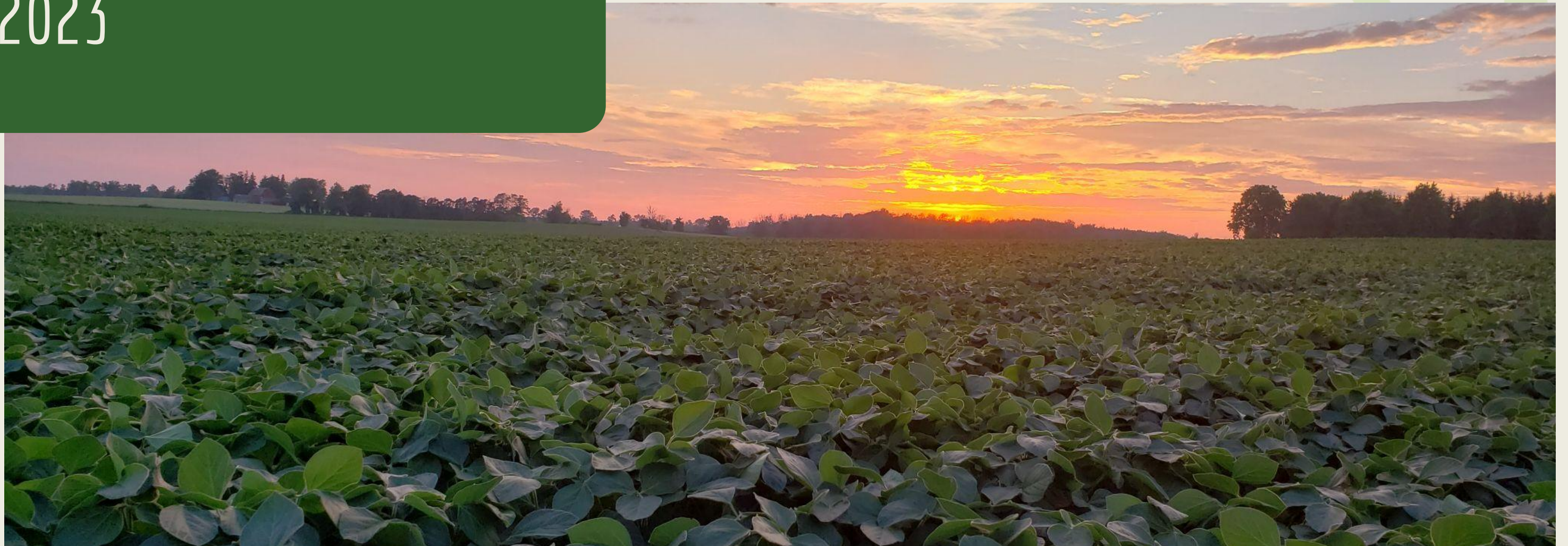


Land use planning to save Oxford County farmland

A presentation to Oxford County
Council
August 9, 2023



Hans van Lith and Valerie Hobbs

Hans van Lith

- BSc Agriculture University of Guelph
- Langeweer Dairy Inc.
- Family run dairy farm



Valerie Hobbs

- BSc University of Waterloo
- Blythe Brae Farms
- Grain farm and grain roasting

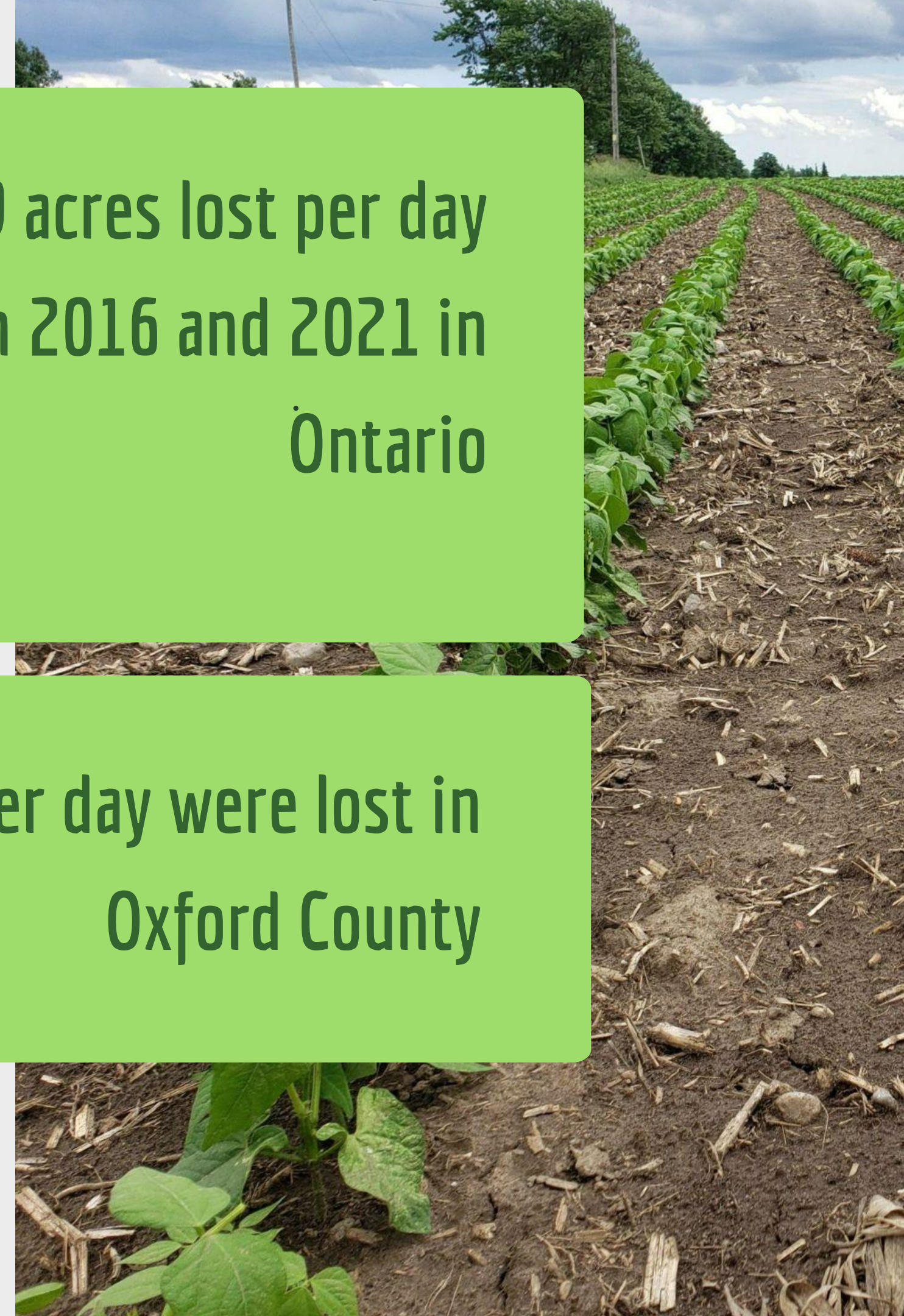


Farmland Lost

According to Statistics Canada, in Oxford County, farmland dropped by 11,386 acres (2.6 per cent), from 444,142 acres to 432,756 from 2016 to 2021

319 acres lost per day
between 2016 and 2021 in
Ontario

6.2 acres per day were lost in
Oxford County



This is the equivalent size of:



A Woodstock Cowan Park
every week



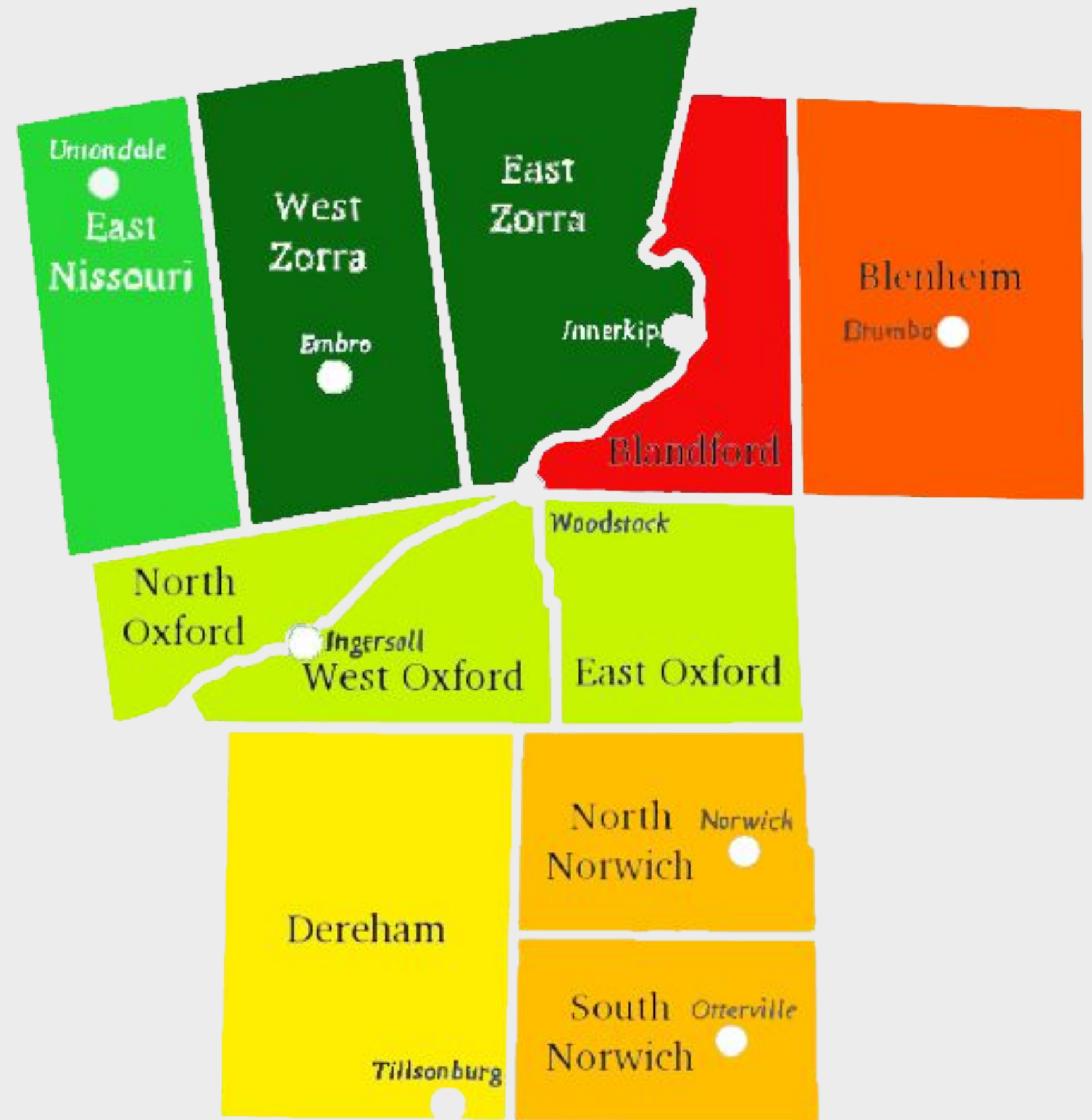
A Tillsonburg Lake Lisgar
lost every 3 days

We are quickly losing Oxford farmland

Oxford Farmland

10 year Average Yield (bu/ac) by Geotownship

	Corn	Soybeans
Blandford	168	46
Blenheim	171	48
Dereham	180	51
Nissouri	194	53
Norwich	181	49
Oxford (On Thames)	184	52
Zorra	196	54
All Ontario	171	47



Geotownships of Oxford County

Oxford County's agriculture industry is an economic powerhouse

Over 2000 farms producing a great diversity of farm products

We have the highest non-greenhouse
agrifood value chain GDP per area of any
county in Ontario

Economic impact of the agri-food value chain (farm, food manufacturing and retail) in Oxford County, 2021

\$2.69 Billion
employing 39,481
workers



Population Growth vs. Density

	Population Growth % 2016 to 2021	Density in 2021 (persons/square km)
Oxford County	9.9	459 (excludes 87% ag land)
Woodstock	14	827
Tillsonburg	17.3	839
Ingersoll	7.3	1075
Toronto	2.3	4428 (with approximately 16,000 in downtown core)

So what can be done?

We need to ensure we
have the land in
Oxford to grow food
for today and for future
generations.



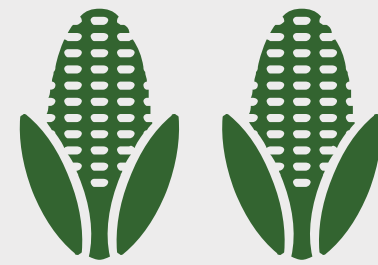
The County of Oxford has recently completed Phase 1 of its Official Plan review, which focused on updates to the Agricultural Policies.



- 
- The County's agricultural policies apply to lands located outside of designated settlements
 - This is 87% of the County's total land area
 - These policies are important to ensure the County's land resources are sustainably managed and protected long term

HOWEVER, the plan's agricultural policies are NOT ENOUGH.

Future amendments to the official plan still put Oxford's farmland at risk!



From 2000 to 2017, amendments to Ontario official plans led to
the loss of 72,196 acres of prime farmland

W. J. Caldwell *et al.* (2022)

Farmland protection and growth management are two sides of the same coin.



There is a need for urgent action on growth management in Oxford County.

“The County is committed to regularly reviewing and, where necessary, updating its Official Plan policies to ensure they remain current, consistent with Provincial legislation and policies, and reflective of local planning principles and objectives as the community continues to grow and change.”



Maintaining the farmlands
and environmentally
sensitive lands can be a
source of pride for our
community.



Agriculture is both Oxford's past and future.

A graphic of stylized green leaves with white outlines, positioned on the left side of the slide. The leaves are layered, with the largest one in the foreground and smaller ones behind it.

Spaces can be liveable and affordable within fixed urban boundaries.

Hold the Line Waterloo Region

Broadly Supported in the Waterloo Region

“Six reasons we hold the line: local food and agriculture, safe drinking water, compact lively neighbourhoods, affordable housing for all, sustainable transportation, financial responsibility”

With smart planning, the land within our countryside boundary should last us hundreds of years while welcoming a growing, thriving population in our cities and villages.



Schneiders' Residential Development Project in Waterloo Region

June 2023

Kitchener Council grants final approval to mixed-use project that will now have nearly 4000 units on the 10 hectares (25 acres). The project will include commercial and office space, parkland and a multi-use trail.



“When the building was torn down, I remember the community saying ‘please don’t get this wrong’. I think we knocked it out of the park.”

Ward 1 Councillor Scott Davey

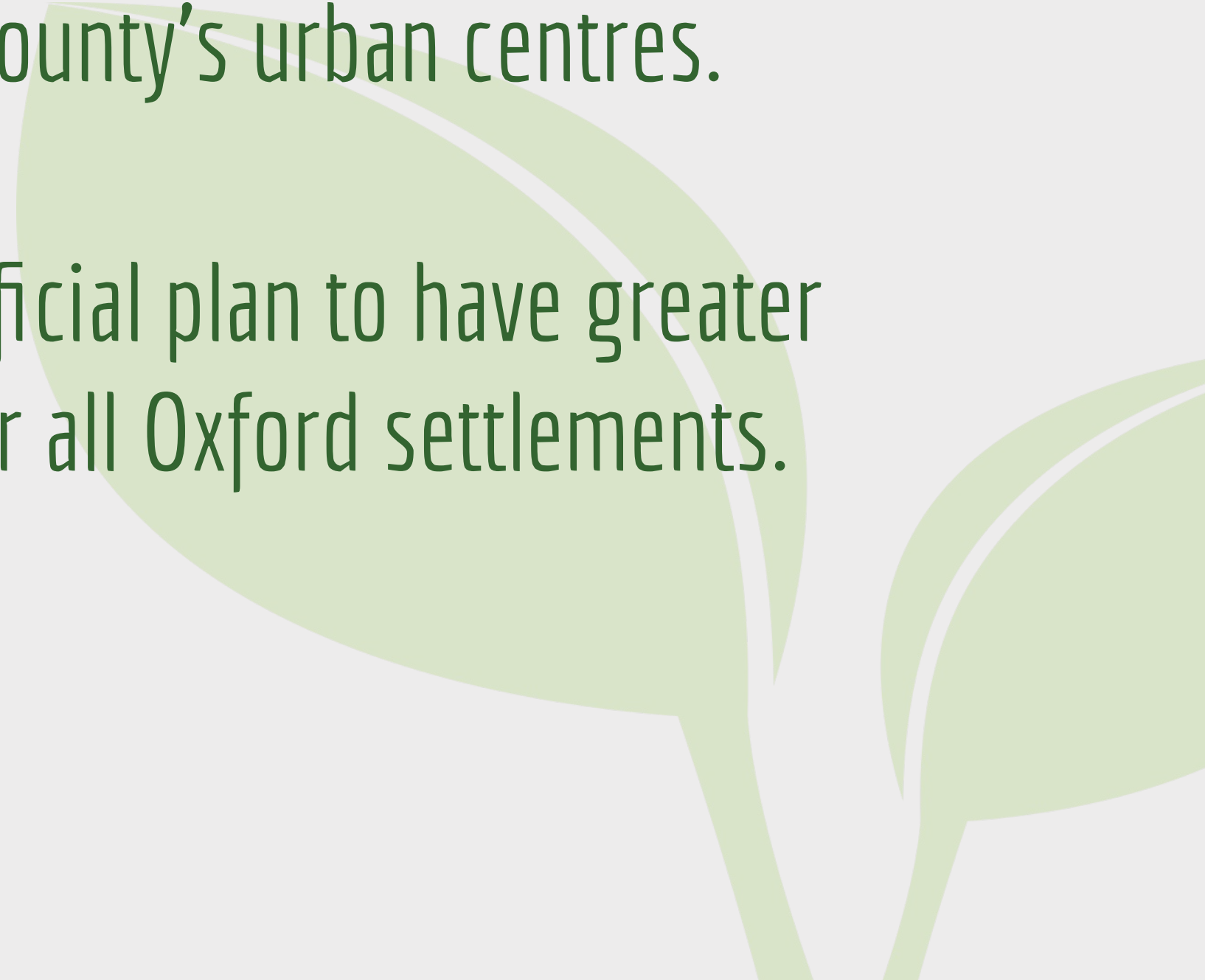
Residential sprawl does NOT create affordable homes or efficient use of municipal infrastructure. It is the building of the past, does not protect the natural environment, and is not carbon friendly.

Furthermore, it is a threat to Oxford's agrifood industry.



We ask that the County design land use policies to encourage intensification and density in the County's urban centres.

This could include an update to the official plan to have greater intensification and density targets for all Oxford settlements.



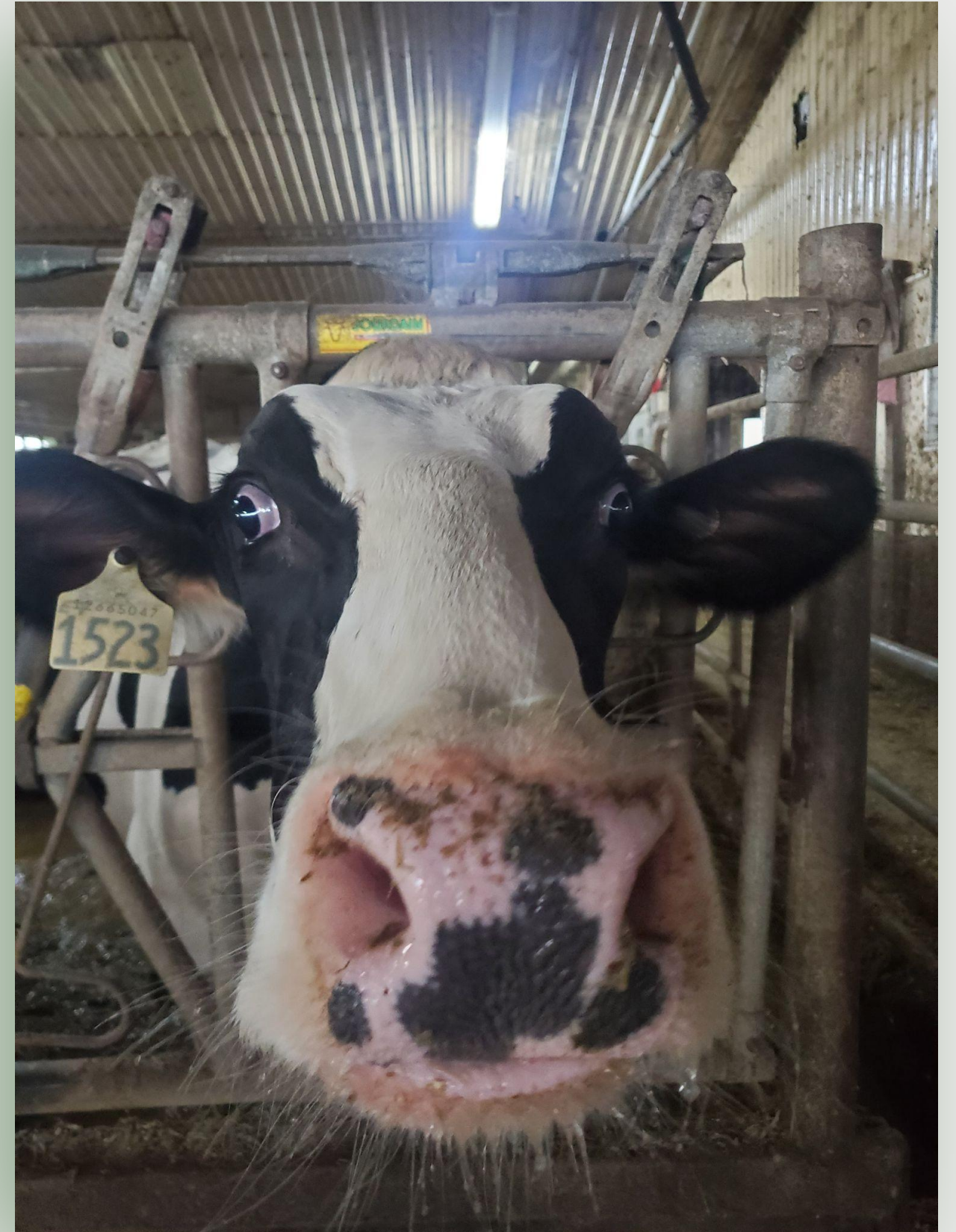
THANK YOU!
Questions?

Hans van Lith hvanlith14@gmail.com

Valerie Hobbs vahobbs@gmail.com

We wish to express our appreciation to:

Tracey Arts, Laura Fraser, and Mark Reusser from the
Ontario Federation of Agriculture.



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