



Region of Waterloo

# Census

BULLETIN | 2016

Agriculture

The **Census of Agriculture** is defined by Statistics Canada as providing “a statistical portrait of **Canada’s agriculture industry and its farm operators and families**”



## Farm operations

In 2016, there were 1,374 farms headquartered in Waterloo Region, covering 214,975 acres of land. Compared to 2011, there were increases to the number of farms in Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Wilmot Township, totalling 59 additional farms. Overall, there were 15 fewer farms (one per cent) compared to 2011, and a decrease of 6,112 acres of farmland associated with farms headquartered in the region. This one per cent decrease of farms in Waterloo

Region was considerably lower than the decreases at both the provincial level (five per cent of farms) and the national level (six per cent of farms) and may be attributed to farm consolidation.

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Statistics Canada assigns all data for an agricultural operation to the geographic area where the farm headquarters are located, regardless of the actual location of land being farmed. As a result, the data could include land located outside Waterloo Region. Conversely, land farmed in Waterloo Region may be reported with a farm headquarters located outside the region.

**Table 1: Total number of farms reported for Waterloo Region and its municipalities, 2006-2016**

| Name                   | Total number of farms headquartered in the region |              |              | Absolute change<br>2011-2016 | Per cent change<br>2011-2016 |
|------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                        | 2006  | 2011         | 2016         |                              |                              |
| <b>Waterloo Region</b> | <b>1,444</b>                                      | <b>1,389</b> | <b>1,374</b> | <b>-15</b>                   | <b>-1%</b>                   |
| Cambridge              | 31  | 21           | 42           | 21                           | 100%                         |
| Kitchener-Waterloo*    | 35  | 16           | 33           | 17                           | 106%                         |
| North Dumfries         | 117   | 124          | 108          | -16                          | -13%                         |
| Wellesley              | 518   | 502          | 486          | -16                          | -3%                          |
| Wilmot                 | 247   | 234          | 255          | 21                           | 9%                           |
| Woolwich               | 496   | 492          | 450          | -42                          | -9%                          |
| Ontario                | 57,211  | 51,950       | 49,600       | -2,350                       | -5%                          |
| Canada                 | 229,373   | 205,730      | 193,492      | -12,238                      | -6%                          |

\*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, 2006-2016

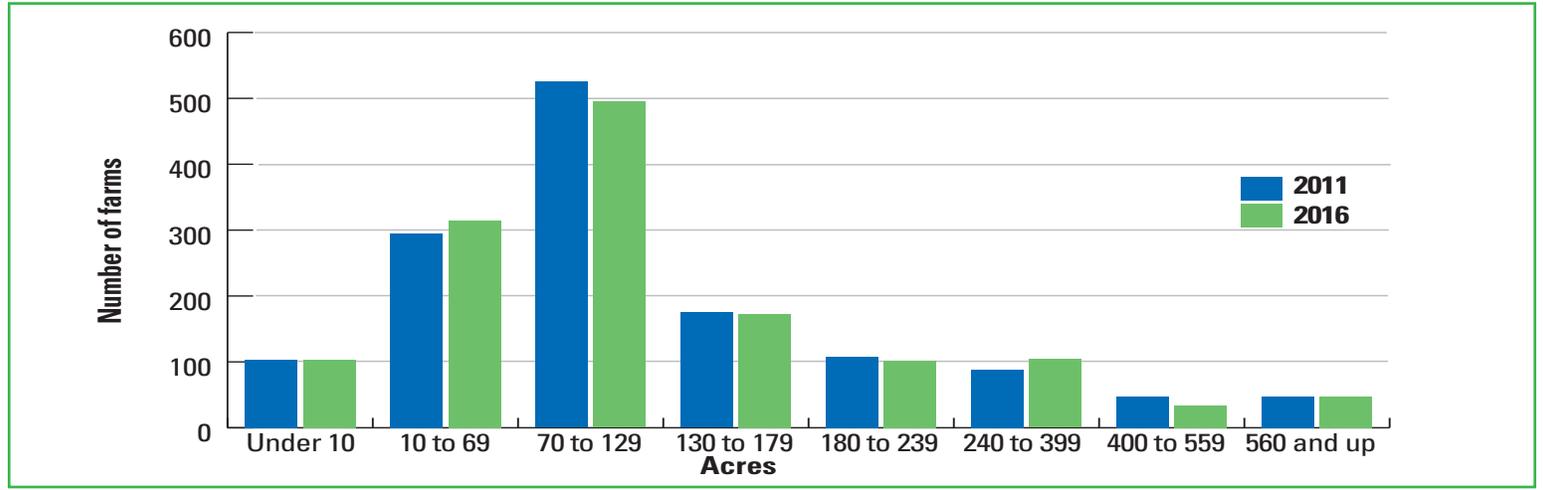
The average size of farms headquartered in Waterloo Region was 156 acres, considerably smaller than the average size in both Ontario (249 acres) and Canada (820 acres). On average, the smallest farms were located in Kitchener-Waterloo. Similar to 2011, roughly one in three farms headquartered in the region were between 70 and 129 acres, most of which were in Woolwich or Wellesley (Figure 1).

In 2016, the average age of farm operators was younger in Waterloo Region than the averages for both Ontario and Canada. Of the 1,985 farm operators across the region, the average age was 49.5 years old, much younger than Ontario's average age of 55.3 years. The average age of farm operators did increase

from 48.4 years as reported in 2011. The amount of time farm operators spent working on farms has also decreased steadily over the last 10 years. While in 2006, 51 per cent of farm operators spent 40 hours or more per week working on their farms, in 2016, this number had dropped to 42 per cent.

The **average age of farm operators** in Waterloo Region was **49.5**, much younger than **Ontario's average age** of **55.3** years

**Figure 1: Size of farms in Waterloo Region, 2011-2016**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2011 and 2016

### Agricultural land area

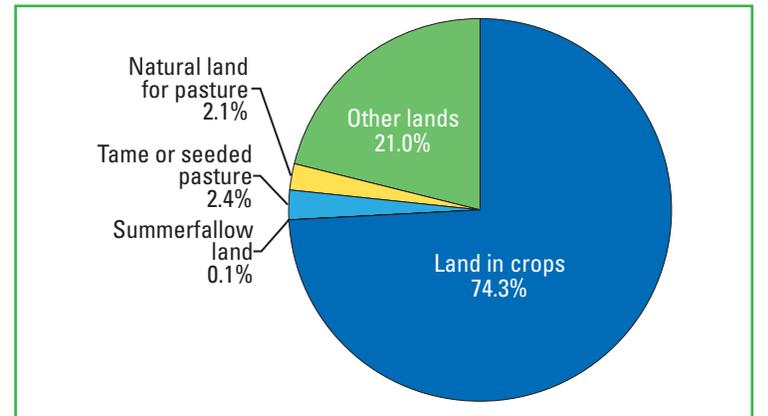
In 2016, 74 per cent of agricultural land in Waterloo Region was used for crops; for example, field crops, hay, fruits, field vegetables, and sod or nursery crops (Figure 2). The remaining proportion of agricultural land was used for pasture or was classified as 'other lands' including woodlands and wetlands. For the most part, agricultural land use in the region has remained unchanged from the 2011 Census period. In comparison to Ontario, Waterloo Region used a greater percentage of agricultural land for croplands than Ontario, which used 65 per cent of its total agricultural land for crops.

### Livestock and crop farms

Similar to 2011, the majority of farms headquartered in Waterloo Region in 2016 were livestock farms, which made up 69 per cent of all farms (Table 2). Of these, cattle farms, which included dairy farms, were by far the most prevalent and comprised 40 per cent of all farms in the region. While the numbers of all other livestock farms declined between 2011 and 2016, the number of cattle farms actually increased by nine per cent or by 45 farms over these five years.

By far, the most widespread crop farms in the region were oilseed

**Figure 2: Agricultural land use type, Waterloo Region, 2016**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture 2016

and grain farms, which comprised 256 farms or 19 per cent of all farms. This farm type, along with 'other crop' farms, both saw increases between the 2011 and 2016 Census periods. Oilseed and grain farms increased by 17 farms (seven per cent) between 2011 and 2016, and 'other crop' farms, which included hay farms, maple syrup production, as well as combination farms, had increased by 12 per cent (12 farms) over this five year period. The number of vegetable farms, fruit and tree nut farms, as well as greenhouses,

nursery and floriculture production farms represented only about five per cent of local farms, and all decreased over this span.

Although organic farms made up a very small percentage of the total number of farms, the numbers of these farms did increase

In **2016**, **45 farms** sold certified organic products



between 2011 and 2016. In 2016, 45 farms sold certified organic products, an increase of five

farms or 12.5 per cent from the 2011 Census year. A further 48 farms sold uncertified organic products and six farms were in the process of adopting practices in order to comply with organic farming standards.

**Cattle farms** made up **4** out of **10 farms** in the region



**Table 2: Farm types in Waterloo Region, 2011-2016**

| Farm type                                       | 2011         | 2016         |                         | Per cent change 2011-2006 |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
|   | No. of farms | No. of farms | Per cent of total farms |                           |
| <b>Livestock Farms</b>                          |              |              |                         |                           |
| Cattle ranching and farming                     | 508          | 553          | 40%                     | 9%                        |
| Hog and pig farming                             | 99           | 76           | 6%                      | -23%                      |
| Poultry and egg production                      | 89           | 81           | 6%                      | -9%                       |
| Sheep and goat farming                          | 35           | 32           | 2%                      | -9%                       |
| Other animal production                         | 240          | 205          | 15%                     | -15%                      |
| <b>Crop Farms</b>                               |              |              |                         |                           |
| Oilseed and grain farming                       | 239          | 256          | 19%                     | 7%                        |
| Vegetable and melon farming                     | 30           | 22           | 2%                      | -27%                      |
| Fruit and tree nut farming                      | 17           | 12           | 1%                      | -29%                      |
| Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production | 34           | 27           | 2%                      | -21%                      |
| Other crop farming                              | 98           | 110          | 8%                      | 12%                       |

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2011 and 2016

### Renewable energy

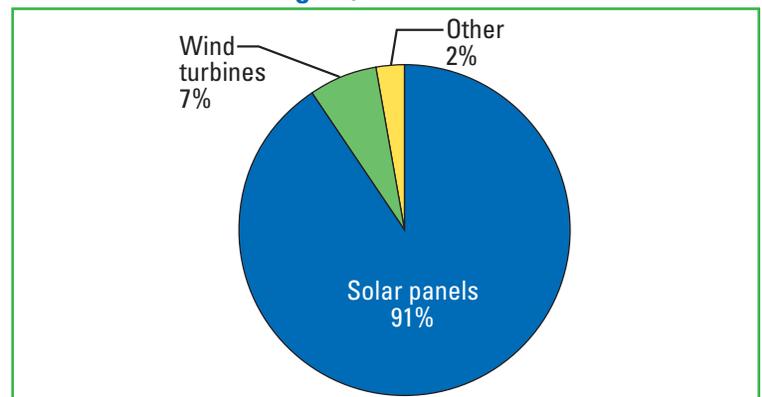
In Waterloo Region in 2016, 148 farms used some form of renewable energy producing systems, totalling 11 per cent of all farms. This proportion is comparable to Ontario, where 10 per cent of farms used renewable energy. In fact, at both the provincial and regional levels, a significantly higher proportion of farms used renewable energy producing systems compared to Canada as a whole where only five per cent of farms did. By far the most common type of renewable energy systems used on farms headquartered in Waterloo Region were solar panels, which accounted for 91 per cent of these systems (Figure 3). After solar panels, wind turbines made up seven per cent of the renewable energy systems on farms and were present on 11 farms in the region. This is a somewhat smaller proportion compared

to the provincial level, where wind turbines comprised 16 per cent of the renewable energy systems on farms. In Waterloo Region, other renewable energy systems, such as anaerobic bio-digesters used to produce fuel, were used on four farms.



2016 was the first year that Census data was collected on farms' renewable energy producing systems

**Figure 3: Renewable energy systems on farms in Waterloo Region, 2016**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture 2016

**1** in **10 farms** in the region used renewable energy producing systems in 2016.



to the provincial level, where wind turbines comprised 16 per cent of the renewable energy systems on farms. In Waterloo Region, other renewable energy

## Farm business

One in four farms headquartered in Waterloo Region sold their products directly to consumers. This rate was higher than the provincial average where approximately one in seven farms sold their products in this way. Of these farms in Waterloo Region, the majority (324 farms) used farm gate sales, stands, kiosks or U-pick to sell their products. Forty-nine farms also sold their products at farmers' markets and 11 farms sold farm shares

In 2015, **gross farm receipts** in Waterloo Region totalled **563.6 million**, a **\$90.7 million increase** compared to 2010.



to community members who in return received a portion of the farm's harvested crops. The high number of regional farms selling their products directly to consumers may in part be a reflection of the prevalence of smaller, family-run farms in this area as well as many regional farms' proximity to urban centres.

In 2015, farms in Waterloo Region generated significant revenue through the sale of agricultural commodities as well as through farm subsidies. This revenue, referred to as gross farm receipts, totalled \$563.6 million in 2015 and represented an overall increase of \$90.7 million from 2010 (Table 3). Over this period, farmers also spent significant funds operating their businesses. Between 2010 and 2015, the total expenses of farms in Waterloo Region increased by \$93 million, totalling

**338**  
farms in the region sold their products directly to consumers.



\$483 million. The expense-to-receipt ratio was 0.86 in 2015, which represents the average amount spent on operating expenses for every dollar in farm receipts.

**Table 3: Farm receipts and expenses for Waterloo Region, 2010-2015**

| Municipality           | Gross farm receipts (\$ millions) |              |                 | Total expenses (\$ millions) |              |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
|                        | 2010                              | 2015         | Absolute change | 2010                         | 2015         | Absolute change |
| <b>Waterloo Region</b> | <b>472.9</b>                      | <b>563.6</b> | <b>90.7</b>     | <b>390.0</b>                 | <b>483.1</b> | <b>93.0</b>     |
| Cambridge              | 3.5                               | 16.0         | 12.5            | 3.5                          | 14.8         | 11.3            |
| Kitchener-Waterloo     | 13.8                              | 9.0          | -4.8            | 12.0                         | 5.9          | -6.0            |
| North Dumfries         | 66.7                              | 34.5         | -32.2           | 59.5                         | 29.3         | -30.3           |
| Wellesley              | 128.9                             | 177.1        | 48.3            | 108.8                        | 158.7        | 49.9            |
| Wilmot                 | 110.5                             | 139.7        | 29.2            | 94.3                         | 120.0        | 25.6            |
| Woolwich               | 149.5                             | 187.3        | 37.8            | 112.0                        | 154.4        | 42.5            |

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture 2016

## 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 2016, in conjunction with the Census of Population.
- The 2016 Census reported income data for the 2015 tax year
- 2016 was the first year that Census data was collected on direct marketing.



For further information please contact:



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