

**THE NIAGARA AGRI-TOURISM INDUSTRY ...**

No clear definition of agri-tourism exists. "Agri-tourism is an all-encompassing term, which embraces a wide range of activities and operations, but essential to all of them is an interaction between the agricultural producer, his/her products and the tourist". (Newfoundland & Labrador Agriculture)

Farmers are no longer just producing a product to sell to a processor, manufacturer or livestock yard. As trends continue to change towards a healthier lifestyle, the public is more than ever looking towards the purchase of fresh locally grown produce and the opportunity to experience the rural and farming lifestyle. To this end, farmers are looking towards value-added farm products in the form of tours, tasting, retail and pick-your-own operations that add to the rural life experience for visitors, making it an event that keeps them returning.

In the Niagara Region agri-tourism is composed of a large and diverse collection of agricultural commodity groups that are continuing to expand and develop. Some of these groups include: fruit and vegetable, greenhouse, maple syrup, herb, nut and livestock operations. One of the largest industries contributing to the agri-tourism industry is the grape and wine industry. Value-added products offered at these vineyards/wineries often include boutiques, tasting bars, tours (private, group and self-guided), conference & banquet facilities and educational seminars.

"Agri-tourism can bring many benefits to rural areas including additional income to farmers, the development of value-added agricultural products, rural economic development opportunities and new jobs".

(Source: DPD 57-2000 - Report on Agriculture, Land Use and Agri-tourism: Information on Activities and Current Policies - Regional Niagara, April, 2000)



**FARMERS' MARKETS:**

Farmers' Markets have been a mainstay in Ontario for close to two centuries.

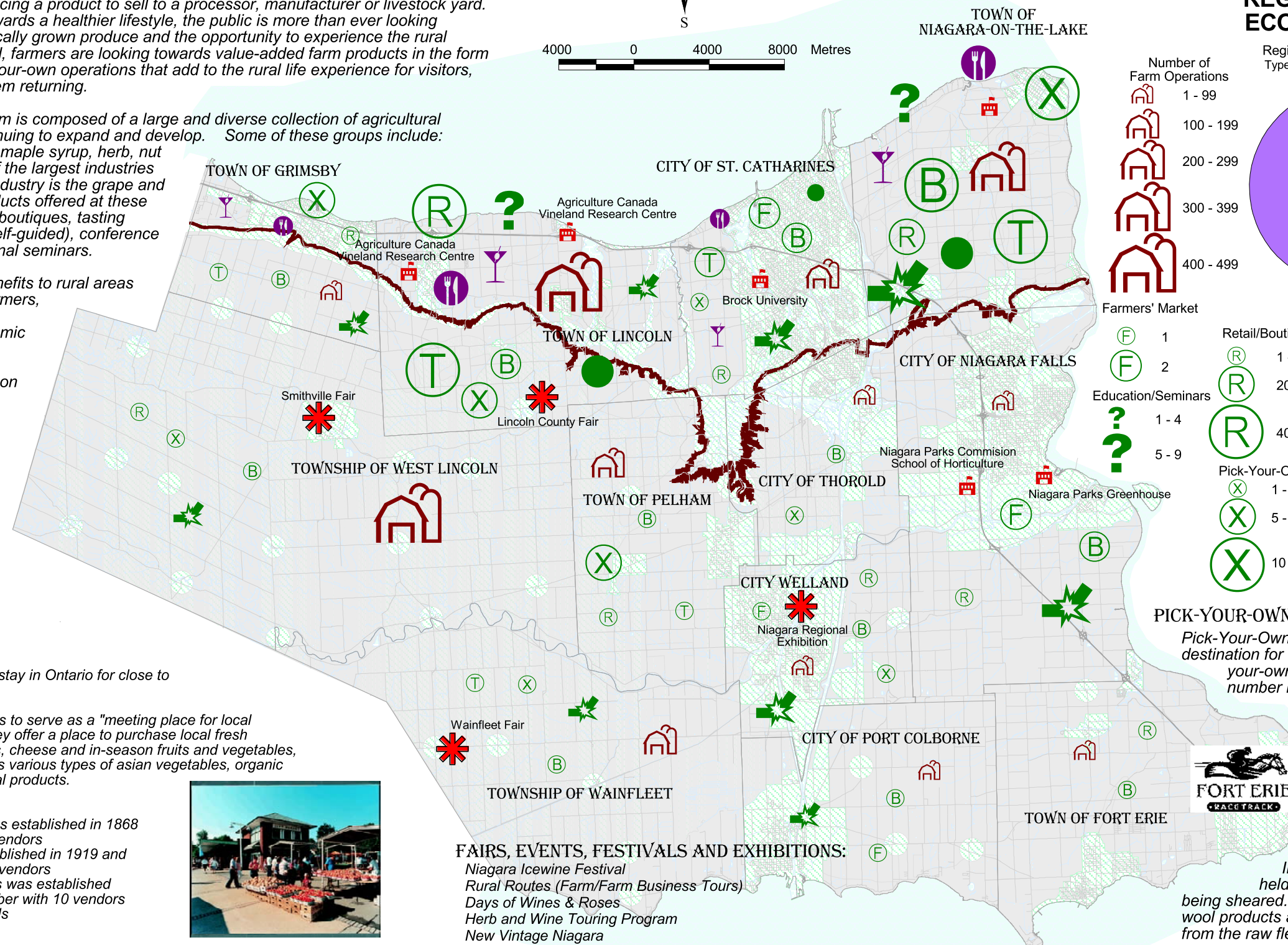
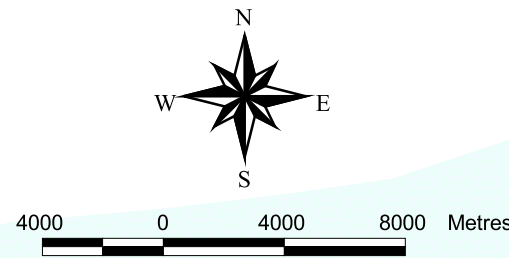
The Farmers' Market today continues to serve as a "meeting place for local farmers, residents and visitors". They offer a place to purchase local fresh produce such as meat, dairy, breads, cheese and in-season fruits and vegetables, as well as such specialty products as various types of asian vegetables, organic produce and other types of all natural products.

- \* St. Catharines Farmers' Market was established in 1868 and operates year round with 30 vendors
- \* Welland Farmers' Market was established in 1919 and operates year round with 60 to 70 vendors
- \* Park Street Market in Niagara Falls was established in 1924 and operates May to October with 10 vendors
- \* Sylvia Place Market in Niagara Falls
- \* Port Colborne Farmers' Market

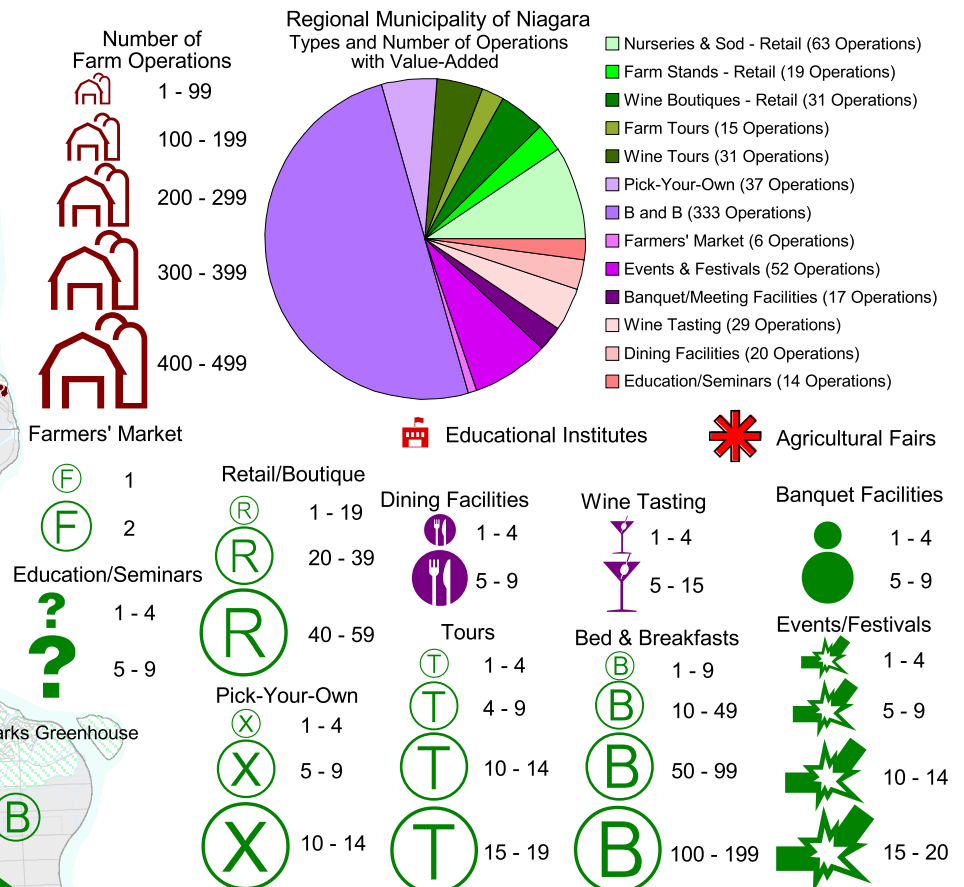


Source:  
Regional Municipality of Niagara (existing information and mapping is considered by the Region to be pre-published), 2002.  
2001 Statistics Canada  
Niagara Business Directory, 2002/03  
www.equinedirectory.com; www.downtown.mag.com  
www.landscapentario.com  
www.bbonline.com; www.bbregistry.com  
www.harvestontario.com/

NOTE:  
This map is for general illustration purposes only. For boundary interpretations, please contact the Regional Niagara Planning and Development Department.



**Figure 7.1  
- REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA -  
Connecting With Our Rural Roots  
REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL  
ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY**



**PICK-YOUR-OWN, FAIRS, FESTIVALS & EXHIBITONS:**  
Pick-Your-Own fruit and vegetable operations are an ever-popular destination for all. According to Harvest Ontario there are 37 pick-your-own venues within the Niagara Region with the highest number located in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area (12).

Agricultural fairs, festivals, events, and exhibitions are another feature of the agricultural sector in the Niagara Region. One of these events is the annual New Vintage Festival that offers nine days of tastings, tours, seminars and other events along Niagara's Wine Route for visitors to experience the first public sampling.

In November, the Annual Sheep Shearing Festival is held in Wainfleet. Visitors can watch over 100 sheep being sheared. A visit to the wool shop allows visitors to purchase wool products and to see the processes and preparations involved from the raw fleece stage to the finished product.

**FORT ERIE RACE TRACK:**  
Fort Erie Race Track is recognized internationally as the home of the second leg of the Canada Triple Crown of Racing, the Prince of Wales Stakes. From its beginnings in 1897, great Canadian champions have raced here. This year, 2003, marks the 106th year of live racing at the Fort Erie Track. "Building on a history of offering outstanding racing and entertainment, the Fort Erie Race Track completed a \$30 million renovation project in 1999. This included a new T.V. Control Room with graphic and electronic photo-finish capabilities that put Fort Erie Race Track on a parallel with some of the top racing facilities in North America".  
(http://www.forterieracing.com/live\_racing/live\_racing.htm)

- FAIRS, EVENTS, FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITIONS:**
- Niagara Icewine Festival
  - Rural Routes (Farm/Farm Business Tours)
  - Days of Wines & Roses
  - Herb and Wine Touring Program
  - New Vintage Niagara
  - Niagara Under Glass
  - Niagara Wine Festival
  - Taste Niagara
  - Black Diamond Wine, Cheese and Food Experience
  - Taste the Season: Christmas Entertaining
  - PoultryFest (Smithville)
  - The Peach Festival (Winona)
  - 2003 Cycling Tour - Vineyard Cycle Tour (Niagara-on-the-Lake)
  - Prince of Wales Stakes (Fort Erie)
  - Niagara Lincoln Show Circuit and Sales - Miniature Horses (Lincoln)