

# Providing ecosystem services: should programs foster competition or collaboration?

Elen Lemaitre-Curri\*

**Objective** After 25 years of experience with agrienvironmental incentives, researchers recommend:

- to increase competition between landholders' stewardship projects for a more cost-efficient use of funds (merit-based selection, reverse auctions...) OR
- to foster collaboration between landholders for widespread and durable changes in agriculture (collective bonus, peer to peer approaches, group projects, delegation to farmers' organizations...)

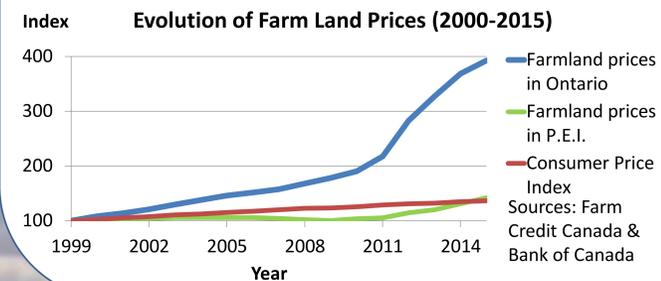
Can evidence from Ontario (& design comparisons with programs in other provinces and countries) bring insight in this debate & help with future designs?

## Ontario vs P.E.I.: important contextual factors

**Ontario:** high land prices, precarious tenure (rental)

Pressure on land-occupying & long-term BMPs (windbreaks, buffers...) & competition among farmers

**P.E.I.:** environmental risks for other sectors → 'social contract' → detailed regulations; community & legal enforcement  
+ voluntary contracts & collaborations



## Methodology

1. Comparison of program designs (≈ 25 in Ontario & 10 in other provinces, countries)
2. Motivations analysis with landholders participant & non-participant in 3 programs (qualitative research)
3. Designs testing (quantitative)

## Sources

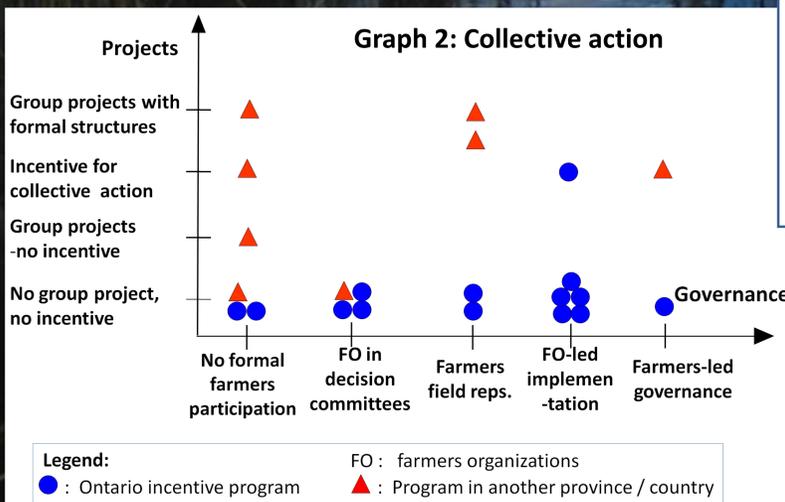
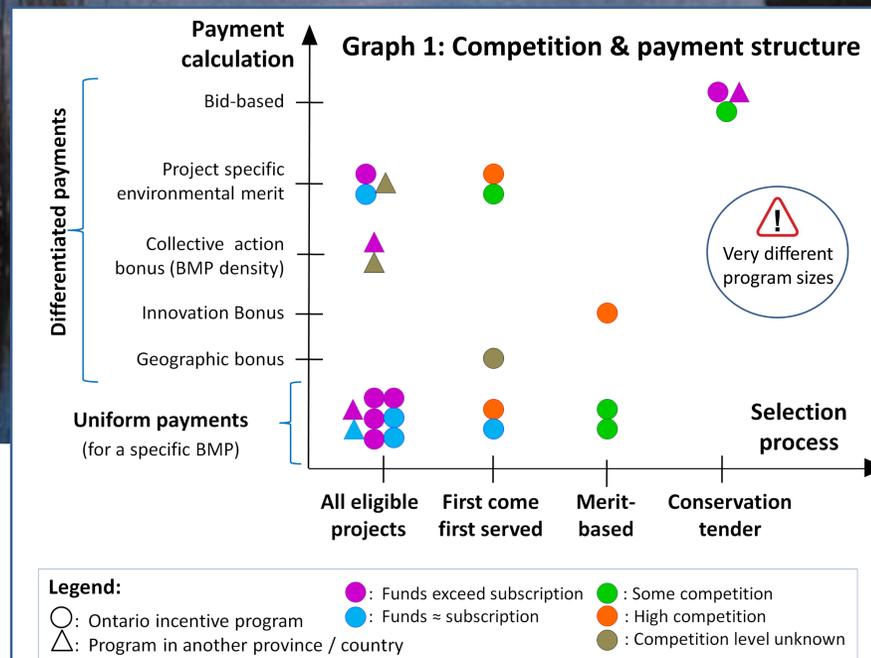
- Program documents
- Semi-structured interviews with: program managers, farmers, farmers' organizations, governments, NGOs ...
- Farmers meetings, programs meetings, field visits...

In progress: interviews with landholders

Choice experiment → Winter 2017

## Preliminary findings in Ontario (Phase 1)

1. **Great diversity of approaches, scales & actors.** Tests. Design evolutions.
  - + Lessons learned
  - ? Coordination costs
  - Adaptation to: target groups, objectives, opportunities
  - Learning costs
  - Pooling
2. Mixed approaches with competitive & collaborative features (peer to peer...) e.g. South Nation Clean Water Program
3. Competitive approaches ≠ competition (Graph 1)
4. High competition & demanding process limit applications
5. Limited appeal for group projects (to be confirmed). But approaches at farming system level, and bonuses for dense adoption could be worth further testing
6. To account for landholders' risk aversion, stakeholders consider:
  - more peer to peer promotion (farmers ambassadors, show cases...)
  - embedded technical assistance (cf. conservation authorities, GLASI)
  - support for risk taking, leading-edge innovation?
7. Differences in perceived fairness across programs; but do they impact participation?



To know more or participate:  
Elen Lemaitre-Curri  
[elen.lemaitrecurri@carleton.ca](mailto:elen.lemaitrecurri@carleton.ca)  
\* School of Public Policy and Administration - Carleton University

This research is supported by: the Economics and Environmental Policy Research Network (Environment and Climate Change Canada)