



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Community Growth and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development
Report: #2025-EDT-2
Date: January 7, 2025

Subject:

Gather at the Farm 2024 Agri-Food Marketing Campaign

Recommendation:

That the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Community Growth and Economic Development committee with a brief overview of the Region's Economic Development and Tourism Division October 2024 marketing campaign, "Gather at the Farm."

2. Background

- 2.1 The Economic Development and Tourism division collaborates with Durham Farm Fresh (DFF) to promote agri-food and visiting local farms to residents and visitors.
- 2.2 The Gather at the Farm Campaign (the Campaign) is the second annual campaign of this kind. It encourages visitation to farms in Durham Region to purchase local food and participation in lively fall-themed events.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

3.1 [#2024-EDT-6](#) – Gather at the Farm 2023 Agri-Food Marketing Campaign

4. Campaign Details and Results

4.1 The Campaign relied on in-house staff resources for development, management, graphic design, social media programming, e-newsletters, and communications strategies. The Campaign also leveraged external resources such as social media influencers, our partnership with DFF, media appearances, and an existing partnership with the Culinary Tourism Alliance and Destination Ontario to deliver this campaign to more than 21,000,000 viewers.

4.2 The Campaign included:

- a. Paid Search campaign within Google and Bing;
- b. Paid Digital display ads;
- c. Paid Meta (Facebook and Instagram) campaign;
- d. Organic social media campaign;
- e. Paid Influencer social media campaign;
- f. Social media contest;
- g. On-farm attendance based contest;
- h. E-newsletter features;
- i. Two television appearances;
- j. News release;
- k. Blog post;
- l. Metroland column;
- m. Culinary activation at the Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture (Durham College Ajax Farm) organized in collaboration with DFF;
- n. Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA) blog and advertising partnership with Destination Ontario (DO); and
- o. Campaign landing page with map to farms and information about activities, events, and on-farm stores.

4.3 The Campaign achieved the following results:

- a. At least 833,176 digital impressions of Durham Tourism owned content;
- b. 21,000,000 impressions of the Campaign through the Culinary Tourism Alliance and Destination Ontario;
- c. 14,953 Durham Tourism landing page views; and
- d. At least 13,000 clicks.

- 4.4 Additional impressions which are not quantifiable include television views, poster views, impressions of influencer content, and media placements reach.

5. New Campaign Features

- 5.1 A new feature of the Gather campaign included a contest to drive attendance. This contest required people to see the digital campaign, visit a farm, and scan a QR code on a poster to enter for a chance to win a night at the Piano Inn in Port Perry, as well as gift cards to farm and culinary destinations in north Durham. This resulted in 173 contest entries, and 140 new Durham Tourism e-newsletter registrations.
- 5.2 An on-farm activation at the Barrett Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture included a culinary demonstration with Chef Alex Page, a local food advocate. This on-farm activation had approximately 150 attendees who learned about urban agriculture and the benefits of cooking with local ingredients.
- 5.3 Through an existing partnership with Culinary Tourism Alliance, a [blog post](#) featured “Flavourful fall escapes 90 minutes from Toronto.” This content was used in a Destination Ontario partnership campaign which resulted in more than 21,000,000 views, reported to Durham Tourism staff as one of the best performing articles Destination Ontario has ever seen. The blog post received 47,740 views. Additional content included promotion of unique fall experiences, and apple picking.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The total cost of the Campaign was \$12,151.00 which was sourced from the approved 2024 Economic Development and Tourism Division budget.

7. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 7.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham region Strategic Plan:
- a. Goal 3.2: Leverage Durham’s prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth;
 - b. Goal 3.4: Capitalize on Durham’s strengths in key economic sectors to attract high-quality jobs; and
 - c. Goal 3.5: Provide a supportive environment for agriculture and agri-food industries.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Gather at the Farm campaign reached a wide audience of potential visitors through digital media to promote opportunities to visit farms with local food or agri-tourism experiences in Durham Region in the fall season, building awareness of Durham as a place with a strong local food offering while supporting economic vitality for agri-food producers.
- 8.2 Economic Development and Tourism Division staff will continue to collaborate with Durham Farm Fresh to create strategies and campaigns that promote agri-food and on-farm experiences to residents and visitors.

9. Attachments

Attachment #1: Gather at the Farm materials and placements.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Community Growth and
Economic Development

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

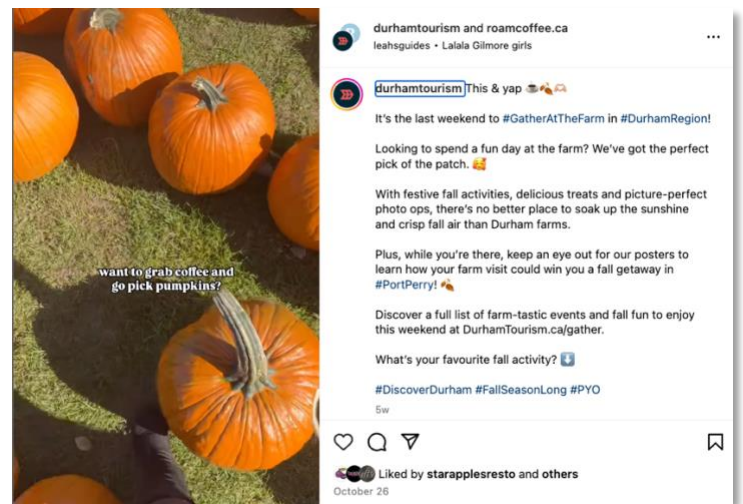
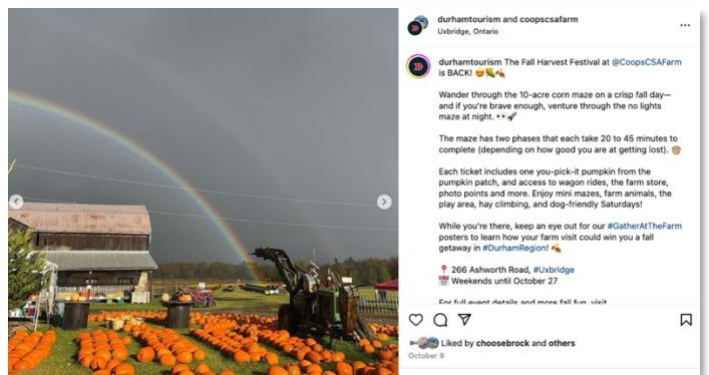
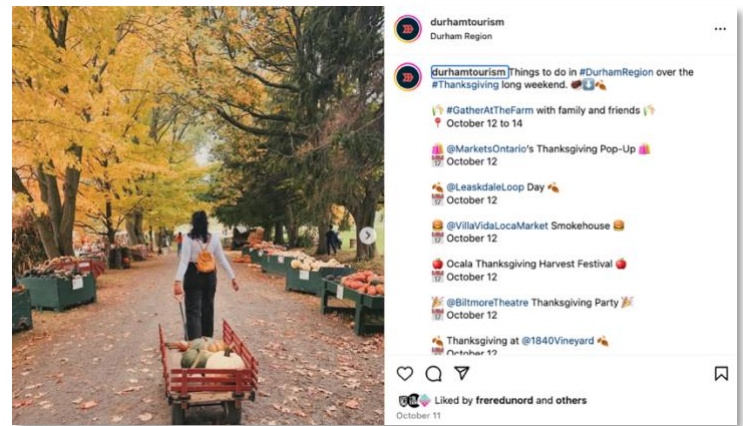
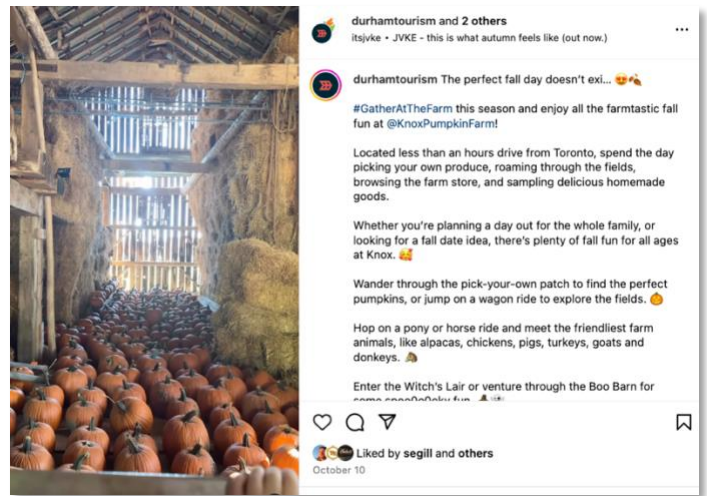
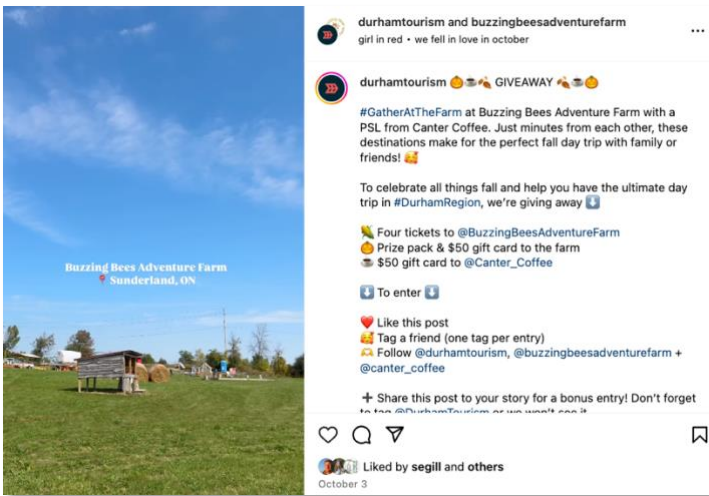
Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer



Gather at the farm map, digital assets and contest poster





Gather at the farm sample Durham Tourism social media posts



Gather at the farm
sample influencer social
media content





Culinary Activation at
Barrett Centre and
Culinary Tourism
Alliance/Destination
Ontario Campaign
materials



Destination Ontario with Ontario Culinary.

Paid Partnership · August 13 ·

Durham Region's "Gather at the Farm" event has put together a series of fall activities for the whole family! Pack the car and set the GPS for one of these twelve great fall farm adventures.



GATHER AT THE FARM IN DURHAM REGION

Located directly east of the GTA, Durham Region is a huge area that stretches eastward from Pickering to Newtonville, and northward from Lake Ontario to Beaverton on the shores of Lake Simcoe.

There is an overwhelming amount of fall goodness to be had in the area, but luckily, you can find a round-up of all the fall fun in Durham Region on the [Gather at the Farm website](#). Grab your kiddos or your besties (or both!) and set the GPS for one of these great fall farm adventures:

PINGLE'S FARM FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL

Where: 1805 Taunton Rd, Hampton, ON. ([View Map](#))



pingle's farm
Pingle's Farm Market

[View profile](#)





Gather at the farm media appearances