

Supporting Growth and Sustainability in Simcoe County's Agri-Food Sector

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The Food Partners Alliance, through its Food and Agriculture Charter, supports the principles of long term economic growth and prosperity as well as agricultural sustainability. Locally and abroad, our farms provide more than just the food we need – they provide industry and opportunity. And in order for advanced and industrialized countries such as Canada to be able to feed its communities and indeed world populations, we know that it's necessary to enhance opportunities for local farms and agri-businesses in order to ensure the very future of these farming and agri-businesses. This provides a sustainable food system and indeed promotes economic growth.

For example, local food and agriculture-related businesses, both large and small scale, produce, store, package, promote, sell and deliver their products locally, nationally and internationally. This supports our local agricultural economy and generates spin-off commerce.

Today there are over 1,500 farms operating in Simcoe County, each of which contributes to ensuring a sustainable food system. There are also more than 16,000 businesses in Simcoe County, many working in the agri-food sector. As Canadians, we want the economic benefit of these farms and agri-businesses right here. From a healthcare perspective, we are healthier when we eat locally produced foods.

Simcoe County has an incredibly diverse range of traditional and organic agricultural products in all of Ontario. Among its unique offerings, county producers grow a wide variety of vegetables and fruits as well as meat, game and fish products including beef, goat, duck, fowl, and fish.

Our region produces some of Canada's best offerings for maple-syrup and maple-based products, fresh honey, and dairy products. One of Simcoe County's newest yields is the region's emergence as a leader in micro-brewing and beverage development. A list of local breweries can be found by visiting www.saintsandinnertrail.com.

Not surprisingly, Simcoe County is home to a vast array of food processors with leaders in the field such as Leadbetter Foods, and Fresh Mix, both of which operate alongside smaller-scale producers.

Simcoe County entrepreneurs continue to seek opportunities for increasing food production in both rural and urban areas and to support increased educational opportunities to learn more about the agricultural sector. This region clearly the place to be when it comes to food, agri-business and taking new food opportunities to market.