

# Food sector strategy for the north

The province is looking to expand the food sector in northern Ontario and asked the public to weigh in on a draft framework.

The OFAH is generally supportive of this plan and sustainable economic development in northern Ontario, but not at the expense of our natural resources, public access to Crown lands, and northern identity.

## Who is leading the strategy?

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

## What is the strategy about?

- The Agriculture, Aquaculture and Food Processing Sector strategy proposes to strengthen food-producing industries (i.e. field crops, aquaculture, livestock, maple syrup) and identify additional opportunities for growth in the north.

## Where exactly would this apply?

- Northern Ontario districts: Rainy River, Kenora, Thunder Bay, Greater Sudbury, Timiskaming, Cochrane, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Algoma

## Why is the OFAH involved?

The OFAH commented on the draft strategy because of the potential impact to anglers, hunters and the management of Crown land. Some of our questions, and concerns include the potential for:

- Wildlife habitat destruction and population decline resulting from unfettered clearing, draining and cultivating of land
- Species introductions resulting from pond and cage aquaculture escapes
- Crown land being converted for agricultural use without fully evaluating environmental, social, cultural and economic trade-offs

## The OFAH also recommends:

- A coordinated effort among government agencies and conservation authorities
- Government agencies consider partnering with ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) to balance agriculture with ecology
- An investment in laboratory resources to afford best farming practices (ie: soil testing/precision fertilizer application)
- Access to provincial government agricultural expertise
- Full regulation of all cage aquaculture in Ontario

