



Healthy Lands For Healthy Horses
Increasing the Adoption of Best Management Practices on Horse Farms in Ontario

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1 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

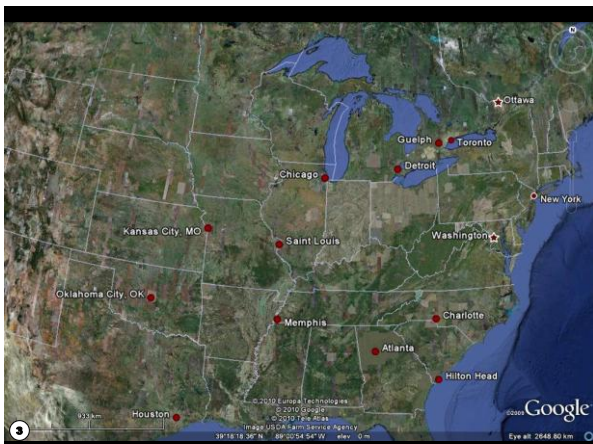


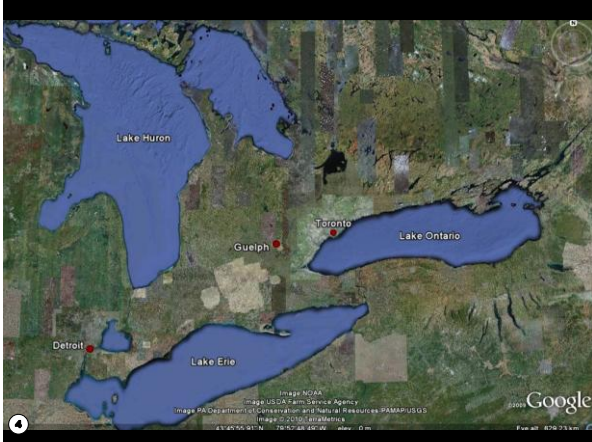
Presentation Outline

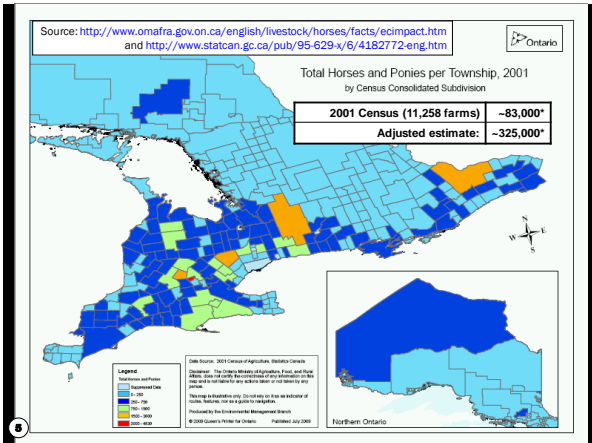
1. Horse Farms in Ontario
2. Agri-Environmental Programs in Ontario
 - A. Nutrient Management
 - B. Environmental Farm Plan
 - C. Barriers to adoption
3. Healthy Lands for Healthy Horses Project
4. Lessons and Next Steps

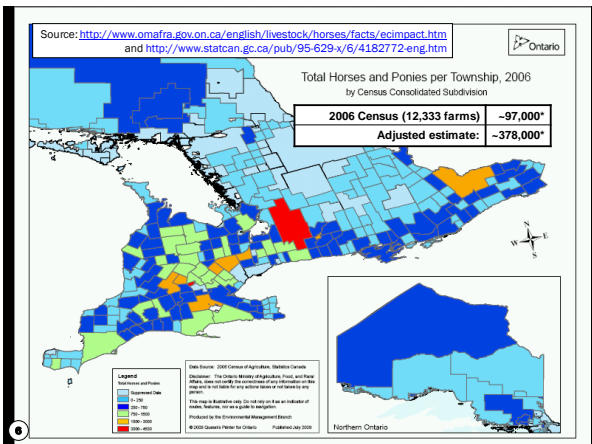
2 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs











The Role of the Horse Farm in the Changing Rural Landscape of Ontario

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Did you know...
...that there has been a 62.2% increase in adult horse owners since 1999

The Horse Farm in the Landscape
The purpose of this project is to evaluate the attitudes and behaviour of horse farm owners in the multifunctional rural landscape of Ontario, Canada.

Objectives of the Project:

- A comprehensive literature review on rural multifunctionality, rural transitions, and horses in society and culture.
- A survey of the membership of the Ontario Equestrian Federation regarding attitudes of horse owners and horse farm owners towards a variety of social, recreational, and environmental issues in the rural countryside.
- Key findings of the research findings as they relate to the multifunctional rural transition framework and current trends in the equine industry in Ontario.

Methodology

- A survey of the membership of the Ontario Equestrian Federation was conducted in the spring of 2007.
- The Ontario Equestrian Federation (OEF) is a not-for-profit sports-governing office that provides education, networking, and support to members of Ontario's equine community (OEF, 2007).
- 192 questionnaires were mailed out to adult members of OEF (total membership over 17,000).
- The final response rate to the survey was 81%.

Writing about horses is a labour of love. Available, the story unfolds upon geology, archaeology, history, agriculture, recreation and art. (MacEwan, 1986, foreword)

Landscape
Landscape multifunctionality is a concept that provides a framework for study into the complex relationships and demands on locally based landscape resources.

Landscape multifunctionality refers to:
 - production functions such as agriculture, forestry, hunting, and conservation of water;
 - ecological functions such as biodiversity, habitat, groundwater recharge, and
 - information functions such as aesthetics, local and regional identity, cultural heritage, and recreation.

Horse farms have been under studied with respect to their role in a multifunctional rural landscape.

Function Category	Potential Contributions of the Horse Farm
Ecological	- water filtration - open space and farmland preservation - wildlife habitat - biodiversity
Production	- hay production, bedding, veterinarian - field services, agricultural communities - breeding stock, sport, tourism
Community	- heritage, education - social connections, recreation - aesthetics

Facts about Horse Farms in Ontario

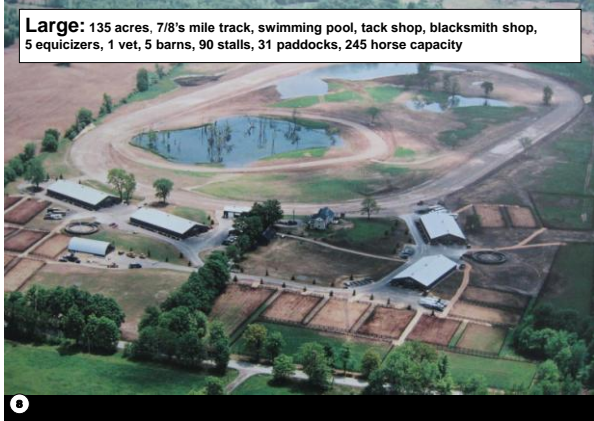
- Horses and equestrian sports have been gaining in popularity in Ontario for the past 20 years.
- There was an 8.5% increase in the Ontario equine herd between 1998 and 2001.
- Recently, horses have surpassed traditional agricultural commodity groups such as poultry, beef cattle, and vegetable production in terms of gross farm receipts in certain regions of Ontario.
- It is estimated that there is an expenditure of \$1,700.00 per horse annually in Ontario. This translates to an **estimated \$300,000,000.00** in expenditures by the **equine participants**.

Conclusions

- Horse farms are a growing and under-studied land use in rural Ontario.
- This study indicates that horse farm owners are willing to learn more about environmental practices on their properties.

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© Stew Hiltz, Director of Pasture Management, University of Guelph
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Large: 135 acres, 7/8's mile track, swimming pool, tack shop, blacksmith shop, 5 equicizers, 1 vet, 5 barns, 90 stalls, 31 paddocks, 245 horse capacity



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Medium: 40 acres, New show-jumping facility, innovative 'green' designs, composting system, 20 stalls, 8 paddocks, indoor riding arena, riding ring



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2. Agri-Environmental Programs in Ontario

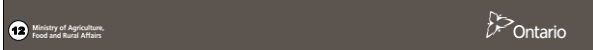


A. Nutrient Management



- Estimated **378,000** horses, on **54,169** farms (average **6** horses per farm)
- *Nutrient Management Act, 2002*
 - Regulations apply to large farms
 - Many horse farms not subject to Act because of size
- Many horse owners are not aware of adequate manure management practices
- Improving manure storages in simple, cost-effective ways greatly reduces the risks from manure

Source: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/07-045.htm>
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-629-x/6/4182772-eng.htm>
Nutrient Management Act, 2002 <http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca>





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B. Environmental Farm Plan

Philosophy

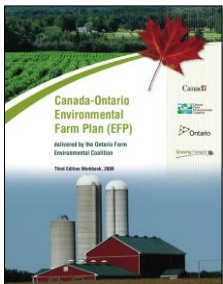
- Voluntary & confidential
- Self-directed, risk reduction approach
- Continuous on-farm improvements



This farm has an ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN



EFP Process



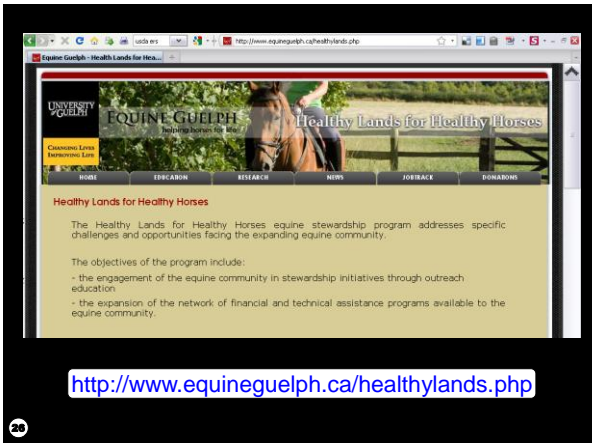
1. Farmer attends workshop
2. Completes workbook
 - a. Ranks farm
 - b. Identifies improvements
 - c. Develops action plan
3. Confidential peer review
4. Apply for cost share



Lessons From the Workshop

- Horse owners like to talk with each other
- Horse health is key for horse owners
- Most questions related to manure and pasture
- High interest in following up and taking action
- Many small horse farm owners wanted much more environmental information





Next Steps

- OMAFRA continues to work with its partners to address the needs of the equine sector
- More workshops in more watersheds
- Need to develop more targeted outreach materials
- Need to help promote that grants are in fact available
- Evaluate impacts of workshops and on-farm projects
- Examine longer-term sustainability of project





