



**Credit Valley
Conservation**
inspired by nature



6 Years of Bird-Friendly Certified Hay |

*Inspiring Agricultural Stewardship
in the Credit River Watershed*

November 19, 2019

Jordan Graham

Coordinator, Agricultural Outreach



Farmland in the Credit River Watershed





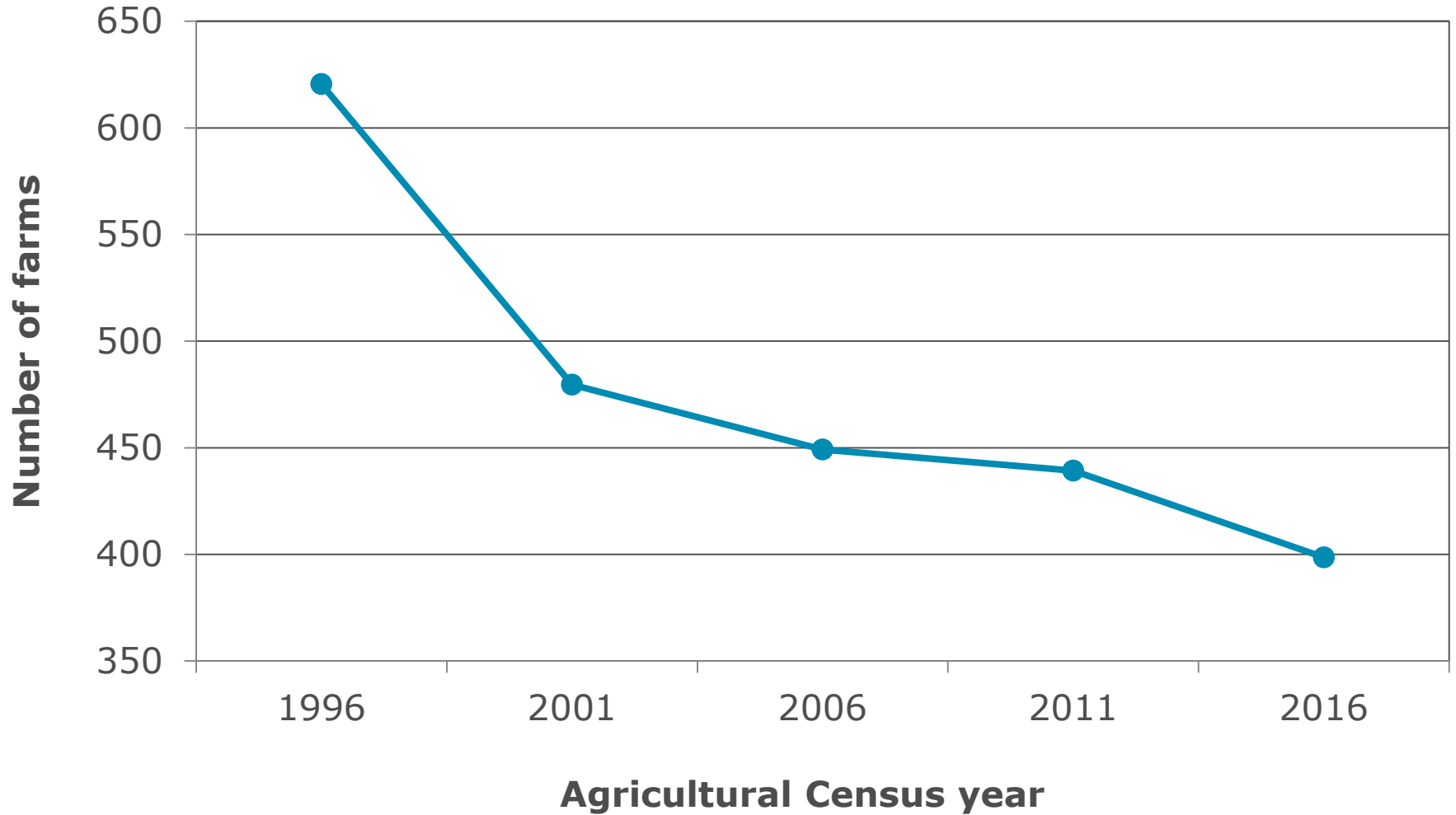
The Credit River Watershed



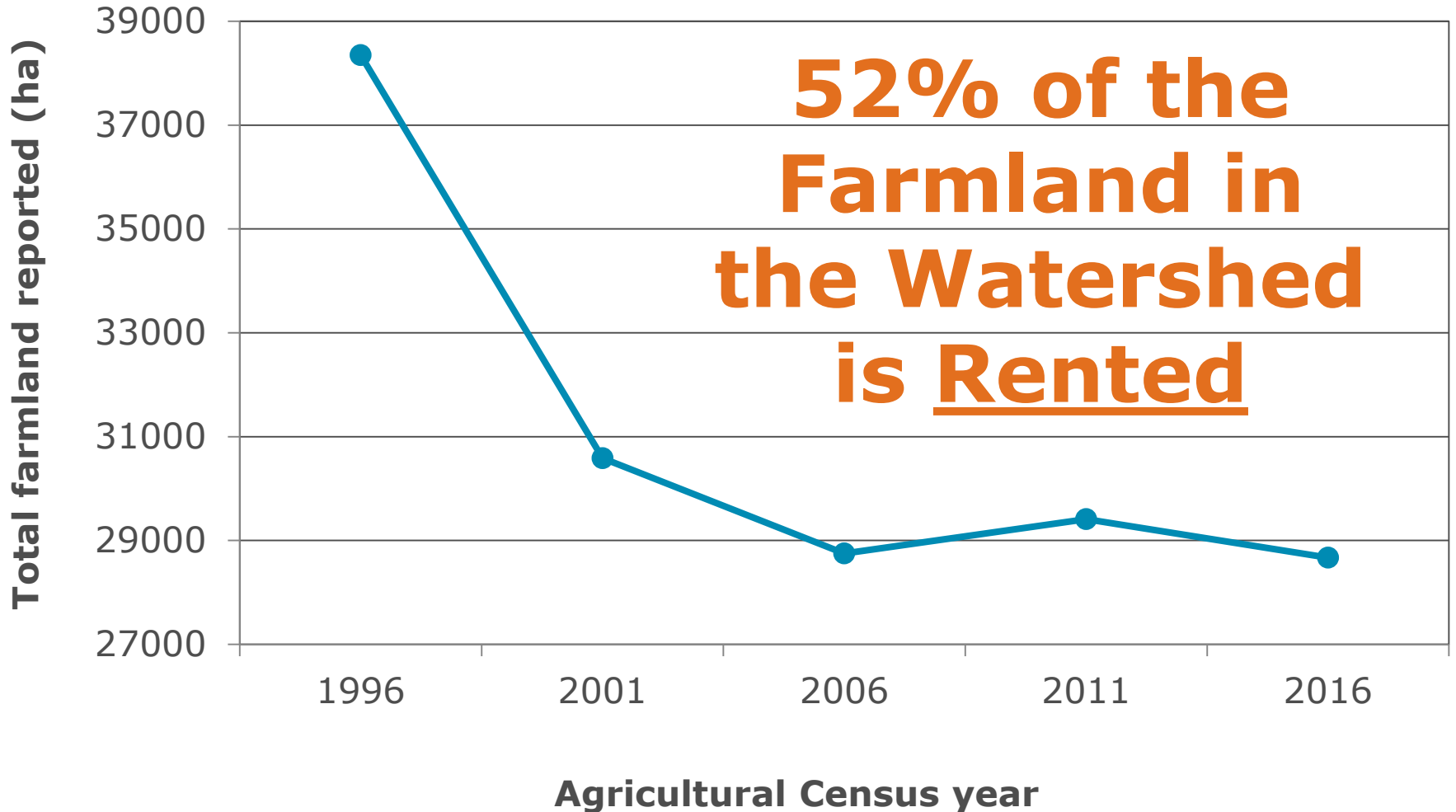
Statistical Profile

Examine changes in farmland from 1996 to 2016 using custom clipped data from the Canadian Census of Agriculture. www.cvc.ca/agstats

Number of Farms



Farmland (ha)





Crop and Livestock Trends

The Bird Friendly Certified Hay Program



What is Bird- Friendly Certified Hay?

Goal: Assist in the recovery of Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark by improving habitat quality, reducing nest damage and direct mortality of the species caused during haying operations.



How to achieve this goal?: Delay hay cutting until after the juvenile Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark have left the nest

Grassland Birds

- Require grasslands for all or most stages of their life cycle.
- Grassland birds have sustained greater declines than those in other habitat types.
- Bird Studies Canada estimated a 57% decline in grassland bird populations since 1970 in their State of Canada's Birds Report - 2019.



Bobolink

*(Dolichonyx
oryzivorus)*



Eastern Meadowlark

*(Sturnella
magna)*



How Does the Program Work?



HAY FOR SALE

No posts - be the first!

[VIEW ALL HAY FOR SALE](#)



HAY WANTED

Looking for good quality mixed...

[VIEW ALL HAY WANTED](#)



LAND WANTED

We are looking for hay fields to...

[VIEW ALL LAND WANTED](#)



LAND FOR RENT

5 ac in Caledon
10 ac in Alton
65 ac in caledon on.

[VIEW ALL LAND FOR RENT](#)

Production Standards

- First-cut is delayed until at least July 15th.
- No in-field machinery disturbances between May 1st and first-cut date.
- Minimum field area for enrollment in the Program is 5 ha (12.4 ac) – *we are flexible on this.*



Why Do Growers Participate?

- A desire to protect grasslands birds
- New niche farm product
- Diversify quality of forages available for sale
- Expand existing agricultural land-base
- Stage hay cutting operations to distribute workload
- Marketing services and competitive advantage





Farmers Helping Grassland Birds

Cody's Cows is a pasture based mixed farm offering antibiotic and hormone free beef, pork, chicken, turkey, lamb, goat and eggs.

On-farm pickup or delivery available.

Geoff and Shanna Maltby

519-853-5320 | codyscows@bell.net | codyscows.com

“Our farm is as much a wildlife refuge as it is a working farm”



About Bird-Friendly Certified Hay

The Bird-Friendly Certified Hay Program helps:

- Improve habitat and living conditions for grassland birds including at-risk species such as Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark.
- Participating hay growers connect with hay consumers looking to purchase Bird-Friendly Certified Hay.
- Landowners with farmland for rent connect with hay growers seeking rental lands to grow Bird-Friendly Certified Hay.

Learn more at:
birdfriendlyhay.ca



Why Do Landowners Participate?

- A stewardship ethic and desire to protect grassland birds.
- Potential property tax reduction of 75% on farmed acreage.
- Land rental income.
- Assisted networking with prospective tenants.
- Protect our shrinking agricultural land-base and support local agricultural operations.



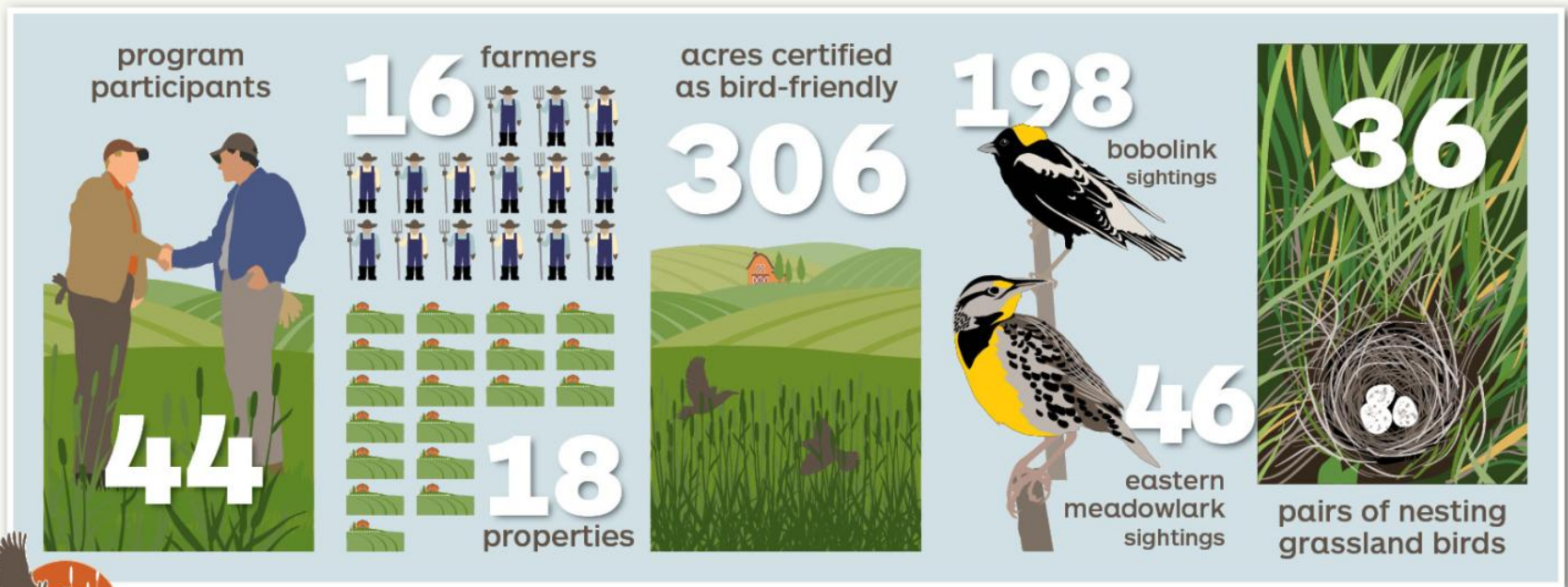
6 - Year Review



2019 Accomplishments

Bird-Friendly Certified Hay Program | 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Rural landowners and farmers are protecting grassland bird nesting habitat by delaying the hay harvest date on their lands.



Bird-Friendly
CERTIFIED HAY

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Grassland Bird Monitoring

- Modified transect method.
- Breeding activity assessed using Ontario Birding Bird Atlas Criteria.
- Every field is monitored once each year between the last week of June to first week of July.
- Limitations, but benefits to this approach.



2019 Citizen Science Monitoring



Program Accomplishments

- In 2019 approximately 2.5% of the hay acreage enrolled.
- Increasing trend of birds / acre.
- Increasing trend of confirmed nesting pairs / acre.
- Changing the narrative around species at risk on farmland.



Why Has This Program Worked?

- Engages multiple segments of the agricultural community.
- Builds relationships.
- The audience is understood.
- Success is measurable.
- It is cost-effective.
- Works well with CVC outreach staff work scheduling.
- The program re-engages participants.



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