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Map Your Farm

Farming is a lot more complicated than it was a generation or two ago. Today's farmers must work within a complex regulatory framework set up to protect drinking water resources and the environment.

The Service Transformation

By helping improve the delivery of existing data, GeoConnections and the other multi-jurisdictional partners have made it easier for farmers in Oxford County to manage their properties.

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In Ontario, farmers of new and expanding operations are required by law to develop nutrient management plans to deal with animal waste and other nutrients kept on their properties or spread on their fields. Farmers need to know detailed information about their properties, such as the location of groundwater aquifers, flood zones, wetlands, sources of potential contaminants and different types of soils.

To get this information, farmers need access to data from many different government agencies: municipalities, conservation authorities, and the provincial and federal governments.

To help local farmers, officials in Oxford County, Ontario have created an internet mapping application entitled *Map Your Farm* that provides greater access to current data provided from a variety of sources. *Map Your Farm* provides access to a broad range of land and water-related information in the form of data and maps.

Using *Map Your Farm*, users can use the menu to select the data layers that they want to view on (e.g. location of wells, roads, sources of potential contaminants) and then print their customized maps from their homes, offices, or the community library. "We've had great response from farmers," says Margaret Parkin, manager of the GeoGraphics Information Systems Group at Oxford County.

Previously, an earlier version of *Map Your Farm* existed but the County had to acquire digital geospatial data sets from conservation authorities, municipalities, the provincial and federal government. The acquisition of this data was time consuming as it required negotiation of data licenses with each organization, transfer of data sets, and on-going provisions to ensure that the data was up to date. "To make sure that the data was up-to-date data was onerous," says Margaret.

With funding from GeoConnections, the County was able to re-engineer its existing mapping application to enable some data suppliers (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agriculture and AgriFood Canada and two local conservation authorities) to upload geospatial data over the web in such a way that

accessible through *Map Your Farm*. Now instead of Oxford County hosting all of the data, these project partners host their own data, says Cindy Mitchell at GeoConnections. This ensures that farmers are getting the most current and complete data.

GeoConnections is a national partnership initiative, led by Natural Resources Canada, to build the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (CGDI), and make Canada's geospatial databases, applications, and services readily accessible on-line.

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Important Notices