

#### **OVERVIEW**

- Provide a high level update of Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy actions for 2020
  - Update on activities since last meeting
  - COVID-19 impacted activities
  - Get your input on upcoming actions
- Provide an update on COVID-19 related activities
  - Business resources for agri-food sector
  - Agri-Food Webinar Series
  - Agri-Food Sub-Working Group

## FIVE STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS

- Strengthen communication and collaboration between York Region, local municipalities and stakeholders
  - 2 Support the agri-food sector through integrated land use planning and economic development
  - Support increased capacity for value added processing and support services
  - Leverage the Region's location within the Greater Toronto Area through direct farm marketing to meet demand for local food production
- Provide support for business retention and expansion of primary agricultural production

## STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IS ON TRACK

 40 out of 45 actions have either been planned, initiated, or completed

Year	Initiated/ Underway	Planned	New/not initiated	Completed	Total Action Items
2017	14	7	24	-	45
2019-2020	27	4	5	9	45

# STRATEGY UPDATE: 2020 ACTIONS

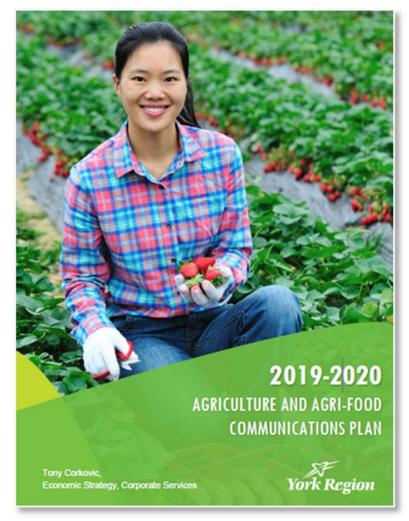
# STRATEGIC GOAL #1: COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

### CONTINUED EXECUTION OF COMMUNICATION PLAN

#### Collaborating, promoting and connecting

- York.ca/agrifood
- Local food education campaign
- Events
- Social media promotion
  - York Farm Fresh Guide Map
  - Timed around seasonal availability





### **AGRI-FOOD SPOTLIGHT 2020**



## **Hiveshare**

Ten years ago, Chris Campbell was a photographer and single father of three young children living in Sutton. Reflecting on society and the environment, he decided to make a change and became a beekeeper as one way to, "contribute rather than consume". Starting out with just one hive, he has grown his business, Hiveshare, to 92 hives with ambitious plans for continued growth.

Most of his hives are in Georgina, York Region, where he cares for his bees on behalf of clients, as Hiveshare does not follow a regular business model. The Hiveshare program was designed to enable anyone to get involved with bees and beekeeping and benefit from the local, unpasteurized, aritisanal honey created each year. Customers buy into a quarter, half or whole hive and in turn receive the honey from that hive as it is harvested. Anyone who does not wish to receive the honey from their share is given the choice of donating it to the local food bank where Chris regularly contributes.



As landscapes become increasingly urban and technology drives innovation, one fact remains true. Bees have been and will continue to be an essential contributor to our wellbeing.

- About one-third of our food comes from crops pollinated by honeybees, including apples, melons, cranberries, pumpkins, squash, broccoli, and almonds, to name just a few
- Pollinators like bees affect 35% of global agricultural land and support the production of leading food crops worldwide.



The days as a beekeeper are long and relatively solitary during the summer. Chris typically works 50-hour weeks to inspect and maintain his hives and create the housy and wax-elated products that he sells online, at farm markets, as well as through select local businesses.

Some of his best sellers are delicious honey blends like his Chocolate Honey, as well as a practical Paw Wax used to protect and treat animal paws during our extreme Canadian weather. Chris also prefers to partner with other local entrepreneurs and growers to create his products such as the Garlic Infused Honey and Habanero Honey.

Ten years in, much of the infrastructure such as fencing, security and tree planting is now in place. Ever enthusiastic, there are plans to further develop the farm shop area, which is expected to open in time for the 2020 cases.

Chris also rears his own Queen Bees and is hired to help those with swarms. He loves the work, where he is continually learning and can work outside surrounded by nature. One might assume that the winters are quiet, but Chris keeps busy with his secondary business offering photography and social media management support as well as interacting with other beekeepers internationally. Each year, he travels to share his knowledge and learn from others. In his words, "You can constantly fill up your bucket. I love it."

Learn more about Hiveshare on his website, <u>Hiveshare.ca.</u> You can also follow Hiveshare on Instagram and Facebook.

#### York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy

York Region is committed to supporting our vibrant agriculture and agri-food sector. This work is being guided by the Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy. With five strategic goal areas accompanied by 45 recommended actions, the strategy is an ambitious framework designed to achieve results and demonstrates York Region's commitment to the sector.

To learn more about York Region's agriculture and agrifood sector, visit york.ca/agrifood





#### Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2019, Chris decided to offer free delivery to local customers within a specific geographic area. The timing couldn't have been better. This touch-free service provided a safe option to reliably supply clients during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and beyond.



### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD NEWSLETTER

- Goal is to provide our audience with stories, news and events
- First edition was released on August 12, 2020
  - Achieved over 50% open rate
- 150+ subscribers within first month
- Next edition to be released in October





#### In this edition:

#### Programs and Initiatives

- Pumpkin picking in York Region
- Celebrating York Region Farmers
- . Ontario farmers get \$7.9 million to improve operations
- · Staying safe at work and at home

#### **Funding Programs**

- · New energy bill relief for small businesses
- · Three new federal income benefits
- · COVID-19 business resources

#### Other News and Events

#### **Celebrating York Region farmers**



## IABC AWARD OF MERIT — GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS



## 2020 AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD UPDATE

30+
events, webinars
and meetings held

180,000+ social media impressions

2.3% average engagement rate

800+ stakeholders engaged

4,000+
social media engagements
(likes, comments, shares)

1,200+
visits to york.ca
agriculture/agri-food



### AGRI-FOOD EVENT PARTNERSHIPS

- Partnered with City of Vaughan
- Vaughan Business
   Expo
- Exhibit York
   Region Food
   Movers, Makers
   and Shakers Zone –
   Feb 11, 2020



#### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS ONTARIO 2020

#### **INNOVATE Conference:** February 25 – 27, 2020, Richmond Hill

- Pre-conference culinary tourism workshop Incorporate a Local Taste of Place and Keep it Zero Waste
- Local food promotion at tradeshow and evening reception





York Farm Fresh exhibit with York Region at Trade show booth

# FEATURED FARMER - POP UP SHOP @YORK REGION



#### INVASIVE SPECIES - WILD PARSNIP WEBINAR

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee
  - Meeting Feb 13, 2020
  - Invasive species education opportunity
- Planned and delivered Invasive Species / Wild Parsnip Webinar



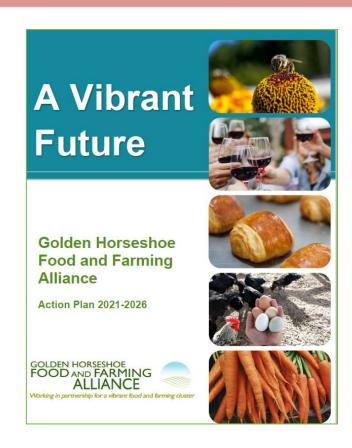
### GOLDEN HORSESHOE FOOD AND FARMING ALLIANCE (GHFFA)

- Continue to support /collaborate with Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance
  - Sharing of Best Practices in Economic Development and Planning
  - Attended Board Meetings (Councillor Avia Eek as York Region representative)
  - Attended Working Group Meetings (Meena Hassanali and Jen Best)
  - Annual General Meeting, May 28, 2020
- GHFFA activities captured in annual reporting to Council



#### GHFFA 2019-2020 ACTIVITIES

- Renewal of Action Plan 2021-2016
- Consultation to Provincial Policy Statement related to agricultural and rural lands in Golden Horseshoe
- Carrot Value Chain Study with Holland Marsh Growers
- ConnectON database addition of new partners
   Trillium Manufacturing Network
- Always in Season project



#### AGRI-FOOD FORUM 2020 — HURON COUNTY

#### Municipal Agriculture Economic Development and Planning Forum

- November 18 & 19, 2020
  - Growing a Better Future: Agri-food & Municipal Collaborations in the 2020's
  - York Region: Planning Committee and Panel for Agriculture System Approach
  - Anticipation for York Region to host 2021



## STRATEGIC GOAL#1

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?



# STRATEGIC GOAL #2: INTEGRATED LAND USE PLANNING

## STRATEGIC GOAL#2: ON-GOING ACTIONS

Item #	Action Item	Timeline
2.1	At next review, update York Region's Official Plan to conform and align with recent changes to the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan (2017 updates)  • Work with lower tier municipalities as they review and update processes	On-going, Q4 2020
2.2	Prior to next Official Plan review, reexamine Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study and determine if updates are needed to reflect changes at the provincial level (agricultural system mapping)	On-going, Q4 2020
2.3	Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review, review York Region's Official Plan (and lower tier plans) agricultural and rural policies to ensure they encourage and support investment and employment in the agriculture sector	On-going, Q4 2020
*New	Deliver a Farm Tour for Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)	Prior to June 2020 *on-hold
2.8	Conduct a study and review of edge planning practices and identify planning tools the Region can use to minimize conflicts between adjacent urban and agricultural land uses	2020-2021

STRATEGIC GOAL #3:
VALUE ADDED PROCESSING & CAPACITY
BUILDING

#### CAPACITY BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

#### Support increased capacity for value-added agri-food processing and support services

#### OMAFRA led On-farm Diversification Workshop

- March 6, 2020 in East Gwillimbury
- 30+ York and Durham Planners and Economic Developers

#### Ontario Water Centre

- RED funding for Young Agri-preneurs Program
- In-kind support with York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre



#### YORK REGION FOOD & BEVERAGE ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

#### Support increased capacity for value-added agri-food processing and support services

- First York Region Food & Beverage Accelerator Program
  - Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) Funding
  - Delivery partner Y Space, York
     University
  - Support from Markham, Vaughan and Richmond hill
- Official Launch of First Cohort
  - Virtually August 11, 2020
  - Joint press release
  - 15+ news stories: BNN Bloomberg, CP24, CTV, Globalnews



#### FOOD AND BEVERAGE ACCELERATOR — COHORT

#### Support increased capacity for value-added agri-food processing and support services



















- 6 out of the 8 companies are 100% women-led (the remainder 2 have women co-founders)
- · 6 out of 8 companies have a BIPOC founder









### STRATEGIC GOAL#3:

#### Support increased capacity for value-added agri-food processing and support services

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?

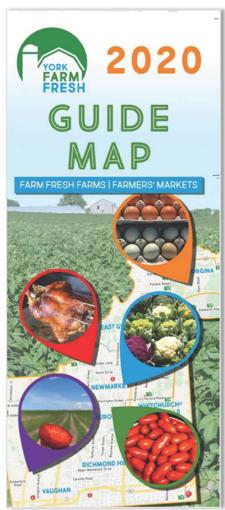


# STRATEGIC GOAL #4: LOCAL FOOD EDUCATION & PROMOTION

#### LOCAL FOOD PARTNERSHIP

Leverage location within the GTA and proximity to customers through direct farm marketing and meet demand for local food production

- Continued partnership with York Farm Fresh
  - Annual York Farm Fresh Guide Map 2020
  - 52,000 maps printed and distributed
  - Good Food Promotion of key messaging
  - Five distinct self-guided routes
  - York Region Food Network partnership
- Members adapted business model in response to COVID-19
  - E-commerce Online Platforms
  - Curbside pick up
  - Public health guidelines securing PPE
  - Sharing best practices



#### LOCAL FOOD PARTNERSHIP

Leverage location within the GTA and proximity to customers through direct farm marketing and meet demand for local food production

#### Agri-tourism activities

- Georgina Virtual Field to Table (July 25, 2020)
- Nine agri-partners
- Total estimated audience reach: 191,000
- East Gwillimbury Farm to Fork (October 2, 2020)

#### York Region Food Council

- Led by York Region Food Network
- Participate in meetings
- Advisory Committee Members participated in webinar to share COVID-19 impacts



#### SELLING FOOD TO ONTARIO

- November 5, 2020 via Zoom Webinar
- Target Audience: producers and small food companies
- Access to new market channels food safety and labelling

# SELLING FOOD TO ONTARIO TRAINING WORKSHOP







### STRATEGIC GOAL#4:

Leverage location within the GTA and proximity to customers through direct farm marketing and meet demand for local food production

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?



# STRATEGIC GOAL #5: BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

#### ANNUAL REPORTING

Provide support for business retention and expansion of primary agricultural production within York Region

#### Regional Council Annual Update Report

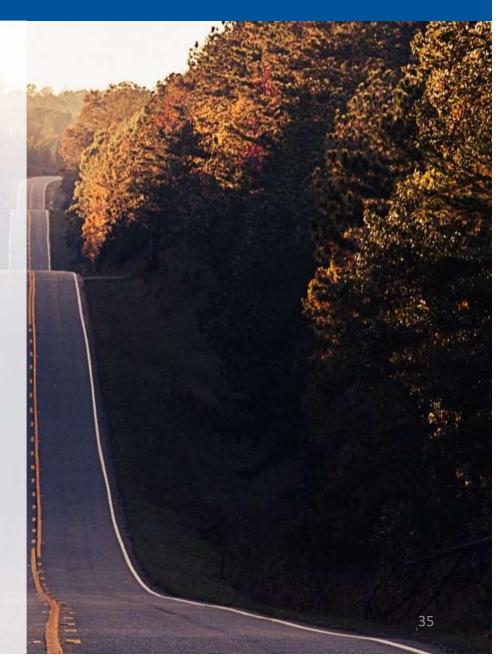
- Council Report: 2019 Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy Update
- Report received by Committee of the Whole (June 11, 2020)
- Report approved by Council (June 25, 2020)

## 2020 ACTIVITIES IMPACTED DUE TO COVID-19

Item#	2020 Activity	Status	Pivot
1.11	Explore opportunities for teaching youth about agriculture and food production in Region  • Career competition with AgScape at high school	On-hold	Assessing feasibility with partners
1.7	Continue support York Region Agriculture and Agri- Food Advisory Committee  • Agri-Food Tour of food incubators/accelerators (April 2020)	On-hold	Explore options with committee for 2021
4.80	<ul> <li>Facilitate relationships between producer, processors and retail companies to support local food production</li> <li>Event/exhibit to connect buyers and local food producers (B2B connections)</li> <li>Explore one-day Farmers Market at the Region in July 2020</li> </ul>	Proceed November 5, 2020	Modified virtual event will be delivered
*New activity for 2020	Deliver a Farm Tour for Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)	On-Hold	Re-evaluated by Planning Team

## **ACTIONS UNDERWAY FOR 2020**

- Continue business support for COVID-19
- Selling Food to Ontario
   Workshop
- Agri-food innovation assets on York Region Innovation portal
- York Food & Beverage
   Accelerator virtual delivery
- Local food opportunities with local municipalities and partners



## UPCOMING VIRTUAL CONSULTATION MEETING

#### **Fall 2020**

- Agricultural System
   Consultation:
- Tentative: October 21, 2020
- Water Re-use project –
   TBD November



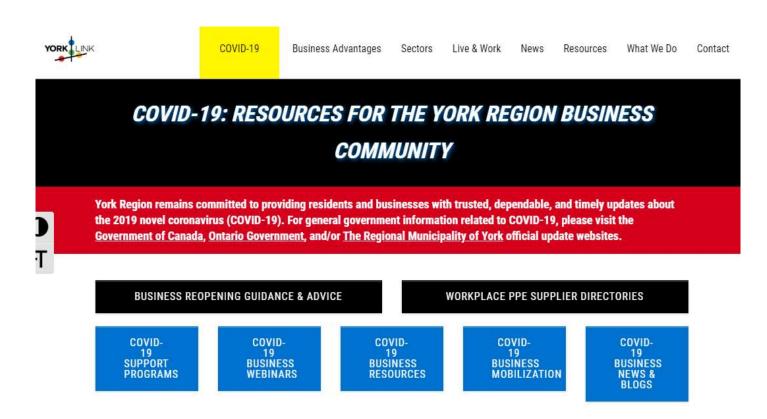
# YORK REGION COVID-19 RESPONSE: AGRI-FOOD SECTOR

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

- York Region Business Recovery Support Partnership
- Industry led Agri-Food Sub-Group
  - Purpose: Identify and address imminent needs/challenges due to COVID-19
  - Challenges: Guidelines and access to PPE, labour shortages etc.
  - Public Health a key partner
- Local supply chain connections
  - Distilleries and breweries pivoted to hand sanitizer production.
  - Long Straw Distillery in Vaughan

#### COVID-19 ONE-STOP BUSINESS RESOURCE

- Guides for Agri-Food Sector with lead from Public Health
  - Guidance for Pick Your Own Farm Operations
  - Precautions: Farmers' Markets
  - Public Health Guidance for Farm Operators



#### AGRI-FOOD WEBINAR SERIES

- Government Funding for Agriculture & Agri-Food with Mentorworks – May 7, 2020
- COVID-19 Health and Safety Measures for Farms by Public Health
   July 22, 2020
- Agri-Food Business Recovery Program for Small Business –
   September 9, 16, 23, October 7, 2020 (four modules)



# QUESTIONS / INPUT AND FEEDBACK

#### **Planning and Economic Development**

Meena Hassanali, Agriculture and Agri-Food Business Specialist

1-877-464-9675 ext. 74430

#### Meena.hassanali@york.ca

Jennifer Best, Senior Planner

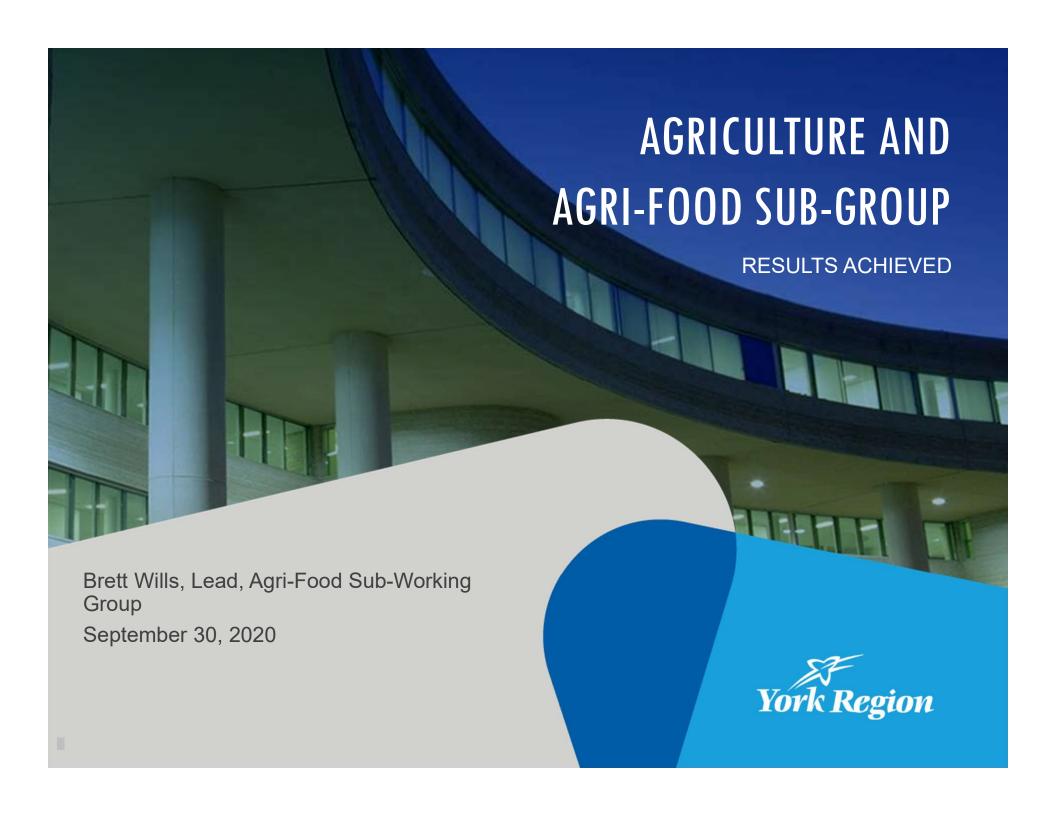
1-877-464-9675 ext.

Jennifer.Best@york.ca





# YORK REGION COVID-19 RESPONSE: AGRI-FOOD SUB-GROUP OUTCOMES



#### YORK REGION AGRI-FOOD COVID-19 SUB-GROUP



**13** Meetings Held

- INDUSTRY LEAD: Brett Wills Food Processing (Advisory Committee Member)
- Avia Eek, Chair of Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee
- Kim Empringham Vice-Chair, Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee
- Janice Bartley Food start-ups (Advisory Committee Member)
- Mark Bhim Longos (Advisory Committee Member)
- Carolyn Puterbough OMAFRA (Agriculture portfolio)
- Jody Mott, Holland Marsh Growers Association
- Aurelio Calabretta Vice-President, Smuckers
- Margo Begin, East Gwillimbury (N6 Representative)
- Fariba Niroui, Richmond Hill (through larger working group)
- James Rilett, Canadian Restaurant Association
- Charles Banfield, York Region, Economic Strategy
- Meena Hassanali, York Region, Economic Strategy

#### SUB-GROUP GUEST SPEAKERS









#### **Over 10 Guest Speakers:**

- Dr.Karl Kabasele, York Region Public Health
- Becky Hester, York Region Public Health
- Marika Italiano, York Region Public Health
- Chetna Pandya York Region Public Health Inspector
- Judy Chang, York University Yspace
- Danielle Collins, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Carolyn Puterbough, OMAFRA
- Aurelio Calabretta, Smuckers
- Mark Bhim, Longos
- Tammi Taylor, York Farm Fresh
- Tony Corkovic, York Region, Economic Strategy
- Richard Franklin, York Region, Economic Strategy

### AGRI-FOOD SUB-GROUP OUTCOMES

Development of a PPE Supplier Directory for Agri-food operations in York Region.



Multiple best practices shared between group members.



Enabled Mobile COVID testing at

Farm locations in York Region

WEBINAR: Covid-19 Health and Safety Measures for Farm Operations



Developed and ran a Temporary Foreign Workers awareness campaign to raise public awareness



Provided COVID-19 guidance for safe farm operations



WEBINAR SERIES: Business Recovery Accelerator for Agrifood Processors.



36

COVID-19 farm spot-check inspections completed by York Region Public Health

# QUESTIONS / INPUT AND FEEDBACK

