



Census bulletin 2021

Agriculture

Farm operations

In 2021, Waterloo Region had 1,409 farms headquartered in the area, covering the span of 210,055 acres, which is a net increase of 35 farms (three per cent), compared to 2016. Kitchener-Waterloo* had the largest increase of farms with a net increase of 34 new farms compared to 2016. It is important to note that Statistics Canada changed the definition of a farm to encompass a larger number of properties, which accounts for the increase of farms in the Region. Meanwhile, two area municipalities saw a net decrease in farms, with a net decrease of 48 farms in Wellesley, and a net decrease of eight farms in Woolwich.

Woolwich had the largest number of farms with 442, and Cambridge had the fewest number of farms with 59. This net increase in farms for the Region is larger than the provincial and federal percentages, as both saw net decreases of three and two per cent respectively. Overall, the Region saw a loss of 4,920 acres of farmland (2.3 per cent) compared to 2016. However, this loss of farmland was less than the provincial and federal percentages of farmland lost at 4.7 and 3.2 per cent respectively.



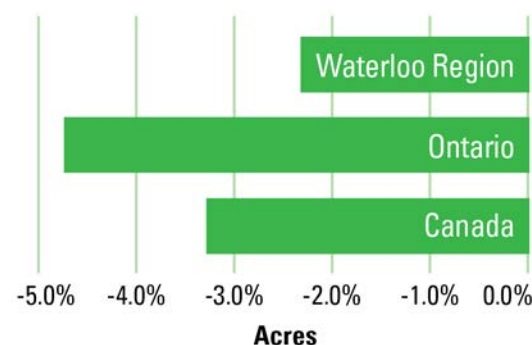
A significant conceptual change has been introduced for the 2021 Census of Agriculture: a “farm” or an “agricultural holding” (i.e., the census farm) now refers to a unit that produces agricultural products and reports revenues or expenses for tax purposes to the Canada Revenue Agency. Before 2021, a “farm” was defined as an agricultural operation that produced at least one agricultural product intended for sale.



Did you know?

Statistics Canada has changed the definition of a farm for 2021 to encompass a larger number of properties. This is why Waterloo Region has a larger number of farms compared to previous censuses.

Figure 1: Percentage loss of farmland for Waterloo Region, Ontario and Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2021

Table 1: Total number of farms reported for Waterloo Region and its municipalities, 2006-2021

Name	Total number of farms				Absolute change 2011-2021	Per cent change 2011-2021
	2006	2011	2016	2021		
Waterloo Region	1,444	1,389	1,374	1,409	35	3%
Cambridge	31	21	42	59	17	40%
Kitchener-Waterloo*	35	16	33	67	34	103%
North Dumfries	117	124	108	139	31	29%
Wellesley	518	502	486	438	-48	-10%
Wilmot	247	234	255	264	9	4%
Woolwich	496	492	450	442	-8	-2%
Ontario	57,211	51,950	49,600	48,346	-2,350	-3%
Canada	229,373	205,730	193,492	189,874	-12,238	-2%

*To ensure confidentiality, data for the small number of farms located in the City of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener have been combined.

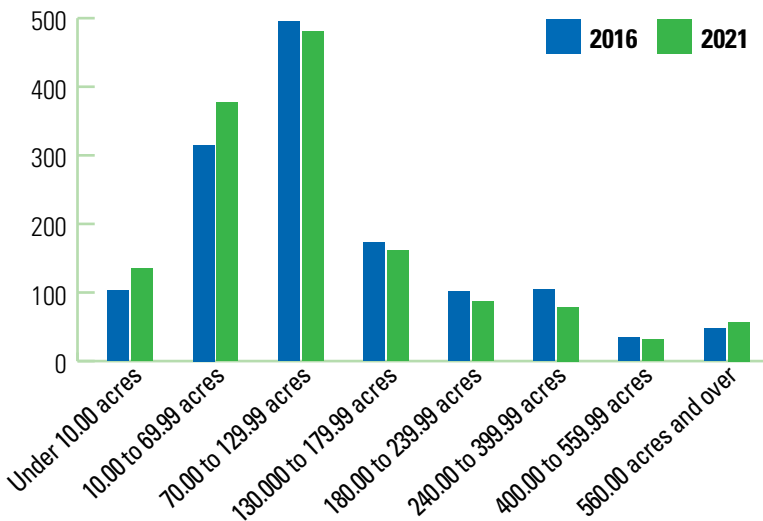
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006-2021



The average farm size in Waterloo Region was 149.1 acres.

In 2021, the average size of a farm in Waterloo Region was 149.1 acres, with North Dumfries having the largest average size of a farm at 217 acres and Cambridge having the lowest average size of a farm at 86.3 acres. Thirty-four per cent of farms in the Region were between 70.00 to 129.99 acres in size, which was the most common size of farms in the Region. However, there were increases in farms under 10.0 acres, 10.00 to 69.00 acres and 560.00 acres and over across the Region compared to 2016.

Figure 2: Size of farms in Waterloo Region, 2016 - 2021

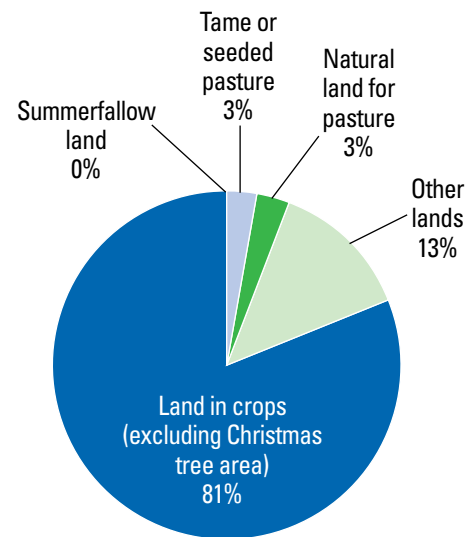


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2016, 2021

The average age of a farmer in Waterloo Region was 52 in 2021. This is lower than both the provincial and federal average age of 56.7 and 56 respectively. However, this average is higher than in 2016 when the average was 49. There were 1,925 farmers in the Region in 2021. In comparison to 2016, there has been a net loss of 60 farmers. In 2021, 37 per cent of farmers reported spending more than 40 hours a week working on their farm, which is down in comparison to 2016 where 42 per cent reported working more than 40 hours. Further, 35 per cent of farmers reported they work less than 20 hours per week on their farm, which is up in comparison to 2016 where 30 per cent of farmers reported working less than 40 hours.

In Waterloo Region, the most common technology used on farms were soil-sampling tests, which were used on 487 farms (35 per cent) in the Region. Slow-release fertilizer followed, which were used on 428 farms (30 per cent) in the Region. Twenty-nine farms (two per cent) in the Region used fully robotic milkers. This was very similar to both the province and the country, where soil-sampling tests were the most common technology used, followed by slow-release fertilizer in the province, and automated guidance steering systems in the country.

Figure 3: Agricultural land use type, Waterloo Region, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2021

Agricultural land use

In 2021, crops occupied 169,677 acres (81 per cent) of agricultural land in the Region. Waterloo Region continued to use more of its farmland for crops compared to the province, which used 77 per cent of farmland for crops. Woodlands and wetlands, lands used for pasture, and 'other lands' occupied the remainder of the agricultural land in the Region. The composition of land use in the Region has remained stable since 2011 with minor increases in lands used for crops.

Crops and livestock

In 2021, the majority of farms in the Region were livestock farms, which made up about 65 per cent of all the farms in the Region. The cattle farm type was the most common with 510 farms, which accounted for 36 per cent of the farms in the Region. However, cattle farm numbers did decrease by 8 per cent between 2016 and 2021. The livestock farm type that saw the largest increase in numbers between 2016 and 2021 was poultry and egg production farms, which saw a net increase of 47 new farms in 2021 and increased by 58 per cent. The only other farm type that increased in size was sheep and goat farming, which saw a 47 per cent increase in the number of farms in 2021.

Crop farms represented 35 per cent of all farms in the Region, and oilseed and grain farming was the most popular crop farm type with 304 farms, representing 22 per cent of all farms in the Region. Oilseed and grain farms saw a 19 per cent increase in the number of farms between 2016 and 2021 with a net increase of 48 farms. Overall, every crop farm type saw increases in the number of farms with the exception of 'other crop farming', which saw an 10 per cent decrease. The two farm types that saw the largest percentage increases were vegetable

and melon farming and 'greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production', which saw percentage increases of 68 per cent and 59 per cent respectively. However, the low number of these farms heavily influenced these percentage increases, as there were only 37 vegetable and melon farms and 43 'greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production' farms in 2021. In 2021, the



65% of the farms in Waterloo Region were livestock.

Table 2: Agricultural land use type, Waterloo Region, 2021

Farm type	2016	2021		Change 2016-2021
	No. of farms	No. of farms	% of total farms	
Livestock farms				
Cattle ranching and farming	553	510	36%	-8%
Hog and pig farming	76	64	5%	-16%
Poultry and egg production	81	128	9%	58%
Sheep and goat farming	32	47	3%	47%
Other animal production	205	164	12%	-20%
Crop farms				
Oilseed and grain farming	256	304	22%	19%
Vegetable and melon farming	22	37	3%	68%
Fruit and tree nut farming	12	13	1%	8%
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	27	43	3%	59%
Other crop farming	110	99	7%	-10%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2016, 2021



54 farms or 4% of the farms in the Region sold organic products.

Region had 54 farms (4 per cent) selling organic products. This represents a 12.5 per cent increase from 2016 when only 48 farms were selling organic products. The Region had 51 farms selling certified organic products and 5 farms selling transitional organic products. On top of the Region continuing to see growth in the number of farms selling organic products, the 2021 percentage of four per cent is higher than both the provincial and federal percentages, which were two per cent and three per cent respectively. The area municipality that had the largest number of farms selling organic products was Wellesley with 27 farms selling organic products, which represents 50 per cent of all organic farms in the Region, and six per cent of the farms in Wellesley.

Renewable Energy

There were 317 farms in Waterloo Region that used renewable energy in 2021. This accounted for 22.5 per cent of the farms in the Region. This is much higher than both the provincial and federal percentages, which were 17.5 per cent and 12 per

cent respectively. Further, the number of farms using renewable energy in the Region has increased significantly from 148 in 2016 to 317 in 2021. The most commonly used renewable energy was solar which accounted for 53 per cent of all renewable energy used on farms in the Region, and accounted for roughly 14 per cent of all farms in the Region. 'Other' followed this, which accounted for 44 per cent of all the renewable energy used. This

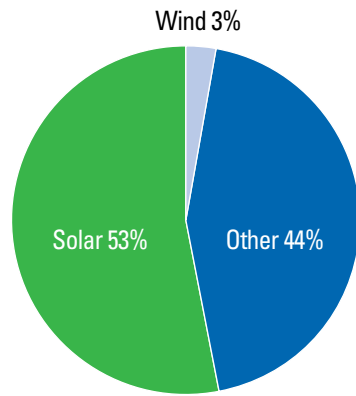


In Waterloo Region, just under 1/4 of farms reported using renewable energy. 67% of which reported using solar energy.

includes bioenergy and geothermal energy. Finally, wind energy was sparingly used with only three per cent of renewable energy used being wind. Overall, these trends were consistent with the provincial and federal trends, with solar energy accounting for 62 per cent of the renewable energy used in the province, and 65 per cent of the energy used in Canada. Wind energy was the least used renewable energy, with wind energy accounting for 12 per cent of the renewable energy used in the province and eight per cent in the country.

Figure 4:
Renewable energy systems on farms in Waterloo Region, 2021

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2021



Farm Business

In 2021, 22 per cent of the farms in the Region reported directly selling their products to consumers. This rate is much higher than both the provincial and federal rates of 16 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. However, this rate is lower than it was in 2016 when 25 per cent of farms reported selling products. From there, of the 315 farms that sold products directly to consumers, 308 reported selling unprocessed agricultural products. Seventeen per cent of the total farms in the Region reported using on site farm stores, stands, kiosks, U-pick or farm gate sales as the method of selling products. Seven per cent of all farms reported delivering products to consumers, two per cent reported using farmers markets, and one per cent reported using Community Supported Agriculture. In 2020, farms in the Region



7% of farms in the Region reported delivering products directly to consumers.

continued to report significant revenue generated through farm subsidies and the resale of agricultural products. The total revenue across the Region totaled \$652.5 million, which is an increase of \$88.9 million compared to 2015 revenue. Woolwich farms generated the greatest total revenue with \$204.5 million and Kitchener-Waterloo farms generated the least revenue with \$21.1 million. However, at the same time, operating expenses also increased, with 2020 operating expenses totaling \$574.9 million, which is an increase of \$91.8 million compared to 2015. Farms in Wellesley had the largest operating expenses at \$183.1 million, while farms in Kitchener-Waterloo had the lowest expenses at \$18.2 million. Overall, farm expenses increased at a faster pace than farm revenue in the Region when comparing the rate of change of expenses and revenue with 2016 numbers.



In 2020, revenue in the Region totalled \$652.5 million, which is a \$88.9 million dollar increase compared to 2015.

Table 3: Farm revenue and expenses for Waterloo Region, 2015-2020

Municipality	Total revenue (\$ millions)			Total expenses (\$ millions)		
	2015	2020	Absolute change	2015	2020	Absolute change
Waterloo Region	563.6	652.5	88.9	483.1	574.9	91.8
Cambridge	16	*	*	14.8	*	*
Kitchener-Waterloo	9	21.1	12.1	5.9	18.2	12.3
North Dumfries	34.5	57.0	22.5	29.3	43.8	14.5
Wellesley	177.1	173.7	-3.4	158.7	183.1	24.4
Wilmot	139.7	181.9	42.2	120	139.4	19.4
Woolwich	187.3	204.5	17.2	154.4	175.5	21.1

*Farm revenue and expense data was not available for Cambridge in the 2021 Census of Agriculture.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2016, 2021



Region of Waterloo

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT
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Census facts

- The term Census in this document refers to the Census of Agriculture conducted by Statistics Canada every five years. The most recent Census of Agriculture was conducted in May of 2021, in conjunction with the Census of Population.
- The 2021 Census reported income data for the 2020 tax year.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.