

# Workforce Focus

From the Sarnia-Lambton Training Board

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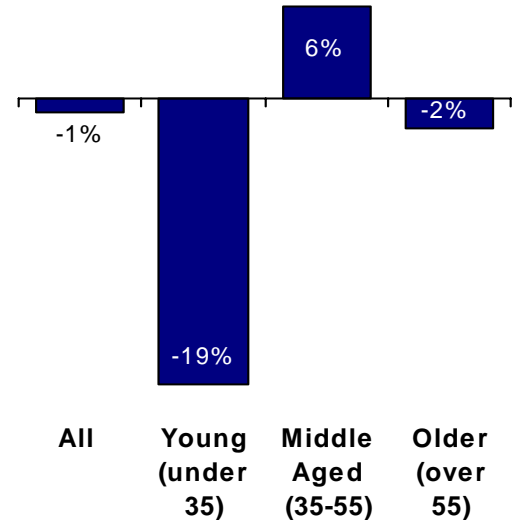
**Reasons for a declining number of farmers:**

- Farms consolidating and mechanizing.
- Strong demand in other industries where farmers can apply their skills.
- Fewer spouses combining their farming efforts.
- Lack of farm profit growth while operating expenses continue to rise.
- Farmers operating their farm as a second job.

Source: Bowlby, Statistics Canada, 2002.

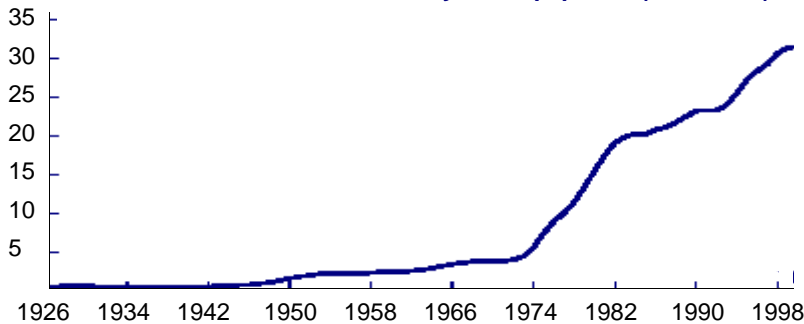
**Young farmers dropping fastest**

Farming employment change by age group  
1996-2001 South Western Ontario



Source: 2001 Census Data, Statistics Canada

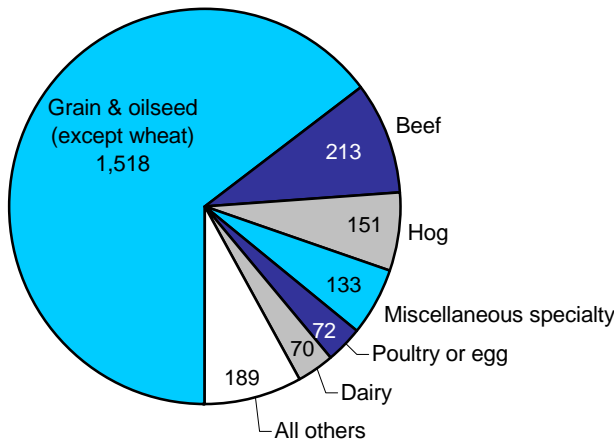
**Value of Canadian farm machinery and equipment (\$ `000,000)**



Farmers mechanized in the years leading up to accelerated drops in main-job farm employment.  
Source: Bowlby, Statistics Canada, 2002.

**Agriculture Composition**

Farms by type, Sarnia-Lambton 2001



**Computers on the farm**

**Use on the rise**

The share of farms using a computer to help manage the farm has doubled every five years since 1991, now standing at almost 40%.

**Most common users**

Farm operations where a computer is used in its management tend to be larger farms, have younger operators who are female, their operators work off the farm, are part tenant/part owner operators and produce certified organic products.

**Computer applications used on farms**

- Accounting (31% of farms)
- Internet (28%)
- Word processing (25%)
- E-mail (25%)
- Livestock and/or record keeping (16%)

Source: Sabuhoro and Wunsch, Statistics Canada, 2003.

**Growth at the top**

In terms of farm numbers, only farms with receipts of over \$250,000 were more numerous in 2001 than in 1996. However, these accounted for only 14% of all Canadian farms.

Source: Farming Facts, Statistics Canada, 2003.

**Lagging incomes**

Farmers average total income from all sources is between 60% and 80% of that of all tax-filers.

Source: Farming Facts, Statistics Canada, 2003.

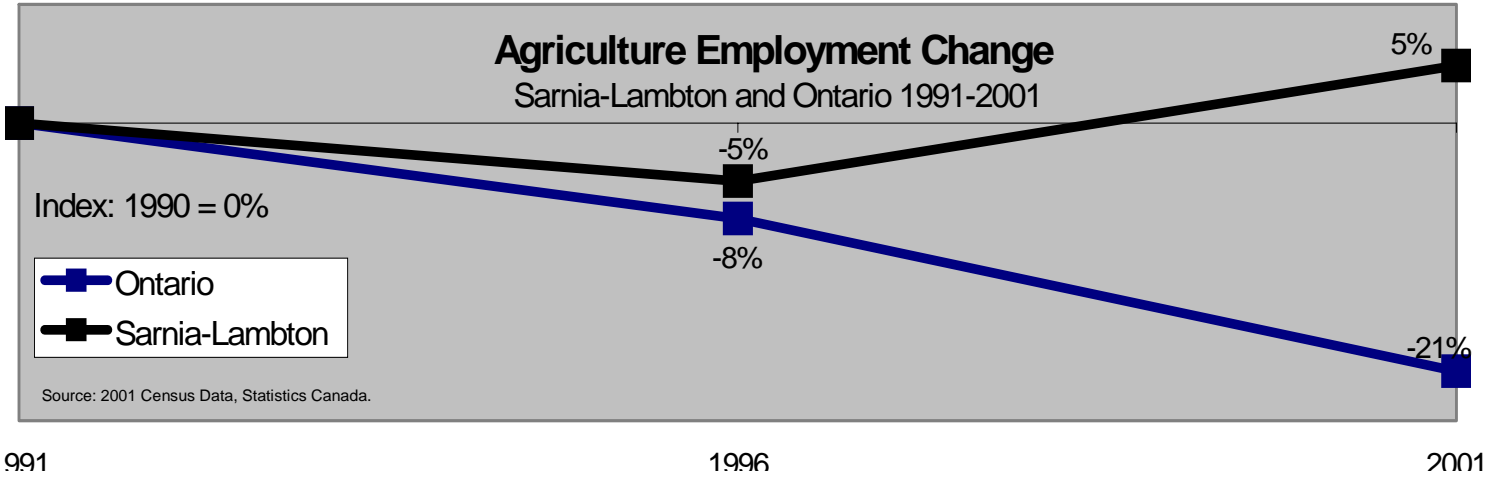


For more information please contact The Sarnia Lambton Training Board at:  
265 Front St. North Suite 504, Sarnia ON. N7T 7X1 (519) 332-0000

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Created by : Dane Rice

## Agriculture Employment Change Sarnia-Lambton and Ontario 1991-2001



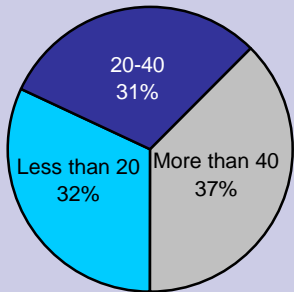
While provincial agriculture has continued to fall, local employment recovered to above 1991 levels.

### On and off farm hours

Sarnia-Lambton, 2001

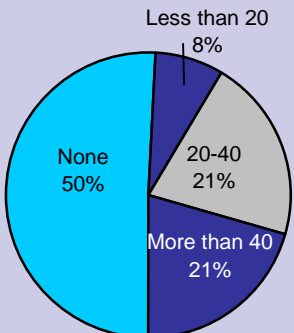
#### On Farm:

Local farmers by hours spent farming per week.



#### Off Farm:

Local farmers by hours spent working outside of agriculture per week.

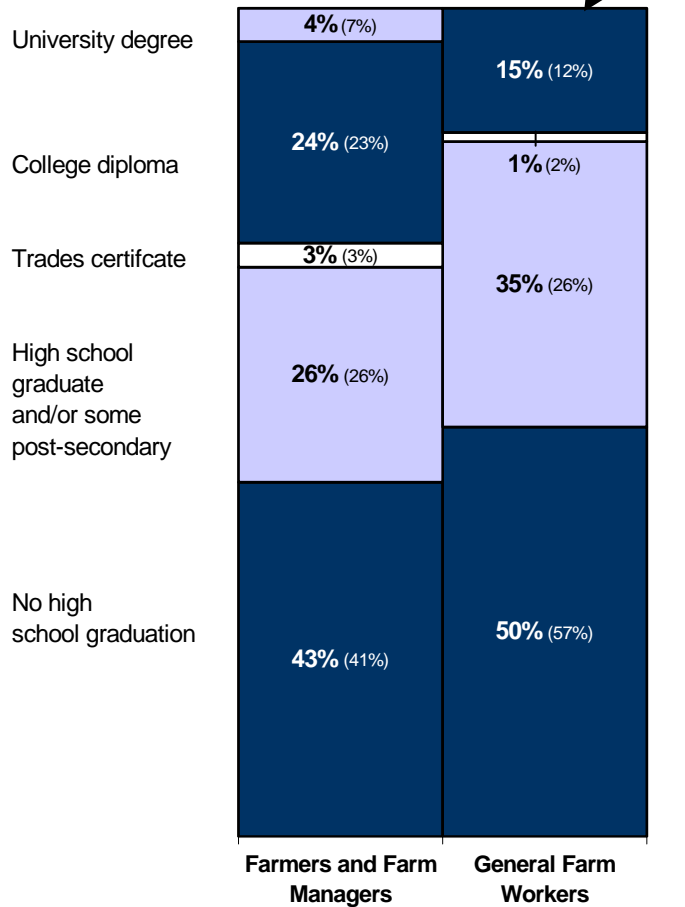


Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada.

### Agricultural Educational Attainments

Sarnia-Lambton, 2001

(Ontario figure in brackets)



Source: 2001 Census Data, Statistics Canada.

### Organics

- Rising demand**  
 Supermarkets are setting aside larger portions of their produce sections for organics and natural food stores are rapidly expanding, despite a very small Canadian organic industry.
- Good returns**  
 Organic yields are generally inferior to those grown with mainstream production methods, yet consumer demand provides a price premium. The result is a larger gross return on about half the organically grown crops in Canada.
- Computer use**  
 As high standards for land management, environment sustainability and food quality are required to be a certified organic producer, these farmers are often more likely to adopt the use of a computer.

Source: Sabuhoro and Wunsch, Statistics Canada, 2003.

Canada

**SEE MORE LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION  
ON THE WEB AT [WWW.SLTB.ORG](http://WWW.SLTB.ORG)**

Ontario

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS DOCUMENT DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA OR THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO.