

June 12th, 2006

WHEREAS one of the recommendations of the approved GTA Agricultural Action Plan states as follows: “Encourage the Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) to develop programs, identify securement mechanisms (including financial) and obtain support from the province, municipal Councils and agricultural organizations;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Ontario Farmland Trust, at its meeting held on Monday, January 30th, 2006, resolved “that the Ontario Farmland Trust bring to the attention of all levels of Government the need to extend the Eco-Gifts Program to a Farmland Gifts Program, or arrange for the establishment of a similar Farmland Gifts Program”;

AND WHEREAS agriculture is an important industry in Ontario earning significant export revenue for the province and providing employment in allied food and support industries;

AND WHEREAS an agricultural land base with high quality soils and a conducive climate is essential to maintaining a strong agricultural industry;

AND WHEREAS farmland provides ecological services, which sustain water and air-quality resources and provide recreational resources;

AND WHEREAS the market value of farmland is much lower than the value of land to be developed for residential, commercial or industrial purposes providing powerful economic incentives to convert land away from agricultural uses;

AND WHEREAS the Ontario Farmland Trust and other charitable trusts have been created with the power to hold restrictive easements and covenants and other interests in land donated by landowners to ensure that they remain available for agricultural use in perpetuity;

AND WHEREAS donors of interests in land which have specified ecological features qualify for significant benefits under the ecological gifts provisions of the Canada and Ontario Incomes Tax Acts,

AND WHEREAS donors of such easements make sacrifices of great value to society,

NOW THEREFORE BE AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

1. **THAT** the Town of Markham supports the current efforts of the Ontario Farmland Trust in regards to:
 - the federal and provincial governments being urged to amend their Income Tax Acts to provide the same benefits to donors of farmland for which donors of ecologically sensitive lands now qualify;
 - the federal and provincial governments being requested to consider other farmland conservation incentives to ensure that farmland remains in agriculture.
2. **THAT** copies of this resolution be forwarded to all lower and upper tier municipalities across the Province of Ontario urging their support for these initiatives.

APPENDIX B



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF MARKHAM

**EXCERPT CONTAINING ITEM #0004 OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF MEETING
NO.12 (Jun 12, 2006)**

**4. ONTARIO FARMLAND TRUST – REQUEST FOR Page 41 SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION -
(7.6)**

Request for Support of Resolution

Ms. Melissa Watkins, Executive Director, and Mr. Don Prince, Board Member, of the Ontario Farmland Trust, presented information relating to the Ontario Farmland Trust.

Moved by Councillor D. Horchik

Seconded by Regional Councillor B. O'Donnell

That the presentation by representatives of the Ontario Farmland Trust requesting support for a resolution to the Federal and Provincial governments relating to agricultural land, be received;

And that the matter be referred to staff for further review;

And that staff report back with an appropriate recommendation.

CARRIED

[Back to Main Search](#)

Town of Markham - Clerks Department

MEMBERSHIPS

Your membership will support our important work such as research and public education as well as on-the-ground projects to protect Ontario's farmland for future generations of farmers.

Your member benefits include:

- Voting rights at the Annual General Meeting in June
- Subscription to our newsletter, Farmland Trust News
- Satisfaction of helping to save an important resource and part of our cultural heritage in Ontario

Your membership will also help support an annual farmland preservation conference.

Membership Category	Annual Membership Fee
Individual/Family/Farmer	\$50
Student	\$25
Non-profit (Farm and Conservation Organizations)	\$250
Corporate	\$500

Please visit our website, or contact us for membership forms, sponsorship opportunities, and donations.

www.uoguelph.ca/~farmland

It is important that farmers be leaders & key partners in the Ontario Farmland Trust and its programs.



protecting farmland and the future of farming in Ontario.



Ontario Farmland Trust
University of Guelph
Richards Building
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

Phone (519) 824-4120 x52686
Fax (519) 824-5730
www.uoguelph.ca/~farmland

How to save farmland: provide farmers with options that make economic sense.



ONTARIO FARMLAND TRUST
Preserving Farmland for Farmers

The Ontario Farmland Trust is a newly-formed non-profit, non-government organization that has been established to work with farmers, rural communities and other interested parties to promote the protection of farmland in the province of Ontario.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Ontario Farmland Trust is to protect and preserve farmland and associated agricultural, natural and cultural features in the countryside and to research and educate to further the preservation of these lands for the benefit of current and future generations.



What is a Land Trust?

In general terms, a land trust is any organization that holds or protects land "in trust" for public benefit. Individual land trusts are usually developed to protect a specific type of land that serves an important function, which may be threatened by competing land uses. Most commonly, land trusts have been formed to protect land with natural heritage values such as woodlands, wetlands, shorelines, or rare species. However, several successful land trusts are designed to protect land with ecological and cultural values such as farmland.

Why a Farmland Trust for Ontario?

Southern Ontario's limited supply of agricultural land is going out of production at an increasing rate. Urban sprawl and farmland severances contribute to the loss of thousands of acres of productive agricultural land in Ontario each year.

Over 2000 farms and 150,000 acres of farmland in the GTA alone were lost to production in the two decades between 1976 and 1996. This loss represented approximately 18% of Ontario's Class 1 farmland being converted to urban purposes. In addition, increasing rural severances provide ever-greater interference with agricultural production.

Currently the long-term protection of Ontario's agricultural land is not adequately promoted, either through specific legislation, incentives or voluntary initiatives. Instead, farmland is treated as any other land area in the land use planning process. We believe that agricultural land should be viewed as a valuable and limited natural resource that must be managed and protected because it provides multiple public benefits.

If we, the farming community, do not take the initiative to preserve farmland now, who will?

AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS

Land trusts can be used to provide permanent protection for designated land areas. Perhaps the most common tool used by land trusts to permanently protect farmland is an easement.

An easement is a legal agreement that determines permissible and restricted land use on a property. It is **forever** tied to the title of the land and is held and monitored by a land trust. The landowner, in consultation with the land trust, determines the terms of the easement, which can be as strict or as flexible as the landowner and the land trust deem appropriate. Like all land preservation strategies employed by land trusts, easements are always a voluntarily tool agreed to by the landowner.

FARM OWNERSHIP

Occasionally farmland trusts will purchase farmland in order to protect it, renting it out to farm operators. Farmland is also donated to trusts in some circumstances. Land deals involving direct acquisition of farmland by trusts often occur at the time when a landowner is retiring from farming: part of the farm may be sold for development, leaving the owner able to donate the remainder, or sell it at a lower price.