

# COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

## Agricultural and Rural Lands Workshop

The discussion covered Meaford's agricultural and farming operations, and various agricultural uses such as farming, agritourism, ecotourism, wineries, etc.

Three main themes were noted during these discussions, 1) prioritizing local food production and increasing farming viability, 2) climate change and sustainability and, 3) value-added agricultural uses along with discussion on:

- prioritizing local food production
- opportunities for agriculture should not be diminished as a result of development or other uses on farms
- ensuring proper infrastructure support and maintenance to accommodate movement of farm equipment
- need for supporting Canadian-owned farm operations and in opportunities for smaller family-owned farms through permitting smaller parcels of land for agricultural uses
- farming viability increased by supporting housing opportunities for farmers on agricultural land by allowing larger additional dwelling units while still protecting farming resources.

With the reality of climate change, adaptation and sustainability measures should be integrated into farming practices and operations and participants identified a number of ways to do so:

- through emergency preparedness plans
- stormwater management such as low-impact development methods
- proper treatment of soil
- agricultural diversity over monocultures
- sustainable logging
- preservation of the existing natural environment and arable land
- tree planting for the future
- community improvement plans (CIPs), development standards, and design guidelines were highlighted as key regulatory tools for implementing green strategies
- more value-added agricultural uses such as wineries, cideries, orchards, farmer's markets, and farm-to-table opportunities

Participants saw value in bridging the connection between farming and urban communities in order to promote local food production and increase opportunities for farmers to sell and promote products locally.