

A time to choose



Toma & Bouma
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS



Stantec

Rationale for a Food & Agriculture Institute

Strathcona County Agriculture Master Plan

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Trends and Statistics (Strathcona)



1. Astonishing consolidation (1,053 farms in 1981; 501 in 2021)
2. Precipitous decline in livestock numbers:
 - pigs and dairy cows: have almost disappeared
 - poultry: some presence (3 large operations)
 - beef cattle: dropped drastically (down 50% since 2001)
 - horses: relatively stable - small decline
3. Multiple organizations by industry sector: dairy; beef; feedlots, beef breeds, broilers; eggs; turkeys; swine, cereals; oilseeds, pulses, honey; Food Processors; Protein Industries Canada;
4. No real presence of a General Farm Organizations such as Wild Rose Producers or Canadian Federation of Agriculture
5. No single voice (or organization) to speak for broader issues

The Major Challenge



The current trends, the perceived lack of support for agriculture and related agricultural activities and a land use policy that is perceived to view agricultural lands as a land bank for future development, led us to conclude:

Agriculture is under extreme pressure and will require strong support to persist and thrive.

Agriculture: A proposed vision

Strathcona County as Canada's most livable community is distinguished by:

- 1. its agricultural heritage that builds on history and responds to opportunities as a leader in the Capital Region*
- 2. in the provision of a broad range of agricultural and food opportunities, as well as services*
- 3. to one of Canada's fastest growing metropolitan regions*

Agriculture: A Vision

Strathcona County as Canada's most livable community is distinguished by its agricultural heritage that builds on history and responds to opportunities as a leader in the Capital Region in the provision of a broad range of agricultural and food opportunities as well as services to one of Canada's fastest growing metropolitan regions

The Overriding Principle

Agriculture will continue to be an integral part of Strathcona's historical, cultural, economic and environmental heritage

Operating Principle

The long term success of agriculture in a metropolitan context can only be assured with strong supporting and integrated land use, economic development and infrastructure policies

Operating Principle

The advancement of agriculture requires *shared leadership* including the municipality, residents and stakeholders within Strathcona, and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region

Recommendations - Governance

1. That Council and Senior Administration strongly support (and be seen to strongly support) agriculture and the acceptance of the Agriculture Master Plan.
2. Facilitate and/or establish a Strathcona Food and Agriculture Institute comprised of interested and motivated stakeholders committed to advancing food and agriculture within Strathcona.

The Institute vs. ASB

The Food & Ag Institute	ASB
Independent & Voluntary	Appointed by the County
Self-Directed/Drives own agenda	Regulated & Mandated
Policy/Issue Focus	Operational Focus (weeds, pests...)
Able to drive policy	Can advise on policy
Responsible	Responsive
Beholden to members	Beholden to the County & Council
Facilitates a “one voice” position	Not clear

How would an Institute function

1. Needs a core leadership group
2. Will revolve around clear issues and desired outcomes
3. Requires membership drive and fund raising
4. Should not be limited to production agriculture but also embrace value added and food related enterprises

A Final Thought

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead