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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

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From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development  
Report: #2025-INFO-37  
Date: May 16, 2025

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**Subject:**

Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Annual Presentations to Area Municipal Councils

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information.

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Regional Council regarding the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee's (DAAC) annual presentations to the area municipal councils.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 In 2023, DAAC members delivered a presentation to the Region's eight area municipal Councils entitled "Agriculture 101". This presentation was focused on the basics of the agricultural industry, farming in Durham, and provided details on the purpose and structure of DAAC.
- 2.2 As a result of changes to Regional planning responsibility stemming from the proclamation of Bill 23, DAAC has prioritized increased communication and outreach to area municipalities. The focus of this outreach will be an annual presentation to each area municipal Council that details what DAAC accomplished in the previous year, how DAAC operates, the issues facing the agricultural

community, as well as encouraging area municipalities to engage with DAAC as a resource when considering impacts to agriculture and rural matters.

### **3. Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 3.1 Report [#2025-CG-1](#) - Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Workplan.

### **4. DAAC Annual Presentations Overview**

- 4.1 The goal of the annual presentations was to increase the knowledge of the agricultural industry in Durham, increase communications between DAAC and local decision makers, update councils on the issues DAAC has been active in, discuss the challenges facing farmers in the region and to promote DAAC as a resource to help with local decision making around agricultural issues.
- 4.2 The presentations to each municipality were consistent and focused on five topics (refer to Attachment 1):
- a. About DAAC;
  - b. Snapshot of the Agricultural Industry in Durham Region;
  - c. Activities at DAAC in 2024;
  - d. Major Issues Facing the Agriculture in the Region; and
  - e. DAAC as a Resource.
- 4.3 Presentations to the eight area municipal Councils occurred between April and May, 2025. The intent was to have DAAC's area representative present to their own municipality with assistance from other DAAC members as needed.
- 4.4 The dates and names of the presenters were as follows:
- a. April 7, 2025 – Clarington – Tom Barrie
  - b. April 7, 2025 – Pickering – Gord Taylor & Nicole Swain
  - c. April 14, 2025 – Brock – Tom Watpool & Hubert Schillings
  - d. April 14, 2025 - Uxbridge - Bryant Hulshof & Dave Risebrough
  - e. April 22, 2025 – Ajax – Zac Cohoon & Neil Guthrie
  - f. April 28, 2025 – Oshawa - Hubert Schillings & Derrik Stevenson
  - g. April 28, 2025 – Whitby – Ronald Death & Hubert Schillings
  - h. May 5, 2025 – Scugog – Zac Cohoon

4.5 Discussions resulting from the presentations were productive and covered a wide range of issues, including:

- a. The impact of tariffs on the agricultural industry;
- b. How best to support Canadian farmers and food production;
- c. The impacts of the spring ice storm;
- d. Backyard chickens and Avian Influenza;
- e. The transportation challenges related to agriculture;
- f. Farm vehicle safety;
- g. Loss of farmland and land use conflict challenges;
- h. Design of local roads and roundabouts;
- i. Vertical farming;
- j. Attracting food processing facilities to Durham;
- k. Farm worker accommodations; and
- l. The costs of farmland in the Region.

## **5. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

5.1 The DAAC annual presentations to the area municipalities align with the following Strategic Directions and Pathways in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. Resilient Local Economies
  - R4. Protect and strengthen the local agriculture sector and food supply chains.
- b. Strong Relationships
  - S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.

## **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The DAAC annual presentations to area municipal councils provided valuable information to the eight area municipal Councils related to the Committee's function and Durham's broader agricultural sector.

6.2 Discussions resulting from the presentations were informative and provided an opportunity for farmers and Councillors to exchange and share knowledge. DAAC's presentations to area municipal Councils will take place again in 2026.

**7. Attachments**

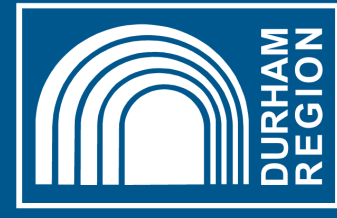
Attachment #1     DAAC Area Municipal Presentation (Example from Brock)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Nancy Taylor, BBA, CPA, CA for  
Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer



# Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) Annual Update

Tom Watpool & Hubert Schillings

# About DAAC

- DAAC provides advice to the Region of Durham on agricultural matters and rural matters as they relate to agriculture.
- Matters, projects and consultations can be referred/presented to DAAC for information or to gather feedback.
- DAAC provides agricultural perspectives and shares the impacts or benefits to agriculture related to the topic.
- DAAC has 17 members including members at large, a representative from each local municipality, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture and Durham Farm Fresh. There are also 3 non-farming representatives on the committee.



# Agriculture at a Glance

AS OF 2024

## Local Snapshot

Durham Region  
CENSUS DIVISION



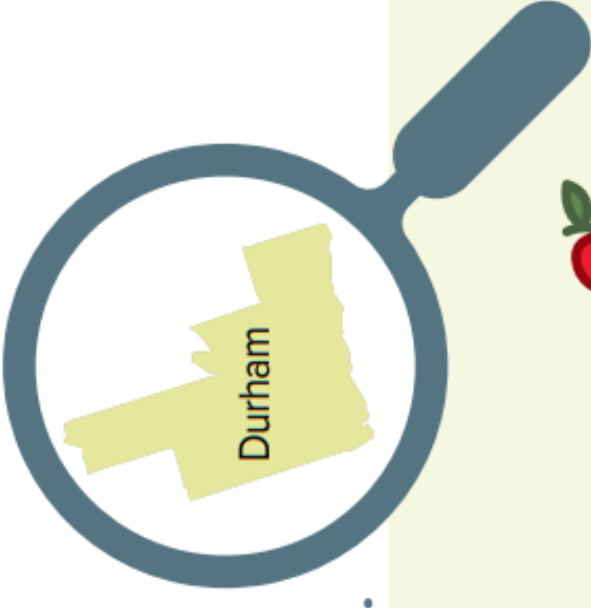
**1,200**  
farms



**264,518**  
acres of farmland



**220 acres**  
is the average sized farm



## Local Farm Sales

**24%**  
sell farm  
products directly  
to the  
consumer:



**18**  
farms operate a CSA  
(Community Supported Agriculture)



**32** farms sell  
at farmers' markets



**191** farms sell directly from their  
farm, at stands, or pick-your-own

# Activities at DAAC in 2024

- North Durham On-Farm Diversified Uses Project undertaken between Scugog, Brock, Uxbridge and Regional Community Growth and Economic Development;
- Skilled Trades Programs in the Region;
- Farm Worker accommodation related by-law issues at farms in the Region;
- Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA) Grain Terminal update;
- Independent Electricity Systems Operator Battery Storage Site Selection;
- Regional Issues
  - Economic Development initiatives
  - Land Use issues – ROP development, provincial planning responses
  - Transportation issues – road design, culverts



# Major Issues Facing Agriculture in the Region

- Backyard chickens and Avian Influenza
- Stormwater Management fees on agricultural properties
- On farm diversified uses
- Transportation of goods
- Price of agricultural land
- Need for more meat processing capacity
- Policy leading to increased costs for farmers, i.e. tariffs

# DAAC as a Resource

- Gather an agricultural perspective on new projects, strategies and more.
- Ensure local decisions consider the impacts to agriculture businesses
- Liaise between the Region and agricultural businesses

## Example of where **DAAC** provides feedback

- Regionals and Local Strategies or Plans
- Economic Development Projects and Strategies
- Agricultural Land-Use Matters
- Works Departments Matters (roundabouts, intersections, ditches, roadwork, etc.)

## How Can DAAC help you?