

Agricultural Land Sustainability and Viability

**Submission to
Land Matters Advisory Committee
by
Concerned Island Farmers**

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Concerned Island Farmers

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Concerned Island Farmers

Who are we?

- 12 successful, moderately-sized Island farm operations stretching Island-wide.
- Represent generations of the independent family farm on Prince Edward Island.
- Employ more than 400 permanent and seasonal workers in peak season.
- Mix of predominantly seed, table and processing potato production.
- Progressive and responsible growers at or near land limit acreage.

Bedeque Farms Ltd.

FarmBoys

Linkletter Farms

Urbainville Farms

D&E Pork Inc.

Gerrit Visser & Sons
(1991) Inc.

Mulligan Brothers

Vanco Farms

Eastern Farms Ltd.

Hilltop Produce & R&L
Farms

Spring Valley Farms Ltd.

W.P. Griffin Inc.



Our Goals as Growers

- **Sustainable business growth:** Status quo is not a business strategy. There needs to be a managed balance between existing production capacity and new production capacity.
- **Enhanced competitiveness against off-Island competition:** Productivity + efficiency + economies of scale = competitiveness.
- **Environmentally sound farming practices:** We are the stewards of our land.
- **Crop diversification and innovation:** It is important that we prepare for the future and identify opportunities for improvement.



Lands Protection Act

“The purpose of this Act is to provide for the regulation of property rights in Prince Edward Island, especially the amount of land that may be held by a person or corporation.”

Key Issues

1. Preservation of Prince Edward Island agricultural land for food production.

- What is our agricultural legacy and future economic contribution?

2. Resident versus non-resident ownership.

- The intent of the LPA was to control ownership of agricultural land by off-Island interests with large financial resources. That intent has been regularly circumvented, weakening farmland supply, accessibility and retention.



Key Issues

3. Role and importance of independent farmers.

- The number of independent farmers continues to decline. What are the future provincial economic implications from agriculture if the production presence of independent farmers is diminished?

4. Crop diversification

- Agricultural production in PEI is dominated by potatoes at a time when PEI's dominance in potato production has been lost to Alberta and Manitoba. What are the future economic implications without crop diversification and innovation?



Key Issues

5. Normal / natural business growth and expanded acreage to support that growth.

- The LPA was never intended to unreasonably restrict independent family farmers. But land limits have not changed since the LPA was enacted in 1982.
- Current land limits may be more than ample for many farmers. For others, they have become a barrier to the natural growth of their farm businesses.
- How does land limit policy support responsible land use growth by independent family farmers?



Concerned Island Farmers' Positions

- Agricultural land is a significant resource asset to Prince Edward Island and must be protected through policy for long-term sustainability and viability. Keep the land in production.
- Independent family farms are the heartbeat of agricultural production. Land limits through the Lands Protection Act were intended to discourage off-Island interests from dominating land ownership at the expense of independent family farms and agricultural production.
- Concerned Island Farmers support the intent, but advocate for changes and commitments that strengthen the intent and enforcement of the Act while avoiding a situation where independent family farms become “collateral damage.”



Concerned Island Farmers' Positions

- Among Prince Edward Island farmers there is sound business rationale for wanting or not wanting more acreage. Each farm is unique in its own way. For those who do, individual land limits should be increased to 1,500 acres, with corporate limits being increased to 4,500 acres.
- With increased limits, exemptions for non-arable and leased-out / leased-in land are retained.
- The LPA and land limits must be responsive to the needs of independent farmers. Responsive would be a land limits review every five years.



Concerned Island Farmers' Positions

- It is no secret that diversifying crops and crop rotations and longer crop rotations can greatly aid positive environmental impacts and land sustainability while generating profitability for farmers.
- Concerned Island Farmers support diversification as an integral component of land ownership and land use protection. But diversification practices such as longer crop rotations are inextricably linked with a need for more land.

Thank you.

