

QUICK FACTS

VANISHING FARMLAND

Between 1981 and 1986, about 80 per cent of urban development in Ontario occurred on prime agricultural land.

- OVERVIEW:** Ontario cities with populations of 25,000 or more gobbled up about 37,000 hectares (91,426 acres) of prime agricultural land between 1976 and 1986 — an area more than twice the size of London.
- LOCAL LOSSES:** The seven counties of Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Lambton, Kent, Huron and Perth lost more than 5,500 hectares (13,600 acres) of farmland in that period.
- SEVERANCES:** Number proposed in agricultural areas of Ontario has risen to more than 14,000 annually from 5,000 only 10 years ago. Most are for non-farm residences. Almost every severance results in fragmentation of agricultural land, increasing potential conflict between farmers and non-farmers. No figure is available on amount of farmland converted this way, but it's thought to be equal to or greater than that utilized for growth by urban centres.
- THE FUTURE:** With London wanting to annex large tracts of Middlesex County, there's fear more farmland eventually will be taken out of production.
- SCOPE OF SECTOR:** Farming is a \$2-billion-a-year sector in Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Lambton, Kent, Perth and Huron counties. (SOURCES: Environment Canada; Ontario ministry of agriculture and food.)

PROVINCIAL ACTION

While municipalities have a say in how development proceeds, Queen's Park helps protect farmland from urbanization and farmers from nuisance complaints by non-farm neighbors:

- FOOD LAND GUIDELINES:** Government policy since 1978; updated policy stalled with installation of new government; the 1978 version permits development of farmland, but conversion to non-farm has to be justified.
- FARM PRACTICES PROTECTION ACT:** Law since 1988; establishes freedom of farmers to raise livestock, grow crops; protects them from nuisance lawsuits arising from complaints about the noise, odor or dust generated by their operations.
- THE FUTURE:** Look for heated debate over the NDP's promise to restrict severely or prohibit development on prime farmland.

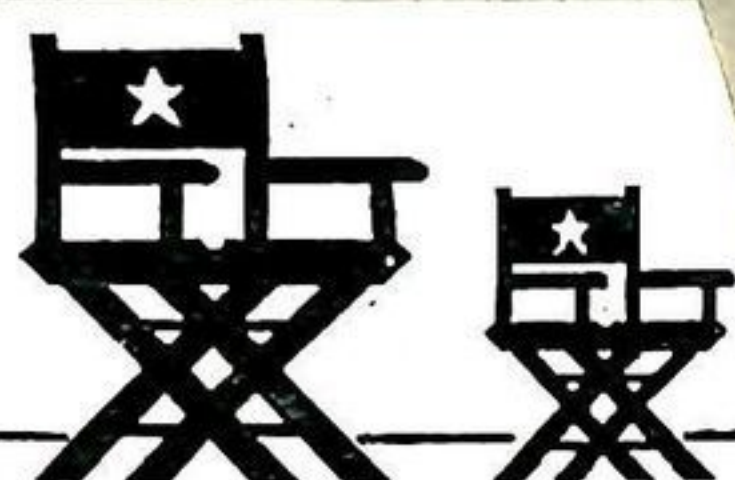
FOR: FARMLAND URBANIZATION

- Provides room for cities to grow.
- Allows farmers to sell chunks of land for retirement or help boost farm incomes.

AGAINST:

- May lead to more food imports.
- Increase conflicts between farmers and non-farmers.
- Higher land prices limit farm expansions.
- Cuts into limited supply of prime farmland.
- Once urbanized, land can't be put back into production.
- Forces farm families to relocate onto poorer land, driving up their costs and making it more difficult to compete.

When I grow up, I want to be just like dad



By Rhonda Vandeworp

Most young people anxiously await for the moment when they're old enough to pack up their bags and start a life of adventure away from home.

There are some individuals, however, who look forward to the time when they can join the businesses run by their parents. The following businesses are only some of the successful father/son operations in South Huron.

C. Haskett & Son Funeral Home - Lucan

C. Haskett and Son Funeral Home is a father and son business that began operation over 100 years ago, and has since been passed down four generations.

Charles Haskett founded the business in 1882 when he purchased the cabinet and undertaking business of Albert Goodacre of Lucan. Haskett had served his apprenticeship with Goodacre.

William Haskett, Charles's son, joined his father in 1918 and the name of the business officially became C. Haskett and Son. William's sons, Clarence and Arthur both followed in their father's footsteps. Clarence took over the family business in Lucan while Arthur worked as a funeral director in Toronto.

The next in line was Clarence's son, Bill. Since the age of 12, Bill knew that he wanted to work with



Clarence Haskett and his son, Bill

cause "I was brought up with it, I didn't have any other interests," he explained.

According to Bill it is easier to conduct a funeral if the leaders know what to expect from one another. He continued to explain

his father has allowed them to "know what the other is going to do by instinct."

In addition to that business, Bill has taken on the responsibility of running Lucan's ambulance service, and his wife manages the

family's furniture store