

# DOLLARS & SENSE

## Opportunities to Strengthen Southern Ontario's Food System



**Ontario's food system** is huge, generating billions of dollars in sales of food products to consumers, bringing in significant tax dollars, and employing 11% of the province's paid labour force. But it is also a major food importer. A recent study by Econometrics Research and its partners suggests that we are missing regional economic development opportunities to support

the production and distribution of local food while lessening our environmental impact. The study includes scenarios for a different food future, with the aim of stimulating public discussion, inspiring policy change, and increasing investment in regional food systems, in Ontario and beyond.

### HOW ONTARIO'S FOOD SYSTEM LOOKS TODAY

LOCAL FOOD INDUSTRY GENERATES

**\$63 billion**

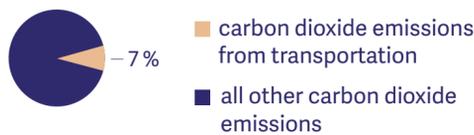
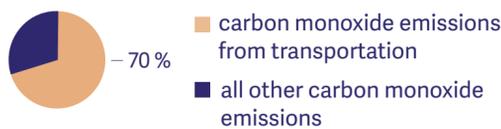
IN SALES & EMPLOYS

**767,000**

PEOPLE



TRANSPORTATION-RELATED EMISSIONS DUE TO AGRICULTURE



THE CORE OF THE FOOD SYSTEM IS AGRICULTURE

Agriculture generates \$11.5 billion in farm products and \$29.3 billion in spending by farmers and their suppliers. The value added (GDP) increases to \$53.7 billion when food processing and manufacturing is included.



### FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

#### SCENARIO 1

**What if we replaced food imports with locally grown food?**

Replacing 10% of the top 10 fruit & 10 vegetable imports with Ontario-grown produce would be beneficial for both the local economy and environment.

GDP INCREASE

**~\$250 million**

NEW, FULL-TIME-EQUIVALENT JOBS

**3,400**



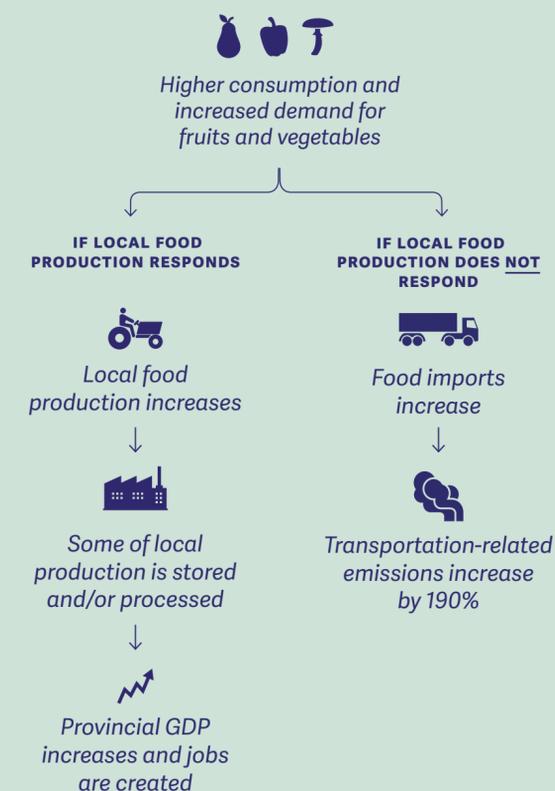
CURRENTLY IMPORTED FOOD THAT COULD BE PRODUCED IN ONTARIO

**50% +**

#### SCENARIO 2

**What if people in Ontario consumed a diet based on Canada's Food Guide?**

Impacts largely depend on whether local food production responds to the increased demand for fruits and vegetables.



#### SCENARIO 3

**What if there was more organic food production in Ontario?**

There are many benefits to organic agriculture, including reduced applications of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Transitioning to a 100% Ontario-produced organic diet, without acreage adjustments and more imports, would result in:

- +** Grains, tomatoes, sweet corn and peppers remain in surplus
- Fruits and other vegetables remain in deficit
- +** → **-** Carrots, pork, turkey and eggs move from surplus to deficit

A more realistic goal would be to aim to farm at least 10% of Ontario's crops organically within the next 15 years.

Data from the report *Dollars & Sense: Opportunities to Strengthen Southern Ontario's Food System*. The report and this infographic are available for download:

- > [greenbelt.ca/research](http://greenbelt.ca/research)
- > [mcconnellfoundation.ca/en/resources/report/dollars-and-sense](http://mcconnellfoundation.ca/en/resources/report/dollars-and-sense)
- > [metcalfoundation.com/publications-resources/publications](http://metcalfoundation.com/publications-resources/publications)



Possibility grows here.

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