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Phase 1 Discussion Paper

State of Agriculture

" DRAFT "



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Abstract

This report serves as a technical report on agriculture as input to an Official Plan Review being conducted by the Town of Innisfil. The report discusses changes in planning policy related to agricultural and is an update of the year 2006 census information and the ranking of the agricultural lands found within the Town. Changes in several agricultural variables such as number and area of census farms, livestock production as well as gross and net income were summarized and reported graphically. Data used is, for the most part, from Statistics Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The data supports the view that agriculture remains important within the Town of Innisfil in the context of Simcoe County and the Province of Ontario. Recommendations related to the new Official Plan are outlined in the report.



Executive Summary

AgPlan Limited was retained by the Town of Innisfil as part of a team assembled by SGL Planning and Design Inc. to:

- Provide information on the state of agriculture in Innisfil and its context within Simcoe County and Ontario.
- Make recommendations with respect to the updated Official Plan.

Four changes in the policy environment were discussed as they relate to agriculture in Innisfil. These policy changes are:

- the new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2014);
- changes resulting from the Simcoe County Official Plan Update (County of Simcoe, 2013);
- “Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021: Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy” (Walton et al., 2012); and
- “Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas Draft for input and discussion” (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs February, 2015).

None of these policy changes change the requirements for differentiating agricultural land as better or poorer based on specialty crops and soil capability and for placing agricultural lands in planning designations of **prime agricultural areas** and **specialty crop areas**. These designations are already part of the existing Innisfil Official Plan.

Information was analysed to include more recent agricultural data relative to that available for the Innisfil Official Plan Update produced in 2006. Information for Innisfil, Simcoe County and the Province of Ontario included:

- census farm area and number,
- common livestock number and farms reporting livestock,
- off farm and net farm income,
- balance of trade for selected commodity groups including fruit and nuts as well as vegetables,
- gross and net farm income, in actual and constant dollars.

The data support the view that agricultural production in the Town of Innisfil is relatively good in the context of Simcoe County and the Province. Information on local food sales and community gardens were also discussed. The non-decision areas in the current Innisfil Official Plan were reviewed for characteristics of farm tax rated parcels, soil capability and active agricultural use.

On the basis of the data analyses, the following recommendations were made:

- Any changes to lands designated as **prime agricultural areas** to non-agricultural designations need to be supported by:
 - evidence of need, and
 - evidence that poorer lands cannot be used for the non-agricultural use as required by the PPS (2014).
- Wording used in the Innisfil Official Plan update (“Our Place”) should encourage community gardens, local products sales, **agriculture-related uses** and **on-farm diversified uses** by specifically listing them as allowed uses within some designations.



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- Non-decision areas should be treated as **prime agricultural lands** and that any designation change to rural or non-agricultural uses in these non-decision areas should be supported, at minimum, by a statement of need and by a detailed soil survey (which provides verifiable information on the relatively low capability of the non-decision area).



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Innisfil, located within Simcoe County, as shown on Map1, is updating its Official Plan to reflect changing economic, social and environmental needs in Innisfil following a community engagement process called “Our Place”. AgPlan Limited was retained by the Town of Innisfil as part of a team assembled by SGL Planning and Design Inc. to:

- Provide information on the state of agriculture in Innisfil and its context within Simcoe County and Ontario.
- Make recommendations with respect to the updated Official Plan.

MAP 1 INNISFIL LOCATION



In February 2006, AgPlan produced a report with the title “**Appendix D Agricultural Assessment Report for the Growth Management Study and Official Plan Review in the Town of Innisfil, County of Simcoe**”. Conclusions of the 2006 agricultural report were that:



- The proposed Innisfil Study Area currently has a restricted and relatively lower mineral soil potential for specialty crop production.
- Specialty crops are grown on organic soils in an area in the south-central portion of the Study Area.
- The Study Area includes lands that are *specialty crop lands* as defined within the *PPS*.
- The soil capability of the Regional Municipality of Simcoe is lowest when compared to the average capability of agricultural lands in other Counties or Regions in Central to Southern Ontario.
- Average soil capability in Simcoe County is not in the prime category. Therefore, there are reasonable potential development area alternatives which could avoid prime agricultural soils in Simcoe County.
- The need to use the Innisfil Study Area lands for agricultural purposes is diminished given existing economic conditions for agriculture in Southern Ontario.
- The need for additional land for urban development in Innisfil has already been established by the forecasting work already completed by N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited (2005).
- Active agricultural uses are predominant within the Innisfil Study Area.
- Differences in agricultural activity and agricultural potential are present within Innisfil.
- Full agricultural potential can only be reached after the application of drainage and/or irrigation to some soils and crops within the Study Area.
- The costs of the application of that drainage and irrigation will be relatively high in the context of agricultural gross farm receipts.
- Different philosophical/social perspectives about the role and methods of farming are present in Innisfil and affect the way that land is rated for agriculture.

This updated AgPlan report (2015) has been produced to answer the following question: “Are there changes in the agricultural policy or in the characteristics of the Town of Innisfil that would affect the ranking of agricultural lands and the conclusions reached in the original 2006 agricultural assessment?”

Like the 2006 report, this report is based on AgPlan’s review of existing published information (listed in Section 5.0) and unpublished information (Multi-Criteria Analyses) as well as the results of field work. When information provided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is mentioned within this report, OMAFRA is cited regardless of whether the information was originally provided by OMAF (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food), by OMAFRA (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs) or Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMAF MRA). Methods are described generally as part of the text. Where italics would normally be used within the text, either quotation marks or bold print has been used instead of italics. Additionally, AgPlan’s report should be read in conjunction with reports prepared by other consultants. Specific reference should be made to the planning analysis completed by SGL (2015).



2.0 POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

The following is not intended to be a planning analysis. However, some changes in the planning policy environment have occurred since AgPlan's first agricultural assessment report (2006). Four changes are discussed in the following as they relate to agriculture. These changes are:

- the new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2014);
- "Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas Draft for Input and Discussion" (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs February, 2015);
- changes resulting from the Simcoe County Official Plan Update (County of Simcoe, 2013); and,
- "Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021: Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy" (Walton et al., 2012).

The Provincial Policy Statement

The PPS (2014) contains some changes related to agriculture with particular emphasis on the kinds of uses allowed in agricultural areas. The 2005 PPS states that: "In **prime agricultural areas**, permitted uses and activities are: **agricultural uses, secondary uses and agriculture-related uses**". The current PPS (2014) removes the reference to **secondary uses** and states that "In **prime agricultural areas**, permitted uses and activities are: **agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses**". The PPS (2014) has modified the 2005 definition of an **agriculture-related use** by removing the reference to small-scale and adding information about the support of agriculture and referencing direct products and/or services and primary activity. The new definition for **agriculture-related uses** is: "**those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity**".

A greater opportunity for change within **prime agricultural areas** might be possible given the definition of **on-farm diversified uses** which are described in the PPS (2014) as: "**uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products**". **Agri-tourism uses** are described in the PPS (2014) as **those farm -related tourism uses including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation**. The use of the word "secondary" and the phrase "limited in area" are clearly intended to restrict the size and importance of the **on-farm diversified use**.

The PPS (2014) provides additional guidance in section 2.3.3.1 as follows:

Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses may be based on guidelines developed by the Province or municipal approaches, as set out in municipal planning documents, which achieve the same objectives.

This section of the PPS (2014) would suggest that there are opportunities to meet the



wishes and the needs of individual municipalities with respect to **agriculture-related uses** and **on-farm diversified uses**. Unfortunately, the wording within the draft Guidelines produced by OMAFRA for interpretation and application of the 2014 PPS can mean that there will be relatively little opportunity for change within **prime agricultural areas**. Additional information which specifically addresses these new draft Guidelines is supplied in the following section of this report.

The need for compliance with Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) is referred to more often within the PPS (2014). OMAFRA staff (Personal Communication, 2015) have suggested that any additional reference to MDS within the PPS (2014) has been made for the purpose of providing additional clarity as opposed to providing emphasis.

The baseline requirements for the delineation of **prime agricultural lands** and **prime agricultural areas**, which supply an importance hierarchy based on **specialty crop areas** and soil capability classes 1 through 3 remain as set out in previous versions of the PPS.

Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas

The "Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas Draft for Input and Discussion" prepared by OMAFRA (2015) provides specificity with respect to:

- **agricultural, on-farm diversified and agriculture-related uses described in Policy 2.3.3 of the PPS.**
- **removal of land for new and expanding settlement areas (Policy 2.3.5) and limited non-residential uses in prime agricultural areas (Policy 2.3.6.1 b).**
- **mitigation of impacts from new or expanding non-agricultural uses (Policy 2.3.6.2).**

The document, as stated in the title, is a draft version intended for public discussion. Therefore, the final wording of the document and its effect on the interpretation of the agricultural section of the PPS (2014) is unknown. Nevertheless, the Guidelines do indicate that the Province still wants to restrict the size and character of uses allowed within **prime agricultural areas**. For example, while the 2014 PPS (section 2.3.3.1) seems to contain the promise that an agricultural planning approach specific to Innisfil is possible, the draft Guidelines have an entire section (1.5) concerning "Municipal Consistency" which begins with the phrase "**These Guidelines aim to increase the consistency of municipal approaches to permitted uses in prime agricultural areas across the province**". The remainder of the section on consistency can reasonably be interpreted to mean that a "**municipal approach**" that may be specific to Innisfil can only be more restrictive than that outlined in the 2014 PPS and OMAFRA draft Guidelines. Creating policy specific to Innisfil that will encourage **on-farm diversified uses** and **agriculture-related uses** will likely require much negotiation with the Province.

The draft Guidelines list a number of examples of **agriculture-related uses** as follows:

- **Apple storage and distribution centre**
- **Farmers' market selling local produce**
- **Food processing plant for local produce (e.g. cider-making, pitting, canning, quick-freezing, packing)**
- **Grain dryer serving several local farmers**



- **Agricultural research centre**
- **Winery using local grapes**
- **Abattoir processing and selling local meat**
- **Flour mill for local grain**
- **Farm equipment repair shop**
- **Livestock assembly yard or stock yard for local farmers**
- **Auction for local produce**
- **Farm input supplier (e.g. feed, seeds, fertilizer)**

While there is intent to control the scale of **agriculture-related uses**, the draft Guidelines do not suggest a specific area or proportion of a farm property or operation for these uses - **The appropriate scale to qualify as an agriculture-related use needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.** This approach to scale contrasts with **on-farm diversified uses** which are restricted on the basis of aerial extent to the farm property as opposed to the farm operation - **On-farm diversified uses may occupy no more than two per cent of the property on which the uses are located, to a maximum of one hectare (ha) or 10,000 metre-square (m²).**

Examples of on farm diversified uses are provided in the draft Guidelines as:

- **Value-added uses (e.g. processor, packager, winery, cheese factory, bakery, abattoir)**
- **Home occupations (e.g. professional office, bookkeeper, land surveyor, art studio, hairdresser, massage therapist, daycare, veterinary clinic, kennel, classes or workshops)**
- **Home industries (e.g. sawmill, welding or woodworking shop, manufacturing/fabrication, equipment repair, seasonal storage of boats or trailers, biomass pelletizer)**
- **Agri-tourism uses (e.g. farm vacation suite, bed and breakfast, hay rides, petting zoo, farm-themed playground, horse trail rides, corn maze, seasonal events, equine events, wine tasting)**
- **Retail uses (e.g. farm market, antique business, seed supplier, tack shop)**
- **Café/small restaurant, cooking classes, food store (e.g. cheese, ice cream)**

Using agri-tourism as an example of many possible **on-farm diversified uses**, the Guidelines document can currently be interpreted to mean that agri-tourism as practiced in Italy, Spain, France and Québec (as experienced by the author of this AgPlan report) will not likely be acceptable within **prime agricultural areas** within Ontario. The larger scale of the agri-tourism observed elsewhere (for example, 52 bed operations which include apartments, as well as a restaurant and dining area large enough for wedding parties) would be too great for application in Ontario. This was confirmed by conversations with OMAFRA staff when describing the aforementioned experiences related to agri-tourism outside of Ontario (for an example in Umbria, Italy see <http://www.agriturismo.it/en/farmhouse/umbria/terni/SantaMaria-0670709/index.html>). The components and economic benefits of agri-tourism as well as the positive and negative attributes associated with agri-tourism (including the effects of regulations) are described in a paper by the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (2013). Nevertheless, there may be opportunities to match the scale of integrated and diversified



farm businesses observed elsewhere by ensuring that **agriculture-related uses** and **on-farm diversified uses** are both allowed to occupy a single farm land parcel.

Discussions related to PPS agricultural policies concerning new and expanding settlement areas and limited non-residential uses in prime agricultural areas, as outlined within the draft Guidelines, are still centred on need and an alternative locational analysis (where specialty crop areas cannot be used for non-agricultural development and relatively poorer agricultural lands need to be chosen for proposed non-agricultural uses). The Guidelines provide more specific information with regards to the variables that need to be considered when differentiating lower priority agricultural lands as follows:

- **existing official plan designation(s)**
- **Canada Land Inventory (CLI) mapping showing land capability for agriculture**
- **soil type and characteristics (as reported in county soil reports); guidelines for soil surveys are available for undertaking detailed soil surveys for land use planning**
- **current use of the land (identify both agricultural and non-agricultural uses)**
- **degree of fragmentation of the agricultural land base by non-agricultural uses**
- **farm parcel size relative to the type of agriculture in the area (e.g. cash crops and livestock farms generally require large parcels while specialty crops may not)**
- **access to water for agricultural use**
- **differing climatic conditions, if applicable (e.g. crop heat units, microclimate)**
- **presence, use and capital investment in farm buildings and infrastructure (e.g. tile drainage, irrigation)**
- **proximity to farm supply, storage, distribution or processing facilities (may be beyond two kilometres)**

The draft Guidelines also provide more information concerning the mitigation of negative impacts on agriculture due to non-agricultural development. Mitigation methods are suggested for minimization/reduction, enforcement etc. in categories including:

- loss of agricultural land,
- traffic and safety risk,
- nuisance issues,
- Minimum Distance Separation,
- trespass, vandalism, pets at large, litter/garbage disposal,
- water quality and water quantity,
- growth pressure,
- economic development support and
- agricultural advisory committees.

The published literature available by search of the Internet outlines the kinds of problems associated with the urban/rural interface. One method of mitigation that is regularly mentioned as a part of mitigation for agriculture at the rural/urban interface is the use of buffers. A systematic summary on agricultural buffer size is available from the Santa



Barbara County Planning and Development Department (2012). Unfortunately, the success of various mitigation measures such as site planning, public education, fencing, buffers, by-law creation and enforcement has not been measured. The use and relative success of some mitigation measures, particularly those related to fencing and buffers could possibly be ascertained by examining the use of those features which have been put in place relative to natural heritage features. Again, the literature reviewed recognizes the need for a measure of success related to mitigation measures for natural heritage systems, but a measured evaluation of the success of buffers tends to relate to specific ecological functions, species and situations. The ecological/environmental literature on buffer success related to disturbance caused by human activity is not as extensive as that related to ecological functions etc. A review by Beacon Environmental (2012, Table 3) cites 2 papers on human disturbance related to buffers associated with wetlands and a paper by Environment Canada (2013, Table 4), again with reference to wetlands, summarizes information related to buffers/protective zones for herbicide drift from agricultural lands, non-point source agricultural pollutants, residential storm water, urban cats and other human disturbances such as hacking trees. None of the literature reviewed discussed the trade-offs between the use of lands for buffer strips as opposed to urban development. For example, the fact that the use of buffer strips at the urban/countryside interface will require land that could have been used for residential development might result in the removal of agricultural land in another area if the residential development is going to be accommodated without a change in population density. Neither does the literature discuss how the use of buffers at the urban/countryside interface might affect the efficient use of land and resources and the efficient use of infrastructure within settlement areas as discussed in section 1.1.3.2 in the PPS (2014).

Regardless of the aforementioned discussion, the status and interpretation of the document “Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas Draft for Input and Discussion” will be incorporated within the Official Plan Review for the Town of Innisfil as much as possible given the timing of the OP review and the final form of OMAFRA’s Guidelines.

Simcoe County Official Plan

The Simcoe County Official Plan has some parts that have been approved by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). However, much of the wording in the section on agriculture is currently subject to appeal before the Board. Therefore, no analysis specific to the new County plan has been completed. A review of the wording in the agricultural and rural sections of the plan indicates that the Plan follows the requirements of the PPS. The influence of the 2014 PPS on wording within the Plan, if any, will not be available until the appeals to the OMB have been completed. If the requirements of the 2014 PPS are reflected in the updated Innisfil Official Plan, it is unlikely that there will be any conflict between the Innisfil Plan and the approved Simcoe County Official Plan.

Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021: Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy

“Food and Farming: An Action Plan 2021: Golden Horseshoe Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy” (Walton et al., 2012; endorsed by several Regional Councils February 29, 2012) is a **plan to make the Golden Horseshoe the leading food and farming**



cluster in the world [underlining added]. Unfortunately, while the plan is ambitious, it contains no data to put **the combined activities and outputs of primary production (farmers), food processing, food service providers (including hotels, restaurants, and institutions), food wholesalers/distributors and food retailers/merchandisers and the input suppliers and service providers** extant in the Golden Horseshoe of Ontario in the context of the world. By the use of the word “cluster” the plan to make the Golden horseshoe a worldwide leader is probably based on a measure of economic activity but whether matters of productivity, efficiency, net energy etc. would be part of the plan is not stated. Neither does the Action Plan provide information on what would be required within Innisfil and Simcoe County in order to implement the Plan. As a result, no reasoned and reasonable analysis of the Action Plan as it relates to the Town of Innisfil can be completed.

3.0 DISCUSSION OF TRENDS IN AGRICULTURE

A number of analyses have been supplemented with more recent data to examine whether the agricultural trends observed in the AgPlan 2006 report have continued. Figures 1 through 16 summarize the data over a 30 year time frame from 1981 to 2011. Economics information, summarized in Figures 17 to 28, is taken, in part, from the OMAFRA website and the time frame varies depending on what is currently available on the website and what has been previously collected by AgPlan. Other economics data is presented after the time of amalgamation within Simcoe County. The results of the data analyses are described in the following paragraphs.

Area of census farms in Simcoe have fluctuated but a line of best fit indicates a relatively constant area trend (Figure 1). In Innisfil, the area of census farms is decreasing (Figure 2). Area of census farms in Simcoe as a proportion of Ontario’s census farm area is increasing. In contrast, the area of census farms in Innisfil as a proportion of Simcoe’s farm area (Figures 3 and 4) is decreasing. Therefore, the fact that the area of census farms is relatively constant in Simcoe, based on a trend line, is in contrast to the rate of decrease for the Province of Ontario. The rate of decrease in census farm area in Innisfil is in keeping with the general trend within the Province as opposed to the trend in the County of Simcoe.

Number of census farms in Simcoe and Innisfil are decreasing (Figures 5 and 6). Number of census farms in Simcoe as a proportion of Ontario’s census farm area is increasing whereas the number of census farms in Innisfil as a proportion of Simcoe’s census farm number (Figures 7 and 8) is decreasing. However, the decrease in farm number in Innisfil occurred from 1981 to 2001 but census farm number has increased in 2006 and 2011. The rate at which the number of census farms is decreasing in Simcoe is less than the rate of decrease for the Province of Ontario. As well, the rate of decrease in census farm number in Innisfil is greater than the rate of decrease in the County of Simcoe.

Number of livestock commonly produced (cattle, pigs/swine, sheep and lambs, horses and ponies as well as hens and chickens) in Simcoe County is decreasing for cattle and swine (Figures 9). Total hens and chickens, sheep and lambs as well as horses have increased over the last 7 census periods. Number of livestock commonly produced in



Simcoe as a proportion of Ontario's number of livestock commonly produced is decreasing (Figure 11) for cattle, sheep and lambs, swine as well as hens and chickens. The number of horses in Simcoe as a proportion of the number of horses reported for Ontario has increased during the time from the 1981 census to the 2011 census. Therefore, the rate at which the number of livestock is decreasing in Simcoe is greater than the rate of decrease for the Province of Ontario for most common livestock categories (with the exception of horses).

Some data on livestock number is suppressed in Innisfil because of the very small number of farms producing that livestock. The statistical information provides background on how many farms are reporting different kinds of livestock but, when the number of farms is relatively small, the actual number of livestock (on the farms reporting) is the information that is not made available. As a result, data on livestock number (as opposed to the number of farms reporting livestock) are only available for pigs/swine from 1981 to 2001 and for hens and chickens the years 1981, 1986, 2001 and 2011. The number of cattle and horses in Innisfil is decreasing between the years 1981 in 2011 (with the decline greater for cattle as shown in Figure 10). Livestock numbers for pigs/swine, hens and chickens as well as sheep and lambs are increasing. Number of pigs/swine as well as hens and chickens are increasing as a proportion of the production in Simcoe County. A linear trendline for Innisfil's cattle production shows a slight increase as a proportion of the cattle produced in Simcoe (Figure 12). Number of sheep and lambs, in addition to horse production, is decreasing in Innisfil as a proportion of these livestock in Simcoe County. Therefore, the rate at which the number of livestock is decreasing in Simcoe does not correlate with the increasing rate of some livestock (cattle, horses and ponies) for Innisfil. Caution must be used in interpreting the information available for Innisfil given the amount of livestock data suppression. Additionally, the number of livestock in Simcoe County and Innisfil has diminished to such an extent in some livestock categories that the yearly decisions related to livestock production of a few farms can very easily affect the total number of livestock reported.

Number of census farms reporting commonly produced livestock in Simcoe and Innisfil are decreasing (Figures 13 and 14). Number of census farms reporting commonly produced livestock in Simcoe as a proportion of Ontario's census farms number is decreasing (with the exception of horses as shown in Figure 15). Therefore, the rate at which the number of census farms reporting commonly produced livestock is decreasing in Simcoe at a greater rate than the rate of decrease for the Province of Ontario. The number of census farms reporting commonly produced livestock in Innisfil as a proportion of Simcoe's census farm number (Figure 16) has fluctuated with an upward trend for sheep and lambs as well as hens and chickens for the census year 2011.

In Ontario, most farmers supplement their income from off-farm sources. In the Western Ontario Region, as defined by OMAFRA and within which Simcoe County is located, the majority (greater than 80% of farms in the years 2001 -2009 as shown in Figure 17) of farms (farms that are in the gross farm revenue classes of less than \$250,000.00 for the year 2001, for example) have off-farm income that exceeds net farm income. Off-farm income is defined by OMAFRA as including *income from wages and salaries, net off-farm self-employment, investments, pensions and other sources.*



Irrespective of income class, net farm income is supplemented by off-farm income. Additionally, when the database is not subdivided into income classes, average off-farm income exceeds net farm income.

Figure 18 outlines the balance of trade in Canadian dollars calculated as export dollar value minus import dollar value. The Figure shows selected commodity groups as well as the total trade value for all commodity groups. Very few commodity groups show a positive balance of trade (where positive balance of trade means that export values exceed import values). Those better but fewer performing commodity groups, where exports exceed imports, are shown in Figures 18 and 19. Figure 18 uses the dollar values as reported whereas Figure 19 uses constant dollars relative to the year 2014 (in other words, the effects of inflation have been factored in and are shown in Figure 19). Regardless, the relative trends in balance of trade are similar in Figures 18 and 19. Fruit and vegetables have a negative balance of trade in Ontario as summarized in Figure 20. The total value of agricultural imports relative to exports is tending to increase. The balance of trade data indicate that agricultural product buyers including consumers are spending more money on agricultural products from foreign sources. Figure 21 presents the same information in a different format and in constant dollars as at the year 2014. This figure clearly indicates that money spent on imported fruits and vegetables is increasing.

Products for direct human consumption (fruit and vegetables) have higher gross income per unit area when compared to soybeans, grain corn and hay, for example, as summarized in Figure 22. Figure 22 shows a trend to increasing gross values per acre. However, when gross income is calculated in constant 2014 dollars, crops such as soybeans grain corn and hay show increasing gross dollar value over time whereas the trends in fruits and vegetables show much greater fluctuations year to year. Marginal returns and net income associated with fruits and vegetables vary with the particular fruit and/or vegetable produced but also tend to be higher per unit area than what would be received for small grains. These higher gross and net returns have not resulted in additional production of fruit and vegetables in Simcoe County and Innisfil. Over a 15 year time frame from 1996 to 2011, the number of farms reporting fruit and vegetables (Figure 24) as well as the area in production for fruit and vegetables in Simcoe and Innisfil has decreased (Figure 25). However, Innisfil shows an increase in the number of census farms reporting fruits and nuts and/or vegetables between 2006 and 2011.

The relationship amongst gross farm receipts (excluding forest products sold), farm business operating expenses and net on-farm income (total gross farm receipts minus total farm business operating expenses) all calculated on a per farm basis, is limited due to changes in the categories included in farm business operating expenses from census year to census year. However, farm business operating expense categories are the same for 2001, 2006 and 2011 and trends presented graphically are therefore most comparable within this report to those census years. These data show Innisfil as having relatively high gross farm receipts when compared to the other municipalities within Simcoe County (Figure 26). Amongst Simcoe's lower tier municipalities/townships, the highest gross income is reported for Bradford West Gwillimbury followed by New Tecumseth with Innisfil ranking 3rd. Innisfil's gross farm income is higher than that for Simcoe County but lower than that for the Western Ontario Region. On the other hand,



Innisfil's net on-farm income ranges from a rank of 3rd and 4th when compared to Simcoe's municipalities/townships as summarized in Figure 27. For 2011, Simcoe County's net on-farm income per farm is ranked as the 20th out of 35 Regions/Countries in Southern Ontario (excluding Haliburton and Muskoka), 2nd out of 15 Regions/Countries in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and 7th out of 10 Regions/Countries in Western Ontario Region. The data indicate that Simcoe County and its constituent municipalities are not outliers with respect to gross farm receipts, total farm business operating expenses and net on-farm income.

Generally the data presented in Figures 1 through 28 support the conclusion that agriculture is not diminishing within Innisfil. In some instances, the importance/relative production of agriculture in Innisfil in the context of Simcoe County is increasing. Therefore, it is recommended that any changes to lands designated as **prime agricultural areas** to non-agricultural designations need to be supported by:

- evidence of need, and
- evidence that poorer lands cannot be used for the non-agricultural use as required by the PPS (2014).

Community Gardens

Various communities, including Innisfil, have initiatives that encourage food production within urban areas in the form of community gardens. Innisfil's 1st community garden was created in the year 2014 and supported by funding provided by the Town (Town of Innisfil, 2015).

It is recommended that wording used in the Innisfil Official Plan update ("Our Place") should encourage community gardens by specifically listing them as allowed uses within some designations.

Direct Sales

Innisfil already allows allow for direct sales of farm products to consumers. There are several farms or stores selling local products available within, or close to, Innisfil as summarized in Table 1.

It is recommended that wording used in the Innisfil Official Plan update ("Our Place") should encourage local products sales by specifically listing them as allowed uses within some designations. Additionally, Official Plan policy should include reference to **agriculture-related uses** and **on-farm diversified uses** and link those policies to zoning by-laws in a way that maximizes the number of, and the ease of creating areas of, local farm products sales.



Table 1 Summary of Farms and Stores Selling Local Products Based on Farm Fresh Information

Farm	City	Address	Phone	Description
Avalon Orchards	Innisfil	3150 5th Line	705 458-9902	Certified Organic Apples, organic apple cider, organic apple cider vinegar. U - pick organic apples and fresh cider, honey and local produce.
Cravings Fine Food Market & Catering	Barrie	131 Commerce Park Dr. Unit A	705 734-2272	Menu and retail store items from the farms and producers in Simcoe County including; Dingo Farms, Nicholyn Farms, The New Farm, Barrie Hill Farms, Williams Farm, Dickey Bee Honey.
Dickey Bee Honey Inc.	Cookstown	4031 3rd Line	705 458-1258	Award Winning Honey & Health Products, Liquid Honey ~ Creamed Honey ~ Comb Honey, Honey Butter ~ Bee Pollen ~ Maple Syrup, Honey Mustard ~ Honey BBQ ~ Honey Garlic, Honey Lime & Honey Balsamic Vinaigrettes~ Buckwheat Liquid & Creamed Honey, Honey & Aloe Hand Cream ~ Lip Balms ~ Honey Soap, Honey & Shea Body Lotion ~ Propolis Throat Spray, Honey & Vanilla Body Wash ~Propolis Baby Cream, Propolis Tincture ~ Beeswax Candles.
Edwards Farm Store	Innisfil	1574 9th Line	705 436-2749	Premium Freezer Beef, Local Pork, Roasting chickens, Milk, Yogurt, Cheese, top quality bird seed.
Eisses Farms Ltd.	Innisfil	2348 Innisfil Beach Road	705 720-0429	Fresh Eggs.
Holly's Sweets and Eats	Barrie	12 Commerce Park Drive, Unit L	705 735-3368	Menu items sourced from area farms, including: Carpe Diem, Orillia Farmers' Market vendors, Williams Farm, McBride's Farm, Ego's Farm, Dickey Bee Honey, Lakeview Gardens, Ficklewood Farm.
Huron Sun Foods	Barrie	1 Saunders Rd. Unit # 4		Pure Virgin Sunflower Oil. Our sunflowers are grown and harvested locally, including from Edwards Farms of Innisfil, Ontario.
Innisfil Farmers' Market	Innisfil	7315 Yonge St.	705 456-5822	Vendors include farms, producers and local food retailers & artisans from Innisfil and from around Simcoe County. We have a wide variety of products



Farm	City	Address	Phone	Description
				including in-season fruits and vegetables, herbs, many types of meats, honey, maple syrup, baked goods, preserves.
Lakeview Gardens	Lefroy	1712 Killarney Beach Rd, RR 1	705 456-5822	Greenhouse grown: English & Gourmet cucumbers, bell peppers, heirloom tomatoes (over 40 varieties), field grown: shallots, onions, squash, carrots, beans, kale, beets, honey from our own hives & preserves, fresh potted herbs & salad bowls.
Sandycove Farmers' Market	Innisfil	2 Weeping Willow Drive	705 881-9850	Fruits & vegetables, meats, cheese, eggs, maple syrup, honey, baked goods, fresh bread, preserves, and hand-made items.

See <http://www.simcoecountyfarmfresh.ca/listing.php>

Non-Decision Areas

The ranking/rating of agricultural lands completed by AgPlan in 2006 was based on an algorithm (a set of instructions) that combined layers of information using a Geographic Information System (GIS). The algorithm was predominantly based on agricultural land use (areas where specialty crops are grown and/or areas of active agricultural use) and soil capability. OMAFRA found some areas where active agricultural use would indicate that the published soil map was inaccurate and/or imprecise resulting in an inappropriate soil capability classification for those areas. Where permission was granted for access, OMAFRA and AgPlan staff made soil observations used in support of the decision to include or exclude lands from the **prime agricultural lands/areas** designation. Where no site specific soils observations were allowed to be made, the lands were designated as **Non-decision Areas** (as shown on Map 2).

The non-decision areas have been characterized again on the basis of aerial photo interpretation, soil capability classification (based on the predominant soil capability within a soil polygon/map unit) and whether the land is a farm tax rated land parcel (as summarized on Maps 3, 4, 5 and 6). The non-decision areas:

- include soil capability classes of poorer than soil capability class 3 (that is, capability classes 4, 5, 6 or 7).

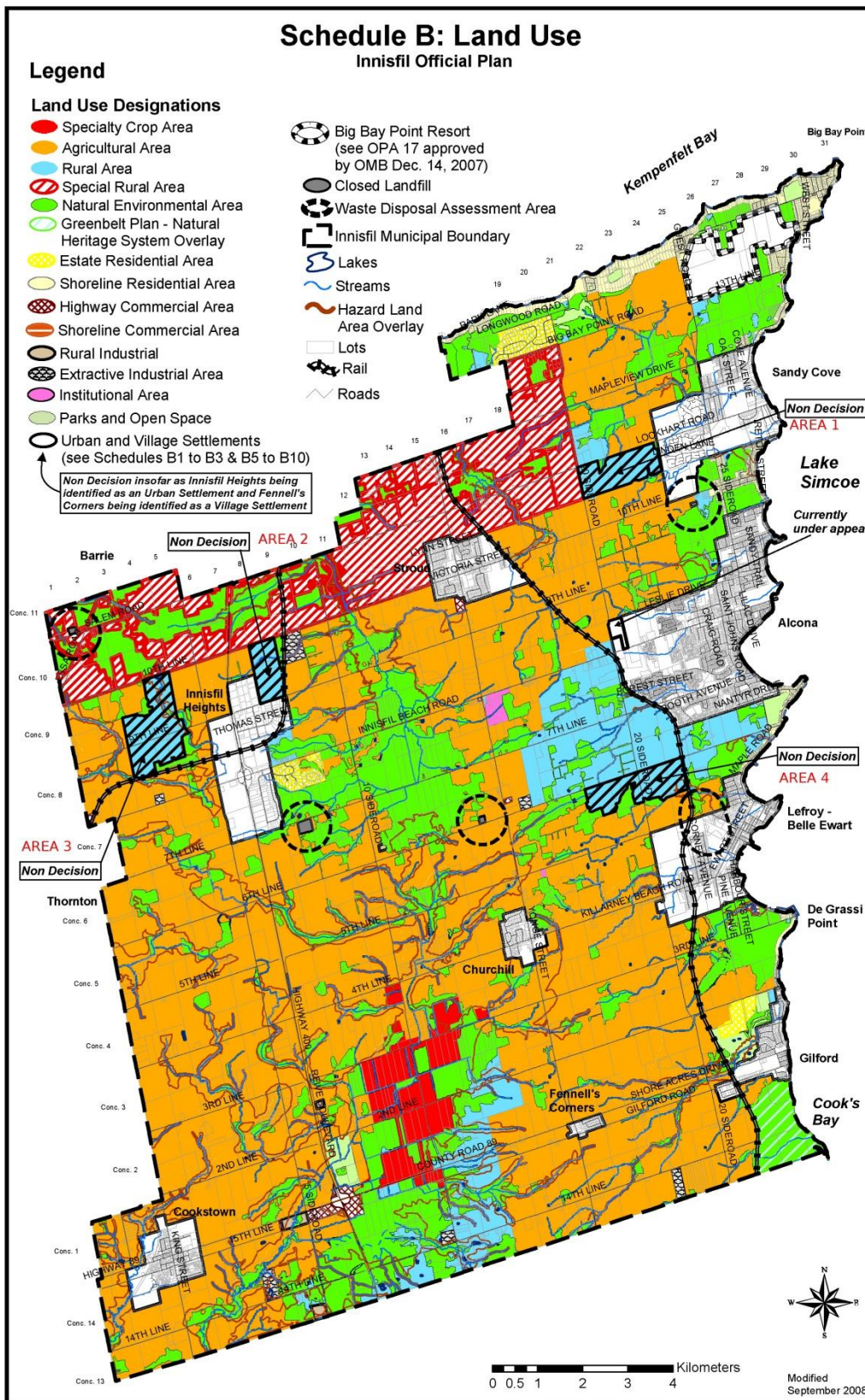
However, it was found that the non-decision areas,

- are predominantly made up of farm tax rated land parcels, and
- are predominantly in active agricultural use.

Given these latter agricultural characteristics, it is recommended that these areas be treated as **prime agricultural** lands and that any designation change to rural or non-agricultural uses be supported, at minimum, by a statement of need and by a detailed soil survey.



MAP 2 AGRICULTURAL NON - DECISION AREAS

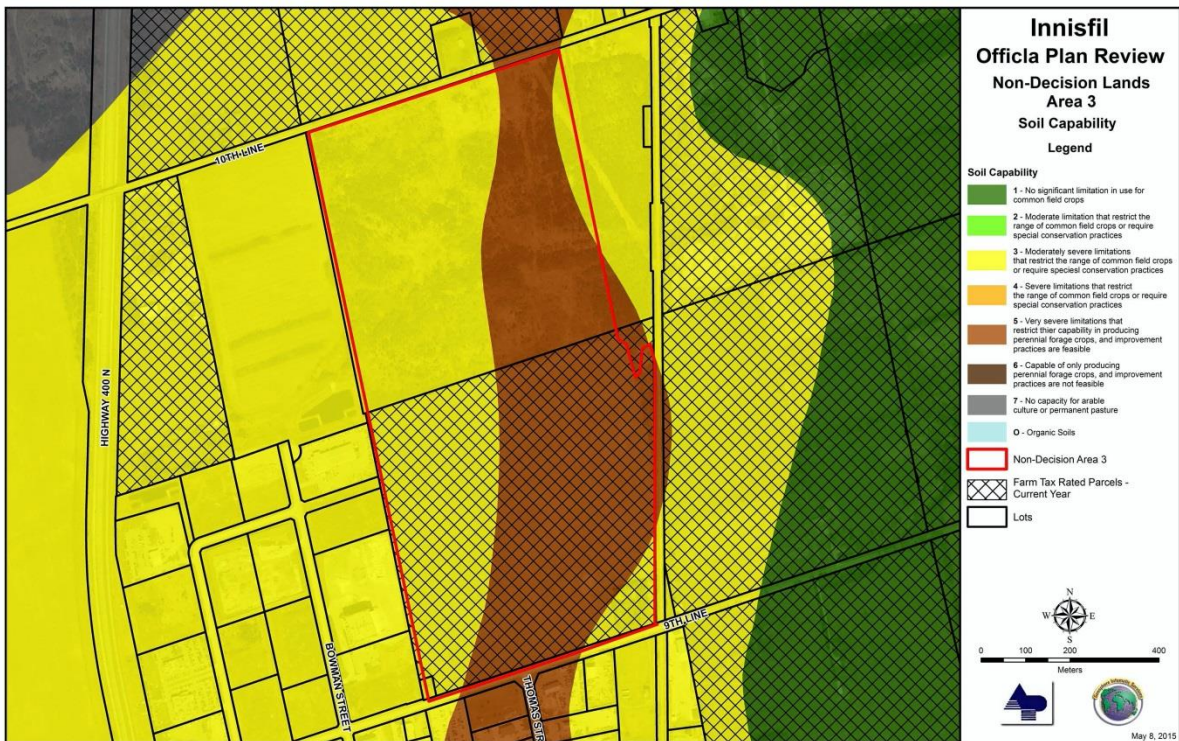




MAP 3 AGRICULTURAL NON - DECISION AREA 1



MAP 4 AGRICULTURAL NON - DECISION AREA 2

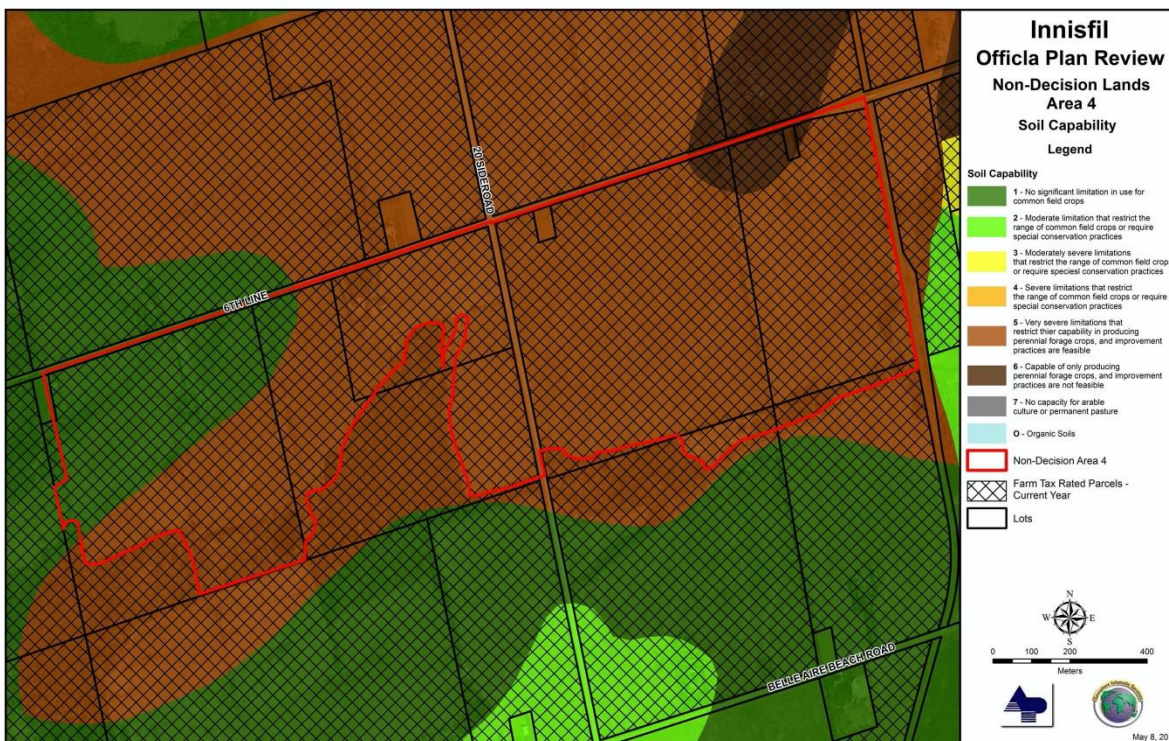




MAP 5 AGRICULTURAL NON - DECISION AREA 3



MAP 6 AGRICULTURAL NON - DECISION AREA 4





4.0 CONCLUSIONS/OPINIONS

In summary, the agricultural data examined as part of this agricultural assessment update and/or in the previous AgPlan report (2006) indicate that agriculture within Innisfil ranks relatively highly within the context of agriculture within Simcoe County. Therefore, three recommendations have been made as follows:

- Any changes to lands designated as **prime agricultural areas** to non-agricultural designations need to be supported by:
 - evidence of need, and
 - evidence that poorer lands cannot be used for the non-agricultural use as required by the PPS (2014).
- Wording used in the Innisfil Official Plan update (“Our Place”) should encourage community gardens, local products sales, **agriculture-related uses** and **on-farm diversified uses** by specifically listing them as allowed uses within some designations.
- Non-decision areas should be treated as **prime agricultural lands** and that any designation change to rural or non-agricultural uses in these non-decision areas should be supported, at minimum, by a statement of need and by a detailed soil survey (which provides verifiable information on the relatively low capability of the non-decision area).

AgPlan Limited

Michael K. Hoffman
Agricultural Analyst



FIGURE 1 AREA OF CENSUS FARMS IN SIMCOE COUNTY 1981 TO 2011

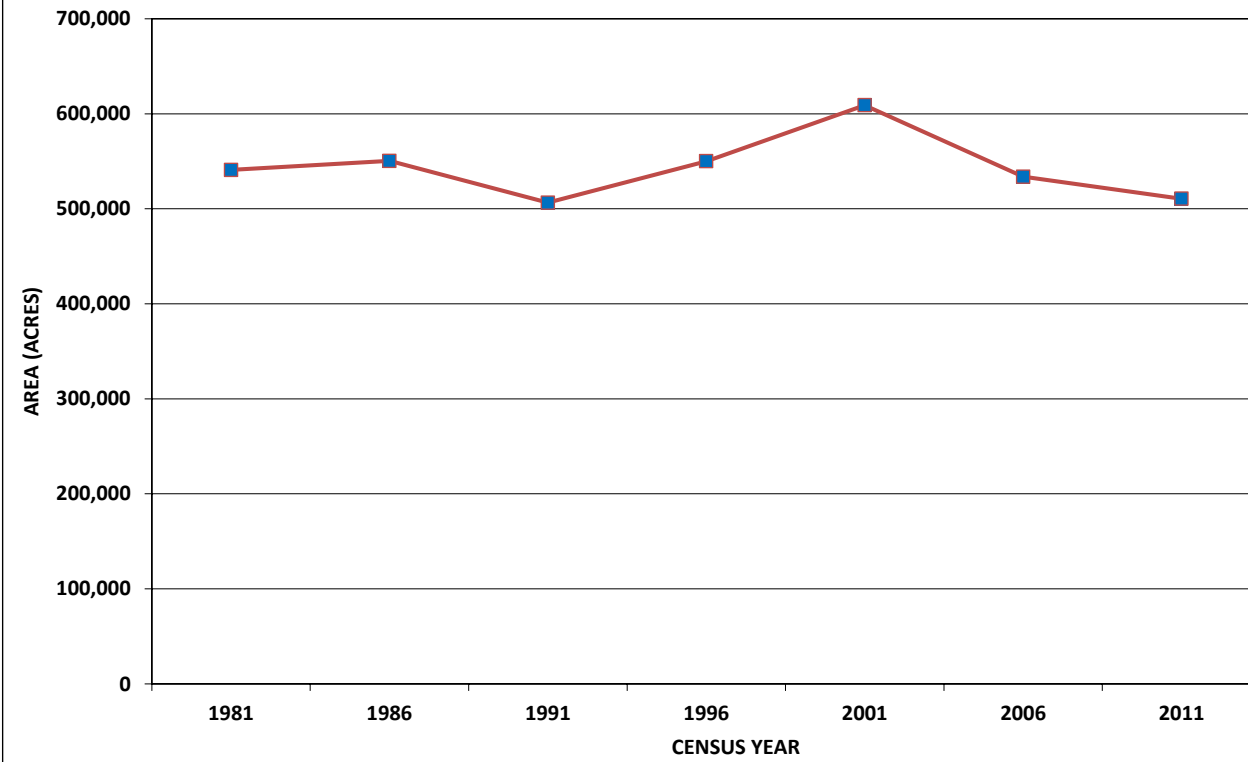


FIGURE 3 SIMCOE'S CENSUS FARM AREA AS A PROPORTION OF ONTARIO'S CENSUS FARM AREA

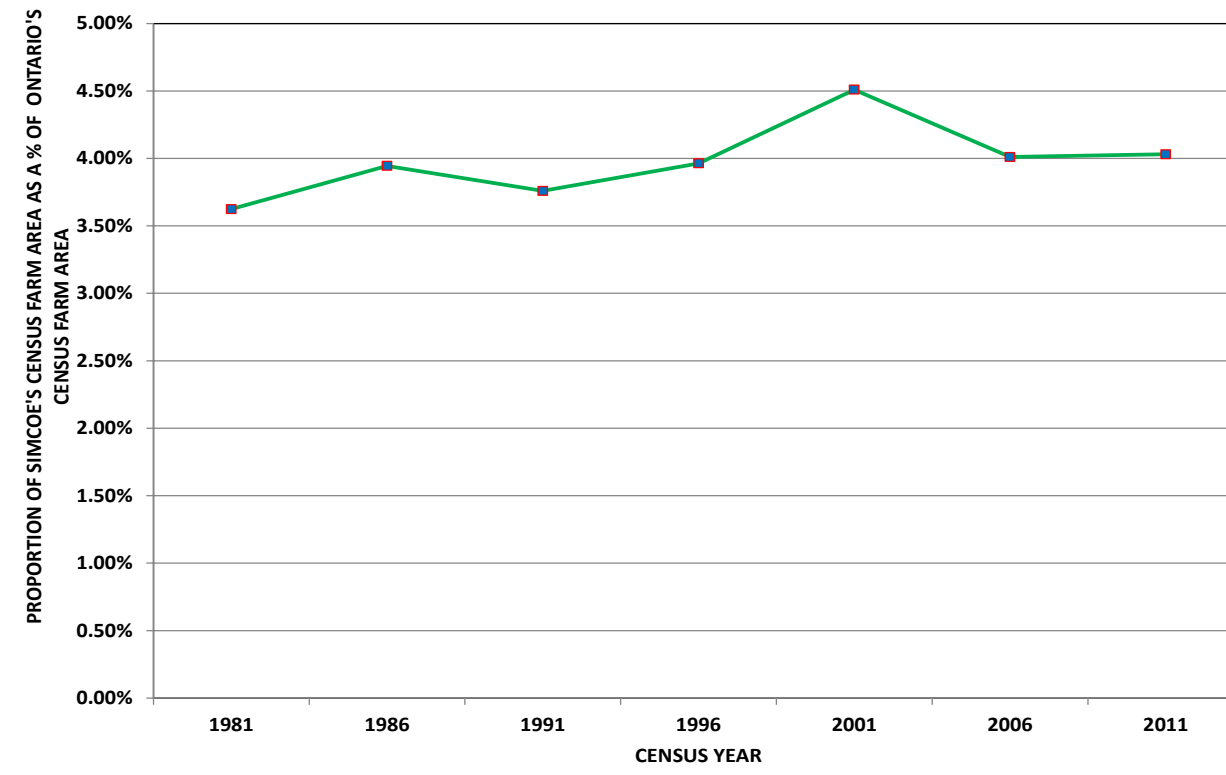


FIGURE 2 AREA OF CENSUS FARMS IN INNISFIL 1981 TO 2011

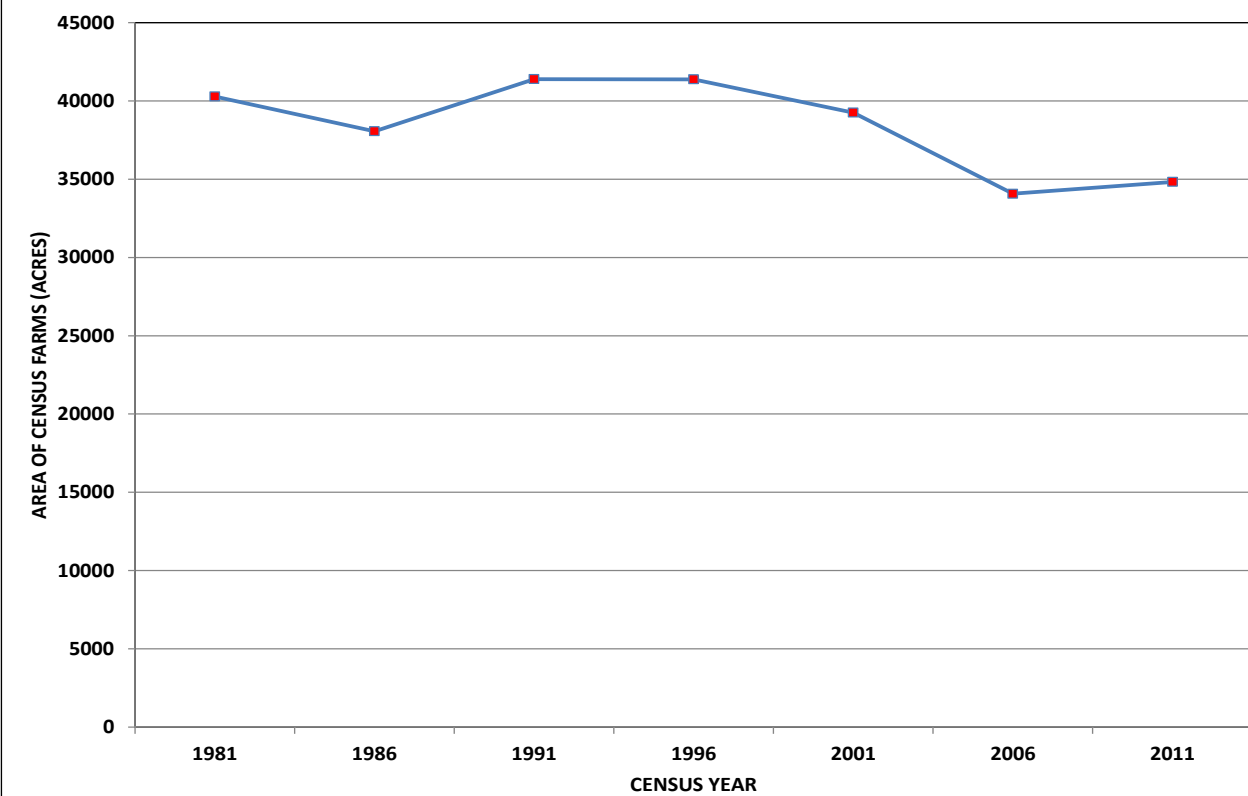


FIGURE 4 INNISFIL'S CENSUS FARM AREA AS A PROPORTION OF SIMCOE'S CENSUS FARM AREA

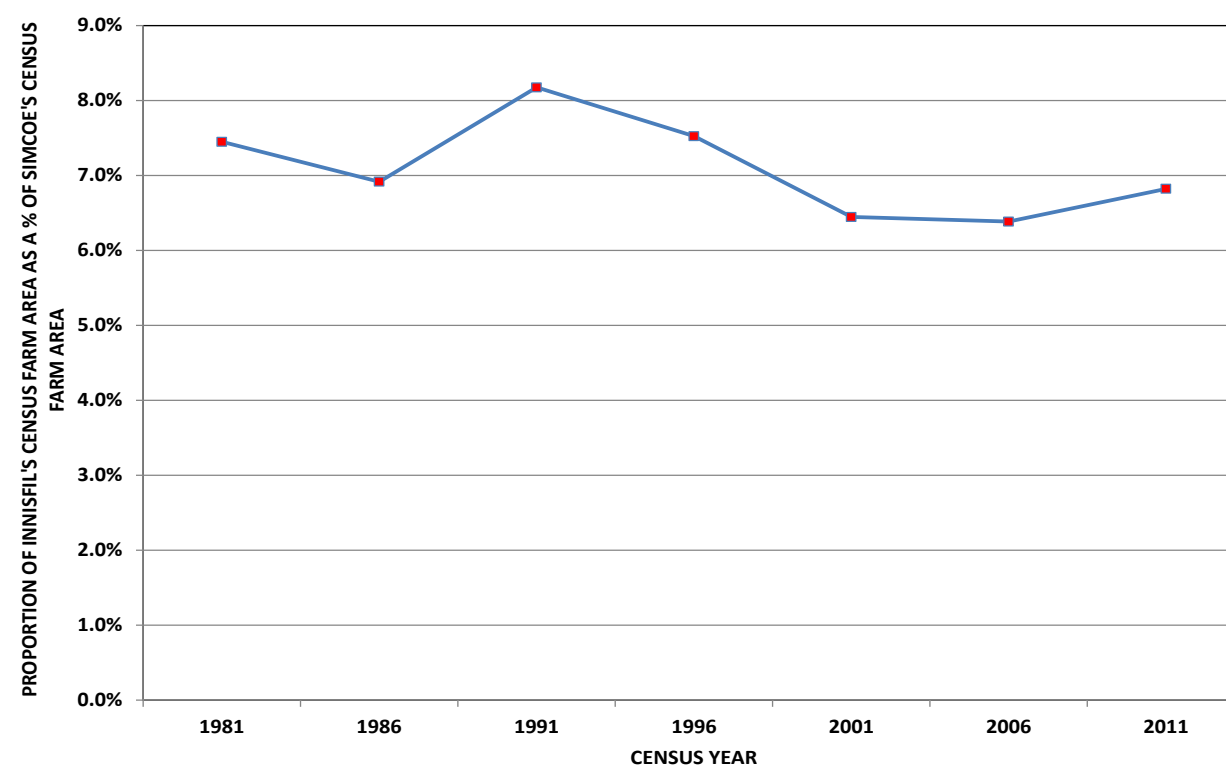




FIGURE 5 NUMBER OF CENSUS FARMS IN SIMCOE COUNTY 1981 TO 2011

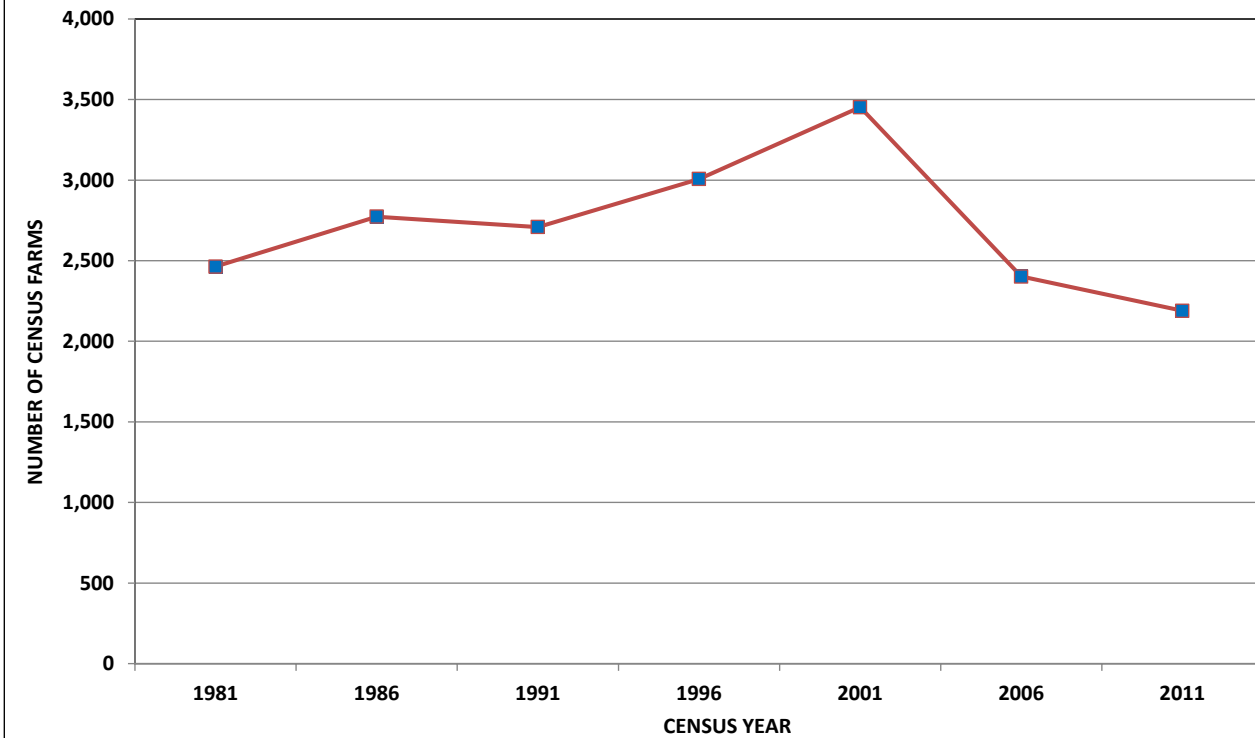


FIGURE 7 SIMCOE'S CENSUS FARM NUMBER AS A PROPORTION OF ONTARIO'S CENSUS FARM NUMBER 1981 TO 2011

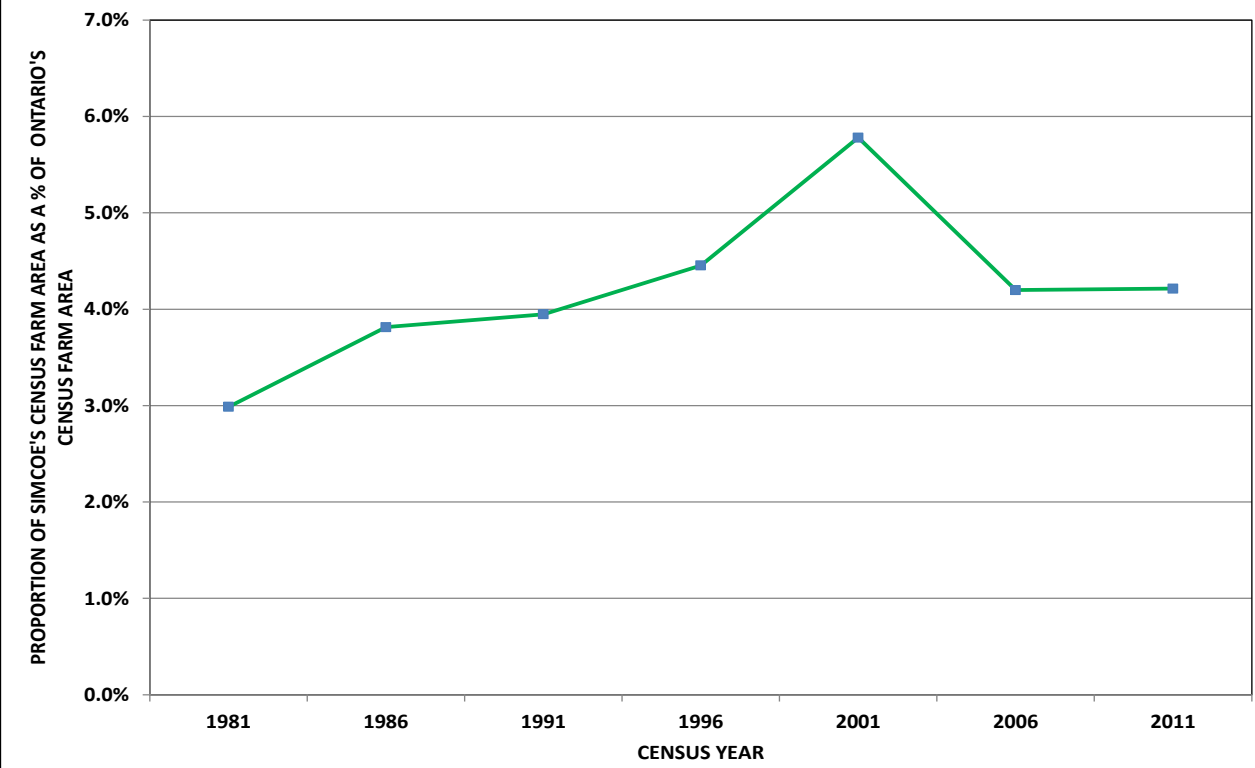


FIGURE 6 NUMBER OF CENSUS FARMS IN INNISFIL 1981 TO 2011

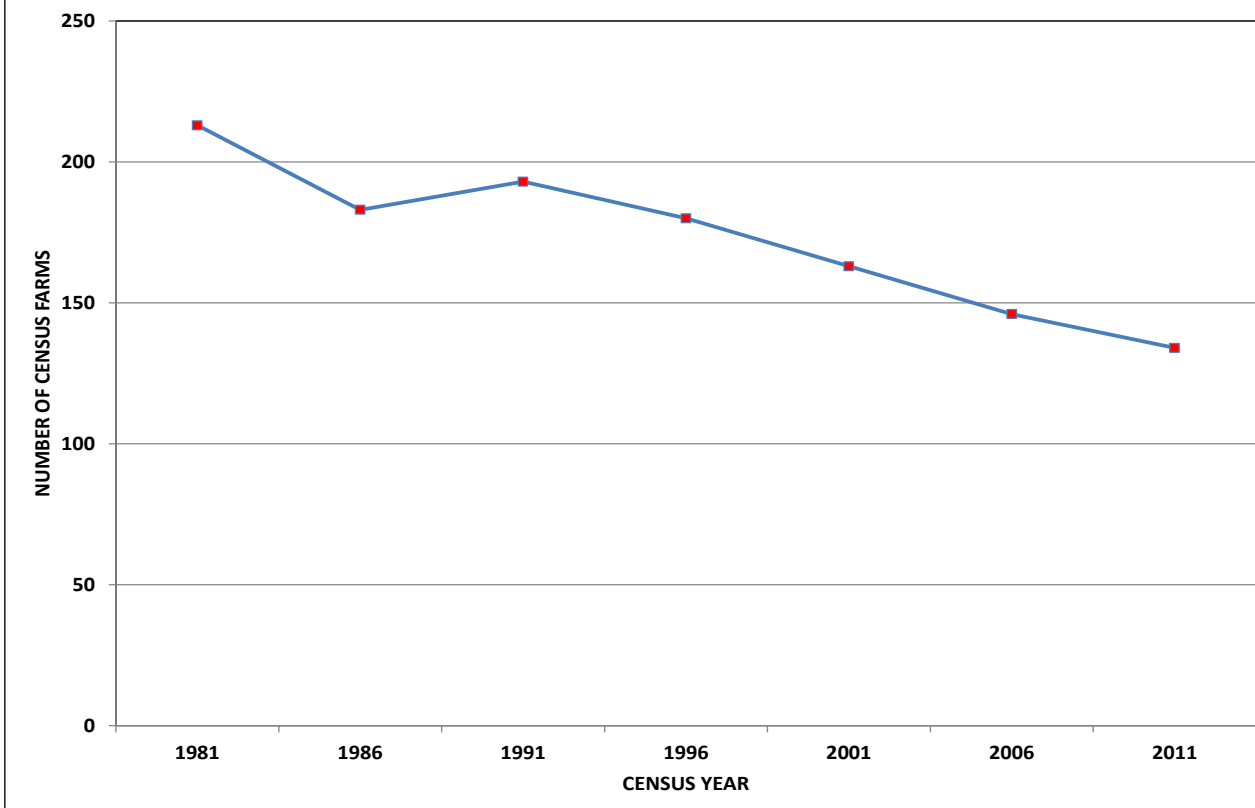


FIGURE 8 INNISFIL'S CENSUS FARM NUMBER AS A PROPORTION OF SIMCOE'S CENSUS FARM NUMBER 1981 TO 2011

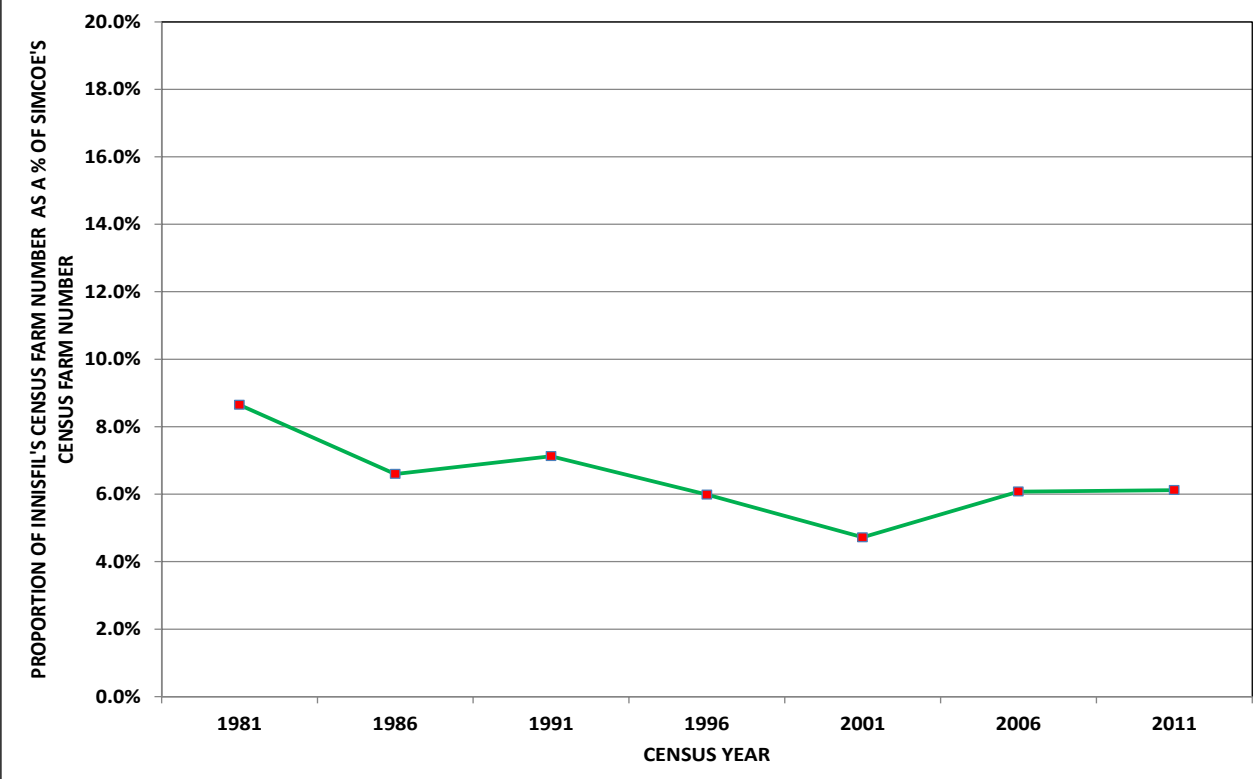




FIGURE 9 LIVESTOCK NUMBER IN SIMCOE COUNTY 1981 - 2011

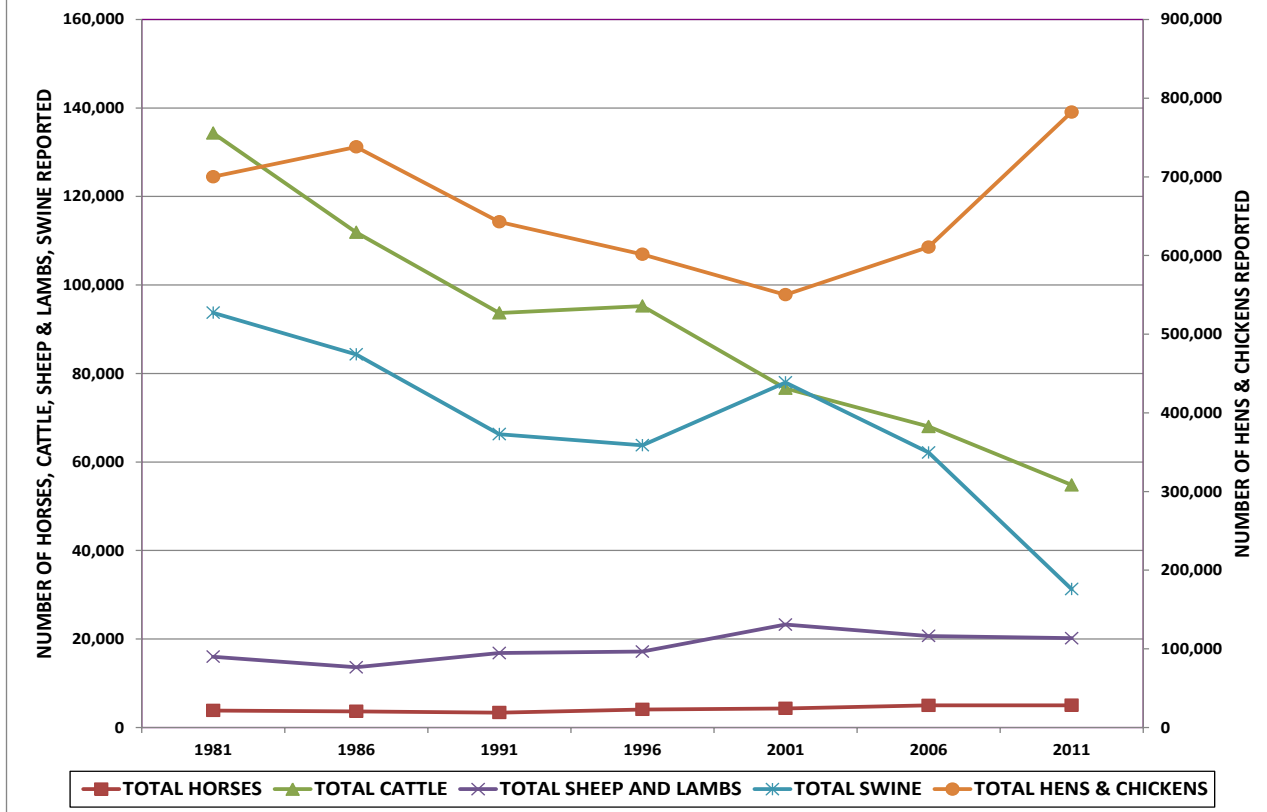


FIGURE 11 LIVESTOCK NUMBER IN SIMCOE COUNTY AS A PROPORTION OF LIVESTOCK NUMBER IN ONTARIO 1981 - 2011

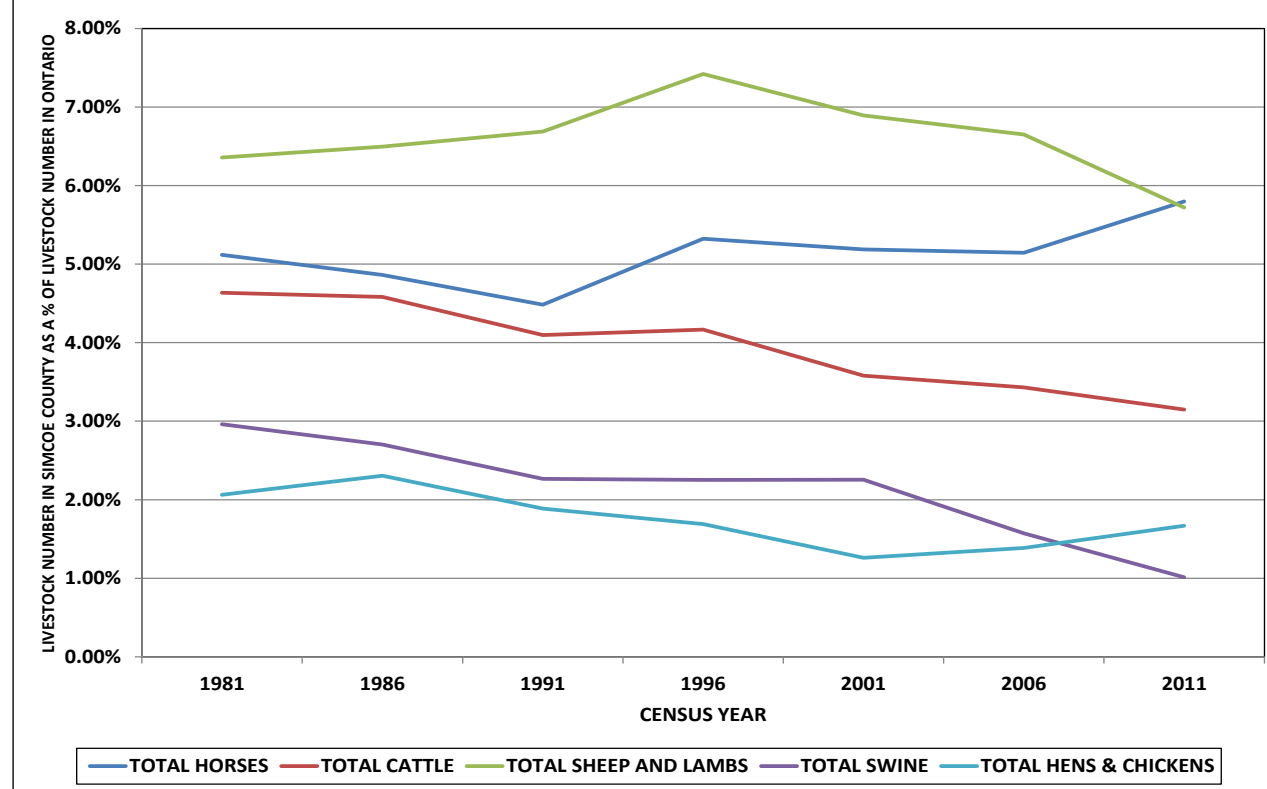


FIGURE 10 LIVESTOCK NUMBER IN INNISFIL 1981 - 2011

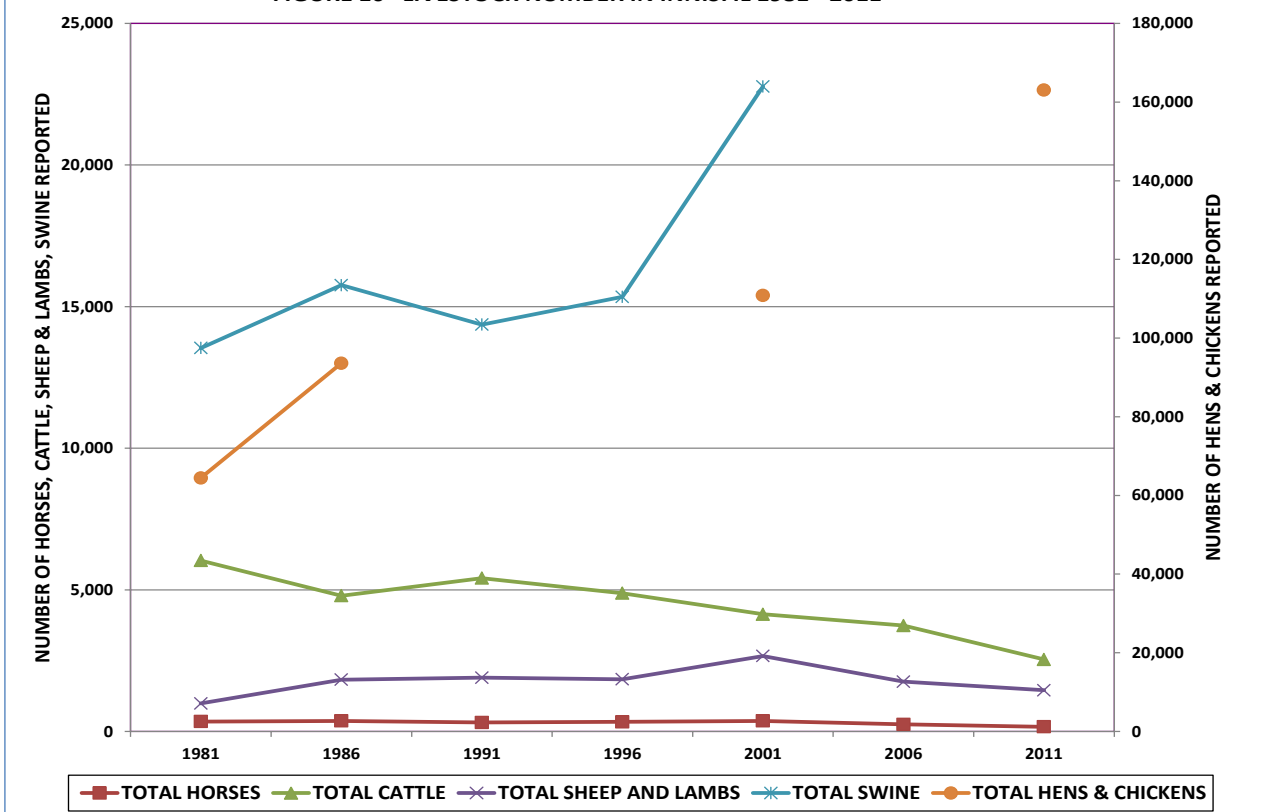
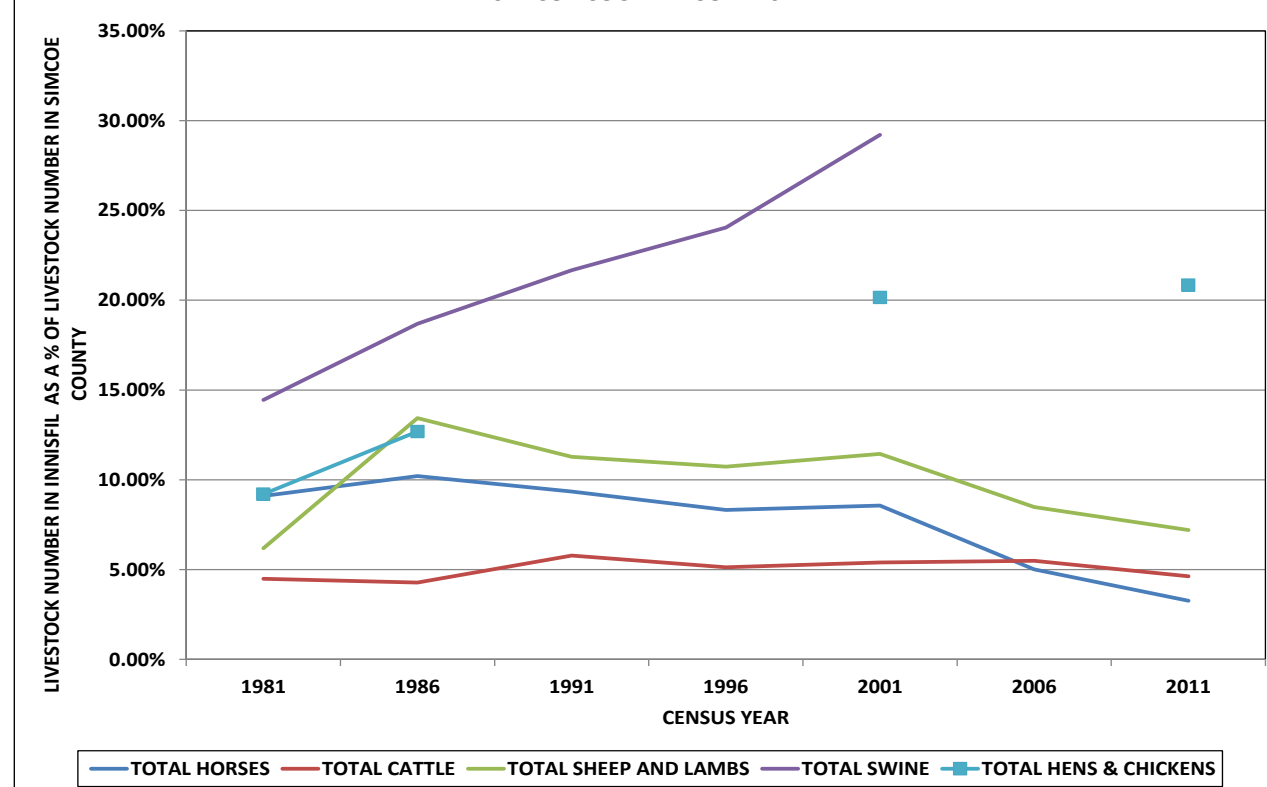
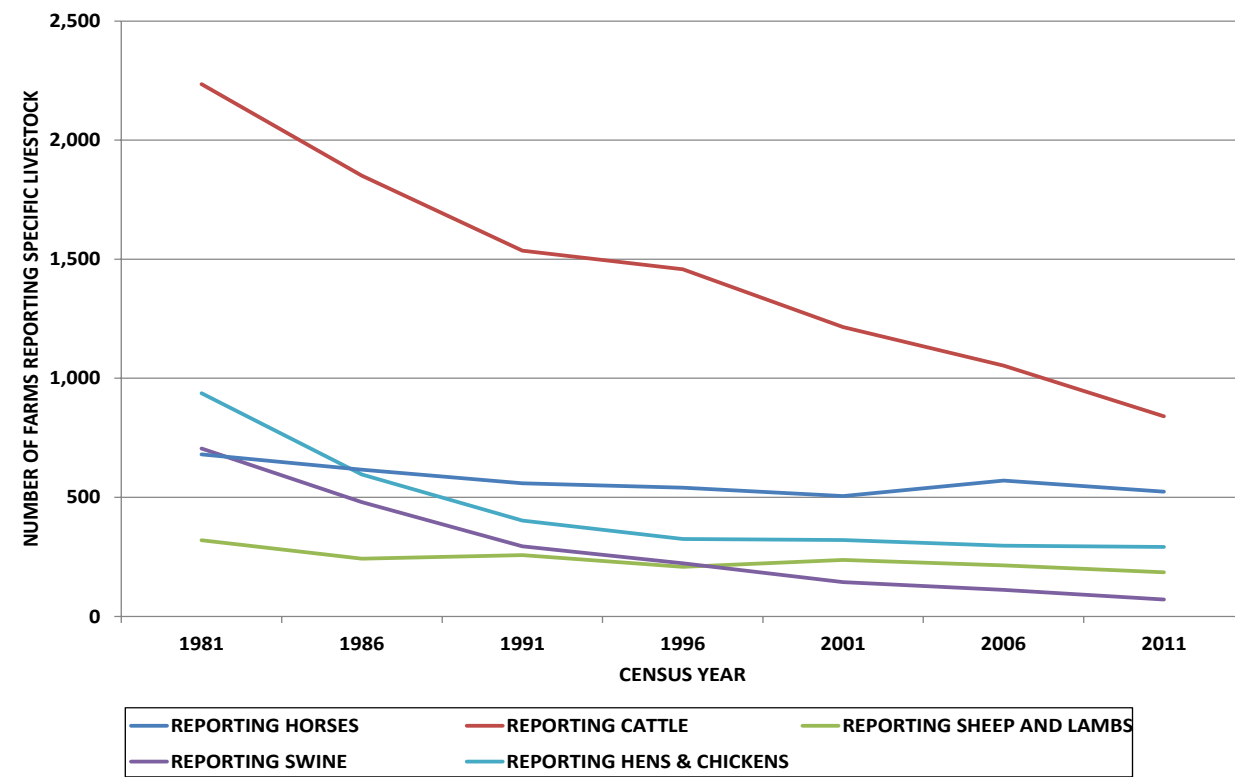


FIGURE 12 LIVESTOCK NUMBER IN INNISFIL AS A PROPORTION OF LIVESTOCK NUMBER IN SIMCOE COUNTY 1981 - 2011

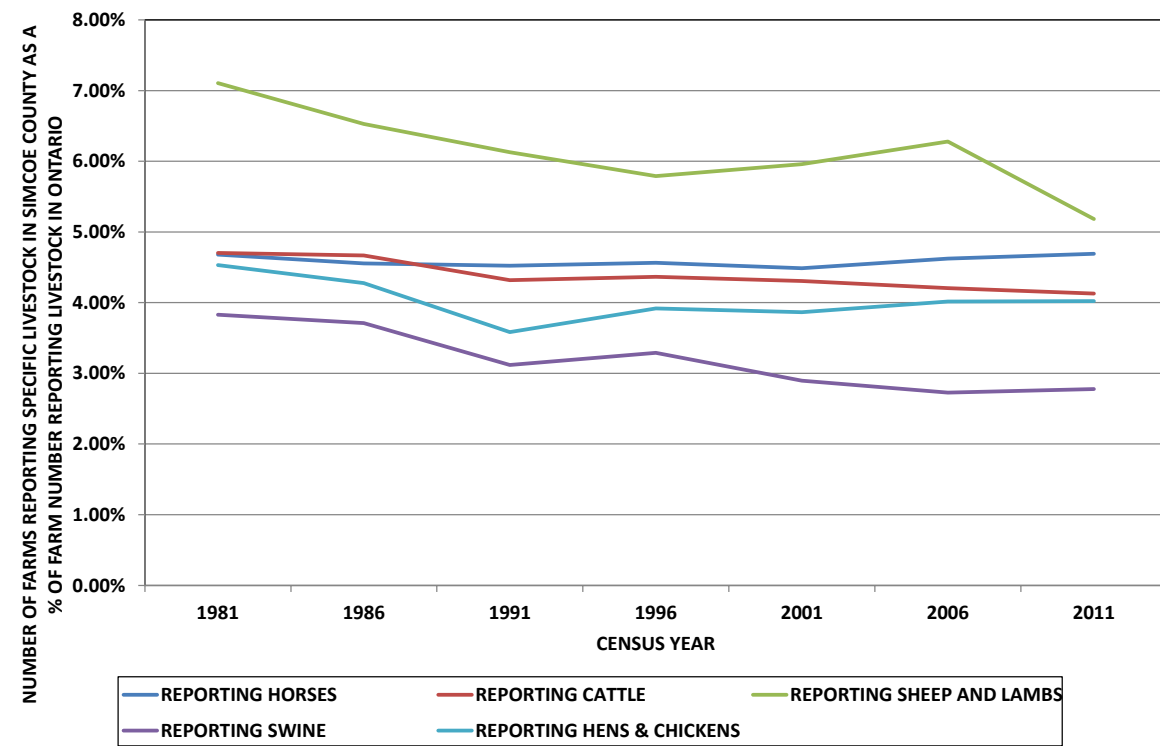




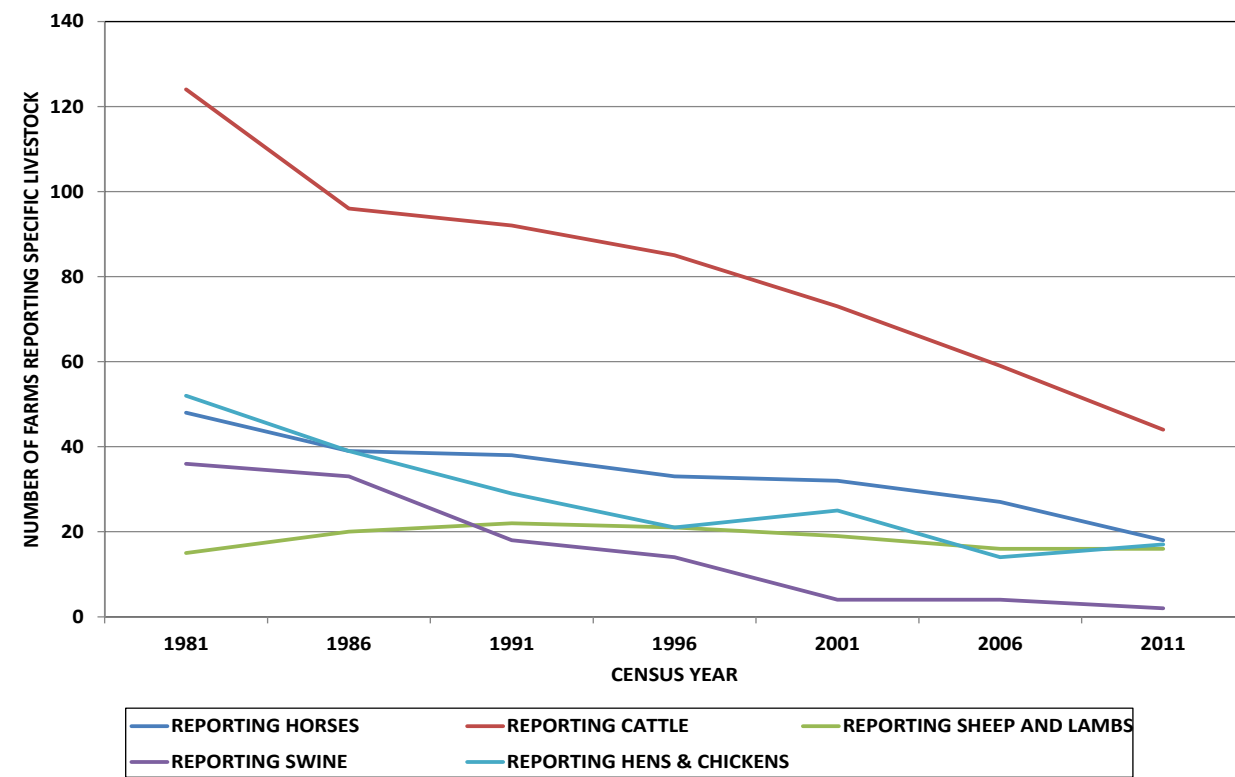
**FIGURE 13 NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING SPECIFIC LIVESTOCK IN SIMCOE COUNTY
1981 - 2011**



**FIGURE 15 NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING SPECIFIC LIVESTOCK IN SIMCOE COUNTY
AS A PROPORTION OF FARM NUMBER REPORTING SPECIFIC LIVESTOCK IN ONTARIO
1981 - 2011**



**FIGURE 14 NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING SPECIFIC LIVESTOCK IN INNISFIL
1981 - 2011**



**FIGURE 16 NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING SPECIFIC LIVESTOCK IN INNISFIL AS A
PROPORTION OF FARM NUMBER REPORTING SPECIFIC LIVESTOCK IN SIMCOE 1981 - 2011**

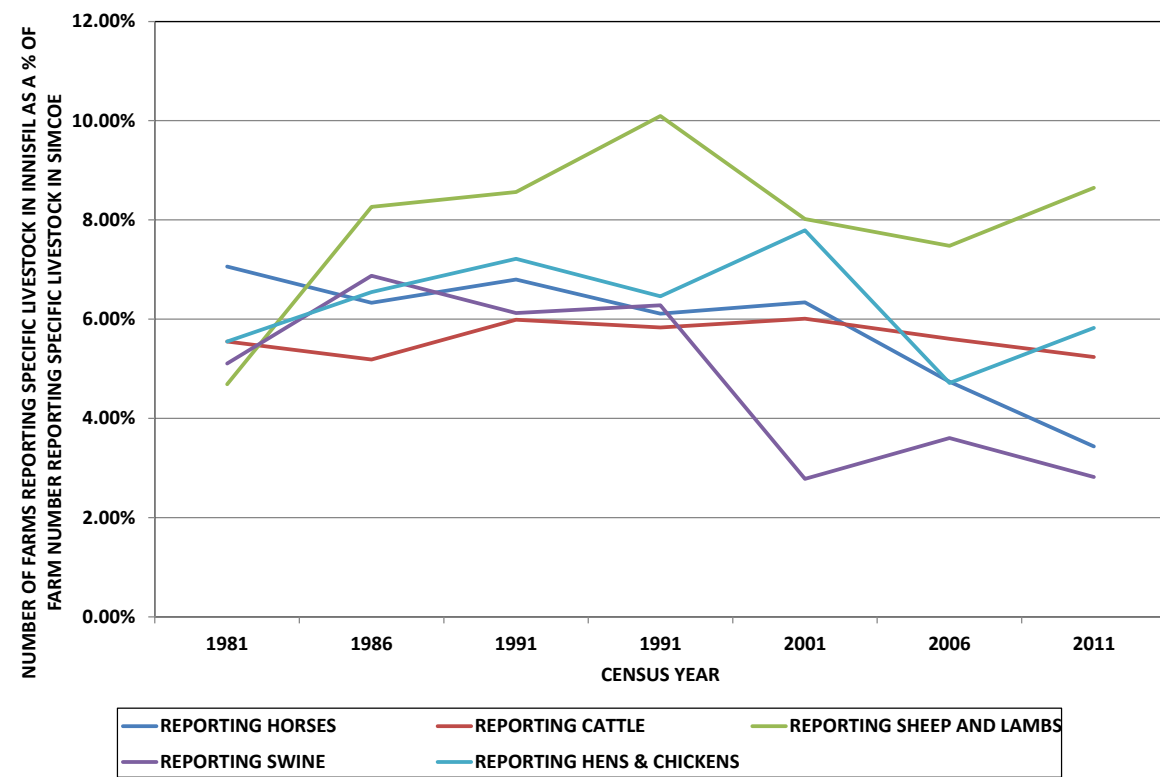




FIGURE 17 PROPORTION OF FARMS WHERE OFF-FARM INCOME EXCEEDS NET FARM INCOME IN WESTERN ONTARIO REGION

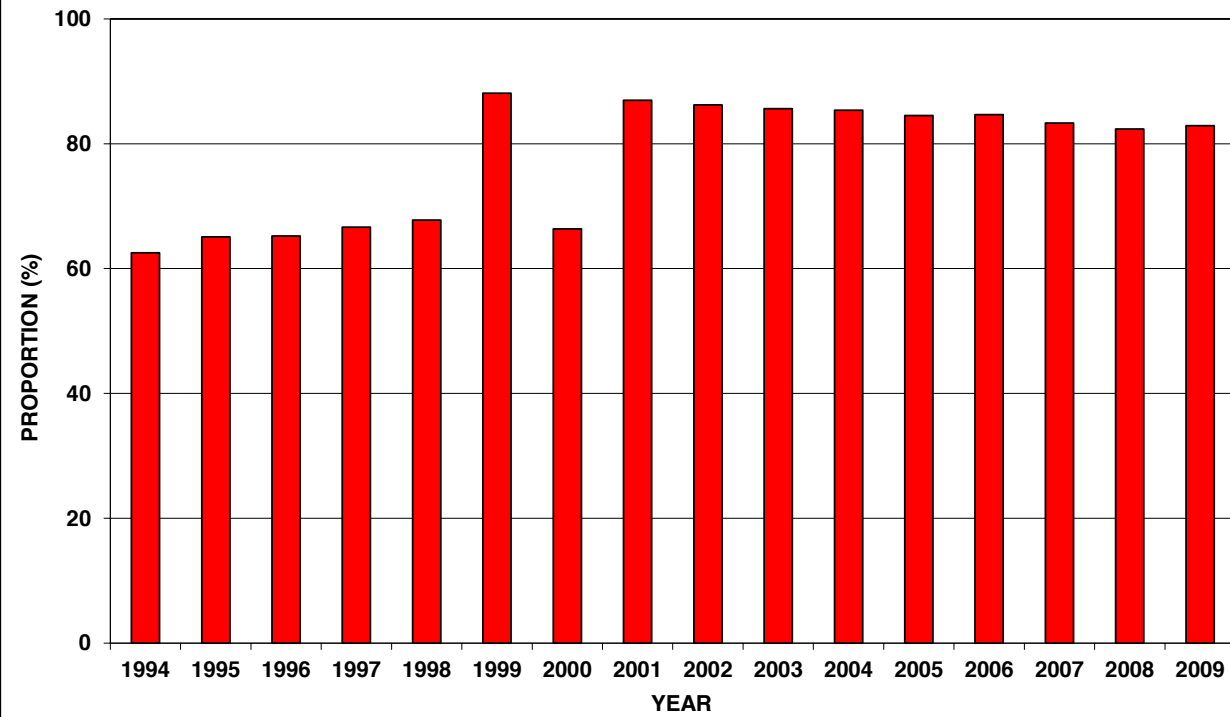


FIGURE 19 BALANCE OF TRADE FOR SELECTED COMMODITY GROUPS ONTARIO AGRICULTURE (IN CONSTANT 2014 DOLLARS)

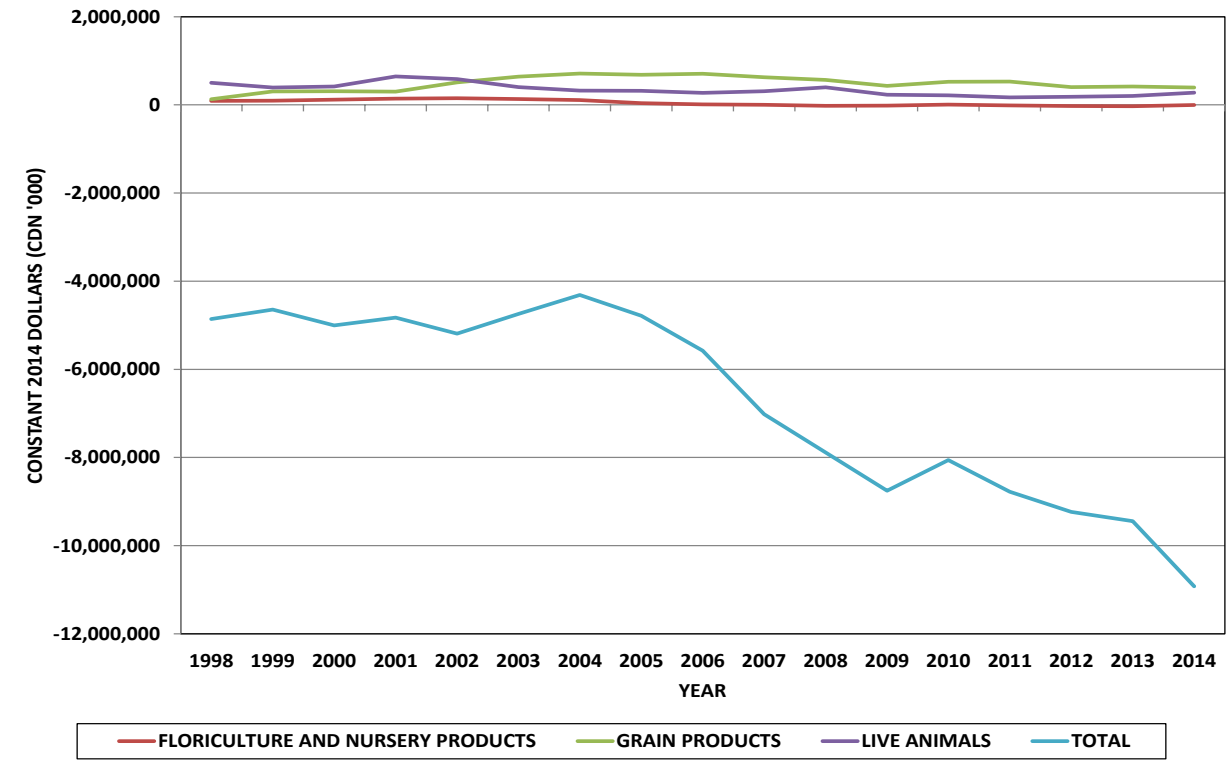


FIGURE 18 BALANCE OF TRADE FOR SELECTED COMMODITY GROUPS ONTARIO AGRICULTURE

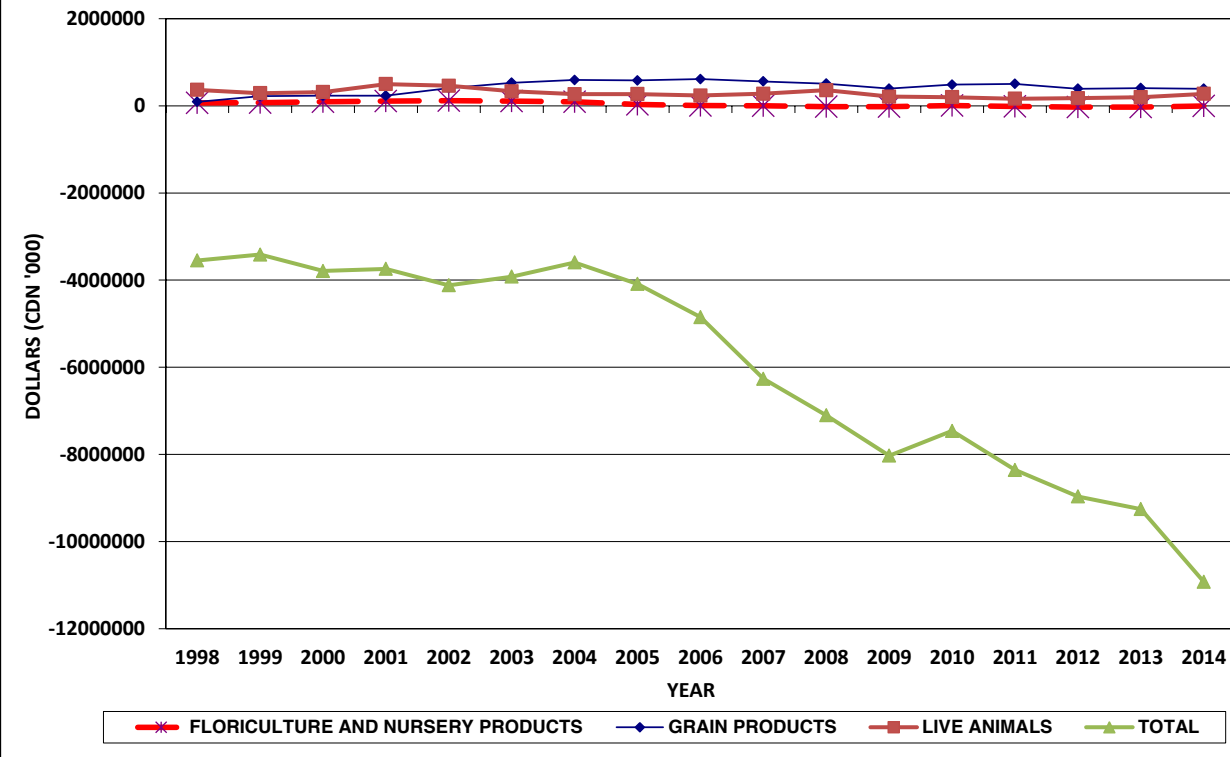
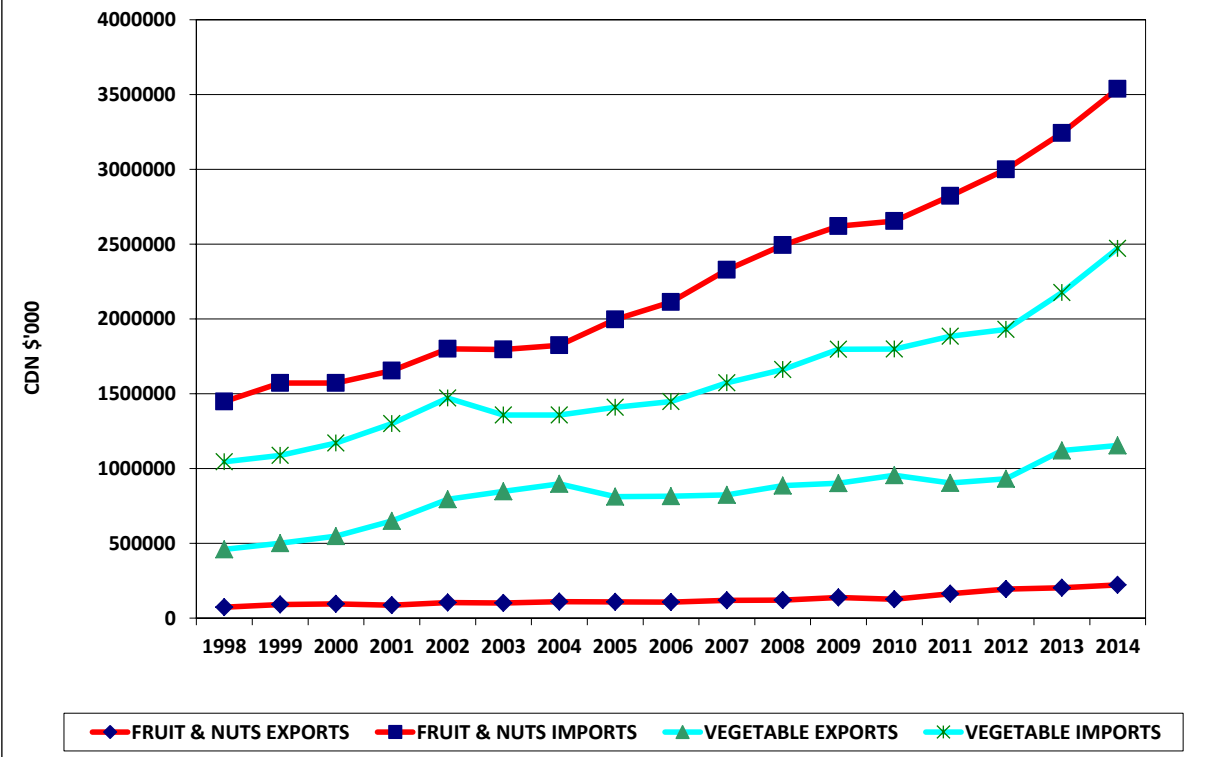
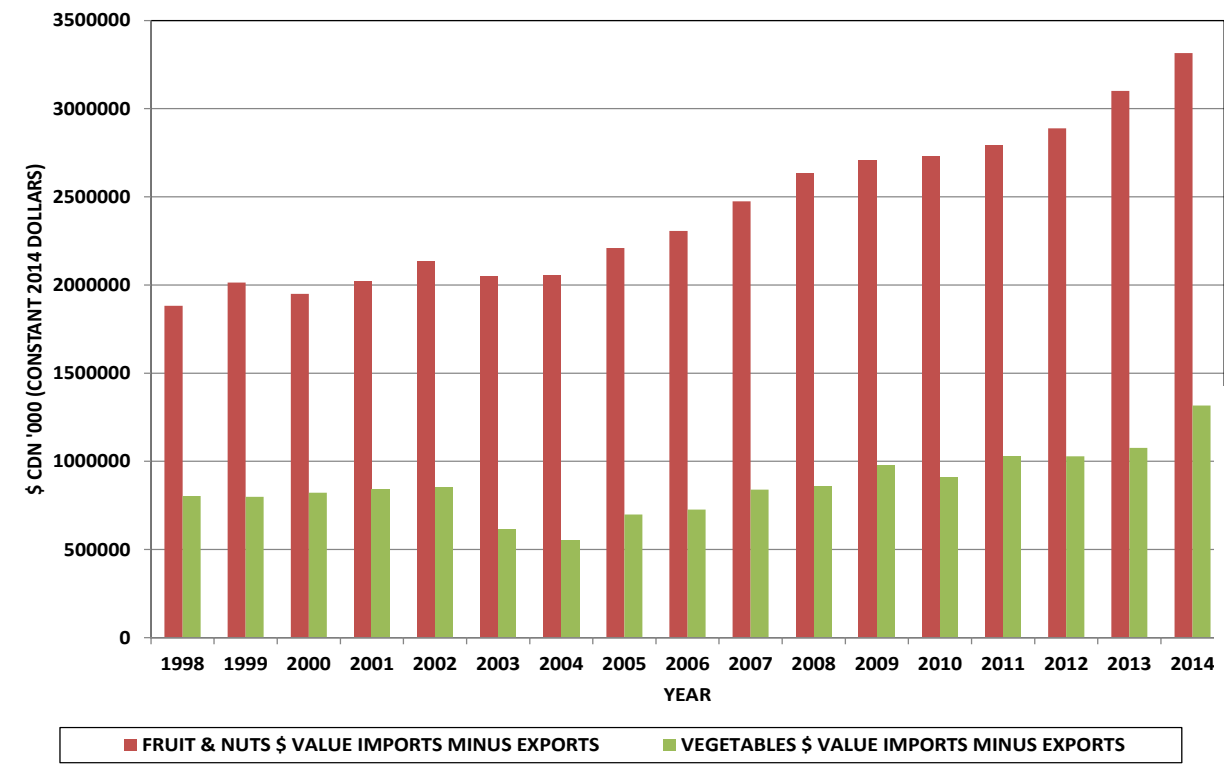


FIGURE 20 ONTARIO BALANCE OF TRADE IN FRUIT & NUTS, VEGETABLES

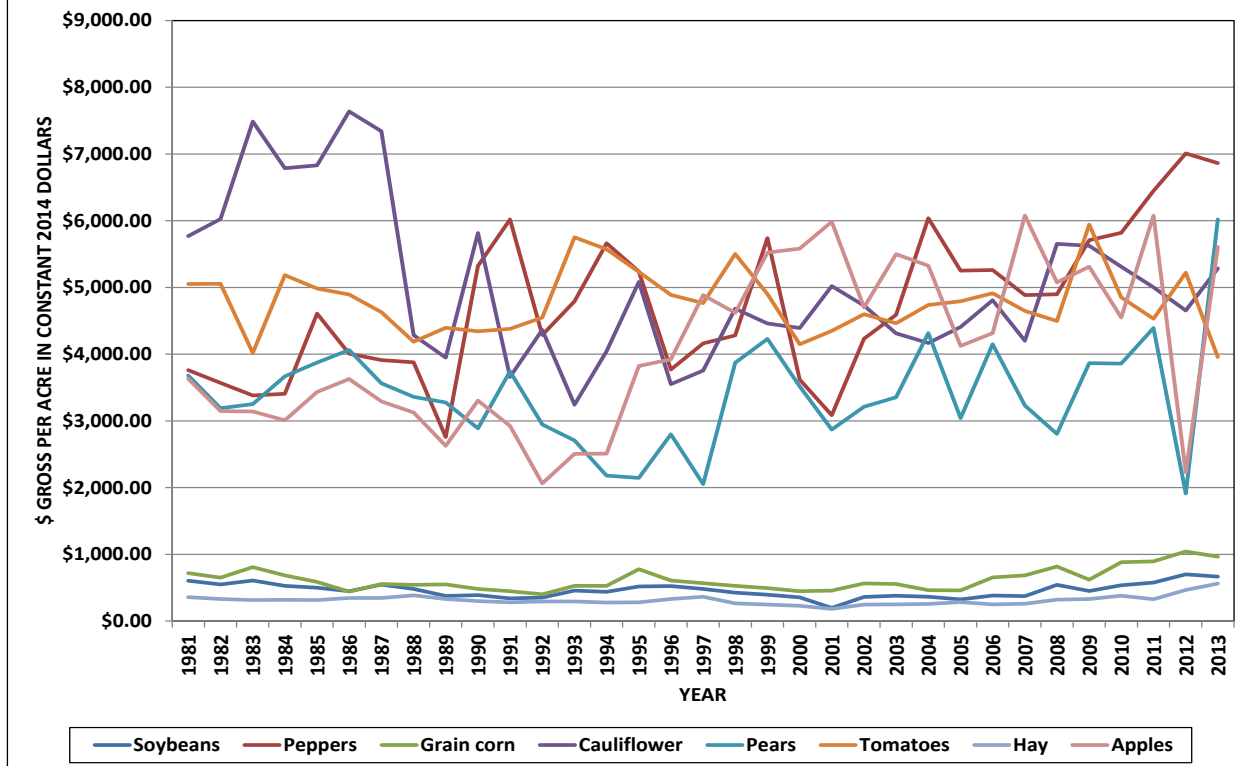




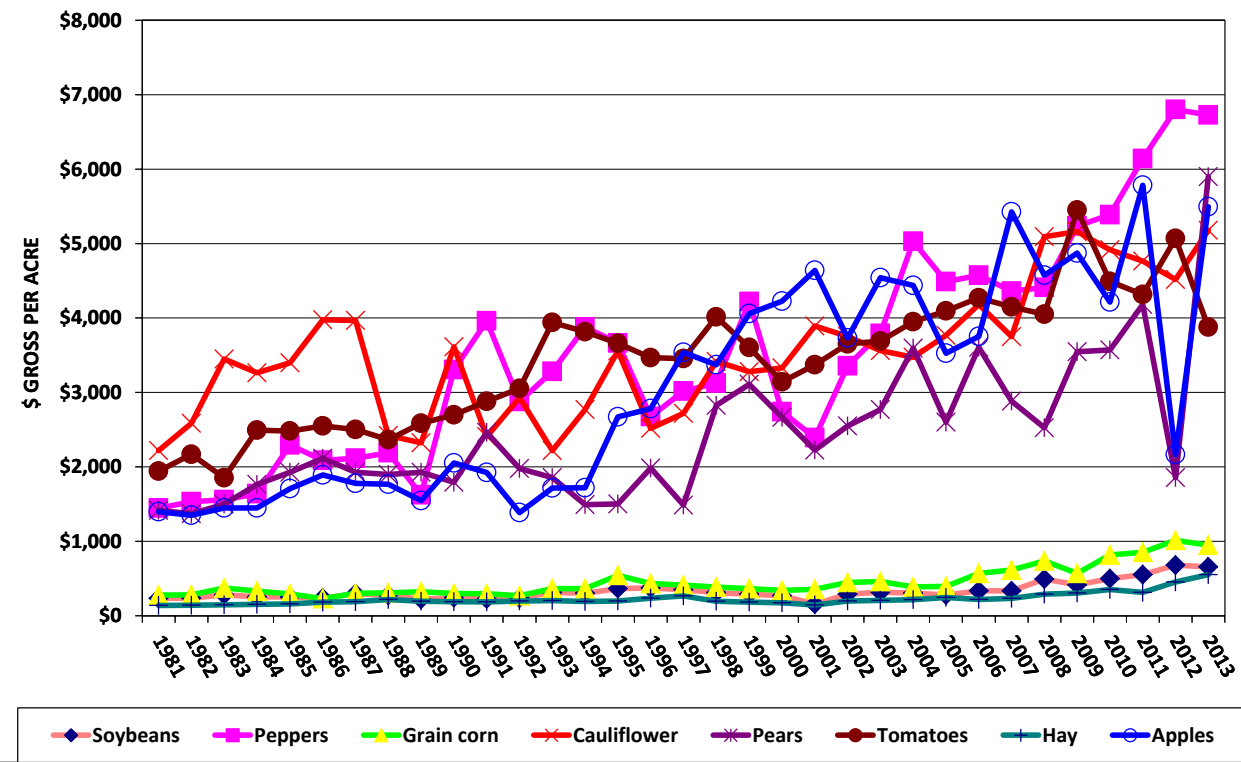
**FIGURE 21 ONTARIO BALANCE OF TRADE IN FRUIT & NUTS, VEGETABLES
IN CONSTANT 2014 DOLLARS**



**FIGURE 23 PROVINCE OF ONTARIO AVERAGE FARM VALUE
(\$ GROSS PER ACRE IN CONSTANT 2014 DOLLARS) FOR SELECTED CROPS**



**FIGURE 22 PROVINCE OF ONTARIO AVERAGE FARM VALUE
(\$ GROSS PER ACRE) FOR SELECTED CROPS**



**FIGURE 24 NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING FRUITS, NUTS AND/OR VEGETABLES AS A
PROPORTION OF TOTAL CENSUS FARM NUMBER**

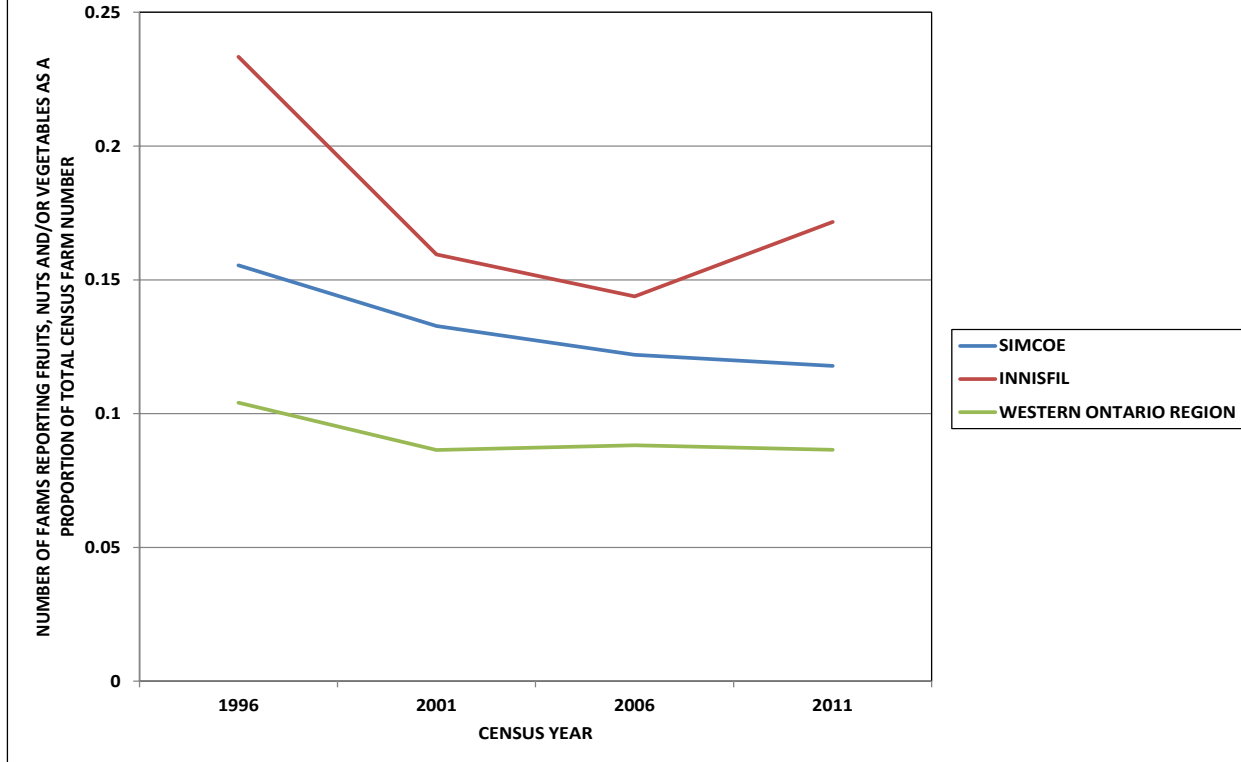




FIGURE 25 TOTAL AREA OF FRUIT, NUTS AND/OR VEGETABLES AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL CENSUS FARM AREA

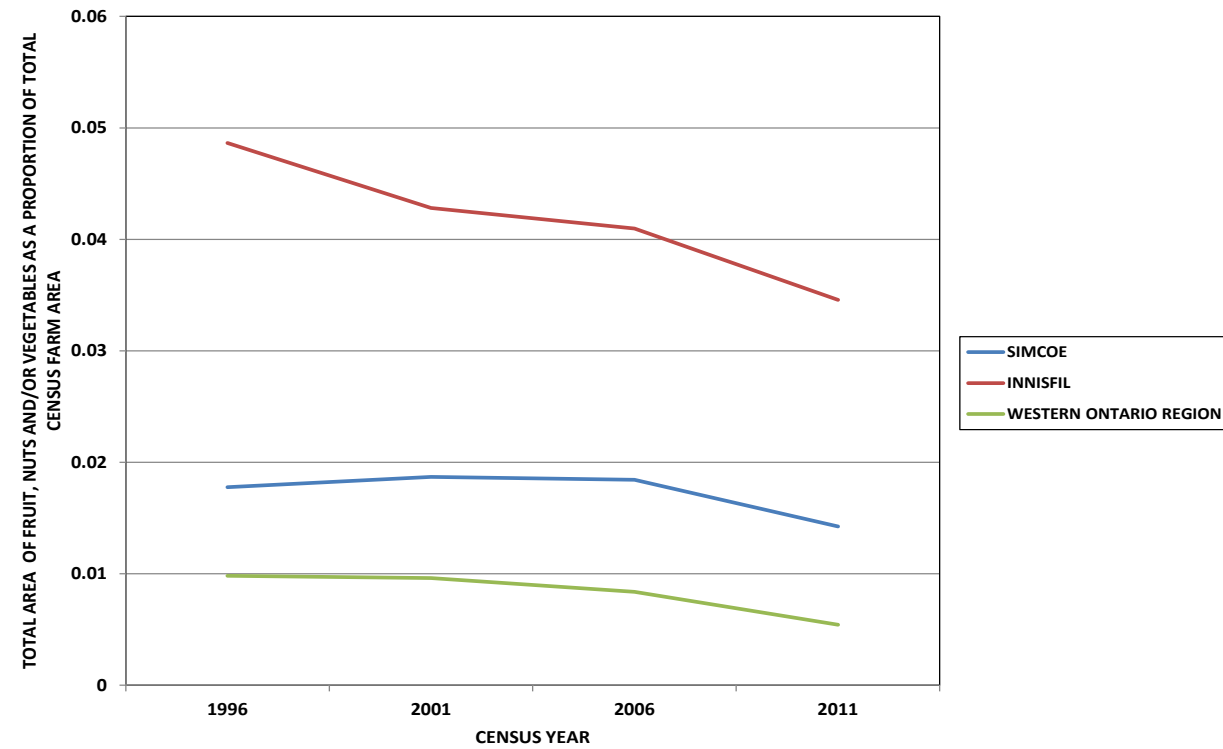


FIGURE 27 ON-FARM NET INCOME PER ACRE IN 2011 DOLLARS IN SIMCOE COUNTY, LOWER TIER MUNICIPALITIES/TOWNSHIPS AND WESTERN ONTARIO REGION 1996 - 2011 /

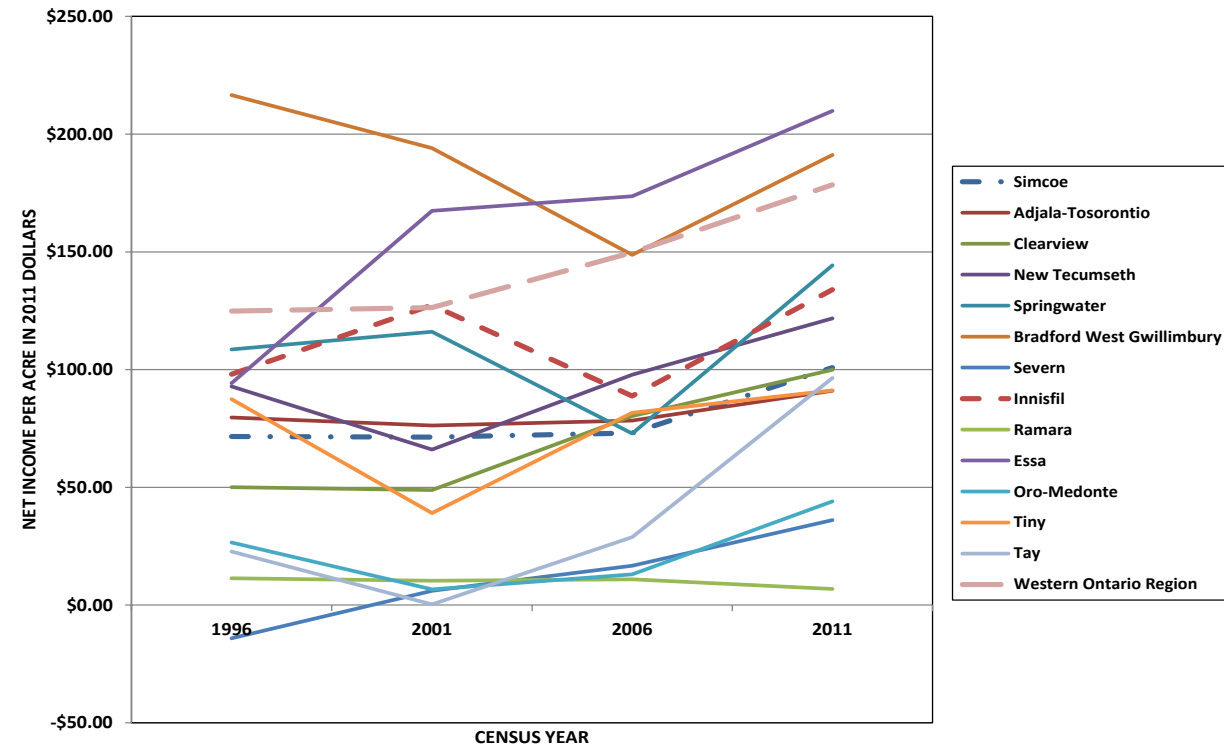


FIGURE 26 ON-FARM GROSS INCOME PER ACRE IN 2011 DOLLARS IN SIMCOE COUNTY, LOWER TIER MUNICIPALITIES/TOWNSHIPS AND WESTERN ONTARIO REGION 1996 - 2011

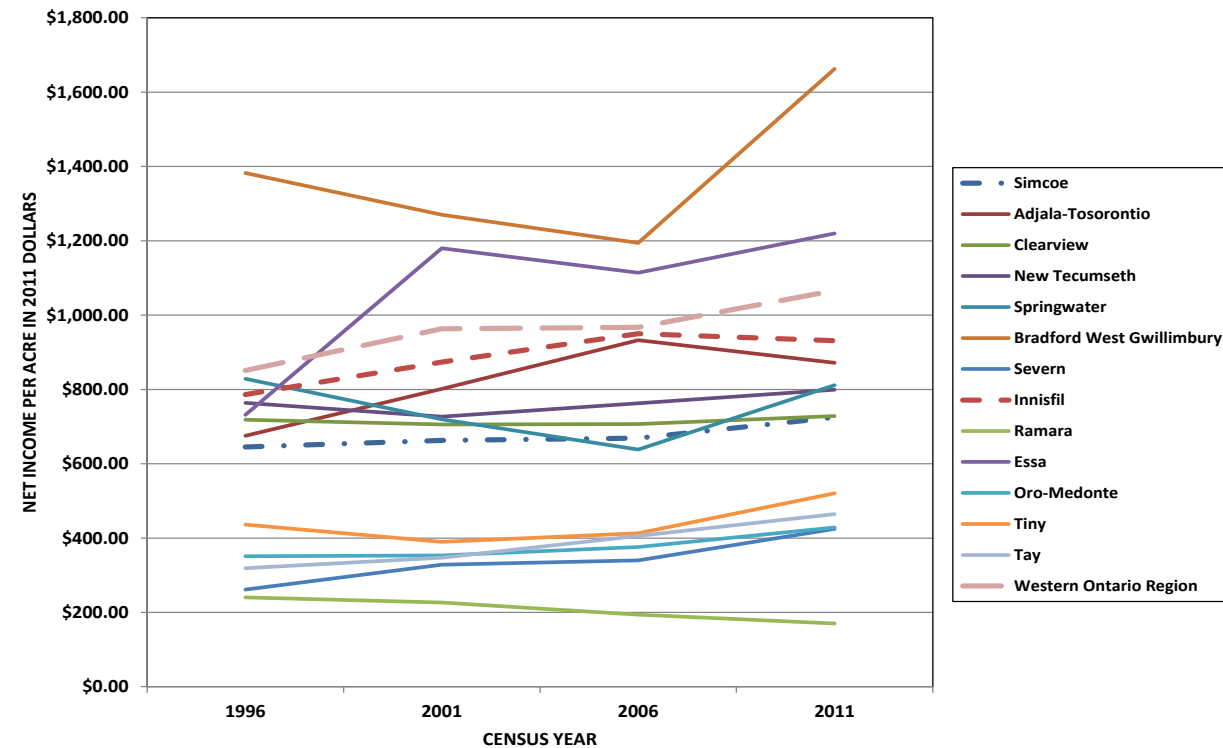
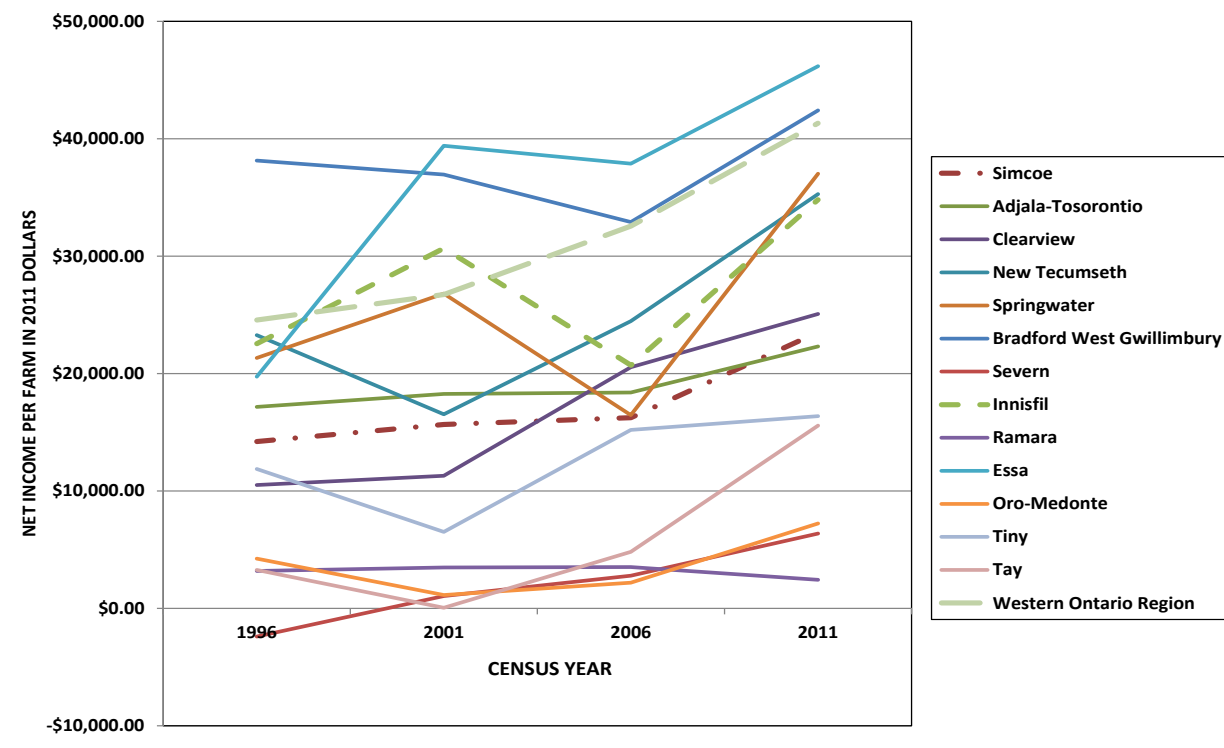


FIGURE 28 ON-FARM NET INCOME PER FARM IN 2011 DOLLARS IN SIMCOE COUNTY, LOWER TIER MUNICIPALITIES/TOWNSHIPS AND WESTERN ONTARIO REGION 1996 - 2011 /





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**APPENDIX 1
DISCUSSION ON NUMERICAL ANALYSIS**



This report is based on the view that numerical analyses assist in making reasoned and reasonable decisions concerning the relative agricultural:

- productivity,
- economic activity,
- product diversity, and
- producers

When comparing one geographic area to another, the number of different variables that can become part of numerical analyses related to agriculture are potentially infinite depending on the scale of the different area comparisons. The objective of the analyses completed in this report was to choose sample indicators of productivity, economic activity, product diversity and producers where such information is available. For example, yield information can be obtained for a relatively broad cross-section of common field crops and specialty crops at the regional/county scale, but these data are not available at the municipal/township scale. Therefore, direct measures of productivity using yield data which would compare Innisfil to the other municipalities/townships within Simcoe County were not possible. Instead, productivity was inferred by measuring agricultural characteristics per unit census farm area or by census farm number.

Different agricultural measures such as gross farm income are used by some as an indication of overall economic activity of agriculture. Others take the view that net income is a better indication of the relative economic health of farm businesses within a given geographic area. Both measures were included within this agricultural report.

Other decisions need to be made concerning how trends are shown over time. For example, changes in net income from one in census year to the next can be made on the basis of the actual dollars reported. Alternatively, net income can be based on constant dollars to a specific year where those constant dollars are a function of inflation. When emphasizing the relative differences within a single census year when comparing different geographic areas, the actual dollars are reasonable way of presenting the data. However, if the objective is to observe the trend over time then calculations in constant dollars are more appropriate. Both measures were included within this agricultural report. The constant dollars used were based on the last year that data is available. As a result, Statistics Canada constant dollars were for the year 2011 the year of the last census. Where OMAFRA data is used and is available to the year 2014, constant dollars were calculated on the basis of 2014 dollars.



APPENDIX 2
CHANGES IN THE AGRICULTURAL CENSUS INFORMATION BASE



Statistics Canada's Agricultural Census has changed markedly over time based on the facts that:

- definitions change,
- the agricultural questionnaire changes and therefore the variables measured within the census change.

More recently, there are viewpoints that the voluntary nature for the long-form census has affected accuracy. The loss of accuracy is described in various sources but two viewpoints can be understood by reference to:

- <http://voices-voix.ca/en/facts/profile/statistics-canada-mandatory-long-form-census> and,
- http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/05/06/national-household-survey-unreliable-n_3220138.html

Statistics Canada makes its own perspectives relatively clear about accuracy at:

- http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/NHS-ENM/2011/ref/about-apropos/nhs-enm_r005-eng.cfm

However, the agricultural census is not voluntary, so the problems related to accuracy described for other parts of the census are less likely to apply.

Irrespective of changing definitions, changes over time have been measured within this report for 30 years based on the fact that this is a reasonable planning timeframe. In some instances, the 30 year time frame has been reduced due to the amalgamation that occurred within Simcoe County prior to the 1996 census. When OMAFRA data has been used where the data is reported yearly, the length of time presented for trend analysis is a function of what is currently available on the OMAFRA website and/or what is part of existing AgPlan records.