

WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL Chamber of Commerce

Windsor-Essex Chamber Agri-Food Paper

Background

The Agri-food is the number one or number two industry in Ontario, depending on how it is measured. In the Windsor-Essex region, it is a \$1 billion industry and it is well positioned to grow.

The AFP was created by the Chamber's first ever Agri-food Committee formed in September 2013. Members of the Agri-food Committee represent our region's Agri-food industry, including businesses and experts from the greenhouse, wine, food processing, farming, educational and the workforce development sectors.

With the help of the Chamber's Agri-food Committee and the numerous stakeholders and Agri-food associations, the Chamber was able to demonstrate the value and the potential of the industry for our region.

Key findings:

- Agri-Food sector statistical data is often dispersed and scarce. Different methods of measuring the data, as is the case with the regional and industry specific statistics, can lead to less accurate and less reliable data. The availability of more data and more accurate data will greatly improve our understanding of the Agri-Food sector.
- Among the key findings of the AFP is the strength of the greenhouse sector, which includes flowers and vegetable production. The highest concentration of greenhouses in Canada is in the Windsor-Essex region, representing approximately 50% of greenhouse production.
- Another important finding is the importance of the accessibility and the cost of energy in the Agri-food industry. Currently greenhouses operate 9-10 months out of the year,. More accessible and lower energy costs would mean year-round production, a 16-25% increase, and improved economic performance.
- Third finding of the AFP is the regulatory environment. The Agri-food industry is less competitive when multiple inspections and regulatory oversight by numerous agencies impact their resources and often incur unnecessary costs.
- Currently, approximately 80% of Ontario's Agri-Food exports are bound for the U.S., while less than 20% are destined for other markets. The expected doubling of global food demand over the next 30 years is an opportunity to generate significant economic benefits

The Chamber's AFP is also available at the Chamber's website at:
<http://www.windsorchamber.org/policy>