AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD STRATEGY

STAFF UPDATE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

York Region Planning and Economic Development

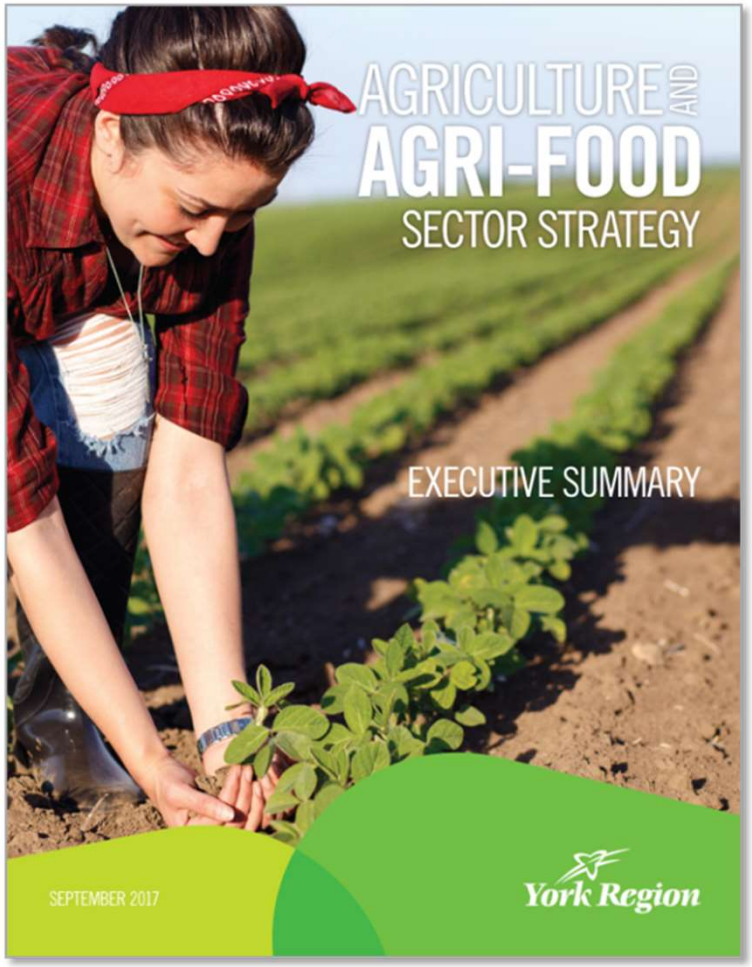
- Meena Hassanali, Agriculture and Agri-Food Business Specialist
- Jennifer Best, Senior Planner
- Tony Corkovic, Marketing & Communications Specialist

March 24, 2021

York Region

OVERVIEW

- **Provide an update of Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy actions for 2021**
  - Update on activities since last meeting
  - Provide an overview on upcoming actions
  - Get your input and feedback



www.York.ca/agrifood

STRATEGY UPDATE: 2021 ACTIONS

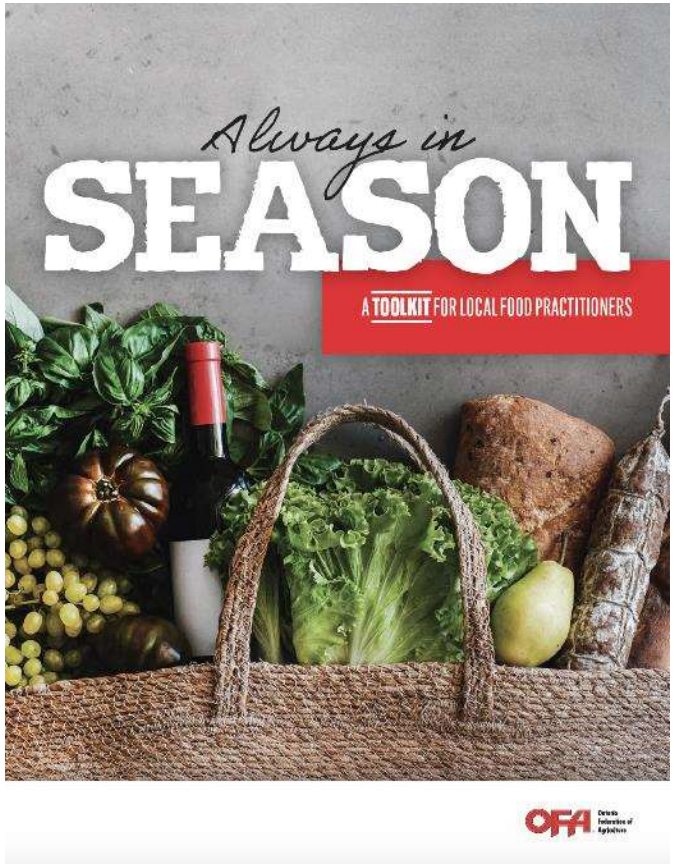
2021 WORKPLAN

#	2021 New Projects	Timelines
1	Always in Season Toolkit Pilot in York Region – Ontario Federation of Agriculture and Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA)	Q2 2021
2	2021 Agri-Food Forum - October	Q3 2021
3	Farm and Food Virtual Spotlight (video) to raise awareness of diversity of production and processing found in the Region	Q3 2021
4	Agri-food tech innovation – Competition **tentative*	Q3 2021
5	Explore 2-3 education virtual workshops/webinars in topics such as: • Opportunities to increase world crops within the Region • Urban Agriculture/vertical farming • Restaurant Pivot to consumer product goods (CPG) / Food-Start up companies	On-going 2021
6	Fulsome Producers Directory working with industry associations	On-going 2021
7	COVID-19 Agri-Food Business Recovery • Project ideas from Agri-Food Sub Working Group	On-going 2021
8	2021 Regional Official Plan Review and Update	On-going 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL #1:
COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

ALWAYS IN SEASON TOOLKIT – PILOT IN YORK REGION

- **Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and Wilton Consulting Group**
- Pilot in York Region with Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA)
- Video to showcase York Region's Agriculture sector
  - Carrot production in Holland Marsh
  - Timing Project: January to August 2021
- Advisory team meetings:
  - Feb 24 and March 8, 2021



AGRI-FOOD FORUM 2021 – YORK REGION

- **Planning for 13th Municipal Agriculture Economic Development & Planning Forum 2021**
  - York Region as host for 2021
    - Virtual Event – **Preliminary dates: October 6-7 (two half days)**
    - Structure of Planning Committee:
      - Planning Committee with OMAFRA + York Region + stakeholders (theme, agenda layout)
      - Working group: OMAFRA, York Region and Municipal partners (speakers, logistics)
      - Advisory Committee: Input and feedback
  - **ACTION**: Provide input on overall theme/panel themes for consideration

YORK REGION AGRI-FOOD COVID-19 SUB-GROUP

- **Continued dialogue**
  - February 11, 2021
  - March 8, 2021

- **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
- **Margot Begin**, East Gwillimbury (N6 Representative)
- **Fariba Niroui,** Richmond Hill (through larger working group)
- **James Rilett,** Canadian Restaurant Association

CANADA'S AGRICULTURE DAY

CANADA'S
AGRICULTURE DAY

Chairman Statement
February 23, 2021

York Region celebrates Canada's Agriculture Day

On behalf of York Regional Council and The Regional Municipality of York, it is my pleasure to recognize Tuesday, February 23, 2021 as Canada's Agriculture Day and to celebrate York Region's diverse farming community.

Canada's Agriculture Day recognizes the vital role the agri-food sector, including farmers, food processors, food distributors, restaurants and grocery stores play in supporting our communities and our economy. It is also an opportunity to recognize more than 700 farm-based businesses and 270 food and beverage manufacturers who call York Region home.

Over the past year we have seen first-hand the importance of essential workers in the agriculture and agri-food sector. From farmers to food processors to grocery workers, the industry ensure we all have access to high-quality, fresh and local food.

Each year on Canada's Agriculture Day, activities and events are planned to celebrate local food. While this year may look different, it remains important we each take the time to recognize the day and thank our agricultural community. This may include cooking a locally sourced meal, supporting a local restaurant or simply thanking a local farmer.

From the rich soil of the Holland Marsh to a diverse mix of food and beverage businesses, York Region's agri-food sector is a key economic driver and grows when we all support local.

On behalf of more than 1.2 million residents who call our communities home, I thank York Region's Agricultural and Agri-Food Advisory Committee, our farmers and the entire food sector for the work you do in helping us build strong, caring, safe communities.

Wayne Emmerson
York Region Chairman and CEO

YORK REGION VIDEO PROJECT

- Highlight and overview of York Region's agriculture and agri-food sector
- Provide information on various crops grown, diversity of production
- Feature interviews at local farms and food processors
- Production over the spring and summer

YORK REGION AGRICULTURE/AGRI-FOOD NEWSLETTER

YORK LINK

WHERE TALENT AND OPPORTUNITY INTERSECT

YORK REGION

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2021

The York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Update newsletter shares highlights from York Region's business community, including news, upcoming events, new funding programs and more.

IN THIS ISSUE

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY NEWS

- Newsletter Update
- Ontario Government Provides Update on Stay-at-Home Order
- York Region Food and Beverage Accelerator Program Open for Applications
- How to Start a Home-Based Food Business
- Know a Frontline Food Hero? Nominate Them
- King Township's Providence Hill Farm Featured on Thriving Farmer Podcast
- Ontario Delivering Support to Agricultural and Horticultural Societies
- Top 15 York Region Business Community News Stories

FUNDING PROGRAMS AND COVID-19 SUPPORTS

- Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program Applications Now Open
- Ontario Small Business Support Grant Applications Now Open
- Central Counties Tourism Business Support Program
- Bioenterprise SmartGrowth Program
- Voluntary Isolation Centre Now Open

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Fireside Chat with Vincenzo Guzzo from Dragon's Den by YSpace
- Canada's Agriculture Day
- Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario Conference 2021
- Restaurants Canada Show: Ontario Pavilion
- North and Eastern Ontario Local Food Virtual Conference
- Food Safety Best Practices with Maple Lodge Farms

LOOKING AHEAD

- Local food promotion
- Business support and other COVID-19 resources
- Newsletter growth
- Video

STRATEGIC GOAL #2:
INTEGRATED LAND USE PLANNING

REGIONAL OFFICIAL PLAN PROGRESSION

- **Outcome of March Policy Directions Report**
  - New and existing non-agricultural uses policies
  - Non-food related agricultural crops
- **Preliminary agricultural mapping results**
- **Next Steps**
  - Continuation of refinement of policies and mapping
  - Consultation will continue with statutory public meeting planned for fall of 2021

STRATEGIC GOAL #3:
VALUE ADDED AGRI-FOOD PROCESSING

YORK REGION INNOVATION PORTAL: AGRI-FOOD ASSETS

– Agri-Food Innovation

Aurora Food and Wine Institute at Niagara College

Teaching and community space and part time teaching programs related to wine education and master taster program.

Details:
89 Mosley St, Aurora
auroraarmourycfwi.ca

Clearwater Farm (Ontario Water Centre)

Young Agri-preneur program is a multi-year apprenticeship providing practical experience to farming.

Details:
1614 Metro Rd N, Georgina
clearwaterfarm.ca

The Food Development Group

Product development, shelf life testing, nutritional labelling, and project management.

Details:
1250B Reid St, Unit 1, Richmond Hill
fooddevelopmentgroup.com

AGRI-FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK

- **Kingbridge Centre in King Township**
  - Innovation hub (kingbridgecentre.com/innovation-hub/)
- **Food and Ag-Tech Industry**
  - High level scan of food and ag-tech companies in the Region with OMAFRA
  - Build network to support innovation

YORK REGION FOOD & BEVERAGE ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

- **Cohort #1 – August 11, 2020 to January 19, 2021**
  - 8 Companies – 6 out of 8 were led by BIPOC founders
  - # Workshops/Fireside Chats: 18
  - Total Revenue: > $500,000
  - # New store presence/distribution points : 148
  - # Jobs: 9
  - Spotlight Video https://youtu.be/2Eu22h3Nnx8
- **Cohort #2 – Starts May 2021**
  - 24 applications received and reviewed
  - 18 interviews in last two weeks and have selected **Top 10 candidates**

CHECK-IN

- Any Questions?
- Input and Feedback?

STRATEGIC GOAL #4:
LOCAL FOOD EDUCATION & PROMOTION

LOCAL FOOD PARTNERSHIP

- **Continued partnership with York Farm Fresh**
  - Annual York Farm Fresh Guide Map in progress
  - York Farm Fresh App – **Beta Version in App Store**
  - Translation of the map in new languages
  - French, Chinese (simplified) and Chinese (traditional), Farsi, Urdu and Russian

LOCAL FOOD PARTNERSHIP

- **Continued partnership with York Farm Fresh**
  - Member Annual General Meeting – March 11, 2021 (24 members)
  - 2021 Board of Directors elected
    - Jenna Pegg - Homestead Orchards
    - Pat White - Homestead Farm
    - Sally Shearman - Sharon Creek Farm
    - Sue Feddema - Round the Bend Farm
    - Timothy Alexander - Robintide Farm
    - Brooke Scott - Village Market at Waldorf
    - Amanda Eek - Fresh Veggies at 60 Aileen
  - Harvest/Preserving Series with York Region Food Network
  - Producing video content to promote YFF for Agri-Food Forum

STRATEGIC GOAL #5:
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

ALL ABOUT SPECIALITY CROPS - WEBINAR SERIES

- **Partnership: OMAFRA, Durham Region, Durham Farm Fresh, York Region and York Farm Fresh**
- Targeted for farmers / primary producers
- January 14, noon to 1 pm: Overview of Specialty Crop Production (completed; 87 attendees)
- January 21, noon to 1 pm: Lavender, Hops, Cannabis & Industrial Hemp (completed; 83 attendees)
- January 28, noon to 1 pm: Specialty Fruit & Nuts (completed; 75 attendees)
- February 4, noon to 1 pm: Specialty Vegetables (completed; 57 attendees)
- Workshops led by OMAFRA staff (Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist and colleagues)

This workshop series is brought to you by OMAFRA, Invest Durham, Durham Farm Fresh, York Region and York Farm Fresh.

Ontario

Invest Durham Agriculture & Rural

Durham Farm Fresh

York Region

York Farm Fresh

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – FARM 911 THE EMILY PROJECT

- **Farm 911 – The Emily Project**
  - Brought forward by Kim Empringham
  - Farm accidents can occur in remote locations
  - Many vacant rural and farm properties lack civic address signage
  - Project in response to an on-farm accident involving a child
  - Partnership with local Federation of Agriculture

- **Action from Dec 2, 2020:** Referred to staff for further investigation and report back at future meeting.

FARM 911 THE EMILY PROJECT – STAFF UPDATE

- **Conducting research and information gathering**
  - Durham Region – Meeting December 10, 2020
  - King Township – Meeting January 8, 2021
  - Town of East Gwillimbury – Meeting January 19, 2021
  - Town of Georgina – Meeting January 20, 2021
  - York Region Transportation – February 24, 2021 *New
  - York Region Community Health Services (CHS) Paramedics and Senior Services – March 4, 2021 *New
  - Local Municipality Fire and Emergency Services – March 15, 2021 *New

RESEARCH FINDINGS – FARM 911 EMILY PROJECT

- **Researched Durham, Peel, Halton, Niagara and York Regions**
  - Only Durham Region has adopted the Farm 911/ The Emily Project at Regional level (February 26, 2020) – led by Finance Department
  - Implementation is championed at local municipal level
- **In most cases, a local municipality led initiative**
  - Examples: Town of Caledon
  - Town of Pelham, Town of Wainfleet, and Town of Grimsby
- **Partnership with local Federation of Agriculture (OFA)**
- **Multi-disciplinary staff involvement**

MEETING SUMMARY – FARM 911 EMILY PROJECT

- **York Region Transportation**
  - Not involved with local municipality civic address signage programs
- **York Region Community Health Services (CHS) - Paramedics and Senior Services**
  - Collaborative response with York Region Police and local Fire & Emergency services
  - Current technology through Provincial Dispatch Centre does not allow direct geo-location / PIN
  - Rely on mixed tools with partners to attend to scene of accident (e.g., physical landmarks, technology and signage)
  - Work with cell phone carriers for an approximate location (triangulation)
  - Provincial implementation of “Next Generation 911” aimed by 2023
- **Local Municipality Fire and Emergency Services**

YORK REGION ANALYSIS – FARM 911 EMILY PROJECT

- **One local municipality has adopted the Farm 911 Emily Project**
  - Town of Georgina (May 6, 2020; By-Law Number 2020 – 0028). Uptake has been slow.
  - Township of King is exploring the initiative
- **Most local municipalities have the Green (911) Signage Program (or municipal civic signage) for occupied properties**
  - Township of King
  - Town of East Gwillimbury
  - Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
  - City of Markham
  - City of Vaughan
- **Interest in technology driven solutions**
  - Next Generation 911 with GIS Overlay
  - What3words App (what3words.com)

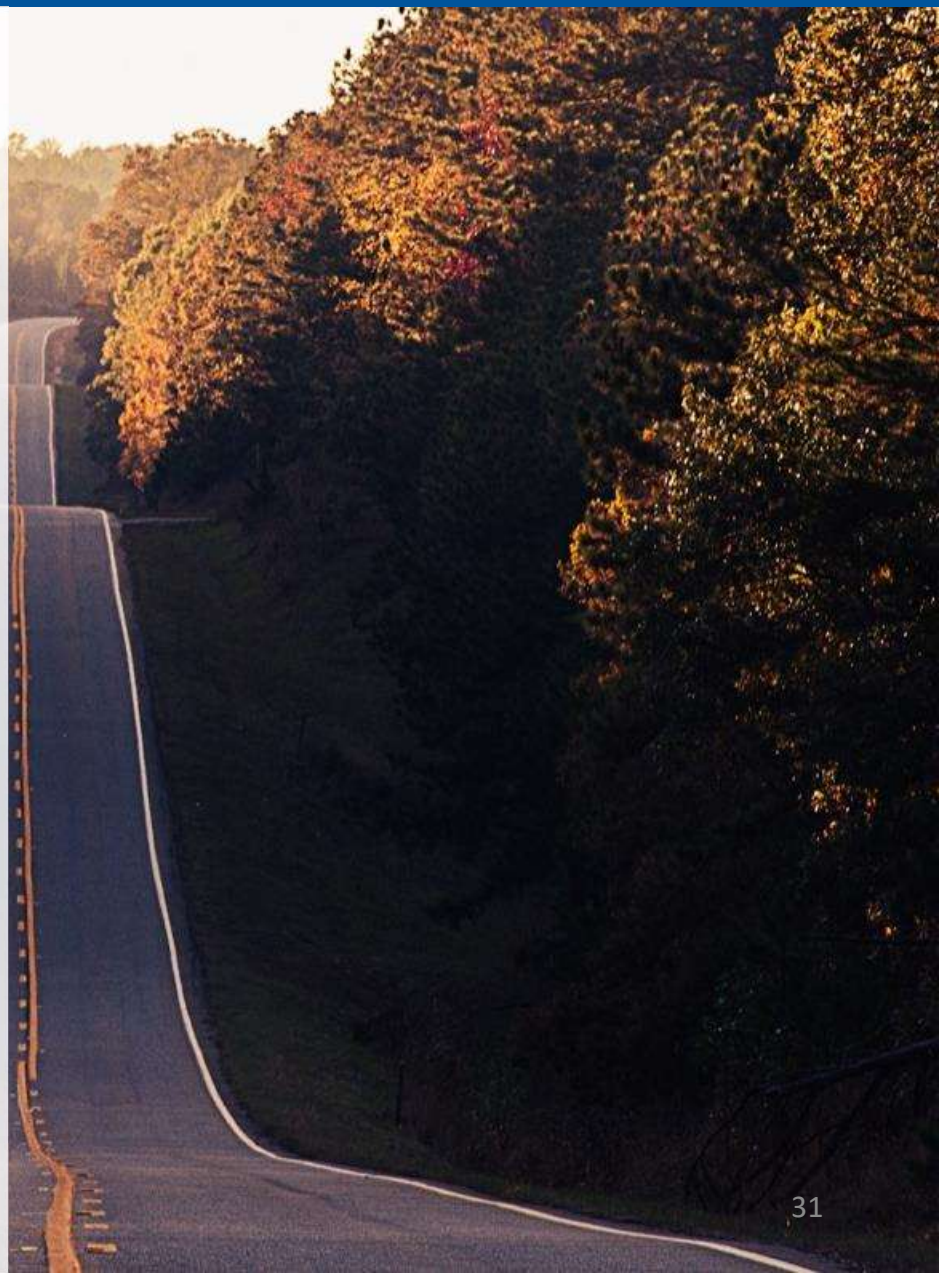
NEXT STEPS– FARM 911 EMILY PROJECT

- **Continue research and meetings**
  - York Region Police
  - Next Gen 911 Committee at York Region
  - Other Regions & Municipalities
    - Aurora / Richmond Hill /Newmarket

- **Share update with Advisory Committee**

NEXT STEPS

- Gather input and feedback
- Continue execution of on-going and new actions for 2021



QUESTIONS / INPUT AND FEEDBACK

Planning and Economic Development

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York Region