



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Community Growth and Economic Development Committee  
From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development  
Report: #2025-EDT-11  
Date: June 3, 2025

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**Subject:**

Local Food in Durham Region: Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association Annual Update and Ontario Local Food Week

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**Recommendation:**

That the Community Growth 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:

- a. Provide an annual update on the activities of the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association (DFFMA); provide an update on their planned activities; and advise that a DFFMA representative will be appearing as a delegation before the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee at its meeting on June 3, 2025; and
- b. Inform Members of the Community Growth and Economic Development Committee that the first week of June each year is Ontario Local Food Week.

**2. Background**

2.1 The Agriculture and Rural Economic Development section of the Economic Development and Tourism Division works with several local agricultural

organizations, including the DFFMA, to implement programming in support of the agricultural and rural economy in Durham Region.

- 2.2 The Region contributes \$13,500 in core funding annually to the DFFMA through the Division's Annual Business Plan and Budget to support the local agri-food sector.
- 2.3 The DFFMA is a largely volunteer-led and membership-based organization with one part-time coordinator. DFFMA has been promoting the production and consumption of local food in Durham Region for over 30 years.
- 2.4 Established in 1993, the DFFMA has been a leader in the producer-led local food marketing movement in Ontario. Members of Regional Council, businesses, and residents will be familiar with the DFFMA branding; including: the annual "Buy Fresh Buy Local" brochure and maps; directional road signs; and the [DFFMA website](#) promoting its members.
- 2.5 There were 40 DFFMA members in 2024. DFFMA's membership structure has categories for full members, associate members and supporting members. This reflects the evolving interests of consumers in not only local food products but also local food experiences, local beverages, agri-tourism (e.g. sunflower, and lavender farms) and other forms of on-farm diversification.

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

- 3.1 [#2025-EDT-3](#) – Growing Agri-Food Durham Annual Report
- 3.2 [#2025-EDT-2](#) – Gather at the Farm 2024 Agri-Food Marketing Campaign
- 3.3 [#2024-EDT-11](#) – Local Food in Durham Region: Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association Annual Update and Ontario Local Food Week. DFFMA reports to Committee annually.

### **4. 2024 Review and 2025 Workplan Activities**

- 4.1 Throughout 2024, the DFFMA continued to support their members by facilitating joint marketing opportunities through KX-96 radio campaigns to highlight members timed with seasonal products, re-designing their brochure and farm maps, re-designing their website, offering networking and social opportunities for farm members to increase their business-to-business connections and focused on advancing their key priorities including policy reform, funding opportunities, education, member recruitment, and more.

4.2 Over the past year, Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Section staff and DFFMA have collaborated to complete several activities that support the agri-food sector:

- a. Supporting the advancement of the joint DFFMA and Durham Farm Connections Rural Economic Development grant workplan activities;
- b. Hosted an agriculture ambassador volunteer training session with Farm and Food Care in July 2024;
- c. Gather at the Farm digital marketing campaign to highlight farm product and experiences offered across the region throughout the month of October 2024;
- d. DFFMA and Durham Tourism jointly hosted two on-farm culinary activation events in June and October 2024;
- e. Agriculture Economic Development staff gave regular updates and consulted with DFFMA on the Enabling Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses in North Durham project.

4.3 Staff continue to engage the DFFMA regularly to advance the implementation of the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan. Plans are underway to collaborate on a selection of culinary activations that highlight local food products in 2025.

## **5. Ontario Local Food Week – June 2 to 8, 2025**

5.1 Every year, the first week of June marks Ontario Local Food Week. This is an opportunity to make an intentional effort to shop local and support the local agri-food economy. Buying and supporting local food creates jobs and contributes to economic growth.

5.2 Below are some ways to celebrate Ontario Local Food Week in Durham Region:

- a. Purchase from DFFMA members; look for their recognizable road signs on Regional roads, or visit [www.durhamfarmfresh.ca](http://www.durhamfarmfresh.ca) and use the interactive farm map to find members across the region;
- b. Search for local farms across the region by visiting [www.investdurham.ca/localfood](http://www.investdurham.ca/localfood); and
- c. Promote Ontario Local Food Week on social media, use the hashtag #LoveONTfood and tag Invest Durham and Durham Farm Fresh.

## **6. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

a. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action

- E5. Respect the natural environment, including greenspaces, waterways, and agricultural lands.

b. Resilient Local Economies

- R1. Attract and retain quality employers that strengthen key economic sectors, including energy and technology.
- R2. Support the growth of new business startups and small to medium local businesses.
- R3. Develop, attract, and support a skilled and qualified workforce, including youth and newcomers.
- R4. Protect and strengthen the local agriculture sector and food supply chains.
- R5. Cultivate and promote local arts, culture, quality of place, and tourism that embrace urban excitement and country charm.

6.2 This report aligns with/addresses the following Foundation(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. People: Making the Region of Durham a great place to work, attracting, and retaining talent.
- b. Process: Continuously improving processes to ensure we are responsive to community needs.
- c. Technology: Keeping pace with technological change to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

## 7. Conclusion

7.1 The DFFMA is a long-standing farm organization that continues to promote and enhance the agri-food sector in Durham Region. They serve as a valued partner in implementing the Growing Agri-Food Durham Plan to grow the agri-food industry in Durham.

7.2 As trends in the agri-food industry continue to shift to meet the demands of consumers, the DFFMA continues to offer a collaborative marketing platform and business opportunities for local food producers across the region.

7.3 Staff will continue to work closely with DFFMA to assist in their sustainability plans and encourage consumers to buy fresh and buy local.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Simon Gill, Director of Economic  
Development and Tourism

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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