
DATE: August 11, 2009

REPORT TITLE: **SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES COMPLETED BY THE PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP IN 2008**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Environment, Transportation and Planning Services

OBJECTIVE

This Report provides a summary about the progress of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) and the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP) for the 2008 calendar year and an overview of the 2009 - 2010 Work Plan (Appendix I).

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- PAAWG assists the Region in protecting prime agricultural areas for long-term agricultural use and to maintain the economic viability of the agricultural industry.
- PAAWG promotes Grown in Peel and environmentally sound land management practices.
- PAAWG fosters collaboration between farmers, agricultural organizations and urban communities.
- The Peel Rural Water Quality Program Approvals Sub-Committee approved 11 projects in 2008, amounting to a total of \$69,087.50.
- The 2009-2010 Work Plan focuses on policy development, communication and outreach, economic development, monitoring issues and proposed direction.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) is a voluntary Working Group established by Regional Council in 1997. Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) became partners with this Working Group in 2005, for the seamless delivery of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program (PRWQP).

PAAWG's goals include: assisting the Region in protecting prime agricultural areas for long-term agricultural use, and maintaining the economic viability of the agricultural industry; encouraging production of local produce and sustaining healthy communities; and promoting environmentally sound land management practices to protect surface and ground water.

PAAWG's membership consists of three municipal Councillors and nine Peel residents. Members are appointed for a term of four years, or until successors are appointed by Regional Council. Non-elected members may be appointed for a term of up to eight years.

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Generally, members are expected to have special rural and agricultural qualifications, interests and abilities, as well as the capacity and willingness to devote the necessary time to the Working Group.

The PRWQP represents a partnership between the Region of Peel, CVC and TRCA. By providing technical and financial support, the PRWQP promotes proactive efforts taken by Peel's agricultural community to implement beneficial management practices on their land. The program also aims to increase public awareness of potential rural pollution sources and environmentally sustainable land management practices to protect water quality. PAAWG works in a co-operative partnership with this program to review and recommend approval of project applications made under the PRWQP to CVC and TRCA.

2. Progress to Date

PAAWG undertook the following activities in 2008 and early 2009.

- a. Reviewed and provided comments on the Peel Regional Official Plan Review (PROPR) Agriculture Discussion Paper and ROPA 21 agricultural policies as a key stakeholder in the consultation process.
- b. Reviewed the Province's proposed "Growing the Greenbelt" paper. Regional staff in consultation with the Town of Caledon staff prepared a memo in June 2008 on the "Criteria for Expansion of the Greenbelt".
- c. Reviewed emerging beneficial management practices (BMP) and programs including:
 - A strategic review of current PRWQP eligible projects and assessed new BMP categories for inclusion in the program. Six new categories were incorporated into the program in 2008, and 2 categories were amended to increase the amount of funding available based on trend analysis from previous years.
 - The CVC, TRCA, and Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CTC) Source Water Protection consultations and Terms of Reference.
 - The environmental cost-share opportunities for Ontario farmers available through the 3rd Edition Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan program for 2008 as they relate to joint funding opportunities with the PRWQP.
- d. Supported Peel's farmers and agricultural organizations and fostered a relationship between agricultural and urban communities through the following initiatives:
 - PAAWG continued its role in developing the Grown in Peel, Buy Fresh brochure.
 - PAAWG members volunteered in the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair to promote the Buy Local, Eat Fresh initiative, the Caledon Eat Local Month, and as committee members in the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Board of Governors for 2008 and the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee.

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- e. PAAWG was provided with updates about the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Advisory Committee (GTA AAC) activities. The GTA Agricultural Working Group, directed by the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario, conducted research, data compilation and mapping for Action Item #19 in the GTA Agricultural Action Plan, to "develop a GTA population profile to identify the emerging consumer groups." The Report can be accessed at:
http://www.gtalocalfood.ca/GTAAC_demographic.html

The study compares statistics across the GTA to show the following trends:

- Between 1986 and 2006, the population of the GTA increased by 49 per cent (or almost 2 million people) from 3.7 million to 5.5 million people.
- Immigrants comprised increasingly large portions of the total population. In 1986, 35 per cent of the GTA's population or 1,295,000 people were immigrants. By 2006, this figure had increased to 44 per cent or 2,420,000 people. In 2006, Toronto had the highest percentage of immigrants in the GTA (50 per cent), followed by Peel (49 per cent), York (43 per cent), Halton (25 per cent) and Durham (20 per cent).
- More GTA residents reported having educational qualifications in 2006 than in 1986. Population with a high school education increased (from 20 per cent to 40 per cent), and people with education at a college or university increased from about 24 per cent in both categories, to (32 per cent) for university, and (23 per cent) for college.
- In the GTA, the percentage of people aged 15 years and older participating in the labour force was approximately 70 per cent from 1986 through to 2006. In 2006, the top four occupations in the GTA were occupations in sales and service; business, finance and administration; trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations; and in management.
- Halton recorded the largest 20-year increase in median household income (almost \$40,000), followed by York and Durham (with increases of \$37,000 and \$36,000 respectively). In Peel and Toronto median household incomes increased by \$30,000 and \$16,000 respectively.

This information provides insights for the agricultural industry to identify emerging consumer groups and ethnic characteristics, market trends and consumer interests, and their geographic location in different parts of the GTA. The establishment niche markets represent opportunities for the agricultural industry to meet the demands of new and expanding immigrant populations. Improved employment and income levels offer consumers a greater choice in the types of products they can afford. Moreover, a better educated population would better understand the purpose of community outreach programs and farm fresh brochures which promote the benefits of buying locally fresh produce and how that affects health and nutrition.

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- f. For the PRWQP, PAAWG approved a total of 11 BMP projects, totaling \$69,087.50 of funding through the program. This funding represents 20 percent of the total project costs to the landowners of \$345,160.00. A full list of approved PRWQP projects for 2008 is attached as Appendix II.
- g. In May 2009, PAAWG organized a 'Peel On-Farm Innovation and Technology Tour' in the Town of Caledon. The purpose of this tour was to provide PAAWG members and other participants, first hand knowledge of how the business of farming is adapting to changing technologies. The tour commenced with a presentation by Ian McDonald, Applied Research Coordinator, Field Crops, Ontario Ministry of Agricultural Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). He described the potential opportunities and challenges faced in utilizing agricultural crops as a source of energy. He noted that biomass such as switchgrass and specialized corn silage offers possibilities to use domestic and sustainable resources to provide energy, provided that such production does not take up good farmland for growing of food crops. Next, the tour visited 'Spirit Tree Estate Cidery' to observe on-farm energy conservation technologies, such as geothermal heating and cooling, peat bio-filter septic system, and the use of straw bales in building construction. The second location visited was 'Whole Village', a cooperatively owned and operated community eco-farm. Participants were briefed about the importance of using ecologically and environmentally sensitive farming practices to promote sustainable crop production and to reduce our ecological footprint.

3. Proposed Direction

PAAWG continues to build on the strong partnerships that have been developed with the Peel farming community, and the contributions of the agricultural industry and organizations in arranging events, projects and community outreach programs. PAAWG will continue to provide valuable input into the PROPR – Agriculture policy formulation process, and to assist the Region to protect and manage prime agricultural lands for long-term use for agriculture, encourage long-term investment in, and improvement to, the agricultural sector as contained in its Terms of Reference and the 2009 -2010 Work Plan.

Towards this end, PAAWG will pursue the following objectives and other relevant issues that may come up during the Work Plan period. First, members are interested in gaining a better understanding of the nature of the agricultural land base in the Prime Agricultural Area. Questions regarding soil types, farming conditions and lot fragmentation can be studied through a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR), to be done jointly by Peel Region and the Town of Caledon. Secondly, PAAWG would support initiatives to promote opportunities for urban agriculture, suitable agricultural diversification where appropriate, local produce and self-sufficiency to effectively meet the changing demographics and other emerging social and economic patterns. Thirdly, PAAWG is interested in the restoration and protection of barns to minimize cultural heritage losses, and would like to work with Caledon staff to determine the best approach to studying the cultural heritage of the farming community. Fourthly, promotion and distribution of the Region's "Grown in Peel" brochure will continue.

An integral part of PAAWG's activity is the promotion of information-sharing between its members and agricultural organizations. In this regard, a number of guest presenters made presentations to inform PAAWG members about emerging agricultural best management practices including:

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- Melissa Watkins: (February, 2008) Ontario Farmland Trust: "Protecting Ontario's Best Places to Grow Food", Ontario Farmland Trust
- David Pelletterio: (August, 2008) "Country Heritage Park", Country Heritage Park Board
- Tina McBrien: (February, 2009) Research Findings: "Survey of the Availability, Origin, Price and Quality of Select Produce in the Region of Peel in July 2008", Public Health Dietician, Region of Peel

CONCLUSION

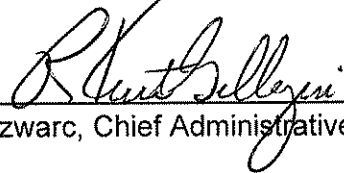
PAAWG continues to play a significant role in advancing the aims and objectives of the agricultural industry in Peel, and builds on the cooperative partnership between the farming community, agricultural organizations and the Region. PAAWG remains a valuable contributor to realizing the agricultural policies of the Region to protect prime agricultural areas for long-term agricultural use, encourage on-farm diversity and promote niche markets and urban/near-urban community gardens, as well as to maintain the financial viability of the agricultural industry.



ACTING FOR

Dan Labrecque
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Approved for Submission:



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c. Legislative Services

REGION OF PEEL

PEEL AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY WORKING GROUP
PEEL RURAL WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

WORK PLAN 2009-2010

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
Input into Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be involved in the Regional Official Plan Review, including input into the draft ROPA 21 policies (Natural Heritage, Agriculture, Air Quality & Integrated Waste Management) • To provide ongoing input and advice to the Planning Policy & Research Division, ETPS, on agricultural, agricultural-related issues and rural matters, with a view to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting prime agricultural areas for long-term use for agriculture ○ Sustaining the financial viability of the agricultural industry and the farming community in Peel ○ Promoting the practice of good land stewardship and ecological goods and services ○ Encouraging on-farm diversity and flexibility on farm practices, where appropriate ○ Natural Snow Fences Program <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Region of Peel Official Plan Review - Implementing PAAWG priority items in the GTA Agricultural Action Plan - Grown in Peel, Buy Local, Eat Fresh Initiative - Greenbelt Protection and Growing the Greenbelt - Sustainable near-urban and urban agriculture - Commenting on Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR), with respect to agricultural and agricultural-related matters - <i>Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009</i> - Renewable and Alternative Energy Systems - Royal Agricultural Winter Fair - Any other relevant matters affecting the agricultural industry in Peel 	Ongoing
Communication/ Outreach/ Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan 2009 Peel On-farm Innovation & Technology Tour • Evaluation of the 2008 Grown in Peel Guide • Promotion of the Peel Rural Water Quality Program • Build on collaboration with agricultural organizations as Peel Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, GTA Agricultural Action Committee, Caledon Countryside Alliance, etc. for information-sharing • Grown in Peel Guide and website for 2009-10 • Snow drift buffers on farms abutting roads 	Done Ongoing
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen partnership with the area municipalities to promote where appropriate, agricultural and related industry, urban and near-urban agriculture as long as practicable 	

Appendix I
 Summary of the Activities Completed by the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group in 2008
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote farmers' markets, agri-tainment and eco-tourism, where appropriate to supplement farmers' income Study options to improve profitability in agriculture industry, through appropriate tax rebates and/or financial incentives Promote agricultural research and development for niche markets, ethnic crops and community gardens Promote green energy generation from energy crops and agricultural wastes 	
Monitoring Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting prime agricultural lands from non-conforming agricultural uses, lot fragmentation and loss of the agricultural land base GTA Agricultural Action Plan implementation The PPS, Greenbelt Plan and Places to Grow Plan Greenbelt expansion and its impact in Peel <i>Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009</i> with reference to renewable energy development on farmland 	
Proposed Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAAWG is interested in better understanding the nature of the agricultural land base in the <i>Prime Agricultural Area</i>. Questions regarding soil types, farming conditions and lot fragmentation can be studied through a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR), to be done jointly by Peel Region and the Town of Caledon Promote opportunities for urban agriculture, agricultural diversification, local produce and self-sufficiency to meet the changing demographics and other emerging social and economic patterns. PAAWG is interested in the restoration and protection of barns to minimize cultural heritage losses. PAAWG would like to work with Caledon staff to determine the best approach to studying the cultural heritage of the farming community. Promote and distribute Peel Region "Grown in Peel" brochure. 	

Prepared jointly by the Region of Peel, Toronto Region Conservation and Credit Valley Conservation
 June 2009.

Appendix II

Summary of the Activities Completed by the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group in 2008

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**PEEL RURAL WATER QUALITY PROGRAM
APPROVED PROJECTS 2005-2008**

CVC (Grants for 2008)			
Project Category	No. of Projects Approved in 2008	Total Project Cost	PRWQP Eligible Funding
Barnyard Runoff Control	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Buffer Strip Establishment & Erosion Control	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Clean Water Diversion	2	\$3,100.00	\$1,550.00
Livestock Access Restriction	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Manure Management	3	\$183,000.00	\$45,000.00
Milkhouse Washwater Disposal	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Nutrient Management Plan	3	<u>\$6,090.00</u>	<u>\$2,037.50</u>
Total	8	\$192,190.00	\$48,587.50
TRCA (Grants for 2008)			
Project Category	No. of Projects Approved in 2008	Total Project Cost	PRWQP Eligible Funding
Barnyard Runoff Control	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Buffer Strip Establishment & Erosion Control	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Clean Water Diversion	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Livestock Access Restriction	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Manure Management	1	\$130,600.00	\$15,000.00
Milkhouse Washwater Disposal	1	\$20,800.00	\$5,000.00
Nutrient Management Plan	1	<u>\$1,570.00</u>	<u>\$500.00</u>
Total	3	\$152,970.00	\$20,500.00
COMBINED (Grants for 2005-2007)			
Project Category	No. of Projects Approved as of December 31, 2007	Total Project Cost	PRWQP Eligible Funding
Barnyard Runoff Control	3	\$82,000.00	\$15,000.00
Buffer Strip Establishment & Erosion Control	4	\$12,068.00	\$7,270.00
Clean Water Diversion	2	\$10,673.00	\$5,337.00
Livestock Access Restriction	4	\$41,993.00	\$23,844.00
Manure Management	5	\$394,798.00	\$50,000.00
Milkhouse Washwater Disposal	1	\$22,202.00	\$5,000.00
Nutrient Management Plan	6	<u>\$26,301.00</u>	<u>\$3,000.00</u>
Total	25	\$590,035.00	\$109,451.00
COMBINED (Grants for 2005-2008)			
Project Category	No. of Projects Approved as of December 31, 2008	Total Project Cost	PRWQP Eligible Funding
Barnyard Runoff Control	3	\$82,000.00	\$15,000.00
Buffer Strip Establishment & Erosion Control	4	\$12,068.00	\$7,270.00
Clean Water Diversion	4	\$13,773.00	\$6,887.00
Livestock Access Restriction	4	\$41,993.00	\$23,844.00
Manure Management	9	\$708,398.00	\$110,000.00
Milkhouse Washwater Disposal	2	\$43,002.00	\$10,000.00
Nutrient Management Plan	10	<u>\$33,961.00</u>	<u>\$5,537.50</u>
Grand Total	36	\$935,195.00	\$178,538.50

Source: Credit Valley Conservation and Toronto Region Conservation, 2009