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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Planning and Economic Development Committee  
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2023-EDT-1  
Date: January 10, 2023

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**Subject:**

Gates Open 2022: Find Your Flavour

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**Recommendation:**

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of last year's Gates Open: Find Your Flavour event, which showcased Durham Region farms and their products during a two-day event that featured hands-on educational activities and unique experiences for visitors. The event was held on October 1 and 2, 2022.
- 1.2 This report will be accompanied by a staff presentation at the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Durham Tourism, in partnership with the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association, were pleased to bring back the Gates Open: Find Your Flavour event which was last held in 2019 and was placed on hiatus in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 2.2 The opportunity to become a host farm for Gates Open was offered to members of the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association by way of an application process. Farms were asked to highlight in their application the types of activities they could offer to visitors - experiences not normally offered during their day-to-day operations.
- 2.3 Ten farms in the municipalities of Brock, Scugog, Uxbridge and Clarington participated in the event:
- Banjo Cider- 614 Sandford Rd., Uxbridge
  - Bragg Farms- 3048 Concession Rd. 3, Bowmanville
  - Gallery on the Farm - 1721 Regional Rd. 3, Enniskillen
  - Nature's Bounty Farm - 651 Scugog Line 2, Port Perry
  - Ocala Winery Groups Inc. - 971 High Point Rd., Port Perry
  - Sargent Family Dairy- 8734 Old Scugog Rd., Enniskillen
  - Tindall Farm & Market- 13669 Durham Regional Rd. 1, Uxbridge
  - Two Blokes Cider- 21300 Simcoe St., Seagrave
  - Villa Vida Loca Market- 13350 Highway 12, Sunderland
  - Wool 4 Ewe Fiber Mill - 3591 Proutt Rd., Nestleton Station
- 2.4 Visitors had the opportunity to take part in fun and educational activities including: live cider press demonstrations, dig-your-own potatoes, potato sack races, food sampling and cooking demonstrations, learning about grass-fed beef and rotational grazing, artist demonstrations, orchard tours, corn mazes, wagon rides, learning about wine production, learning about milk and cheese production, paint your own pumpkins and much more.
- 2.5 Admission to Gates Open: Find Your Flavour was free. In addition to financial support from the Region of Durham and Durham Farm Fresh, this event was made possible with \$16,698.00 of funding from the Provincial Reconnect Grant program. This program supports festivals and events that have a tourism economic impact, and which motivate visitors to rediscover Ontario.
- 2.6 A marketing rollout plan was developed to ensure the success of the Gates Open: Find Your Flavour event. Marketing for the event included printed posters, flyers, feature box placement on the Durham Tourism website, newspaper advertising, radio, social media, press release distribution, and a dedicated website: [www.gatesopen.ca](http://www.gatesopen.ca).

### **3. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

3.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

3. Economic Prosperity:

3.5 Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries:  
Agriculture and agri-food industries are key drivers of our regional economy.

### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 According to visitation counts collected at participating farms, Gates Open: Find Your Flavour welcomed approximately 2500 guests over the course of the two-day weekend.

4.2 The event provided an opportunity to showcase some of Durham's most incredible farms and each farm demonstrated the passion and dedication they bring to farming, and their commitment to local food. Guests were able to learn about life on a farm and experience fun, hands-on educational experiences.

### **5. Attachments**

Attachment #1: Gates Open: Find Your Flavour Poster

Attachment #2: Metroland Advertorial

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and  
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer





# GATES OPEN

**FIND YOUR FLAVOUR**

**Experience Durham Region's  
signature farm tour**

**OCTOBER 1 - 2, 2022 ★ 10 A.M.  4 P.M.**

**[GatesOpen.ca](https://GatesOpen.ca)**





# Gates Open event returns to Durham Region



The gates will be open and so will the barn doors, as local farms welcome guests to experience rural life just in time for the harvest season. On October 1 and 2 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., people from all across Durham Region and the Greater Toronto Area will be invited to visit several locations, free of charge, and participate in a number of fun activities for the whole family.

In partnership with Durham Farm Fresh, Durham Tourism is once again welcoming folks who want a glimpse into rural life after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The last Gates Open event took place in 2019.

This event is the perfect way to kick-start your celebrations for Ontario Agriculture Week (October 3 to 9).

## Fun activities

You'll get to do more than just walk around these farms; you'll be encouraged to roll up your sleeves and partake in some fun and educational activities. Some of the activities you can expect this year include digging for potatoes, pressing apples, working with wool and painting pumpkins. Which activity you participate in will depend on the farms you visit, so plan out your route accordingly.

The Gates Open event is self-guided, so visitors can plan their weekend out how they want, with no registration or tickets required.

As a family friendly event, Gates Open encourages people of all ages, from near and far, to come out and experience life on a real working farm.

## Participating farms

As of the publication of this article, the following Durham Region farms are participating in the 2022 Gates Open weekend:

- Banjo Cider (Uxbridge)
- Bragg Farms (Bowmanville)
- Gallery on the Farm (Hampton)
- Nature's Bounty Farm (Port Perry)
- Ocala Winery (Port Perry)
- Sargent Family Dairy (Enniskillen)
- Tindall Farm & Market (Uxbridge)
- Two Blokes Cider (Seagrave)

- Villa Vida Loca Market (Sunderland)
  - Wool 4 Ewe Fibre Mill (Nestleton Station)
- As you can see, there's a good variety represented, with cideries, wineries, dairy farms, wool producers and more!

## The flavours of Durham

One thing the Gates Open event highlights is the importance of locally produced food. We take for granted that fresh vegetables are available to us at the grocery store, and we forget that some of that bounty is produced in our own backyard.

Many of our Gates Open farms will be offering samples of their goods to visitors, including some prepared by professional chefs. You might not realize that these goods are produced right in your own area!

If you want more than just a sample, many of these farms will have items for sale, as well. It's a great opportunity to stock up for fall harvest season celebrations. Nothing beats having locally grown vegetables and homemade baked goods on your dinner table when hosting close family and loved ones.

## Plan ahead

Want to take part in this year's Gates Open event? Visit [GatesOpen.ca](http://GatesOpen.ca) to get the details on participating farms and to plan your route. This is a rain or shine event, so be prepared for weather conditions.

We hope to see you and your family on October 1 and 2. There's so much to see and do right in your own backyard. It's a great opportunity to experience another way of life.

Our local farms and farmers play such a vital role in our communities; it's important to learn more about them.

See you there!



Banjo Cider (Uxbridge)



Bragg Farms (Bowmanville)



Gallery on the Farm (Hampton)



Nature's Bounty Farm (Port Perry)



Ocala Winery (Port Perry)



Sargent Family Dairy (Enniskillen)



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