



SCHOOL OF
**ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**



Ministry of
Agriculture, Food &
Rural Affairs



Planning and Agri-Food Systems: Evaluating the Capacity of Ontario Municipalities

2022 Planning Together - Student Symposium

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CONTEXT

Ontario, Canada

Canada:

\$134.9 billion

in annual revenue from
**agriculture and agri-food
system**

2.1 million

Canadians are employed by
the agriculture and agri-food
system

5th largest

exporter of agri-food and
seafood in the world

Ontario:

20%

of prime agricultural
land in Canada is
located in Ontario

25%

of total farms in
Canada are located in
Ontario



A photograph of an apple orchard. The trees are heavily laden with ripe red apples. In the foreground, two chickens are pecking at the ground. One is a light-colored hen, and the other is a darker, speckled hen. The ground is covered with grass and fallen apples. The background shows more rows of apple trees stretching into the distance under a clear sky.

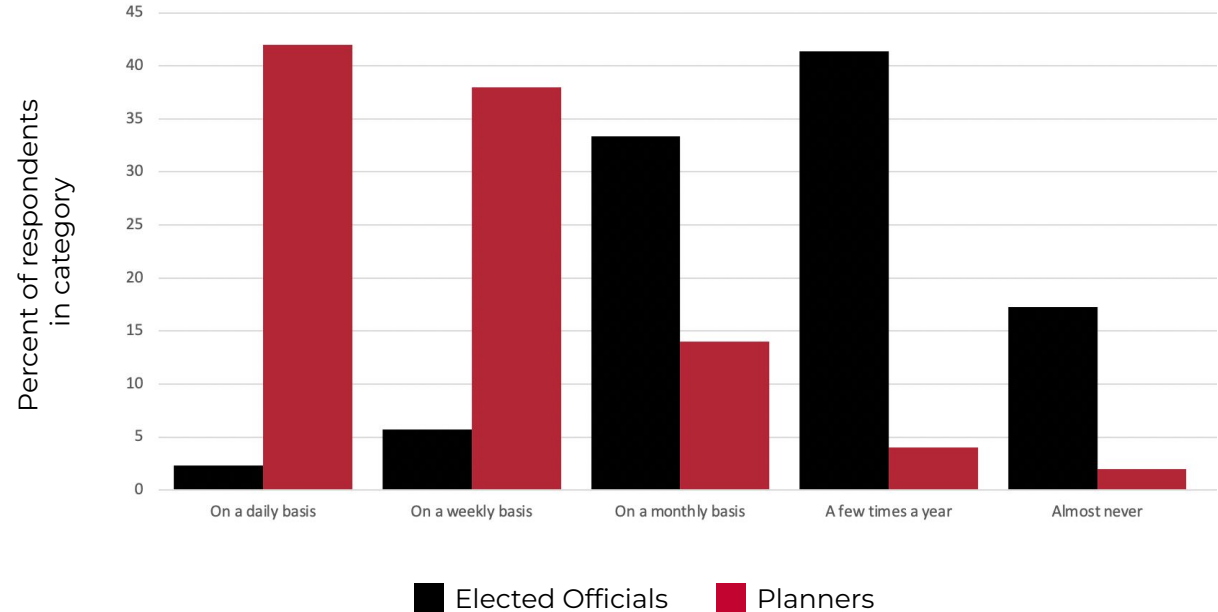
“ A thriving agricultural industry depends on the knowledge and support provided by municipal governments.

Caldwell et al., 2020

KEY FINDINGS

A Greenbelt Focus

How frequently does the planning department / council deal with agriculture and agri-food related issues?



KEY FINDINGS

A Greenbelt Focus

Contributions to Capacity

- Farmers as experts
- Culture of agriculture
- Intergovernmental collaboration
- Provisioning for corporate memory
- Cross departmental awareness of agri-food systems

Challenges to Capacity

- Complex jurisdictional setting
- Perceived lack of provincial direction
- Competing urban priorities
- Lack of exposure to agricultural issues
- Lack of staff resources

NEW RESEARCH

Ontario

Research Questions

- To what extent do municipalities vary in their capacity to respond to and support the local agri-food sector?
- Which provincial agricultural and rural land use policies are the most challenging for municipalities to implement?
- What can be done to increase municipal capacity for more efficient implementation?

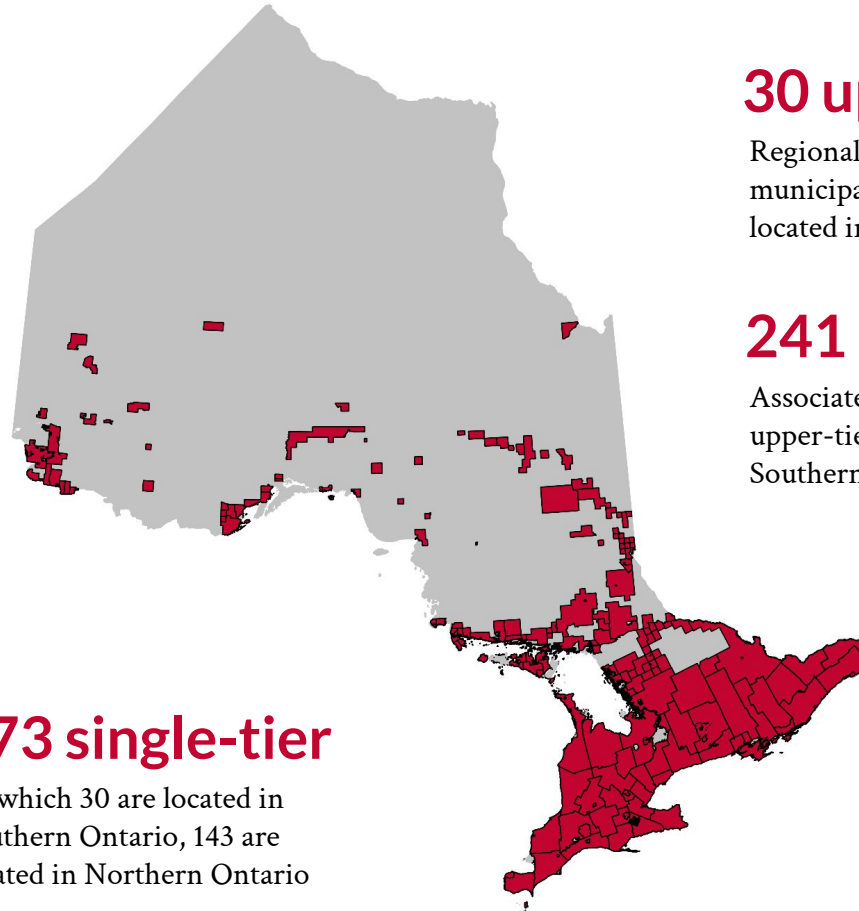
RATIONAL

Intended benefits

- Stakeholders: municipal staff, elected official, OMAFRA, agricultural communities, and the public
- Knowledge of the factors influencing municipal effectiveness at meeting and satisfying agricultural and rural provincial policies.
- Understanding of which policies municipalities find challenging to address and implement.
- Identification of gaps in training and resource materials.
- A more knowledgeable, supportive, and predictive planning system.
- Evidence to inform decision-making and program development related to agricultural and rural communities.

STUDY AREA

Ontario



30 upper-tier

Regional and county
municipal governments
located in Southern Ontario

241 lower-tier

Associated with the
upper-tier municipalities in
Southern Ontario

173 single-tier

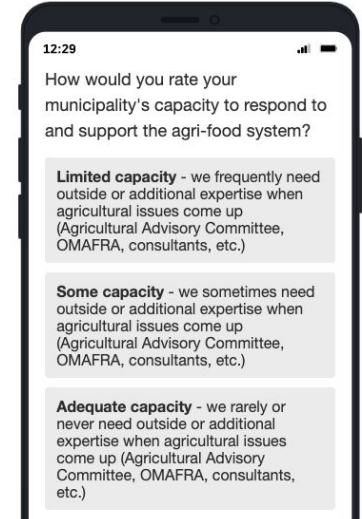
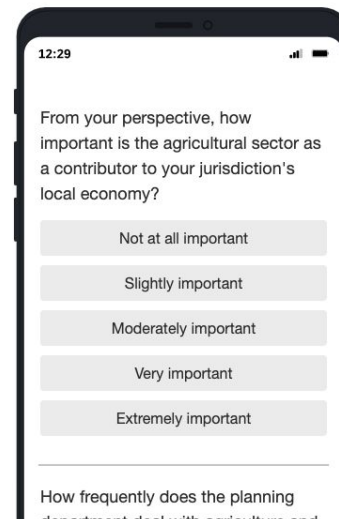
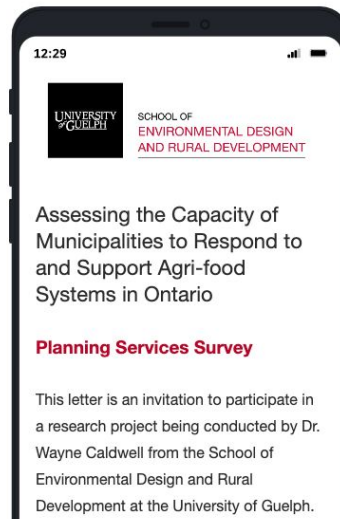
Of which 30 are located in
Southern Ontario, 143 are
located in Northern Ontario

METHODS

Ontario

This study includes three types of data collection that will be considered in conjunction with a review of municipal documents (e.g., official plans, budgets, etc.):

1. A survey sent to elected officials,
2. A survey sent to the most senior planner (or similar), and
3. A semi-structured interview with a member of the planning department (upper- and single-tier municipalities only).



WHAT'S NEXT

Project timeline

1

Refine Research Instruments

- Identify municipalities to be included
- Refine survey and interview templates

2

Advisory Committee Meeting

- Review research instruments
- Feedback on approach

3

Data Collection

- Disseminate surveys
- Conduct interviews with planners

4

Data Cleaning & Analysis

- Prepare transcripts
- Analyze data using NVIVO and R

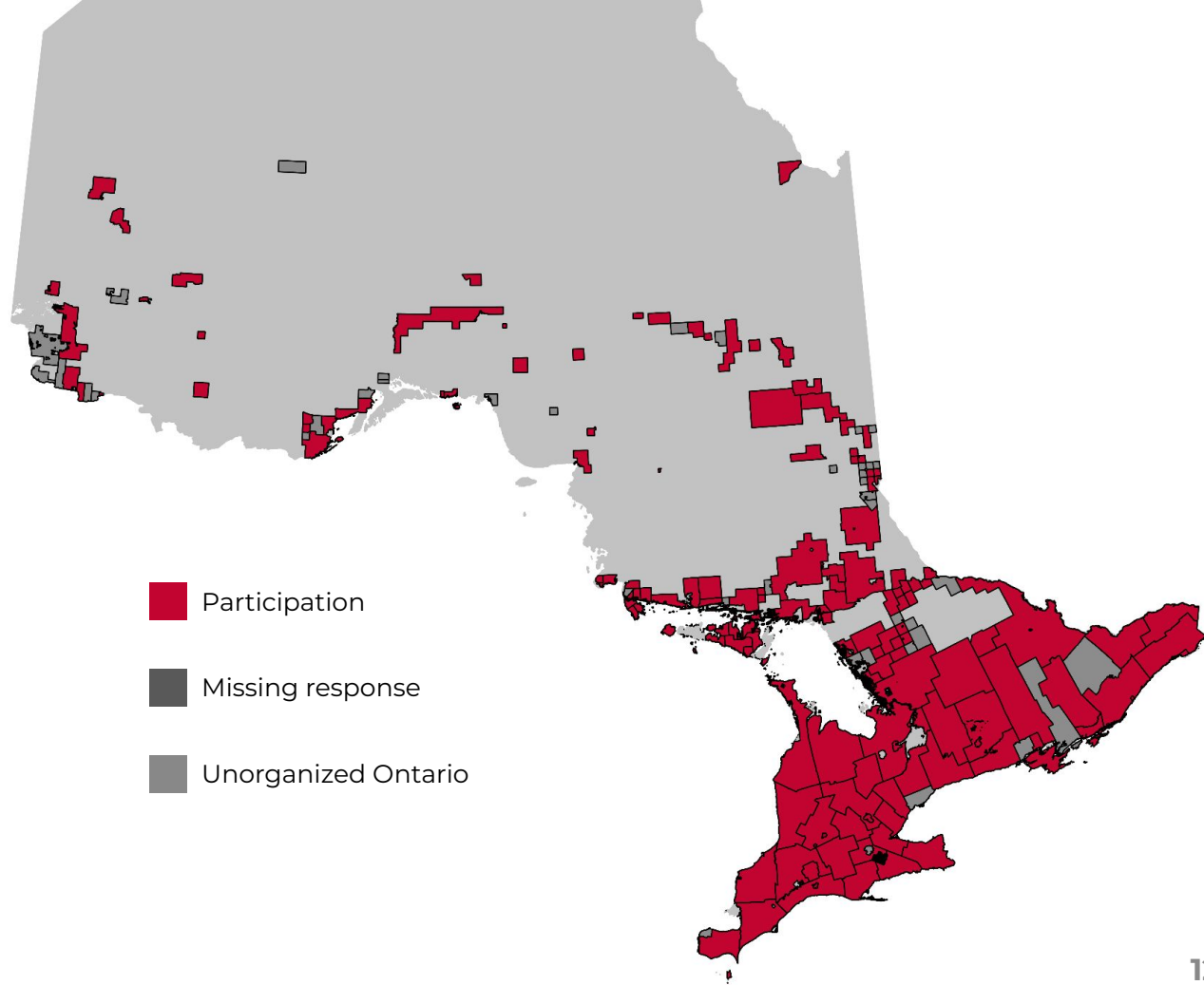
5

Final Report and KTT Activities

- Identify training needs
- Agriculture 101 toolkit/workshops

UPPER- AND SINGLE-TIER RESPONSE MAP

10/31/2022

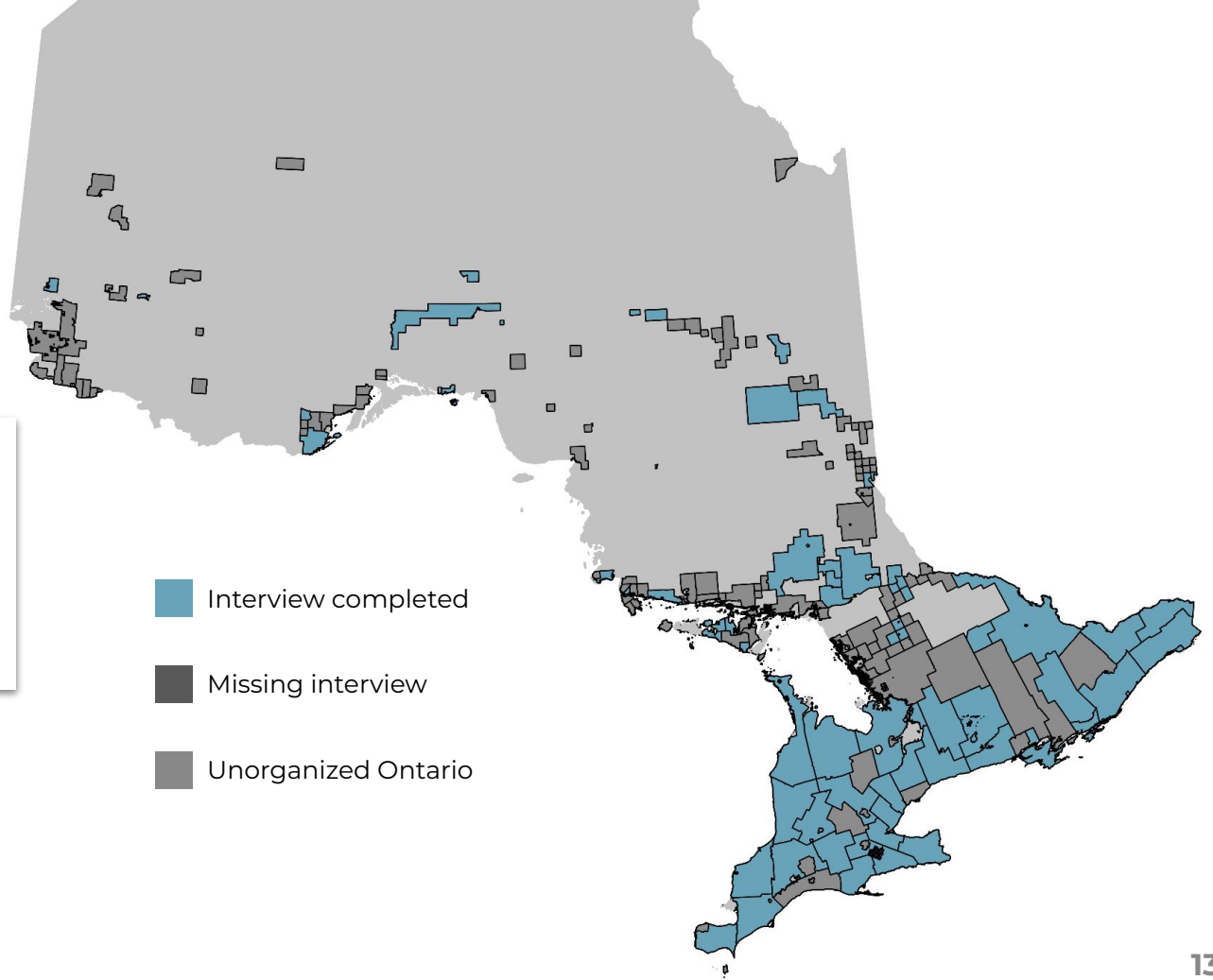


UPPER- AND SINGLE-TIER INTERVIEW RESPONSE MAP

10/31/2022

Who we interviewed:

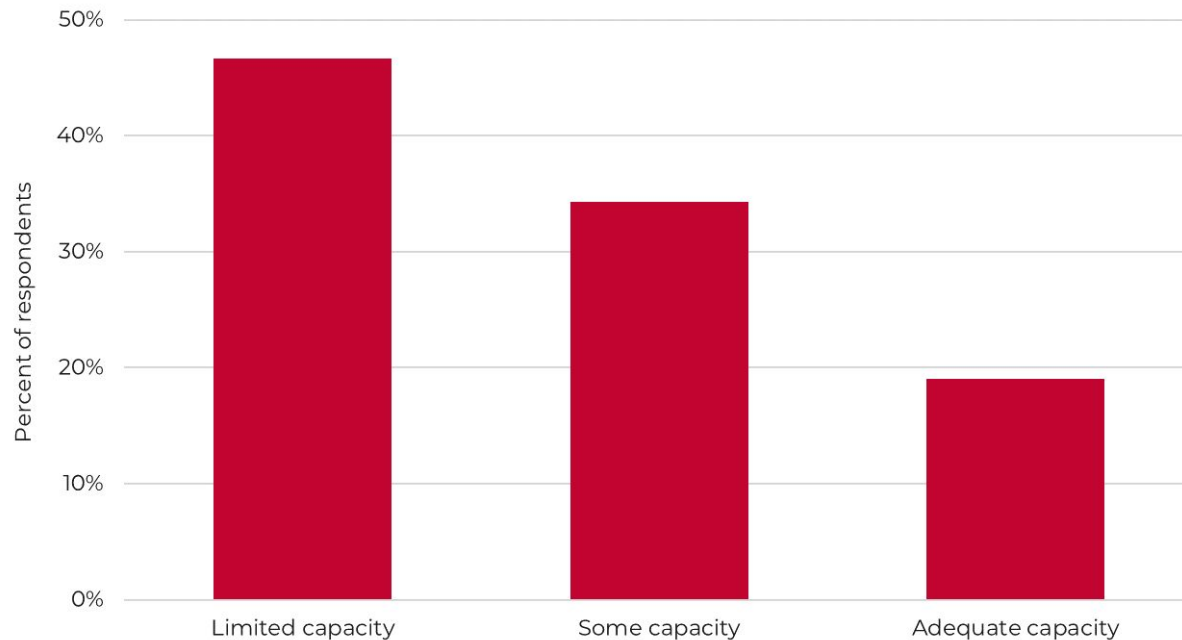
- 22 Upper-tiers
- 42 Single-tiers
- 4 Planning Boards



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Upper- and single-tier municipalities in Ontario

How would you rate your municipality's capacity to respond to and support the agri-food system? (n=105)



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Upper- and single-tier municipalities in Ontario

Does your municipality have/deliver any of the following?

- **Economic Development initiatives related to growing/supporting the agricultural sector**
- **Water quality programs**
- **Buy local programs**
- Agritourism/food and farm tours
- Climate change strategy
- Agricultural workforce development/labour initiatives
- Agricultural advisory committee
- Agricultural strategy
- Food strategies
- Biodiversity strategy

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

What we are hearing



Interviews with upper-tier municipalities

- Concept of the 'Ag-vocate' on staff
- Importance of "on the ground" knowledge - high level policies & local impacts
- Whose job is agri-food program delivery? (Economic development? Planning? A partner organization?)
- Urban & residential development pressures

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

What we are hearing



Interviews with single-tier municipalities

- Agriculture vs. agricultural systems approach
- Requires collaboration - conservation authorities, other municipalities, OMAFRA, agri-food stakeholder groups, etc.
- Support from the Province
- Increased role of consultants
- Northern vs. Southern Ontario municipalities



Thank you.

We would like to thank the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Greenbelt Foundation for supporting this project.

Additionally, we would like to thank all of the planners and elected officials who have or will contributed their perspective, experience, and knowledge to this project.

To learn more or continue the discussion visit [**Dr. Wayne Caldwell's resource website.**](#)