

# Queen's Park Report

By JULIAN REED  
Liberal M.P.P.  
(Halton-Burlington)

The Ontario Institute of Agrologists, whose membership includes farmers, soil scientists and other agriculture professionals, has urged the Provincial Government to impose an immediate freeze on the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, and to strengthen its proposed guidelines for food-producing land. In a statement to the Minister of Agriculture, the Institute maintains that the Government's recent policy paper on foodland guide-lines allows municipalities too much leeway in developing land use plans.

According to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the 26 acre per hour decline in improved land during 1966-1971 was reversed during 1971-1976. Meanwhile the decline in unimproved land continued. The overall story is that in 1976 there was less land in control of food producers, but that more of the land on farms was improved land, compared with 1971.

From available statistics, it is difficult to ascertain the exact situation. So much depends upon the quality of the land in question, which is not specified. Also the official definition of a farm has been changed. Prior to 1971, a farm comprised any unit of at least one acre, producing for sale agricultural products worth at least \$50. A farm is now defined as a unit of one acre or more producing \$1,200 in agricultural products.

The "Food for the Cities Conference" was held in Toronto on March 30th and March 31st, 1977.

Liberal Leader Stuart Smith said that "in the short run we could let the market prevail. More land would be taken out of production, prices would rise, and those farmers remaining on the land would have a very good income."

"But we must look to the future. There is no more land being made; we must husband and protect this product. This requires a distortion of the market today, but it will pay dividends in the future. Subtle changes in climate, some of which are now being predicted by experts in that field, could render our current land resources much less productive. Changes in the price of fertilizer may affect the optimum productivity of the land. There may well be a time when food exports will become a vital part of the balance of payments of this province. Although it is not yet the case, it seems clear to me that by present world trends our food resource could become somewhat similar to the oil resources now held by the OPEC countries. As we incur ever increasing deficits to pay for energy resources, we may be able to sustain our economy by exporting natural resources."

"The energy crisis is not temporary and the price of energy will continue to rise. It may soon become economically feasible to raise energy crops on agricultural land to produce methanol."

"But if we distort the market, who shall pay? In our view it should not be the farmer, already struggling to make a decent living - that would be patently unfair. We all must find fair ways to share this cost. We must pay at the supermarket and through taxes. We must make wise use of marketing boards and tariffs and must recognize that part of the price must be paid through higher food prices. If we want to preserve agricultural land there must be some increases in the price of food. Farmers must have an incentive to earn a decent living but it is not enough to say preserve the farmer and he will preserve the land."

"In some cases the growth of cities has put tremendous pressure on our best agricultural land in terms of soil capability and heat units. This is natural because many settlements in Ontario such as London, Chatham and many others grew up as market towns. But it is not responsible to say that we could freeze all growth of such communities."

"One policy alternative to consider is the establishment of buffer zones fringing areas of growth. This land should be put to those agricultural uses relatively compatible with urban growth and large population centres. In addition... we would require a mandatory designation of all foodlands... proper inventory of our agricultural land... Once land has been designated as food land there should be no development unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Of course decisions respecting individual parcels of land must be subject to a certain degree of flexibility, and persons whose land is affected must have the right to appear before a tribunal which includes concern for the agricultural use of land."

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<p><b>Short &amp; Sassy Shampoo</b> 200 ML PLASTIC BTL <b>1.69</b></p>	<p><b>Peanut Butter</b> PETER PAN 28-oz jar <b>1.49</b></p>
<p><b>Dreamsicles</b> BORDEN'S (ESKIMO PIES PKG OF 6 99¢) pkg of 12 <b>99¢</b></p>	<p><b>Billy Bee Honey</b> NO. 1 GRADE, CREAMED ACTION PRICED! 2-lb ctnr <b>1.49</b></p>
<p><b>Dad's Cookies</b> ASSORTED VARIETIES INCLUDING CHOCOLATE CHIP ACTION PRICED! 16-oz tin in bag <b>89¢</b></p>	<p><b>Sliced Pineapple</b> PALANDA - CRUSHED, TIDBITS OR 19-1/2-oz tin <b>2 for 99¢</b></p>
<p><b>Tea Bags</b> BLACK LABEL ACTION PRICED! pkg of 100 <b>1.59</b></p>	<p><b>B.B.Q. Sauce</b> KRAFT, REGULAR ACTION PRICED! 25-1/2-oz jar <b>99¢</b></p>
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**Nectarines** lb **49¢**

NO. 1 GRADE, ONTARIO, FRESH DAILY

<p><b>Lettuce</b> SWEET, RED CUTTERS 3 for <b>1.00</b></p>	<p><b>Green or Wax Beans</b> ONTARIO, LARGE SIZE lb <b>39¢</b></p>
<p><b>Watermelon</b> each <b>1.89</b></p>	<p><b>Pepper Squash</b> 2 for <b>49¢</b></p>

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<p><b>LAMB LOIN CHOPS</b> FROZEN, IMPORTED, NEW ZEALAND lb <b>1.58</b></p>	<p><b>YOUNG TURKEYS</b> GRADE "A", EVisCERATED, FROZEN, VAC PAC 6 TO 12 LBS AVERAGE lb <b>78¢</b></p>	<p><b>BREAKFAST STRIPS</b> MAPLE LEAF lb <b>99¢</b></p>	<p><b>Beef Steakettes</b> TOWN CLUB, FROZEN 2-lb pkg <b>1.58</b></p>
<p><b>Medium Ground Beef</b> FRESH lb <b>88¢</b></p>	<p><b>Spare Ribs</b> PREVIOUSLY FROZEN, PORK SIDE GREAT ON A GRILL! lb <b>1.29</b></p>	<p><b>Smoked Ham</b> MAPLE LEAF, COOKED, HALVES OR QUARTERS VAC PAC lb <b>1.78</b></p>	<p><b>Fried Chicken</b> GOLDEN SKILLET, FROZEN 2-lb bucket <b>2.99</b></p>
<p><b>Chicken Halves</b> FRESH lb <b>88¢</b></p>	<p><b>Cooked Ham</b> MAPLE LEAF, SLICED 6-oz VAC PAC <b>1.09</b></p>	<p><b>Sausages</b> Beef &amp; Pork lb <b>79¢</b></p>	