



Applied Agriculture Research Framework for Northern Ontario 2018

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OMAFRA retained NOFIA to deliver/manage the Northern Ontario Agri-Food Research & Innovation Summit & Applied Agricultural Research projects.

Agricultural Research and Innovation in Northern Ontario is important for the development and continuity of the sector. Several organizations have long-standing involvement in coordinating and conducting agri-food research and innovation activities in Northern Ontario. Additional organizations in Northern Ontario, not traditionally involved in agri-food research and innovation, are seeking to become involved (e.g. Northern Ontario universities and colleges).

The intent of the project was to host a Northern Ontario Agri-food Research & Innovation Summit in early 2018, provide a Summit Report that outlines key research and innovation priorities for the sector in Northern Ontario, identifies opportunities to coordinate research and innovation across the region and preliminary plans to achieve that coordination, and implement Pan Northern Ontario agri-food applied research and demonstration projects.

Northern Ontario Agri-Food Research and Innovation Summit brought together existing and new partners to coordinate their work, maximize the use of scarce resources (\$\$) and help to drive growth of the Ag sector in Northern Ontario by identifying research priorities and stakeholder needs. Two Summits were held in Sudbury and Thunder Bay (January 2018). They focused on assessing current state of agriculture research in Northern Ontario AND how to further coordinate it and build upon it with current and future partners and stakeholders.

Merits for collaborative, coordinated, sustainable and successful agricultural research include a degree of stable funding, existing organizational framework, strong physical infrastructure, unique Northern features and opportunities for growth, stakeholder interest, engagement and community strength, innovative approaches and positive existing collaboration.

Challenges identified in delivering agricultural research in Northern Ontario include a lack of sustainable funding, lack of structural coordination, lack of research infrastructure, communication barriers, knowledge translation and transfer, changing demographics, administrative and logistical issues, farm viability, production and economic challenges and Northern Ontario realities.

The need for sustainable, stable, long-term funding support and a coordinating body that is positioned to establish stakeholder priorities, coordinate research and compile, communicate and report on Northern results were identified as priorities that could have lasting impacts on the delivery of agricultural research in Northern Ontario.

Research sectors priorities identified during the summits:

Crop Management; Livestock; Specialty and Emerging markets; Horticulture; Indigenous Agriculture; Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability; Agricultural Infrastructure and Asset Measurement.

Seven applied research projects specific to Northern Ontario needs were conducted:

- Plastics Disposal Assessment: Envis Consulting;
- Deadstock Disposal Assessment: 2 disposal vessels on farm in Thunder Bay with Jacqui Empson Laporte (OMAFRA);
- Medicinal Plants Opportunity Analysis: RRFDCorp;
- Non-timber Forest Products in North Eastern Ontario: Temiskaming FN;
- Development of a Hops Yard: EARS;
- Beekeeping Course: 1 northern beekeeper;
- Crop & Forage Trials: NLARS

New projects were started due to new partnerships created via the Summits. NOFIA is leading a Collaborative Pan-Northern Malting Barley Study; a Mycorrhizal Inoculant for Potatoes & Cereals project development and new collaboration between NOFIA, TBARA & LUARS.

Project reports and updates can be found at www.nofia-agri.com

