



**Strategic Priorities**

**2017 - 2020**

**“Farmland Forever”**

**Approved by Board of Directors**

**January 10, 2017**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2004, the Ontario Farmland Trust has successfully developed a new approach to land conservation in Ontario. We work with farmers, government, and conservation partners to establish Conservation Easement Agreements that permanently protect farmland for agricultural and conservation purposes. We have developed a strong reputation for collaboration across sectors, providing sound policy advice and taking direct action to secure and protect farmland at risk.

The rate of farmland loss in Ontario is increasing and unsustainable. The province has lost 18% of its farmland in 35 years due to urbanization, aggregate mining, and other conversions. There has been enormous interest in our farmland easement approach, and thus far, we are proud to say that we have protected 12 farms and 1,200 acres of farmland.

Now in our 12th year, the Board of Directors have created this Strategic Plan to guide our activities. Over the next three years, the Ontario Farmland Trust will focus on four main areas:

- 1. Increase the amount of farmland secured and permanently protected, with a focus on particularly vulnerable areas.**
- 2. Offer our unique perspective to help shape policies and programs that protect farmland.**
- 3. Use events and celebrations to promote awareness of the need for farmland protection, and build a base of new members.**
- 4. Diversify funding sources in order to achieve financial sustainability.**

## MISSION

The Mission of the Ontario Farmland Trust is to protect and preserve Ontario farmlands and associated agricultural, natural and cultural features of the countryside through direct land securement, stewardship, policy research and education for the benefit of Ontarians today and future generations.

## VISION

Our vision is for a future where Ontario's best farmland is valued and permanently protected through sound policy, partnerships and proactive community engagement, where diverse farming communities thrive, and where the protection of farmland, agriculture and local food production is recognized as the foundation of a sustainable rural economy in Ontario.

## 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## 2017 – 2020

**1. Secure farmland.** The Ontario Farmland Trust will ramp up our farm securement efforts, with an emphasis on protecting high risk farms.

- Secure 8 farms and a minimum of 1,000 acres. Two farms will be secured in 2017, and three farms will be secured every year thereafter.
- At least one farm per year in a high risk area.

**2. Influence policy and programs that protect farmland.** The Ontario Farmland Trust will use our unique perspective to help shape policy and programs in Ontario.

- Provide written comments on all new or amended provincial policies that affect farmland.
- Provide written comments on municipal and federal policies where there are strong ties to land securement.
- Contribute to meetings as requested by government or partners to discuss relevant policies.

**3. Promote awareness of the importance of farmland protection.** The Ontario Farmland Trust will focus on building a base of supporters who believe in our vision.

- Host successful Farmland Forum.
- Execute one easement celebration for each newly secured farm.
- Increase membership.
- Strengthen social media presence.

**4. Financial stability.** The Ontario Farmland Trust has a need for a sustainable source of unrestricted funds. We will prioritize reaching out to individuals.

- Diversify funding sources, with a focus on unrestricted funds.
- Increase donations from individuals.