

Agriculture In the Local Community: The Municipal Role

by

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- **Changes in the Rural Community**
- **Characteristics of the New Rural Community**
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- **Planning for Agriculture in the New Rural Community: BMP's for Municipalities**

Agriculture and the New Rural Community

Farmers often use production practices that some in society find offensive. Moreover, individual farmers often respond to evolving economic circumstances by changing production practices, size of operation, or enterprise type (for example from beef to pigs). Where this flexibility is impeded there is a significant risk to the long-term future of agriculture.

In the New Rural Community there is the potential for significant debate over current production practices as well as by-laws and regulations that may significantly impede the ability of agriculture as an industry to cope and respond to changing economic and environmental requirements.

This presentation focuses on the need to treat these issues as Risks and to respond with appropriate Strategies.

Huron Farm Environmental Coalition

Results from a questionnaire circulated by the Huron Farm Environmental Coalition to Huron Farm Groups. Responding groups included: OFA, CFFO Chicken Producers; Corn & Wheat Producers, Pork Producers & Egg Producers.

Does your group support environmentally sound operations of any size in Huron County?

All respondents said yes

Should the Huron Farm Environmental Coalition speak on behalf of all farm groups on environmental issues?

All respondents said yes

Should a Manure handling safety course be required similar to pesticide safety course?

1 yes (nutrients); 1 only if necessary, 4 voluntary

Should separation distances between houses, recreational and urban uses and large barns be increased?

5 no (1 no response)

Should the County play a more aggressive role in manure management?

3 no; 1 neutral; 1 yes; 1 same approach everywhere

Do you support increasing fines for repeat offenders?

5 yes, 1 no

Should legislation be developed in consultation with community groups and be adopted by the province concerning nutrient management (i.e. storage , spreading, applications, etc.)?

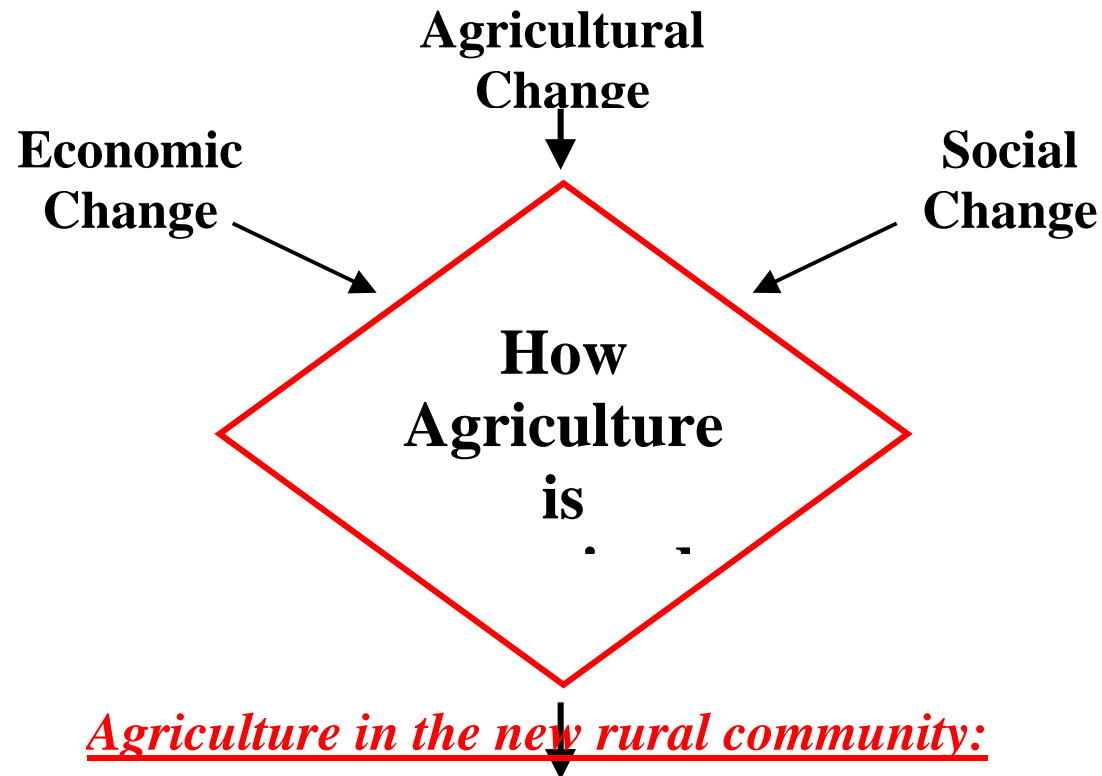
4 yes, 1 neutral, 1 no

Discussion Question:

So...What are some of the characteristics of the “New Rural Community”?

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Characteristics of the New Rural Community



- Altered (reduced) role for agriculture (globalization)
- Much greater diversity in the rural community
- Much greater diversity in agriculture
- Public space in the countryside
- Agriculture perceived as an industry
- Pervasiveness of urban influences
- Role of technology

Trends in Agriculture

- **Increasing Size and Scale of Production**
- **Vertical Integration**
- **Demise of the family farm (as traditionally thought of)**
- **Specialization**
- **Role of technology**
- **Tenure**
- **Efficiencies of Production**
- **Farming as Business**
- **Environmental Liability**

• International Market Place

Improvements in Energy Efficiency for Grain Corn Production in Ontario: 1975 vs. 1991

	1975	1991	1991 using 1975 methods
Total Production (Million Tonnes)	3.3	5.3	5.3
Crop Area (Thousands hectares)	575	766	920
Total Energy Uses (million L DFE*)	292	191	467
Energy Efficiency (L DFE per tonne)	88	36	88

* Litres of Diesel Fuel Equivalent

- **Between 1951 and 1991 Corn yields increased from 3.4 to 6.9 tonnes / hectare (103% increase)**

Improvements in Energy Efficiency for Soybean Production in Ontario: 1975 vs. 1991

	1975	1991	1991 using 1975 methods
Total Production (Million Tonnes)	.4	1.4	1.4
Crop Area (Thousands hectares)	158	570	598
Total Energy Uses (million L DFE*)	28	51	105
Energy Efficiency (L DFE per tonne)	70	36	75

* Litres of Diesel Fuel Equivalent

*Source: Agri-Food Research in Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, July, 1995.

- **Between 1951 and 1991 soybean yields increased from 1.67 to 2.4 tonnes / hectare (44% increase)**

Dairy Production (Ontario)*

Between 1951 and 1991:

- **milk production increased by 2.9% with 849,000 fewer animals**
- **the number of dairy farmers dropped from 40,000 to 9,757**
- **the average herd size increased from 23 to 45 cows**
- **the land base required to support the 1951 dairy herd was 1,079,200 hectares compared to 505,800 hectares in 1991**

Egg Production (Ontario)*

Between 1951 and 1991:

- **Egg production increased from 107 M doz. to 179.2 M doz.**
- **The land base required to produce eggs dropped from 128,500 to 60,770 hectares**
- **Feed efficiency (Kg of feed/doz. eggs) improved from 3.4 to 1.6**
- **The amount of manure generated to produce 1 dozen eggs dropped from 7.14 Kg to 3.36 Kg.**

*Source: Agri-Food Research in Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, July, 1995.

Chicken Production (Ontario)*

Between 1951 and 1991:

- **Meat produced increased from 45 M Kg. to 299 M Kg.**
- **The land base required to produce chickens increased from 96,150 to 117,226 hectares**
- **Feed efficiency (Kg of feed/ Kg of chicken) improved from 6 to 1.85**
- **The amount of manure generated to produce 1 Kg of chicken dropped from 12.6 Kg to 3.88 Kg.**

Pork Production (Ontario)*

Between 1951 and 1991:

- **Pork Production increased from 2.69 M to 3.93 M**
- **Feed efficiency (Kg feed/Kg lean pork) improved from 16.1 to 9.8**
- **the number of pork producers dropped from 93,564 to 8940**
- **the land base required to support pork production dropped from 727,000 hectares to 371,000**

*Source: Agri-Food Research in Ontario, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, July, 1995.

Change in the Rural Community

- 1. Rural as a Decreasing Component of Country's Population**
- 2. Rural Farm as a Decreasing Component of Rural**
- 3. The Growth of Rural Non-Farm Development**
- 4. The Countryside As A Common Resource**
- 5. Elected Officials / Environmental Regulation**
- 6. An Evolving Agricultural Industry**
- 7. Environmental Awareness**
- 8. Environmental Liability**
- 9. Normal Farming Practices**
- 10. Agriculture Versus Other Development**

A Relevant Perspective:

- Importance of the livestock industry
- Appropriate regulation
- Education
- Political process and the need to avoid a knee jerk reaction... but ... a recognition that something will be done
- Important issue in the rural community
- The relationship between perception and reality

Constraints on a Municipal Response:

- Jurisdictional Constraints
- Public Rights
- Enforcement Issues
- Public & Political Support
- Protecting Agriculture & Maintaining Competitiveness
- Provincial Policy / Direction

Agriculture in the New Rural Community: Issues For Municipal Consideration

- **balancing real with perceived issues**
- **evolving agricultural industry and related environmental concerns**
- **expansion of “industrial” agricultural facilities**
- **pressure to urbanize**
- **non-farm development and evolving rural landscape**
- **loss of flexibility**

- **traffic and safety concerns**
- **competition for land and inflated land values**
- **balancing appropriate levels of service**
- **complaints re. “normal” farming practices**
- **loss of political clout for rural communities in general and agriculture in particular**
- **local planning policy and relationship to agriculture**

Planning for Agriculture: BMP's for Municipalities

**“planning to prevent problems and
planning in response to problems”**

(note: corollary for farm groups)

- **Visioning:** recognize the importance of visioning - establish a vision for rural, not for urban
- **Timeframe:** consider the long-term implication of planning decisions
- **The Tough Decision:** don't shirk responsibility – make the tough decisions
- **The Public Role:** provide mechanism's for participation in the planning system

- **Sound Planning:** Subscribe to sound planning practices- minimum separation distances, minimize non-farm lot creation; agricultural zoning, etc.
- **Appropriate Standards:** establish fair and appropriate standards for new livestock facilities
- **Agriculture's Contribution:** recognize agriculture's contribution to the local community
- **Agriculture as Industry:** recognize the industrial nature of agriculture (this creates the basis for an agriculture first policy)
- **Non-farm Interests:** recognize legitimate interests of non-farm community

- **Respond to Environmental Issues:** develop & implement approaches to environmental issues (i.e. BMP's, NMP's, Good Neighbour Policy etc.). Recognize constraints and build on opportunities.
- **Monitor:** be vigilant - monitor environmental issues
- **Conflict Resolution:** Facilitate conflict resolution directly through actions and indirectly through support for other programs
- **Non-Regulatory Tools & Education:** promote non-regulatory tools (research, prov. grants, etc.)