**Research Background**

**Problem:** limited information available to track historical losses of farmland.

**Objective:** identify and implement a strategy to measure farmland loss in Ontario.

**Solution:** utilize regional official plan amendments to track conversion of prime farmland to non-farm uses.

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**Scope**

**Time:** 2000 to 2014 (Phase I)

**Location:** Greater Golden Horseshoe

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**Methodology**

1. Determine areas with prime agricultural land.
2. Collect official plan amendments converting prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural designations.
3. Sort identified farmland loss by category: development, rural land use or special policy.

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**For more information:**

Visit the website: www.waynecaldwell.ca

Or email: Emma Drake – edrake@uoguelph.ca

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**Progress to date**

- 13 counties and regions completed in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, plus 2 study pilot areas
- 2 remaining areas in progress

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**Result to date**

- 21,821 hectares of prime agricultural land lost or converted through official plan amendments from 2000 – 2014
- 19,910 hectares converted to a rural or development designation
- 1,911 hectares modified with site-specific uses

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**Key Messages**

- Ontario has experienced large losses of prime agricultural land in the area bounded by several of the Great Lakes, this region being known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- The highest rates of agricultural land loss have historically been in the Greater Toronto Area, where high rates of population growth have been experienced
- The Greenbelt has been effective in preserving prime agricultural land within it’s borders, but land continues to be lost in unprotected areas
- Given the high rates of expected population growth, more prime agricultural land will likely be consumed
- Provincial and municipal planning policies are needed to protect prime agricultural land and maintain the agricultural, environmental and economic value it holds

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