



StandOurGround.ca NEWSLETTER

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Save Russell Township from Mega Sprawl!

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Call for candidates

We’re now officially in an election year! Time to think about your Township’s future. If you are considering running for a council position we would like to know your opinions on preservation of farmland. Candidates who align with our goals may be supported in their campaign by **StandOurGround**.

Russell Township claims farmland “increasing”

The Township of Russell and the United Counties of Prescott and Russell (Russell’s upper tier government) have claimed that farmland in Russell and area is increasing. How is that possible considering the thousands of acres recently redesignated for development? By claiming that farmers and speculators tearing down forests means more farmland is being “created” that’s how. However, farmland is **NOT JUST** cropland.

An article in Farmer’s Forum, where UCPR statistics were quoted, also quoted StatsCan, saying, “*Cropland—or ‘land in crops’ as termed by Statistics Canada—refers to the usual field crops, as well as fruit and vegetable plantations and sod and nursery products. It does not include hay, pasture, silage crops, Christmas trees, woodlots or any other unproductive areas.*”

In other words, municipal claims of increased farmland were made by ignoring the true definition of farmland. So how is farmland actually defined?

1. **StatsCan:** Farmland area refers to land owned or operated by an agricultural operation. It includes cropland, summerfallow, improved and unimproved pasture, woodlands and wetlands, all other land (including idle land, and land on which farm buildings are located).
2. **Government of Canada:** “*Farmland*” generally means land that is regularly used by a person for the purpose of gaining or producing income from a farming business carried on by the person. Farmland also includes any portion of vacant land (e.g., a bush area) that may not be used directly in a farming business. In addition, any fixtures on the farmland (e.g., a barn or a corral) form part of the farmland.



3. **Government of Ontario:** Ontario's prime agricultural land is a finite, non-renewable resource comprising less than 5% of Ontario's land base. It is the foundation for food, fibre and fur production, the local food economy, agri-food exports, economic prosperity and the growing bio-based economy. The PPS states that Ontario's prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture and defines prime agricultural areas as areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Planning authorities (e.g., municipalities) are required to designate prime agricultural areas in their official plans, including specialty crops.
4. **Ontario Farmland Trust:** Ontario's farmland has been sorted into classes that show how capable it is of supporting agriculture. The surveys that created this classification system provide valuable data about the land, however they don't tell the whole story. While soils that fall into higher-ranked classes are typically better at producing traditional row crops (corn, soybeans, wheat) and horticulture, the soils that fall into lower-ranked classes are still a highly valuable agricultural resource capable of supporting a large variety of agricultural activities, such as tender fruit and livestock production. All of our agricultural land is worthy of protection... farmlands can also provide a range of ecosystem services that benefit the surrounding landscape like water filtration, flood mitigation, and wildlife habitat.
5. **Government of Manitoba:** Farm Land means real property—located outside a city, town or village—that is used, or is reasonably capable of being used, for agriculture.
6. **Merriam Webster Dictionary:** land used or suitable for farming.
7. **Cambridge Dictionary:** land that is used for or is suitable for farming.

Residents have noticed the thousands of acres which have been deforested, often to grow cash crops—because the higher quality land in the municipality has already been used up by urban sprawl. So please, officials on high, don't be gaslighting the public by making an impossible claim. Russell Township does not suddenly have more "farmland." As anyone with eyes can see, there is less than ever. **That's why it's time to Stand Our Ground.**


The Ontario Farmland Trust Annual Farmland Forum

The Ontario Farmland Trust are pleased to invite you to their annual Farmland Forum on **March 19, 2026**. Join farmers, planners, municipal leaders, conservation organizations, and community members from **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at The Grandway Events Centre in Elora, ON**, for a day of learning, connection, and conversation. **(You may also attend on-line.)**

This year's theme, Municipalities & Farmland Protection, focuses on the critical role municipalities and communities play through land-use planning, zoning, and policy decisions. Through an inspiring keynote, a panel featuring farmer perspectives, a hands-on workshop, and informative sessions, the 2026 Farmland Forum offers a space for meaningful dialogue, shared learning, and practical action. Participants will leave with new connections and clear tools to champion farmland protection in their own communities.

You can learn more about the day's program here.

StandOurGround.ca welcomes your feedback, counterarguments, photographs, and written submissions for our Newsletter. Kindly inform us if you would like your Letter to the Editor to remain anonymous.

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