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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOOD & RURAL AFFAIRS



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Results-Based Plan Briefing Book 2008/2009

Author:

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Last Reviewed:

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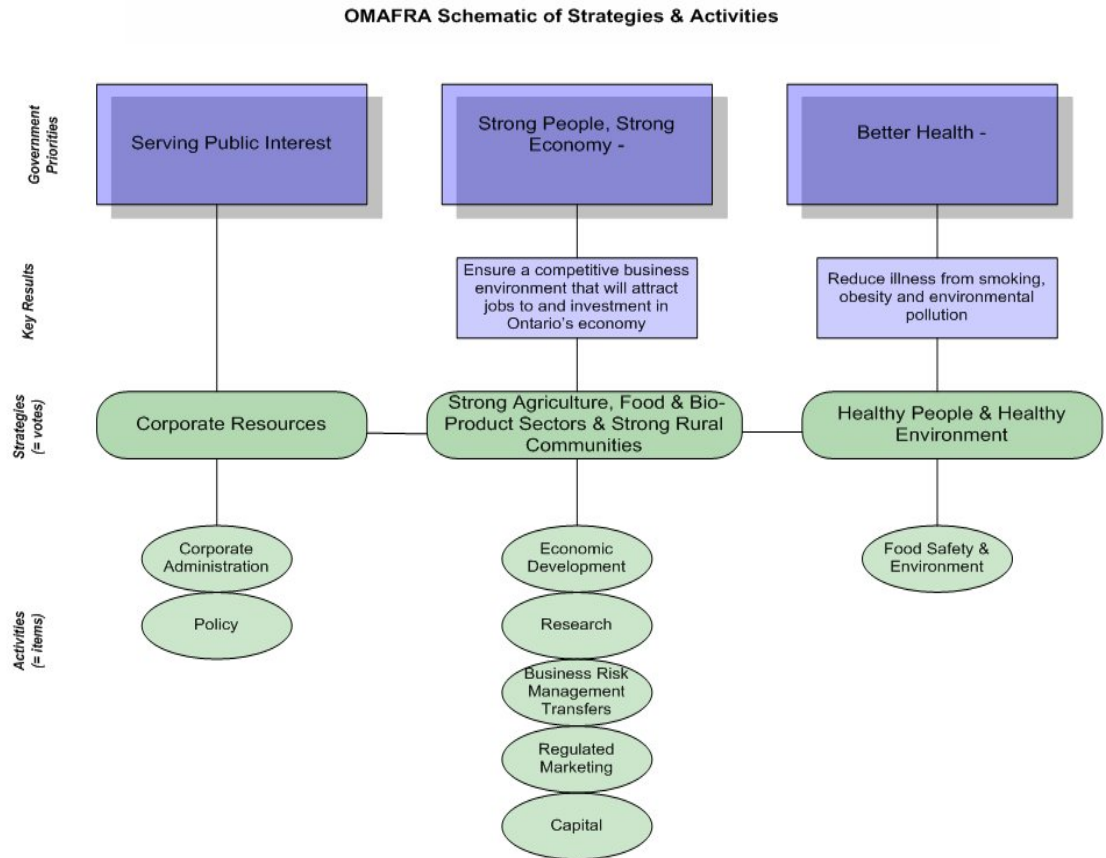
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Part I: Ministry Overview

Ministry Vision

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' (OMAFRA) vision is, "Thriving rural Ontario, agriculture, and food sectors". The ministry's mission is to be, "A catalyst for transforming our agriculture and food sectors, and rural communities, for a healthy Ontario".

The vision and mission support the government priorities of "Strong People, Strong Economy" and "Better Health" (see diagram, below).



[Text equivalent to graphic](#)

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Ministry Priorities and Strategies

The ministry's priorities are to strengthen Ontario's agri-food sector, enforce and improve food safety, protect the environment and strengthen Ontario's rural communities.

OMAFRA addresses these priorities under two main strategies:

1. strong agriculture, food and bioproduct sectors and strong rural communities
2. healthy people and healthy environment

The agri-food sector in Ontario is facing ongoing and new challenges, in particular rising energy, feed and labour costs. Many rural communities are also facing challenges, such as attracting, maintaining and expanding businesses and making infrastructure investments. The ministry works with partners to help the agri-food sector and rural Ontario meet these challenges.

The ministry is pursuing strategic investments in fostering innovation, developing research capacity, enhancing market opportunities and supporting rural communities to help overcome short-term challenges. The ministry must balance its role of providing support to demand-driven challenges while investing in a transformational agenda to effect change in the medium to longer term.

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Ministry Activities and Results

OMAFRA's key activities fall broadly under six categories within the two strategies. Under the strategy of "strong agriculture, food and bioproduct sectors and strong rural communities" are the following activities: economic development

- research
- business risk management transfers
- regulated marketing
- capital

Under the strategy of "healthy people and healthy environment" is:

- food safety and environment

Strategy - Strong agriculture, food and bioproduct sectors and strong rural communities

Economic Development Activity

- Green Energy from the Farm

The Ontario Biogas Systems Financial Assistance Program, announced in the summer of 2007, is a climate change initiative designed to encourage new anaerobic digester projects and further the development of existing anaerobic digester projects for sustainable biogas production in the agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors of Ontario.

In 2008/09, OMAFRA is spending \$3.5 million for this program, which fosters innovation and investment in Ontario's economy and supports other government initiatives in building rural economies, protecting the environment and producing clean green energy.

- Strengthening Rural Communities

As key ministry partners, OMAFRA, the Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services have laid the foundation to enable Ontario to increase the availability of affordable, high-speed broadband technologies to rural and remote areas of the province.

Building on investments made in 2007-08, OMAFRA is providing \$30 million over four years to the broadband initiative as part of a provincial Digital Strategy. This investment leverages the existing Rural Connections program that has already successfully committed almost \$8.5 million to 18 municipality-led projects in rural southern Ontario.

The Rural Economic Development (RED) program has a history of successful investments that have helped rural communities across the province overcome barriers to economic development. In 2008/09, OMAFRA will invest \$19.9 million in RED. This investment is consistent with the government's priority relating to jobs and prosperity.

The Ontario Small Waterworks Assistance Program (OSWAP) assists small communities, particularly

those in northern and rural Ontario, who face unique challenges with the financial sustainability and affordability of their drinking water systems. OMAFRA has assumed the role of OSWAP Secretariat and is responsible for delivering OSWAP funding to eligible applicants.

OSWAP will provide \$8 million over five years in operating grants to municipalities and local services boards with public drinking water systems serving 1,000 or fewer residents. A second stage of OSWAP will provide further assistance to small populations over the next four years.

The Ontario government is moving forward, in partnership with the federal government, to ensure Ontario farm families can increase their family income by taking advantage of opportunities in an ever-changing agriculture, food and bio-products economy. The federal government has provided the ministry with \$2 million to deliver the Canadian Agricultural Skills Service Program (CASS) in Ontario to reflect an extension to the Agricultural Policy Framework. CASS is a federally funded initiative that provides access to educational opportunities for lower income farmers and/or their spouses so they can improve their family income through improved profitability of the farm and/or increase family income through new business opportunities and employment.

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- Pick Ontario Freshness

Over the next four years, \$52 million is being invested to continue the highly successful Pick Ontario Freshness strategy. The response from consumers to this strategy has been positive - across the province people are more conscious of the importance of buying locally-produced food. To further promote Ontario foods, OMAFRA is investing \$4 million in a Farmer's Market Initiative. This funding will support the development and implementation of a broadly based, long term strategy for increasing access to Ontario-grown farm products. It will also help enhance economic opportunities for producers through farmers' markets and direct-to-consumer sales. This funding supports and complements the ongoing efforts of the Pick Ontario Freshness campaign to increase consumer interest in, and demand for, Ontario foods.

- Orchards and Vineyards

In partnership with the federal government, this program will support producers in Ontario's tree fruit and grape sectors who are undergoing a significant period of transformation due to industry pressures, the closure of food processors and changing markets. The funding is designed to help these growers make the transition to growing different, more marketable crops.

Research Activity

- University of Guelph Partnership

OMAFRA has signed a new partnership agreement between the ministry and the University of Guelph under which the province will provide approximately \$300 million over the next five years. The funding will go toward top-notch agri-food and rural research and development programs, animal health and food testing services, and education.

In the future, the partnership's research program will focus on seven themes that were recommended by the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, a group of agri-food industry leaders who advise the Minister. These themes reflect today's realities and anticipate tomorrow's opportunities in the sector and in our rural communities:

- agriculture production systems
- food for health
- environmental sustainability

- industrial uses for the bioeconomy
- agriculture and rural policy
- product development and enhancement
- emergency preparedness

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Business Risk Management Transfers Activity

OMAFRA is working with the federal government and industry to provide business risk management tools to help stabilize farm incomes and create an environment in which sound business decisions can be made. Business Risk Management (BRM) programs are designed to do this. Part of Ontario's efforts is a new national Business Risk Management suite of programs introduced for the 2007 year, consisting of AgriInvest, AgriStability and AgriInsurance. Work is underway with the federal government to further define a fourth program, AgriRecovery, to fill the gap in existing programming in the event of a disaster. Ontario introduced a three-year pilot Ontario Risk Management Program in partnership with producers of grains and oilseeds to address issues in their sectors. The ministry will continue to work with the agri-food industry and other governments to improve the BRM programs available to Ontario farmers, to ensure they effectively meet the needs of our producers.

Plum Pox Virus is a serious plant disease affecting tender fruit (e.g. peaches, plums, nectarines) that was first detected in Ontario in 2000. The virus does not kill trees but can significantly reduce yields as well as fruit quality and value, which affects the long-term viability of the tender fruit industry. The virus may also be hosted in ornamental plants and its presence is a threat to the nursery sector. Plum Pox Virus eradication is important to maintain these industries in Ontario.

While eradication efforts continue, OMAFRA is allocating \$1.6 million annually to extend the Plum Pox Virus Asset Loss Financial Assistance program to 2010/11. This program is a cost-shared federal/provincial program that compensates farmers for lost income related to removing infected trees.

Strategy - Healthy people and healthy environment

Food Safety and Environment Activity

OMAFRA is committed to strengthening a science-informed food safety system that will protect public health as well as enhance the competitiveness of the Ontario agri-food industry.

Ontario's farmers are good environmental stewards. To support their efforts, OMAFRA is joining the Ministry of the Environment to develop a Lake Simcoe protection strategy. This strategy aims to protect the quality and quantity of waters in the lake, supporting a healthy lake ecosystem. OMAFRA will coordinate the examination of agricultural components related to protecting the lake, including phosphorous management, education and outreach, and innovative technologies.

The current Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) partnership with the federal government expired March 2008. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have begun to develop the next generation of agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products policy. Called Growing Forward, this project will form the basis for a new policy framework for the sector.

Ontario has allocated \$2.6 million to extend specific programs outlined in the expired framework. This funding will go toward the Food Safety Initiative under the APF to help implement Good Manufacturing Practices and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans within the processing industry to maximize the safety of Ontario's food supply.

Highlights of 2007-08 Achievements

In December 2007, the ministry began implementation of a new suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs and made a decision to continue existing non-BRM programs under the current Agricultural Policy Framework (APF).

Grain and oilseed farmers began receiving initial payments under the three-year Risk Management Program pilot project in December 2007.

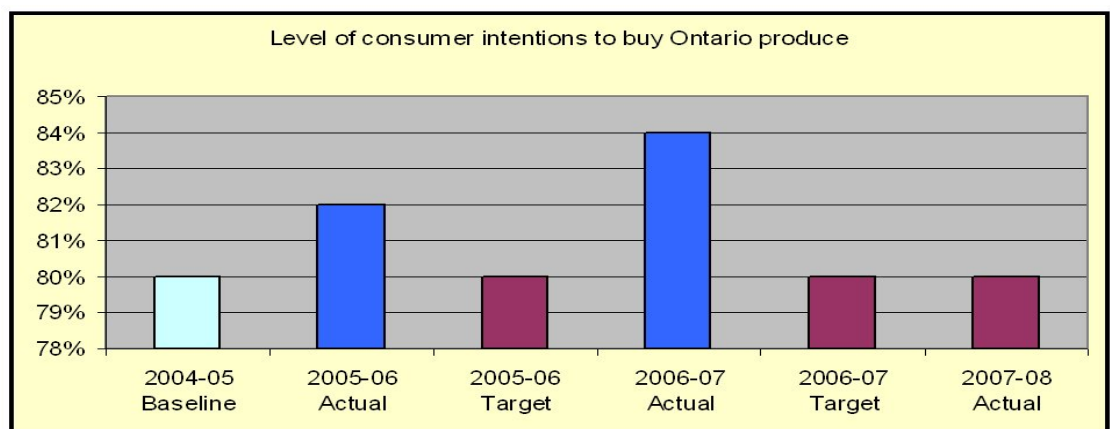
The ministry also developed a \$150 million package of assistance for Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture producers, who are under financial pressure due to a higher Canadian dollar, higher input costs and lower market prices.

As part of the transitional support package announced in January 2008, the ministry provided \$9 million to cattle abattoirs in Ontario. The funds helped the abattoirs with some operational costs that resulted from the July 2007 implementation of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's enhanced feed ban regulations.

OMAFRA completed negotiations with the University of Guelph on a new multi-year partnership for jointly managed research, laboratory testing and veterinary clinical education programming. This new agreement is built upon a new vision and outcome-oriented performance management system more aligned to government priorities such as transforming the agri-food sector to new markets and opportunities, maintaining a safe food supply, and protecting the safety of all Ontarians through enhanced focus on public health and emergency planning.

An additional \$56 million in one-time funding for the University of Guelph was also announced in the 2008 Ontario Budget to support research, animal health and the Ontario Veterinary College.

To better highlight to consumers the high-quality agri-food products being produced in Ontario, OMAFRA developed and launched the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy in June 2007. Ten million dollars were allocated to raise consumer awareness and promote the consumption of Ontario foods. Funds were directed towards initiatives such as advertising materials, and identifying Ontario products in-store and in-restaurant. An additional \$2.5 million was provided to agri-food organizations to help with their promotional efforts. The campaigns resulted in a measurable number of Ontarians stating they intended to buy Ontario products, far exceeding OMAFRA's target (see following chart).

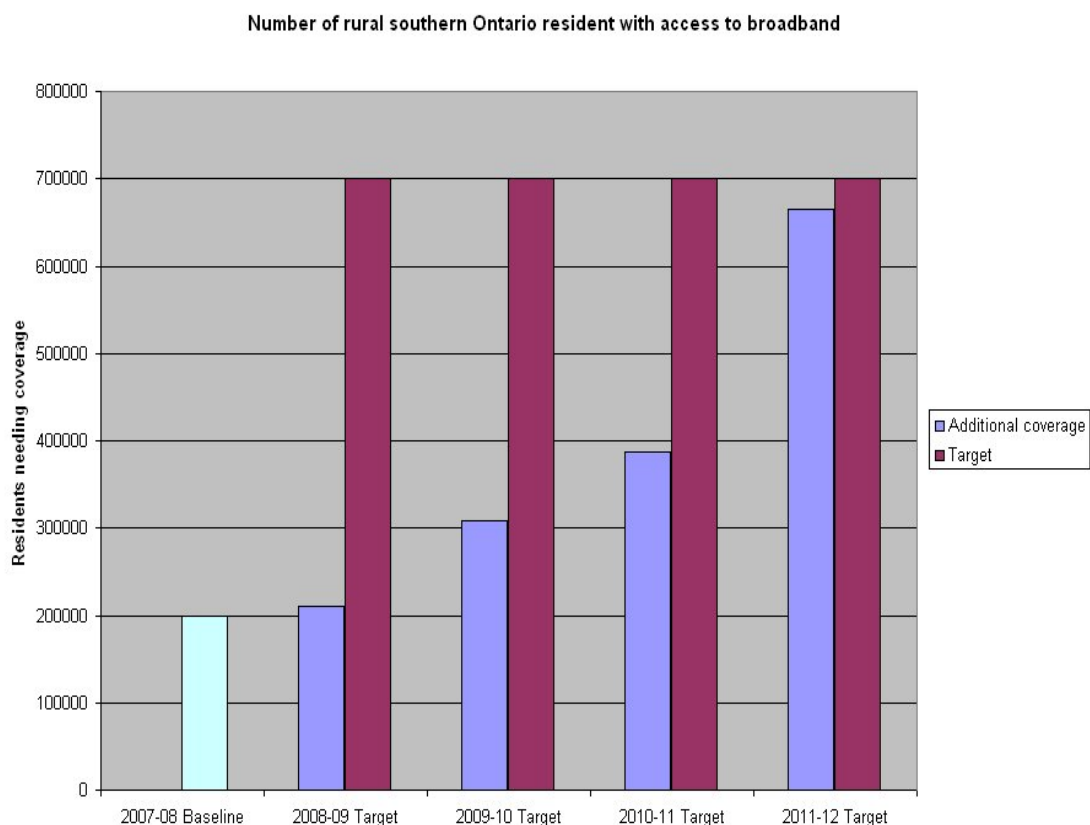


[Text equivalent to graphic](#)

More Ontarians intend to buy Ontario produce. This performance measure indicates the success of OMAFRA's Foodland Ontario consumer marketing. Data for this measure is collected through an annual study conducted by a research firm with grocery shoppers in Ontario communities with populations of more than 100,000.

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A modern, efficient and reliable telecommunications system is part of Ontario's plan for strong, sustainable rural communities. To this end, Rural Connections ... The Ontario Municipal Rural Broadband Partnership Program was launched to help address broadband gaps and bring high speed Internet access to rural southern Ontario. Eighteen capital infrastructure projects, with a funding commitment of \$8.5 million, were announced as part of this program (see following chart).



[Text equivalent to graphic](#)

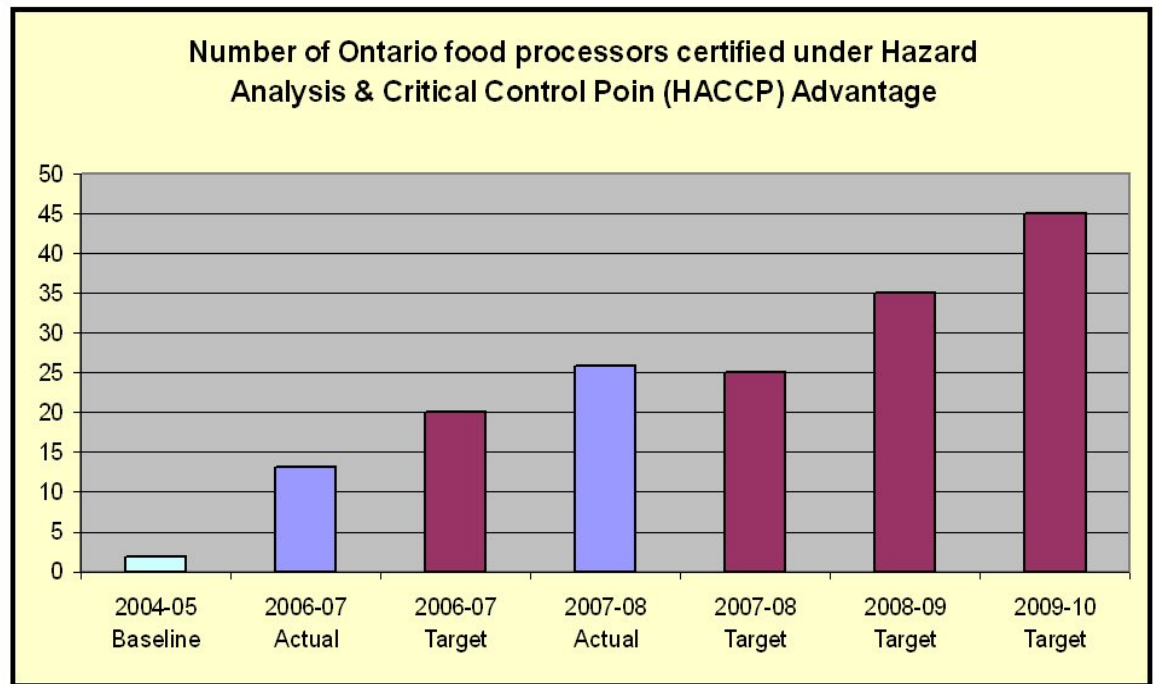
Based on today's technology and applications, high-speed broadband is defined as a high-capacity, two-way link between end user and access network suppliers capable of supporting high speed applications, such as full-motion, interactive video.

Affordable, accessible and efficient broadband access for public and private sectors in rural southern Ontario will provide communities and individuals with opportunities to fully participate in the knowledge economy, thereby stimulating citizen engagement, job growth and economic diversification in rural communities.

In 2007-08, 170 freestanding meat plants were phased in under the meat regulation of the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001. With these new plants, OMAFRA now has the regulatory authority for the licensing and inspection of approximately 290 free-standing meat processing plants, in addition to approximately

160 slaughter plants. Target numbers were achieved for meat plants certified under Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Advantage.

HACCP is an internationally recognized system for improving food safety. The system is designed to help prevent problems in food production, processing and handling before they can occur.



[Text equivalent to graphic](#)

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HACCP Advantage is a made-in-Ontario program specifically designed for small and medium-sized food processors. It offers a voluntary, staged approach to food safety management which helps meet the needs of specific markets and suppliers. As the above chart shows, OMAFRA exceeded its target for the adoption of HACCP Advantage by provincial food processors

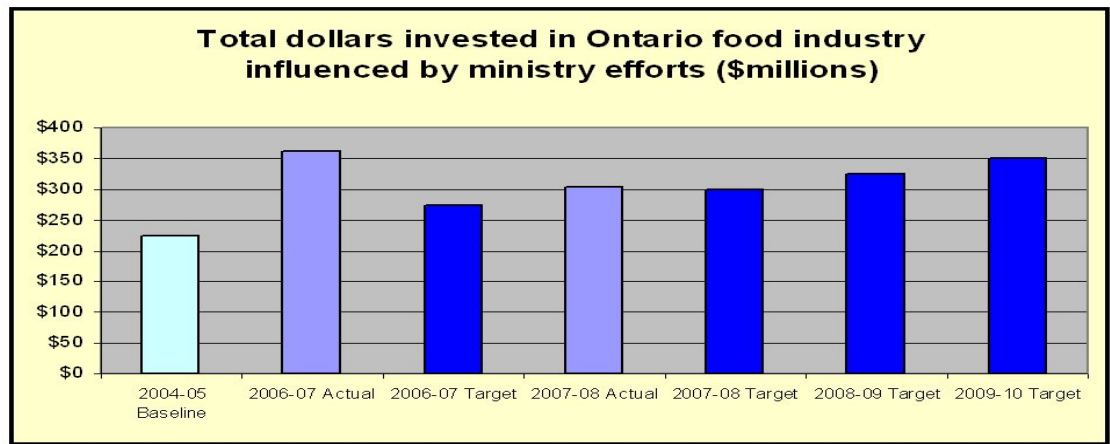
Ontario's agri-food sector is the second largest goods manufacturing industry in the province. It contributes \$30 billion to the economy every year and employs more than 700,000 people.

As part of this contribution, last year OMAFRA influenced a total of \$303.1 million in new investment in the food processing sector, resulting in the creation or retention of 4,545 jobs (as of March 31, 2008). An additional \$163 million was invested in Ontario and 1,827 jobs created or retained in rural manufacturing and bioproducts sectors (see following chart).

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- [Minister's Office](#)
- [Job Opportunities](#)
- [Service Ontario](#)

[Text equivalent to graphic](#)

This performance measure tracks the total dollar value of new capital investment in the food processing industry (e.g. land, bricks and mortar, machinery and equipment). Data is collected by the ministry, through contact with clients and monitoring media coverage to reflect the level of ministry influence.

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The following is a complete list for which the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible:

Topics

- [Agriculture](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Rural](#)
- [Research & Innovation](#)
- [Food Safety](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Programs & Resources](#)
- [Agencies, Boards & Commissions](#)
- [What's New](#)

- AgriCorp Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 17, Sched. A
- Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. A.9
- Agricultural Employees Protection Act, 2002, S.O. 2002, c. 16
- Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. A.13
- Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. A.14
- Animals for Research Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. A.22
- Beef Cattle Marketing Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.5
- Bees Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. B.6
- Commodity Board Members Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.18
- Commodity Boards and Marketing Agencies Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.19
- Crop Insurance Act (Ontario), 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 17, Sched. C
- Dead Animal Disposal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. D.3
- Drainage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. D.17
- Farm Implements Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.4
- Farming and Food Production Protection Act, 1998, S.O. 1998, c.1
- Farm Products Containers Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.7
- Farm Products Grades and Sales Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.8
- Farm Products Marketing Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.9
- Farm Products Payments Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.10
- Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act, 1993, S.O. 1993, c. 21
- Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 20
- Grain Corn Marketing Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. G.9
- Grains Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. G.10
- Livestock and Livestock Products Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.20
- Livestock Community Sales Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.22
- Livestock Identification Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.21
- Livestock Medicines Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.23
- Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.24

- Milk Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.12
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.16
- Ministry of Energy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.23, sections 8 and 9 insofar as the powers and duties set out in those sections are required to develop and administer the Ontario Ethanol Growth Fund program.
- Nutrient Management Act, 2002, S.O. 2002, c. 4. Under this legislation, OMAFRA approves on-farm nutrient management plans and strategies while the Ministry of the Environment leads inspection and enforcement activities.
- Ontario Agricultural Museum Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.8
- Ontario Agriculture Week Act, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 10
- Ontario Food Terminal Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.15
- Plant Diseases Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.14
- Pounds Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.17
- Tile Drainage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.8
- Veterinarians Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. V.3
- Weed Control Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. W.5

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Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs)

To better serve the agri-food industry, OMAFRA relies on 11 agencies, boards and commissions. Some, such as the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal, have an adjudicative role. Others provide specific services. AgriCorp, for example, administers production insurance programs to provide farmers with protection against natural hazards and delivers income stabilization payments. The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission is a regulatory agency which supervises the province's 21 marketing boards and three representative commodity associations.

The following is a complete list of agencies, boards and commissions for which the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible. Only those entities with assets, liabilities, revenues or expenses greater than \$50 million, or an annual surplus or deficit or outside revenue source of greater than \$10 million are consolidated in the ministry's Results-based Plan.

Agricorp (Operational Enterprise)

Agricorp, a crown corporation established in January 1997, has responsibility for the functions of the former Crop Insurance Commission of Ontario. It administers production insurance programs for more than 60 commercially grown crops to provide farmers with protection against natural hazards, such as weather disasters. It also delivers AgriStability formerly the Canadian Agricultural Stabilization Program which provides money to Ontario agricultural producers against both small and large declines in farm income. The table below represents the expected year-end position for 2007-08 and the current year plan for the Agricorp consolidation as stated in the Ontario Budget.

	Plan 2008-09	Interim Actuals 2007-08*
\$Millions		
Revenue	294.7	241.5
Expenses	313.3	266.0
Surplus (Deficit) Impact	(18.6)	(24.5)

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Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal (Adjudicative Agency)

The role of the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal is to provide an accessible, efficient, independent, fair appeal process and responsible decisions, to anyone aggrieved by a decision that is appealable to the Tribunal under its legislative mandate. The Tribunal hears applications and appeals made under 20 statutes including the Drainage Act, the Milk Act, the Farm Products Marketing Act, the Crop Insurance Act, the Assessment Act and also the Agricultural Employees Protection Act, 2002. All members of the Tribunal are cross-appointed to a Board of Negotiation which may mediate disputes under the Environmental Protection Act.

Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO) (Operational Service)

The role of the ARIO is to: provide advice to the Minister on ministry funded research with respect to agriculture, food, veterinary medicine and consumer studies; select and recommend new areas of research for the betterment of agriculture, food, veterinary medicine and consumer studies; and stimulate interest in research as a means of developing a high degree of efficiency in the production and marketing of agricultural and food products in Ontario. Research infrastructure is critical to the future success of Ontario's agri-food research and innovation effort and in 2006-07, the 14 provincial research stations and three agricultural colleges were transferred from the government to ARIO. The transfer of the stations and colleges to ARIO received broad stakeholder support. The table below represents the expected year-end position for 2007-08 and the current year plan for the ARIO consolidation as stated in the Ontario Budget.

	Plan 2008-09	Interim Actuals 2007-08*
\$Millions		
Revenue	1.6	2.3
Expenses	2.7	4.9
Surplus (Deficit) Impact	(1.1)	(2.6)

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Board of Negotiations (Adjudicative Agency)

The role of the Board of Negotiations is to facilitate the settling of claims for crop damage due to the release of a contaminant into the environment (Consolidated into the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal as of December 1999).

Boards Under the Farm Products Payments Act

Under the Farm Products Payments Act, funds and boards are established to: protect producers from non-payment by dealers; investigate claims; grant or refuse payment of claims; and, determine the amounts and manner of payment. Boards administering funds under the Farm Products Payment Act are the Grain Financial Protection Board, and Livestock Financial Protection Board. All boards under this Act are "regulatory agencies" with most program administration costs being absorbed by the ministry and all board expenses being absorbed by the respective funds.

- **Grain Financial Protection Board (Trust Agency).** This board collects fees and administers The Fund for Grain Corn Producers, The Fund for Soybean Producers, and The Fund for Canola Producers and the Fund for Wheat Producers. It approves claims made under the Grain Financial Protection Program, to protect producers of grain corn, canola, soybeans and wheat in the event of default on payment by a licensed buyer.

- **Livestock Financial Protection Board** (Trust Agency). This board collects fees, administers The Fund for Livestock Producers and reviews claims made against it under the Ontario Beef Cattle Financial Protection Program, to protect producers and other sellers of beef cattle in the event of default on payment by a licensed buyer.

Livestock Medicines Advisory Committee (Advisory Agency)

This committee reviews all legislation and regulations pertaining to livestock medicines; inquires into and reports to the Minister on any matter referred to the committee by the Minister; advises the Minister on matters relating to the control and regulation of livestock medicines and evaluates and recommends procedures relating to the sale of livestock medicines and proper standards for maintenance, handling and storage of livestock medicines; makes recommendations with respect to the description of drugs, or classes of drugs, as livestock medicines and the designation of livestock medicines for sale under a licence or any class of licence.

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Normal Farm Practices Protection Board (Adjudicative Agency)

The Normal Farm Practices Protection Board hears appeals which arise under the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, 1998.

Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission (Regulatory Agency)

The Commission supervises Ontario's 21 marketing boards and three representative commodity associations created under the Farm Products Marketing Act and the Milk Act; develops, recommends and implements policy with respect to regulated marketing in Ontario; provides education programs to Ontario's marketing boards and industry stakeholders to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the regulated marketing system; and, provides strategic leadership to marketing boards and representative associations. The Commission is also responsible for the enactment of milk and milk product quality regulations under the Milk Act which are then enforced by the director named under the Milk Act.

Ontario Food Terminal Board (Operational Enterprise)

The Ontario Food Terminal, located in Toronto, is a wholesale produce market that leases land, warehouse units, offices and other facilities to farmers, wholesalers and allied services.

Rural Economic Development (RED) Panel Board of Directors (Advisory Agency)

The Panel reviews RED project applications and makes recommendations for funding to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

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Minsitry Organization Chart

[OMAFRA Organization Chart](#)

Text equivalent of OMAFRA Organization Chart:

Minsitry Organiztion Chart
Minister: Leona Dombrowsky
Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission: Dave Hope
Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal
Agricorp: Liam McCreery

Deputy Minister: B.A. (Bruce) Archibald
Communications: Tom Rekestis
Legal Services*: Michael Brady

Research & Corporate Services Division: Karen Chan
 Business Planning and Financial Management: Madeleine Davidson
 Service Management: Shelly Gibson
 Human Resources: Jim Felker
 Research & Innovation: Gwen Zellen
 Audit Services**: Tracy Dallaire
 Information Technology***: Franco Merlino
 Director, Transition: Bill Ingratta

Food Safety & Environment Division: Deb Stark
 Food Safety Programs: Gwen McBride
 Food Inspection: Rena Hubers
 Environmental Management: Peter Meerveld
 Animal Health & Welfare: Tom Baker

Economic Development Division: Bonnie Winchester
 Agriculture Development: Aileen MacNeil
 Business Development: George Borovilos
 Rural Community Development: Brian Cardy
 Client Services: Phil Malcolmson

Policy Division: Dave Antle
 Strategic Policy: Brent Kennedy
 Farm Finance: Christine Kuepfer
 Food Safety & Environmental Policy: Ling Mark
 Economic Development Policy: Thom Hagerty

Regulated Marketing Division: Dave Hope
 Farm Products Marketing Commission: Arva Machan
 Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal: Lorne Widmer

*Legal Services provided by the Ministry of Attorney General

**Audit Services provided by the Ministry of Finance

***IT Services provided by the Land and Resources Cluster

Ministry Financial Information

Operating and Capital Summary by Vote

OMAFRA helps to build and maintain a strong, competitive agri-food sector that is integral to Ontario's economy. OMAFRA invests in the following key areas: innovation, research, rural economic development, food safety, environmental stewardship, farm income support, and emergency preparedness. The ministry also helps rural Ontario to build strong, vital communities with diversified economies and healthy social climates.

Votes/ Programs	Estimates 2008/09 \$	Changes from Estimates 2007/08 \$	Change %	Estimates 2007/08 \$	Interim Actuals 2007/08* \$	Interim Actuals 2006/07**

Operating and Capital - Vote1: Ministry Administration	37,385,800	5,334,600	16.6	32,051,200	32,735,200	31,092,193
Vote 7: Better Public Health and Environment	65,301,600	(24,207,000)	(27.0)	89,508,600	91,161,100	59,973,747
Vote 8: Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities	693,246,500	(156,154,100)	(18.4)	849,400,600	835,865,400	731,686,583
Total Including Special Warrants	795,933,900	(175,026,500)	(18.0)	970,960,400	959,761,700	822,752,523
Less Special Warrants	0	(209,600,000)	(100.0)	209,600,000	209,600,000	-
Total to be Voted	795,933,900	34,573,500	4.5	761,360,400	750,161,700	822,752,523
Special Warrants	0	(209,600,000)	(100.0)	209,600,000	209,600,000	-
Statutory Appropriations	96,014	(14,526)	13.1	110,540	78,500	3,090,900
Ministry Total Operating & Capital Expense	796,029,914	(175,041,026)	(18.0)	971,070,940	959,840,200	825,843,423
Consolidations & Other Adjustments	316,057,800	54,525,000	20.8	261,532,800		247,970,144
Ministry Total Operating and Capital	1,112,087,714	(120,516,026)	(9.8)	1,232,603,740	959,840,200	1,073,813,567
Assets - Vote 1: Ministry Administration	300,000	-	-	300,000	0	-
Vote 7: Better Public Health and Environment	500,000	-	-	500,000	0	-

Vote 8: Strong Agriculture, Food and Bio-product Sectors and Strong Rural Communities	3,300,000	-	-	3,300,000		-
Total to be Voted	4,100,000	-	-	4,100,000	0	-
Statutory Appropriations	11,800,000	-	-	11,800,000	0	4,853,000
Total Assets to be Voted	15,900,000	-	-	15,900,000	0	4,853,000

* Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the 2008 Ontario Budget.

** Actuals for 2006/07 are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure.

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Appendix I: Annual Report 2007-08

OMAFRA supports the government priorities of Strong People, Strong Economy and Better Health, and carries out its mandate under two main strategies: strong agriculture, food and bioproduct sectors and strong rural communities; healthy people and healthy environment.

Strong Agriculture, Food and Bioproduct Sectors and Strong Rural Communities

During development of a new Agricultural Policy Framework, the ministry moved forward with programs designed to mitigate shorter-term risks for Ontario producers. Initial payments under the three-year Risk Management Program pilot project to support the grain and oilseed sector began flowing in December 2007. The ministry also developed an assistance package for Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture producers, who are under financial pressure due to a high Canadian dollar, rising input costs and lower market prices. A total of \$150 million was issued to producers by the end of March 2008.

Ontario's agri-food sector must continue to invest in strategies and programs that promote the sustainability of the sector and build new markets for Ontario's agri-food products. OMAFRA recognizes the important role that research and innovation will play in realizing this objective.

To better highlight to consumers the high-quality agri-food products being produced in Ontario, OMAFRA developed and launched the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy in June 2007. A total of \$10 million dollars was spent to raise consumer awareness and promote the consumption of Ontario foods.

Significant resources were dedicated to attracting new investments in Ontario's food processing, bioproducts and rural manufacturing sectors. Last year, the ministry influenced a total of \$303.1 million in new investment in the food processing sector, resulting in the creation or retention of 4,545 jobs. Including rural manufacturing and bioproducts sectors, \$466.6 million in new investment has been influenced, creating or retaining 6,372 jobs.

Ontario's food and beverage processors will be able to increase their competitiveness and reduce costs with new technical, advisory, training and environmental sustainability programs designed and delivered by industry experts, with a \$3 million investment provided to them in January 2008. This funding will allow

- the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors to design and deliver a program to encourage innovation and productivity in the food processing sector
- The Guelph Food Technology Centre to carry out environmental and energy audits at food plants, and training programs for plant managers to implement the changes recommended in the audits.

Ontario provided \$12.5 million in 2006/07 and an additional \$12.5 million in 2007/08 to the Vineland Research and Innovations Centre Incorporated for research projects that support the mission of this new Centre at Vineland.

Together with funding from the federal government, Ontario's investment is the first step to creating a vital hub for horticultural science and innovation in Vineland by making it a model for research facilities elsewhere in the province and the country.

The Vineland Research Station was created in 1906, when a local citizen donated the property to the province to create a centre of excellence in horticultural research. Ontario's tender fruit and grape and wine industries have reaped the benefits of the work conducted there, which included plant breeding and the introduction of new varieties, production techniques and post-harvest technologies.

Honey bees play an important role in the production of some fruit and vegetable crops, with an estimated value of over \$170 million. In addition, the honey crop is worth over \$14 million. Six weeks of bitter cold in early 2007 contributed to a decline in Ontario's honey bee population, and the province invested \$3 million in a Special Beekeepers Fund.

The Special Beekeepers Fund directly compensated beekeepers who suffered higher than normal hive losses over the winter, and provided the Ontario Beekeepers' Association funding for research, technology transfer, and to help promote Ontario honey.

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Rural Economic Development and Policy Coordination

OMAFRA continued to fine-tune its rural economic development work and policy coordination. In conjunction with federal and municipal partners, the ministry delivered Ontario's commitment of \$298 million through the Canada-Ontario Municipal Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF). The ministry also worked with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal to support the \$450 million Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative.

Rural Connections ... The Ontario Municipal Rural Broadband Partnership Program was launched to bring high speed Internet service to rural areas of southern Ontario. Eighteen capital infrastructure projects, with a commitment of \$8.5 million, were announced. Ministry staff continue to work with municipalities to implement their projects and worked with other ministries to further develop a Digital Strategy for Ontario.

The ministry negotiated a new three-year, \$240,000 Memorandum of Agreement with the Ontario Rural Council to provide a forum for the province to engage in dialogue with rural stakeholders and to enhance and facilitate rural economic development.

Healthy People and Healthy Environment

Food Safety

The province's meat regulation, part of the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001, ensures that meat processed in provincially licensed plants meets thorough food safety requirements. Provincial meat plants have been phased in under the meat regulation since its 2005 introduction. The meat industry benefits from the stronger safety standards in the regulation as consumer confidence in their products increases.

With the addition of 170 freestanding meat plants coming under the regulation in 2007-08, OMAFRA now has the regulatory authority for the licensing and inspection of approximately 290 free-standing meat processing plants, in addition to approximately 160 slaughter plants. Target numbers were achieved for meat plants certified under Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Advantage.

Ontario's cattle industry continues to feel the effects of the 2003 discovery of BSE in an Alberta cow. In April 2007, the McGuinty government committed \$6 million to help the industry comply with new federal feed ban regulations designed to eliminate BSE from Canada's cattle herds.

As part of the transitional support package announced in January 2008, the ministry provided \$9 million to cattle abattoirs in Ontario. The funds helped the abattoirs with some operational costs that resulted from the July 2007 implementation of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's enhanced feed ban regulations.

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Environment

Environmental issues such as climate change, energy supply, waste management and water quality are important to Ontario's agricultural and food sectors.

Biogas systems are fuelled by renewable materials like manure, crops and crop residues and food processing by-products. They can produce electricity and heat or replace conventional fuels like natural gas. Agricultural and food producers can use the electricity produced from their biogas system to meet their operation's energy demands. In addition, they can sell excess electricity to the electrical grid.

A biogas system that uses manure from 250 cows could result in 400 fewer tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and 550 additional megawatt-hours of power production every year.

The \$9 million Ontario Biogas Systems Financial Assistance Program was launched in July 2007 to help farmers and rural businesses carry out feasibility studies for the installation of biogas systems as well as cover a proportion of construction and implementation costs.

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For more information:

Toll Free: 1-888-466-2372

Local: (519) 826-3100

E-mail: about.omafra@ontario.ca

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