-ontario-ag>

www.ontariondp.ca/economy

<https://platform.ontarioliberal.ca/issue/supporting-farmers/>

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/doug-ford-says-he-ll-release-fully-costed-platform-before-the-election-1.3941721>

https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2018/.../ontario-pc-platform-2018-doug-ford_a_2344.

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