



Media Release

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Ontario Invests in Province-Wide Agricultural Systems Mapping to Support Municipal Planning & Economic Development

Milton, ON - Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) is investing up to \$164,650 to support the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) in advancing ConnectON, a province-wide asset-mapping platform that supports municipal planning, economic development, and the long-term viability of Ontario's agri-food sector.

"We are proud to support the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance through this investment, helping municipalities plan strategically and attract agri-food business expansion across Ontario," said Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. "With the most up-to-date data, ConnectON will strengthen local food supply chains while supporting jobs and economic growth."

The 1-year project, *Supporting the Agricultural Systems Mapping Rollout Across Ontario*, will strengthen municipalities' ability to implement an Agricultural Systems approach under Ontario's 2024 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) by providing access to current, standardized and geo-mapped agri-food business data. ConnectON is uniquely positioned to support this work as the only province-wide database of its kind.

Through this investment, GHFFA will refresh business data for 23 Eastern Ontario municipalities, enhance the ConnectON platform with a dedicated Agricultural Systems feature, pilot lower-tier municipal access for 15 communities, and deliver training and support to municipal users across the province. These enhancements will help municipalities better identify their Agri-Food Network, agricultural production areas, supporting businesses and supply chains, and encourage positive rural and agri-food development outcomes.

"ConnectON helps municipal staff across Ontario make informed, data-driven decisions that protect agricultural lands, strengthen local food systems, and support rural economic development," says Janet Horner, Executive Director of the GHFFA. "Current data is key to ensure the Agricultural Systems is applied in a consistent and practical way."

Municipal planners and economic development professionals across Ontario rely on ConnectON to support business retention and expansion initiatives, investment attraction, policy and long-term land-use planning. The platform currently supports more than 70 municipalities and 400

users, providing access to data on over 120,000 agri-food, manufacturing and tourism businesses. Running from June 1, 2025 to June 1, 2026, the project aims to increase public engagement and strengthen trust and knowledge of Ontario's Agri-Food system.

About the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance is a not-for-profit organization that advances the growth and competitiveness of Ontario's agri-food sector. GHFFA manages **ConnectON**, a province-wide asset-mapping and data platform made for Ontario municipalities, that supports municipal planning, economic development, and agricultural systems analysis.

Learn more:

<https://www.connecton.ca/>

<https://foodandfarming.ca/>