

# The North Halton Compass

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## BRASS TACKS – Editorial

It's no exaggeration to say *nothing* is easy for farmers these days.

According to a discussion paper on Halton Hills' rural areas, the farmers are under a considerable amount of stress and upon implementing a new Official Plan, this must be taken into consideration.

Meridian Planning Consultants, the company who undertook the review, believe these rural areas play a valuable role in the health of the area. They do indeed.

The company believes that as land values and taxes escalate, the cost to operate a farm is going to continue to increase, and more likely than not, farmers are going to give up. Either they will move elsewhere to an area that is more cost efficient, or they will give up farm-

ing altogether.

Both scenarios are disturbing.

Of course trying to maintain support for Ontario farmers locally is not easy.

The majority of people count their pennies, cut out coupons, and basically just try to get the best for their hard earned dollar. Which at the moment, often means forfeiting their support of Ontario farmers and opting for imported produce that is both cheaper and for the time being, appears to be a larger, more luscious product.

And so the vicious downward cycle goes. The more expenses farmers encounter, the higher the cost of their crops. And the higher the cost of their produce, the less local consumers will buy. So the cost will continue to rise in order for the farmer to survive.

That's where the local governments need to step in and do what they can. Obviously, there's a lot they can't do, and the farmers are constantly battling with the provincial and federal governments for their rights.

One step in the right direction is for local governing bodies to protect the farmers' land by designating the area as agricultural and banning operations in the area that would take good land from the agricultural industry.

When it comes to farming, it's a constant struggle and the more support local farmers have behind them, the better chance they have to survive.

## Milton quarry expansion: Dufferin eager to work together with CH, Region, Towns

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Scientific Interest, the Region's environmentally sensitive area, the main provincially significant wetlands complex and associated setbacks," explained Ms. MacMillan.

"Based on our data collection, W7 and W8 were both already disturbed when used as farm ponds, and V2 and W7 do not support significant portions of the habitat of the Jefferson Salamander."

It is Dufferin's position that extracting the areas where Jefferson Salamander eggs have been found would not have a significant effect on the habitat or population as there is a wide spread habitat in the adjacent areas as well as a wide spread occurrence of eggs in the surrounding wetlands.

Dufferin proposes to establish

wetland pools as part of the quarry rehabilitation process and to support research to further the understanding of the Jefferson Salamanders and their occurrence and life cycle habitat requirements.

The Region of Halton will seek input from the Ministry of Natural Resources on these four natural areas.

"We feel that all four areas should be excluded from the application. W7 and W8 are provincially significant wetlands and we are confident that the Ministry of Natural Resources will support our recommendation. V2 and the ANSI lobe are still under study and after input from the Ministry may be included in licensed areas," explained Ho Wong, Director of Planning for the Region.

Commissioner of Public Works Patrick Murphy made it clear however, that the decision on these areas lies ultimately with the Region.

"We may reconsider after input from the Ministry, but it is not a foregone conclusion that V2 and the ANSI lobe will be extracted even if the Ministry approves of it."

The final approval of the application is expected to take place in the fall after at least one more public meeting, input from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the finalization between the Region of Halton, Conservation Halton and Dufferin Aggregates on Adaptive Management Plan.



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